



Keeping in Touch

first united
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Established 1886
Sep. 16, 2011

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.

www.fulc.com

QUOTATION OF THE WEEK

Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.—Wendell Berry



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Susan Strouse

Why do we observe the Season of Creation?

The Christ Connection (from www.seasonofcreation.com)

The season of Creation is part the heritage of mainstream Christian worship. There is no break from the gospel as the core of our faith. Nor do the liturgies reflect a New Age orientation. Christ is at the heart of our celebrations. The cosmic Christ is the new life at the core of creation. In the season of Creation we celebrate Christ together with creation, we face the ecological crisis with Christ, and we serve Christ in the healing of creation.

A Charter for the Season of Creation

In our worship during the season of Creation we:

- ▲ **Celebrate** Earth as a sacred planet filled with God's vibrant presence.
- ▲ **Unite** with all creation in praising the God of creation.
- ▲ **Confess** our sins against creation and empathize with a groaning creation.
- ▲ **Embrace** our kin in creation as our extended family.
- ▲ **Proclaim** the good news that the risen Jesus is the cosmic Christ who fills and renews all creation.
- ▲ **Gather** at the eucharist to receive the healing power of Christ that extends to all creation.
- ▲ **Go forth** on a mission to be partners with Christ in the healing of creation.

Blessings,
Pastor Susan

This week on *PS* (Pastor Susan's blog):
9/11 Observance: The Difference between SF & NY: Part II
<https://progressivechurch.wordpress.com>

These are the websites I mentioned last week about taking action.

Click for free:

http://www.ecologyfund.com/ecology/donate_plant_tree.html

<http://www.landcareniagara.com/>

<http://www.care2.com/click-to-donate/rainforest/>

Donations:

<http://www.plantabillion.org/> The Nature Conservancy

<http://www.handsofactionblog.com/2011/05/25/plant-a-tree/> Hands of Action Uganda

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 the Season of Creation—Wilderness Sunday

*Spirit of God, groaning in creation,
attune our spirits to your cries
and the cries of all creation
longing for liberation
and the renewal of planet Earth. Amen*



from <http://www.seasonofcreation.com>

- ✦ for the Peace of God to be made manifest in our world:
 - ∞ for the people of the Horn of Africa, suffering as a result of drought
 - ∞ for the liberation movements of Libya, Egypt, Syria
 - ∞ for Heather Hargraves and the work of the Peace Corps in Uganda
 - ∞ for environmental protection movements throughout the world

- ✦ for the Wisdom of Christ to be made manifest in our communities:
 - ∞ for a bountiful harvest and sharing from community gardens
 - ∞ for *SF Care, SF Night Ministry, SAGE, Welcome*, and all who serve the needs of our city
 - ∞ for the *SF Interfaith Council, the SF Opera*, and all who attend our 9/11 observance

- ✦ for the Power of the Spirit to be made manifest in our congregation and beyond:
 - ∞ for Roger Creet, at Atherton Health Care in Menlo Park
 - ∞ for Alan Pearson, at San Francisco Towers
 - ∞ for Barbara, Marilyn, Daryl, John Patrick*, Kevin, and all in need of healing
 - ∞ for our upcoming church council meeting

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

*Cards and letters of support can be sent to John Patrick Williams at 4100 3rd Street, San Francisco 94124

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.



MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

Each Sunday we will be putting together monthly packets for our homebound members. During each month a card will be available for signing. You are also encouraged to include pictures and stories of things going on in your life. We will also ask for news from theirs, as well as information about what we might be able to do for them. This will be sent at the end of the month. Then, once a season, we will put together a more extensive gift package, possibly with artwork from our kids.

For more information, see James Alexander or Pr. Susan.

OUR COMMUNITY

LIFE AT FIRST UNITED—News & Information

DISCOVERY GROUP BEGINS THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- WHEN:** This Sunday @3:00
WHERE: First Unitarian Kincaid Room
WHO SHOULD COME: Newcomers and long-timers at First United
WHAT WILL WE DISCOVER: What does it mean to be a part of this First United community?
WILL THERE BE REFRESHMENTS?: Of course!



THE SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation challenges us to re-orient our relationship with creation. While the challenge may have been provoked by the current ecological crisis and a growing awareness of our place in the web of creation, the origins of our re-orientation lie deep in our Christian tradition, especially our biblical heritage. We are challenged to return to our biblical roots to rediscover our intimate connections with creation. We return to see ourselves again as part of the very Earth from which we are made.

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Sep. 11: 1 st Sun. in Creation | <i>Forest Sunday</i> |
| * Sep. 18: 2 nd Sun. in Creation | <i>Wilderness Sunday</i> |
| * Sep. 25: 3 rd Sun. in Creation | <i>River Sunday</i> |
| * Oct. 2: 4 th Sun. in Creation | <i>St. Francis of Assisi / Blessing of the Animals</i> |
| * Oct. 9: 5 th Sun. in Creation | <i>Climate Sunday</i> |
| * Oct. 16: 6 th Sun. in Creation | <i>Earthquake Sunday</i> |
| * Oct. 23: 7 th Sun. in Creation | <i>Land Sunday</i> |

UPDATES:

LISA PEARSON (VIA EMAIL MESSAGE FROM MARILYN):

Don't know how I can get there but will try. Thought you would enjoy sharing HER joy!! She was selected out of 22 on Sunday reading her poem about Nick awaiting his new yellow school bus and something about her own crazy life.
mare

From: Lisa
Subj: Save the Date for November 10

Hi Everyone!
*You are invited to the LIVE event of **Writers Read!** sponsored by the Oak Park Writer's Group. It's on **Thursday, November 10, from 7-9 PM** in the Oak Park Main Library. There will also be a short awards ceremony for the teens who won the poetry/prose contest sponsored by OPWG.*

*Writers who are reading that evening include: Mary Anne Mohanraj, Daniel Meyer, Vanessa Ellis, Mary Lou Edwards, Victor Yipp, Marita Zeller, and **Lisa Pearson**.....*

I hope to see you there.... Light refreshments will be available... and it's free...

There should be some publicity in the near future.....

Wheeee,
Lisa

Certificate of Merit

On behalf of San Francisco AIDS Foundation
and 48 Bay Area AIDS Service Organizations,
this certificate is presented to

First United Lutheran Church

for outstanding achievement as a Team for the
25th annual AIDS Walk San Francisco.

Total Amount Raised as of August 12, 2011: \$4,156



Created and produced by MZA Events. AIDS Walk: Founder/Producer: Craig R. Miller. © MZA Events, 2011

MULTIFAITH RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVANCES

September

- 14 Elevation of the Life Giving Cross - Holy Cross Day - **Christian**
- 23 Equinox
- Mabon * - **Wicca/Pagan** northern hemisphere
- Ostara * - **Wicca/Pagan** southern hemisphere
- 27 Meskel - **Ethiopian Orthodox Christian**
- 28-
- Oct 5 **Navaratri ** - Hindu**
- 29-30 **Rosh Hashanah * - Jewish**
- 29 Michael and All Angels - Christian



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.

This Sunday's Readings

Season of Creation—Wilderness Sunday



FIRST READING—Exodus 16:2-15

After their miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites pressed on into the wilderness.

It is written . . .

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of YHWH in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Then YHWH said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was YHWH who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of YHWH, who has heard your complaining against YHWH. For what are we, that you complain against us?" And Moses said, "When YHWH gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because YHWH has heard your complaining—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against YHWH."

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to YHWH, who has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of YHWH appeared in the cloud. YHWH spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am YHWH your God.'"

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that YHWH has given you to eat."

This Sunday's Readings—continued

SECOND READING—Romans 8:18-27 “The Groaning of Creation”

The Gospel message of this text makes it clear that human beings are not alone in waiting for liberation. The whole creation is longing for that day as a mother about to give birth.

It is written . . .

Indeed, I consider the sufferings of the present to be nothing compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. All creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God. Creation was subjected to transience and futility, not of its own accord, but because of the One who subjected it—in the hope that creation itself would be freed from its bondage to decay and would come to share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that from the beginning until now, all of creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth. And not only creation, but all of us who possess the firstfruits of the Spirit—we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

For in hope we were saved. But hope is not hope if its object is seen. Why does one hope for what one sees? And hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance.

The Spirit, too, comes to help us in our weakness. For we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who knows everything in our hearts, knows perfectly well what the Spirit is saying, because her intercessions for God's holy people are made according to the mind of God.

GOSPEL—Matthew 3:15-4:1 “Jesus in the Wild of the Wilderness”

When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit that fills all of Earth now fills Christ in a special way. In response, Jesus retires to the wilderness to connect with creation.

It is written . . .

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. John tried to dissuade Jesus, saying, “I should be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?!” But Jesus replied, “Leave it this way for now. We must do this to fulfill all righteousness.” So John reluctantly consented.

Immediately after Jesus had been baptized and was coming up out of the water, the sky suddenly opened up and Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and hovering over him. With that a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Own, my Beloved, on whom my favor rests.”

Then Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil.





REFLECTIONS ON ATTENDING A CHURCH MUSIC WORKSHOP

(In August, I attended a 2-day Evangelical Lutheran Church in America music workshop in Long Beach. They are given each year around the country in various locations, and are sponsored by Augsburg-Fortress, the ELCA's publishing arm. I had attended some of these many years ago. What follows are my reflections.—Orion)

First the positive:

The clinicians and the workshops were really good. Mini-Jeff* had excellent presentations, was well-prepared, and offered up a lot of very valid and helpful stuff. It really recharged some batteries for me that have been dormant a long time. I kept thinking, “Wow—I used to know and do a lot of this stuff, and used to have this kind of input on a regular basis. I need this more often.” And John Ferguson, the organist and perhaps the heir to the Paul Manz hymn-style legacy, was truly inspiring.

Then the debatable:

Perhaps it's the “bubble” of living and working in San Francisco, but I found much of the tenor (pun intended) of the clinic to be very far removed from the reality of the nature today of the church and its worship, at least as I know and experience it in Northern CA. ALL of the clinic addressed what I assume to be a small and ever-shrinking model of what we (Lutherans who've grown up Lutheran and had the whole “college Lutheran” experience) imagined the church to be and to remain from years ago—an organ (or, sometimes, piano) and a four-part choir (or perhaps sometimes less) singing standard hymns from a hymnal (with an exciting “new” 2005 pedigree!) and performing arrangements of both well-known hymn chorale tunes, with additional instrumentalists when they're available, and once in a while throw in some spirituals and some Latino flavor in order to accommodate our increasing “multi-cultural” demographic (infrequently, of course).

Perhaps this really still is the norm in much of the country (outside my personal “bubble”), but it certainly does not address, not only the daily reality of the emerging church (and the emerging spirituality) and progressive Christianity, but neither does it acknowledge the fears and challenges that we face regularly: the phenomenon of the “American Idol-ization” of worship (the praise band, the supplanting of the centrality of word & sacrament with pop-concert style performance, the appeal to the lowest common denominator of musical integrity vs. the striving toward the highest artistic and, ultimately, the most deeply spiritual and satisfying, ideals); the broadening of our spiritual understanding through, and embrace of, our sisters and brothers of non-Christian faith traditions; my brother's recent disappointments and frustrations attempting to find a “Lutheran” church—and pastoral leadership—that has not completely mangled, debased, or erased the rich spiritual heritage of the liturgy.

No—the clinic planners/presenters either do not know of the pervasiveness of these phenomena, or perhaps just choose to ignore them in the hope that they will just go away. Or maybe it's true that I'm simply unaware of life outside California; however, I've had a few experiences in other locations that indicate otherwise. But it pointed up for me very acutely just how true it is that First United, its mission and its practice, are in fact unique. I forget that, and it's good to get away and be reminded of our very distinctive, vital, and necessary mission.

P. S. Perhaps the most telling observation regarding the clinic is this: I'm 60, and of the 35-or-so clinic attendees, perhaps no more than 3 were not within my age range or older.

**Orion had remarked in an earlier email to Pastor Susan that the young clinician, Chris Aspaas, on the faculty of St. Olaf College, kept reminding him of someone; and then it hit—he was Jeff Johnson! A few slight modifications physically and in age, but the facial expressions, voice, mannerisms, hand gestures, delivery, sense of humor, and even his looks were very much like Jeff.*

FALL 2011

Celebrate our "Connection in Service"

District C Conference

Sunday, October 16th 2-4pm



Special Opportunity:

To offer our support for the

ELCA Malaria Campaign/Lutheran Malaria Net Initiative

We will gather a special offering in support of this service outreach to the World community.

http://lwe.org/site/c.dnJCKIOYIqI6G0/0_7536285/0_981D/Lutheran_MalariaNetInit.htm

<http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-MalariaCampaign/Malariaources/Video.aspx>

Come and hear what's new in our Sierra Pacific Synod and in the greater ELCA.

Bishop Mark Holmerud will be our special guest. Meet Jose Luis La Torre Cuadros, our new Assistant to the Bishop, Sacramento

Learn about the Churchwide Assembly 2011 initiatives and how the reorganization of our Synod is progressing. Ask your questions and get the information your congregation needs.

Do the business of your Conference including:

- o Electing nominees to Churchwide Assembly 2013
- o Electing nominees for other Synod and Discipling Team positions

Other information:

All clergy and representatives from each congregation or ministry are strongly encouraged to attend. Each congregation is entitled to three voting members, but more people from your congregation or ministry are welcome to attend. Coffee and refreshments will be provided.

Conversation with Bishop Mark Holmerud



Save the Date

When?	Where?
Sunday October 16 th 2-4pm	St. James Lutheran Church 993 Estudillo Ave San Leandro

Questions, comments, ideas – email your Dean:

South Alameda Conference: Pastor David Beard

pastordave@trinitypleasanton.org

San Francisco Conference: Pastor Susan Strouse

smstrouse@juno.com

East Bay Conference: Pastor Mary Stein-Webber

casbaydean@gmail.com



In wildness is the preservation of the World—Henry David Thoreau

Scenes from last Sunday's 9/11 Remembrance Event:



More photographs by Eric Slomanson from the 9/11 "Opera in the Park" event can be found at <http://www.slomphotos.com/galleries/OperaInTheParkSFIC>

Honoring Spirits of Place

Saturday–Sunday, October 22-23, 2011; \$75; First Unitarian-Universalist Church

We invite you to join nearly 20 ceremonial leaders and teachers of diverse backgrounds for a full weekend of embodied learning, interfaith dialogue, and co-creative ritual around the theme of honoring spirits of place. Meetings take place at the church on Friday and various outdoor locations in San Francisco on Saturday. Please consider joining us in this gathering of interfaith exchange and earth healing. For more information visit:

www.earthmedicine.org/2011-conference or contact info@earthmedicine.org.



Coming Events:

☞ **NEW DISCOVERY GROUP 1ST SESSION**
Sunday, September 18, 3:00-4:30 pm
First Unitarian Kincaid Room

☞ **SUNDAY DISCUSSION GROUP**
Sunday, September 18, 3:30-4:30 pm
First Unitarian Courtyard

☞ **SEASON OF CREATION—WILDERNESS SUNDAY**
Sunday, September 18, 5:00 pm
Worship in the First Unitarian Chapel



☞ **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**
Tuesday, September 20, 7:00 pm
Jacob Johnson's Medical Office—450 Sutter

☞ **THURSDAY EVENING DISCUSSION GROUP**
Thursday, September 22, 7:00 pm
Peet's Coffee at Van Ness & Bush

☞ **"NAME THE NEWSLETTER" TEAM MEETS**
Sunday, September 25, 3:30 pm
First Unitarian Chapel

☞ **SEASON OF CREATION—RIVER SUNDAY**
Sunday, September 25, 5:00 pm
Worship in the First Unitarian Chapel



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
 email: info@fulc.com

Pastor Susan Strouse
 Office Hours:
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Orion Pitts
 Music Director & Office Administrator
orion@fulc.com

2010-2011 Council:
 Jacob Johnson President@fulc.com
 Steve Johnson Treasurer@fulc.com
 Terri Bogaards Secretary@fulc.com
 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 submitted after this time may not be included in that week's edition.



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



Sep 20:
 Troy Boyer

Oct. 3:
 Inger Larsson
 Noelle Hart

Oct. 7:
 Pastor Jay Wilson

Oct. 12:
 Margie Jang

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Prsident	Pr. Susan Strouse
Council Rep	Steve Johnson
Cantor	Steve Johnson
Worship Assistant(s)	Margie & Steve
Refreshments/Bread	Margie & Steve

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR SEPTEMBER 25

Prsident	Pr. Susan Strouse
Council Rep	Jacob Johnson
Cantor	Nicole Bohn
Worship Assistant(s)	Pam Hargraves
Refreshments/Bread	Pam Hargraves/ Marge & Tom Peterson

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

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.