

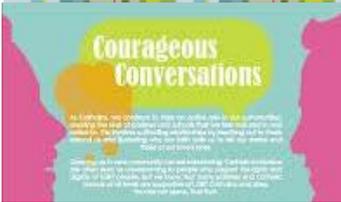


FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

BY REV. JENNIFER CHANNIN



I didn't plan for my first year of ministry here to include coordinating a congregation-wide conversation on racism. In fact, I'd heard over and over again from colleagues and teachers that one should refrain from attempting big changes or starting risky new initiatives during one's first year of ministry.

But the world certainly doesn't bend itself to my plans! This fall, protests erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, after a young black man, Michael Brown, was shot and killed by a police officer. Over the next few months, similar incidents from around the country made headlines and more protests sprang up. Black Lives Matter, a movement that was started in 2012 after the shooting of Trayvon Martin, became the rallying cry for sharing stories of racial injustice across the internet. For the first time since I can remember, the term "systemic racism" has been discussed in mainstream as well as in activist circles.

Times like these demand a response from faith communities. Rev. Kathleen, Adam, and I have been talking about systemic racism, police brutality, and discrimination in our sermons, and we've heard many reactions from the congregation. Reactions ranging from, "Finally! Let's get out there and do something!" to "I need to learn more about this!" to "I don't agree with this and I won't be coming back to church."

Racism is a divisive topic, and even for those who agree that systemic racism is a problem that ought to be addressed, it can be an uncomfortable topic to discuss. Some of us were raised to believe that it's "impolite" to talk about race. Some of us were taught that the best way to erase racism is to pretend we don't notice race at all. But I suspect that for many of us, our discomfort is harder to pinpoint because it's not rational—it's deep and emotional. We might be afraid that we'll hurt others by saying something offensive or inappropriate. We might have been punished, or seen others punished, for daring to point out racism.

It's not enough to engage our intellects to better understand the systems of racism in society. It's not enough to engage our feet and our hands to join the efforts to change those systems. We must also engage our hearts, our emotions—and that takes courage.

This spring, First UU is launching a new kind of small group discussion called Courageous Conversations. The purpose of Courageous Conversations is to give us a way to come together when important but uncomfortable issues arise, and to explore these issues through open-hearted sharing and listening to one another.

Each Courageous Conversation will have a facilitator and guidelines to ensure there's open and compassionate communication that aligns with our church covenant. Like the Telling Our Stories groups that met a few years ago, Courageous Conversations will be spaces for reflection and spiritual deepening, rather than debate or trying to seek uniformity of opinion.

I hope you'll sign up! You must RSVP for a particular meeting time. We're limiting each group to 15 people. Several meeting times are available during April and May so you can find one that fits your schedule. To sign up, you can go to the Adult Religious Education page on our church website, or find the sign-up sheets on the patio after the services on Sundays. Contact Jennifer@firstuusandiego.org with any questions.

Also in this issue:

- Hope, Renewal and Beginnings: Rev Kathleen Owens [Pg 2](#)
- April's Sermon Messages [Pg 2](#)
- Going to All Church Camp [Pg 3](#)
- Dropbox [Pg 4](#)
- A Community of Care for the Aging [Pg 5](#)
- "Wonder Girl of the Twentieth Century"—Helen Keller [Pg 6](#)
- Jim and Betty Grant [Pg 7](#)



Hope, Renewal and Beginnings

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

Although the changing climate has made our weather more unusual and unpredictable, spring is in the air. I love this season - the citrus trees are flowering outside of the office building and the aroma wafting in the air when I arrive in the morning is a sweet greeting. I'm reminded of Denise Levertov's poem, "[Beginners](#)," with its closing line, "so much is in bud." The poem talks about all that has just begun, all we've imagined, with all we've planted that is yet to be. And it reminds us of how we can't give up or give into despair, so much is in bud.

This is how I feel about our church community. With all the transition we've experienced, with all we're hoping for, with all the work we're doing, so many seeds were planted throughout last summer, fall and winter months that now we are beginning to see some buds appear. More families are finding this community and there's a deeper sense of welcome to many, including military service members, their families and veterans. There's a greater longing for our justice work to be grounded more deeply in our values—embedded in a universal love.

Spring offers a time of hope and of renewal. Our worship theme this month is resurrection. This is an essential theological concept for our Christian cousins and a vital one within our own tradition too, as we are all, from time to time, in need of resurrection, of starting life anew. Our Easter services at both campuses will celebrate the flower communion. You're invited to participate in this ritual by bringing a flower to church on Sunday, April 5. What is beginning to bud in your life? How might being in this community—through services, meditation groups, classes, and more—help you flower into your best self? I look forward to all that will rise up as we continue to create community, nurture spiritual growth and act on our values to help heal the world.

Kathleen

April Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus: Sunday, 9:30a and 11:30a
(ASL Interpretation)

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

The **April Transformational Theme** is **Resurrection**

Sunday, April 5: Easter

Hillcrest Services—

"Easter Service with Flower Communion and Wheel of Life,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister,
and Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant
Minister

South Bay Service—

"Easter Service with Flower Communion and Wheel of Life,"

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister,

Sunday, April 12:

Hillcrest Services—

"Earth Day: Not Waiting for a Miracle,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister
and the Climate Justice Team.

South Bay Service—

"I've Been Here Before,"

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister,

Sunday, April 19:

Hillcrest Services—

"A Challenge: Being Mortal,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Multigenerational Service—

"Earth Day: Not Waiting for a Miracle,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister
and the Climate Justice Team.

Sunday, April 26:

Hillcrest Services—

"I've Been Here Before,"

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister,

South Bay Service—

"A Challenge: Being Mortal,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.



GOING TO ALL CHURCH CAMP

BY DR. MELISSA JAMES, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Bent Trout Lake is the campground that hosted the great majority of my family vacations growing up. It is where I saw my first shooting star. It is where I caught a fish bigger than my arm. It is where I learned how to perfectly brown a marshmallow. It is where, as a child, I learned how to sit contentedly surrounded by nature and a host of adults who cared about me and who just wanted to be together.

Camping was time away in my family's own little world, where the only thing competing for our attention was our individual desires and the wish to be all together as a family. There was plenty of time to indulge in both. Nature became our playground, our imagination was our activity director, and our creativity was a saving grace that turned even the stormiest of nights (this was Minnesota in the summer, after all) into a chance to laugh and connect with one another. I am so grateful to have grown up camping and attending camps.

This will be my first time joining First Church at All Church Camp at [Camp de Benneville Pines](#), May 29-31st. I have to admit I am counting down the days. Our theme this year, "Interconnecting," is a play on the seventh UU principle which calls us to respect the interdependence of all creation.

When I think about this theme, there are three strong reasons I am drawn to camp:

In a world facing grave ecological threats, spending a weekend at camp gives us the opportunity to reconnect with nature and listen to her call. Perhaps our time in nature will be a time of healing, a time of seeking forgiveness, and of renewing our spirit and commitment to work for justice for the earth.

Living in a world that is ever more connected electronically, often leaves individuals and families feeling disconnected.

Camp gives us the opportunity to disconnect from those things that isolate us, so we can unplug and connect with each other.

Camp creates spaces and ways for people of all generations to create, play, sing, talk, and simply be together. When I saw my grandparents' truck pull up to our campsite, it didn't really matter what we were doing together; simply having three generations together made everything richer and more meaningful. All Church Camp is one of the most immediate ways we live out being a multi-generational community.

The All Church Camp is a weekend of learning, creating, exploring, and interconnecting. There are workshops, crafts, special offerings just for kids, hikes for all ages, and so much more. Whether you choose to participate in one of the many scheduled activities, spend time on your own, or sit on the porch and knit all weekend, there is a place for you at All Church Camp.

If you have been to camp before, please share your excitement with someone new and invite them to join us! If you have not been to camp, please join us! No camping experience is necessary (and you don't even have to sleep in a tent!). All ages are invited. Scholarships are available and no individual or family will be turned away due to cost.

Can't join us? I invite you to take up Rev. Kathleen's lead and challenge: she will be sponsoring a scholarship for someone else to attend and invites you to do the same. Contact [me](#) for more information.



Camp de Benneville Pines

DROPBOX

BY KATH HILLERY

Have you ever tried to email a photo to a friend and you weren't able to because the file was too large? Have you ever misplaced a thumb drive or other portable file-storing device? Have you ever had a document you wanted to share with several people so you could collaborate on it, and it got cumbersome mailing it back and forth? If so, there is a convenient solution, and it can be free. It's referred to as cloud storage, and it involves storing data on remote servers, or computers, that are accessed through the internet.

There are many options for cloud storage. It seems that every company with a significant investment in the internet offers it. The three most popular cloud services are Google Drive, Dropbox, and Apple iCloud Drive. Each of these services allow you to store files on their servers and access them through a computer, a phone, or a tablet, anywhere there is internet access. Apple allows each user one gigabyte for free, while Dropbox allows twice that. Google drive offers 15 gigabytes without charge. Each gigabyte holds the data that could be contained in 10 yards of books stored side-by-side, so these options all provide an impressive amount of storage. In addition, Dropbox offers more free storage space if you recruit others to join Dropbox.

Getting started isn't complicated. To begin, you must establish an account secured with a password. Once the account is established, your computer will show an additional storage option in the file manager, so you can store things to that location. When you're away from your computer, you can access your files through the service's internet portal.

Your storage can be organized into folders and subfolders. It's possible to completely hide files and folders from others, while at the same time, other files can be visible to everyone on the internet. There is also a middle ground, where you can grant access to only those you've invited by sending them a link to the file. Further options allow you to grant some people permission to edit a file, while others may only comment, and still more are only allowed to view the file.

The benefits of using cloud storage are many. The files are automatically backed up, you can share large files, and you determine the desired level of access for each person. In addition, the fact that it's available across platforms makes it very convenient to use. I can work on a file on my computer at home, store it on the cloud, access it at work, and then view it on my tablet when I'm at church. It provides all the portability of a thumb drive with none of the risk of loss or damage to the drive.

The church uses Dropbox for storing some of its public files. One folder holds photographs from Dining for Dollars events. The link to this folder is https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5vxpu840ss79tna/AADhY3yd7l8p_bnDqAfgmWEwa?dl=0. By clicking this link and creating your own Dropbox account, you can share pictures from your Dining for Dollars events, and help the church get more free data storage.

I hope some of these hints will help you share your photos and documents with more ease and safety.



iCloud Drive.

A COMMUNITY OF CARE FOR THE AGING

BY MARLA ENGLISH

In her [address](#) to the General Assembly in Rhode Island in 2014, [Reverend Esther Hurlburt](#), a Unitarian Universalist Community Minister with a passion for working with, and advocating for, people who are aging reminded us that the "silver tsunami" has hit the shores of many of our UU congregations. First Church is certainly not exempted from this.

Many of our elders are doing well, and are vital members of our loving community. For them, aging is another natural and welcomed developmental task. I look to them to model this time of life for me. But I also know from my own experience that the later years are not so easy for others, and is often a time when many long-time congregants drift away from the church's support.

As a licensed therapist and leader on the Caring committee, I'm concerned about the pain, confusion, and stress that occurs for some of our elders during the aging process. Some congregants suffer from isolation when they can no longer attend church services. They must deal with emotional and spiritual pain when they become infirm. They withdraw when they experience grief and loss. Family relationships become strained; folks are fearful when they must deal with the reality of caregiving, death and dying.

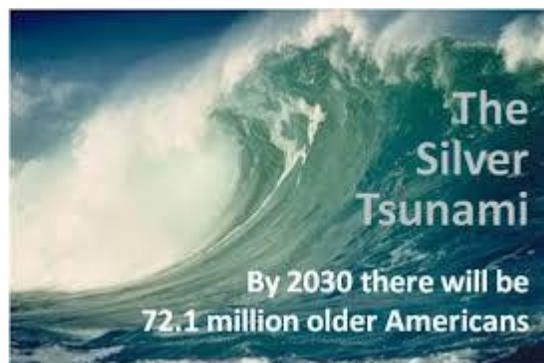
Our ministers, Rev. Kathleen Owens and Rev. Jennifer Channin, work hard to help people through these difficult times. They're available for pastoral counseling, as well as home and hospital visits. Also, lay ministers, who have been trained to provide compassionate listening after each Sunday service, or for one-on-one short term support during a congregant's transition, are available. And the [Practical Care Network](#) provides support services to church members in need of practical help such as medical equipment, meals, and rides to appointments.

And yet, the needs are growing. As another way to extend the community of care, the Caring committee has authorized funds, through the Vehslage Endowment, to support a Pastoral Counselor, an 8 hour a week part-time position. I have been blessed to be asked to fulfill this role.

I'll work closely with Kathleen to support church members, through visits to homes or hospital or rehab facilities, and to help congregants and their families discuss ongoing needs and issues. I'll identify ways the church can be of further help, and possibly address ways that congregants can re-engage with the church community.

We need your support as well. One of the challenges of this outreach is to identify those who need help. Please let Kathleen or me know about current or past congregants you know, who may benefit from a supportive visit from me, in my capacity as Pastoral Counselor.

I believe we learn to grow old comfortably by helping one another through the process and I'm grateful to be part of this needed outreach. As Unitarian Universalists, our theology of honoring human dignity and interdependence supports me in this service to my spiritual home. I know that, together, we are finding ways to support people at the end of their lives and helping to minimize the difficulties that aging brings to some in our community.



"WONDER GIRL OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY"—HELEN KELLER

BY LIZ JONES, ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

1915 was a momentous year here in San Diego and throughout the world. Tumult in Europe was in the news daily. Here in San Diego, the Panama California Exposition opened in the newly named Balboa Park. People from throughout the nation and the world were being drawn to San Diego to see its wonders. Those living here in San Diego were treated to many lectures and events made possible because of the exposition.

Sponsored by the First Unitarian Church and the San Diego Humane League, two joint lectures were held on March 18 and 19, 1915, at the Spreckels Theater, featuring Helen Keller and her teacher Mrs. John Macy (Anne Sullivan). The evening lecture was held on the 18th, and a morning lecture was held the following day. Miss Keller's lecture topic was billed as "Happiness."

The crowds flocked to hear what was labeled as "one of the most marvelous educational stories of modern times." Helen Keller lost her ability to see, hear, and, therefore, her ability to speak at 19 months of age due to an illness. At age seven, she began the difficult educational process that took her through college. The lecture began with Mrs. Macy telling the story of how Helen Keller was taught first the significance of words, then how to read and write, and eventually how to read lips and then to talk. She's quoted as saying the "manual alphabet opened Helen's mind and the spoken word lent wings to her thoughts."

Following Mrs. Macy's words, Miss Keller was brought forward. One news report stated her speaking voice was imperfect, lacking color and resonance at times, and, although disagreeable at first, soon lost its offending qualities. Interestingly, other reporters noted that to hear Helen Keller answer in her new-found

voice, a voice deep with tones and cadences, was something to remember always.

During her lecture on Happiness, Miss Keller said, "We live for each other, and the life for each other is the only life worth living." She called on the audience to "Look up to the stars and be glad at the beauty all around you and try to make something, do something, see something to gladden another. Happiness will come to you when you least expect it. Work for more love, more justice, more happiness. Love is the only happiness. There is no darkness so deep but that the sunlight of faith may not find it out."

She said "There are so many blind and deaf in their minds who have never heard nor seen the light of truth. And it is these I am now trying to seek out, to get the eyes and ears of their minds free. The fundamental evil that causes all the terrible eruptions of our life is poverty. Therefore we must get rid of poverty, and any real social work will teach the people how it can be done."



In a conversation about the war in Europe, Mrs. Macy said the issue depressed Helen greatly. Miss Keller said she was waiting for the time to come when men will lay down their arms and never take them up again at the command of King or Parliament. When asked what would bring that about, she answered without hesitation "socialism."

According to the Church Board Minutes, a committee was created to make arrangements for the Keller/Macy lecture. The minutes from the March 21, 1915 board meeting following the lecture, state the church would probably net \$700 from the lecture. Funds were to be used to increase the pay of the pastor (Rev. Howard Bard) and to pay notes due.



JIM AND BETTY GRANT

BY NANCY FISK

Jim Grant and his wife Betty are members of First Church who have lived in San Diego since 1996. Jim Grant is an affiliate minister at First Church. He assists wherever the ministers need him, which includes pastoral care, doing adult education and preaching the occasional sermon. His wife, Betty, is a storyteller, who participates in the Religious Education classes and, on occasion, in the Winter Solstice program.

Jim was raised at First Baptist Church, in Asheville, North Carolina. His church was much more open-minded than most Southern Baptist churches. Jim sang and learned to be a choir director at the church, skills he used to help put him through seminary. He and Betty met when they sang in choirs together in college and toured with those groups. They were married in 1957.

Ordained in 1960, Jim was a minister with the American Baptist Church in the Northeast, and worked with youth and campus ministries. He had 3 parishes during his career, and served on the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Through his district work with the Massachusetts Council, he started to meet UU ministers and found he liked them. One of them was the Rev. Dr. Carl Scovel, from King's Church in Boston. As a result, Jim went to 25 Beacon Street and looked over the books at the bookstore, discovering that he agreed with many of the philosophies.

After retiring as an American Baptist minister, Jim became credentialed as a UU minister, to continue his work in ministry. Betty and Jim relocated to San Diego to be closer to their daughter's family. At Christmas in San Diego, they attended Summit Church, then in La Mesa, and met Rev. Ned Wight. Their daughter works as a pediatric nurse at UCSD. Eventually, their son came to Southern California and is an assistant chancellor at the University of California in Riverside.

Before he and Betty moved to San Diego, Jim was advised to tell the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) of the UUA that he was coming. He ended up

doing consulting ministries and interim ministries in the next few years for the PSWD, in Santa Monica, San Dieguito, Rancho Bernardo, Laguna Beach, Rancho Palos Verdes, and First Church of San Diego.

Betty has her Masters in Early Childhood Education and was a lead teacher in a preschool for 34 years. After moving to San Diego, she discovered a passion for storytelling, and took all the classes that the University of San Diego offered on the subject. She often told stories wherever Jim was preaching. Before she retired, Betty taught at the USD child development center. She now teaches music and storytelling there once a week.

When asked what makes him a UU, Jim says, "I enjoy the freedom of thought. I agree with the principles. I appreciate that UUs don't have a creed—that there is no dogma in our religion. We are encouraged to help one another. I also like that the principles are built on a variety of sources, as named by the UUA." Jim has spent 60 years in the ministry and says, "Church has been my life."

What Betty liked about First Church when they first came here, was listening to Ken play the organ, seeing the tree outside the Meeting House window, and experiencing the Earth Centered Spirituality Circle program. She also enjoyed hearing the choir. She says, "We're lucky to be UU and happy to be UU."

Jim is currently hosting a Wednesday evening discussion called "Conversations with the Spiritually Curious" which is based on a book titled "Infinity in Your Hand," by William Hough. After a short talk, he opens the floor for questions from the participants. The discussion starts at 6:45 and continues until 8pm. All are welcome to attend. No registration is necessary. Apr 8, "Pitfalls"; Apr 15, "Roots and Wings"; May 6, "The Doing Good Problem"; and May 20, "A Beautiful Self".

As a part of the 'Conversations with the Spiritually Curious - Stages on the Journey', Jim Grant gave 'a biographical sketch' which may be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/122188781>.

Staff

Rev. Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister
 Rev. Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister
 Adam Dyer, Intern Minister
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations
 Dr. Melissa James, Director of Children and Family Ministry
 Daniel Ratelle, Hillcrest Music Coordinator/Adult Choir Director
 Lynn Mendoza-Khan, Youth and Children's Choir Director
 Lorelei Isidro, South Bay Music Coordinator
 Andrea Newall, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
 Roy Attridge, Handbell Ensembles Director
 Justin Murphy-Mancini, Organist and Pianist
 Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice/South Bay Ministry Teams Coord.
 Suzette Southfox, Director of Membership and Development
 Alice King, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator
 Abby Koch, Executive Administrator and Office Manager
 Käthe Larick, Youth Programs Coordinator
 Chris Christenson, Communications, Database, Adult Ed. Coord.
 Jenny Epler, Events Scheduler
 Connie Hayes, Bookkeeping Controller
 Rev. Dr. Carolyn and Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti

Board of Trustees

Tony Brumfield, President
 Claudia Lizett Lopez, Vice President
 Louise Kilnke, Treasurer
 Kath Hillery, Secretary
 Mike Moreau, Immediate Past President
 Michanne Hoctor-Thompson, Dave Karpinski, Marcia Biller, John Keasler, Carolyn Woodbury.

ONLINE E-mail & Web Addresses

FirstWords Editor & Submissions, Nancy Fisk:
nfisk1@juno.com

To be added to the E-mail List:

firstwords@firstuusaniego.org

Facilities (request for maintenance):

facilities@firstuusaniego.org

General First Church E-mail: mail@firstuusaniego.org

Scheduling of Church Property Requests:

schedule@firstuusaniego.org

Order of Service submissions: os@firstuusaniego.org

The Window submissions (Church bulletin):

[window@firstuusaniego.org](mailto>window@firstuusaniego.org)

Webmaster: website@firstuusaniego.org

Care Network: carenetwork@firstuusaniego.org

First Church Web Sites:

Main Website: <http://www.firstuusaniego.org>

South Bay Campus:

<http://www.firstuusaniego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

To view sermon video casts, click on these YouTube or Vimeo buttons:



Giving: <http://www.firstuusaniego.org/giving-overview>

Click on these Amazon Affiliate or iGive buttons for your online shopping and First Church receives a portion of the sales. Secure and private.



FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO

4190 Front Street (GPS use 298 West Arbor Drive)
 San Diego, CA 92103-2098

Phone: 619-298-9978

Fax: 619-298-9997

E-mail: mail@FirstUUSanDiego.org

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FirstWords,
 4190 Front Street, San Diego, CA, 92103.

Our web site:



On facebook:

