



Christmas

Keeping in Touch

We are a creative Christian community,
Caring for one another

inviting others to experience the power of God's love,
that God might use us to transform ourselves, our community,
the Church and the world.

first united
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Established 1886
December 30, 2011

www.fulc.com

QUOTATION OF THE WEEK

*For all that has been—thanks.
For all that shall be—yes!*
—Dag Hammarskjold



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Susan Strouse

It's traditional for many people to make New Years resolutions for the upcoming year. I gave that up a long time ago; I don't really need more ways to set myself up for failure. Maybe they work for some, but not for me. Instead, I've found a new way of moving with intentionality into the future: choosing a word (or rather letting a word choose me). I first discovered this practice on the Abbey of the Arts website (<http://abbeyofthearts.com>). The idea comes from the Desert Mothers and Fathers:

“Many people followed these ammas and abbas, seeking their wisdom and guidance for a meaningful life. One tradition was to ask for a word--this word or phrase would be something on which to ponder for many days, weeks, months, sometimes a whole lifetime.”

So I am awaiting my word or phrase. And I invite you to ask for your word as well, as we go forward into the New Year together.

Blessings,
Pastor Susan

This Week on PS (Pastor Susan's Blog)—
New Year—New Word
<https://progressivechurch.wordpress.com>

First United is a "Reconciling in Christ" (RIC) congregation that has declared that all persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities are equally welcome to join fully in the worship and life of this Christ-centered community.

**First United Lutheran Church is committed to accessibility to the extent that it is within our control.
Please let us know if we can be of assistance in accommodating your accessibility needs.**

Prayers for the First Sunday of Christmas

*Step softly into your weeping world,
incarnate God;
embrace it in your love.
Bring light into broken lives,
warmth into frozen hearts,
hope to those at war.
May your peace pervade every place.
Help us to approach this new year
filled with the joy of your companionship,
as we step out in faith with you,
ready to face the future,
whatever it may hold.*



Carol Dixon, *Hay & Stardust*, Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Fourth Floor, Savoy House; 140 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2 3DH, UK

- ✦ for the Peace of God to be made manifest in our world:
 - ☞ for leaders and people of Syria, for an end to violence
 - ☞ for peace with justice throughout the world
 - ☞ for a New Year of commitment to care for the Earth

- ✦ for the Wisdom of Christ to be made manifest in our communities:
 - ☞ for the Winter Shelter and all shelters, and for the people who come for food and a safe place to sleep
 - ☞ for *Welcome*, *SF Night Ministry*, *Welcome*, *Lutheran Social Services*, and *SAGE*
 - ☞ for a New Year of compassion and care for the “least of these” in our city

- ✦ for the Power of the Spirit to be made manifest in our congregation and beyond:
 - ☞ for Roger Creet and Alan Pearson
 - ☞ for Barbara Vignola, Daryl Hackbart, Bishop Mark Holmerud and all in need of healing
 - ☞ for family & friends of Linda Ulland, former member of First United, who died on the 25th
 - ☞ for a New Year of mission, ministry, and outreach in our congregation

🕯 *If you would like to add someone or something to the prayer list, please contact Orion or Pastor Susan.* 🕯

PRAYERS IN ACTION

We are collecting cards, notes, pictures, etc. for our homebound members. There will be an envelope for each at every service. You can put your items into the envelopes, which will be sent or delivered at the end of each month. This is an ongoing project of love and support for those who are unable to physically be part of our community, but are members of it nevertheless.

Take note:



Winter is here. We will continue to collect non-perishable food, white socks, and hoodies for *Welcome*.

OUR COMMUNITY



Peace Hope Joy Love

May you find rich blessings in 2012

*And, if you're a devotee of the Mayan calendar, may you find deep tranquility in this, your final year.
We'll miss you.*



NOTES AND NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MEGAN ROHRER

Hey friends:

I'm writing to ask you to share the information about my Kickstarter campaign far and wide to folks you think would be interested or in your newsletter. I currently have \$1,285 of my \$7,000 goal pledged, but I must raise the full amount in 29 days or we don't get any of the money. Remember, since all the funds go to Welcome, the pledges are tax deductible. You can get fun schwag for donating as little as \$10, so think about it.

The LGBTQ Homeless Youth Leadership project will travel around the country collecting video interviews with homeless youth. Their narratives will be shared online and be used to inspire this population to use art to advocate for better political and social rights.

This project will create archive materials for the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco and educational materials to enable congregations, politicians and individuals to respond to LGBTQ homeless youth, but most importantly it will serve as an opportunity to create mentoring relationships and to create leaders who can speak out about LGBTQ homelessness.

For the last few years, you have heard me talk about how important it is to work with this vulnerable population. Since nearly all of the chronically homeless adults I work with came to San Francisco as LGBTQ youth, I am convinced that this project is the key to reducing and possibly eliminating future generations of homelessness in San Francisco. Thank you for all the ways you have supported my work on this project and for helping me to spread the word about our Kickstarter campaign.

Visit our project at Kickstarter here: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1909786228/lgbtq-homeless-youth-leadership-project>

Megan Rohrer
Executive Director
Welcome

DEATH OF FORMER MEMBER OF THE FIRST UNITED COMMUNITY LINDA ULLAND

Linda Ulland (in more recent years in Minnesota) died on Christmas Day after a long struggle with chronic illness. She was a long time member, served as council president, and was dedicated to the ministry of FULC.

Readings for the First Sunday of Christmas



A READING FROM ISAIAH—61:10-62:3

Clearly Isaiah imagines salvation as social and national as well as individual. The healing of persons is interconnected with the healing of nations. In the wake of the last few years' economic, budget, and debt crises, this ought to be patently obvious. There is no rugged individualism here—no privilege for the 'job creators' or the '1%'—but the emergence, albeit still a dream, of justice rolling down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

It is written . . .

I will joyfully exult in YHWH, who is the joy of my soul!
My God clothed me with a robe of deliverance
and wrapped me in a mantle of justice,
the way a bridegroom puts on a turban,
and a bride bedecks herself with jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and a garden brings its seed to blossom,
so Exalted YHWH makes justice sprout,
and praise spring up before all nations.

For Zion's sake I will not be silent,
nor for the sake of Jerusalem, I will not rest—
not until her integrity shines like the dawn,
her deliverance like a flaming torch.
The nations will see your vindication, and the rulers your splendor;
you will have a new name that YHWH's mouth will bestow.
You will be a garland of beauty in YHWH's hands,
a solemn crown worn by your God.

PSALM 148

Praise God! Praise God from the heavens;
praise God in the heights!

Praise God, all you angels of God;
praise God, all you host of heaven!

Praise God, you sun and moon;
praise God, all you shining stars!

Praise God, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of God,
for God commanded and they were created.

God established them forever and ever;
God fixed their bounds,
which cannot be passed.

Praise God from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy
wind
fulfilling God's command!

Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Beast of the forest and all cattle,
crawling things and flying birds!

Rulers of the earth and all peoples,
nobles and all leaders of the earth!

Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Sovereign,
whose name alone is exalted;
whose glory is above earth and
heaven.

God has raised up a horn for the people,
and praise for all the faithful,
for the people of Israel
who are close to God.
Praise be to God!

A READING FROM GALATIANS—4:4-7

Galatians describes us as God's children in whom God's Spirit cries out, "Abba!" There is a deep movement of grace and inspiration in our lives. There is always a point of contact—a place of revelation—in every life.

It is written . . .

When the designated time had come, God sent forth the Christ—born of a woman, born under the Law—to deliver from the Law those who were subject to it, so that we might receive our status as adopted heirs. The proof that you are children of God is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of the Child who calls out, "Abba!" You are no longer slaves, but daughters and sons! And if you are daughters and sons, you are also heirs, by God's design.

A READING FROM LUKE—2:22-40

Two elders have been waiting for their spiritual fulfillment. They have prepared for an epiphany, for a sense of God's revealing, by prayer and presence. They alone recognize this nondescript family as holy; they alone see the hopes of humanity in this little child. They have prepared a lifetime for this vision of holiness, and see it when it appears. Yet, their vision is not private or restricted to this child—God's salvation is prepared for all peoples, friends and strangers alike, all nations shall experience divine revelation and glory.

It is written . . .

When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. For it is written in the Law of God, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to God." They likewise came to offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accord with the dictate of the Law of our God.

Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. She had revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. Prompted by the Spirit, Simeon came to the temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, Simeon took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation, which you have prepared for all the peoples to see, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel."

As the child's mother and father stood there marveling at the things that were being said, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare. And a sword will pierce your heart as well."

There was a woman named Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was also a prophet. She had lived a long life, seven years with her husband, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple, worshiping night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up at that moment, she gave thanks to God and talked about the child to all who anticipated the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When the couple had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the Law of God, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. The child grew in size and strength. He was filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was with him.



The 2012 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebrations to be held on Monday, January 16, at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Yerba Buena Gardens.

San Francisco, California—December 25, 2011: The 2012 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration entitled, **Renewing the Dream**, will be held on **January 16, 2012**, at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Yerba Buena Gardens. A host of activities and programs mark the day, including our annual March/Parade; MLK Dream Address and Program; San Francisco Interfaith Council Interfaith Commemoration; the 2012 Children's Reading Festival; the new Civil Rights Film Festival; the 2012 MLK Conversation Series; Health Preparedness and Sustainability Festival; special music; free museum admission to the area museums and a host of other inspirational activities. All are free to the public.

In partnership with the [San Francisco Interfaith Council](#), interfaith activities include the 2nd annual interfaith tribute to the *Selma-to-Montgomery* march and the symbolic crossing of the *Edmund Pettus Bridge*. The tribute will take place during the annual march/parade as it crosses San Francisco's Lefty O'Doul Bridge and briefly stops at Willie Mays Plaza at AT&T Park. Also, the 2nd interfaith commemoration ceremony at the Esplanade stage at Yerba Buena Gardens will conclude the march/parade, with spiritual leaders from a host of faith backgrounds providing reflection on the vision of Dr. King. Last, recognition of San Francisco's first African American school principal, *Ms. Leola M. Havard*, will take place as part of the celebration programs.

Free and discounted commemorative transit passes on BART, Golden Gate Transit and Ferries and SFMTA are available on a first-come-first-served basis by registering on the Contact page at [norcalmlk.com](#).

Day-long activities feature the *Health, Preparedness and Sustainability Festival*, led by the *American Red Cross*, Bay Area Chapter, *SFEnvironment* and the *San Francisco Hospital Council*, with free services and activities for all ages, including the annual *MLK/Red Cross blood drive*; the *2012 Inaugural Civil Rights Film Festival*, in partnership with *California Newsreels*; the 2nd annual *Children's Reading Festival* in partnership with *Marcus Books*, the nation's oldest African American book store.

Log-on to the Events page at [norcalmlk.com](#) for a full list of activities and downloadable activity maps, and subscribe to us on Twitter at [norcalmlk](#) for the latest updates on activities and the day's events.

ACTIVITY LIST (*scheduled and subject to modification*)

2012 MLK March/Parade

Begins at 11:00am (*arrive early*)

Begins at 4th St. & Townsend Ave. (*Caltrain Depot*)

MLK Dream Address and Special Presentations

12:15pm - 4:00pm, Limited Seating, doors open at 11:50am.

Novellus Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (scheduled)

San Francisco Interfaith Commemoration

11:45am - 12:15pm

Esplanade Stage at Yerba Buena Gardens

Health Preparedness and Sustainability Festival

11:00am - 4:30pm The Forum at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

2012 Civil Rights Film Festival

11:00am - 4:30pm Various screening rooms (*see the Events page at [norcalmlk.com](#) for details*)

Children's Reading Festival

11:00am - 4:30pm Children's Creativity Museum/Yerba Buena Center for the Arts & Gardens

Contemporary Jewish Museum, Museum of the African Diaspora & Children's Creativity Museum

10:00am - 5:00pm



The New Year is a great opportunity to begin anew. Because many people look at the new year, the year to come, with hope. "I will do better next year," you promise yourself . . . Of course we have made mistakes. Of course we have made ourselves suffer. Of course we have made the people around us suffer. But that does not prevent us from beginning anew and to make things much better next year, or even the next moment.

—Thich Nhat Hanh



MULTIFAITH RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES

December

- 30 Feast of the Holy Family - **Catholic Christian**
31 Watch Night - **Christian**

January 2012

- 1 Mary, Mother of God - **Catholic Christian**
Feast of St Basil - **Orthodox Christian**
Gantan-sai (New Years) - **Shinto**
Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus - **Orthodox Christian**
5 Twelfth Night - **Christian**
Guru Gobindh Singh birthday - **Sikh**
6 Epiphany - **Christian**
Feast of the Theophany - **Orthodox Christian**
Dia de los Reyes - **Hispanic Christians**
Nativity of Christ - **Armenian Orthodox**
7 Feast of the Nativity ** - **Orthodox Christian**
8 Baptism of Jesus - **Christian**
9-12 Mahayana New Year ** - **Buddhist**
13 Maghi - **Sikh**
15 World Religion Day * - **Baha'i**
17 Blessing of the Animals - **Hispanic Catholic Christian**
18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - **Christian**
20 Timkat - **Ethiopian Orthodox Christian**
23 Chinese New Year - **Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist**
25 Conversion of Saint Paul - **Christian**
28 Vasant Panchami ** - **Hindu**

Interfaith Calendar



- Note: 1. * Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.
2. ** Local or regional customs may use a variation of this date.
Bold titles are primary holy days of a tradition.



Coming Events:



☞ **FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**
Sunday, January 1, 5:00 pm
First Unitarian Universalist Chapel

☞ **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**
Tuesday, January 3, 7:00 pm
Home of Terri Bogaards



☞ **FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (OBSERVED)**
Sunday, January 8, 5:00 pm
First Unitarian Universalist Chapel

Sunday Worship

5:00 p.m. at

First Unitarian Universalist Chapel
 1187 Franklin St.

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Steve Johnson	Treasurer@fulc.com
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Tamara Alliston	Dana McDonald
	Pamela Hargraves

NOTE:

Deadline for submission
 of all information or items in
Keeping in Touch is

Wednesday at 12 noon

of the week of publication. Items sub-
 mitted after this time may not be in-
 cluded in that week's edition.



*For details on all First United
 events, go to www.fulc.com
 & click on "Calendar".*

Policy for Charitable Donations

First United's policy is to help people
 by finding services when possible.
 All requests for help must go to Pas-
 tor Susan. Please do not ask mem-
 bers for money, rides, phone use, or
 food—ask only Pastor Susan.

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Pr. Susan Strouse	Pr. Susan Strouse
Jay Beatty	Jay Beatty
Dana & Sophia	Dana & Sophia
Dana & Sophia	Dana & Sophia
Dana McDonald	Dana McDonald

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR JANUARY 8

Pr. Susan Strouse	Pr. Susan Strouse
Daniel Eickmann	Daniel Eickmann
Barrow family	Barrow family
Barrow family	Barrow family
Alliston/Johnson unit	Alliston/Johnson unit

To sign up as a Greeter or other worship assis-
 tant, send an email to info@fulc.com.



Jan. 10:
 David Rohrer

Jan. 15:
 Kati Pessner

Jan. 21:
 Pamela Hargraves

Jan. 23:
 Jacob Johnson