



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

UU Legislative Ministry—What's That?

By Jan Garbosky



Deepening Faith, Growing Leadership, Building Justice

Unitarian Universalist
Legislative Ministry California

Did you know that:

... in parts of California what comes out of the faucet in thousands of homes is not drinkable and California's Human Right to Water Bill—which was the first in the nation and was vetoed by the governor—was the brain child of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry California (UULM) as part of its **Climate & Water Justice** work?

... a riot & demonstration at the Black Cat bar in LA rallied the gay rights movement two years before Stonewall? UULM does and is hosting a social justice “plunge” this month led by a docent from One National Gay and Lesbian Archives to explore the neighborhood around the old bar and learn about what inspires and sustains the LGBT movement in our state.

... every two years California's UUs complete “Issue Surveys” which determine what UULM's focus areas will be?

... there is no regulation of agricultural runoff anywhere in California and the resulting pollution disproportionately affects laborers and poor immigrant communities? Those who participated in last month's Justice Plunge explored first hand what this means for people of the Central Coast region.

UULM:

... endorsed and supported last June's California Fair Elections Act as part of its **Clean Money for Fair Elections** focus?

... was responsible for hiring and supervising all the faith-based organizers who worked on No on Prop 8 as part of its Action Network **Marriage Equality** work. As a result of their assistance, First UU became known as a leader in faith-based organizing in San Diego with over 170 church members volunteering for No on Prop 8?

... was the sponsoring organization for California Faith for Equality?

... has a PowerPoint presentation created by its **Health Care Reform** Steering Committee that explains the new benefits and how to access them that you can download as well as a Healthcare Curriculum?

... has established a “Thank-You-Ministry” sending letters and cards to legislators who supported reform bills in line with our UU values?

As a statewide justice ministry celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, UULM serves to empower the moral voices of UU values in the public arena. Its Issues Teams work to build a statewide education and advocacy network anchored in our faith and informed by its history and principles. Its Action Network is a separate non-profit that focuses on direct advocacy for supporting or opposing specific legislation such as Prop 8.

UULM will be the recipient of February's offerings at First Church. That is wonderful but UULM works day in and day out, every month, and has for 10 years. 43% of its income comes from individual donations. For several years, I have made a monthly donation to UULM and to the UULM Action Network to ensure the day to day work is possible. I am proud to be a Board member of this organization where I can see my values at work and find ways to actively participate in helping build a better California and a better world. For more information about UULM, go to www.uulmca.org or visit the Social Justice Ministry Team table.

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Arvid's Arcana

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

Sabbatical Part I:

This great civilization that I knew so little about before I visited Mexico IS a part of us. The Mexican culture is more and more a part of life the United States. This is causing hate, it's causing fear, and it's inevitable. But there is so much to celebrate, and we, Unitarian Universalists, we have something to say about this issue.

We have something to say about immigrant rights. We have something to say against hate. We have something to say about a rational debate around issues of immigration. Each wave of immigration into the United States has enriched our nation, has enriched our culture, and this wave of immigration is doing the same, and it is inevitable. It's something that can be managed and welcomed, if we just get off of our fear and hatred. And that's why I'm so committed to immigration. It's part of who we are.

More and more people of all races and ethnicities are finding our free theology, our free religious community VERY compelling. It's what they have been looking for, all their lives! Our faith is truly becoming a worldwide faith, not by any missionary efforts, but by attraction, by people hearing about it, reading about it, and saying, "This is for us too!"

From the sermon, Ten Things I Learned About Mexico, transcribed by Mar Cardenas

Link to this sermon: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBjR5CDyQME>

Sabbatical Part 2:

What do I plan to do? Mostly writing. I am turning a sermon series I did a few years ago on the major theological paths within Unitarian Universalism into a book, to be published on line. My hope is that each chapter will describe the paths in such a way that their major advocates and responsible critics will both recognize their positions. The book will end with a chapter on what in common to Unitarian Universalists of all paths.

As I complete a portion of the work, I intend to post it on this blog, so stay tuned.

The sabbatical will also include a pilgrimage in March to our Partner Churches in the Philippines.

February Sermons

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

Sunday, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.

South Bay Campus: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

February's **Transformational Theme** is **Evil**

February 6—Hillcrest

With Hearts, and Hands, and Voices

- Rev. Jason Shelton, Guest Pulpit (live)

February 6—South Bay

By Whose Authority?

- Sue Magidson, Intern Minister (live)

February 13—Hillcrest

The Virtue of Temperance

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (live)

February 13—South Bay

With Hearts, and Hands, and Voices

- Rev. Jason Shelton, Guest Pulpit (pre-recorded)

February 20—Hillcrest

Evil

- Sue Magidson, Intern Minister (live)

February 20—South Bay

Temperance

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (live)

February 27—Hillcrest

The Young Adult Service

- Rev. Kathleen Owens (live)

February 27—South Bay

Evil

- Sue Magidson, Intern Minister (live)



A New Way to Discover Unitarian Universalism

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

Did you think that the only way to learn about Unitarian Universalism is to take a class, or read a book? Of course, another way is to teach Children's Religious Education, you'd be surprised at the things you learn that way! But, there is an intriguing way to do it in your own home at your own pace. Try exploring some of the many YouTube videos on Unitarian Universalism.



Go to <http://www.youtube.com> on your computer browser and type Unitarian Universalism or Unitarian Universalist History in the search box and you'll be amazed by all the results that come up. Here are some of my favorites:

Unitarian Universalism: You're a Uni-What? http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=iv&v=Nh0TY4gig_Q&annotation_id=annotation_531002

How about a Puppet Show that explains what Unitarian Universalists Believe?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq8kzuy2a3M&feature=related>



There is a great three part series on Universalist and Unitarian History created by the Universalist Historical Society beginning with part one at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HONNsToX-OU&playnext=1&list=PLF7D706E720D37974&index=1>

There are several videos of famous Unitarian Universalists. Check out this one:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzUW4mpO8Ew>



You'll find videos of sermons from a variety of congregations. You can hear some of our favorite hymns, and listen to testimonials from Unitarian Universalist around the county and around the world.

The Unitarian Universalist Association has posted many videos with messages from our UUA Presidents, videos that are part of publicity campaigns, videos that show workshops and lectures from General Assemblies and the A Religion For Our Time Series which includes our Young Adult Program:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm9SyFeBeFg>

There are a variety of videos from individual congregations showing their special events and programs. Like our South Bay Program: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_9-PdRzdvm

I hope you enjoy exploring our faith in this new and exciting way. You may find it interesting to watch some of the videos with your family and friends and discuss what you hear. Some of the sermons would be perfect for discussions. If you find some really exciting and interesting videos, let me know and we'll spread the word. This is a fun way for individuals of all ages to explore our faith!



Have fun!
Liz

Excuse Me, I Have Something to Say!

BY Mar Cárdenas-Loutzenhiser, South Bay Ministry Leader

I shed tears every time I see pictures from the National Day of Action, May 29th of last year, in which hundreds of UUs from every corner of my adopted nation answered the call of leaders from the UU congregations in Arizona and came, and marched for many miles under the Phoenix sun, side by side with me, with other human rights activists, with entire immigrant families, with many undocumented people who have reached the *¡Ya basta!* point, proudly holding posters declaring to the world, I AM UNDOCUMENTED AND I'M NOT AFRAID!

The feelings of gratitude that I feel for all those UUs who again, just two months later, answered a similar call to action have not diminished since July 29th, and I doubt they ever will.

A similar call, but different. This time it was a call to participate in Civil Disobedience during the National Day of Non-Compliance, in defiance of the beginning of the enforcement of SB1070, a law that, even after its worst portions were stayed by a judge, still shows the spirit of those few who crafted it, and signed it into law. Almost 100 people were arrested, 29 of them UUs, for Standing on the Side of Love with immigrant families. Most are still attending trials on the 20th, 21th, 27th, and 28th of January. We demonstrated our faith with action, because as someone's poster read, "*When oppression becomes law, resistance becomes duty.*"



As I write this, I'm flying to my beloved home city, Morelia, in the state of Michoacán, a red state, according to the United States State Department, because of the drug trafficking-related violence. I'm sorry, nice people at the US State Department, but I have to go home now. Is that OK with you?

There are tears in my eyes. There are tears in many of my fellow passengers' eyes as well. We are flying home for similar reasons, unfortunate reasons, a loved one is ill, or worse, has passed away.

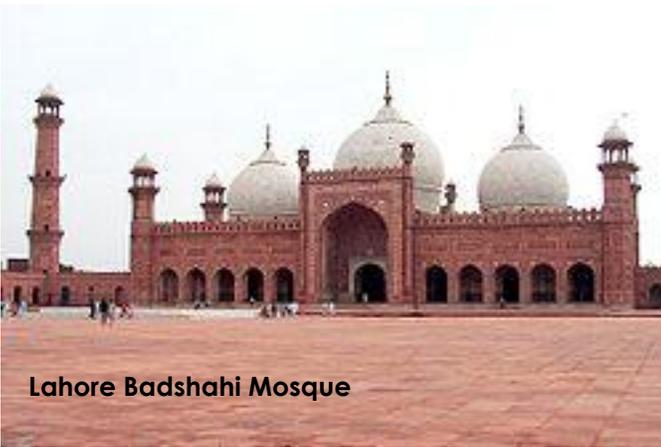
I'm fortunate, I remind myself amidst my sorrow. I am fortunate that I have the privilege to come and go across a border that every single year claims the lives of hundreds of dreamers who, just like I did decades ago, search for the opportunities that no longer exist in our places of birth.

I'm fortunate because what took me only a couple of years to get, the coveted green card, takes others decades. For those who need it the most, there just isn't one. Those who do not have a green card cannot travel to their loved ones in Mexico when they are needed most. It is painful, it is wrong, it must be stopped.

And as a Unitarian Universalist, I am sorry, but I will no longer remain silent, I certainly have something to say about that!

Mar Cardenas, along with Joan Cudhea, Derek Staats, Julie Schauble and David McCain, is conducting an adult education class on Immigration as a Moral Issue, Monday evenings beginning January 24th, 6:30-8 PM at the Hillcrest campus. It is part of a 2010-2014 Study/Action Issue for the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.





Lahore Badshahi Mosque

Among a number of Muslim friends I have had in Yemen, Northern Nigeria and Pakistan, what eventually becomes part of our conversations is the matter of our religious faith. I have been invited to the Lahore Badshahi Mosque where as many as two or three thousand of the faithful come to pray on Fridays. To watch them all submit themselves, heads to floor, speaks of their deep faith as they submit themselves to the will of Allah. Islam.

One of my friends from Egypt had a dark mark on his forehead, the result of touching his head to the ground for decades, five times a day. In most cases my conversations with him and other friends dealt with the basis for belief, that is the book, as in the case of Christians, the Holy Bible, and in the case of Muslims, the Holy Koran.

Persons, who criticize or demean the Koran openly, be they famous authors or the common man on the street may have a *fatwah* pronounced on them, targeting them for punishment or death. A believer cannot accept one portion of the Koran and reject the other, because all the words are those of God's Prophet.

The lesson I have learned in more recent years among U S is to celebrate the faith of all, celebrate the origin of their faith, and accept them as sisters and brothers who can teach me what gives them peace, hope and meaning in living. Certainly an invitation to share with us about their belief is very different than a put down about the origin of it, be it in a book, a *guru*, a revelation or even tradition.

Islam and Christianity

BY Harold M. Bergsma

I was traveling in Los Angeles and saw two heavily bearded men, their hair dyed orange, signifying they had made the Haj to Mecca. I heard them talk to each other and stopped and began to speak in Urdu. Immediately they were not just a couple of strangers in a foreign land, who looked weird in their native dress, who had long beards like Saint Klaus, In a thrice we, all three 'wise' men, were holding hands and jabbering away like old friends, while my wife waited patiently for me. Then I said I had to leave, introduced my wife, and there was bowing all around. Now came the spontaneous part that I remember with joy, these Moslem Pakistani Mullahs, hugged me, and had tears in their eyes because our meeting was so brief. "May the blessings of Allah be upon you." What lovely Seasons Greetings.



So my resolution for the New Year will be to study, to learn and to listen to those from the communities who revere the holy books. Certainly all of these books have contributed vastly to the development of harmony and peace in a troubled world. Certainly among the adherents of these faiths there has been comfort and joy because of their beliefs. Yes there has also been conflict and horrendous crusades, pogroms and wars between these communities, which I acknowledge but do not understand. Could it be that few of them studied others of the other books, befriended them and extended welcoming hands and warm hearts, rather than war (*fatwah*) over the sources and differences of their faith?

Your Good Relations Committee at Work

BY Susan McLeod, Chair

As a congregation we have a Covenant of Good Relations (approved by the Board in 2008). The Good Relations Committee is charged with making sure that we adhere to that Covenant in our congregation; in September of 2010 we led discussions after the services at both the Hillcrest and South Bay campuses to ask members of the congregation for their ideas.

We asked this question: How can we, individually and collectively, ensure that we are being true to our Covenant of Good Relations in our interactions with one another? We received some excellent suggestions, many of which had to do with making everyone more aware of the Covenant. Listed below are a few of the suggestions you gave us, along with what we have been doing to implement them.

1. People need to see/hear the statement over and over again to keep it in mind. Before meetings would be a good time.

The committee has asked the ministerial teams to think about how various meetings might incorporate either the entire Covenant or parts of it at the start of the gathering.

2. Frame and put the Covenant in each meeting room as a reminder.

Done. We have been told, however, that these are not very eye-catching, so we are looking at ways of making them more visible.

3. Have an Adult Education course on Conflict Resolution.

Barbara Filner from the National Conflict Resolution Center led a workshop for our Adult Education program on Dec. 9, 2010.

4. Have something like the General Assembly's Green Shirt Squad, so Good Relations Committee members are identifiable.

The Good Relations Committee members now have green ribbons on their nametags identifying them as members of the committee.

5. We need a procedure for complaining or bringing up problems. If there were a prescribed way, step-by-step, then people would follow that procedure. Put the procedure on our web site so people can find it easily.

The committee has written a document, "Conflict Resolution Guidelines," that is now on the Church [website](#) and has also been published in *First Words*.

6. Put together a brochure about the Covenant and have it in the hymnal racks.

We now have a brochure that includes the Covenant and the Conflict Resolution Guidelines that will be available in the hymnal racks and other places on the church campus.

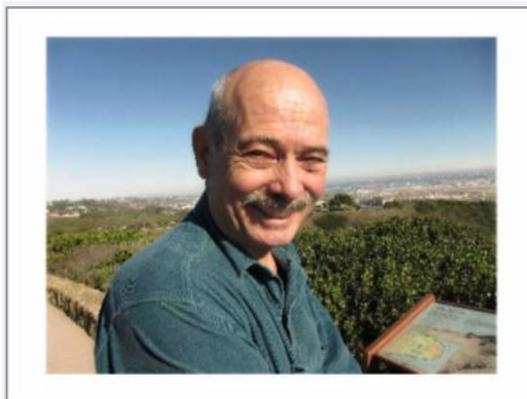
Thank you from all of us for these excellent suggestions. We are open to more, so don't hesitate to talk to one of us (identifiable by the green ribbons on our nametags)!



Interview with Bob Hartman

BY Robert McMahon

Bob Hartman is normally a very active guy. He cycles (long distances), kayaks (with conviction), hikes and climbs, and volunteers and works (full time). He has also been very active in the Sierra Club, but I caught him 8 days after his hip replacement, and he had finally slowed down, at least for this interview. Here is what he had to say:



Bob Hartman

Since joining the church, I have served on the board of trustees for 3 years, and was active in the formation of the California UU legislative committee, which lobbies for legislation that furthers Unitarian Universalist principles and goals. I also served on the search committee that brought Kathleen Owens, the associate minister, to First Church.

"I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, in a working class neighborhood in a non-denominational, non-practicing Christian household. I graduated from Missouri Valley College then did post graduate work at Ohio State. In January 1971, I started working for the Social Security Administration in Norfolk, Nebraska. I came to San Diego in 1974, and I'm still working for the SSA."

I joined the church in 1993. My first wife of 20 years was hostile to any religious community, but after our divorce I sought a life-change and knew that Unitarianism could offer the type of community that I sought. I had learned of First Church through other progressive social advocacy groups to which I was associated.

In March 1998, I organized a canoe trip on the Colorado River for First Church. There I first met Lisa Youmans and her son, Danny. We created a friendship which developed into a desire to share our lives together. In 2004, we married and continue to grow a loving and supportive relationship.

I've had many memorable moments at our church, but what stands out is the relief I felt when I first attended, at being in a community where I felt comfortable with everyone around me.

... recognize the moment we are in, it's never going to be the same.

I doubt I have a philosophy by which I live, but a verse from the Grateful Dead gives me pause, 'cause when life looks like easy street, there is danger at the door.' To me it means recognizing the moment we are in, it's never going to be the same. It's all about the impermanence of life.

And I'd like to thank you and the church for taking time to do these interviews. One thing I do miss from my earlier days at First Church are the credos. I learned so much about our members through those short presentations and I was very moved by them – maybe someday we'll find the 5 minutes to fit them into a service once a month or so..."

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 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
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