



# FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

## In Concert: "Sources" - A Unitarian Universalist Cantata

BY Roy Attridge



**Jason Shelton**

The combined choirs and musicians of the San Diego County Unitarian Universalist Cluster proudly present: "Sources: A Unitarian Universalist Cantata", a choral work in seven movements, with music by Jason Shelton and lyrics by

Kendall Gibbons. Musical direction is by Tim McKnight, Director of Music at Chalice Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Escondido. The concert will be Saturday June 9th, at 7:30 PM in the First Church Meeting House. This performance will be ASL interpreted.

The "Sources" cantata takes its inspiration from the six sources of Unitarian Universalism, which include the teachings of many different world traditions. (Please read more in the [UUWorld](#) article on the writing of the cantata.) Opening the program will be Voices in Unity, the youth choir from First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego, under the direction of Lynn Mendoza-Khan.



**Tim McKnight**

All proceeds (after expenses) will go to the music program at the San Diego Center for Children, which has been helping children in San Diego County for 125 years.

The mission of San Diego Center for Children (SDCC) is to promote the well-being of children, youth, families, and communities by providing an array of proven and effective mental health, educational, and social services. Founded in 1887, SDCC is San Diego's oldest accredited non-profit organization. Today, SDCC has become a leader in providing mental health services to children and families within our community. They offer a variety of programs for children facing behavioral, emotional, social, and educational challenges.



**Rehearsals**

The music and recreation therapy programs available at the San Diego Center for Children are two of the most important healing services. The Performing Arts Program restores trust and hope in children who have suffered abuse, trauma, or have severe developmental behavioral problems. Through music, the children are coping with their pain and aggressions. The hands-on music program, with director Sundiata Kata and his staff, offer multiple opportunities for children and adolescents to get involved in a positive musical experience of health and wellness.

These musical activities reduce stress and were developed to be a creative outlet for the difficult emotions that the children process on a daily basis. Through the San Diego Center for Children's Music Program, children and adolescents can express themselves and sense feelings of accomplishment.

Suggested donation at the door: (check or cash only please) \$15 general admission; \$10 children, students, and seniors ; \$40 families of 4 or more.

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## The Music Program in Fall 2012

BY Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister

In the past several weeks, you have been hearing about plans to change the Hillcrest worship services in September. The 9:30 will feature traditional church music such as the congregation is accustomed to. The service will be little changed from the current format, with classical music, as well as our outstanding organ and organist.

The 11:30 service will have a more upbeat, contemporary feel. Dana Decker will direct the music at that service and his band will be prominently featured. The Chalice Choir, JUULTones, the children's and youth choirs will all sing at both services from time to time, and all the musical ensembles will be part of both services at different times. Dana and musicians under his supervision will continue to provide contemporary music at South Bay worship. First Church will be taking fuller advantage of the richness and diversity of its musical resources. The Spirit Level Foundation has given the church a matching grant of more than \$16,000 to make this improvement to worship possible.

Some of you have asked to know more about the thinking behind this plan. The answer, in short, is because the opportunity is now here to have a greater diversity of music and to reach the hearts and souls of more of the current and future worship attendees. Even before I became your minister, during Candidating Week, I heard divided opinions about the music at First Church. Many people are justly proud of our organ and organist and the rich tradition of fine classical music. And it was immediately clear that others simply do not relate to that style of music at all. They have been pleading for music that was more contemporary and upbeat, like rock, folk, jazz, world music and gospel.

A report of the Growth Task Force, approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2011, recommended expanding the musical styles at the worship services as a growth opportunity. Traditionally, worship in Unitarian Universalist congregations has been staid and restrained, as has worship in much of mainline Protestantism. But worship doesn't have to be like that. Other traditions and cultures in the United States have preferred music that is highly energetic, joyful and upbeat. More and more, this style has been the way of growing congregations. A study by the Hartford Seminary Foundation has found that the churches that are growing most rapidly feature drums and guitars in their worship. Members describe their worship as "joyful." Members in congregations that are shrinking describe their worship as "reverent". I think worship can be both joyful and reverent, at both services.

At both services, the music will be outstanding, with more depth, musicianship, and power than any mega-church or downtown mainline congregation. Bach and Dylan, Brahms and gospel, jazz and Mozart will touch our hearts and souls. It will be an adventure to see how this music evolves to move the congregation each Sunday.

## June Sermon Messages

### Celebration Times:

#### Hillcrest Campus:

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

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

### The Summer's Transformational Theme is Ecology and the Interdependent Web

#### Sunday, June 3

Hillcrest Services — "P.C.D.— Reflections on the Dalai lama's Visit", Rev Kathleen Owens and Dana and the Band (live).  
Rev Dr Arvid Straube will be at All Church Camp.

South Bay Service — "Water the Seeds of True Self", Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice and South Bay Ministry Teams Coordinator (live)

#### Sunday, June 10:

Hillcrest Services — "A Heart Big Enough for the World: Recognizing Suffering", Rev Dr Arvid Straube. (live) Step 11 in The 12 Steps to a Compassionate Life series.

South Bay Service — "P.C.D.— Reflections on the Dalai lama's Visit", Rev Kathleen Owens (live).

Annual Membership Meeting at 1pm.

#### Sunday, June 17:

Hillcrest Services — "Keys to Spiritual Fulfillment Series: Time in Nature", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service — "A Heart Big Enough for the World: Recognizing Suffering", Rev Dr Arvid Straube. (pre-recorded)

#### Sunday, June 24:

Hillcrest Services — "Ringing the Living Tradition", Ken Herman, Guest Pulpit, and Handbell Ensemble Music Sunday (live)

Both Ministers at General Assembly

South Bay No Service.  
Please attend Hillcrest services.



The Children's Ministry program is undergoing a make-over. It's moving from a task oriented committee structure to a collection of teams that will support the Children's Ministry. There continue to be many tasks that need to be accomplished in order for a large and vital program to exist, and this new structure will allow for individuals to become involved in areas that they feel truly called to and that they enjoy.

Here are the basics of the program:

**Advisory Team:** This team will be comprised primarily, but not exclusively of parents. The plan is for the team to meet quarterly. Their role will be to assist in setting a vision and goals for the program and evaluating how well the program meets those goals.

#### Sunday Morning Teams:

**Classroom Team:** This team will be made up of two groups. Group one will be the larger one and be comprised of classroom volunteers who will be there to get to know the children and support the program teachers. The second group will be comprised of the program teachers. These teachers will lead the class sessions which will most likely be two Sundays a month and last for a semester.

**Sunday Support Team:** This team will be individuals who help set up for Sunday morning and support the program on the patio. This group will ensure that snacks are set out and the Religious Education (RE) table is set up on Sunday mornings. There will also be members of this team who are greeters at the RE table to welcome visitors and explain the program. If there is a need for patio recruitment or any sign-ups, this group will assist with that.

## Children's Ministry Reorganized

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

#### Working Teams:

**Supply Support Team:** This team will gather the needed supplies for the classrooms and also will include people who can do specific things like sewing, designing, printing, mailing, shopping, and making phone calls.

**Worship Team:** This team will develop and lead once-a-month worship for the children's program and work in collaboration with Liz Jones.

**Social Justice Team:** This team will work with Liz Jones and the Social Justice Ministry Team to develop and present a once a month Social Justice Program.

**Children's OWL Team:** This group will primarily be the trained team of leaders who present and coordinate the K-1 and 5-6 OWL programs on alternate years. Additional team members will help with organization and planning.

**Special Events Team:** The team will coordinate our Special Events such as the Tree Decorating Party, the Egg Decorating Party, the Easter Egg Hunt. Other special events may be developed by the group.

The goal will be to have a volunteer Children's Ministry Program Coordinator to replace the Committee chair. This individual will work with me to help coordinate the various teams. It is hoped that the division of this program into smaller working groups will allow more people to be involved in an active way.

Recruitment for these teams will occur over the summer, and the new plan for Children's Ministry programming will go into effect in the Fall. If any of these teams appeal to you, please contact me so we can discuss details.

Looking forward to our exciting future!

# The Welcome Center Opens Soon

BY NANCY FISK

Barring any problems, the fences will be down June 4th and the Annual meeting will be held in the new building at First Church on June 10th. The entire building will be known as the Welcome Center, to reflect the openness of this community. The naming committee has designated the main social room as Bard Hall, and the foyer outside of that as the Owen-Towle Gallery. Other rooms will be named for those donors who have made the appropriate contributions.

On Sunday, August 19, 2012, the members and friends of First Church will dedicate the Welcome Center. The festivities will begin with a service in the Meeting House at 3 PM, which will honor key leaders during the project and celebrate the expanded mission of First Church, made possible by the new building. Public officials will be on hand to congratulate First Church and Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President of Meadville/Lombard Theological School, a UU seminary in Chicago, will preach a sermon. The service will then move to the Welcome Center, where all will dedicate the new building. The service will be followed by a reception.

This building comes with many new features: Three levels of office and meeting space; an elevator that accesses all three levels; several unisex bathrooms, and patio space outside on the upper level. There is a library, a volunteer workroom and a lounge which can serve as a bride's room. The building is being tele-cabled for Internet and phone by Ray Evans. Campus-wide wifi access will be made available.



Outside the building, stairs from the UCSD Medical Center parking structure lead straight onto the campus of First Church. A holly oak is being planted that will eventually provide shade for the entire lower patio. There are concrete walkways, and

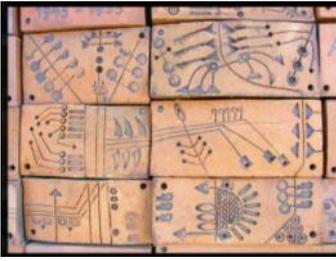


bricked-in patios. A dry river bed that

will run through the campus, is being created with cobbles salvaged from the construction.

Once the patio is open, the new uses of the space can be explored. According to associate minister, Kathleen Owens, "This is a period of experimental impermanence." For the next 6 months or so, the congregation will test out new ways of living on this remodeled campus. A new facilities use policy will be given out at the Ministry Team Council meeting and Volunteer Appreciation on May 31st. It will then be made available to the congregation. Social hour will still be held in the Common Room (Room 112), where it has been during the construction, until equipment can be purchased for the kitchen that would allow Social Hour to be held in the new building.

The building will be finished and the wish list for furnishings is long. The wish list will be available in brochure form at the Annual meeting and on the website. It includes items such as: equipment for the kitchen; a projection screen and sound system for Bard Hall; chairs and tables for the various meeting rooms and for use in Bard Hall; and patio furniture. A black-tie optional gala is scheduled for October 20th, 2012, called the "Finishing Touches Gala," which will be a fundraiser for the wish list.



# The Memorial Wall

BY Nancy Fisk

The Memorial Wall at First Church is a clay mural designed by Rhoda Lopez, one of a group of artists in San Diego known as the mid-century artists.

Rhoda designed the Memorial Wall to reflect a Bible verse from Isaiah 55:12, "And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" – the center of the clay mural is a tree of life. Plaques on the wall commemorate church members who have died.

She designed the wall for First Church and began building it in 1979. Jerry Thiebault became the guarantor on the project after Rhoda became very ill with cancer after beginning work on the wall.



Jerry graduated from Virginia Tech as an architect and worked with the Peace Corp in Iran in the late 60's and 70's. He came to San Diego in 1972. Jerry met Rhoda in late 1974 and began working at her teaching studio, Clay Dimensions, as a lab assistant. They started working together in 1978 and became partners at that time. Rhoda died in 1993 at age 79 after a long and fruitful career.

The construction of the wall was a gargantuan effort. Rhoda and Jerry were able to use the basement of a house built by Bruce Richards, where one side was completely open to the air. After creating the wall at the house, it was delivered carload by carload to the church. The original wall was to be 40 feet long. Two additions have been added to it since then.

When Jerry talks about what it takes to design a clay sculpture of any size, he has this to say: "Clay is so plastic. The original drawings are very simple,



and become enriched as the design process continues." Also, the design process is time consuming. The original Memorial Wall took approximately 2 years to build and

a week to install. It took 20 years for all the plaques to be filled up.

A second Memorial Wall is being considered in the new construction and landscaping at First Church. While Jerry is receiving names every year to be included on that wall, he says that it will be a few years before a new wall is raised. He will begin working with the architects this summer on the design. He is thinking of doing something that is more in relationship with the buildings of the campus, rather than just a straight wall. An example of this is the Memorial Wall at the San Dieguito Fellowship in Solana Beach, which sets off several more private spaces on the campus of the fellowship.

Rhoda and Jerry are also responsible for the Aspiration Stelae sculpture that is in the front of the campus. Installed in 1990, the Stelae are tall structures that have the church aspiration engraved on the face of stone blocks. During the construction, Jerry had to move the Stelae and put them in storage. At the end of May, he had put the Stelae back in place. ([Photo Album.](#))



**Jerry Thiebault re-installing The Channing Chalice.**

Two final sculptures on campus that are Jerry's are the Channing Foundation chalice, which can be seen on the Meeting House wall. Also, he designed the clay chalice that stands on the Meeting House chancel, with design elements that reflect the Memorial Wall and the Stelae.

Finally, he will be responsible for 2 donor sculptures in Bard Hall, and will be working closely with the architects to create those in the new building.



In 2006, First UU Church organized itself into "Ministry Teams," or, clusters of groups engaged in the work of the

church. Today we have eight such teams; Caring, Generosity, Larger UU Connections, Lifespan Religious Growth & Leading, Membership, Social Justice, South Bay and Worship & Program. Each ministry team is made up of the individual groups of the church, such as the Practical Care Network, Friends of de Benneville Pines, Men's Fellowship, Earth Centered Spirituality Circle, and Young Adults 25-35. There are about 65 of these groups that create programs and activities in support of our mission and Unitarian Universalist values. Anyone can get involved in these groups.

Each ministry team is "led" by at least one lay leader working with at least one staff person. In the past, the Ministry Team Council was made up of the lay leaders and staff who were the designated "leader" of each ministry team. This Council regularly gathered to share information of what various groups were doing.

While this structure of each ministry team being "led" by lay leader and staff person will remain for accountability, planning and facilitating the new meetings, the purpose, mission and gatherings of the Ministry Team Council has been completely redefined. The mission of First UU Church of San Diego is to create community, nurture spiritual growth and act on our values to help heal the world. The new mission of the Ministry Team Council is to create a community of spiritually grounded leaders who inspire acting on our values to help heal the world.

Ministry Team Council meetings will now be held on a quarterly basis and will be open to all lay leaders and interested church members. That means, ANY-ONE who is engaged in the many groups of the church is eligible to attend. The quarterly Ministry Team Council meetings will focus on interesting, important and supportive in-service trainings. Through these gatherings, we will better be able to identify potential leaders while encouraging and developing current lay leaders.

## MINISTRY TEAM COUNCIL

BY SUZETTE SOUTHFOX, DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry Team Council shall accomplish its mission through :

- ✧ Conducting relevant meetings as needed; budget, calendar, communications, strategic plans & training
- ✧ Identifying, encouraging and developing lay leaders
- ✧ Providing lay leaders and church groups with opportunities for on-going dialogues regarding spiritual development, reflection and awareness, taking time to periodically define these words.
- ✧ Assuring that each ministry team is aligned to the church mission and outcomes
- ✧ Practicing a culture of appreciation

Ministry Team Council meetings shall:

- ✧ Be convened on a quarterly basis, open to all church groups and lay leaders and facilitated by Ministry Team Leadership (the lay leader and staff team accountable to each Ministry Team.)
- ✧ Have regular, concise and appropriate agendas
- ✧ Produce minutes in a timely manner and sent out to all lay leaders
- ✧ Regularly recognize and appreciate volunteers
- ✧ Produce action items to carry forth our work into the world, and to hold us accountable
- ✧ Present ongoing leadership training
- ✧ Support ongoing spiritual development, reflection and awareness
- ✧ Facilitate regular checking in on goals from the strategic plan

The schedule of future Ministry Team Council meetings will be:

2012

- ✧ Thursday, August 16, from 6 to 9 pm
- ✧ Thursday, November 15, from 6 to 9 pm

2013

- ✧ Thursday, February 21, from 6 to 9 pm
- ✧ Thursday, May 16, from 6 to 9 pm

The Ministry Team Magazine is available from our website at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/ministry-teams-overview>.



## Introducing Emily Webb, Ministerial Intern 2012-13

BY THE INTERN COMMITTEE

The ministerial intern at First Church this 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.

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.

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

*Editor's note: This article first ran in Jan 2012. It is included here to reintroduce the new intern who will be arriving in Aug 2012.*

## First Words on Hiatus in July and August BY NANCY FISK

As much fun as it is to write First Words, I've decided to take off July and August this year. The next issue will be the September First Words. I am hearing from more and more of you that you are pleased with this online magazine. This notice is also to let you know that I am always looking for material.

If you are interested in being included in First Words, please submit articles that are about:

- ✧ Subject matter that has to do with Unitarian-Universalism, or the guiding principles of the mission statement of First Church;
- ✧ An activity that is coming up at First Church, a concert, a workshop, etc.;
- ✧ An activity you participated in that expresses UU values;
- ✧ Your personal credo; what is your history and what guides your spirituality;

Photos for any of the above, especially a photo of you so that people can attach your face to your byline.

Finally, all articles should be around 500-600 words long. For time-sensitive material, it needs to be submitted a month before the event takes place. There is no age limit as to who can contribute. I am looking for material from youth as well as adults. If your article runs long, I will be happy to edit it to a length I can use.

My email is [nfisk1@juno.com](mailto:nfisk1@juno.com) for any submissions.

Have a great rest of the summer and I hope to hear from you soon!

**Staff**

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister  
 Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister  
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister  
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations  
 Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry  
 Käthe Larick, Youth Program Coordinator  
 Chris Christenson, Communications / DB / AE Coordinator  
 Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice Ministry Team Coordinator and  
 South Bay Ministry Leader  
 Kenneth F. Herman, Director of Music  
 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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