



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

We will be honoring Avid's retirement from parish ministry on Friday, June 20. There will be a buffet dinner (please RSVP with [Abby](#)), entertainment in the meeting house and a cake and champagne reception after the entertainment.

When we called Avid to us ten years ago, I was chair of Council and I have remained active in church work during his time with us. We had lunch together recently and I reminded him of work we did early in his ministry with us to review, develop, and document new policies and guidelines. I told him it was one of the many "behind the scenes" things he has done that has strengthened us and enabled us to accomplish so much.

Avid said he always felt the Board had his back in getting things done and spoke highly of the board presidents in his early years, who recognized the need to review and create new procedures. He is very proud of what we have done in South Bay, the people that campus has attracted and the recognition it has received as a way to grow our faith.

Avid has done so much work that isn't easily visible but was very important in getting us to where we are today. I remember when board meetings lasted until midnight. With policy governance, we are often done by 8PM. We have a strong church with long term strategic planning, a beautiful new building that is environmentally sound, solar generated electricity, a growing bi-lingual church in the South Bay and a great minister to carry on after Avid leaves.

I also talked to Avid about how he became a minister. Avid's parents immigrated to Nebraska before he was born. He grew up in the Church of God, strict fundamentalists with a German speaking congregation. When he was five years old, his father's parents came to visit. Grandpa died during the visit and Grandma stayed on with the family. Avid was very close to his grandmother and she encouraged him to become a minister. She died when Avid was 10 years old.

When Avid started college, his theological beliefs started changing. When he realized he was a Unitarian, it felt natural to become a Unitarian minister. His parents were not upset over his change of religion.



REMEMBERING ARVID

BY ROSE VAN OSS

The intersection between spiritual development and working for social change has been an abiding passion throughout his ministry. During the 1980s, Avid made three trips to Central America with the inter-faith group, Witness For Peace, a group that witnessed and reported on the human cost of the U. S. sponsored wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador. He was active in a number of social justice causes, including working with an inter-faith coalition opposing a state constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage.

Avid served as associate minister at the East Shore Unitarian Church in Bellevue, Washington for three years, before beginning a 21- year ministry at the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Durham, North Carolina. During that ministry, the congregation grew from 170 to over 700 members, built three new buildings, and helped found two new congregations.

He has had a Buddhist meditation practice for 30 years and describes himself as a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth as well. Avid was also the 2013 recipient of the Doctor of Divinity honorary degree from Meadville Lombard School of Divinity.

Avid has been lead minister at First Church since 2004. He is proud of all the work we did for same sex marriage and seeing "so many people working for our values" and the team he and Kathleen built and the synergy that developed. "The church is now poised to meet its potential" he said.

We are creating a memory book to present to him. Drop by the office and write a note in it or tape a photo. We hope everyone will have the opportunity to speak with Avid before he leaves and let him know how his ministry has affected them.

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Arvid's Arcana

BY REV DR ARVID STRAUBE, LEAD MINISTER

As I reflect on what to write in this, my last, First Words column, I find that in my mind is a litany of gratitude for the 10 years I have spent at this church and with its people. Space does not allow me to express all that is in my heart.

I am grateful for the legacy of more than 130 years of liberal religious witness in San Diego and for the strong and healthy ministries before mine. I am especially grateful to have benefited from the outstanding 24 years of my immediate predecessors, Tom and Carolyn Owen-Towle. They helped created a loving, outward looking church with many innovative programs and an eye for artistic beauty.

I am grateful for a congregation so dedicated to acting on Unitarian Universalist values that we have been willing to take some risks. By adopting policy based governance, the congregation has been able to move quickly and nimbly in a time of great change. It has allowed a continuity of ministry and vision that will continue in this time of transition. We have begun a very successful new bi-lingual ministry in the South Bay. We have completed the wonderful Welcome Center at Hillcrest that has allowed us to expand our outreach, programming, and sense of community. And we have begun vital new ministries for youth and young adults.

I am grateful for a vibrant, ever more creative worshipping community. This includes a music program that is always creative and trying new things under Ken Herman and his wonderful staff.

And most importantly, I cannot express the gratitude I feel that so many of you have trusted me to enter your lives at profound moments; moments of life and death, moments of joy and love and moments of tragedy and grief. You have let me listen and companion you as you have struggled with major life decisions, faced your fears, and taken brave new steps in the direction of your dreams. We have hugged each other, strengthened each other, listened to each other, laughed with each other and even, at times, forgiven each other. As is right and fitting in a spiritual community, our lives have flowed into one another. You will always be a part of me.

June Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus: Sunday, 9:30a and 11:30a (ASL Interpretation)

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

The Summer Transformational Theme is
Rest, Renewal, and Sabbath.

Sunday, June 1:

Hillcrest Services—

"The Price of Renewal,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister Elect.

South Bay Service—

"Humanism and the God Question,"

Rev Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister.

Sunday, June 8:

Hillcrest Services—

"Choosing Joy,"

Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"The Price of Renewal,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister Elect.

Sunday, June 15:

Hillcrest Services—

"Break the Shell," End of Internship

Farewell Sermon, Elizabeth Bukey, Intern.

South Bay Service—

"Choosing Joy,"

Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister.

Sunday, June 22:

Hillcrest Services—

"The Secret of Life," Farewell Sermon,

Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

@ Hillcrest for joint service.

Sunday, June 29:

Hillcrest Services—

"Humanist Heroes Who Didn't Know They Were Either,"

Rev Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Calm in the Storm,"

Elizabeth Bukey, Summer Associate Minister.



Faith and Trust

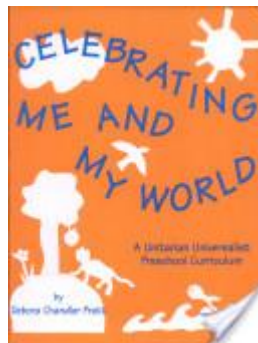
BY LIZ JONES, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY

When our boys were learning to drive, oh those many years ago, my husband said that he finally understood faith from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. Getting in a car with your child behind the wheel is faith. It's a trust that is strong enough that you are willing to risk your life on it. As I write this last of my First Words articles as your Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry, I feel in the same place. I have spent nearly 21 years of my life growing and nurturing this program, and now I am letting go. It isn't always easy. I can do this because I have faith in this congregation. I trust that you will all do what is needed to keep this congregation and the religious education program strong, healthy and vibrant. There will be changes, and I will not fret, or worry, or second guess because I trust you all.

You'll hire a new Director of Children's and Family Ministry. I trust the search committee to locate someone who will be a good fit here. I know there are many wonderful religious educators out there who can serve you well. This is a time for excitement.

I also trust that you will be there for the new religious educator as you have been for me. I hope that you will step forward in the next month or two and sign up to lead the summer classes and join a teaching team for the fall so that she or he will be able to step into the role without the anxiety of trying to recruit from among people they do not yet know. I know you will show them how much this community values our children and the program.

Last month I told you about our Dr. Seuss Summer programs. There are still places left in the teaching schedule. Please check out the table on Sunday to see how you can help.



In the fall, we will be offering four classes during 1st service (9:30 am) and two during 2nd service (11:30 am). At 9:30 and 11:30, for our 2s&3s, we will offer Celebrating Me and My World, a program that is especially appropriate for that age group. We will also offer our 4-6 year olds a program called Wonderful Welcome, that looks at the gifts

central to Unitarian Universalism. It's filled with stories and activities that are appropriate for those ages.

At 9:30 am, we will offer our 2-4 grade students a curriculum called Moral Tales. Drawing on stories from the world's wisdom traditions, this class will look at our personal moral compass. Our 5th and 6th grade students at 9:30 am will be using the curriculum Amazing Grace that helps our young people to explore issues of right and wrong from a UU perspective. We will offer Moral Tales as well to our 2-6th Grade students at 11:30. As the world's wisdom tales speak to all ages, this curriculum will be adapted to suit the needs of this broader age group.

I know I leave this congregation in good hands – your hands. Please show your new religious educator the wonderful church that this is!

Blessings,
Liz

A NEW HAT

BY ELIZABETH BUKEY, SUMMER ASSISTANT MINISTER

Well, that went quickly.

It really does seem like I just arrived in San Diego, but it's been ten months, and June 15 will be my last day as your Intern Minister. But I'm not leaving quite yet. Because of the many staff transitions over the summer, Kathleen and I have agreed that I'll stay on for another six weeks, providing continuity and ministerial support during the time between Arvid's retirement and Jennifer's arrival.

What does that mean? I'll be doing a lot of the things I do now: I'll be preaching in both South Bay and Hillcrest, providing pastoral care, coordinating the children's program at South Bay, and meeting with lay leaders. But with the official internship over, my focus will broaden from specific learning-serving goals to generally serving the needs of the congregation. From June 23-July 31st, I'll be Kathleen's summer co-pilot as the church sails into its next chapter.

And after that?

In the fall, I'll begin a temporary job with Church of the Larger Fellowship. This part-time position as a minister-in-training will focus on worship. I'm really excited to imagine UU worship online for a "congregation without walls" spread all over the world. Since this work is online, I'm still deciding where I will be physically living and working.

In September, I have an appointment with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee: they will review my portfolio and qualifications, listen to me preach, and interview me about my call to ministry and understanding of Unitarian Universalism. If that goes well, I'll enter into the search process to look for a position in a congregation.

I have learned and grown so much in my time at First Church. As I write this, I've just gotten back from a trip to Sacramento with two lay leaders, where we lobbied for immigrant justice with activists from around the state. In some ways this trip brought me back to the beginning of my journey to ministry. In 2005, I travelled to Washington DC for the first time to attend an advocacy training put on by the UUA. I joined other UU youth and young adults in learning about the public policy governing sex ed in public

schools. We were outraged at the misinformation being funded at the time, and learned to lobby elected officials to fund comprehensive sex ed programs. I was terrified, but also inspired by how straightforward our meetings were, and how powerful a religious voice could be. In the time after that, working for the UUA's Washington Office, I helped clergy make their first lobby visits and UUs to find the spiritual underpinnings of their work on social justice.

Nine years later, it was an honor and privilege to help represent First Church in Sacramento, and to "show up" as clergy and offer a ministerial presence for our church's delegation.

That's part of what ministerial internships are for: helping those of us becoming ministers to see our skills, gifts, and experiences through the lens of ministry, to pull together our experiences and personality into a pastoral identity. Thank you for being a crucial part of that process for me.

I love you and can't wait to hear about the ways First Church continues to transform lives and the San Diego region.



WHY SHOULD FIRST UU CHURCH SUPPORT ITS CHILDREN'S/YOUTH CHOIRS?

BY PAULA JOHNSON

On June 14, at 7PM, Voices in Unity, the First Church youth choir, and the Children's Choir, under the direction of Lynn Mendoza-Kahn, will present a concert at First Church. All proceeds will benefit the Children's/Youth choir programs.

Rev. John Wolf, founder of the thriving Children's/Youth Choir Program at All Souls UU Church in Tulsa, identified one of the best reasons why UU churches should start and support children's/youth choir Programs:

"The Children's/Youth choir program is the single most important program for the education of children and youth concerning what a UU is and how a UU lives. . . This is the foundation of the educational philosophy of a children's/youth choirs program. Through aesthetic experiences like singing in a choir, the feeling quality of the tradition of UU spiritual expression is passed on to the next generation.

But passing on that UU religion is not the only reason to support children's/youth choir programs:

- Children's/youth choirs give UU children an opportunity to serve their church. Religious education and other activities minister to children, but joining a choir gives children a chance to minister to others through music.
- Participation in a children's/youth choir gives children and youth an opportunity to take a leadership role in the service. It gives them a sense of responsibility for the ministry of the church and helps them identify with worship as they grow to adulthood.
- Children's/youth choirs provide opportunities to build UU character. A choir is a team with a common goal; the qualities of tolerance, self-control, cooperation, and commitment can flower in a fun, nurturing way.
- Children's/youth choirs are part of the UU religious education process. When children sing about UU values, they remember them for a lifetime. Reflecting on the message of the song as they sing instills understanding of spiritual truths.
- Making and keeping UU friendships in a children's/youth choir can be a life saver for shy, introverted UU kids as well as the more outgoing UU kids. They always have someone to sit with in church.

Finally, many adults find that their children's/youth choir experience instilled a homing instinct that brought them back to church when they were ready. Many UU youth drift away from the church during college, but if they've been in a children's/youth choir, when they do come back to church, they can find their place in the choir.

VOICES
IN
UNITY
AND THE FIRST UU
CHILDREN'S CHOIR
BENEFIT CONCERT

All Proceeds
Go To Support
Children's Youth
Choir Programs

KIDS 10 AND
UNDER FREE

UNDER THE
DIRECTION
OF LYNN
MENDOZA-
KHAN

ADVANCE
TICKETS
\$10

TICKETS AT
THE DOOR
\$15

SATURDAY - JUNE 14 - 2014 - 4190 FRONT STREET - 7PM
FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MUSICIANS NETWORK CONFERENCE AT FIRST CHURCH

BY KEN HERMAN, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST



Every summer Unitarian Universalist musicians of all stripes—music directors and conductors, choir singers, composers, organists and pianists, worship planners—gather for a four-day conference to sharpen their skills and share resources. First UU Church of San Diego is again hosting the annual conference of the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network ([UUMN](#)) July 16 to 20. We also hosted this conference in 1988 and 2000, and we are the only congregation in the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to have hosted three UUMN conferences.



Ruben Valenzuela © Bjorn Bjerede

We expect some 200 individuals from congregations across North America to attend. Our primary choral clinician will be Ruben Valenzuela, a well-respected San Diego church musician who is also the founder and director of the Bach Collegium San Diego, an outstanding period music performance ensemble of chorus, vocal soloists and instrumentalists that regularly performs up and down the California coast. They have also performed in Mexico City and at a recent early music festival in Bolivia. Ruben will teach the conference attendees choral music he has discovered in the archives and choral library of the Cathedral in Mexico City, music by both European and indigenous composers, and the First Church congregation will hear this music in our Sunday Hillcrest services on July 20.



Dana Decker

To balance the “where do we come from” early music performance emphasis, Dana Decker and Lynn Mendoza-Khan will be our clinicians for trends and skills in contemporary music and worship, the “where are we going” aspect of UU worship practice. They

will work with instrumentalists and vocal soloists over the course of the conference to prepare them to participate in the Sunday worship services, providing a template for blended worship that weaves together the old and the new in a compatible format.



Lynn Mendoza-Khan



Dr. Marcia McFee

Our guest plenary speaker Dr. Marcia McFee will share her wide experience as a contemporary worship consultant. Author, worship designer and leader, preacher, professor,

preacher and artist, Marcia combines her background in professional companies of music, theater and dance with a variety of worship and preaching styles in order to provide a fresh experience at each worship setting. Several years ago Marcia led a worship conference at First Church sponsored by the UUA, and we eagerly await her return.



SOLAR ENERGY SAVING TONS AT FIRST CHURCH

BY DAVE KARPINSKI AND CAROLYN WOODBURY, CO-CHAIRS OF THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TEAM

In March our solar panels offset nearly 6 tons of carbon pollution in the atmosphere, the equivalent of 151 trees gobbling up carbon dioxide. In April, our first full month with solar energy, we offset 8.5 tons of carbon pollution equivalent to planting 217 trees. We are saving more money on our electric bill than expected, easily paying off the solar loans with cash to spare. Our use of renewable energy is a major step toward becoming a Green Sanctuary, <http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/>. Stellar Solar, the installer of our solar system at 1st Church, will be presenting a lunch and informational program about our system and home systems in the near future. If you are planning to install a solar system on your home right away, a Stellar Solar representative can help you determine what size system would best suit your needs, without obligation. All church members and their friends contracting with Stellar Solar will be given a discount on their home system: <http://www.stellarsolar.net/unitarian/>.



FIRST WORDS ON SUMMER HIATUS

BY NANCY FISK, EDITOR

What a difference a year makes! So many changes, from saying goodbye to a beloved minister and other staff members, to saying hello to new possibilities. It's time to catch our breath and rest up for the new church year ahead of us. First Words is on hiatus for July and August.

On July 1st, Rev. Kathleen Owens begins her new role as lead minister of First Church. Elizabeth Bukey, our intern minister, continues on with us through the summer as the 2nd minister. On August 1st, the new assistant minister, Rev. Jennifer Channin starts working with us. Adam Dyer, the intern minister will be here on August 15th. Then in the fall, we welcome a new director of Children and Family Ministry and a new Music Director.

In September, we will say a proper goodbye to Liz Jones, our Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry.

In October, we will wish Ken Herman, our Director of Music/Organist, a good retirement. After that, we'll continue on with the work of First Church, finding our way as we go.

As always, thank you for reading First Words. And don't forget to include First Words when planning an event or highlighting social justice activities that others might find interesting. Have a good break and see you in September!

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Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, *Lead Minister*
 Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister Elect*
 Rev. Jim Grant, *Affiliate Minister*
 Elizabeth Bukey, *Summer Assistant 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
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 Suzette Southfox, *Director of Membership and Development*
 Alice King, *Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator*
 Kenneth F. Herman, *Director of Music and Organist*
 Dana Decker, *Associate Director of Music*
 Daniel Ratelle, *Adult Choir Director*
 Lynn Mendoza-Khan, *Youth and Children's Choir Director*
 Andrea Newall, *JUUL Tones Ensemble Director*
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