



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Holly Near Sings at First UU on Feb 9, 2013

By Ken Herman



Singer, song-writer, and social activist Holly Near will give a benefit concert in the Meeting House of First UU Church of San Diego on Saturday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m. You know Holly and her music from her many recordings, from her songs in our UU hymnal ("We Are a Gentle, Angry People," which Holly likes to call "Singing for Our Lives"), and from her appearance as the prestigious Ware Lecturer at the General Assembly held in Long Beach in June, 2004.

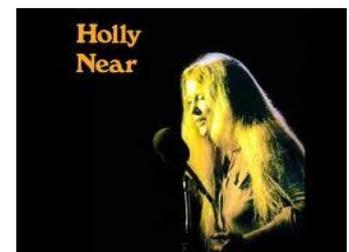
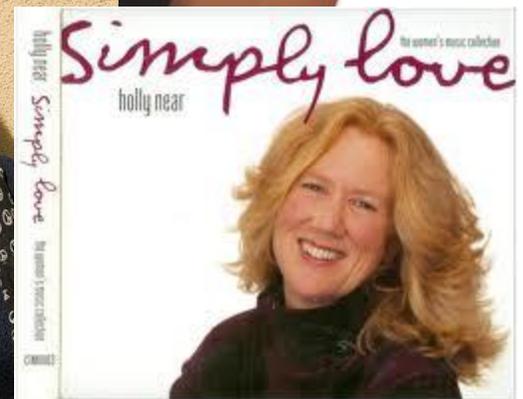
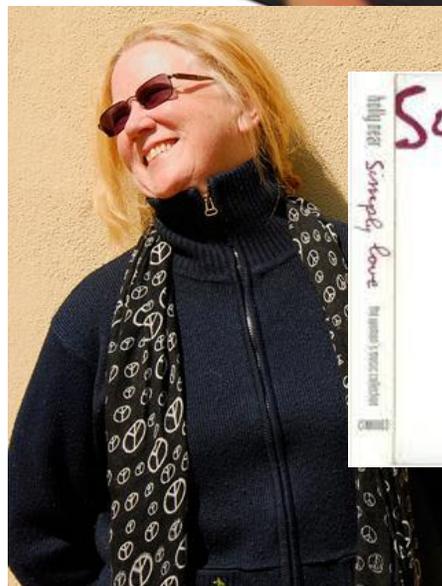
She has appeared with many of the great popular singers of our day, from Pete Seeger to Harry Belafonte, and she has demonstrated with feminists Jane Fonda, Christine Lahti and Eve Ensler.

Holly will be in San Diego for one night only, and we are honored that she will be performing in our Meeting House. She will bring her own touring band, and our Associate Director of Music Dana Decker has been invited to open for Holly with his Hillcrest Sunday ensemble.

She's touring to celebrate the release of her new CD, "Peace Becomes You." You can find sample tracks at her website, hollynear.com. You will also find an archive of interviews with Holly, a list of social change artists, and blogs about her experiences traveling as a global citizen.

From her [website](http://hollynear.com): "I do not separate my music from my heart nor do I separate my ideas from my daily life. I open myself up to learning as much as I can about humanity and this mysterious life experience, but I do not relate to political work as series of "causes." Moment by moment, I integrate what I learn into my personal life, personalizing my politics. It is from this personal place that I write my songs. Enjoy my website ... and then go outside and talk to real people. Computer activism is not the same as being part of community in person."

We will ask \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door for this special concert, with after concert expense going to support our Spirit Level grant for our congregation's new contemporary music program.



Also in this issue:

- Arvid's Arcana [Pg 2](#)
- January's Sermon Messages [Pg 2](#)
- Marking The New Year with your Family Liz Jones [Pg 3](#)
- San Diego UU Network (SUUN) is BACK!! [Pg 4](#)
- Diversity? ¿Pero por qué? But Why? [Pg 5](#)
- Our Welcome Center Kitchen [Pg 6](#)
- A New Year and a New Strategic Plan [Pg 7](#)



Arvid's Arcana—

By Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister

Lately, I've noticed a distinct discomfort with any analysis of the world, history or the human condition that provides a dualistic explanation. I've heard that there are two kinds of people in the world, those that divide the world into two kinds of people and those who don't. More and more I find myself in the latter category. Any explanations that refer to good and evil, right and wrong don't ring true for me anymore. I think this is because of decades of Buddhist study and practice.

In the Buddhist analysis, everything that is, including ourselves and our present situation is the result of conditions that have come together. And all of that is impermanent. When the conditions change, so do the things or situations we think are so solid and real. Things are not so much things at all but dynamic relationships. Thich Nhat Hanh calls this "inter-being". Everything is part of everything else. What each of us does affects the whole. In order to make meaningful change, we need to have an understanding of holism, the theory that a whole system of beliefs must be analyzed rather than simply its individual components.

As I write this, my heart is breaking because of the senseless murder of the children and school staff in Connecticut. I sense that our country has reached a tipping point where we as a society will no longer accept these episodes of mass killing as just the way things are. And I believe that we need to address this problem at many levels.

Yes, I believe we should ban not only assault weapons, but also mega round ammunition clips and bullets not suitable for hunting, that are only meant to kill humans in the cruelest way possible, such as the killer used. Opinion leaders, including us clergy, need to speak out to counter statements like those that say society would be safer if everyone is armed, or that people should be armed so that they can take over the government if it over-reaches. These opinions need to be exposed and refuted.

Much as groups like M.A.D.D. have changed drunk driving from being a socially acceptable behavior to being a crime with a deep social stigma, we should vigorously protest ideas that say there should be no restrictions whatsoever on weapons. But...we need to recognize that we can do this and still allow hunting and target shooting. It is not either/or.

Our society needs to recognize that we have neglected to care for those who struggle with mental illness and give them and their families the help they need. Society owes them this. Our criminal justice system should not be the major institution that deals with mental illness, as it is now. Much of the huge costs of jails and prisons could be more effectively used for treatment. And we need to humanely protect ourselves from those, who, for whatever reason, represent a danger to themselves and others.

The children who were killed were all our children. And, while it is hard to do this, we must also recognize that this is true for the killer, and his family, as well. Whatever solutions we come up with, we should leave no one out of the equation.

An engine for this kind of change is the congregation at First Church. Here we teach our children to be kind, empathetic and to respect other people and their cultures and traditions. Here we seek to live out the Universalist imperative to leave no one out of our family of concern. And here we act on these values to help heal the world.

January Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

Sunday, 9:30a (Traditional) and
11:30a (Contemporary)

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

The January Transformational Theme is **Grace**

Sunday, January 6:

Hillcrest Services—"The Grace of Laughter", Rev Jim Grant (live)

South Bay Service—"Grace: Expect the Unexpected", Emily Webb, Intern (live)

Sunday, January 13:

Hillcrest Services—"Will First Church Survive the End of Church?", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service—"The Grace of Laughter", Rev Jim Grant (live)

Sunday, January 20: **Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday**

Hillcrest Services—"Risk Love", Emily Webb, Intern (live)

South Bay Service—"Will First Church Survive the End of Church?", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded)

Sunday, January 27:

Hillcrest Services
9:30—Coming of Age Service (live)
11:30—"Finding Inner Peace", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service—"Mastering Life", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded)



Marking the New Year with Your Family

By Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

Creating a tradition or ritual that will help you mark the transition to the new year with your family is a good way to begin creating family traditions, if you do not already have one. We often think of the new year as a time for starting new things, so why not try?

There are some general rules of thumb to keep in mind as you begin a new tradition. The very first rule is to keep it simple. If you create a tradition or ritual that is too complex, or requires too many supplies or preparation, it is unlikely that you will be able to keep up the tradition year after year.

The second rule is that you need to involve all the members of your family at some level, if you want them to become engaged. Make the design and planning process fun. Have treats to eat, use colored sticky notes and markers. Make sure that everyone's ideas are heard. While not everyone may be able to do everything they want, don't lose the ideas. Consider putting them in a scrap book to go back and look at another time (It becomes almost a time capsule of people's interests and thinking process).

Do be sure that there is something of the ritual or tradition in which each person is interested. Very young children may not be able to engage in the planning process. Traditions and rituals for children this age need to be very basic, and quite literal or clear.

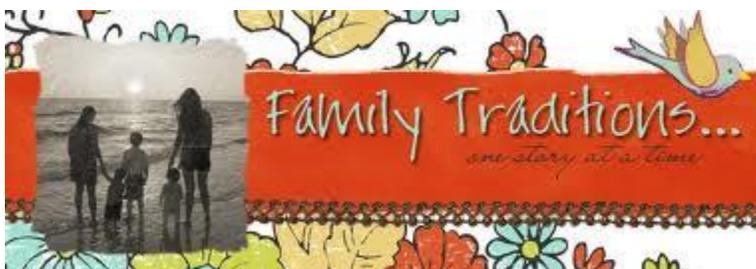
In beginning to create a tradition or ritual, you need to be clear about what your intent is. Are you interested in marking a specific time (a birthday, or the New Year); are you marking a passage (starting school, getting a driver's license, a promotion at work); or are you wanting to make the daily special (a evening meal, bedtime).

Then I try to include four things:

1. Gathering together those people you feel are important for that particular moment. It could be your immediate family, your extended family, or just two family members. It could possibly include other friends.
2. You need some story telling. The story may be a family story, or it could be a wisdom tale that relates to your reason for gathering. It is at this time that all gathered are reminded of why they are there. It could also be a special song or reading that sets the tone.
3. There needs to be some action. In some cases, it might be eating a particular meal or even just a special food together. It could be something you make, or an outing that you do together. In the case of a ritual, it could be a symbolic gesture such as candle lighting, or adding an item to an altar. Or, it could be a deep sharing of thoughts, feelings, or what happened during the day.
4. And finally, there needs to be some form of closure. This could be as simple as hugs all around, or a unison blessing. It could also include a token that is taken away as a remembrance of the time together. It could also be a kiss good-night and a turning out of the lights.

Family traditions and rituals should create a sense of comfort, or provide joy to your lives. If it is stressful, it may be too complicated, or not right for your family. If something does not work, let it go, and try again. I'd love to hear what traditions your family enjoys. Please share with me, and I'll find a way to share with everyone!

Liz Jones



San Diego UU Network (SUUN) is BACK!!

By Susan Riegel Harding

Some years ago you may have heard about a publicity group for the San Diego Unitarian Universalist churches in San Diego County (also known as a cluster) that was called by the name of CIAO. (Cluster Inreach and Outreach).

Martin Kruming kept up a monthly newsletter and there was some very useful interaction between the 5 congregations: First Church, UU San Dieguito, Chalice, Palomar and Summit.

When funding lapsed, so did CIAO. Now that group is known as the San Diego Unitarian Universalist Network (SUUN) and includes the South Bay campus of First Church. Although there is still no funding, there is a [website](http://www.uusandiego.org/) (<http://www.uusandiego.org/>) and SUUN is working on a FaceBook page. The present website, which is not presently kept current, has been very instrumental in directing people to each congregation's respective site, so it is very important to keep that going and make it more dynamic.

The structure of SUUN consists of at least one representative from each of the five congregations. First Church has two: Susan Riegel Harding is the representative for First Church and Barbrey Bryan is the one for the South Bay campus. We also have a specific representative for the ministers, Rev. Jim Grant, one for the Lifespan Religious Growth programs, Kathleen Mascato, and another for the music programs, Vicky Newman.

WELCOME!

Our congregations actively promote personal freedom and social justice. Our caring communities throughout San Diego County support you in your spiritual growth. Come see what we're all about!

About Unitarian Universalism
Our Seven Faith Principles • Famous UUs

Find a Church
San Diego's UU Congregations

Religious Education
Lifelong Learning for All Ages

Social Justice
Putting the Deed into the Creed

Music & Cultural Arts
Concerts, Workshops, Events

What's New
Up-to-Date Happenings

Different People. Different Beliefs. One Faith.

SUUN's purpose is to help the congregations: coordinate and publicize their programs and resources provide mutual encouragement, aid and support strengthen their relations with one another and affirm, promote and practice the Principles and Purposes of Unitarian Universalism

SUUN is planning to produce cluster-wide concerts, put on a yearly picnic, work together on the LGBT Pride parade and festival, and organize joint efforts in the social justice arena.

SUUN also hopes that everyone will get used to thinking of the cluster as a whole whenever plans are being contemplated for fun or important and meaningful projects, so that SUUN can spread the word about the various Unitarian Universalist communities. SUUN needs your help also. Please keep SUUN in mind with any of your clever and exciting ideas for collaboration, by realizing that more can always be accomplished by working together.

DIVERSITY? ¿PERO POR QUÉ? BUT WHY?

BY TONY BRUMFIELD

Why does First Church want to be more diverse? The Board of Trustees is drafting a strategic plan for the next five years. In preparation, members of the Board have met with several groups to hear where people want this church to go. Over and over again, as members of the Board listened, we heard people say that they want this church to be more diverse with greater variety in what First Church offers and with greater participation by young people and people of color to better represent the diversity that already is part of our community.

Do we want to be more diverse because we fear that our faith appeals only to well-educated and aged white people? We know that growing numbers of young people and people of color call First Church home. Is it because we fear that our faith movement doesn't have universal appeal, that it is culturally specific? We have to admit that Unitarianism and Universalism come out of a Western (and White) very rational tradition, but does it have to be so in the future? We know that more and more UUs are attracted to woman-centered, more intuitive, earth-centered traditions. Unitarian Universalism is changing. We are becoming more diverse.

We don't want to become more diverse because it makes us look good. We want to be more diverse because all humans thrive to be whole, strive for truth, and strive to make the world a better place.

Diversity strengthens us spiritually. Instead of avoiding people who are different than ourselves, we learn to live with difference. Instead of avoiding conflict, we learn to do conflict in a way that is respectful and constructive. We can get over our fear of emotion. It's okay to express anger and to make people angry. It's not the end of the world. We learn that people from other cultural traditions can also do Unitarian Universalism. We learn that older white people don't have to lead. Older white people can also follow. It's okay. We can give up trying to be in control all the time. A process that appears to be chaotic can also be constructive. We can get used to really big decisions being made more slowly because they are more inclusive.

Diversity challenges the stereotypes and the simplistic us/ them dichotomy that often rules our thinking. We learn that people who appear to be our adversaries are not, and that people who appear to be our allies are not.

In our struggles to become more diverse, we must always strive to present ourselves authentically, to not pretend to be something that we are not. There is tremendous variety that already exists in the people who call themselves Unitarian Universalist. We just need to present that variety, to come out of the closet so to speak. When we do, we'll discover that there are young people, LGBT people, people with less education and less money, people of color, and yes, some people who we have always thought of as our adversaries who will discover that First Church is the spiritual home they have been looking for.





OUR WELCOME CENTER KITCHEN

By ROBIE EVANS, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Yes, our new Welcome Center kitchen is absolutely beautiful. And we will put it to great use: affordable lunches on Sundays, support for our church community potlucks, our stellar Sunday Social Hours, even outstanding fundraising events for hundreds of members and guests.

What many people don't know is that this is now a "commercial" kitchen. It is regulated by the County of San Diego's Department of Environmental Health (DEH) which means that we have our very own "A" card, just like a restaurant. And, we will have periodic visits from the County Health Inspector.

Because of this new designation, we have many rules and regulations to follow. Every church volunteer who wishes to work in this kitchen will need to have a Food Handler's card, which will be copied and kept as part of our records that the health inspector will review. More information about obtaining this card will follow in this edition of First Words.

Food Safety

The DEH seeks to increase life expectancy and the quality of life by promoting public health and safety for the 3 million residents of San Diego County and the more than 14.7 million overnight guests that visit the County each year. One of the Food and Housing Division's main goals is to reduce the number of foodborne illnesses in our county. They are partnering with their stakeholders to improve food employee behaviors and food preparation practices that directly relate to foodborne illness in retail food facilities. Improved food employee behaviors and food preparation practices should then lead to a reduction in the occurrence of major food safety risk factor violations identified by the Cen-

ters for Disease Control and Prevention as the most significant contributing factors to foodborne illness.

Foodborne illness causes an estimated 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths in the United States each year from all sources including commercial and residential venues. The good news is that it is preventable and we can do our part by following the principals outlined by the DEH. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), five food safety risk factors related to employee behaviors and preparation practices have been identified as the leading contributing factors to foodborne illness. They are:

1. Improper holding temperatures
2. Poor personal hygiene
3. Inadequate cooking
4. Contaminated equipment
5. Food from an unsafe source

In addition to the above risk factors, five key public health interventions are identified by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as methods to protect consumer health:

1. Demonstration of knowledge / Food Safety Certificate and training
2. Employee health controls
3. Controlling hands as a vehicle of contamination
4. Time and temperature parameters for controlling pathogens
5. The consumer advisory

We now have a significant share in the responsibility to make sure our church food is safe. Our food safety management program must focus on monitoring and controlling food safety risk factors and implementing public health interventions in order to minimize the risk of foodborne illness.

What This Means for Us

Anyone who wishes to use the Welcome Center Kitchen will need to have an approved Food Handler Supervisor plus any needed additional approved volunteer(s) with Food Handler Cards on file at the church to be on hand throughout the entire set up and tear down of a specific event. This may require additional fees to the event holder.

We will hold periodic food handler trainings, as well as trainings regarding specific use of our kitchen equipment. A complete procedures manual will be permanently placed in the kitchen,

How to obtain a Food Handler Card

If you need to renew your current Food Handler Card, or look for further resources, please go to the County of San Diego's Department of Environmental Health's (DEH) website:

<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/food/foodhandler.html>

To obtain a Food Handler Card from a provider that is approved by the County of San Diego Health Department, please go to one of the following websites:

- ServSafe / National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
Phone: (800) 765-4842 Website: <http://www.nraef.org>
- Exporior Assessments aka Thompson Prometrics
Phone: (800) 624-2736
Website: <http://www.prometric.com/foodsafety>
- 360training.com, Inc.
Phone: (888) 360-8764
Website: <http://www.learn2serve.com>
- National Registry of Food Safety Professionals
Phone: (619) 885-5522 or (800)446-0257
Website: <http://www.nrfsp.com>

OR:

First Church will be offering classes held by Chef Ray Evans, our Supervising Certified Food Safety Manager, in the very near future. Please check upcoming editions of the Window for more information.

Paul and Kath Hillery have each taken the online course offered by the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals. The fee is \$12.95, which the church will reimburse to you upon successful completion of your course and the issuance of your Food Handler card. The course and assessment test take approximately 1 – 2 hours and can be completed in the privacy of your own home. For more information, please contact Robie Evans, Director of Operations, at 619-398-4433 or robie@firstusandiego.org.

as well as the DEH Retail Food Facility Operator's Guide, the Food Handler's Handbook and the California Retail Food Code.

If you, or someone you know, already have a valid Food Handler's card and/or you are interested in being on our approved kitchen volunteer list, please contact our Director of Operations, Robie Evans, at her direct line (619)398-4433 or via email at

robie@firstusandiego.org.





A NEW YEAR AND A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

By ROSE VAN OSS, BOARD PRESIDENT

With the start of the New Year, your Board will be working on the new strategic plan for the church. First Church develops five-year strategic plans to provide long range planning for the goals of the church community. The Board met with a facilitator for a day and a half in August and discussed what we needed to know in order to develop the plan. We called it planning how to plan.

Board members volunteered to research the items we identified, while Arvid and staff conducted interviews with the congregation through the ministry teams and affiliated organizations. Each month the Board reviewed what had been researched thus far. It was interesting to read of consistent themes throughout the congregation. We held another all-day retreat on December 1 facilitated by Rev. David Miller. He provided these definitions:

- Goal - a broad filter to view something,
- Tactic - a specific activity to fulfill a goal,
- Strategy - broader means to accomplish a goal. A strategy should be accomplishable and measureable.

The board developed four goals based on the feedback received and research accomplished.

The goals were:

1. Provide bold and engaging worship and programs to meet the spiritual needs of a diverse, intergenerational/multicultural community.
 - Learning
 - Small group ministries
 - Program development
 - Revamp R.E. to include outside learning experiences
 - Expand and diversify music program
 - Address the needs of the "nones" (people who don't attend or are not affiliated with a church)
 - Days, times and styles of worship
 - Generational needs
 - Leadership opportunities for lay people
 - Increase and diversify lay leadership in worship

2. Develop collaborative partnerships with marginalized communities that transform the San Diego region to be more just, equitable and compassionate.
 - Identify specific marginalized communities
 - Identify partners
 - Create a sub-plan to define "just, equitable and compassionate"
3. Commit to raise our individual and collective awareness in order to identify and remove cultural, physical and attitudinal barriers to full participation in our congregation.
 - Listening and learning
 - Identify specific curriculum
 - Identify internal/external resource people
 - Inclusive revision of JTW and ROARS structure, function and role in the Church
4. Intentionally engage all generations in leadership development.
 - Leadership Development Committee (four-year)
 - Communications strategy
 - Identify and utilizing appropriate current resources
 - Exploring current curriculum
 - Leadership Transition / cultivation
 - Identify appropriate leadership opportunities globally (beyond the church)

A Board committee was formed to develop a draft Strategic Plan to accomplish the goals. It will be presented at the January Board meeting for review and discussion. The Board must have a strategic plan by March 1 to pass to staff for budget development. The new budget will reflect the new strategic plan.

As I write this, I am excited. We accomplished so much with the last strategic plan. We have an established church in the South Bay, more diverse worship opportunities and a beautiful new building for our programs and fellowship. I believe our new strategic plan will build upon the last five years to deepen our spiritual life and increase our impact on the world.

Staff

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister
 Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
 Emily Webb, 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
 Kenneth F. Herman, Director of Music
 Dana Decker, Associate Director of Music
 Daniel Ratelle, Adult Choir Director
 Suzette Southfox, Director of Membership and Development
 Alice King, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator
 Abby Koch, Executive Administrator and Office Manager
 Rev. Dr. Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti
 Patty Eshleman, Director, Unitarian Cooperative Preschool

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

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