



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

A Month of UU Justice Offerings in January

BY Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice Coordinator, and Rev Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister

Throughout the month of January, First Church will be exploring, celebrating and supporting the work of justice through the transformational worship theme and our generosity offerings. 85% of the weekly offering will go towards the important work of organizations that reflect the values and the mission of First Church. This month will be special because each week the offering will be received for a different organization or cause that is linked to the Unitarian Universalist faith.

On Sunday, January 1, the offering is in support of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC: www.uusc.org) and the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO: www.uu-uno.org). The UUSC is an organization that advances human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world through a combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots organizations. The UU-UNO engages in the work of the United Nations to advance a peaceful, just, sustainable and pluralistic world community that promotes human rights. The offering will be split equally between these organizations.

On Sunday, January 8, the offering is in support of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA: www.uua.org). The UUA is the association that links UU congregations to one another, and supports them in building relationships and sharing best practices in areas such as worship, social justice, religious education, and governance.

January 15th will be the annual Journey Towards Wholeness (JTW) Sunday, which supports the work within the congregation to become a more inclusive, multi-cultural and anti-oppressive community. To find out more, please contact the JTW co-chairs: Jan Carpenter Tucker: janct@cox.net and Jaq Morill: smorill221@gmail.com.

On Sunday, January 22, the offering highlights the justice work done here at First Church. In 2011, 337 people took action in a variety of ways to create the beloved community. This will be a great day to find out how you can get involved in the justice work of this congregation.

The Social Justice Ministry Team submitted a grant this year to the Unitarian Universalist Funding Panel, to support the transformative justice work being done at First Church. Our proposal was titled "Reimagining Justice: Healing Through Spiritually-Grounded Action," and highlighted the work in the areas of service projects & generosity offerings, leadership development, "Telling Our Stories" and community partnerships. The funding program supported First Church with two grants, one for \$10,000, and an additional matching grant for \$4,000. This is your opportunity to help match the support of the foundation for the second grant.

Following each service at the Hillcrest Campus on January 22, there will be a Justice Fair on the patio and in the Common Room where you can meet partner organizations from the community, generosity offering recipients, and find out what lay leaders are working on through the church.

On the final Sunday, Jan. 29, the offering will be received in support of Justice General Assembly 2012 (Justice GA 2012: www.uua.org/ga/2012). Justice GA 2012 will be a gathering with multiple ways of engaging in justice work for people of all ages. The offering will go to support youth, young adults, and those in need of support who would like to attend Justice GA 2012.

We hope you will join us for a month of Justice!

For more information, contact Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice & South Bay Ministry Teams Coordinator: kristen@firstuusandiego.org, 619-298-9978, x216.

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Arvid's Arcana: Welcoming Visitors

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

I love speaking with our visitors. It's a practice I commend to you. I find that people don't change their Sunday morning routines on a whim. What brings people here is either a deep yearning, a broken heart, or both. People may have suffered the loss of a relationship or a job, a death, a serious illness, a crisis in their career or their family, a move, or a child asking questions they need help answering. Or there may be a sense that following the "American Dream" of working all the time and amassing possessions is hollow and does not lead to happiness. There may be those who are lonely for people who have values like theirs, for a life lived with compassion and wisdom. Almost always, they have researched Unitarian Universalism and First Church thoroughly on the internet. The 20 to 40 people who visit us each Sunday know they want to be here. They deserve a warm welcome. Here's how you can join me in the heartwarming privilege of welcoming visitors.

- ✧ Don't take a visitor parking space. They are likely to be late because, frankly, our church isn't the easiest place to find. It is a good first impression to have a space ready for visitors. It shows we are welcoming. Please, don't park in a visitor's parking space.
- ✧ If you see someone by themselves smiling hopefully and holding a cup of coffee or sort of standing around looking at bulletin boards, why not go up and introduce yourself. Extroverted people persons, this is a job for you! Don't say, "Are you new here?", in case the person is not new. Better to say, "Hi, my name is _____. We haven't met yet."
- ✧ Please don't think because we have a Welcome Table that it is someone else's job to be welcoming.
- ✧ If someone you don't know sits next to you at the worship service, say hello if the service hasn't started yet, or make eye contact and smile at them if it has. We can all do that and it makes a big difference for people who are in a strange environment with strange people.
- ✧ Have a little compassion for parents with small children who might make a bit of noise.

I remember back to my first visit to a UU church and how I was warmly welcomed. Perhaps you experienced something similar. Or perhaps you felt un-noticed and unwanted the first few times. If the latter was true for you, let's all do our best to make sure that this is never the experience of visitors to our beloved First Church.

January Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

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

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

January's Transformational Theme is Justice

Sunday, January 1:

Hillcrest Services "Sacred Moments, Sacred Intentions", Rev Dr Arvid Straube and Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service "Sacred Moments, Sacred Intentions", Kristen Kuriga (live)

Sunday, January 8:

Hillcrest Services "Keys To Spiritual Fulfillment: Money and The Meaning of Life", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live) (a new series)

South Bay Service "And then it happened ...", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

Sunday, January 15:

Hillcrest Services "Journey Toward Wholeness"

South Bay Service "Keys To Spiritual Fulfillment: Money and The Meaning of Life", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded) (a new series)

Saturday, January 22:

Hillcrest Services "Justice Work: Being the Change", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

South Bay Service "Journey Toward Wholeness"

Sunday, January 29:

Hillcrest Service "Coming of Age"

South Bay Service "Justice Work: Being the Change", Rev Kathleen Owens (pre-recorded)

Time Capsules

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

The New Year is a time for setting intentions and beginning anew. One great way to mark your change and progress is to create a Family Time Capsule. You can place in the capsule items that represent who you are now, and any intentions and hopes you have for the future and put it away until a future point in time. Planning what you will put in the capsule can be one of the most exciting parts of the project.

Choose an appropriate container to be your Time Capsule. A shoe box, cookie tin, or plastic storage box will work depending upon where you decide to store it. If you are planning to bury the box in your yard, make sure it is water proof, and will not rust. A large glass jar will work. You might even wrap the contents in plastic inside the jar and seal the lid with melted wax. Should you decide to store it in the attic, or the back of a closet, you just need to know it will fit.

Now, brainstorm items to go in your time capsule. List things that represent individuals in the family. You can take into account special events in your lives this year, important current events that impact your life, favorite poems, and many other things. Consider putting in current photographs of the members of your family as a way of representing who you are now, and to compare with appearances when you open the box. Decide on the number of items that will fit in the box and, as a family, decide together what you will include and what must be omitted.

Take time for each family member to set some intentions for the future. It could be a characteristic you would like to work to improve, like friendliness, or charity. It could be a vision for how you want to be in the world—a loving person, someone who cares about others. You might want to set a family intention, like working to live more gently on the earth. Write these down and place them in the time capsule.

Now, the next step is to decide when you will open the capsule. You could set a specific time—five years from now, or maybe ten. It could be when a special event happens, like graduation from high school or college. Your family needs to decide. Plan how you will remember to open the time capsule!

Enjoy this fun time together as a family, creating your personal time capsule. Then enjoy it again at some future time, considering all the changes that have occurred since it was created.

Liz Jones



Once Upon A Mattress: The Broadway Musical Meets the Princess and the Pea

By Paula Johnson

Although the music for "Once Upon A Mattress" was composed by Mary Rodgers, the daughter of Richard Rodgers of Rodgers and Hammerstein fame, the show is perhaps better known for introducing the young musical comedy star Carol Burnett in the starring role of the princess who wins her prince by staying awake all night tossing and turning on a bed of 20 mattresses.

But, if you thought you knew the story of "The Princess and The Pea," you may be in for a prodigious surprise! Did you know, for instance, that the Princess Winifred, actually swam the moat to reach Prince, Dauntless the Drab? Or that, in fact, it wasn't a pea at all that caused the princess a sleepless night? Carried on a wave of wonderful songs, by turns hilarious and raucous, romantic and melodic, this rollicking spin on the familiar classic of royal courtship and comeuppance provides for some side-splitting shenanigans.

Heading up our production is veteran director J Marcus Newman who has directed over 40 projects in San Diego for such companies as Playwrights Project, North Coast Repertory Theatre, Compass Theatre and the Coronado Playhouse. He currently serves as Artistic Director for Across the Generations New Jewish Play Festival at Congregation Dor Hadash.



J Marcus Newman



After earning his MFA in Theatre from the prestigious California Institute of the Arts, Marcus continued to work in film, television and on stage as an actor in Los Angeles and in San Diego, where he was in Diversionary Theatre's very first production. In his 25+ years in San Diego, Marcus has taught theatre at SDSU, Southwestern and Mira Costa Colleges and National University, as well as privately in his own studio.

He also played the role of Prince Dauntless in "Once Upon a Mattress" as an undergraduate drama major at Syracuse University.

If you would like to be part of the "Mattress Team", auditions for Looking Glass Theatre's "Once Upon A Mattress" will be held in the First UU Meeting House on Friday, January 20, 6-9 pm; Saturday January 21, noon-4 pm; and January 22, 2:30-4 pm. A cast of 25 to 30 actors of all ages is required for this show and all interested performers are welcome and invited to audition. Experience is helpful, but not required and newcomers are always welcome. If you would like to audition, please make an appointment by calling or emailing Elsie at 619.575.3191 or elsie5@cox.net. For more information on characters including vocal and dancing requirements, visit www.LookingGlassSD.org.

"Once Upon A Mattress" opens April 13, 2012 and continues on April 14, 20 and 21 at 7:30 in the Meeting House of the First UU Church of San Diego.

Tickets will be available on-line at <http://lookingglasssd.org/> and on the church patio beginning March 4.



Jan Garbosky

For years, I've felt less whole because I didn't think I had a spiritual practice. Then I read [Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice](#) and realized my work with California's UU Legislative Ministry (UULM) has allowed me to further my spiritual journey to learn, grow, and deepen.

2012 is the start of a new year and a new decade for UULM—the first statewide UU justice ministry in the nation to bring UU values to the public square. It has been the inspiration for the establishment of similar organizations in 13 other states.

This is the organization that not only reflects my UU values but makes decisions, takes action, and uses my financial contributions grounded in UU our principles. Unique among charitable and faith-based organizations, UULM addresses the needs of society while considering the inherent worth of every person, the interdependent web of all existence, and the right of conscience. By taking advantage of the opportunities to learn more about emerging and continuing justice issues, I am better able to serve my congregation, my community and my world.

There are two sides to UULM: education (UULM) and advocacy (UULM-Action Network); advocacy is currently structured around Issue Teams but is moving toward more regional organizing.

Education activities for 2011 included:

- ✧ justice leadership training for 79 clergy and lay leaders led by experts from California and beyond,
- ✧ launched a year-long Spiritual Activist Leadership Training (SALT) program for 16 young adults selected via an application process ,

UULM: What is It? Why Should I Care?

BY Jan Garbosky

- ✧ the 3rd annual young adult Water Justice Road Trips,
- ✧ 37 health care forums highlighting the Affordable Care Act's benefits to low-income adults, and
- ✧ Immigration reform training for more than 200 UU leaders in preparation for this year's "Justice General Assembly" in Phoenix.

For Advocacy/legislative activities, UULM:

- ✧ played a major role in 4 of the 5 Human Right to Water bills being signed into law by Governor Brown and
- ✧ Joined environmental health and green jobs coalitions to stop Prop 23 and save the momentum of California's Global Warming Solutions Act.

Just one year's activities and programs have made an impact beyond what any single congregation could—no matter how large. Although I didn't participate in all of the above, I know my monthly pledge helped each and every one of them become a reality while those in which I did participate caused my spirit to soar, nourished my soul, and taught or honed skills I've brought to my work here. UULM takes me from myself—what am I called to do?—to our congregation—what are we called to do?—to this moment—what are we called to do NOW? For me, UULM is the story of NOW, this moment, and what I can do to live my faith and let service by my prayer.



What can you do to help UULM bring our faith and its values to the public square? Will you educate yourself or others about one of the justice issues being addressed by UUs across California? Will you donate monthly or on a regular basis to ensure UULM is as successful every year of its second decade? I hope your answer is a resounding "Yes." To find out more about UULM, please visit the Social Justice Ministry Team table or www.uulmca.org.



Introducing Emily Webb, Ministerial Intern 2012-2013

The ministerial intern at First Church next year will be Emily Webb, who is currently a student at Starr King School for the Ministry, where she serves as Co-President of the student body. During December, Emily has been on an immersion study program in Turkey. She sent this picture made on a ferry in Turkey.



Emily, who grew up in Kentucky, has been an active Unitarian Universalist since she was a teenager. She has participated in both continental and regional UU youth events. She is a graduate of Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon, and while there, was active in the First UU Church of Portland. In addition to school and other service, Emily loves to dance.



The Intern Minister Committee

- Steve Howard, Chair
- Alice Diamond
- Marla English
- Kathleen Garcia-Horlor
- Jim Grant
- Scott Grantsmith
- Suzanne Hess
- Maggie Marshall
- Lauren Way

Emily brings a wealth of experience including serving as director of religious education for a summer at the UU Congregation at San Mateo. She also served as Development Director of the UU Community Schools program. She is Training and Development Coordinator for Youth Spirit Artworks in Berkeley. While in Portland, she served as Reproductive Healthcare Specialist for Planned Parenthood.

Emily is fluent in conversational Spanish and has been an activist for racial justice. Emily writes, "The miracle I have found in my own life is in giving and receiving. It is life's powerful push toward exchange, toward generosity and compassion. It is the joyous sense I notice when I discover unexpectedly that I do have something to give; and this is nothing less than miraculous."

Emily will begin her ministry with us in August, 2012. In the meantime she will complete her work at Starr King and also complete a full time clinical pastoral education course.





Jean Seley

Jean Seley grew up in Pasadena, California and remembers walking down an alley to go to school and seeing chickens, pigs and hearing the roosters near her home. She attended junior high in Sonora in the 1940s, 30 miles outside of Modesto. She went to College of the Pacific in Stockton, where she met her husband. Raised in the Christian Science church, she became Unitarian Universalist after she married. Her first job as a Religious Education (R.E.) director for a Unitarian church was in Stockton, CA.

It was the beginning of the profession, and there were only seven R.E. directors in the denomination. She says, "When I was hired, the church was told they should get an RE director but they didn't know what to do with one. "Eventually, that group of RE directors was put on the faculty of Starr King school of Ministry, where they planned and conducted seminars for other R.E. Directors.

Jean was the R.E. director at First Church from 1963 to 1968. The first thing she did was spruce up the classroom yards, add play equipment and publish a church school newsletter. The church school grew from 70 to over 300 children in the time she was director. The church scheduled double services to accommodate the size of the church school. A Wednesday potluck and service was also added, where the minister had an informal service for the parents, while children attended Religious Education.

An Interview with Jean Seley

BY Nancy Fisk

One of her other passions was her involvement with the black movement. Jean, along with several church members, including Gail Durson, a friend and a longtime church leader, organized a group called the Facilitators. At that time, there were interracial dialogues throughout San Diego around issues of racism and the concerns of the black community. The Facilitators attended meetings downtown, with the mayor, chief of police and other public officials who were willing to listen to leaders of the black movement. Working with others, the Facilitators helped rally support for issues such as Lincoln High wanting a black principal. They had never had a black principal up to that time. When there was a Board of Education meeting on this issue, Gail and Jean contacted members of their telephone tree who got a crowd of 300 people together in just a few hours.

When the Facilitators began weekly interracial dialogues at the church, the Black Panthers volunteered to participate. These lasted for months. Through her participation and leadership in the interracial dialogues, she became very aware of how distorted her views were because of racism. She realized that all the black actors on TV were stereotypes and all the models in magazines were white. Once she realized how deep-seated racism was, it made her angry. She put Eldridge Cleaver's picture on her kitchen wall and didn't care who objected.

When asked about her beliefs, this is what she says: "I believe in goodness. I am having a hard time giving up my belief in that goodness of men and women, in spite of lots of evidence to the contrary. I believe that we are all part of one another. I believe in God as a creative force in the universe and beyond. I treasure and love Jesus as a teacher and model as I do Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, my mother, Einstein and others. I love the mysterious and wondrous. I believe in taking responsibility for my life, its disappointments and its joys, because I believe that our thoughts become our reality.



Most important to my spiritual life are gratitude and laughter. "



“.. gratitude
and laughter..”

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 Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Associate Minister*
 Rev. Jim Grant, *Affiliate Minister*
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ONLINE E-mail & Web Addresses
 FirstWords Submissions: nfisk1@juno.com
 To be added to the E-mail List: firstwords@firstuusandiego.org
 Facilities (request for maintenance): facilities@firstuusandiego.org
 General First Church E-mail: mail@firstuusandiego.org
 Scheduling of Church Property Requests: schedule@firstuusandiego.org
 Order of Service submissions: os@firstuusandiego.org
 The Window submissions (Church bulletin): [window@firstuusandiego.org](mailto>window@firstuusandiego.org)
 Webmaster: website@firstuusandiego.org
 Care Network: carenetwork@firstuusandiego.org
 First Church Web Sites:
 Main Website: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org>
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 4190 Front Street, San Diego, CA, 92103.

 **First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego**
 4190 Front Street (GPS use 298 West Arbor Drive)
 San Diego, CA 92103-2098

Phone: 619-298-9978
Fax: 619-298-9997
E-mail: mail@FirstUUSanDiego.org
Unitarian Cooperative Preschool Phone: 619-295-9860

