



FirstWords

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MILITARY MINISTRY TOOLKIT

BY NANCY FISK

Last fall, an invited group at First Church field tested a new UUA curriculum called the [Military Ministry Toolkit](#). Of those who were invited, one was active duty military, two were military spouses, and several had no military affiliation.

Jaynelle Miller is a military spouse and a member of First Church who participated in the class. During the class, she had some surprising insights. The members were first asked what their childhood impressions of the military were. Jaynelle was surprised to discover that she had no exposure to the military as a child. When her husband, Justin Miller, joined the Navy, the two of them were free to create their own version of what it meant to be a military family.

This was important because the military are often seen as being very traditional and conservative. Only 5% of those in the military have a bachelor's degree. Jaynelle has her bachelor's in Psychology, while Justin has a Master's in Political Science. Because they move around so much, military families need a place wherever they are stationed that gives them a sense of belonging. Since the Millers discovered the Unitarian Universalist faith, the UU churches near where they are based have become their spiritual home.



Later in the class, the group members were led in a discussion about the differences between a just war theory, pacifism and peacemaking. Peacemaking encourages peaceful solutions to conflict, following all options, including diplomatic negotiations, before the necessity of war is considered.

Jaynelle saw the course as having a great benefit towards facilitating a conversation that encourages the airing of feelings regarding those in military service, veterans and their families.

The group gathered for the field testing was very pro-military. Jaynelle can see the benefit of hearing from those who have negative reactions to the military. And she sees it as a very necessary curriculum in those cities and hubs where there is a large military presence.

There will be a new Military Ministry Toolkit class, starting on Thursday, Feb 12. The class is 6 sessions on Thursdays in February and March, facilitated by Rev. Kathleen Owens, and Rev. Jennifer Channin. Registration is required for the class but it is open to everyone, with or without military affiliation.

The class will consider questions such as:

- Is our congregation reaching out to active duty military personnel, veterans and their families?
- Do we want to make a safe, welcoming space in our community for sharing members' stories of involvement in war or military life?
- Does our community seek to become more intentionally open and inviting to military service people, veterans, and their families?
- How do we support families who have someone serving in the military?
- How can we be welcoming to military personnel who are discovering Unitarian Universalism and are attending First Church?
- How can we invite stories of veterans and their families into congregational life?
- How can we hold honest and faithful conversations about war and peace that make room for multiple perspectives, experiences, and truths?

For more information on how to register for this class, go to the website under Adult Education or follow this link <http://www.firstuusanidiego.org/adult-religious-education-class-registration>.

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Building Partnerships

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

February is Black History Month and our worship theme this month is Love. With this important combination, I'm excited about the many directions our worship services, Wisdom Circles, and Deep Conversations will go. There is so much that is 'up' for our country around the issue of race—from the protests against police brutality, especially to young men of color, to the Black Lives Matter demonstrations, to immigration reform and the growing economic inequality that severely impacts people of color. All of these issues and more cry out for people of faith to be a voice for justice and moral action.

By working with and continuing to build partnerships with others, our UU faith can be a stronger voice in San Diego. There are times when it can be hard to discern which groups reflect the values that we can work with and which groups have an agenda that we cannot support. Sometimes the need for this knowledge can slow down our response; so the ministers, staff and lay leaders are working on some guidelines to help us be more flexible and timely in our response to current events. Because this work requires some uncomfortable conversations, we all have to remember to speak the truth in love, to honor each person's worth and dignity and experience, and act respectfully in all ways.

In the near future, there will be new programs to help us in this work. I'm very excited that the Rev. Ian Riddell will join the ministerial team at First Church in August to help create worship services that stretch and encourage us. He will lead and deepen the music program and also provide pastoral care, teach adult religious education classes, and be a specific support to the UU Men's Fellowship.

All of this—the programs, worship services and more—is grounded in Love. Though the programs and services will continue long after February, love, our Universalist heritage, will guide us always. For we are a tradition that Stands on the Side of Love.

Faithfully yours,

February 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 **February Transformational Theme** is **Love**

Sunday, February 1:

Hillcrest Services—

"Love in the 21st Century,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Love with the Proper Stranger," Adam Dyer, Intern.

Sunday, February 8:

Hillcrest Services—

"To Speak With Bravest Fire,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Exploring the Koran,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

Sunday, February 15:

Hillcrest Services— ROAR with Soul/Journey
Toward Wholeness Sunday

"Full Spectrum... Full Circle: Handing The Baton to the Next Generation."

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

South Bay Multigenerational, Standing on the Side of Love Service—

"Trans*forming Love,"

Dr Melissa James, Dir of Children and Family Ministry.

Sunday, February 22:

Hillcrest Services—

"Hand and Heart—UU and Islam,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"To Speak With Bravest Fire,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.



RITUAL, PLACE, AND BELONGING

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

Throughout my years as a religious scholar and educator I have visited many places of worship. I have delighted in the welcome I have felt as communities allowed me to bear witness to the rituals, words, and music that gave them life. Recently, I joined an evening service that began with reflection and meditation and moved into song and ritual. I was happy to be there and felt welcomed, but held onto a sense that the unfamiliar kept me at a distance. This didn't bother me. I was not there seeking connection to the community or my own spiritual renewal. Then something changed—the group moved into a ritual blessing of bread that used prayers which were familiar to me. Without even trying, the group had welcomed me into their community in an important way.

At South Bay, children are regularly involved in the full service including rituals, songs, stories, and teachings. As they have grown, these children have developed a sense of belonging and family amidst community. At Hillcrest, we also have a history of having children among us in worship. This is incredibly important, as it reminds all of us that we are more fully in community when people of all ages are connected. It is also important in the spiritual formation of children and families, as ritual and worship together creates foundational experiences, in which children gain tools for making sense of their world through religious and spiritual practices.

A part of the children's experience at Hillcrest involves circling around the chalice and reciting the affirmation (the one we call the "Children's Affirmation" at Hillcrest). This ritual centers on a key symbol for UUs as a community—the chalice. This same chalice is kindled each service as we recite the Church Aspiration and is extinguished when one among us dies.



To gather around the chalice puts the focus of the ritual on the circle that is our community, tied together by a common quest. We aim to strike the balance between creating a sense of belonging and place and fostering a sense of awe and wonder. By proclaiming our affirmation in both Spanish and English, we broaden that invitation to belonging and place. Saying the affirmation in Spanish becomes a way for many to enter into the ritual more fully, through using a language that is central to who they are. For others, this addition allows them to engage with the ritual by pushing them to learn something new.

When we began introducing the affirmation to the children in Spanish, I wondered how they would respond. I wondered if there would be a chorus of "why do we need to do this?" or "I don't want to." I was prepared for these reactions, but they didn't

come. Instead, I heard responses like, "We speak Spanish at home," and "I went to a Spanish immersion school." Their responses were a reminder to me of why we add the Spanish at Hillcrest—because our world, our context, our community is interconnected by many things, including language. This change was not about a nod to diversity in worship; it was about opening up and expanding our ritual to enter into deeper meaning together.

For those of you for whom the affirmation in both English and Spanish is comfortable, I invite you to follow our children in our affirmation boldly. For those of you for whom the affirmation is familiar in just one language, I invite you to practice with the children until you, too, can speak our affirmation boldly in both languages.

*Somos Uniaros Universalistas
Personas de mentes abiertas
Corazones amorosos
Y manos que dan la bienvenida*

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

BY HAROLD M. BERGSMAN

When I traveled to Hawaii, upon arrival, a beautiful woman draped a lei (garland) of flowers around my neck. What was she saying to me? Why use flowers in this way? Different flowers used for the lei have different meanings and there are prohibitions as well. Ancient peoples in Hawaii used strings of flowers in religious ceremonies.



How many different types of flowers did you notice? Did one or two of the flowers symbolize fertility? What does the rose symbolize? Some have called it the "flower of god" and that it relates to messianic restoration. A lotus flower has very special religious meanings to many people, including some Buddhists who see in it spiritual growth, spontaneous birth, purity and the power of creation. In Hinduism, puja can actually be translated as the "flower act". The lotus is but one among many flowers used in puja and is central in meditational devotion among Buddhists as well.



Flowers were widely used in the Sikh Gurudwara that I visited in Amritsar and other places in India. I asked a Sikh man why flowers were used in worship and he had a simple answer, "I offer flowers with a sense of devotion to God, then God is gratified. Then I feel that gratification in my life. It is a part of my puja." (Puja can be translated as worship.)



I can only hint at the meanings flowers have played in various religions. Why does the "White Madonna Lily" feature in religious weddings? Taoists use flowers to symbolize life, happiness, and fertility, and white flowers are symbolic of death at funerals. The Chinese use flowers in weddings to symbolize renewal of life and fertility with the color red --deep and powerful blood red.



The use of flowers in various religions is a most interesting topic to research, and there are surprises which include prohibitions, such as in Judaism flowers are not used in funeral observances, but are widely used during weddings. Take a little walk to the front of the meeting hall next Sunday and identify types of flowers and then go home and research what each one has meant to Unitarian Universalists throughout their fascinating history. In worship, say it with flowers.

Did you ever notice the flowers displayed on the stage in front of the pulpit on Sunday? Did you wonder why were they there? Are you familiar with the symbolism related to the individual types of flowers? How did that symbolism relate to "worship," or should it?



HASHTAGS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

BY KATH HILLERY

Perhaps you've seen or heard the rallying cry "*Je Suis Charlie*" (I am Charlie) used by supporters of free speech and the victims of the Charlie Hedbo murders. This slogan is reminiscent of John F. Kennedy's "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" ("I am a Berliner") spoken in West Berlin on the 15th anniversary of the Berlin blockade, and French reporter Nicole Bacharan's declaration "Tonight, we are all Americans," ("*Ce soir, nous sommes tous Américains*") expressed on the evening of September 11, 2001. Shortly after the attacks in Paris this last month, millions of people expressed their support on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for those affected by the attacks by using a special symbol in their messages, [#JeSuisCharlie](#), to label their comments so that others all over the world could easily find them.

The hashtag, which you already know as the pound symbol, #, is used on many social media websites to "tag", or label, topics and facilitate searches for related material. The term "hashtag" is now so popular that the Oxford English dictionary added it to their 2014 edition. Text that is preceded by a hashtag becomes a hyperlink (special text that directs the computer to another document or webpage) that can be clicked to reveal postings that have the same hashtag. It's also possible to search for a hashtag in a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Bing.

The hashtag, [#JeSuisCharlie](#), quickly became the way to communicate with others about what was happening in France. According to Wikipedia, "Within two days of the attack, the slogan had become one of the most popular news hashtags in Twitter history. Je suis Charlie was embraced worldwide, was used in music, displayed in print and animated cartoons (including *The Simpsons*), and became the new name of a town square in France."

Creating a hashtag is fairly simple. All that is required is the # symbol followed by letters or numbers. Spaces and special characters like @ and & are not allowed. Uppercase letters are equivalent to lower case letters in a hashtag, so in lieu of spaces, words can be separated using uppercase letters.

Clever use of hashtags can allow you to express a wide range of emotion or humor. Sarcasm can be conveyed using hashtags, as shown in this cartoon:



Because hashtags are hyperlinks, directing the computer to other websites, they are frequently used for advertising and promotion. This tweet contains an example of multiple hashtags, to express a lot in very few words.

The movie [#Gravity](#) is beautiful, but so terrifying!
[#NeverGoingToSpace](#)

While multiple tags can be included in a message, hashtags should be used sparingly. No more than three hashtags should be included in a single Tweet. Because Tweets are limited to 140 characters, limiting the number of hashtags allows you characters to devote to your tweet.

Now that you know about hashtags, why don't you give one a try? Open a search engine like Google, Yahoo, or Bing and type in [#UUA](#). You'll be taken to the UUA Twitter page, a webpage designed to promote UUA values and show who Unitarian Universalists are in a whole new way. You can read thoughts from UU's all over the world, and learn more about what's happening in the UU faith. That's a whole lot of excitement for four little

JOAN CUDHEA AND THE CLARA BARTON SISTERHOOD AWARD

BY DOROTHY PEARLMAN



Clara Barton,
founder of the
American Red
Cross

The Clara Barton Sisterhood award was created by the UU Women's Federation as a way to honor those women who have contributed to the UU faith and their communities and who are 80 years old. Recently, Joan Cudhea was nominated by the local UU Women's Federation chapter and was accepted for the Clara Barton Sisterhood life membership. We honor Joan for her life-long contributions to our cherished faith, her energetic willingness to contribute her gifts to benefit our church and wider communities while setting an example worthy of emulation by her fellow UUs.

Growing up in Marblehead, Massachusetts, Joan attended the Universalist church in Lynn, Massachusetts. As a teen she belonged to AUY (American Unitarian Youth) serving on its district and continental Boards. She later graduated from Wellesley College and married.



As a young wife and mother, Joan joined the UU church in Long Beach, California, where she was active in the first grade religious education (RE) program. She returned to Massachusetts and co-founded the UU Fellowship in Ipswich, growing the children's religious education program from 3 to 30 children. She attended summer sessions at the Unitarian camp on Star Island and the Universalist Ferry Beach camps to enrich the Fellowship's RE programs. Maintaining her strong New England roots, she still visits her family-owned summer home, on the shore of a pond in Massachusetts, surrounded by 68 acres of woodland placed under conservation restriction.

In the 1970's, Joan returned to California via San Francisco, joining the First Unitarian Universalist Society. She earned a Master's degree at San Francisco State University and worked as a report writer and educator in the environmental awareness community, before moving to San Diego a few years later.



In San Diego, she joined First Church and volunteered on the Membership and Book Room committees. She became a Certified Financial Planner in private practice and served as chair of the Finance and Planned Giving Committees for the church. Joan was elected to the Board of Trustees, and served as Church Secretary, and Church Treasurer. She frequently attended General Assembly (GA) as a delegate, bringing back her interest in Association programs and introducing them to our congregation. These programs included Journey Toward Wholeness and Mind the Gap, which led to our Young Adult Ministry.



Joan was appointed to the President's Council under UUA Presidents Buehrens and Sinkford. Her expertise in financial planning and concerns for the environment and social justice led her to serve on the UUA's Committee on Socially Responsible Investing, where she guided Association investments into entities in line with UU values. After two 3-year terms, she was appointed to serve on the West Regional Subcommittee on Candidacy of the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) which interviews ministerial aspirants and evaluates their fitness to serve as UU ministers. After 6 years on the MFC, she was appointed to the Starr King School for the Ministry's Board of Trustees, serving until 2014.

Joan continues her participation in many church-related and community activities. She is a member of Friends of Jung, the League of Women Voters, and a docent at the Japanese Friendship Garden in Balboa Park. She and her life partner, Tomas Firlé, frequently travel for pleasure and work to create a more peaceful world. She's a "GA Junkie," rarely missing this annual UUA event. She continues to serve our congregation in various programs in the Larger UU Connections and Social Justice Ministries.

LORELEI ISIDRO, SOUTH BAY MUSIC COORDINATOR FOR FIRST CHURCH

BY NANCY FISK



Lorelei (pronounced: Lor-e-lay) Isidro has been serving as the [South Bay Music Coordinator](#) for First Church since September 2014. Lorelei first came to First Church after researching churches online. She arrived at First Church on a Jazz Sunday that was led by Dana Decker. Impressed with

the music, she approached Dana and volunteered to sing as a soloist. After working with Dana for several months, he recommended her for the job of music coordinator at South Bay when the position became available.

Working part-time for First Church, Lorelei coordinates the musicians who perform at the South Bay service each Sunday. She also researches what would make appropriate introit and postlude music for the service. On a recent Sunday, Lorelei played the ukulele and led the hymns for the congregation, accompanied by Chase Pado on the piano and Chris Duvall on the bass. Other groups that have performed in South Bay are the [JUUL Tones](#) and a trio of handbell players.

Born in Hawaii, Lorelei attended part of primary school at Sullivan Elementary in Yokosuka, Japan and studied voice at Valhalla High School, in Rancho San Diego. Music has been a constant in her life. She started piano lessons at 9, took singing lessons at 18, and went to Grossmont College and San Diego State University as a voice performance major. She has played as an organist at church, composed music for herself, produced a children's album and taught music classes ranging from mommy and me toddler classes, private piano lessons to conducting church choirs and children's choirs. Locally, she has sung jazz vocals with John Garner, a jazz guitarist. She also has a 5 member band called [the Fish and the Sparrow](#).

She worked at a business called Music for Kids for 13 years in Rancho Bernardo. After that she had her own business, known as Music Tots, for 5 years. At present, she teaches music in Del Sur for kindergarten through 5th grade.

Lorelei has two children, a 12 year old daughter, Faye, and a 10 year old son, Royce. When not performing or teaching music, Lorelei likes to ride her bike, go hiking, draw and do arts and crafts. The beliefs that Lorelei enjoys about Unitarian Universalism is that the important thing is to be compassionate and nurture individuals to grow to be more spiritual.

Lorelei is reviving the South Bay Singers group, with a performance scheduled for Easter Sunday, April 5, in South Bay. The music will be fun and fairly easy. If you are interested in joining the South Bay Singers, email Lorelei at loreleigi@hotmail.com. She will then send links to the music you need to practice and mp3 recordings to listen to. Rehearsals will begin after the service on Sunday, Feb 22.



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