



First
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FirstWords

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JEFF PEKAREK, SOUND ENGINEER AT FIRST CHURCH

BY NANCY FISK



Jeff Pekarek is the new sound engineer at First Church. Jeff came to us through Robie Evans, our Director of Operations. He plays cello with Caprice Strings, a string quartet, although he is

most well-known for playing contrabass.

Born in San Diego, Jeff was influenced as a musician by his grandfather Pekarek, a trumpet player and his grandfather Davis, a pianist. His great-grandfather, Charles Davis, was a bassist in Riverside. Fred Benedetti, the classical guitarist, is a childhood friend and colleague.

Jeff began his musical career playing for the San Diego Symphony from 1975 -1979, at the age of 17 and was the youngest player for the symphony at that time. After the symphony, he became a co-founder of the Jackstraws, local performers of period music. He is also band leader and live sound engineer of the Electrocarpathians, a local comic folk-rock fusion act.

From 1987 to 1995, he was a music instructor for classical guitar, electric guitar, electric bass, contrabass and cello, at the Bishop's School in La Jolla. He also directed the jazz band during that time.

He worked for Canum Entertainment from 2004-2008, where he was a sound engineer, audio producer, instrumentalist and audio editor. He's been mixing live music since 1979.

Since 2004, he's been the arranger, bassist and co-producer for all recordings for a sea-shanty group called "Kick Up the Dust". He will be on tour with them in England for a couple of weeks in January.

For the past year, Jeff's been playing for the Church of Religious Science in Mission Valley. He is looking forward to mixing music and running the sound board at First Church.



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SERVICE IS OUR PRAYER

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

As part of our Sunday morning ritual, the words roll easily off our tongue that “service is our prayer.” I so deeply appreciate that our Aspiration includes these words – for I believe and know that when we are of service, great things can happen. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

There are many opportunities for service to others in this congregation. Our Practical Care Network has volunteers who offer rides to folks who need transportation to medical appointments. They take meals to those who need one while recovering from an illness, and more. You can volunteer by talking with those who staff the Caring table on the Hillcrest patio or talking with the Lay Minister at our South Bay campus each Sunday. Our Social Justice Ministry Team offers many opportunities for service with our community partners in San Diego County.

Whenever I’m feeling despair about the world around me, serving others brings me into a place of connection with others, reminds me I’m not alone and that I have the power to make a difference – not only for someone else but for myself too. Service is like that – it gets us out of ourselves and at the same time, connects us with our best self. Service widens our vision and deepens our appreciation for life.

Whatever I do, I want it to be in service of Freedom, of Justice and of Love. Most of all. I want to be in service of our values that create connection and community with more and more people in our neighborhoods. Today we’ve too many examples of service to one’s self, one’s ego, one’s personal profit. I’ve been talking with many of our visitors and new members – they’re coming to First Church to find ways to connect and to be in service to something greater than themselves.

We offer that here. Your faithful attendance and participation in this congregation, in big ways and small, are a service to many who are looking for your example. Our Aspiration is essential as we create community, nurture spiritual growth and act on our values to help heal the world. You and your service make a difference.

Faithfully yours,

February 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 [Spanish,
English])

February’s Transformational Theme is “Service”

February 5, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

“Conversation and Covenant”

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

South Bay Service—

“Cultivating Empathy”

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

February 12, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

“Cultivating Empathy”

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

“The Saving Grace of a Crisis”

Katy Swanson

February 19, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

“Belonging”

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

“And Service Be Its Prayer”

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

February 26, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

“The Call to Serve”

Tania Márquez, *Intern Minister*

South Bay Service—

“Science Fiction and Social Justice”

Alix Klingenberg, *Intern Minister*



LIVING THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

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

I've been thinking a lot about our first UU principle lately, "We affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person." Perhaps many of us have been thinking about this. As this new year unfolds, and we're greeted each day with new ways that the inherent worth and dignity of individuals and groups is being denied, there seems to be an imperative for us to commit to deeply engage with this foundational principle. This is deceptively difficult work.

Wherever you are in your religious, spiritual, or philosophical journey, first principle living in today's world will be demanding. Our hope is that you'll gain not only knowledge and skills, but hope and fortitude from the opportunities coming up in the next several months through our lifespan religious education programs that open space for us. Whether we're children, youth, or adults, we have opportunities coming up to learn, not just about the issues we face in our society today, but about the tough work of confronting racism, developing empathy, and building beloved community.

One of the areas that gives me a great deal of hope these days is our Family Ministry. Family Ministry helps us focus on the way that multigenerational relationships, whether within family units or more broadly, in the congregation, are paramount to the health, vitality, and growth of individuals and community. One of the areas we've seen this happen is through the intersection of social

justice and families with children. Like in our lifespan education programs, this intersection is where the spring will be rich in first principle living.

Over the next few months, picking up the mantle from the PJ's, Pancakes, and Social Justice event in which our children helped set the social justice priorities for Family Ministry, the Family Ministry social justice working group will be providing opportunities for us to engage with issues of bullying.

We'll kick it off with a family chapel during the children's religious education time on February 25th. Children, parents, and anyone interested



in working with our children on issues of bullying are invited to join us for the 35-minute chapel time. We'll have song, story, ritual, and activity to help us dive deeper into empathy and connection rooted in our principles.

We'll also do a 2-hour training for parents and others who work with children on developing tools to talk with children about bullying and building skills to address concerns and make connections. Our parent programs, including our parent Facebook group and our Parent Lounge, will focus on bullying through discussion and providing resources.

Watch for more information in the Window and the Children and Family Ministry e-newsletter for details and dates. If you're interested in being a part of or helping to lead any of our initiatives, be in touch with Dr. Melissa.

FAITHIFY: FIRST UU WOMEN'S CHORUS TRIES CROWDFUNDING THE UUA WAY

BY JAN GARBOSKY

Does your group have hopes and dreams it can't fulfill due to limited funds? First UU's Women's Chorus does. Last year, the chorus selected Women's Empowerment International (WE) as the beneficiary of its first ever concert. WE provides tools to impoverished women in San Diego, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, and Uganda to help them work their way out of poverty. Although the concert was a great success, production costs ate into the amount the chorus could donate to WE's programs. To raise more funds for WE at this year's Stronger Together! Concert, a way to fund production costs was needed. The concert planning committee decided to try crowdfunding—raising money from folks beyond our congregation—and doing it the UU way.

The UU way is via FAITHIFY—our denomination's crowdfunding site—"where passionate people

INSPIRE, UNITE, and FUND Unitarian Universalist ministries." Our Women's Chorus is submitting a proposal to raise \$2,400 to cover production costs (lighting, sound, musicians, sign language interpreter, event coordinator, and flyers, tickets, and programs) for our Saturday, April 29th concert (Please save the date!). We think many UUs around the country will want to help empower the women and families served by WE. The fundraising campaign will be open for 45 days. All \$2,400 must be pledged or the chorus gets nothing. Keep your ears and eyes open for announcements about the opening date of the chorus' FAITHIFY campaign. Chorus members hope you'll help us reach the \$2,400 goal. Tell your family and friends, too!

Want to see the projects other UU churches are hoping to fund? Go to www.faithify.org.

VEHICLE DONATION: THE EASIEST WAY EVER TO RAISE FUNDS

BY JAN GARBOSKY

Have a car, truck, RV, motorcycle, or boat you've outgrown or no longer need? Don't want to deal with the time-consuming work of selling it? Then consider donating it to First UU! It's easy, stress-free, and a wonderful way to support our congregation's work in the world. Recently, First UU received proceeds for donations of a motorcycle and a car bringing us over \$1,000. And, another car donation is in process.

Almost all vehicles are accepted—even if the vehicle has engine trouble and/or can't pass a smog test. Vehicles don't need to run, but must have an engine and be towable. And, they're even accepted without a smog certificate or current registration. (Vehicles that are in extremely poor condition or out of tow range may be declined if the towing cost is more than their value.)

First UU works with a reputable corporation, Charitable Auto Resources, Inc. (CARSTM) which provides services for car donations for over 500 charities and non-profit organizations throughout the United States.

How It Works:

1. You complete the online donation form (www.careasy.org/nonprofit/first-unitarian-universalist-church-of-san-diego) or call CARS (877-537-5277)
2. A driver will pick up your vehicle from your home, business, or repair shop—usually within 24-48 hours of your initial phone call. You do need a clear title (pink slip). The rest is taken care of, including pick-up, at no cost to you.
3. Once your vehicle has been sold, you'll receive a receipt for your tax records and the sale proceeds (70% of the sale) will be donated to the church in your name. You'll receive a tax benefit from the total sale amount.

Need help? Contact Pam Bates (pam@firstuusandiego.org) and she'll find a member of the Generosity Ministry Team to help you.

SUFI HEALING CIRCLE AT FIRST CHURCH

BY NANCY FISK



Larry Sweet, church member is an initiated conductor for Sufi healing rituals. He has led this ritual every Tuesday evening at First Church for the past five years. Larry has been initiated in three different Sufi orders. As a healing conductor, Larry is familiar with the background of Sufism and is available to answer questions about it.

The lineage of the Sufism for the healing ritual Larry conducts comes from Hazrat Murshid Inyat Khan, (wahiduddin.net/hik/hik_origins.htm) a musician famous in India in the 1900's. Murshid means teacher.

Sufism has often been confused with Islam. Larry emphasizes Sufism is universal, and uses practices from several religions, such as Hinduism, Islam, Zorastorianism, and the Abrahamic religions, Judiasm and Christianity.

“The basic way to describe Sufism is that it is a mystical practice. It is the religion of love.”

The group that meets meditates on the healing of persons who have given their permission to be named during the healing circle. A

maximum of 10 names are included in every ritual. 6-7 of those names are given to Larry over the Sufi global listserve. Then he looks for local people to fill out the 10 names.

Three individuals are needed for the healing ritual, a healer, a reader, and a mountain. They are known as mureeds (initiates). A mureed, or spiritual seeker, is someone who seeks to acquire the love of Allah, and has joined a sufi order. In the ritual, there are two to three readings, a meditation known as wazifa, and chanting, or zikkur. The healer leads the ritual, the reader conducts the readings, and the third person is the Mountain, someone who is a strong support during the meditation.

At the moment, the healing ritual has been suspended because the reader needed for the ritual, Larry's wife, Sue Sweet, has not been available to do the readings. Larry is continuing to do teaching about Sufism during the Tuesday meeting. "People seem to enjoy what I'm doing. I try not to be attached to the outcome." The Sweets came to First Church looking for a place where their daughter, Haley, could create a framework to base her spiritual progress on.

All are welcome to join the Sufi Healing Circle on Tuesdays in Room 323 in Hillcrest from 7 pm to 8 pm.



TAKE AN EXCURSION TO SOUTHERN ARIZONA! DISTRICT ASSEMBLY (DA) ISN'T JUST A MEETING

District Assembly will be different this year. It will be a Social Justice Immersion Experience emphasizing border life and immigration. It will be held at three UU Churches in Arizona March 31 - April 2. Carpooling is available. There will be activities for adults, families, youth and young adults. Some events in Mexico require passports. Here are just some of the activities:

- ◆ Faith-Fueled Responses to Immigration
- ◆ Hospitality for Migrant Neighbors
- ◆ Immigration Detention - Visitation and Prevention
- ◆ Self-organizing Communities in the Face of Oppressive Systems
- ◆ Supporting Health of Migrants Before and After Crossing
- ◆ Building Capacity instead of Walls
- ◆ "Deterrence by Desert" and Humanitarian Aid

- ◆ Borderlands Water and Walls
- ◆ Creating a Culture of Peace
- ◆ Three Migrant Trail Walks
- ◆ Border Tours

And for Nature Lovers:

- ◆ Animals of the Sonoran Desert (Visit Sonoran Desert Museum)
- ◆ Wildlife and the Border Wall
- ◆ Several Hikes

All for \$100 registration fee before February 15. If you would like to be a delegate, you can get reimbursement of \$100. Application forms are in Box 13 in the Volunteer Room.

For more details, see justiceda2017.weebly.com/registration.html

PSWD JUSTICE DA 2017

HOME EDUCATION CONNECTION TRANSFORMATION REGISTRATION

Migrant & Borderlands Justice

March 31 - April 2
Sonoran Arizona & Mexico

REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 15, 2017

PSWD Justice DA 2017
March 31-April 2

MEET OUR VOLUNTEER: SUE MARBERRY

BY ELAINE TWAMLEY



A lifetime love of math, music, and service to others are apparent in the life of our very active church member Sue Marberry. Born in New York City just a few years after the end of World War II, Sue is the child of Austrian immigrants who came to the United

States to escape the Holocaust. Her parents converted from Judaism to Catholicism in an effort to evade the Nazis, but came to realize that was not effective camouflage. They therefore came to the United States and rediscovered their Jewish roots later in life.

Sue grew up in the Bronx, an area rich in diverse groups of people. Her home life was rich too, especially with music. Sue studied piano and voice. "Mother said I sang before I talked!"

In her adventurous early years, Sue graduated from City College of New York and went to the University of Wisconsin where she obtained a master's degree in English. Afterwards, she went to London for six years, teaching in an American high school. She returned to the United States, lived in Nashville briefly, and finally came to San Diego in 1985. Here she worked as an accountant for 30 years, in addition to raising her family.

Sue's love of math and music clearly show in her many church activities. She sings in the

Chalice and Women's Choirs. She co-chairs the Bookroom. She serves as treasurer of the First Church Board of Trustees and sits on the Finance Committee. She chairs the Internal Audit Committee. When not volunteering at least 10 hours a week at church, Sue serves as treasurer of three other local choral groups.

What drives this dedicated volunteer? Partly a desire to give back. When her husband and one of her daughters died, it was the enveloping love of church members that got her through very dark days. Our church is central to Sue's life: here she finds community, shared values, mental stimulation. "I love the sermons!" Sue says. "I love the service too. As I grow older, I grow more spiritual. I now embrace the word worship instead of cringing at its mention."

Up next for this busy lady: the Sundance Film Festival and a tour of South Africa, the twenty-seventh foreign country Sue has visited. Bon Voyage!



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