



First
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FirstWords

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BRENDA GARCIA, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOUTH BAY MINISTRY TEAMS COORDINATOR

BY NANCY FISK



If she seems familiar, that's because she is! Brenda Garcia was our First Church Administrative Assistant from July 2015 to June 2016. Now she's our Social Justice and South Bay Ministry Teams Coordinator. This article will emphasize Brenda's duties as the Social Justice Ministry Teams (SJMT) Coordinator.

Brenda is from Keyes—a small, rural town in Central California, and has her BA in Sociology from UC Merced. She interned with Congregations Building Community in Merced. This group is a chapter of PICO National Network, a faith-based organizing network. The San Diego Organizing Project, which First Church participates in, is also a chapter of PICO.

After graduating from college, Brenda came to San Diego to live with her brother, who is in the military. Her sister-in-law was a social worker back east, who worked with a UU congregation that ran a homeless shelter. She advised Brenda to check out the local UU church when she came to San Diego. When Brenda looked at the First Church website, we were advertising for the administrative assistant position. Brenda applied for the job and started working here 5 days later.

Brenda became the Social Justice Ministry Team Coordinator when Kristen Kuriga, the first person in the position, resigned to work on her ministerial studies. The position's intent is to coordinate and vision what the congregation sees as its purpose and mission around social justice.

One of First Church's most coordinated efforts was the "No on Proposition 8" campaign. With the incoming federal administration, Brenda says an emphasis for the SJMT will be immigration and racial justice, as well as continuing to work on LGBT rights. First Church has an immigration and racial justice action group, along with a group called SOLACE (Souls Offering Loving and Compassionate Ears), which works with detainees at the Otay Mesa Detention Center for Immigration.

Another emphasis will be to work on climate change issues, on a bigger and more present scale. First Church works with a group called SD 350, which focuses on local climate change issues.

The SJMT uses its funds to support partnerships with local non-profits such as the International Center for Worker Justice (ICJW) and Planned Parenthood. On January 16, First Church will have 3 tables at the All People's Celebration, with the Rev. William Barber, creator of Moral Mondays in North Carolina, as the main speaker. All seats for these tables have been reserved.

There are many opportunities available to get involved with Social Justice. Contact Brenda at brenda@firstuusandiego.org for more information on the following:

National Day of Service at Balboa Park: Monday, January 16, First Church will participate in an intergenerational, interfaith clean-up effort in Balboa Park.

A 7 UU Principles Approach to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: Wednesdays, January 11 to February 1, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm in Room 323. This class takes a compassionate, UU-centered approach to examining conflicting Palestinian and Israeli narratives, while honoring the historic pain and trauma of both peoples, and exploring possible responses that affirm our UU principles. Sign up at www.firstuusandiego.org/adult.

Interfaith Homeless Shelter in February: The church will host a 2 week homeless shelter February 12 – 26. Volunteers are needed to coordinate meals and act as overnight hosts.

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MARGINS AND CONNECTIONS

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

While I'm not a predictor of the future, I find our monthly theme for worship and program life here at First Church right in line with how many are feeling. January's monthly theme is Margins and Connections. It feels like we're living in a very divided nation and many may be feeling like they're now living on the margin. There are many kinds of margins we're experiencing in our lives, publicly and privately, as a congregation, as well as a nation. Many of us aren't used to these feelings.

If this resonates with you as it does with me, then I think our task isn't to hide under the covers or refuse to pay attention. Rather, I think our task is to embrace this feeling and accept it as an invitation to greater solidarity with more and more people.

We can learn to listen more deeply to people for whom living on the margin has always been a way of life –because of systemic racism, because of our broken immigration system, because of generational poverty and years of stagnant wages.

We have an opportunity in this new political and social landscape to gather our strength and the resources we do have (and they are more numerous than we think) and create methods of hopeful resistance. We need to resist the lie that tells us what we do and say doesn't matter. We need to resist the temptation to accept, without question, decisions made that benefit the few, while the many suffer.

This year I think we have an opportunity to take more seriously our role in creating the kinds of community we need to sustain us in the justice work that's calling us—justice work grounded in the Spirit of Love and Life.

Some of the ways you can be nourished, strengthened, and refreshed to engage in this new reality are by participating in the life of this congregation and in the various workshops that are coming this winter, like Cultivating Empathy for All, Learning How to Have Crucial Conversations, and more (see The Window for details) and by coming to Sunday services regularly. All are positive ways to make life on the margins a rich time of growth and connection.

I look forward to our time together in this New Year.

Yours faithfully,

January 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])

January's Transformational Theme is "Connection"

January 1, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

"The Fire of Commitment"

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

South Bay Service—

A New Year's Feast

Rev. Jim Grant

January 8, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

"Let's Change the World"

Tom Andrews, *UU Service Committee
President and CEO*

South Bay Service—

"Beyond the Veil: A Different Perspective on Islam"

Rev. Lone Broussard

January 15, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

"Building a Singing Community"

Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell

South Bay Service—

"The Power of Love"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

January 22, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

"The Power of Stories"

Tania Márquez, *Intern Minister*

South Bay Service—

"The Margins That Connect Us"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

January 29, 2017

Hillcrest Services—

"The Margins that Connect Us"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Conversation and Covenant"

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



ACTING ON OUR VALUES TO HELP HEAL THE WORLD

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

Several years ago I taught a travel course on the theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. I traveled around with a group of college students to sites of importance in the life of MLK, Jr. One of the last stops was Memphis, Tennessee, where we visited the museum that was built around the Lorraine Motel where he was shot in 1968. This became a pivotal site in the learning journey of the students. All throughout the travels, we kept revisiting the depth of philosophical and theological groundings for the work King did, with an eye to problematizing the white-washing that's happened to his legacy. This last stop brought it home as we explored his very presence in Memphis being linked, not to some kumbaya version of a post-race society, but the economic struggles of the sanitation workers, as King saw worker justice linked to racial justice.

Each January, our community participates in the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Interfaith Day of Service. This is a city-wide event that draws on people of a variety of traditions to join together in the spirit of service. Throughout the years, this has been one of the biggest and most multigenerational service projects for our congregation. Throughout the day, people young and old gather together to work side by side. I'm a firm believer that service projects have the potential to be deeply meaningful learning experiences. Serving together on MLK, Jr. Day is not simply a group doing a good deed. It's the chance for our church community to come together to create relationships in the wider community and learn about and with each other within our own beloved community.

Here at First Church, we strive to be a community that helps each other grow and learn throughout our lives. We become co-journeymen together.

Every experience we have gives us the opportunity to deepen our ability to be beloved community. We walk together as we dive into anti-oppression work, serve side-by-side, sit in meditation, or flex the muscle of our brains.

As this new year with its new imperatives and opportunities unfolds, my invitation to you is to be intentional about your own journey and expansive in your co-journeymen. As you look to this new calendar year, where are you in your learning journey? What are the experiences you need to seek out in order to deepen, open, or focus your awareness? With whom will you seek to learn and grow? Perhaps you'll join us as we serve together. Perhaps you'll seek a new class or meditation group.



Looking for a concrete suggestion? If you're already involved in a ministry team at the church, invite youth into the planning stages with you. Maybe you've seen some of the stories that go around social media about young people making radical differences in

their communities. Much of the programming for our youth—both at the congregation level and the district level—focuses on leadership development and youth empowerment.

This means we have many well-trained, capable youth that would make excellent partners from day one of your work. One of the greatest disservices we can do for our youth is to think of them after the fact. Invite them to join your team from the very beginning and you'll be amazed at their creativity, compassion, and commitment. Our congregation is full of just such youth waiting for the opportunity to walk alongside you in your work to act on our values to help heal the world.

HEALING THE WORLD THROUGH MUSIC

BY REV. IAN W. RIDDELL

The mission of our congregation is to create community, to nurture spiritual growth, and to act on our values to help heal the world. I want to share with you some examples of the way our music ministry is living out our mission beyond our worship life. I want to highlight the way two of the ensembles that share worship leadership with us on Sunday mornings are also reaching out to act on our values to help heal the world.

You may have noticed that the JUUL Tones—our a cappella group, under the leadership of Andrea Newall—has twice this fall offered what they're calling a Song Circle. The singers gather in a circle and sing and chant songs of support, comfort, and inspiration to those who need it at the center of the circle. It's a healing and moving experience to be in the middle of such intentionally loving sound—to have the voices of the singers fill the air around you with gentle vibration. If you haven't experienced this yet, don't worry, because the JUUL Tones will be offering this experience a few times this coming winter and spring.

And the JUUL Tones continue their regular practice of singing at the bedsides of the ill and those in hospice—bringing the same loving gentleness to those in need of solace and affirmation.

Last year, our Women's Chorus, under the leadership of Director Lynn Mendoza-Khan, collaborated with several groups within and beyond our community: Lynn coordinated the entertainment for our Reproductive Justice group's

luncheon fundraiser, including the Women's Chorus, several members of our Youth Choir, and other performers. And, the Women's Chorus presented a spring concert as a fundraiser for Women's Empowerment International—a San Diego-based non-profit, which has partnered with the International Rescue Committee to help impoverished refugee women and other poor women in San Diego work their way out of poverty by starting small businesses.

This year, Lynn and the chorus are broadening that collaboration by working with Rev. Ian, Brenda Garcia, and our Social Justice team to focus attention on the voices and stories of refugees in our community. The Women's Chorus concert on April 29th will again be a collaboration with Women's Empowerment International – and this will be paired with a day-time event on the Hillcrest campus featuring the refugee voices and possibilities for involvement. The worship service at Hillcrest the following day and at South Bay the next week, will also explore these themes. There may even be a dance to kick the whole thing off!

Our music ministry stretches beyond the walls of our worship space and into the lives of our community and the community around us. Music offers us new and very old ways to make change in ourselves and change in the world around us. I hope you'll ask our volunteer and staff musicians about how this ministry moves them.

And—don't forget the workshop with Dr. Ysaye Barnwell on Saturday, January 14, in Bard Hall!
To sign up, contact Rev. Ian.

In harmony,
Ian



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



JUUL Tones, *Winter 2016*

JAMES CROSLY, VOLUNTEER

BY ELAINE TWAMLEY



"Life is a smorgasbord of choices," says church member James Crosley. "We can choose our path to goodness, who we are, and who we can become. And our faith can help guide us to that path."

A church member for nine years, James began his volunteer service by working on the rummage sale. He gradually added more duties and is now a lay minister. James regards his own life as a work in progress and is able to listen to others empathetically. He is also a Co-Chair of the Membership Committee—committed to membership growth so that others may benefit from First Church as he does.

A native San Diegan, James endured a challenging childhood and eventually found solace in a traditional Christian church in his teen years. In his late teens, he came out as gay and the church leaders told him to leave. Thereafter, he entered the US Army serving as a medic and hiding his sexual orientation for six years. He then trained as a nurse and worked for many years in a rehabilitation facility. James now lives in the College Area with husband Patrick Nichols.

James says his spiritual path has been full of twists and turns. After rejection by his first church, he tried others without finding a match. He

had heard about Unitarian Universalists for years, and finally found his spiritual home here at First Church after a very long search.

The Seven Principles are the foundation for his religious beliefs and serving others has been his life's work for more than thirty years. As a nurse, he particularly liked helping people at the time of death and considered this a spiritual experience. He talked people through the transition, telling them to let go and look for the light. A lifetime of helping others "keeps my heart light," says James. "Living the Seven Principles guides my way."

Thank you, James for finding us, volunteering for us, and helping to heal our little corner of the world.

Dr. Ysaye Barnwell

BUILDING A VOCAL COMMUNITY®

The Power of Song in Community



Join us for a gathering of singing, story, and history as Dr. Barnwell leads us in rhythms, chants, traditional songs from Africa, the Diaspora, and African American culture. Throughout the workshop, this music and the practice of singing it will be placed in the historical and social context of the communities from which it grew.

You don't have to be a trained singer to take part in this powerful workshop. Just bring your voice and your spirit.

\$10 requested donation
Pre-registration requested
ian@firstuusandiego.org

Saturday, January 14, 2017 9am - 3pm

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego
 4190 Front Street, San Diego, CA 92103 619-298-9978

SPECIALTY SALES—A SLIMMED DOWN RUMMAGE SALE!

BY THE GENEROSITY MINISTRY TEAM

On February 4th, from 8:30 am to 2 pm, the Generosity Ministry Team (GMT) will be holding a “Specialty Sale” in Bard Hall, featuring items usually sold in our rummage sale’s infant and children’s department and women’s accessories areas. Replacing the church-wide rummage sales of the past, the GMT will be sponsoring smaller sales, focusing on one or two of the more popular departments from the original sale. These specialty sales will continue to allow us to recycle items in good condition and offer the items to those who can use them and will be less labor-intensive than the 1,000 Family Rummage Sales of the past. Depending on the success of this sale, other departments will be emphasized in the future.

Items needed:

Infant and Children:

- * Clothes (size newborn to child size 10)
- * Toys
- * Games, puzzles
- * Sports equipment
- * Strollers, cribs
- * Children’s furniture

Women’s accessories:

- * Jewelry
- * Vests
- * Scarves
- * Hats
- * Vests
- * Dressy Sweaters/Jackets
- * Shoes



- * Belts
- * Scarves

All items should be gently used and NOT in need of laundering or repair. Clothes should be brought on hangers.

Jewelry (in a bag with your name on it) can be delivered to Robie in the church office Monday thru Friday, 10 am—4 pm, between now and January 30. All other items may be dropped off at church on:

Saturday—January 28

Sunday—January 29

Monday—January 30

Volunteers are needed to sort items and help with the sale. To volunteer, contact Jan Gallo at jngallo@yahoo.com.



PUTTING FACES ON OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR PARTNER CHURCH IN MALINGIN, PHILIPPINES

BY LIZ JONES

Through our partnership with the UU Congregation in Malangin in the Philippines, First Church has made a commitment to fourteen students from Grade 2 through high school, to provide scholarships so they can attend school. Without our assistance, their parents could not afford the cost of uniforms and school supplies required for them to attend. We need to let them know who we are and that we care!

Over the last few years, we've collected funds from many of you to cover the \$100 per year for the elementary students, and the \$200 per year for the high school students. Each year we receive some lovely notes as well as the report cards to show the progress of these students.

What we'd like to do now is pair these specific children up with a sponsor who can receive these reports and keep up with the progress of the students. We'd also like to encourage communication with the students so they know someone cares. Right now, three of our 14 students have specific sponsors. We have nine elementary students who could use a sponsor, and three high school students who could use a sponsor. You can sponsor as an individual, or as a group. The UU Women's organization is sponsoring an elementary student and a high school student. They've made a commitment to do so throughout the students' time in school.

The exciting as well as overwhelming thought is that there are 17 new students who are applying for scholarships for next year!

A goal of the UU Church of the Philippines is to find sponsors for students who complete high school to attend college level courses. The hope is this will help them stay in their communities and earn a living that will benefit the community as a whole. One of our sponsored high school students will be requesting college level aid for the next school year. We hope we can step up and make this happen.

What can you do right now? Contact Liz Jones, (ljonesd@aol.com) and select a student you'd like to sponsor. She'll provide you with the information we have on your student and encourage you to write a note that Liz will see gets sent to Malangin through the church headquarters in Dumagette. Be prepared to financially support that student in the next school year (June through March in the Philippines). We'll need the funds by late April so they can be sent through the Partner Church Council in time for classes to begin. Once our existing students are sponsored, we'll be able to provide scholarship for the new students requesting assistance.

Also contact Liz if you have questions about the program and how it's administered. A member of our San Diego congregation, Rick Zemlin, visited our Partner Congregation this fall and will share what he learned about how this program is going when he returns in the spring.



First Unitarian Church

A diverse community of seekers

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Alix Klingenberg, Intern Minister
Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
Robie Evans, Director of Operations
Dr. Melissa James, Director of Family and Lifespan Ministry
Käthe Larick, Youth Programs and OWL's Nest Coordinator
Daniel Ratelle, Chalice Choir Director
Lynn Mendoza-Khan, Children, Youth & Women'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
Pam Bates, Development Manager and Scheduler
Brenda Garcia, Social Justice and South Bay Ministry Teams Coordinator
Jenner Daelyn, Membership Coordinator
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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:
 First Words, 4190 Front Street, San Diego, CA 92103.

ONLINE E-mail & Web Addresses

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

To be added to the E-mail List:

firstwords@firstuusandiego.org

Scheduling of Church Property Requests:

schedule@firstuusandiego.org

Order of Service submissions: oos@firstuusandiego.org

The Window submissions (Church bulletin):

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

Care Network: carenetwork@firstuusandiego.org

First Church Web Sites:

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

South Bay Campus:

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



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