

FirstWords

Our Monthly Publication

The 10 states that adopted 10 or more new abortion restrictions between 2011 and 2015 together account for 60% of all 288 new restrictions.



gutmacher.org

Access to women's

reproductive health care is continually being assaulted at the state and national levels, as these maps from the Guttmacher Institute show. It certainly is an issue in the upcoming election. Becoming educated about Reproductive Justice issues, participating in discussions in a safe and welcoming environment, and acting on our beliefs as Unitarian Universalists are good ways to effectively fight back against these attacks.

On Saturday, February 6, 2016 the First UU Church's Reproductive Justice group will offer a workshop that will educate and inform participants about reproductive justice issues. It will focus on promoting and strengthening the reproductive justice movement locally and globally.

First Church and other UU congregations have been on the frontlines of the Reproductive Choice/Rights/Justice movement for decades. In 2012, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) recommitted to **reproductive justice, selecting "Reproductive Justice: Expanding Our Social Justice Calling" as the 2012 - 2016 Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI)**, see <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/calling>, focusing on how economic justice, racial justice, and health equity are a central part of this vital work. In June 2015 a Statement of Conscience was passed, calling on us all to take action for reproductive justice.

As part of the CSAI process, the UUA developed a six-part curriculum that the First Church Reproductive Justice group presented in spring 2014. Participants' comments, concerns, and Ideas were submitted to the UUA for inclusion in the Statement of Conscience. The workshop being offered on February 6 is an abridged

WORKSHOP ON REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE MATTERS:

FEBRUARY 6

BY BETSY STEVENS

version of the full curriculum, updated to reflect recent developments in the ongoing struggle to achieve reproductive justice for all.

The UUA Statement of Conscience recognizes the broad reach of reproductive justice. In addition to access to reproductive health care, reproductive justice addresses the root causes of lack of access, such as the need for accurate information about sexuality and reproduction (as provided in our OWL programs); the chipping away of individual control of personal reproductive decisions; wage inequity; and gaps in the availability of affordable housing, paid parental leave, and affordable child care. The entire statement it is available online at uua.org/statements/reproductive-justice.

Please join us on February 6, 2016 from 9:00 to 3:45 PM to discuss these issues, learn more about the attacks on the ability of individuals and families to access reproductive health care, to examine what each of us can do to promote reproductive justice, and to recognize other agencies working on this issue.

Register online for this workshop, a program of Adult Education, at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/adult-religious-education-class-registration>.

We hope to see you in February!

Betsy Stevens and Mina Taylor.

Note: Visit Bard Hall starting in early January to view six beautiful posters from The Repeal Hyde Art Project. This project raises awareness and creates dialogue about the Hyde Amendment, which blocks people from using Medicaid to pay for abortions.

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A FRESH START

BY REV KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

There is something refreshing about the New Year. Many images come to mind in this time of year - a fresh start, a clean slate, re-birth, an opportunity to **begin again. Even when the world's turmoil** continues, in this New Year, I have hope that resolutions may be found and efforts in peace-making can grow.

This year, some new programs will begin that will help us create community and nurture spiritual growth. Rev. Jennifer Channin and Rev. Ian W. Riddell will lead and facilitate worship experiences outside of Sunday morning. In the spring, Dr. Melissa James will share resources and ways for us to better serve families with children and youth who identify as transgender and Kathe Larick will continue to broaden the reach of our OWL (Our Whole Lives - a Lifespan Sexuality Education program). I will be leading the engagement with military service members and our U-Uniforms group. Acting on our values to help heal the world continues through our various Social Justice Action groups and so much more.

This month your ministers and worship staff are engaging in new ways to plan and prepare for Sunday morning worship services at both campuses. New Adult Religious Education classes, led by the Rev. Jim Grant and many others, will stimulate our minds and stir our hearts. The Board of Trustees is finding new ways to communicate with the congregation and deepen our work within policy governance - ensuring that our work stays true to our mission through our strategic plan, strategies and tactics. Also this month we look forward to hiring new coordinators for the Social Justice Ministry Team and for our Young Adult and Campus Ministry program.

And though I'm not much for New Year resolutions, in each new day, I resolve to find a few more minutes to offer gratitude and expressions of appreciation for this one wild and precious life I have.

I give thanks for a new year, a new month and a new day and for this growing and beloved congregation.

Faithfully yours,

Kathleen

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])

February's Transformational Theme is
Community

January 10, 2016

Hillcrest Services —

"Embracing Welcome"

Megan Dowdell, *Intern Minister*

South Bay Service —

"Diversity Makes You Brighter"

Rev. Jim Grant, *Affiliate Minister*

January 17, 2016

Hillcrest Services: ROAR with SOUL Sunday —

"Black Lives Matter: One Year Later"

Rev. Jennifer Channin, *Assistant Minister*

South Bay Service —

"Bidding Life to Come:

Music and Worship"

Rev. Ian W. Riddell,

Minister of Music and Worship Arts

January 24, 2016

Hillcrest Services —

"The Diversity of Evil"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service: ROAR with SOUL Sunday —

"Black Lives Matter: One Year Later"

Megan Dowdell, *Intern Minister*

January 31, 2016

Hillcrest Services —

"Bidding Life to Come:

Music and Worship"

Rev. Ian W. Riddell,

Minister of Music and Worship Arts

South Bay Service —

"The Diversity of Evil"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*



ON FAMILY MINISTRY AND BELOVED COMMUNITY

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

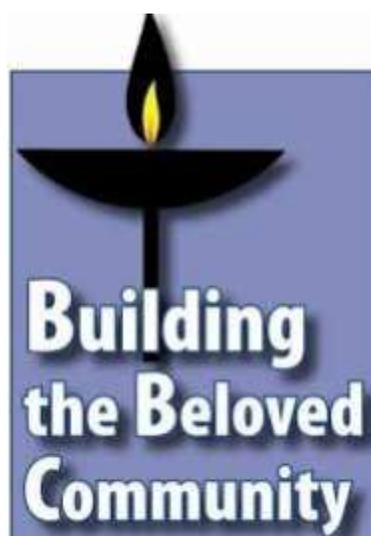
Family ministry builds on a rich history of giving children a safe place to explore and grow seriously. When we are in beloved community together, we must think about connections. More than how many kids are filling our classrooms, we think about how we are working to make sure families feel connected to each other and to the **community more broadly. We don't just think** about whether we as individuals like being around kids, we think about how we are supporting the entire community to embrace all ages as interconnected beings. We think about the impact our meeting times have on parents, whose little ones need to be in bed by 7:30 pm. We think about how we have grown throughout our life in relationship with those older than us and with those younger than us. Then we seek ways we can reach one hand to those in our community whose journey started long before ours, and one hand to those who are coming after.

In this month when the theme is diversity, there's a fantastic opportunity to practice being beloved multigenerational community. You see, being in **beloved community isn't just about what it's like** within the church community. Seeking beloved community together means acting on our values to help heal a world that is rife with racial injustice, gender-based violence, broken relationships to the environment and myriad other injustices that keep all from flourishing. If this seems a bit heavy to juxtapose with family ministry – **it's not. Families with** children are greatly impacted by injustice and our families with children in this community are deeply committed to seeking justice together. This is one of the recurring themes we hear when we talk to families, new and old, here. We all want to work for a more just world and we want our kids to be a part of that work.

Looking for a concrete way to do this? Here are 4 things you can do:

- Start a conversation with a child about what they would like the world to be like. If they could wave their hand and fix one thing about the world, what would it be? You may be surprised at how similar your answers are to theirs.
- Consider inviting children and youth to be a part of your work here at church, either on their own or with a parent. We have some amazing young leaders in our midst.
- When asking a parent to join in your group or work or meetings, ask them how you can make it most accessible for them to participate while respecting the needs of their family.
- Be a part of a multigenerational service or justice project. Join in one of our quarterly all church, family-friendly service projects. Our next project is the Interfaith Day of Service on MLK, Jr. Day January 18th. Watch the Window for sign up information.

Finally, we want to work with YOU ... the person who has been volunteering with kids for years, the person who has avoided kids at all costs, the person whose children are grown and left, the person who never considered sharing your passion for justice with someone a fraction of your age...you! You are important to us becoming a multigenerational community, committed to acting on our values to help heal the world.



EXPLORING DIFFERENT WAYS TO GATHER IN WORSHIP

BY REV. IAN. W. RIDDELL, MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS;
REV. JENNIFER CHANNIN, ASSISTANT MINISTER

Rev. Ian remembers:

“Each Wednesday night in my last year of seminary, I participated in a Taizé service offered at Loyola University in Chicago. I am so grateful for the way that simple songs washing through the still, dark space caused my own voice and body to vibrate in a new way. Simple repeated songs led into long, powerful silences in a space set vibrating by our voices. It was as if my whole body was being retuned as we sang together, brought back into right resonance with my heart and mind.”

Rev. Jennifer remembers:

“In the summer of 2011 I attended a ‘UU Revival’ in Boston. For 3 hours, UUs of all ages from around the city sang folk songs, rock songs, and old-timey hymns, and members of the community testified to their own experiences of salvation and grace. There was more heart than head in that service, more feelings than words. There’s something cathartic and healing about “losing” one’s self in a communal experience of music and movement - about feeling safe enough with others to ‘let go’ of self-consciousness. It’s something I’ve experienced again and again at rock concerts, youth conferences, and occasionally at justice rallies, but this was the first time I felt that way in a church service.”

In the new year, we will be offering some new opportunities to worship together in ways that are different from our large Sunday morning services. Sometimes quieter – sometimes louder – often focused less on words and ideas than on experience and connection – centered on sound, on movement, on silence, on creativity.

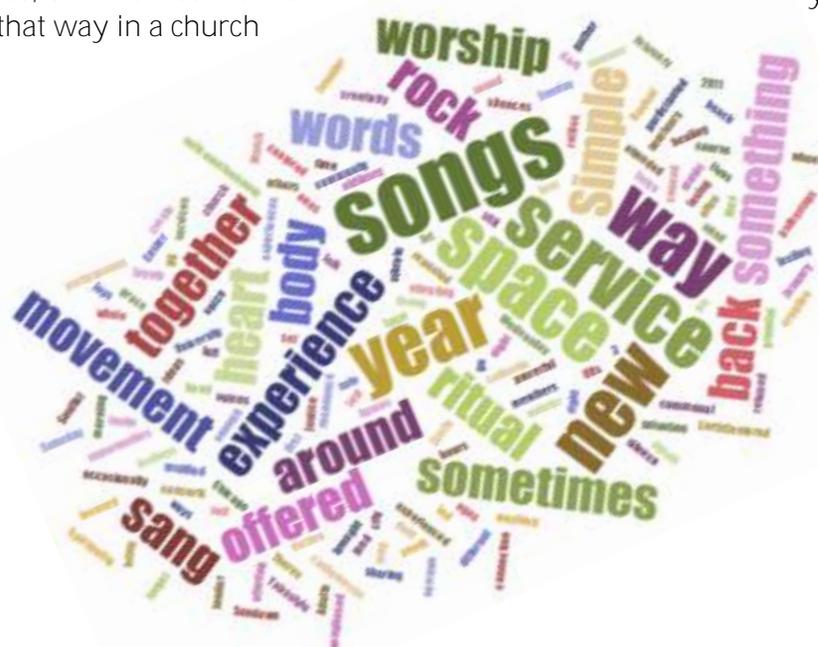
In January, we will create ritual space for sharing the joys and sorrows of our lives with each other.

In February and May, our Young Adults will bring back their creative and participatory Soulful Sundown gatherings.

In March, Rev. Ian will lead a Taizé-style, song-based worship, and Rev. Jennifer will invite us to gather at the beach for an Easter Saturday ritual.

And, of course, don’t forget the rituals offered around the wheel of the year by our Earth-Centered Spirituality Circle.

Don’t hesitate to contact Rev. Jennifer or Rev. Ian if you have questions or want more information. And keep your eyes open for dates and times in the Window and First Words, and join us to deepen your spirit and broaden your connections.





SAVE THE DATES!

[assembly/](#)

- Family Dinners: Fri Jan 8, Feb 12, Apr 8, May 13; 6-8pm, Bard Hall. A part of the Family and Children Ministry, all are welcome.
- Elizabeth Bukey Ordination: Sat Jan. 16, 3pm, Meeting House. Elizabeth, a former intern, has asked First Church to ordain her, along with the Chalice UU Church in Escondido. All are welcome to attend.
- Men's Fellowship Spring Renewal, Apr 15-17, Camp de Benneville Pines. All men are invited to this retreat at the UU camp in the San Bernardino mountains. Details can be found at the UU Men's Fellowship <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/mens-fellowship>
- Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) Assembly, Apr 29-30, Santa Barbara. District Assembly is a meeting of the 50 churches that make up the Pacific Southwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), of which First Church is a part. More details at <http://www.pswduua.org/events/district-assembly/>
- Spring Spiritual Retreat, Apr 29-May 1 at Prince of Peace Abbey, Oceanside. Deepen your personal and communal spiritual practices. Register at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/adult-religious-education-class-registration>.
- Dining 4 \$ Bidding, May 1, 8, 15, 22. Our Annual Church Fundraiser, this is a silent auction held between and after services on the Sundays in May. Dinners, outings, and hikes are among some of the offerings you can bid on.
- All Church Camp, Jun 3-5, [Camp de Benneville Pines](#). A multigenerational weekend for First Church at the UU camp in the San Bernardino Mountains.
- General Assembly, Jun 22-26, Columbus, OH. The annual conference for the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). For more information, go to uua.org/ga.

MEMORIAL GARDEN UPDATE

BY ROBIE EVANS, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Last February we introduced our new Memorial Garden history and plans to you in this monthly publication. Here is a quick synopsis of where we were, where we are, and what to expect in the next couple of months.

Text, continued on Page 7 ►

The creation of a Memorial Garden between the west end of our Religious Education Building and the southeast corner of the Meeting House has been a goal of the Church since our current Memorial Wall became fully subscribed. Such a garden will offer surfaces to inscribe the names of deceased Church members in a manner similar to what our current Memorial Wall accomplishes and would offer a quiet, open area for contemplation, reflection, and meditation. Esthetically, the Garden will fill out and complement our new Patio and will offer windows out on the canyon below. All of this will be done in a design that will reflect the values and Mission Statement of our Church and our community.

A committee consisting of Robie Evans, Andy French, Susan Harding, Lois Day, and John Holl has been meeting with our Project Manager, Erich Aragon of Strategy Builders to address issues that must be faced as we proceed. These include complying with city zoning requirements to complete an emergency egress from the rear of the Religious Education Building that meets American Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, allowing sufficient offset from the crest of the canyon and its natural habitat, and complying with storm water runoff regulations. This is necessary so that there is no more flooding of the Chapel nor erosion of the canyon slopes. Jerry Thiebolt, the co-designer and artist for the current Memorial Wall, has also met with the Committee regarding the design of the Garden and its walls to offer suggestions, ideas, and possibilities and to hear our concerns and limitations. Jerry has now completed the design of the walls in the Garden and has completed a model which will be on display for the Congregation after we have obtained cost proposals subsequent to receiving completed plans. The Church Board has reviewed and approved the Memorial Walls and Garden design for future presentation to the Congregation. The theme of the original Memorial Wall **includes the "Tree of Life."** Throughout the six new walls, the recurring theme in our new Memorial Garden is a river, with meaningful poetry, symbols and quotes relative to our faith and our lives.



Memorial Garden Model



Memorial Garden Footprint

◀ *Text, continued from Page 6*

Jerry is now working on completing the construction plans required to take the project out to bid and therefore determine the cost. Jerry, who also built the walls and garden at the San Dieguito UU Fellowship, has designed six new walls which will have artistic shapes and sizes throughout the garden and we will have room for over one thousand names. The Garden is planned to be an extension of our original Memorial Wall. The art (clay work) on the walls does not have to be done at this time, only their super structure and proposed drainage solutions. Once the Memorial Garden wall superstructures have been built, they will **be stucco'd with an appropriate campus landscape color** until the artistic clay is installed. Each wall will take approximately one year to complete. Also, a footpath of bricks that congregation members can actually design themselves will be incorporated into the Memorial Garden.

We already have a cost estimate from Jerry for the artistic portion of the walls. And, thanks to current donations, one major, we have sufficient funds to start, but more will be needed later to complete. We have already completed preliminary water drainage solutions in front of and alongside our Chapel in **preparation for this year's anticipated "El Nino" storm** weather.

Cost for each brick in our new Memorial Garden will be \$350 each. We are now taking reservations for these bricks. If you are interested in reserving your space in our Memorial Garden, please contact Elaine Durson at eballerina@cox.net.

Stay tuned in the next few months for the complete unveiling of this incredible project, along with a detailed cost analysis. All project management questions should be directed to Robie Evans, Director of Operations, at 619-398-4433 or robie@firstuusandiego.org.



Memorial Garden Wall Design

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 Rev. Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister
 Rev. Ian W. Riddell, Minister of Music and Worship Arts
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 Tania Márquez, Intern Minister
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations
 Dr. Melissa James, Director of Children and Family Ministry
 Daniel Ratelle, Hillcrest Choir Director
 Lynn Mendoza-Khan, Choir Director
 Lorelei Isidro, South Bay Music Coordinator
 Andrea Newall, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
 Roy Attridge, Handbell Ensembles Director
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<http://www.firstuusandiego.org/uus-of-the-south-bay>

To view sermon video casts, click on these

YouTube or Vimeo buttons:



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

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