



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Publication

January 2019; Vol. 13, No. 1

RICHARD LEDERER AT FIRST UU OF SD

BY RHEA KUHLMAN

On Friday, January 18, at 7:00 pm, we proudly welcome Richard Lederer to First UU for An Evening of Language and Laughter. Light refreshments will be served.



Proceeds from the event will benefit the church's Sanctuary Program, which the congregation voted overwhelmingly to approve earlier this year. The purpose of the Sanctuary Program is to provide safe harbor to immigrants as their cases work their way through the courts. So far as we know, our congregation is the first and only one in San Diego to offer this humanitarian service. Funds are needed for food, supplies, and medical care for those who choose to shelter here.

Lederer, America's favorite Verbivore, is the author of more than 40 books about language, history, and humor, including his best-selling *Anguished English* series and his current books, *The Gift of Age*, *A Tribute to Teachers*, *American Trivia*, and *Amazing Words*. He has been profiled in magazines as diverse as *The New Yorker*, *People*, and the *National Inquirer* and was founding co-host of "A Way With Words" on Public Radio.

Also sometimes known as Conan the Grammarian, Dr. Lederer's observations on language appear in magazines throughout the United States, and "Lederer on Language" appears each Saturday in the San Diego Union-Tribune. He has been elected International Punster of the Year and Toastmasters International's Golden Gavel winner.

As an added benefit for the church's Sanctuary Program, there will be the opportunity to buy raffle tickets for a poker event to be held here later this year. Dr. Lederer, the proud father and poker teacher of professional poker players Howard Lederer and Annie Duke, will offer poker lessons and engage in a few rounds of the game. So all you UU card sharks, sharpen your minds and open your wallets!

Richard will bring some of his books, and a percentage of all sales will also go toward the Sanctuary Program.

The laughter begins at 7 pm on Friday, January 18, in Bard Hall. Suggested donation is \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Tickets may be purchased at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/social-justice>.



Also in this issue:

- Contemplation by Rev Kathleen Owens [Pg 2](#)
- January Sermon Messages [Pg 2](#)
- The Director in my Head by Tony Bianca [Pg 3](#)
- Being Courageous by Tony Brumfield [Pg 4](#)
- Reverend Jason Shelton by Rev Ian W. Riddell [Pg 5](#)
- Pam Bates profile by Rhea Kuhlman [Pg 6](#)
- Save the Date - Spring/Summer 2019 [Pg 7](#)

CONTEMPLATION

REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER



The worship theme of Contemplation for this January starts 2019 off in a powerful way. There's a lot we need to consider in this New Year, in our personal lives and in our congregation, around our relationships with one another and as an institution.

On a personal note, when I consider how I want to be in this year ahead, I think of qualities that I want others to experience when engaging with me, qualities like compassion, openness, caring, inspiring, clear, forgiving, joyful, to name a few. Then I consider what actions I can take to increase those qualities within myself, and then act to bring them into being.

Contemplation can seem passive, but it's not. It's real work. When I think about our congregation, I wonder how will we engage with one another in a way that helps our values shine through? What questions can we ask ourselves and our friends that will open new ways of thinking, of seeing the world, of being in community together? In what ways can we do church differently, through our Journey Towards Wholeness work that will shift our systems for more inclusivity, for a more radical welcome?

Our congregation, as an institution, has some deep questions to contemplate as we reimagine who we are, who we are called to serve, how we offer that service and where. As our Journey Towards Wholeness work continues and our ongoing conversations with the UCSD Medical Center continue, we want to engage in a visioning process that will help us clarify our shared vision. We want to create a strategic plan that will inspire us, that will clarify our identity as an institution and help guide us in an important decision-making process when the time comes.

This is deep spiritual work and this first step of contemplation – of considering, of meditating on possibilities, of engaging thoughtfully, respectfully, honestly as we begin this work – this time of contemplation is vital and necessary. And when done well, healthy actions will follow. I look forward to our work together when I return to the church on March 1st.

Faithfully yours,

Rev. Kathleen Owens

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)

January's Transformational Theme is "Contemplation"

January 6, 2019

Hillcrest Services—

"Three Requirements"

Tom Owen-Towle, *Minister Emeriti*

South Bay Service—

"Stillness / Quietud"

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

January 13, 2019

Hillcrest Services—

"Contemplation and Change"

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

South Bay Service—

"There's No Time! / No hay tiempo!"

Stevie Carmody, *Intern Minister*

January 20, 2019

Hillcrest Services—

"MLK"

People of Color Lay Leaders

South Bay Service—

"MLK"

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

January 27, 2019

Hillcrest Services—

"The Faith We Sing"

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

South Bay Service—

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

THE DIRECTOR IN MY HEAD

TONY BIANCA, INTERIM FAMILY AND LIFESPAN MINISTRY DIRECTOR

On December 16th the Handbells played “People Look East” as the Opening Song – the Handbells and drum accompanied the song and I acted as song leader. As I was singing and directing, my inner dialogue (that incredibly non-helpful committee in my head) was active as usual: “I think I set the tempo too fast!” “Wow that note could’ve been better!” “Jeesh, there’s not much time to breathe there. I sound like I’m gasping for air!” “How does that next verse start?!” In my mind, I did ok... but just ok.

As I always do, I recorded our performance. When I watched the recording later, I was surprised to find that it sounded much different than I expected. The tempo was just fine. There was no gasping for air. All the notes and lyrics were good. That insane yet persistent internal critic had it wrong on all counts... again... as usual.

I’ve performed in one way or another for over three decades now and I’ve had this same experience countless times. I continue to critique myself too harshly in the moment and am surprised when the recording doesn’t support that critique. I know intellectually that the sound I hear isn’t the sound everyone else hears (there’s a really interesting reason for that that involves vibrating skull bones!), but knowing it intellectually isn’t the same thing as knowing it in my gut. And while I haven’t mastered the Jedi art of silencing my inner critic, I have developed some tools for dealing with him when he shows up.



First, I remind myself that life (and the music) goes on. The next measure is usually just four beats away and if I’m busy worrying about a mistake I made in measure 32, I’m gonna make another one in measure 33. The thoughts still enter my head, but I don’t entertain them.

Secondly, I’ve chosen to make friends with my inner critic. The parts of myself that I can sometimes experience as “anxiety” and “self-criticism” can also be experienced as “a desire to do well” and “self-awareness” if I just shift my perspective a little bit. I find that there is a middle ground between trying to silence or ignore my inner critic

and, on the other extreme, believing that critical voice unconditionally. It’s possible to just acknowledge that I’m having self-critical thoughts, accept that they may or may not be valid, and then choose to get on with whatever I’m doing anyway. I don’t ignore them, but I also don’t let them paralyze me.

Finally, I find it incredibly helpful to get another perspective. Sometimes that other perspective can be a video. When that’s not available, I can ask someone else directly for honest feedback. It’s important not to be too caught up in trying to get external validation, but I have found it helpful to occasionally check my perception against some outside source. It’s helped me learn that my worst perceptions about myself are usually false. And I’ve never been so happy to be so wrong.

BEING COURAGEOUS

BY TONY BRUMFIELD

I'd like to share with you a story where the action of a single person changed the culture that we live in. I work as an educator in juvenile hall, and one morning, on the way to my classroom, I noticed that one of the cells had a big SW written on the door. I asked an officer and she said that SW meant Suicide Watch.

That morning was the first time this boy was going to join the other boys in school. Early in our routine, this boy started to cry. Nobody knew what to do. One of the boys began to make fun of him but was stopped by another boy, a boy who is usually loud and disruptive, but who commands the attention of the other students.

He says, "Hey, I was twelve years old when I was first arrested, and I cried the whole night." Two other boys chime in and say, "I did too."

The other boys did not attack the boy that was crying because they had experienced the same feelings.

The boy who spoke up made it all right for the other boy to be human and feel his feelings. His message was, "It's okay to cry." Human beings cry, and most importantly, the message he sent was, "You are not alone. All of us have these feelings. There's nothing wrong with you. You are human."

The sociologist, Allan Johnson, has helped me understand what is happening when something like this occurs. He said for every social situation there are social norms, acceptable ways for people to behave in that situation. If everybody in a given situation is feeling comfortable, then everybody is conforming to the norm. If

one person acts outside of the norm, people can feel it in their bones. It can be caused by somebody pulling the group to a lower level, or to a higher consciousness than the group.

The boy who began to cry was acting outside of the norm. In our society, it's not normal for teenage boys to cry in a classroom, and the classroom fell silent because nobody was sure how to act in that situation. One boy guessed maybe the right thing to do would be to make fun of him, but that didn't feel right. Another boy chose differently. He chose to pull the group to a higher consciousness. By stating that he also cried when he was arrested, he created a new social norm, one of compassion for somebody who is in pain. He made it easier for other boys to act compassionately.

What brought me to tears was who created this shift. It was not the teacher. It was a boy who was normally loud and disruptive. He shifted from pulling the group backwards to pulling the group forward. He went from being a bully to a defender of the weak and vulnerable. At that moment, he moved from being a child, saying things that might get some laughs, to doing what is courageous.

Let US be courageous. And let us NEVER forget we are not alone. You are not alone. Let us, together, support the vulnerable and resist those who attempt to pull us to a lower level. Let us speak up and support those who are more courageous than ourselves, to cry when we feel overwhelmed, and to celebrate when we have been victorious.

REVEREND JASON SHELTON AT FIRST CHURCH JANUARY 25-27

BY REV. IAN W. RIDDELL, *MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS*

Rev. Jason Shelton will be at First UU from Friday, January 25th, through Sunday, January 27th. I have brought him here to work with our choirs, the choirs from our local UU congregations, and anyone else interested in the ways music is part of our worship and our faith tradition.

Rev. Jason Shelton is an award-winning composer, arranger, conductor, song- and worship leader, workshop presenter, and coach for clergy and musicians looking to deepen their collaborative relationships. In 2017, he stepped down as Associate Minister for Music at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, which he served since 1998, and is now engaged in a music ministry at-large, focused on serving the musical resource needs of UU (and other liberal) congregations around the country.

In his ministry, Jason starts with the premise that “what we sing is who we are.” As a composer, conductor and songleader he is fluent in a wide variety of styles, a quality he feels is important as a musical and spiritual discipline. He believes that we live in a world where our diversity can be celebrated, where the musics of many peoples intertwine and offer new possibilities for the sonic expression of our deepest values and commitments.

Schedule for the weekend:

Friday, January 25, 6:30 pm — 8:30 pm
We’ll explore our hymnals and the ways in which we share the sources of our faith through what we sing.

Saturday, January 26, 9:30 am — 3:30 pm
Lunch break 12 pm — 1 pm - “Where do we come from? Where are we? Where are we going?” We’ll dig deeper into the ways in which music has shaped our tradition, how we have used music to share that tradition. What have we meant when we have sung “we”? How might we sing a different “we”? There will be coffee and snacks in the morning, but please bring your own lunch or be prepared to visit the UCSD cafeteria or nearby restaurants.

Sunday, January 27
Rev. Shelton will preach in our Sunday Hillcrest services, “The Faith We Sing.” The choir from Chalice UU Congregation in Escondido will join us that morning as we sing some of Rev. Shelton’s new choir compositions. Rev. Sharon Wylie (from Chalice) will co-lead the service with Rev. Shelton and myself.

I hope that you can participate in as much of this weekend as possible. There will be lots and lots of singing and sharing. There is no charge for the events, but a good-will offering to offset the cost of bringing Jason here will be gratefully received.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF PAM BATES

BY RHEA KUHLMAN

THIS IS ONE IN AN OCCASIONAL SERIES ABOUT THE WORK OF FIRST UU'S WONDERFUL STAFF MEMBERS, WHO LABOR BEHIND THE SCENES TO MAKE THE WHEELS OF THE CHURCH TURN SMOOTHLY

What is a Development Manager, and why does First Church need one? Pam Bates, the current occupant of that position, would probably have a hearty chuckle at that question. Every organization needs to bring in money to survive, and this one is no exception.

As Pam sees it, her job is about much more than just money. It's about finding ways to communicate to the congregation that WE ARE the church. Every person that contributes in some way of his/her/their time, talent or treasure builds and fortifies our church community. Without its wonderful members and friends, the church would be just a collection of buildings. With the support of its members and friends, we continue to grow as a congregation and enhance our ability to positively impact the wider San Diego community and the world. Pam is continually amazed at how much is going on here, and at the amazing people who make up our congregation.

On a daily basis, Pam's job involves lots of number crunching. She continuously updates the Church's E-Tapestry database on individual pledge donations and generosity offerings. With our switch to year-round pledging, she keeps in touch with folks regarding their financial commitments and the fulfillment thereof, at the 6-month mark of their pledge year and at the 11-month mark. She's also been known to send out friendly reminders if people have forgotten to pledge for the new year.

Pam analyzes and reports to the Ministers on data regarding trends in membership, pledging, and church attendance; and serves as staff liaison to Sustainers of the Flame. This important committee focuses on encouraging

members and friends to leave a lasting legacy to the church via planned giving through wills and trusts.

Pam also serves as facilitator for the Generosity Ministry Team (GMT). The mission of the GMT is to support the church by growing the generosity of its members' donations of time, talent and treasure in creative ways. These include such activities as the church Bed and Breakfast program, where members offer their homes to visitors from out of town, and payment goes to the church. There are also church bake sales, art shows, specialty sales, facilities rentals, the book store, and possibly a new program where church members offer tours to out of town visitors. The GMT also encourages members and friends to make purchases through the church website, where a portion of the purchase price goes to the church, and to buy gift cards, which operate on the same principle. Gift cards can be purchased on the patio once a month, or ordered via the church website.

Pam emphasizes that people contribute to the church in many ways, and they don't all involve spending extra money. Not everyone can afford large monetary donations, but by signing up to buy your groceries at Ralphs or Food for Less, staffing the church office a few hours a week, volunteering for a committee, or helping out at an event, everyone can support the church in some way. She likens the church congregation to a giant potluck party. We don't all bring the same thing, but sharing a small dish of any kind will give you a seat at our bountiful table.



Save The Date - Spring/Summer 2019

April 12 — 14, 2019 Men's Fellowship Renewal at DeBenneville Pines

The Men's Fellowship Renewals offer a safe place in which we, as brothers, can be open to the issues that challenge us to the core of who we are and help us to begin the process of unpacking them. In addition, there will be time for music and singing, hot tub and hiking, drumming and ritual, conversation and renewing friendships, and meditation and quiet time. [Click here](#) to register.

April 26 — 28, 2019, Pacific Southwest District Assembly

“From the Ground Up: The Power of Our PSWD Communities.” Long Beach, CA.

District Assembly is a meeting of the 50 churches that make up the Pacific Southwest District. This year's theme speaker is Donald Milton III, director of music at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, the largest UU congregation in the Southeast. He will lead the keynote presentation entitled “Upcycling Church Music for Deeper Engagement.”

Click [here](#) to register for District assembly [Register now!](#) To become a delegate for First UU, contact Denominational Relations at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/denominational-relations> and fill out the delegate application form.

May 30 — June 2 All Church Camp at DeBenneville Pines

All-Church Camp provides us with an opportunity to spend an extended time with members of our community becoming more connected, and deepening our commitment to our community. Registration begins in April. Scholarships are available for those who need them. For more information, click here: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/all-church-camp>

June 19 — 23, 2019 UUA General Assembly in Spokane, Washington

Theme: “The Power of We” In a time of great challenge and heartbreak in our world, what does our faith demand from us? At this year's General Assembly we will explore the power, possibility, purpose, struggle and joy of finding the path forward together as Unitarian Universalists. Attendees will leave inspired, with the tools needed to carry on the work into their own congregations and communities. Join us as we work for collective liberation inside and outside our faith. General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to send voting delegates. Delegates may also attend online. Registration opens March 1. For information go to: <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

To become a delegate for First UU, contact Denominational Relations at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/denominational-relations> and fill out the delegate application form.

For more information see our website at [firstuusandiego.org](http://www.firstuusandiego.org)
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

Hillcrest Campus
4190 Front Street
San Diego, CA 92103

South Bay Campus
970 Broadway, Ste. 104
Chula Vista, CA. 91911

Staff

Rev. Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister
Rev. Ian W. Riddell, Minister of Music and Worship Arts
Rev. Tania Márquez, Assistant Minister
Stevie Carmody, Intern Minister
Rev. Jim Grant and Rev. Löne Broussard, Affiliate Ministers
Rev. Bonnie Tarwater, Rev. Katy Swanson, and Rev. Julie Forest, Affiliate Community Ministers
Robie Evans, Director of Operations
Käthe Larick, Youth Programs and OWL's Nest Coordinator
Angela Fujii, Social Justice Ministry Team Coordinator
Jenner Daelyn, Connections Coordinator
Pam Bates, Development Manager
Lorelei Garner, South Bay Music Coordinator
Andrea Newall-Lockett, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
Justin Murphy-Mancini, Organist and Pianist
Connie Hayes, Bookkeeper / Controller
Rose Riedel, Office Administrator
Tony Bianca, Interim Religious Education Coordinator and Handbell Programs Director
Karla Alvarez-Malo, Scheduler and South Bay Administrative Asst.
Ray Evans, Maintenance
Mark Epler, Event Coordinator
Revs. Dr. Carolyn and Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti

Board of Trustees

Les GrantSmith, President
Rhiannon Smith, Vice President
Sue Marberry, Treasurer
James Long, Secretary

Richard Costantinou, Kathleen Garcia-Horlor, Angela Garcia-Sims, Kathleen MacLeod and Sarah Ormond—Trustees

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.



Our website:



On facebook:



4190 Front Street (GPS use 298 W 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