



# FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

## The Gifts of Community

BY Rev Arvid Straube; Lead minister Robie Evans, Director of Operations; and Suzette Southfox, Director of Membership and Development

Whether you have been involved at First UU Church for six weeks, for one to five years or for more than twenty years, chances are your life has been transformed by this community in countless ways. Perhaps the simple act of attending services each Sunday gives your life an anchor of sanity and spirit. Maybe a small group such as meditation, the bell choir, or an adult religious education class has helped to expand your circle of friends. Perhaps you've been part of a Looking Glass Theatre production, Winter Solstice or one of the many monthly social justice projects and through these activities, your heart has been healed. Or maybe you have been a leader in the children's program or attended the recent Cabaret of Love youth benefit concert and you have been refreshed with hope for our future.

These are some of the varied gifts of community this Unitarian Universalist congregation provides members and friends. What sustains all of these activities are things like staff support, print and electronic publications, facilities, website information, music, materials, childcare...even water and electricity. These things are the nuts and bolts of transformation. Without them, First Church cannot change lives through meaningful worship or enriching programs. And these things cost money. From staff salaries to SDG&E bills, from sheet music to printing paper and copy machines, these costs constitute the First Church's operating budget, which is what the congregation pledges for each year.

On Sunday, March 18th, First Church will be having its Celebration Sunday worship services at both the Hillcrest and South Bay Campuses. On that day, all members and friends will be invited to pledge their financial support for the coming year. Those attending the service will have an opportunity to submit their pledge forms during worship, and of course pledging before and after the service is easy to do as well. This year, members and friends of the con-



gregation will rise to the challenge of considering a pledge of 5% of their income – or considering a meaningful plan to achieve a 5% giv-

ing level in 1 to 3 years. It is also important to note that all pledges received will be considered "a continuing pledge," to be carried out until you tell us otherwise.

2012 marks the last time First Church will be holding an all church annual pledge drive! In the future, members and pledging friends will be contacted once a year on a staggered schedule to check in with them about their pledge amount. You can affirm the gifts of your community by making your pledge on or before March 18. Your pledge made in a timely manner lets the staff and the board of First Church know how much personal transformation, community building and justice making we can afford for the new fiscal year, which begins July 1! We'd hate to have to cut programs because we don't have your pledge in time. "Celebration Sunday" on March 18th, promises to be an exciting day of special music, food and fellowship, where the true gifts of community can be enjoyed and appreciated. We look forward to seeing you then.

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## Arvid's Arcana

BY Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube

As I write this, the New York Times reports that an audit of 400 recent foreclosures in San Francisco showed that almost all involved either legal violations or suspicious documentation. These irregularities are almost certainly widespread across the entire country. This is long after these same financial institutions imperiled the entire world economy by reckless risk-taking and outright fraud. This is long after we the taxpayers bailed these banks out to keep the entire economy from collapsing. This is long after government agencies, from the Federal Reserve to the SEC ignored their responsibility to prevent these abuses from happening. Almost immediately after the bailout, the executives responsible for these crimes paid themselves huge bonuses with your money and mine. Meanwhile almost everyone else paid a huge price-- people have lost their homes, their retirement savings and their livelihoods by the hundreds of millions. And still, no one is in jail. Few have been prosecuted. Corporations have been offered settlements by government regulators so ridiculously lenient that the outraged judges in charge of the cases have refused to approve them. And as this recent audit reports, these large banks have continued to ignore the law.

All great moral and political movements in our history have begun by moral outrage. And always, a few people have led by refusing to feel helpless and afraid and have spoken the truth with courage and conviction. Others follow and a movement is born. Even those in power must listen. The beginning of these movements--civil rights, LGBT rights, farm-worker rights, women's rights and more --is almost always messy and experimental. Strategies are argued. Tactics are tried, to fail or succeed. But the momentum builds and things change.

This is the story of the Occupy movement as well. While the camps have all been dismantled and some local groups like Occupy San Diego have moved to disarray, the movement is far from over. It has only begun. Already, thanks to Occupy, the political conversation has shifted from what programs for the poor and middleclass can be cut by how much, to how can our economic inequality as a nation be addressed.

## March Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus:

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

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

### March's Transformational Theme is Brokenness

Sunday, March 4:

Hillcrest Services — "The Necessity of Religion", Guest Pulpit, Rev Dr Galen Guengerich  
- As Americans increasingly reject traditional views of divine revelation and religious dogma, the ranks of the religiously unaffiliated – the undecided of the religious world – continue to grow. These "Nones" drift and dabble in everything, searching for spiritual practices that make them better, happier people. Is there a way to make the consolations of faith and religious community accessible to people who fully inhabit the modern world?  
- The Church of the New Millennium Workshop—2p, Meeting House

South Bay Service — "Keys To Spiritual Fulfillment Series: Friendship", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (pre-recorded) (third in this series)

Sunday, March 11:

Hillcrest Services — "Monsters We Love", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service — "The Necessity of Religion", Guest Pulpit, Rev Dr Galen Guengerich (pre-recorded)

Sunday, March 18—Celebration Sunday

Hillcrest Services — "You Can't Be Spiritual By Yourself: The Gifts of Spiritual Community " Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

South Bay Service — "Community Worth Celebrating", Rev Kathleen Owens (live)

Saturday, March 25:

Hillcrest Services — "Living Whole Amidst the Broken", Rev Kathleen Owens

South Bay Service — "Monsters We Love", Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live)

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## Are Things Broken or Is This an Opportunity

BY Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

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This past week we had another major power failure. I've become accustomed to checking my computer on a regular basis and turning on the TV or radio while I work around the house. Suddenly all of that was taken away. Everything felt broken. I had to stop and think about what I was going to do.

I had to remember that sometimes setbacks are just opportunities for something new and different. I might not be able to do what I had planned or what I usually did, but I could do something else. I could read. This thought reminded me of the power of reading together as a family.

When our boys were small, Scott and I would read books aloud in the evenings. That reading together gave us all a common experience and something we could talk about when we were not reading. Reading stories let us speculate on what would happen next, or opened doors to discussing issues and ethics. Such discussions could help us formulate ideas and help prepare us to make decisions in our own lives. Reading about shared interest areas or vacation destinations helped prepare us for what we would be doing or seeing so the experience was more meaningful.

If your family is open to beginning such a reading time, you can find books that will be interesting to everyone. Borrow them from the library, or start your own collection. Sometimes finding the time

and place for everyone to sit down together and read might be difficult. Or, if you did not begin reading together when your children were small, starting with adolescents might seem very forced. One way to share reading as a family might be to have a family bookshelf. Use it just like your own personal "One Book One San Diego." Encourage everyone to read books from the shelf. You can discuss what you have read over meals or while riding in the car.

Before we had children, Scott and I would read aloud to each other on long car trips. We would read about the history and culture of where we were traveling, or share some novel we'd both been hoping to read. Later when we went on long family vacations we took along recorded books. You can borrow CDs and MP3s from the library, or download them from the Internet. It's a new technology, but still the shared reading experience. So, if your power goes out, or the TV and computer are down, think about how you can experience that time not with a sense of things being broken, but as an opportunity to create some new shared family experiences with reading!

Blessings,

*Liz Jones*



## Justice GA in Phoenix Arizona, June 2012

By Nancy Fisk

In 2010, when Arizona passed a law that curtailed the rights of immigrants, SB 1070, many Unitarian Universalists went to Phoenix several times that year to protest the passage of that law. At GA in 2010, many delegates wanted to boycott the General Assembly (GA) already planned for Phoenix in 2012.

Rather than a boycott, UUs in Arizona wanted the UU community at large to assist them in protesting and changing the immigration laws of the state. The UUA decided to take a stand for justice, and make the General Assembly in Phoenix a conference to support the Arizona UUs and other people who need their help on this civil rights and "immigration as a moral issue."

Mar Cardenas, a member of First Church, was one of those who helped to win the vote NOT to boycott at the 2010 GA. In addition, a new four-year Congregational Study Action Item (CSAI) titled "Immigration as a Moral Issue" was adopted. This issue is to be studied by the denomination and the results are expected to become a UUA Statement of Conscience by 2014.

At the Phoenix GA in 2012, instead of business as usual, the UUA will hold workshops on education and public witness around the issues of immigration. There will be service projects and public witness in the community. Finally, there will be reflection groups on this unique process.

There will also be some schedule changes at GA, due to the heat in Arizona at the end of June. Much of the education workshops will be held in the morning and early afternoon. Large GA events, such as Service of the Living Tradition and the Ware lecture, will be held at 5pm, instead of the traditional 8PM. Much of the public witness, service projects and other actions will be held in the early evening.

The Pacific Southwest District will have a large presence there. Joan Cudhea and others from the Larger UU Connections and Social Justice Ministry Teams are helping to organize this effort from First Church. First Church is allowed 14 dele-

gates with voting privileges at GA. The applications to become a delegate are available in the church office and on the church website. [jcudhea@earthlink.net](mailto:jcudhea@earthlink.net). Questions about transportation to GA from First Church may also be directed to this Ministry Team. Youth wanting to apply for scholarships to GA should speak with Kathe Larick, Youth Director at First Church.

General Assembly will be held in Phoenix, Arizona on June 20-24, 2012. Registration opens March 1st. Links to registration and available housing are on the UUA website, [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga). Other information, such as travel details and the 2012 Assembly schedule are also available at the website.

As Rev. Kathleen Owens said, "We're going there to help the community with their needs instead of doing civil disobedience." While much work will be done during General Assembly, supports will be left in place to continue that work once General Assembly is over. Consider becoming a part of this denomination wide effort for justice.





## Looking Glass Theatre: Our "Mattress" is Stuffed with Young, Talented Actors

Director, J Marcus Newman and his bright, energetic cast have already begun rehearsing

"Once Upon A Mattress," Looking Glass Theatre's funny, enchanting Spring show. The photo below shows Ed Cao, the "Mattress" choreographer teaching the cast how to do the Spanish Panic, a rousing dance number from the show. Ed is the second dancer from the right.

Looking Glass Theatre's "Once Upon A Mattress" cast includes 14 actors making their debut on the Looking Glass Theatre stage. They will be performing beside Looking Glass Theatre veterans: Alex Mack, Andrew Ferrier, Athena Halsma-Fernandez, Kerry Williams, Les Grant-Smith, Naomi Dubisch, and Phoebe Dubisch.

### Once Upon A Mattress Cast List

Actor	Role
Alex Mack	Sir Harold
Andrew Ferrier	Second Knight
*Anthony Lehr	Prince Dauntless
Athena Halsema-Fernandez	Nightingale of Samarkand
*Brandon Levie	Sir Harry
*Chloe Dubisch	Lady in Waiting
*Ed Cao	Jester
*Gwen Martin	Lady Beatrice
*Jennifer Hovey	Queen Aggravain
Kerry Williams	First Knight
*Katrena Keys	Lady Mabelle
*Laura Todd	Lady Merrill
Les Grant-Smith	King Sextimus
*Paul Ford	Minstrel
Naomi Dubisch	Lady in Waiting
Phoebe Dubisch	Lady in Waiting
*Sabrina Boudreaux	Lady Lucille
*Sara Jane Salonga	Lady Larken
*Shelli Franchoise	Princess Winifred
*John Bertsch	Wizard
*Zoey Hamel-Hyland	Lady in Waiting
*Looking Glass Theatre Debut	

Our "Mattress" guarantee won't promise you a night of restful sleep but it will promise one night of rollicking fun and laughter. Mark your calendars now to be sure you'll have the time of your life supporting this talented group of young actors. Looking Glass Theatre will present "Once Upon A Mattress" on April 13, 14, 20 and 21, 2012 at 8 pm in the Meeting House of First UU Church of San Diego. Discounted tickets will be available on the church patio beginning Sunday, March 4 or online at [www.LookingGlassSD.org](http://www.LookingGlassSD.org).



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# Nominating Committee

BY KATHLEEN GARCIA HORLOR

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Every year, the Nominating Committee has the pleasure of discovering members who show strong leadership skills from other members, staff and Ministers. We are charged with preparing a list of nominees for the Board. The Board Members represent the congregation in governing the church. The Board is primarily focused on visioning and how to achieve that vision through its actions and policies. Working within a policy governance structure, the Board has general oversight of all of the affairs of the church.

The Nominating Committee's list of candidates will be announced on Friday, April 20, 2012. Election of Board Members, Officers and other church positions will be at the Annual Meeting in June. Officers to be elected include a Vice President, Treasurer, and three additional Board Members. The Vice President serves for three years (VP, President, and Past President). The Treasurer serves for one year, and the additional Members serve for three years. Occasionally a resignation may require a replacement Member to complete another's term. All members in good standing of at least one year's duration are eligible to be nominated. There is a petition process for others who might wish to serve on the Board in one of the above positions. Petitions will be available on April 15, 2012 in the church office. They are due back in the church office by May 4, 2012, at 4:30 P.M.



Thank you, Kathleen

If you have questions you may contact a Nominating Committee member:

[Tom Dowdy-Winslett](#) at 1-858-522-9413;

[Kathleen Garcia-Horlor](#) at 619-251-3331;

Angela Garcia-Sims 619-709-2062;

Janet Dray at 1-858-335-4453.

We welcome your interest and participation.

# Your Legacy at First UU

BY Doug Diamond

Every time you come to a worship service, attend a committee meeting, make a pledge payment, or participate in the many activities on and off campus, you make an important contribution to the life of our Church community. When you pass away, though, your contributions could end. But they need not, not if you plan ahead to leave a legacy to the Church.

To facilitate this, the Planned Giving Committee has recently revised and expanded its material on the Church website. The fact is that there are several different ways to proceed, all of which are at least a little confusing to most people. The website now lays these out in enough detail to get you well-oriented, but, of course, it is no substitute for sitting down with an estate attorney or financial planner.



Just go to <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/planned-giving> and browse through the list of topics. Or go to the Church website, put your cursor on the "Giving" tab and then click on "Planned Giving" below.

Topics include:

- ✧ the advantages of gifting out of an IRA or other retirement account,
- ✧ the opportunities to make a gift now and receive income for the rest of your life,
- ✧ the wording to include when gifting through a will or trust, and
- ✧ the details on how the different endowments work and whether you might even consider funding a new endowment focused on a specific facet of the Church's mission.

Your planned gift to the Church endowments can continue your contributions long beyond your lifetime. Income from our endowments is used to expand programs, maintain our physical infrastructure, and buffer our budget from sudden shifts in the economy.

When you give to one of First Church's endowment funds, your gift is added to gifts from those who have already given generously (over \$800,000) through the years. These funds are pooled with funds from over 200 congregations and other UU-related entities, and are managed by professional advisers chosen by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

If you do NOT specify an Endowment in your estate planning documents (will, trust, IRA, etc.), your bequest will go directly to the church. Normally, unless you specify otherwise, a direct bequest to the Church causes half is to be taken into the operating budget and half into the General Endowment. This provision, though, is currently suspended, so that all such gifts go to the Capital campaign for renewing Bard Hall (thereby reducing the long-term debt payments of the Church).

Please also check out <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/the-channing-society> on how to become a member of the Channing Society and have your name added to the over 120 names on the lovely ceramic chalice on the wall in the far left corner of the Meeting House.

Many thanks for thinking about such a last and lasting contribution to your Church community.

Planned Giving Committee (2011-2012): Doug Diamond (Chair), Susan Harding, Mike Hctor, Armin Kuhlman, Iris Masotti, Stephanie Webber

**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*  
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**ONLINE E-mail & Web Addresses**  
 FirstWords Submissions: [nfisk1@juno.com](mailto:nfisk1@juno.com)  
 To be added to the E-mail List: [firstwords@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:firstwords@firstuusandiego.org)  
 Facilities (request for maintenance): [facilities@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:facilities@firstuusandiego.org)  
 General First Church E-mail: [mail@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:mail@firstuusandiego.org)  
 Scheduling of Church Property Requests: [schedule@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:schedule@firstuusandiego.org)  
 Order of Service submissions: [os@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:os@firstuusandiego.org)  
 The Window submissions (Church bulletin): [window@firstuusandiego.org](mailto>window@firstuusandiego.org)  
 Webmaster: [website@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:website@firstuusandiego.org)  
 Care Network: [carenetwork@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:carenetwork@firstuusandiego.org)  
 First Church Web Sites:  
 Main Website: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org>  
 South Bay Campus: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FirstWords,  
 4190 Front Street, San Diego, CA, 92103.



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

**Phone:** 619-298-9978  
**Fax:** 619-298-9997  
**E-mail:** [mail@FirstUUSanDiego.org](mailto:mail@FirstUUSanDiego.org)  
**Unitarian Cooperative Preschool Phone:** 619-295-9860

Our web site:



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