



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

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LOOKING GLASS THEATER: STATE FAIR!

BY NANCY FISK

In May, Looking Glass Theater (LGT) presents *State Fair*, a Rodgers and Hammerstein's production. The show is full of big musical numbers, with singing and dancing. Several of the songs are familiar ones, "It's a Grand Night for Singing," and "It might As Well Be Spring." Yaro Trujillo and Les GrantSmith are co-directors of *State Fair*. This is Yaro's first time as a director of an LGT production. Randy Brinton is the musical director, and this is his first time as musical director for an LGT show.

State Fair provides a glimpse into the life of a farming family, the Frakes, and their three-day adventure at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines in 1946. While parents Abel and Melissa are hoping to win a few blue ribbons, siblings Margy and Wayne are more interested in finding romance on the midway.

In this production, Abel and Melissa Frake are cast members Eddie Reidel and Rose Reidel, who have appeared in other LGT productions. Crystalinda White and Ian Cunningham are the



Artwork created by John Keasler

brother and sister who hope to find romance at the Fair, with Vanessa Moreno and Louis Quinn playing the love interests. They are just part of a large intergenerational cast.

Yaro Truillo has lived in San Diego for 11 years. She participated in community theater in the Bay area before coming here. She and her daughters, Aurora and Gloria, were in the LGT production of *Dorothy Meets Alice*. Yaro played the Wicked Witch, while Aurora was Dorothy, and Gloria was the Dormouse.

Yaro loved finding LGT at First UU because it was a place where she and her daughters could work on a show together. "There aren't many opportunities like that in San Diego that are free," according to Yaro. She teaches dance at the Malashock studio, and is choreographing the dances for *State Fair*. She also has a photography business, teaches art classes, and is an instructional aide at her daughter's school.

The show will be at the Hillcrest campus, on Friday and Saturday, May 4 - 5 and May 11 - 12, at 7:30 pm. There will be a matinee on Sunday, May 6, at 4:30 pm. The suggested donation for tickets is \$15 at the door, \$13 advance purchase, and \$10 for students and military. For more information contact LGT at lookingglassSD.org.



Dancers: Vanessa Moreno and Ian Cunningham,
Crystalinda White and Louis Quinn

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AGITATION THAT COMES FROM LOVE

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

I am waiting . . . some days it can already feel like spring has started . . . then a storm front moves in and winter, with needed rain, returns . . . and I'm waiting for spring again. It's hard to know when spring will finally arrive, given the changing climate, given that many buds and new leaves have already appeared.

I'm waiting, too, for another kind of spring, the kind that can burst open the closed heart, break through the cynical habits of thought. I am waiting for the time, as poet Karin Boye says in her poem "Yes, it hurts when buds burst;" I'm waiting for the time when "fear itself is compelled to let go."

For many of us, there's a lot of fear and uncertainty in our national system right now. On the surface, the worship theme of Agitation may not be the balm we're hoping for this spring. But let us not forget, agitation, while uncomfortable, can stir us to a newness we hadn't imagined before; can bring fresh insight to an entrenched system so different understanding and pathways might be created.

And, agitation that comes from Love, helps us center our conversations, thoughts, plans, and actions in a way that respects our UU Principles, and invites honest curiosity and engagement with one another. The ministry team and program staff hope the agitation and small tensions we may experience through our services and programs will urge, nudge, and move us into a brighter day, with deeper and fuller conversations, a warmer embrace of our diversity, and a celebration of a stronger community, while inviting us to reflect on who we yet can be—so we can make a bigger difference in San Diego and help heal the world in which we live.

Isn't this the reason of coming together in religious community, to grow beyond fear, and blossom into a beauty the world longs to see?

See you in services,

Faithfully,

April Sermon Messages

Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus: Sunday, 9:30 am and
11:30 am (ASL Interpretation)
South Bay Campus: Sunday, 9:30 am
(Intergenerational, Bilingual)

April's Transformational Theme is "Agitation"

April 1, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

Easter and Flower Communion

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

Rev. Ian W. Riddell, *Minister of
Music and Worship Arts*

South Bay Service—

Easter and Flower Communion

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

April 8, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Answering the Call"

Sadie Lansdale, *Intern Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Decentering"

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

April 15, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Thriving in Holy Discomfort"

Rev. Ian W. Riddell, *Minister of Music
and Worship Arts*

Rev. Bonnie Tarwater, *Affiliate
Community Minister*

South Bay Service—

"The Power of Agitation"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

April 22, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"The Power of Agitation"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Agitation in a Search for Meaning"

Rev. Jim Grant, *Affiliate Minister*

April 29, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Dismantling Patriarchy"

Rev. Tom Owen-Towle, *Minister Emeriti*

South Bay Service—

"A Bigger Container"

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*



AGITATION AND FAITH FORMATION

BY DR. MELISSA JAMES

When I was discerning my path in seminary in Chicago many years ago, I chose to pursue faith-based community organizing as a way to engage communities of faith in the work of justice. I trained with excellent people and served as an interim organizer working on housing issues on the North Side for several months. Agitation was a central tool to that work.

The model I trained in pushed their organizers and subsequently, community leaders, to dive deep into what motivated them to engage in the work. It used the tool of agitation to ask tough questions, not only to identify what made someone angry, but to turn that anger into action. Throughout the years, I've come to doubt that the sole source, or even best source of motivation, comes from anger.

The focus on anger came from a secular model of organizing that was superimposed on communities of faith. While anger is a useful emotion in an organizing setting, I firmly believe that anger too often leads to burnout. Research shows that dwelling in anger hurts our health. All people, and especially people of faith, can draw their motivation from many sources and emotions.

That said, one of the most helpful things I still hold from my faith-based organizing training is an understanding that when anger or other big emotions well up inside of us, in those places of internal agitation, those emotions signal what is important to us. It can be a sacred act to explore what agitates us.

That exploration can be the link between nurturing our spiritual growth and acting on our values to heal the world. The very act of listening to what agitates us is a form of spiritual practice. We engage in that work by finding the stillness

that allows us to reflect on our own agitation, through loud and boisterous creative work together or any number of ways.

When we talk about religious education at First Church, it is fairly well known we're not talking about memorizing doctrine or adopting dogma. What is less clear, but equally important, is when we talk of religious education, whether for children, youth, or adults, we're not talking about what classes we're offering or taking.

Like so many aspects of what we do here, we're not in the business of creating offerings for people to consume, in a special interest class removed from the community. The work of life-long faith formation requires us to discern what is important to us individually and collectively, from doing the important "homework" to

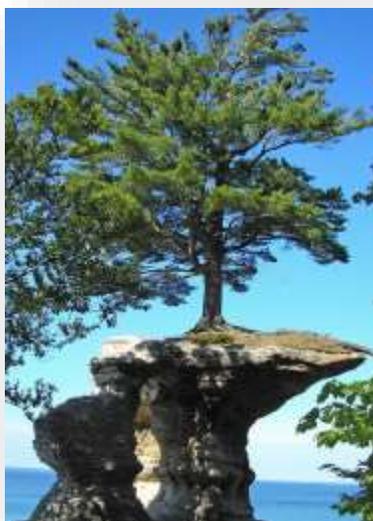
challenge our own privilege and build our foundation of knowledge, to equipping leaders, and to working together in public witness.

Over the next year, we'll be rolling out phases of our new Adult Faith Formation model. I'm deeply excited about this model because it supports us on the journey of leaning into the places where we're most agitated.

What is agitating you? How might the myriad ways we learn and grow together in this community help you go deeper - exploring how those

points of agitation help you create community, nurture your spiritual growth, and act on your values to help heal the world?

Not sure? You're not alone in that discernment. You're surrounded by a community in journey together. Not sure where to get started? Check out our Adult Religious Education or Family Ministry webpages. As always, the Adult Religious Education committee members and I are here to help you.



HOMESTRETCH SAGES AND YOUNG ADULTS MEET

BY SADIE LANSDALE, *INTERN MINISTER*

Sometimes people ask me, “Why parish ministry?” and I tell them, “Well, I like babies. I like elders. I like everybody in between. I like when they all hang out with each other.” Religious community is one of the only places where many of us experience true intergenerational community outside our own families. In February, the Rev. Lone Broussard and I hosted a Homestretch Sages program focusing on intergenerational relationships. A few young adults came with me, and the whole group listed together all the ways we could think of to say “cool.” Here’s a sample: Peachy keen, super-duper, lit, fab, great, sick, tight, right on, rad, dope, tubular, fantastic, cat’s pajamas, swell, neat, hunky dory, wonderful, terrific, awesome, neato, help, brilliant, bad, groovy, far out, bitchin’, radical, too much, boss, sweet, wicked.

We then moved on to the question “What do people assume about you based on your age?” and we answered in our age-specific groups. I’m focusing on the hurtful assumptions here.

The elders shared first.

- “People assume I can’t hear, or that I don’t know things, or that I’m embarrassed about my age.”
- “I get called ‘sweetie’ a lot.”
- Elders are often treated like they’re invisible. One shared, “If I’m with a younger person, whoever we’re talking to will just speak about me directly to them as if I’m not even there.”
- We also heard, “People think we’re stubborn, inflexible, gullible, unwilling to try or to learn new things, or uninterested in sex.”

The young adults shared next.

- “People think we’re self-absorbed, lazy, and entitled.”
- “They think we’re partying all the time, and we’re always on our phones instead of talking to each other.”
- “Sometimes people seem to think we never get lonely because we’re young.”
- From some young adults who regularly attend services here: “People think we party, sleep in on Sundays, and don’t come to church. Hello!”

- “Sometimes it’s assumed that we’re all physically able.”
- Poignantly, that section ended with “sometimes people assume that we don’t care about our elders.”

We noticed as a group that we have quite a lot in common, so we explore those commonalities next.

What do much younger and much older adults share?

- We discovered that we’re more likely than middle-aged adults to be single (not yet married, skeptical of marriage as an institution, or bereaved or divorced).
- We’re more likely to be financially vulnerable (indebted or living on fixed income).
- We’re more likely to cohabitate outside of nuclear families (roommates or assisted living, retirement homes, live-in care).
- We’re experiencing massive social transition (moving, getting married, having children, or moving to retirement homes, friends dying).

- We’re searching for meaning and purpose (unsure what to do with our lives or if we want to have a family, or making meaning after retirement).

We had some spiritual concerns in common that I interpret as common to

most people, not just older adults and younger adults:

- We love our music.
- We get lonely sometimes.
- We don’t like being put in boxes.
- We’re not afraid to speak out for what we think is right.
- We look to the future and are hopeful for change.
- We appreciate nature and we care for the earth.
- We’re looking for community and connection.
- Whatever our age, the church and the community it makes possible are deeply meaningful to us. We love this church and the home we find here.

The Sages and Young Adults left this conversation with a sense of appreciation for each other and for this place that brings us together. We hope that whoever you are, you’ll find ways to engage, with curiosity, outside your own generational bracket.



COME TO THE SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM MEETING MAY 4, 2018

BY NEWT FERRIS

The Social Justice Ministry Team (SJMT) will have their semi-annual meeting on May 4, 2018 at 6 pm in the Common Room. Come hear what members of the team have been doing this last year. Here's a sampling of recent activities. We hope you'll consider becoming involved.

The Reproductive Rights task group:

- Is actively involved with the Roe v Wade annual breakfast
- Continues to advocate for women's rights during these challenging times.

The Organizing for Justice (O4J) task group:

- Is involved in whether the church should become a sanctuary church, actively supports DREAMERS, and demonstrates for Immigrant rights.
- SOLACE (Souls Offering Loving and Compassionate Ears) visits detainees at the Otay Mesa detention facility.
- In cooperation with the San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP), members advocate for more equitable treatment of people of color by the San Diego Police Department.
- Actively supports county union workers in their negotiations with county supervisors for better pay and working conditions.
- Members will also be active in promoting issues for the upcoming elections.



The Rainbow Coalition organizes the church's participation in the Gay Pride parade.

The Uptown Shelter is staffed by our volunteers and, on Sundays, continues to accept food and clothing in the bins on the patio.

These are just some of the activities our members have been involved in. Join us on Friday, May 4 to meet your fellow congregants and discover where you can participate as part of our Social Justice Ministry Team.

The Climate Change task group:

- Attended legislative training,
- Participated in an introduction to climate change lobbying,
- Held climate chats, and
- Held an Eco-Movie night in South Bay.



EARTH DAY WEEKEND EVENT - REUNION OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

BY REV. BONNIE TARWATER

Although I was ordained by First Church eighteen years ago, as a Christian UU, there were many more opportunities for me in the United Church of Christ (UCC), so I've served as a parish minister for both UCC and UU churches in San Diego, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Michigan since that time. Currently, I'm the first person who is an affiliated community minister at First Church. As a community minister, I serve outside the regular walls of church. I have also been asked to serve on the Board of the UU Society of Community Ministers and look forward to exploring nontraditional ministry, here in San Diego and on Planet Earth.

Three years ago, I had a life transformative experience. My teacher, friend, and mentor, Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr., asked me to work on "Seizing an Alternative," an ecology conference that woke me up to the reality that we're living in the 6th extinction of life on earth. I decided to dedicate my ministry to Mother Earth and the divine feminine.

My first project with First Church is an inter-generational Earth Day weekend event, "Reunion of Science and Religion," on Saturday, April 21, from 1:30 - 8:30 pm, here at First UU. The featured speakers will be environmental leaders, Dr. Ramanathan, from Scripps Oceanography-UCSD, a preeminent climate scientist and advisor to Pope Francis, and Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr., a process theologian and philosopher. We'll be joined by the Martin Luther King Community Choir, with giant rod puppets and live music throughout the day. Suggested donation for the afternoon program and reception is \$10. Child care is available.

At 4:30 pm, Earth justice organizations will be at tables on the patio for a popcorn reception. At 5:30 pm, there'll be an Indian vegetarian community meal that explores "the oneness of

humanity," generously donated by the Sikhs. Youth and young adults are especially invited. Please RSVP for the dinner at www.earthdayreunion.eventbrite.com.



After dinner, we'll dance, because as Emma Goldman says, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

It's past time for us as a human species to bring together all that has been made separate by an immature, mechanistic, and dualist world view. All crisis is an invitation for spiritual growth and we'll not solve our current problems using the old ways of thinking that caused our planetary problems in the first place. May this reunion move us into more ecologic, interconnected, and organic ways of thinking, a new consciousness raising, a paradigm shift and more sustainable world view.

Co-sponsors of this event are SanDiego350.org and Church for Our Common Home.

San Diego 350.org is an inclusive volunteer organization devoted to inspiring a movement to prevent the worst impacts of climate change and climate injustice.

Church for Our Common Home, co-founded with my husband, Dr. Walter Rutherford, MFT, is a church and counseling center, providing artistic, religious and psychological services to awaken to the moral and ecologic crisis, as an invitation for spiritual growth, and for creating loving community with all of creation, as well as caring for our common home, Mother Earth. For more information, go to our website at www.churchforourcommonhome.com



First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

WHERE 1270 Cleveland Avenue, San Diego, CA 92103

WHERE 555 Broadway, Chula Vista, CA 91910

WHEN Thursday, 4/5/18

FROM 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Bring this flyer or show an electronic version to the cashier when you place your order and we'll donate a portion of the proceeds from your purchase. Gift card purchases and catering are not counted towards the event.

Learn more at PaneraBread.com/Fundraiser

Ordering Online? Try Rapid Pick-Up or Delivery.

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