



Pentecost

# 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  
July 1, 2011

[www.fulc.com](http://www.fulc.com)

## QUOTATION OF THE WEEK

*There is a power that has been since all eternity and that force and potentiality is green!*

—Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)



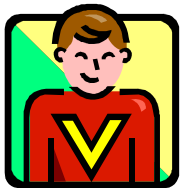
## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

*Pastor Susan Strouse*

While we are surrounded by red, white, and blue as we celebrate the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, may we be reminded of the color green, the color of the Pentecost season in the Church. The 12<sup>th</sup> century abbess, Hildegard of Bingen coined the term 'veriditas' (Latin: green + truth) for the greening power of God, the animating life-force within all creation. Our summertime theme, 'Going Green,' reminds us that caring for the Earth is a spiritual discipline, as well as a practical one. As we celebrate Independence Day, may we also remember our *interdependence* with one another and with all of Creation.

Pentecost Blessings,  
*Pastor Susan*

This week on *PS* (Pastor Susan's blog): *Marriage in a New York Minute*  
<https://progressivechurch.wordpress.com>



## Volunteer Services

## We're all in this together!

### Still needed

—a volunteer (or family unit) to share 2nd Sundays as worship assistants/refreshment providers. Currently the Barrow family is serving 2nd Sundays every month, and the opportunity is available to share that service with them, every other month. That's just 6 times a year. See Orion if interested.

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 full accessibility.**  
Please let us know if we can be of assistance in accommodating your accessibility needs.

## An Independence Day Reflection

(words by Lloyd Stone, 1934)



*This is my song, O God of all the nations,  
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.  
This is my home, the country where my heart is,  
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine.  
But other hearts in other lands are beating,  
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.*

*My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,  
And sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine.  
But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,  
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.  
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,  
A song of peace for their land and for mine.*

### Prayers for the Third Sunday after Pentecost

*Holy One,*

*You who have taken upon your own shoulders  
the burden of the redemption of all creation,  
You who offer us a yoke that is light, a weight to bear that is not heavy,  
bear us up, strengthen our limbs, embolden our hearts,  
that we might be of help to others,  
to set them free, to restore their hope,  
to remove the obstacles in their path,  
to repair the breach between enemies,  
and that your Body may grow strong and the face of the earth may be renewed,  
in the Name of the One who bore it all that grace might abound.*

*Amen*

<http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/weekly-seeds>

- ✦ for the **greening power of God** to be made manifest in our world:
  - ☞ for the people of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya—and all who are striving for independence
  - ☞ for Southern Sudan, becoming an independent state on July 9, amidst lack of food, water, and fuel
  - ☞ for the people of Japan, especially those near the tsunami-damaged Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant
  - ☞ for ongoing relief efforts in Haiti, and all places where disasters have struck
  - ☞ for our generous response to those in need
  
- ✦ for the **greening power of God** to be made manifest in our communities:
  - ☞ for *Welcome*, the *SF Night Ministry*, *Lutheran Social Services*, and all who serve the poor
  - ☞ for SAGE and other agencies that work against human trafficking
  - ☞ for *Interfaith Power & Light*, *The Sierra Club*, and all who promote sustainable ways of living
  - ☞ for the *Free Farm*, and all community gardens and gardeners
  - ☞ for those affected by recent tornados and floods—and all relief agencies
  
- ✦ for the **greening power of God** to be made manifest in our congregation and beyond:
  - ☞ for our homebound members: Alan Pearson, Roger Creet
  - ☞ for Barbara Vignola, Daryl Hackbart, John Patrick Williams, and all in need of healing
  - ☞ for Heather Hargraves, leaving for Uganda with the Peace Corps
  - ☞ for all who are traveling, and for a summer of refreshment and renewal
  - ☞ for a Pentecost season ablaze with green fire and energy

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

# OUR COMMUNITY



**Notice!** Dana & Sophia, our “1st Sunday regulars”, will be out of town on August 7—the first Sunday in August. Volunteers are needed for lector, intercessor, refreshments, and communion bread for that Sunday. Please see or email Orion—[orion@fulc.com](mailto:orion@fulc.com)—if you would be willing to serve in any capacity.



**It's July!  
It's almost here!**

## What YOU can do:

- ☞ Sign up to walk—join the team!
- ☞ Contribute to one of the team

Just go to the [First United Team Page:](#)

(<http://awsf2011.kintera.org/faf/search/searchTeamPart.asp?ievent=467364&lis=1&kntae467364=F8FD26B51D014A5F88B792625C451250&supld=0&team=4130606&cj=Y>)

Welcome to the Donation Page of Kirk Pessner

[My Team Page](#)

Benefactor (\$1,000.00 +)  
 Platinum (\$500.00 +)  
 Gold (\$100.00 +)  
 Silver (\$50.00 +)  
 Bronze (\$25.00 +)

Enter Donation Amount Here:  
 \*Currency shown: US Dollar  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Continue

My Fundraising Goal: \$0.00  
 Money Raised to Date: \$0.00

100%  
50%  
25%

25th ANNUAL AIDS WALK SAN FRANCISCO JULY 17, 2011

Join me in my efforts to support AIDS Walk San Francisco!

If you are unable to donate online, please print out a [donation form](#).

Thank you for supporting AIDS Walk San Francisco. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.



First United's Team 2008 in action!

**LAST CHANGE!!! (MAYBE; NO, REALLY)**

**IT MIGHT BE YOUR LAST OPPORTUNITY; OR NOT**

**A FIRST UNITED CONTEST!**

**THE FIRST UNITED**

**“NAME THE NEWSLETTER” CONTEST!**

Invoke your personal creative muse--what would YOU like to call the newsletter for First United?

Got a good idea--or several good ideas--something that reflects the First United spirit?

Great! Submit your ideas via email to [info@fulc.com](mailto:info@fulc.com); as the new branding takes shapes and is launched, a panel of specially selected and extremely qualified judges (any volunteers? Please? PLEASE?) will select the winning entry, the new name will be announced, and the winner gets a prize! (We have a bunch of old T-shirts with the old logo lying around somewhere . . .)



AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THOSE AFFECTED BY THE  
2011 SEVERE SPRING STORMS

The San Francisco Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is collecting funds to help those whose lives have been turned upside down by the 2011 spring deadly storms and flooding.

As part of a special National Chapter Response effort, Thrivent Financial will add \$1 to every \$2 raised up to \$250,000, to support relief efforts. All funds will be contributed to Lutheran Disaster Relief, ELCA Disaster Relief, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, and WELS Christian Aid Relief, to be used 100% to aid victims of the spring storms and flooding to clean up, rebuild and recover. This additional funding, together with chapter response efforts nationwide, has the potential to raise at least \$750,000 to support disaster recovery efforts.

How to contribute:  
Make checks payable to:

SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER OF THRIVENT FOR LUTHERANS

and write "2011 SEVERE SPRING STORMS" on the memo line.

Congregations: Please consolidate special congregational cash collections into one check to the SF Chapter.

Send checks to : THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS  
Attn: Brian Farmer, SF Thrivent Chapter Treasurer  
50 Belcher Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114

The Chapter will be accepting donations no later than July 15th.

Please join us in meeting the challenge, and more importantly,  
providing help to those in need.

Record flooding has caused severe damage in places like North Dakota and Nebraska. Here are some observations by ELCA Western North Dakota Synod Bishop Mark Narum, who visited the Minot and Burlington area on June 26.

Here is the update from the Minot/Burlington area as the river roars through Northwestern North Dakota on its way back up into Canada... We have crested about 2 feet lower than the worst projections. While that is good news it is still 3 feet above the highest recorded flood stage reached in 1881. At this point I know that flood waters are in the main sanctuary of Augustana and Christ Lutheran in Minot. I am guessing that Peace Lutheran at Burlington has water in the basement. First Lutheran in Minot is protected by a dike (which is 15 to 20 feet tall depending on the location according to the Corp of Engineers) and Oak Valley Lutheran at Velva has been evacuated.

Last evening and this morning I worshipped in 3 of our 4 current locations in Minot. I saw lots of tears, heard awesome sermons and had a chance to talk with evacuees and host families. I heard one pastor, who currently has 2 feet of water on the main floor of his house, talk about taking a break yesterday and getting a huge hug from his 4 year old granddaughter. He talked of how that is what all of us need to



Peace Lutheran Church, Burlington, ND

be doing now—caring for each other as Christ cares for us. I heard a young first call pastor, who does not know if he has a home to return to, preach the most powerful sermon I have heard in a long time about how God is not done yet... It was a sermon of deep truth (life bites right now as we are floating) but God is faithful...



I stopped at one of the television stations this morning and spent about 15 minutes talking with the anchor person, live on-air, about lament, about the need to drop our independent ways and begin to reach out to one another, God has gifted us so that we can do this. The anchor along with at least 3 other members of the television staff are now homeless. I got a call after I got off the air and was told from the person they were glad to be Lutheran. I talked about how currently the city officials, Corp of Engineers, National Guard and others were working to keep us safe in this crisis but behind the

scenes people are at work ready to help with rebuilding. I worry deeply about our rostered leaders. They are either homeless or, if they have a home, feeling guilty. I spent an hour at the National Guard Emergency Operations Center. My younger brother is a Sgt. Major working most of the day (like lots of soldiers) and grabbing a couple of hours of sleep in a back office. He introduced me to one of the National Guard Chaplains—an ELCA Lutheran from Fargo, ND, Cory Bjertness—soldiers are well served by faithful people like this . . . Wow!



Reverend Michael Pancoast blesses children with water, as congregations from the First Lutheran Church and Christ Lutheran hold a Sunday service at a hotel.

So what's next? We are told that it will take 14 days for the river to get back within the banks. It is estimated that there are 4,000 homes in Minot alone that will need to be gutted. We have lots of work to do. Thanks to all of you who have sent words of support. I have passed them along. These words are important for the people in the midst of the devastations. Keep us in your prayers. I am concerned about all of the congregations involved and the rostered leaders. I will continue to keep you informed of ways that you can help.

Blessings, Bp. Mark Narum, Western North Dakota Synod

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

## Why Lutheran Churches Can't Attract A Crowd (or How to grow a Lutheran church)

My pastor is on sabbatical, spending 3 months visiting multiple churches in a quest to study worship. This past Sunday, he visited a classic "[Crowd and Core](#)" church in Huntsville, Alabama. From my days before attending a Lutheran church, I am very familiar with this particular church. I studied its growth model, and was intimately involved in a very similar church in a nearby town. I had a first hand view of the challenges and the pitfalls of this particular church growth model.

This model is simple. The church consists of two groups of people, the "Crowd" and the "Core". The goal is simple, do whatever it takes to draw a "Crowd", then try to get at least a small percentage of the "Crowd" into the "Core" group. This model is entirely a numbers game. The vast majority of the "Crowd" does not enter the "Core", so the challenge is to get the "Crowd" as large as possible. The size of the "Crowd" is important because it must be large enough to bring enough into the "Core" to both make up for those leaving the church, and to provide the rapid growth necessary to keep the show for the "Crowd" funded.

To develop the "Crowd", two simultaneous approaches are used. First, the show on Sunday morning must be as professional as possible. The singers must all be young, attractive, and wear fashionable clothes. The announcer must sound professional. Lighting, sound, and cameras must all be professional. Timing must be accurate down to a few seconds. Everything is a choreographed performance.

Second, and probably more important than the show, is the content of the pastor's sermon. In general, the way to attract a crowd is to do two things. First, the delivery must be story driven rather than content driven. The sermon must be a series of personal stories and illustrations. It is important not to have substantial content. Second, the sermon must concern the concept of the "Theology of Glory". All Lutherans know this theology as opposed to the "Theology of the Cross". In the "Theology of Glory", the Christian faith is more about what the individual does, and how God makes our life better here on Earth. Typical "Theology of Glory" sermon titles are

- ☞ "How to battle Depression"
- ☞ "How to have a happy marriage"
- ☞ "How to manage money"
- ☞ "How to be a better Father/Mother/Son"

In more fundamentalist churches that draw a crowd, the "Theology of Glory" takes a different path

- ☞ "If our country doesn't return to God and put prayer in schools, it will collapse"
- ☞ "If you have sex before marriage, the rest of your life will be terrible"
- ☞ "If you live the right way, read the bible every day, and not spend time with the wrong people, God will reward you with a happy marriage"

In modern prosperity churches, the sermon is always the same

- ☞ "If you give xxx and do xxxx, God will prosper you and give you a happy life"

In one local church, the pastor ordained his son into the ministry, paraded his Father, beautiful wife, and beautiful daughter before the crowd and said "If you follow God, you will have a happy and beautiful family like I have."

It is ingrained into Lutheran pastors not to preach that way. They seem almost incapable of it. I believe the difference in the "Theology of the Cross" and the "Theology of Glory" is so ingrained in them, most seem unwilling to copy the sermon portion of the crowd and core growth model. *(continued next page)*

I am so glad. I couldn't take the crowd and core growth model. In other blog entries, I have noted some of the problems, and at various times I will continue to blog on these issues. But the key point of this entry is that since the "Theology of Glory" is an anathema to true Lutherans, it is important for Lutherans to accept that the crowd and core model does not work for a Lutheran church. It is a waste of time to try to emulate them.

Instead of emulating this growth model, I call on Lutherans to embrace their history and work on evangelism in a way that matches your rich history. Embrace the "Theology of the Cross." Proclaim it in sermons, in Sunday School small groups, in mid-week small groups, and on Internet websites and blogs. Embrace it and proclaim it with all your heart, and do not flee from it. Embrace it with passion, being confident and perhaps a bit arrogant about it. The "Theology of the Cross" is core to who you are, and is a desperately needed message in a world dominated by prosperity gospel.

But, you will not draw a crowd. You will gain one, two, three people at a time. About as many that come in the front door may go out the back door just as quickly. But, don't give up. The "Theology of the Cross" has persevered for 2000 years, and you are called to proclaim it to next generation.

\*About Allen Krell

I was raised in a Southern Baptist church. Everyone who knows me says one phrase about me "Allen is quiet". I am the type of person who quietly sits in meetings, but in the end I am the one who gets things done. Over my life I have probably tried most every role in the church, even at one point becoming an ordained elder in a church start that became one of the largest and fastest growing churches in our area.

The "successful" church start actually was the final trigger that led me to a spiritual crisis. I never questioned the existence of God, but I questioned the type of Christianity I was being fed. I started searching through the history of the Church for answers. I have examined dozens of movements and denominations throughout the 2000+ year history of the church. I have looked at Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinistic, Plymouth Brethren, Methodist, Baptist, and the Pentecostal movements. I have spent a great deal of time and thought comparing the history of Christianity to the current style of Christianity typically taught in evangelical United States based churches. This blog is a story of my reflections.

For my current status, I have found a home in a Lutheran church associated with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). I haven't actually joined yet, because my wife is not yet ready. I think she believes I will change my mind again, but I believe I am settled. I don't agree with everything, but I find myself content with receiving the Eucharist and enjoying bits of the historic Lutheran liturgy.

## INTERFAITH NEWS



*The love of one's country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border?*  
—Pablo Casals

### MULTIFAITH RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES FOR JULY

- 1 Sacred Heart of Jesus—Catholic Christian
- 9 Martyrdom of the Bab—Baha'i
- 11 Saint Benedict Day—Catholic Christian
- 13-16 Ulambana—Japan Buddhist
- 15 Lailat al Bara'ah—Islam  
Asalha Puja Day—Buddhist  
Saint Vladimir Day—Christian
- 23 Birthday of Emperor Haile Selassie I—Rastafari
- 24 Pioneer Day—Mormon Christian
- 25 St. James the Great Day—Christian



[Interreligious Calendar events are taken from the [Multifaith Action Society](#) Multifaith Calendar 2010 and other sources. See also the Online [Interfaith Calendar](#) and the [BBC Interfaith Calendar](#)] **NOTE:** Jewish Holidays begin at sundown the day before. Buddhist holidays are observed on many different days, according to local tradition.



## Coming Events:

### Our Summer Eco-Project

*Don't forget to save your junk mail and bring it to worship—as we symbolically “return it to the earth from whence it came”—by building our tree.*



- ☞ **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**  
Tuesday, July 5, 7:00 pm  
Location TBA
- ☞ **SECOND SUNDAY SCHOOL (KIDS & ADULTS)**  
Sunday, July 10, 3:00 pm  
First Unitarian Murdock & Thoreau Rooms
- ☞ **AIDS WALK SAN FRANCISCO—  
SUPPORT YOUR TEAM!**  
Sunday, July 17, 10:00 am  
Golden Gate Park

### Sunday Worship

5:00 p.m. at

First Unitarian Universalist Chapel  
1187 Franklin St.

### Office Hours & Mailing Address

1537 Franklin St., Suite 201  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
M- F 7:30-11:30 a.m.  
(415) 359-1025 (V)  
(415) 359-1267 (F)

For information visit our website:  
[www.fulc.com](http://www.fulc.com)  
email: [info@fulc.com](mailto:info@fulc.com)

### Pastor Susan Strouse

Office Hours:  
Tuesday & Thursday  
(510) 528-4354(H)  
(510) 579-7061 (C)  
email: [PastorSusan@fulc.com](mailto:PastorSusan@fulc.com)

### Orion Pitts

Music Director & Office Administrator  
[orion@fulc.com](mailto:orion@fulc.com)

### 2010-2011 Council:

Jacob Johnson	<a href="mailto:President@fulc.com">President@fulc.com</a>
Steve Johnson	<a href="mailto:Treasurer@fulc.com">Treasurer@fulc.com</a>
Terri Bogaards	<a href="mailto:Secretary@fulc.com">Secretary@fulc.com</a>
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](http://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.



- Jul 1:  
Ezekiel Johnson
- Jul 7:  
Brett Jones  
Barbara Vignola
- Jul 12:  
Jay Beatty
- Jul 20:  
Dana McDonald
- Jul 23:  
Phred Arsenault

### THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Presider	Pastor Susan Strouse
Greeter	<b>Your Name Here</b>
Council Rep	Tamara Alliston
Cantor	Jay Beatty
Worship Assistants	Jacob & Tamara
Refreshments/Bread	Jacob & Tamara

### WORSHIP LEADERS FOR JULY 10

Presider	Pastor Susan Strouse
Greeter	<b>Your Name Here</b>
Council Rep	Dana McDonald
Cantor	Daniel Eickmann
Worship Assistants	Barrow family
Refreshments/Bread	Barrow family

To sign up as a Greeter or other worship assis-  
tant, send an email to [info@fulc.com](mailto:info@fulc.com).