



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

District Assembly at First Church

By Nancy Fisk



District Assembly is coming to First Church this year, on April 24-26, 2014. This is the semi-annual gathering of the Pacific Southwest District ([PSWD](#)) of the Unitarian Universalist Association ([UUA](#)). District Assembly planners are expecting between 275 and 325 people from central and southern California, Arizona and Nevada. Thursday, April 24th will be Ministers' Day. Registration for other participants opens at 3:00 PM on Friday, April 25, 2014 and will be \$75.00 a participant. There will also be a youth caucus, at which 35-40 youth are expected.

This is a great opportunity to experience the larger denomination and all it has to offer. If you've ever wondered what General Assembly is like, this is a chance to find out what an assembly is. Volunteers will be needed as ushers, for registration on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, as greeters on the campus directing participants and to provide home hospitality.

On Friday night, the keynote speaker will be Rev. Meg Riley, whose topic is the theme of the conference, "Growing Our Future". "Rev. Meg A. Riley is senior minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship ([CLF](#)), a 3500 member church without walls. She has worked at the intersection of religion and culture in a variety of contexts, including serving as Director of the [Unitarian Universalist Association's Advocacy and Witness](#) staff group, Office of Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay



Rev. Meg A. Riley

Concerns, Washington Office for Advocacy, Youth Programs, and as a religious educator in several Unitarian Universalist congregations. Riley was the founding director of [Standing on the Side of Love](#) (Harnessing Love's Power to Stop Oppression, Exclusion and Violence)." (Source: Huffington Post bio.)

Saturday will include breakfast, worship and workshops in the morning and afternoon. A box lunch will be provided to all participants. A bridging ceremony for youth bridging to young adulthood is planned. The final event will be a closing ceremony around 5:30PM.

There is a need for some home hospitality. This is an opportunity to offer some of our visitors a place to stay Friday and possibly Saturday night. The cost is \$25/a person or \$50/ a couple, which the host will collect and the proceeds will go to the church. No meals are to be provided by the hosts.

To volunteer during the assembly, or as a host for home hospitality, please contact Jan Gallo at 619-298-5322 or at jngallo@yahoo.com.

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Arvid's Arcana

By Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister

As most of you know, I've been quite intentional about choosing and planning my final messages from the pulpit, thinking about what I really want to say before I retire as your Lead Minister on June 30. Several of you have said that you would rather not hear that I am leaving soon and that you would rather not think about it. Dear friends, it warms my heart that my ministry is meaningful to you and that I will be missed. But I don't think it wise, when big changes are coming, to avoid thinking about them.

I couldn't be more delighted that Rev. Kathleen will be succeeding me as Lead Minister. But again, some folks have expressed the thought that, since she has been here for 7 years, not so much will change. Things will change. They will change a great deal. In order to do the job that you have called her to do, Rev. Kathleen's role will change significantly. It will take time, communication and clarity for everyone to get used to new ways of relating to Kathleen in her new role.

Your [Search Committee](#) is busy looking for a highly qualified Assistant Minister to join Kathleen in her new ministry. This person will not meet everyone's expectations but he or she will also exhibit wonderful talents and characteristics that you might not yet imagine. He or she will be a whole new person and will join with Kathleen to create a completely new team. In addition, First Church's intern minister for next year, Adam Dyer, will be different from interns in recent years in that he is male and African American.



Adam Dyer
2014-15 Intern

It is natural to avoid thinking about change. It is also human to fear change. But think about this. The human body experiences change and excitement in exactly the same way—the same clenching and fluttering in the chest and belly. I am confident that for an organization as strong and mission driven as First Church is, it is the excitement that will predominate and that a tremendous energy will be released with the new start that the church is embarking on.

February Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus: Sunday, 9:30a and 11:30a

South Bay Campus: Sunday, 9:30a
(Intergenerational, Bi-lingual
[Spanish, English])

The February Transformational Theme is **Evil**.

Sunday, February 2:

Hillcrest Services—"Our Response to Religion's Demise," Rev Kathleen Owens.

South Bay Service—"The Future of Liberal Religion," Rev Dr Arvid Straube.

Sunday, February 9:

Hillcrest Services—"So, You Don't Want To Meditate ... ," Rev Dr Arvid Straube.

South Bay Service—"Standing Up For Love," Elizabeth Bukey, Intern Minister.

Sunday, February 16:

Hillcrest Services—"Share The Love—Universalist Style", Rev Kathleen Owens.

South Bay Service—"Deliver Us From Evil," Elizabeth Bukey, Intern Minister.

Sunday, February 23:

Hillcrest Services—"Death and After Death," Rev Dr Arvid Straube.

South Bay Service—"Share The Love—Universalist Style", Rev Kathleen Owens.



The Sermon is Only the Beginning

By Chris Christenson, Adult Religious Education Coordinator

Do you find yourself coming to services, listening to the sermons, being moved in some way, and wanting to share your feelings with others in a "Deep Conversation"?

You may have noticed, at the bottom of each Sunday's Order of Service, a "Question for Reflection", asking you to consider a thoughtful response to the essence of the sermon message. This is meant to stimulate a conversation - a personal reflection on the question and on how the sermon message may have been personally or communally transformative.

Here are examples of past Reflection Questions:

The Beginning of Love, Rev Jan Christian, Guest Minister, Nov 10 2013 Veterans Day sermon
If you don't transform your pain, you will always transmit your pain. How's yours?

Power to the People, Rev Kathleen Owens, Nov 3 2013 sermon
What is one thing you can do to advance your education and our democracy?

The Dead Come to Life, Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Oct 27 2013 sermon
In what way does your relationship with beloved people who have died continue?
How to Not Be a Zombie: Being Alive in a

Deadening World, Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Oct 20 2013 sermon
What parts of you are asleep?

The Messiness of Creation, Rev Kathleen Owens, Oct 13 2013 sermon
What mess are you making?

A Mixing Gesture, Rev Dr Susan Ritchie, Guest Minister, Oct 6 sermon
If we want a religion that merges out of mixing gestures, what might that look like?
What would Miss Trinity do?

Foolish Things Smart People Do, Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Sep 15 2013 sermon
What are the foolish things that you do?

Did these, or other, reflection questions stir something in you which you'd like to share and discuss, or consider how it affected others?

The need to share personal feelings and experiences with others in a like community is a natural response. Being in open and safe conversation with others can confirm or challenge your feelings -both can be powerful, rewarding, and even transformative.

Join with others for a facilitated Deep Conversation around the sermon message. Deep Conversations will be held every Sunday after each service, for 30 minutes.

In these facilitated conversations, we will establish these guidelines:

- Statements encouraged
- These are personal reflections based on sermon reflection question, not commentary
- Not looking for right answer consensus or agreement; not necessary to explain, justify, or defend what you say
- A pause between responses
- Brevity is encouraged
- Staying on topic is important
- Share the conversation; keep individuals from dominating
- You can change your mind
- Silence is honored, but not encouraged; time allowed at end for those who haven't spoken yet, encourage everyone's input

Deep Conversations

Starting February 2nd, Sundays after each service, from 10:45-11:15 am and 12:45-1:15 pm, in the Library (Rm 311).

Dining for Dollars (D4\$) Returns

The 11th annual Dining for Dollars returns! Many of you have enjoyed creating and hosting dinners, teas, picnics, museum tours with lunch, pool parties, brunches, barbecues, sailing expeditions, crafting, sing-alongs and other events, and providing services (computer help, massages, handyman help) for your fellow church members and their families. And even more of you have enjoyed participating in and benefiting from these events. Last year was another success of over 200 events, 1200 winning bids, and \$49,000 contributed to the church!

We are gearing up once again to bring this fun auction back to First Church. It is time to start thinking about what you might like to offer. In the coming weeks (through March) we will be accepting your events. A detailed bidding booklet will be printed and the auction commences on Sunday May 4th for three consecutive Sundays. You can hold your event any time from June, 2014 – May, 2015.

In addition to those great meals (fancy, simple, creative) we continue to expand D4\$ to include outings and tours, game nights, and services that many people can enjoy, including those with a modest budget. Look for information about Dining For Dollars (D4\$) on the patio starting March 2nd and in upcoming issues of the Window. Time to start thinking and planning your event(s) now! You can access information, ideas and host forms by going to our church website, <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/dining-for-dollars>.

Feel free to contact D4\$ Co-Chairs with questions:

- Sylvia Ollinger (sjolling06@hotmail.com) 858-689-9185
- Lisa Hartman (lisaRhartman@cox.net) 619-226-6684





Come away for a weekend of rest, renewal and play! Join together with UU Women and Rev. Kathleen Owens at Camp Stevens from Friday, March 14 to Sunday, March 16, to deepen connections within yourself, to others and to the earth. Various workshops and activities are planned for times of reflection and sharing together as well as time alone for your personal time. Because this is the inaugural Women's Renewal Weekend, scholarships are not currently available.

Inviting close friends or family members who are not UUs is fine, but there are only 100 spaces, so do register early. We welcome women from the San Diego UU cluster congregations.

Camp Stevens is located 2 miles northeast of mountain town of Julian, California on State highway 78 in northern San Diego County. "A community retreat center, Camp Stevens is a "peaceful place apart" where groups can leave the bustle and distractions of everyday life to deepen relationships with one another and accomplish common goals. Two hundred fifty-six acres of forest and meadows offer unhurried serenity, and the comfortable facilities are designed to encourage and support community-oriented programs. The serene, natural setting brings rejuvenation to the spirit, mind and body."

For directions to the camp, see their website, www.campstevens.org.

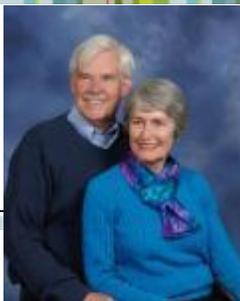
There will be opportunities for large group, small group and individual time. Women can participate in group activities as much or as little as they choose. Kathleen's hope is that women will come away from this weekend with a more grounded sense of themselves and the earth and a stronger sense of connection with one another through reflection and play. Specific small and large group activities are forming.

You may register using the electronic form on the church website, <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/special-spring-womens-retreat>, following the form and instructions. Hard copy registration forms are available at the Hillcrest Campus volunteer desk and the "Get Involved" table on the South Bay Campus.

[Jan Gallo](mailto:jngallo@yahoo.com) (jngallo@yahoo.com) is our registrar. All inquiries and mailed forms should be sent to Jan's attention.

Again, retreat maximum is 100 women, so first come, first served. The deadline for registration and payment is February 21 (Friday). Hope to see you there!





John and Ardath Schaibly

CREATING COMMUNITY

BY JOHN SCHAIBLY

The Search Committee has received 12 applications for the assistant minister position. We have selected 6 of those for further review. In the next 2-3 weeks, we will be asking for additional detailed information from each applicant. We will also send them our Congregational Packet, a document that provides a very detailed look at First Church's programs, people, campuses, and more. The following is an excerpt from the Congregational packet:

John Schaibly was asked to write about the first part of the First Church mission statement, "Our mission is to create community..."

"My wife Ardath and I moved to San Diego in 1968 and immediately looked for a UU community to acclimate us to a new life in a new city, a new job and a new set of friends. When someone asks why I'm so active in church, I tell them that the church is my West Coast family. Most of our close friends and acquaintances are UUs and the church provides most of our entertainment and fellowship.

We brought our son to RE classes on Sunday and we soon became active teachers. We were impressed at the quality of the curricula and other teachers, and the RE and later, junior high and senior high groups became our son's only social groups.

Over the years, the church community has provided us with various groups of acquaintances and close friends. Covenant Groups have provided the opportunity to make new friends in a discussion format. Our neighborhood group has been sharing monthly dinner parties where we have deepened friendship with a smaller group of close friends for 20 years.

We helped form and maintained for 25 years the group called Friends of de Benneville Pines, to support the Pacific Southwest District church camp in the mountains. Our

monthly potlucks, fundraising and seasonal work parties have sustained the camp as well as creating a community of friends.

My wife plays piano for musical productions with our in-house intergenerational theater group, the Looking Glass Theatre. This group has spawned several talented young people who went on to theater careers and has given a large number of volunteers the opportunity to express their amateur talents. It has also served as an outreach to bring outsiders to our congregation.

I really cherish our church men's groups. Support groups, monthly meetings and semiannual retreats provide a safe environment for men to share life's joys and concerns and try out new ways of relating to others. On occasion, I have attended one of our three Buddhist Sanghas focusing on meditation and yoga.

I have been active in the Social Justice Ministry Team for many years. Under the leadership of our Social Justice coordinator, many in our congregation regularly participate in activities for education, advocacy and activism for the important issues of the day. We often coordinate our issues with the UUA Congregational Study Action Issues. I have made lasting friendships with other UU leaders locally and throughout the nation.

The caregivers' team gives me personal satisfaction in being able to assist others in need by offering rides or other services for disabled members.

These groups represent those which are meaningful to me. In our large congregation, the number of our groups seems limitless. Their variety and quality, in addition to Sunday services, keep us actively engaged at First Church."

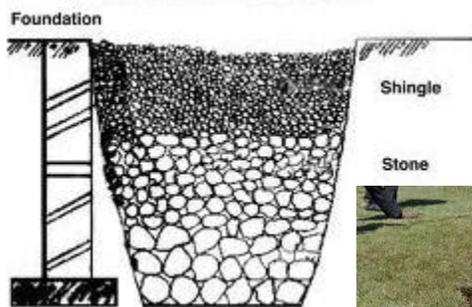
The Congregational Packet will be available at the Search Committee patio table on Sunday, February 16.



Ed Law

A French drain or weeping tile (also blind drain, rubble drain, rock drain, drain tile, perimeter drain, land drain or French ditch) is a trench

filled with gravel or rock. It is built to divert water that runs through a property to a more suitable location, instead of allowing the water to pool or create puddles in inconvenient places.



I first encountered one of these when I was 19 years old and working at building The Lordstown Depot in Ohio. I was one of the laborers putting in a French ditch, which involved placing 10 to 12 inch rocks in an 8 foot wide trench that was to drain the water away. Fortunately, I heard the boss tell his assistant to go to the Union Hall and get a truck driver. I volunteered for the job and was accepted.

The only problem was that I had never been in a truck and the complicated gear system puzzled me. Joe, the driver of a ditch digger, which my truck hauled around, came to my rescue and taught me how to drive the truck. I finished out the summer working driving the truck 10 hours per day and seven days a week. I went back to college rich but with no time to spend it, as I went into the army later that semester.

Imagine my surprise when, 70 years later, I entered our recently upgraded patio to find a French ditch. Most of you have never seen one before, but I am referring to the drainage ditch that runs from the parking lot to the chapel. It looks like a dry riverbed filled with rocks and hopefully, it will drain our property in a big storm. I intend to rush to the Church when that first storm hits. If we were not UU's, we might pray that it works!

I am thrilled to have participated in building the French ditch in Ohio and then to have the opportunity to help finance one 70 years later.



**Welcome Center Patio
Reconstruction**

April, 2012

Staff

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, *Lead Minister*
 Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Associate Minister*
 Rev. Jim Grant, *Affiliate Minister*
 Elizabeth Bukey, *Intern Minister*
 Robie Evans, *Director of Operations*
 Liz Jones, *Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry*
 Käthe Larick, *Youth Program Coordinator*
 Chris Christenson, *Communications / Adult Ed. Coordinator*
 Kristen Kuriga, *Social Justice and South Bay
 Ministry Teams Coordinator*
 Suzette Southfox, *Director of Membership and Development*
 Alice King, *Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator*
 Kenneth F. Herman, *Director of Music and Organist*
 Dana Decker, *Associate Director of Music*
 Daniel Ratelle, *Adult Choir Director*
 Lynn Mendoza-Khan, *Youth and Children's Choir Director*
 Andrea Newall, *JUUL Tones Ensemble Director*
 Abby Koch, *Executive Administrator and Office Manager*
 Jenny Epler, *Events Scheduler*
 Connie Hayes, *Bookkeeping Coordinator*
 Rev. Dr. Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, *Ministers Emeriti*

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 Main Website: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org>
 South Bay Campus:
<http://www.firstuusandiego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

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