



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

"Creating Family in CommUnity" Conference

By Jan Carpenter Tucker



If you're wondering if you should attend this conference, the answer is Yes! The upcoming DRUUMM-ARE (Diverse, Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries-Allies for Racial Equality) regional conference on January 17-19, 2014 is First Church's opportunity to take one giant action step toward fulfilling these strategic goals:

1. Provide bold and engaging worship and programs to meet the spiritual needs of a diverse, intergenerational and multicultural community and;
2. Commit to raising our individual and collective awareness in order to identify and remove cultural, physical, and attitudinal barriers to full participation in our congregation.

All persons who identify with and believe in these goals are welcome to attend.

Friday night provides the context for deeper discussion around the conference theme "Create Family in CommUnity." There will be a "Roar with Soul" Poetry & Music Celebration in the Meeting House at 7PM, featuring Nia Quartet and hosted by Christopher D. Sims, Leah Goodwin and Alex Mack. This multiracial, multicultural, intergenerational event is free and open to the public. Everyone is encouraged (whether you identify as white or a person of color) to enter their original poetry to win a slot on the program. Submit your poetry by January 13th to www.roarwithsoul.com/poetry-music-celebration. Bring your family and friends to enjoy fun, thought-provoking, deep sharing based on the "I Am From" poems.

Saturday holds a full day of workshops on two tracks from 8AM to 4PM. DRUUMM will have an "Ancestors" workshop by Kat Liu, discussions of "What brought you here? What keeps you here?" (in preparation for an upcoming book), and identity caucusing based on race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual/affective orientation and other points of intersectionality.

ARE (Allies for Racial Equity) will have informative, thought- and action-provoking workshops titled "Who Are We?", "Where Do We Come From?", "Where Are We Going?", and "How Do We Get There?" Special Youth and Young Adult Programming will be led by Rev. Monica Cummings and Children's Programming by Erin Gallagher and Kia Monteverde. Childcare is available.

Saturday night there will be a CommUUnal Dinner at 6:00 PM open to all participants, friends and family where participants from SOLACE (Souls Offering Loving and Compassionate Ears) an immigrant detention visitation project, will speak. A Love Power Circle led by Kristen Kuriga, our South Bay and Social Justice Ministry Coordinator will be followed by dancing and singing the night away or venturing out to San Diego's night spots.

On Sunday, worship services at both South Bay and Hillcrest will feature DRUUMM ministers Rev. Joseph-Santos Lyons with a sermon "Binding Up the Broken" and Rev. Marisol Caballero with a sermon "Beyond Diversity." Participants will share personal creative reflections based on their "aha!" moments during the conference. A hot buffet lunch will be followed by a CommUnity Forum with a panel of ministers, leaders and participants to process what we have learned.

Low cost options and scholarships are available. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds. The suggested donations to cover meals are: Adults \$75, Youth \$65, Children \$25. Learn more and register to attend at www.roarwithsoul.com or contact Jan Carpenter Tucker at roarwithsoul@cox.net or 619-527-2850.

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Arvid's Arcana

By Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister

By now, most of you will have heard that I am retiring from the ministry of First Church as of June 30 of next year. My last Sunday in the pulpit will be June 22. Serving as your Lead Minister these past ten years has been a source of great pride and satisfaction for me. We have done important work together and you have won a permanent place in my heart.

Many of you have asked what will happen to Sonya and me after June. We plan to stay in San Diego and continue to live in our home. It is the custom in our denomination for a minister to stay away from the congregation he leaves for at least one year, a wise guideline which allows members and friends to connect with the new ministers, or, in the case of Rev. Kathleen, to a known minister in a new and different role. Sonya and I plan to affiliate with the Summit UU Fellowship in Santee, near our home.

The final responsibility of leadership of a large and complex institution such as First Church, while fulfilling, can be heavy at times. I look forward to more ease in my life. But I will not be retiring to do nothing. I plan continue to do ministry in a new way. I intend to establish a private practice of individual and group spiritual direction and spiritual coaching. Being a companion for people who are intentional about their spiritual journeys has always been joyful work for me, work I haven't had much chance to do of late.

I am very confident in the future of First Church, in the near and far term under the able leadership of my close friend and colleague Kathleen Owens. These last months with you are bittersweet and very precious.

January Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

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

South Bay Campus: Sunday, 9:30a

(Intergenerational, Bi-lingual [Spanish, English])

The January Transformational Theme is
Authority.

Sunday, January 5:

Hillcrest Services—"Generosity: A Full Heart and Open Hands," Rev Dr Arvid Straube.

South Bay Service—"A Theology of Liberation," Elizabeth Bukey, Intern.

Sunday, January 12: Pulpit Exchange Sunday

Hillcrest Services—"Bending the Arc," Rev Dr Frank Placone-Willey, Guest Minister from Summit UU Fellowship, Santee.

South Bay Service—"Transforming Conversations: The Voices of Animals in the Interdependent Web," Rev Dr Beth Johnson, Guest Minister from Palomar UU Fellowship, Vista.

Arvid will be at Palomar UU Fellowship in Vista, and Kathleen will be at San Dieguito UU Fellowship in Solana Beach.

Sunday, January 19:

Hillcrest Services—DRUUMM (Diverse, Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) Service: "Creating Family in CommUnity—Beyond Diversity." 9:30—with Rev Marisol Caballero, 1st UU Church, Austin, TX.

11:30—with Rev Caballero and Rev Joseph Santos-Lyons, 1st Unitarian Church of Portland.

South Bay Service—DRUUMM Service: "Creating Family in CommUnity—Binding Up the Broken," Rev Joseph Santos-Lyons, 1st Unitarian Church of Portland.

Sunday, January 26:

Hillcrest Services

9:30—"Will Liberal Religion Survive the 21st Century," Rev Dr Arvid Straube.

11:30—Coming Of Age Service.

- South Bay Service—"On the Topic of Authority," Rev Kathleen Owens.



Unitarian Universalist Parenting

By Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

It's never easy to parent a child or teen. There are so many decisions to make about boundaries, discipline, how we answer questions, and even the ethics around the foods we eat are all part of the big picture of parenting. When we choose to raise a child in ways that may feel counter-cultural or at the very least not the same as the parents in our neighborhood, it becomes even more difficult.

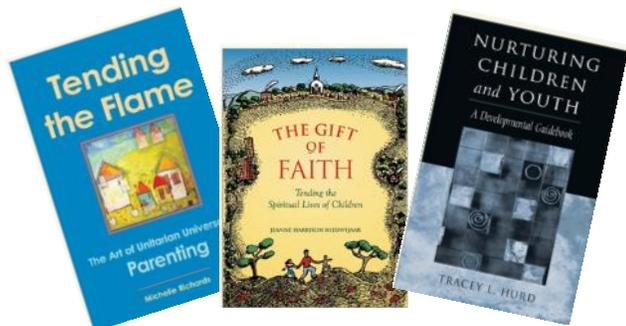
One way to make parenting easier is to find or create a community that supports you in your choices as a parent. Our church community is a place where many families find support for their parenting choices. If you are looking for like-minded parents here at the church, let me help you find each other. Send me an e-mail and we'll see what we can do to connect you.

In addition, here are some parenting blogs and books that can be a help. Check out the UU Parenting blog by Michelle Richards. Michelle wrote the book [Tending the Flame: The Art of Unitarian Universalist Parenting](#). Her blog is about parenting and liberal religion and appears at <http://blogs.uuworld.org/parenting/author/michellerichards/>.



A discussion about parenting and liberal religion, with Michelle Richards, author of *Tending the Flame: The Art of Unitarian Universalist Parenting*. | Welcome | Subscribe

In addition to Michelle's book, there is also the book [A Gift of Faith: Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children](#) by Jean Harrison Nieuwejaar. Another book I recommend is Tracey L. Hurd's book [Nurturing Children and Youth: a Developmental Guidebook](#). All three of these books were written through a particular Unitarian Universalist lens.



There are also several resources on the UUA Website directed toward families that can support you as a parent. All of the inserts found in the UU World Magazine, called UU World Family Pages can be found at <http://www.uua.org/re/families/153856.shtml>.

These pages include stories, activities, and reflections for you as a family. Check out the [Taking It Home: Families and Faith](#) booklets. These six PDF documents are resources for beginning family discussions on Respect; Time and Money Balance; Marriage and Committed Relationships; Divorce and Broken Relationships; Families and Loss, and Interfaith Families.



The Unitarian Universalist Association also hosts several mailing lists. Many of these are closed groups for members of specific organizations connected to the Association, and others are open to anyone interested in the topic. You can find these lists at lists.uua.org. Included among them are UU-parenting, and HUUH-L for homeschooling parents as well as other lists that would be of interest to some families.

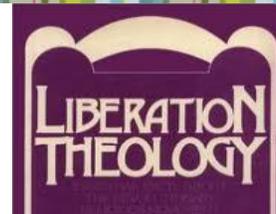
These are specifically Unitarian Universalist Resources. If you are aware of other resources that you'd like to share, let me know and I will pass them along. The saying that "It takes a village to raise a child" is more than just nice words. We need each other!

Blessings,

Liz Jones

A Taste of Liberation Theology

By Elizabeth Bukey, Intern Minister



What is theology, anyway? Who does it? And what is it for? Literally, "theology" is "the study of God," and for years in the Christian church, "theology" largely meant priests, ministers, and academics attempting trying to correctly describe the nature of God, Jesus, and humanity's relationship to the Divine. After the Enlightenment, academic theology wrestled with the use of reason in understanding the world, and with the ascendance of a scientific worldview. Liberal and neo-orthodox theologians debated the ability of humanity to comprehend God, and the role of sin in a world of both progress and atrocity.

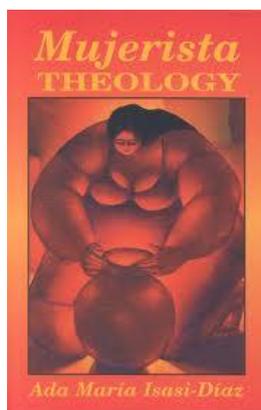
In the late 1960s, liberation theology broke into this conversation, questioning not only the conclusions of traditional Christian theology, but also its methods, its participants, and its goal. Arising initially both in Latin America and in Black communities in the United States, liberation theology posed a different question: what does the Gospel have to do with the liberation of the oppressed? Liberation theologians contended that the church has been overly concerned with spreading the correct beliefs to those in doubt or error.

Instead of wrestling with this "problem of the non-believer," the church should concern itself with the "problem of the non-person," that is, with the reality that millions of people are degraded and dehumanized by poverty and repressive regimes. Instead of orthodoxy—right belief—the church needs to be concerned with orthopraxy—right actions. Instead of seeing theology as the basis for action, the church must see theology as the "second step," as reflection on the actions it has taken for liberation.

Latin American liberation theology emerged as priests and bishops confronted the poverty of their communities. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian Catholic priest, called poverty the starting point of theology. God, he argued, has a "preferential option for the poor," meaning that God is primarily encountered in the poor. Facing "sin" requires confronting oppressive socio-economic systems, and "salvation" is not just about the afterlife, but means liberation from earthly oppression.

Liberation theologians founded "base Christian communities," among the poor, which meet to worship, study the Bible, and act for their own liberation. While Latin American liberation theology is influenced by Marxism, it is also deeply committed to the Bible and its stories of God's liberating activity.

Black liberation theology arose in the context of the civil rights and Black Power movements in the United States. Black theologians experienced a profound disconnect between academic theology and their experience of oppression. James Cone, a theologian at Union Theological Seminary, drew on Black experience, culture, and history, along with Christian scripture, revelation, and tradition, in elaborating a theology of a Jesus Christ who liberates Black people. Theology should not be in the hands of the dominant classes, he argued, but instead in the hands of people like Jesus—oppressed, occupied, martyred.



Many communities have employed the framework of liberation theology, including Latina feminist theologians. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, a Cuban-American Catholic theologian and longtime professor at Drew Theological Seminary, was a pioneer in this field. Coining the term "mujerista theology" out of the Spanish word for "woman," Isasi-Díaz argued for Latina theologians to name themselves, rather than use the

word "feminist." As she articulated it, mujerista theology began in the lived experience of Latinas; its goal is liberation, while also seeking to impact mainline theologies. Others, including María Pilar Aquino, a professor at the University of San Diego, embrace the term "feminist," while sharing Isasi-Díaz's emphasis on the experiences of excluded Latina women as the starting point for theology.

As Unitarian Universalists continue to build our religious movement, we have to face liberation theology's challenge: what does our theology have to say about the liberation of the oppressed?



Looking Glass Theater (LGT) is an intergenerational theater group affiliated with First Church since 1986.

LGT is celebrating its twenty-seventh season! We are now preparing for our big spring musical, *The Enchantment of Beauty and the Beast*. We need people with a variety of talents to bring this delightful story to our stage. This is your chance to release your inner thespian!



Auditions will be held on Sunday, January 12, from 1:30 PM to 4:00 PM and Monday January 13 from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM in Bard Hall. (Note: If you absolutely cannot attend either audition (you only need to attend one) please suggest dates and times later in that week when you are available. We will try to work something out.)

There are parts in this play for singers and non-singers alike. We welcome youth from age five through adults of any age: we will find a part for everyone who wants to participate.

For those who don't care to go on stage, there are a number of other ways to help out and have fun doing so. Can you design or build sets? Paint scenery? Just know how to use a hammer or a paintbrush? We need you! There are technical jobs to fill: We will provide the training. You could learn to run a spotlight or help with sound. We are always in need of anyone who can sew, even a little bit, to help with costumes. Maybe you could design programs or tickets. We need media savvy people to help with publicity.

LOOKING GLASS THEATER WANTS YOU!

By Gay Hybertsen

There are so many ways to contribute to this production. We need patient souls that we call "Kid Wranglers" to look after our youngest actors when they are off stage. Do you like to do hair or make-up? We have a job for you. Are you a good organizer? Maybe you could help the production manager fill other jobs. If you love the theater we want you to be a part of our cast or crew. You will work in a team with an experienced LGT leader.

Our goals are to build community and promote UU values. When you get involved with our production you won't just meet people—you will make friends and become part of our LGT family. *The Enchantment of Beauty and the Beast* runs for four nights the weekends of May 9-10 & 16-17, 2014. The play is directed by Mark S. Butterfuss, who also commanded last year's very successful production of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*.



Charlie Brown Cast

If you want to just work backstage, write us at info@LookingGlassSD.org. You do not need to come to auditions unless you are simply curious.

For more information please visit www.LookingGlassSD.org and "like" us at www.facebook.com/LookingGlassSD.



POLL ON CSAI ISSUES

BY JOHN SCHAIBLY

I trust that you have heard of "Immigration as a Moral Issue" and "Reproductive Justice". These were and are being studied and acted upon in UU congregations across the country because they were voted on at previous General Assemblies to be Congregational Study Action Issues (CSAIs). The issues are for study, reflection and action.

Every two years congregations propose issues. This year congregations are asked to choose five out of six proposed. General Assembly (GA) will choose one of the resulting five this summer. There will be a congregational poll this spring to determine which five issues First Church will support at GA.

In effect, the congregational poll will serve only to help decide which one of the six proposals will be dropped. Still, the Larger UU Connections Ministry Team would like all members and friends of First UU to consider the choices. Our congregation's choice is due to the Commission on Social Witness by February 3.

The choices are:

Proposed CSAIs for 2014-2018:
(Click on any link for full proposal)

[Empowerment: Age and Ability Reconsidered](#)

[Ending the War on Terror](#)

[Escalating Inequality](#)

[Gun Violence: A Public Health Issue](#)

[Renewing and Securing Our American Democracy](#)

[Unitarian Universalist Values and the Pursuit of a Just Peace for Israelis and Palestinians](#)

In January look for printed versions of these choices at a patio table in Hillcrest, and some forums at both campuses for further perusal, discussion and voting.

Also, our Church President, Mike Moreau, sent a letter of support to include "Escalating Inequality" in the poll. It was proposed by [UUJEC](#) (Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community) and supported by leaders of the Social Justice Ministry Team and the Larger UU Connections Team.



As a final note, in the third year of a rather complex congregation-driven process, delegates at General Assembly can vote to approve a Statement of Conscience (SOC) resulting from congregational feedback on the CSAI. A fourth year is devoted to implementation. A Statement of Conscience becomes an official policy of the UU Association of Congregations (UUA). Perhaps you recall the process for adopting recent prior SOCs: Ethical Eating and Creating Peace.

More information on this complex process is at <http://www.uua.org/statements/process/index.shtml>. The Immigration issue was studied for three years, and a final Statement of Conscience was approved last June at General Assembly. The Reproductive Justice Issue will be voted on in June 2015. Our congregation can submit comments on a draft by March 1, 2014.



Eleven people from various backgrounds and locations in Southern California packed a few personal belongings, drove to designated meeting points and carpoled via the I-5 to San Diego, and met at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Chula Vista. We'd all signed up for the first experiential UU Justice Trip, hosted by two San Diego based UUs – Gary and Mar Cardenas.

Destination - Tijuana!

Why? To increase awareness of the issues surrounding immigration and see firsthand what's happening on the other side of the fence. And to inspire commitment and action of UUs to work for more compassionate and improved comprehensive immigration reform.

We knew our focus would be on justice issues concerning the US-Mexico border and immigration, but there were other questions on our minds as well. Some of them were about safety, cartel activity, drug activity, violence. What about the sex trade? What about the wall? The deportees? Will they try to cross again? What about the risks each time they cross to get work to support their families? What will we actually see? And what can we do about it?

The first shelter we saw was ELDA, which offers temporary shelter to newly arriving men and women deportees. ... [The stove] sat on a worn piece of plywood in its severely rusted casing. The only clue that this stove came alive at meal time was the gray mottled gas tank sitting on the floor hooked up to it via a red hose and valve – an umbilical cord - a life line to cooked food. It was hard to imagine cooking for 30 people every morning on that small, rusty, two burner stove...

Next, we drove to the maquiladoras several miles out from the town center – the factories. Many companies from foreign countries set up their factories in Mexico because of cheap labor and minimal regulations. One description explained that as part of the interview process the candidate is given a quantity of water and then timed to see when the person has to use the

UU JUSTICE BORDER TRIP TO TIJUANA

EXCEPTS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED ARTICLE BY THERESA FELLMAN

bathroom. If the wait is not long enough, the person does not get hired.

We volunteered at Desayunador Salesiano where breakfast is served daily to 1100 people, mostly deported. We met with 2 wonderful groups doing good organizing work to make their communities better. Some were deported but some were Tijuana citizens.

We visited El Mapa, where many deported live in tents and talked with many people. We gardened at the bi-national garden and painted part of the wall to beautify it.

We talked with a U.S. veteran who was deported. As with so many other stories we heard, he misses his daughter terribly. We also learned about current immigration reform legislation statewide and nationwide.

We participated in a bi-national service by a Methodist Minister – we sang, held hands, prayed together, and took communion right there at the wall – the wall we had heard so much about. What was once just a word was now real. The wall. The fence. La barda. Imposing.

We talked about the Doctrine of Discovery, how this still goes on today. We connected people with ways to get involved after this transformative weekend. We understand more what it is like for those who are deported to Mexico. Unless they can get their Mexican passports, they have no country, cannot get a job, have trouble starting a new life.

...Driving back to San Diego, the air was clear but our minds were clouded with thoughts and images...trying to make sense of what we'd just seen and experienced...wondering how to improve such desperate conditions for so many. At the same time, we were amazed at the dedication of the many angels already helping.

We'd seen so much - and all of it very different from our own clean, safe, organized worlds – in the United States...

No wonder they come.....

Staff

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 Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Associate Minister*
 Rev. Jim Grant, *Affiliate Minister*
 Elizabeth Bukey, *Intern Minister*
 Robie Evans, *Director of Operations*
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