



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Going Solar and Refinancing the Bridge Loan: A Win, Win for First Church!

By Doug Diamond for the Generosity Ministry Team

The time is ripe to move First Church into solar power. SDG&E rates just went up about 9%. The Sustainable Energy Team at First Church has carefully analyzed the savings and risks of investing in solar. The State of California is still offering financial incentives that make the numbers work for our budget. Solar experts have found that panels on the Meeting House, mostly out-of-sight, would be sufficient to meet our electricity needs. And the scientific evidence is becoming ever more ominous about global climate change. Going solar is one way we can live out our Unitarian Universalist values.

But \$250,000 is needed to make the conversion to solar. Coincidentally, our bridge loan, taken out in order to complete our Welcome Center, is coming due in June 2015 at \$300,000. We can refinance it now for much less than the 6% we are paying.

So First Church could make good use of about \$550,000 in total. To raise \$550,000, First Church is providing members and friends with an opportunity to invest in promissory notes of \$5,000 and above with 2-year, 5-year and 12-year options.

By investing in the Church, the Earth wins, the Church budget wins, and many of our members can earn a better return on their savings!

How You Can Help

- **Make a 2-Year loan to the church at 2.0% towards prepaying the bridge loan:**

The shortest term notes would mature in 2 years, with semi-annual payments of principal and interest. The interest rate will be 2.0% per year. About \$100,000 of these notes will be offered. In order to reduce recordkeeping, the minimum denomination will be \$5,000.

- **Make a 5-Year loan at 3.0% towards either the Solar Project or the bridge loan:**

The 5-Year Notes will come in two forms. One would be tailored to match the flow of savings from the solar conversions, with scheduled payments of principal and interest every 6 months over the five years. About \$125,000 in these notes will be offered at 3.0%, also with a minimum of \$5,000.

The other form is designed to be repaid as and when undesignated bequests are received that can be put towards the cost of the Welcome Center. They will likely be partially repaid during the five years, and will in any case be fully repaid at maturity. There will be about \$200,000 in such notes, at 3.0%, also with a minimum of \$5,000.

- **Make a 12-Year loan at 4.0% towards the Solar Project:**

The solar panels themselves are guaranteed to operate at a high effectiveness for 25 years. The projected savings to the Church in electrical charges are more than sufficient to repay these notes in just 12 years. We need about \$125,000 in such longer-term financing to ensure that the Church budget is not burdened by the solar conversion. Because of the long period of repayment, the interest rate is 4.0%, and the minimum amount will probably be \$10,000.

Solar enthusiasts that are unable to meet the minimum 5K investment are invited to make any size donation to this vision of a brighter tomorrow for First UU Church and the Earth.

The Generosity Ministry Team will be organizing the raising of these funds, with help from members of the Sustainable Energy Team and the Finance Committee. Details are subject to change at this point, with final details forthcoming on October 13, and will be posted on the Church website. Of course, please consider your financial situation carefully before making such loans to First Church. We hope you will find that you, your family, our beloved Church and our environment, can win with these investments.

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Arvid's Arcana

By Rev Dr Arvid Straube, Lead Minister

First Church has now had one year of experience with creating more diversity in our music program. We have had two separate musical styles for each of the two services; traditional church music at 9:30 and a variety of contemporary music at 11:30. Our music at the South Bay campus has had a contemporary flair from the beginning. We have learned many things in that year, from direct feedback, discussions with groups affected by the changes we have made and from our recent survey. We found out a lot about what styles of contemporary music and worship the congregation responded to best. We learned that worshippers at First Church had a broad range of musical tastes and generally don't like having to choose one style of music to enjoy at worship. It has also been difficult for some to change their worship time preference to fit their musical preference.

We've heard you. So beginning this month, at Hillcrest, we are offering a new program of music at Hillcrest. The music at both services will be the same each Sunday. We've learned that jazz has been a popular addition to our musical offerings, so the first Sunday of every month will feature a jazz band led by Dana Decker. The second and fourth Sunday of the month will have more traditional church music with our choirs and ensembles prominently featured. The third Sunday of each month will feature some of First Church's favorite vocalists in a leading role. At South Bay, Andrea Newell will be backing up Dana on the music there and will be paying special attention to enriching the Spanish language offerings.

All the musical styles will be showcased in a special gala concert to benefit the music program on October 12. This is an event not to be missed.



Arvid

September Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

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

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

The October **Transformational Theme** is **Creation**.

Sunday, October 6:

- Hillcrest Services—**"A Mixing Gesture,"** Rev Dr Susan Ritchie, Starr King School for the Ministry, Guest Pulpit (live).
- South Bay Service—**"Living on the Side of Love,"** Elizabeth Bukey, Intern Minister (live). Coffee conversation.

Sunday, October 13:

- Hillcrest Services—**"The Messiness of Creation,"** Rev Kathleen Owens (live).
- South Bay Service—**"Foolish Things Smart People Do,"** Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live).

Sunday, October 20:

- Hillcrest Services—**"How Not to Be a Zombie: Being Alive in a Deadening World,"** Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live).
- South Bay Service—**"The Messiness of Creation,"** Rev Kathleen Owens (live).

Sunday, October 27:

- Hillcrest Service—**"The Dead Come to Life,"** Rev Dr Arvid Straube (live).
- South Bay Service—**Intergenerational Service for Día de los Muertos,** Elizabeth Bukey, Intern Minister and Kristen Kuriga, South Bay Ministry Team Coordinator



Creation

By Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry

The worship theme for October is Creation, which gives me a great opportunity to share with you about one of the new Religious Education classes for our older children. We will be engaging the creative energy of the children and several of the adult leaders in presenting a 7 Principles Banner Class. After discussing what principles are, and what images could be used to present the [Unitarian Universalist Principles](http://www.firstusandiego.org/principles-sources) (<http://www.firstusandiego.org/principles-sources>), the class will create individual squares that will represent each Principle.

At the end of the class, children will be able to take home their own 7 Principle Banner. They will have an opportunity to use a variety of fabric art media from fabric crayons to tie-dye as they create each square.

Artistic creativity is not limited to children and "artists." I really believe that we all need permission to express ourselves creatively. Sometimes this means giving ourselves permission to take the time to "play." We tend to be hard on ourselves and are very task oriented – art feels frivolous.

I like the list of permissions in the front of the book *Making Things: A Handbook of Creative Discovery - Book 2* by Ann Wiseman –

Permissions

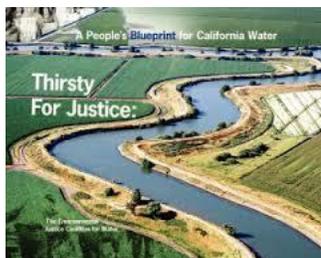
- It is OK to try something you don't know
- It is OK to make mistakes
- It is OK to take your time
- It is OK to find your own pace
- It is OK to bungle – so next time you are free of the fear of failure enough to succeed
- It is OK to risk looking foolish
- It is OK to be original and different
- It is OK to wait until you feel ready
- It is OK to experiment – safely!
- It is OK to question the "shoulds"
- It is special to be you
- It is necessary to make a "mess" which you should be willing to clean up – the act of creation is often messy

We need to remember what feeds our souls. Now, traditional art media may not be how you express your creativity. You might be creative in the kitchen, or the garden. Your creativity might be in the realm of the performing arts, like singing, dance, or playing a musical instrument.

Take the opportunity this month to really bring the worship theme home by giving yourself permission to be creative in whatever way feeds your soul.

Liz Jones





Access to Water in a Changing World— The Impact of the Human Right to Water

By Kristen Kuriga and Kathy Smith

On Saturday, November 2, there will be an exciting and engaging forum on the human right to water in Bard Hall at First Church. Patricia Jones of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) will be with us to share about the work of UUs and partner agencies on the international level to secure the right to water for all. Jack Shu from the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry (UULM) will present about the passage of Human Right to Water legislation in California. Ian Slattery will debut UULM's film "Thirsty for Justice." Local panelists will include Shasta Gaughen, Environmental Director of the Pala Mission Indian Board, and Conner Everts of the Southwest Watershed Alliance.

About the movie:

Thirsty for Justice: The fight for the human right to water in California

This is a story about a stark injustice facing hundreds of thousands of Californians every day: lack of access to clean, safe, affordable water for their basic needs. Their stories call out to us and their message is simple: water is a human right. This is also a story of celebration – of a diverse grassroots movement that helped make California the first state in the nation to legislatively recognize the Human Right to Water. Finally, it's a story about the future, and the choices and challenges that await us all as we strive to protect water resources for ourselves and for future generations.

Ian Slattery is the co-director and editor of *Thirsty for Justice*. Ian is a documentary video producer and activist who works with nonprofits and community groups to help share their stories.

Jack Shu is the President of the Cleveland National Forest Foundation and serves on the Environmental Justice Steering Committee of UULM.

Join us for this important opportunity for education and engagement!

Forum on Human Right to Water and movie "Thirsty for Justice"

November 2 (Sat), 8:30 am-12 pm
Hillcrest Campus in Bard Hall

To register, contact Kathy Smith:
ksmith04@san.rr.com

Discussion with Patricia Jones about the work of the UU Service Committee:

November 3 (Sun), 10:40-11:30 am
Hillcrest Campus, Room 323

Patricia Jones, PhD, is the Environmental Justice Program Manager at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Patricia manages a program on the human right to water in the Americas, Africa and Asia. Efforts by Unitarian Universalists, through the UUSC, have supported successful challenges in the courts that have set precedent in Argentina, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and South Africa. The UUSC and UULM of California, in coalition with other groups, worked on water policy to enshrine the human right to water in California's water code.

Shasta Gaughen is a cultural anthropologist with research interests in California Indians, Native America, tribal gaming, identity, and political economy. Along with working as an adjunct professor in the anthropology department at Cal State San Marcos, she also serves as the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Pala Band of Mission Indians, and is acting director of the tribe's Cupa Cultural Center.

Conner Everts is the Executive Director of the Southern California Watershed Alliance and is co-chair of the Desal Response Group. He is chair of Public Officials for Water and Environmental Reform (POWER) and serves on non-profit boards, including the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water and Amigos de los Rios. Conner has been an important mentor and guide for the UULM California's water justice tours.



THE HELEN MEYERS FORUM

BY BENITA BERKSON

The Helen Meyers Forum Committee (HMFC) is a unique entity within First Church. We give away money—to bring outstanding Unitarian Universalist speakers to First Church.

Helen was a native of Toledo, Ohio. She taught music and several choral groups. She was fluent in French, German and Italian and because of this, was a frequent escort to war brides and children on troop trips from Europe to America after World War II. She had a very colorful history; she told the story of being required to sign a loyalty oath to teach school during the McCarthy era, because she was a Unitarian. She deeply appreciated the fine arts, and volunteered at the San Diego Museum of Art and was named "Volunteer of the Year" in 1983.

Helen Meyers joined First Church in 1974, and when she died in 1983, she left First church a magnificent legacy, an endowment that would underwrite the costs of bringing distinguished UUs to San Diego. The Board of Trustees established the HMFC to arrange for programs under the conditions of the Helen Meyers bequest.

Over the years HMFC has brought many outstanding presenters to First Church, including Rev. Forrest Church, Margot Adler, Rev. Jeremy Taylor, Rev. Sandor Mathe, Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, and Rev. Jason Shelton. On October 12th, the committee is underwriting an Enneagrams weekend.

The committee limits the amount available for any program to a maximum of \$2,000 per presentation. We live within our means, spending only income from the bequest and not any part of the principal. Steve Howard and Barbara Keiller have previously chaired the committee; before that, there is no record of chairpersons. Revs. Tom and Carolyn Owen-Towle were very active in the committee as well.

In the old days, (before the internet) the committee met regularly, and individuals would come before the committee to present a request presentation. It could take several months for an approval or rejection. Since the institution of email, things have changed. A few years ago, we received a request on a Monday, I emailed it to all committee members and we had approval by Wednesday.

The HMFC now manages requests over the internet. Any church member can request an application form from the committee chair, which is currently Benita Berkson. Once the application is submitted, it is sent out to the committee, and discussed by email. This procedure is less personal, but much more efficient. Once the committee reaches a decision, the chair contacts the person or group requesting the funds.

In most cases, the committee does not participate in organizing or publicizing the event. Frequently, several church groups join forces to present a speaker or a program. During First Church's 125th anniversary celebration, HMFC participated in several events.

Who would YOU like to see at First Church and what committees are you on that could sponsor such event? Talk to us on the patio or email us; we are always interested. And we have money.

Contact Benita Berkson, chair, Barbara Davenport, secretary, Sue Haskin, and Liz Lancaster for more information.



PARTNER CHURCH CHOIR TOUR REVEALS ORIGINS OF UNITARIAN CHURCH

By Kathy Hughart

"We cannot learn anywhere from the Scripture of God,

that his words and religion are meant to be spread by fire and sword." – Francis David 1553

Before going on a Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) tour to Romania and Hungary in 2011, I thought Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and their contemporaries founded the first Unitarian church in Boston, Massachusetts in the 1800's. Little did I know that the history of the Unitarian religion goes back to 1510 in Europe.

This year I signed up with the UUPCC again, to sing in Unitarian churches and revisit sites such as Torda, where the first act of religious tolerance was signed in 1568. Beth Norton, director of the Concord, Massachusetts Unitarian choir, brought together both American and Hungarian singers, an intercultural combination that energized our repertoire as we sang in both Hungarian and English.

The Festival Choir of 2013 gave concerts in Brasso, Szekelykeresztur, Marosvasarhely, Kolozsvár & Budapest. In Brasso, where we gave our first performance, I met Reverend Sandor Mathe. First UU Church of San Diego partners with the Brasso church, and there have been exchange visits between the two congregations.

An outcome of the partner church tour for me was to realize how the political history of Eastern Europe dating back to 1568 affected religious observance among residents of Hungary and Romania.

In 1568, the Edict of Torda was an early attempt to guarantee religious freedom in Christian Europe. The edict came about as a result of Francis David (Ferenc David in Hungarian) arguing for religious tolerance with King John II Sigismund of Hungary. Francis David was a Unitarian preacher and founder of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania.

The site of the stone designating the edict of Torda is in St. Michael's Catholic Church in what is now Turda, in Cluj County, Romania. The church has changed denominations several times throughout history, and what was at one point a Unitarian church is now again a Roman Catholic Church.

Luckily, (and perhaps because the doctrine of religious tolerance still prevails) our choir freely entered the foyer of the church during off hours and sang Elizabeth Alexander's song, "Jo" ("Good") as a tribute to Francis David.

Learning how Francis David debated ministers of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist religions, (Trinitarians), helps explain why Unitarian ideas eased the way for people who questioned rigid doctrinarism.

"Better in the service of the village than in that of the court." - Ferenc Balasz (1901-1937)

En route to Torda we had visited the Alabaster Village of Meszko, made famous by the book of the same name. The Alabaster Village by Christine Frederikson Balazs is available directly from the UUPCC at <http://www.uupcc.org/secure/store.php>.



Ferenc Balasz's short and passionate life was filled with studies in Britain, followed by four years of travel, first in Western Europe and North America, then in South and East Asia where he studied Asian village life. Balazs was not a fan of industrial society, and spoke out against assembly line labor. While in the United States, he organized peace caravans, sang folk songs, and spoke for rights of black Americans.

Back home in Romania, Minister Balazs rattled many members of the clergy, who eventually sent him to the remote village of Meszko. His book "Under the Clod," (the limestone common to the area) describes his first experiences with his congregation. Our choir, upon hearing Balasz's story told by minister Robbie Kalman in the Meszko church, was inspired to sing two anthems

from church hymnals, as choir member Jeff Hamrick played the still functioning organ in the choir loft.



Kathy Hughart, Beth Norton, Robert Kalman, Sandor Mathe





SUMMER CAMP FOR GROWNUPS

BY JOHN SCHAIBLY

For years I had heard that the district Adult

Summer Camp for Grownups at de Benneville Pines was wonderful. The third week in August, when the camp was traditionally held, was the week my wife Ardath and I usually travel but this year our schedule allowed us to go to camp and boy, am I glad we did!

The theme speaker was our own minister emeritus, Rev. Tom Owen-Towle, so it didn't take much arm twisting by our friend Mac Downing to get us to go. The camp is sponsored by PSWIRL (the Pacific Southwest Institute for Religious Liberals) and shares space with Laura Janes' Art Class and a nature photography course.

The camp's theme was "Self Care: Tending to our Whole Being". Sunday's session was dedicated to an overview of the different parts of our selves and how they fit together. Monday, we focused on Body and Mind followed by Heart and Spirit on Tuesday. The concluding session on Wednesday explored Conscience and Soul, including compassion and forgiveness.

Afternoons were opportunities for workshops and activities. I took my first creative writing course from a very unusual and creative teacher who teased new writing skills out of me - thus, this article! Besides workshops, others renewed their archery skills, practiced yoga or hiked, swam, slept or read. Evenings we could star-gaze through a fine telescope and folk-dance.

Here are some of the memories other First Church friends report:

"I love de Benneville Pines and felt refreshed by nature and impressed by amazing people I met. I appreciated Tom's wisdom, inspiration, and the opportunity for meaningful reflection and sharing. Tom's guitar sing-alongs drew many voices and I also was motivated to go canoeing, write haikus, and play piano in the talent show."

– Ardath Schaibly

"This was my first time at "Adult Camp" but definitely not my last. I signed up for Art Camp because I like Laura's paintings and I enjoy spending time with her even though I've never taken a drawing class before. A dozen artists (some who actually sell their work) accepted and encouraged me. Surprisingly, I learned to draw people reasonably well in four days."

– Carolyn Woodbury

"The beauty and peace of de Benneville Pines frees me to do things I couldn't/wouldn't do off the mountain. On day two, Tom challenged us to write some haikus. My first reaction was "I don't know how; not me." By end of day, I had composed 5. It turns out the simple rigorous form of the haiku appealed to a programmer. Here is my beginner's effort inspired by the dramatic geology of the mountain."

*Bound by common mud
Different UU pebbles
Grand conglomerate."*

– Peter Woodbury

"This year I planned to support and encourage Tom as HE worked, and I was going to sit under the pines and read. That was until Laura Janes, the drawing teacher, got hold of me and warmly encouraged me to take her class. Not having done any applied art for over 50 years, it took some courage but I joined in with the rest. I had an epiphany of sorts, in which I discovered that through years of maturing, I have learned to see and I am able to make my hand draw what I intend. It's whetted my appetite for next year."

– Carolyn Owen-Towle

Next year's camp is scheduled for August 10-14, 2014 including the maximum of the annual Perseid Meteor Shower which should be spectacular on the mountain. We'll remind you next spring when it's time to register. You'll be glad you did!

Staff

Rev. Dr. Arvid Straube, Lead Minister
 Rev. Kathleen Owens, Associate Minister
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
 Elizabeth Bukey, Intern Minister
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations
 Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry
 Käthe Larick, Youth Program Coordinator
 Chris Christenson, Communications / Adult Ed. Coordinator
 Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice and South Bay
 Ministry Teams Coordinator
 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
 Abby Koch, Executive Administrator and Office Manager
 Jenny Epler, Events Scheduler
 Connie Hayes, Bookkeeping Coordinator
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<http://www.firstuusandiego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

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