

Epiphany

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.

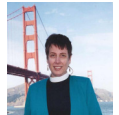
first united
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Established 1886
March 4, 2011

www.fulc.com

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Susan Strouse



QUOTATION OF THE WEEK

God is transfiguring the world right this very moment through us because God believes in us and because God loves us. What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. And as we share God's love with our brothers and sisters, God's other children, there is no tyrant who can resist us, no opposition that cannot be ended, no hunger that cannot be fed, no wound that cannot be healed, no hatred that cannot be turned into love, no dream that cannot be fulfilled. ~ Desmond Tutu

We now come to the end of Epiphany—the season of revelation. We began with the brilliant star of the magi, but we are now about to cross over into the shadows of Lent. But before we go, we have one last burst of cosmic glory in the story of the transfiguration of Jesus.

“Transfiguration captures the spirit of Epiphany. The season of Epiphany begins with a world-transforming star, guiding the magi from the East, and concludes with glory abounding on a mountaintop. The mood of Epiphany, perhaps more than Christmas, is a time of wonder and glory, radiating from a humble dwelling to encompass the whole earth. During Epiphany, we are given vision to experience God in our individual vocations and gifts and then in all persons and places. We are also reminded that politics and government have a vocation of justice-seeking so that all people have the opportunity to go from survival to beauty. This truly is a transfigured world.” Bruce Epperley

How have you experienced creative transformation (transfiguration) in your life this Epiphany season?

Transformational blessings!

Pastor Susan

This week on Pastor Susan's blog:
A Christian and a Pagan Walk Into a Café . . .
<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 full accessibility.
Please let us know if we can be of assistance in accommodating your accessibility needs.

Prayers for Transfiguration

*Most glorious and inclusive God,
Help us to see your transfiguring powers
when we encounter you in inclusive communities.
Help us to feel your transfiguring powers
as you call our ancestors to attest to your hopes for us and our communities.
Help us to experience your transfiguring powers
as we encounter Jesus resisting oppressive powers in his day and ours.
Help us to encounter you transfigured before us,
as we join you in bold ministries of inclusion, intimacy, and justice.
Transfigure our world. Amen*



—from *Out in Scripture*, <http://www.hrc.org>

- ✦ for the healing power of Christ to be made manifest in our world:
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of our world into communities of peace
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of the leaders of all nations into lovers of justice
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of Libya and all places where people are protesting against oppression
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of the earth into a healed and healing environment
- ✦ for the healing power of Christ to be made manifest in our communities:
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of our state, in difficult budget decisions
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of our city: for *SFCare* (*Welcome, the Night Ministry, and Friendship Banquet*)
 - ☞ for the transfiguration of our neighborhoods into places of safety and neighborliness
- ✦ for the healing power of Christ to be made manifest in our congregation and beyond:
 - ☞ for the transforming presence of Christ to be with all those in need

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

IN OUR LITURGY: *Why Do We . . . ?*

This Week: *Why don't we say "Alleluia" during Lent?*

Alleluia
Alleluia!

Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent, singing or saying the word "alleluia" has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days. This period of individual and congregational reflection on the quality of our baptismal faith and life suggests that the joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations when it is given full and jubilant voice.

The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back at least to the fifth century in the western church. The custom of actually bidding it farewell, however, developed in the Middle Ages.

Along with a sung farewell to alleluia, some congregations have embraced the practice of physically "burying" the alleluia. This may take the form of actually placing a visual representation of alleluia in a hole in the ground, or of hiding it away after carrying it in procession around the church or worship space.

Alleluia is appropriately bid farewell on the Sunday preceding Ash Wednesday (the Transfiguration) the last Sunday after the Epiphany). This is the last Sunday when alleluia will be used until Easter.

<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Learning-Center/FAQs/Alleluias-During-Lent.aspx>

You are welcome to submit questions for *Why Do We . . . ?* to any member of the worship planning team (Pr. Susan, Orion, and Steve Johnson).

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY— IN THE DESERT

LENT BEGINS MARCH 9 with our
Ash Wednesday Service of Ashes Holy Communion
Wednesday, March 9 at 7:30 pm
in the First Unitarian Chapel

A LENTEN JOURNEY WITH THE DESERT MOTHERS & FATHERS

Our theme for the Sundays in Lent will be the spirituality of the desert mothers and fathers of fourth and fifth century Egypt.

“The desert is a place of sparse landscape, where we are stripped down to our essence and confronted with our own deep needs and desires. Consider taking a pilgrimage to the desert and in the process journey to your own deepest self. In the scriptures for the Lenten season we read about Jesus’ path into the desert as a preparation for his ministry and his confrontation with the temptations he encountered there. You are invited to engage the wisdom of these holy men and women who went to the desert to live out a simple but profound spiritual path that still calls to us across the centuries.” <http://abbeyofhearts.com>



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The Church Council met on Tuesday, March 1, at the home of Terri Bogaards

- ✧ Re: ELCA decision-making process
 - Tabled possible constitution changes until April meeting
 - Will request a copy of St. Francis’ constitution
 - Will schedule a congregational forum to discuss pros and cons
- ✧ Reviewed and discussed proposal from MediaWorks for work on logo
- ✧ Agreed to support Friendship Banquet financially
- ✧ Brochure holder at First UU is up; still looking into signage and bulletin boards
- ✧ Welcomed Ben Colahan, student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, to learn about a proposal for a new arts ministry in San Francisco

FRIENDSHIP BANQUET

Because we cannot usually round up enough volunteers to host a Friendship Banquet on our own, we have been invited to team up with Ebenezer/herchurch. The next opportunity to help is Tuesday, March 8th. Servers are needed, and possibly help with salad, veggies, and dessert. You need to be there by 3:00 and leave at about 5:00. No dishes to do! Remember, this is for about 60 homeless and HIV-positive folks who get fine dining every Tuesday.



First United at the San Francisco Food Bank

FULC will volunteer to help pack food at the food bank on Sunday March 20 starting at 1:30. To help the Food Bank plan the work, they need to know how many people are coming. If you would like to volunteer, please let Tamara know.



Interfaith Prayer Circle for Peace & Justice

Civic Center Plaza (across from SF City Hall)

March 19, 2011 / Saturday, 10:30am

An Invitation to People of Faith and Justice Seekers

On Saturday, March 19, 2011, thousands of people will be marching in cities across the country calling for an end to wars and occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq. This day marks the 8th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Most religious groups have called for peace, non-violence, and an end to these wars. Let us stand in solidarity with others in our communities who seek peace.

*We invite you and your congregations to join us on **March 19 at 10:30am for an Interfaith Prayer Circle for Peace and Justice at Civic Center Plaza, San Francisco.** Please bring your congregation's banners and signs. We also request clergy to come in your religious garb. Those who wish to join the 12noon anti-war march may do so after the prayer service (rally and march will begin at United Nations' Plaza, Market and 7th Streets).*



[RSVP - CLICK HERE!](#)

[To download a flyer, please click here](#)

For more information and inquiries, you may contact Rev. Israel Alvaran at 415-863-1142 or email him at ialvaran@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

March 19 Prayer Service Committee:

Dolores Perez Priem, Millie Phillips, Adrienne Fong, Rev. Israel Alvaran

Amor Vincit Omnia

The Supreme Court of the United States this week handed down a ruling protecting the right of free speech, even if that speech is motivated by fear and hate, as in the case of a group calling themselves the “Westboro Baptist Church”. While the message and actions of this group may cause some concern and distress among those who heed Christ’s Great Commandment to “love one another”, a group of bikers (including a pastor) in Kansas has found an opportunity for ministry; don’t miss this short video:

Protecting a Funeral—Ministry Against WBC

If you are unable to access the link above, go to this URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DZbix25Oy0>

“Like a might-y ice-berg moves the church of God . . .”

“*The King James Version is the real one—it’s the one Jesus knew . . .*”—anonymous

NEW BIBLE UPDATES LANGUAGE; “BOOTY” FALLS BY WAYSIDE
by Bill Chappell, NPR News Blogs

The Old Testament will have a new look in the next edition of the New American Bible, one of the most popular English-language Bibles. And it’ll also have some big changes—in many cases, words like “booty” and “virgin” are removed in the new translation.

Scholars translating from ancient Hebrew and Greek for the new Bible decided that the meaning of those words had shifted in the 40 years since the Old Testament was last updated in the New American Bible.

Here are some of the swaps included in the new Bible:

- “booty” is now “spoils of war”—for presumably obvious reasons.
- “virgin” becomes “young woman”—especially where the original uses the Hebrew word “almah.”
- “holocaust” will become “burnt offerings”—scholars say that was closer to the original meaning, before “holocaust” came to be identified with the genocide of World War II.
- “cereal”—now co-opted by General Mills and Post, becomes “grain.”

Scholars sometimes clashed as they sought to refine the Bible’s language. An article from the Catholic News Service [quotes Kathleen Nash](#), a professor who translated the book of Joel:

There were disagreements, to be sure, such as over whether the pronoun “he” should be used in all references to God, she said. Another effort was made to substitute “it” for references to the church as “she.”

“That didn’t fly,” Nash said.

And according to Reuters, one case where “almah” will now be rendered as “young woman” instead of “virgin” in the new Bible occurs in Isaiah 7:14, where the birth of Jesus Christ to a virgin mother is foretold.

“The bishops and the Bible are not signaling any sort of change in the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus. None whatsoever,” Mary Sperry, who oversees Bible licensing for the bishops, told Reuters.

Before publication, the changes were approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The new volume, called the New American Bible Revised Edition, will come out in a variety of paper and digital formats, including as a cellphone app.



A pair of Christmas booties. Using the word “booty” to mean “plunder” has become impractical, as other connotations have overtaken its original meaning, religious scholars say.

INTERFAITH NEWS



The heart of the person before you in a mirror, see there your own form.—Shinto

INTERFAITH COOPERATION IN EGYPT

Many in the interfaith movement worldwide observed how the demonstrations in Egypt that ultimately unseated President Mubarak displayed both a commitment to nonviolence and striking interfaith cooperation. Frank Fredericks of World Faith wrote in the *Washington Post*:

The protests have demonstrated explicit interfaith components. It was only a few weeks ago that Egyptian Muslims attended Christmas mass with their Christian neighbors and friends as human shields after the deadly attack on a Coptic church. Mohamed El-Sawy, whose cultural center has hosted World Faith Cairo events, said of faith relations in Egypt, "We either live together or we die together." Returning the favor, Christians stood guard at mosques across Egypt while their Muslim friends finished their Friday prayers before the day's protests. When a few demonstrators began chanting "Allahu Akbar," others convinced them to join together: "Muslim, Christian, we're all Egyptian!"

INTERFAITH COMES TO THE IPAD

A recent article in the San Jose Mercury highlighted the ways that the iPad and iPhone are now being used by religious people from the controversial Roman Catholic Confession app, to sacred scriptures, to the Sabbath Manifesto, which uses smart phones to allow users to tweet and text their contacts to allow users to observe a "Sabbath" unplugged from the high-tech whirlwind. But what may be the first truly interfaith app has just been released by ING, the San Jose-based educational outreach organization with affiliates throughout the U.S. that promotes interfaith dialogue and education about world religions with their Muslim and Interfaith Speakers Bureaus. [FaithNews--Multifaith News and Events](#) provides updated news on religious pluralism, a calendar indicating religious observances of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, and brief introductions to the basics of each of those traditions. Links to sources like Wikipedia and Beliefnet allow more in-depth learning. It's a must-have for anyone in interfaith work who uses iPhone or iPad (and it's FREE!).

SPIRITUALITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE SERIES CONTINUES

The Renewal of Dialogue: the Religious Renewal of Interreligious Relations

Presenter: Jacob Sherman Ph.D, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the California Institute for Integral Studies

Dr. Sherman will consider the way that interreligious dialogue is being reinvigorated in the 21st century by a new appeal to the particularity of religious traditions.

Tuesday, March 15, 2010, 7:00-9:00 pm

Interfaith Center at the Presidio

The Spirituality and Social Justice Series is co-sponsored by the Interfaith Center, the California Institute of Integral Studies Chadhuri Center for Contemplative Practice and the Knights of Saint Francis Porziuncola Nuova.

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES



March:

6	Cheesefare Sunday--Orthodox Christian Transfiguration Sunday--Christian
7	Clean Monday--Great Lent begins--Orthodox Christian
8	Shrove Tuesday--Christian
9	Ash Wednesday--Lent begins--Christian
13	Orthodox Sunday--Orthodox Christian Birthday of L. Ron Hubbard--Scientology
17	St Patrick's Day--Christian
19	Magha Puja Day--Buddhist Saint Joseph's Day--Christian
20	Equinox Purim--Jewish Ostara--Wicca/Pagan northern hemisphere Mabon--Wicca/Pagan southern hemisphere Holi--Hindu Hola Mohalla--Sikh
21	Norouz (New Year)--Persian/Zoroastrian Naw Ruz (New Year)--Baha'i
25	Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary--Christian
28	Khordad Sal (Birth of Prophet Zarathushtra)--Zoroastrian

[Interreligious Calendar events are taken from the [Multifaith Action Society](#) Multifath 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.

Spirituality and Social Justice: A New Lecture Series

Co-sponsors:

- The Chaudhuri Center for Contemplative Practice, Interreligious Dialogue, and Social Justice
- Interfaith Center at the Presidio
- Knights of Saint Francis of the Porziuncola Nuova

Third Lecture

The Renewal of Dialogue: the Religious Renewal of Interreligious Relations; with Jacob Sherman Ph.D

Tuesday, March 15, 2011, 7:00PM-9:00PM

Presidio Chapel

at the Presidio of San Francisco

Building 130, Fisher Loop , the Presidio



Free admission: suggested donation \$10

The importance of interreligious dialogue—for negotiating issues of justice, diversity, and peacemaking, both at home and abroad – is more apparent in the twenty-first century than perhaps ever before. This talk will consider the way that interreligious dialogue is today being reinvigorated by a new appeal to the particularity of religious traditions. Rather than minimizing religious differences, the most extraordinary examples of dialogue today encourage participants to plunge deeply into their own respective religious traditions, even into those places where they most disagree, for it seems that only in this deep plunge are the transformative and liberative energies released into the very act of dialogue.

About the presenter

Jacob Sherman is Assistant Professor and core faculty in Philosophy and Religion at the California Institute of Integral Studies. He received his PhD in Philosophical Theology from the University of Cambridge and was previously a Visiting Lecturer in Philosophy of Religion at King's College London. He is the editor, with Jorge Ferrer, of *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies*, and his writings have appeared in journals such as *Religious Studies*, *Modern Theology*, and the *Heythrop Journal*.



Coming Event Highlights . . .

☞ **SUNDAY FORUM—SPECIAL MARCH SERIES**
Sunday, March 6, 4:00-4:45 pm
What is Prayer?—led by Amanda Nelson
First Unitarian Universalist Murdock Room



☞ **TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**
Sunday, March 6, 5:00 pm worship
First Unitarian Universalist Chapel



☞ **ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE**
Wednesday, March 9, 7:30 pm worship
First Unitarian Universalist Chapel



☞ **RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES—HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
Sunday, March 13, 2:00-4:30 pm
First Unitarian Universalist Chapel
(Second Sunday School for the kids)

☞ **WORSHIP TEAM MEETING**
Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 pm
Church Office--1537 Franklin St., Suite 201

☞ **THIRD SATURDAY SING**
Saturday, March 19, 10:00 am
Orion's home—23A Baker St.

☞ **FULC VOLUNTEERS AT SAN FRANCISCO FOOD BANK**
Sunday, March 20, 1:30 pm
900 Pennsylvania Avenue

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)

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Orion Pitts

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orion@fulc.com

2010-2011 Council:

Jacob Johnson	President@fulc.com
Kirk Pessner	Treasurer@fulc.com
Terri Bogaards	Secretary@fulc.com
Tamara Alliston	Dana McDonald

NOTE:

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

Wednesday at 12 noon

of the week of publication. Items submitted after this time may not be included in that week's edition.

Happy Birthday



Mar. 6:
 Russ Miller

Mar. 9:
 Suzanne Mawhinney

Mar. 28:
 Kim Connor

Apr. 4:
 Marilyn Pearson

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Presider	Pastor Susan Strouse
Greeter	Your Name Here
Council Rep	Jacob Johnson
Cantor	FULC Musicians
Worship Assistants	Dana & Sophia
Refreshments/Bread	Dana & Sophia

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR MARCH 13

Presider	Pastor Susan Strouse
Greeter	Your Name Here
Council Rep	Terri Bogaards
Cantor	Daniel Eickmann
Worship Assistants	Barrow family
Refreshments/Bread	Barrow family

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



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 Pastor Susan. Please do not ask members for money, rides, phone use, or food—ask only Pastor Susan.