



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Publication

June 2018; Vol. 12, No. 6

A FAREWELL FROM OUR INTERN MINISTER

BY REV. SADIE LANSDALE



Thank you for supporting me in this year of growth and transition. It has been a whirlwind. This year I:

- Ran the UCSD campus ministry, supported the

Young Adult group (23-35), and launched the Emerging Adult group (18-25).

- Facilitated the South Bay Wisdom Circle.
- Passed the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) in December.
- Entered search on January 1.
- Interviewed with 4 congregations (meaning I was away for 4 pre-candidating weekends in February and March).
- Called as the solo Settled Minister by the UU Church of Greensboro, North Carolina on April 29.
- Ordained by my home church, River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland on May 13.

I'm grateful to the staff here for their guidance, patience, and encouragement, and to the commitment of this congregation to prepare Intern Ministers for denominational service. As my intern committee said at my first meeting, "You're our Intern Minister, but you're not ours." I've received a lot of grace this year, and I'm thankful. I feel very well prepared for service.

I give endless thanks and praise for my intern committee: Scott GrantSmith, Dorothy Pearlman, Sue McLeod, Alex Bates Lamparella, Everardo Aguilar, and Steve Gelb. I appreciate their careful work. It was clear to me that a large part of my professional future rested in their hands, and they worked diligently, responsibly, and with such joy. From them, I learned about boundaries, self-care, advocating for myself, and how to take a bird's-eye view in problem solving.

I'm grateful to this entire congregation for your commitment to teaching and stewarding the future of UU ministry, and to the Spirit Level Foundation for the financial contributions that help to make this year possible. I hope that you feel proud of your commitment and integrity. Angela Garcia-Sims was the chair of the

committee that interviewed me, and when I was deciding between offers, she said, "Choose us. You'll be happy that you did." I'm glad I listened.

I want to share with you what I'm taking with me into my future ministry. I've so appreciated the opportunity to work creatively with lay worship associates, encouraging your reflections and your testimonies and collaborating with you to lead our folks in worship. You amaze me with your commitment to this congregation and the depth of your reflection. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to lead some intergenerational connection programming between the Young Adults and the Homestretch Sages.

Religious communities are some of the last true sites of intergenerational community, and it's my honor and privilege to serve and accompany people from birth thru death. I've learned about strategic and interfaith relationships from your ministers and the Social Justice Ministry Team under Angela Fujii's leadership. You show up. You are working on taking the lead of directly affected communities. You teach me humility.

Finally, the board process on the sanctuary vote was the highlight of my year here. The board and the sanctuary subcommittee were so thoughtful and so diligent, keeping in mind the urgency of the issue and the tender hearts in our community, listening deeply and communicating clearly. I feel lucky to have worked with them and supported them in their amazing leadership of this community. I will carry your good work with me wherever I go.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your love and support. I won't forget you. I wish you all the best.

Faithfully, Rev. Sadie

Also in this issue:

Rev. Kathleen Owens: To Create Community [Pg 2](#)
June Sermon Messages [Pg 2](#)

Listening, Wondering, and Imagining by Dr. Melissa James [Pg 3](#)

Meet Our Volunteer: Rhea Kuhlman by Elaine Twamley [Pg 4](#)

The Value of Disobedience by Alex Lamperella Bates [Pg 5](#)

Worship and Music this Summer By Rev. Ian Riddell [Pg 6](#)

A Day in the Life of Rose Riedel by Rhea Kuhlman [Pg 7](#)



TO CREATE COMMUNITY

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

Our mission at First UU San Diego is to create community, to nurture spiritual growth, and to act on our values to help heal the world. The first phrase with a verb is our monthly worship theme in June—to create community.

With the help of technology, we can be more connected than any previous generation. Social media options continue to grow, offering various ways to stay connected and, yet, research indicates that many of us feel lonelier than ever. Because we live in this paradox, we choose to gather every week to practice living this part of our mission into reality—to create community to ease the loneliness and isolation. And, it's one of the most radical and hardest things we do—because creating community can be hard work.

It can be hard work because community and what that means can so easily differ with each individual. It's why we choose to gather together and engage with one another, guided by the principles of this faith. Living into action our principles of affirming and promoting every person's worth and dignity is deep spiritual work. Spiritual because it calls us to de-center ourselves long enough to listen carefully and respectfully to someone else, to listen long enough, without our own egos engaged, to hear a bigger story, and see in one another the reflection of our own eyes, needs, hopes, and failures.

This spiritual work is a practice grounded in a Universal Love, the Spirit of Life that I believe lives at the core of our being. Creating community and connection is so much more than a surface identity or label, and participating in this action requires many virtues, including humility, kindness, patience, and gratitude among others.

This faith journey of ours is a practice performed by imperfect human beings who, in spite of our growing edges, continue to hold on to the hope and the faith that if we keep trying with an open mind, and loving hearts, a real community, with deeper connections to our principles and values, will bring about more healing in our own lives and in our world. May it be so.

Faithfully,

June 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)

June's Transformational Theme is "Community and Connection"

June 3, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"The Nature Fix"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Theology of Hugs"

Rev. Löne Broussard, *Affiliate Minister*

June 10, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Here and Now"

Rev. Sadie Lansdale, *Intern Minister*
Dr. Melissa James, *Director of Family and Lifespan Ministry*

South Bay Service—

"The Nature Fix"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

June 17, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"The Heart of Community"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"This Faith of Ours"

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

June 24, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Gather the Spirit"

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

South Bay Service—

To be Announced

Rev. Rita Capezzi



LISTENING, WONDERING, AND IMAGINING

BY DR. MELISSA JAMES

We've been listening, wondering, and imagining. We've been listening to the community, and particularly to our parents with young children and the children themselves. We've wondered, "What is our collective experience of spiritual growth and faith formation for children and families?" We've imagined new ways of being, doing, and living faith formation and spiritual growth.

All this listening, wondering, and imagining has brought us to a precipice. Oh, not necessarily a "we're about to fall off a cliff to our peril" sort of precipice. More of an "it's time for us to own the exciting, solid foundation we have here for meaningful and engaging faith formation, for spiritual growth in family and multigenerational learning, while leaning into the yet unknown of what we might build together" sort of precipice.

What's becoming clear is that, across Unitarian Universalism in the United States, and faith communities more broadly, the needs and ways of engaging of our children and family have changed in the last decades. Some of our long-standing programming at First UU still meets those changing needs. Some of our newer programming has been developed to meet those changing needs. Some of our current programming no longer serves us or the community in the way it needs to.

When we get to a point where something isn't serving to create a multigenerational community committed to taking children seriously, supporting families, challenging oppression, and learning together, the best thing we can do for our community and the world is give our gratitude for the good that thing has brought us, and boldly step toward that which will serve us now.

I believe that LifeSpan Learning and particularly Children and Family Ministry here at

First UU are in a key place of discernment and experimentation to redefine who we are and what we seek to be together. I'm excited about one way we're already starting to act out of listening, wondering, and imagining.

This spring I began working with lay leader and seminarian Everett Howe and Program Assistant Tony Bianca to take the feedback and insight from our parents, children, and talented religious education and Family Ministry volunteers to revision the way we do Sunday Religious Education for our 7-12 year olds. This summer we'll be transforming room 113 on the Hillcrest campus into what we're calling "The Lab."

This will be a faith formation and spiritual growth laboratory in which participants will engage in hands-on exploration of weekly challenges at different learning areas. The vision for the room includes an immersive experience, where kids come into the room and go directly to the active learning exploration area of their choice, to wrestle with big questions, meaning-making, and ethics.



Surrounded by our principles and sources, children can take in this information with the learning style that best suits them. Worship and wonder, learning and teaching, service and justice become organic and exciting in this space.

Intrigued? Watch the Window for our Open House later in the summer to experience the Lab yourself. Or [email me](#) to be a part of the transformation!

This is just one step of a much larger conversation we'll be having while listening, wondering, and imagining. In the coming months and years, there will be opportunities for you to be a part of the conversation. Please take advantage of those opportunities. Your voice is important as we create the bridge over the precipice before us.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEER: RHEA KUHLMAN

BY ELAINE TWAMLEY

Thinking of resting up in your retirement? Here's what church member Rhea Kuhlman does in her retirement: serves as President of Women's Empowerment International, volunteers at her local library two days a week, gives time and talent to the Generosity Ministry Team, ushers for church services, and runs her online rare books store!

A lifelong activist for social justice, Rhea was born in Miami and then hopscotched across the United States for many years: Philadelphia, Charlottesville, Las Vegas, San Antonio, Denver, and finally San Diego in 1987. "At this point," Rhea says, "I couldn't move any further west!" With a master's degree in public administration from the University of Virginia, Rhea enjoyed her career and many new job opportunities. Finally in the 90's, she opened her own used



book store which she ran for many years. Rhea and her husband Armin now live in the College Area.

Being

President of Women's Empowerment International (WE) is a major focus of Rhea's Life. WE operates in five geographical areas, giving women the tools they need to work themselves out of poverty. In San Diego, WE partners with the International Rescue Committee to help resettle refugees who receive training to open their own businesses.

In Haiti, WE trains women to operate small shops offering health products and advice, as well as other small businesses, such as sewing, doing laundry, food preparation, and selling used clothing. Sex workers in Tijuana are helped

to seek other employment if they wish it or demand safety if they remain sex workers. Micro loans for small businesses are provided to women in Honduras. In Uganda, the emphasis is on helping poor grandmothers raising their grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. Rhea's attitude toward the WE mission: "It's hard to change a whole country. But we can help one person at a time."



A church member for thirty years, Rhea is particularly impressed with the Universalist part of our heritage. The Seventh Principle of respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part also strongly resonates. "Animals, plants, oceans, and land all connect us. It is our job to be good stewards."

Rhea is pleased with the direction of First UU toward greater inclusion of people of color and the embrace of the sanctuary movement. She credits an outstanding ministerial staff for much of our recent progress. Perhaps we can credit also exemplary church members like Rhea for making us who we are: people who honor and include all people as we help heal our corner of the world.



THE VALUE OF DISOBEDIENCE

BY ALEX LAMPERELLA BATES

The following is from a Sunday service in March; Alex was the worship associate and spoke about the monthly theme of Disobedience.

Recently, I heard a story about dogs that ultimately turned to a lesson in disobedience, and the world's current need for it. The woman had been training her pet to become a guide dog. The dog was doing well until the phase of training focused on disobedience.



A dog trained to lead a blind person needs to refuse orders if the direction received would lead to danger; the path of an oncoming car, train, or potential threat. The woman's dog had failed this part of the training and became depressed. Dogs are naturally joyous. Seeing them listless is hard. But the story of the dog's failure is also reassuring. The story suggested that disobedience is a higher cognitive skill than obedience, and affirmed how essential it can be, in so many situations.

Jim Kutsch, the president of The Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey, the nation's oldest organization training guide dogs for the blind, once said, "In all other cases, the human gives a command and the dog is expected to obey that command." He continued, "In the case of a seeing eye dog, the dog is obligated to decide whether the command makes sense. The dog needs to stand still, or turn left or right, and lead me away from danger."

See—that's where we as humans struggle. We grow up being led, taught, occasionally coerced into behavior deemed not only normal,

but celebrated for its submissive characteristics. We as UUs are too often compelled to protect our goodness through the mindset of ignorance.

But this faith of our seven principles has raised me to consistently question, who am I? Who do I want to become? How will I get there? And, what will I change?

Those four questions should not stop at 18. They should not stop at 50, at 87, or 104. We as a congregation are called to action from the youth in

Florida, the teachers in West Virginia, those still struggling in Flint, and within our own souls, bodies, and minds. We're called to be our own seeing-eye dogs. When we're given a command to follow, we must ask if the command makes sense.

Then, you must answer these questions for yourself:

- ✧ Who are you?
- ✧ Who do you want to become?
- ✧ How will you get there?
- ✧ What will you change?



WORSHIP AND MUSIC THIS SUMMER

BY REV. IAN RIDDELL

Summer is coming—warmer weather, slowing down the steady pace a little bit, and some opportunities for new ways of participating in our Sunday morning services.

Our 9:30 am Hillcrest service continues as usual with words and silence, ritual and music to deepen our connections to our hearts, our community, and the deeper reality of which we're a part.

As we did last year, our 11:30 am Sunday morning worship at Hillcrest will be shifting for the summer season. Starting Sunday, July 1, and running through the end of August, our 11:30 am service will be held in Bard Hall—some of the regular service elements will be briefer; the sermon will be a little shorter—all so we can have a longer period of individual and group reflection on the theme of the day. Join us for connection, contemplation, and reflection in a cooler space. Get a chance to

know yourself and the people around you more deeply.



Have you wanted to sing in one of our choirs but not been able to find the time to commit to weekly rehearsals? Do you want to stretch your wings and your vocal

strings and see what singing with your fellow congregants of all ages feels like?

Then come on and join our annual Summer All-Voices Choir. We'll gather to sing together and learn some new songs three times over the summer and sing in the Sunday morning 9:30 am service at Hillcrest on August 26. Even if you can only make two rehearsals, you're welcome!



Anyone who can already read (words, not music!) is welcome to join us—any age!

We gather to learn and rehearse in:

Room 323 on:

- ✦ Sunday, July 29, from 10:45 am to 12 pm;
- ✦ Thursday, August 16, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm; and

Clark Chapel on

- ✦ Sunday, August 19, from 11:15 am to 12:30 pm

Come and sing with us!

For more information, please contact Ian at ian@firstuusandiego.org.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ROSE RIEDEL

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.

Rose Riedel probably never expected to end

up with a job title like “Scheduler,” given her background as an actor, but Rose is nothing if not flexible. You’ve probably seen her on stage with Looking Glass Theater, where she appeared most recently, along with husband Eddie, in “State Fair.” Or, you may have run across Rose when she was providing Sunday childcare, or subbing for RE staff members. You may have seen Rose dressed up as a clown (yes, she’s our only staffer who actually graduated from Clown School and has worked as a professional clown.)

But in her role as Scheduler for church events, Rose most likely appears to you as a disembodied message on a computer screen. In her 12 hours a week as First UU’s official Scheduler, Rose must balance the many requests that come in each week for the use of church facilities and equipment. About half the time, she’s able to give the requester the specific room and equipment sought. At other times, she must work with the requester to find another suitable room with the right capacity and the necessary equipment to accommodate the event.

With about 300 events a month on the Hillcrest campus, that can sometimes be a tall order. Is the event inside or outside? Regularly scheduled or a one-time happening? Is the requester a church member or an outside person or group? If the former, there’s no charge or a reduced fee for the room, and the church member

can be the key holder. If the latter, in most cases, there will be a charge for the facility, and since there isn’t a church member to serve as key holder, the event will require an Event Coordinator (large events require an Event Coordinator even if they’re church sponsored).

If Rose determines there’s a charge for the facility, she generates an invoice on the church’s QuickBooks accounting system, which she closes out once the invoice is paid. She arranges for Event Coordinators where needed and works with them to insure proper set-ups are provided. For events lacking a Coordinator, she ensures the church Custodian or other staff members sets up the event space as requested.

It’s incumbent upon Rose to keep tabs on the total number of event attendees expected on campus at any given time, and coordinate with Ace Parking on events that will fill up the parking lot. She sends Ace a report each week on what’s going to happen at church, instructing them as to when to close the parking lot to non-church users, keep it open and charge non-church users, or provide “pink slips” for overflow parking in the UCSD parking structure.

Church events vary from regular meetings to one-time conferences, from private weddings and celebrations of life to classes offered by groups such as Insight San Diego, or practice sessions by the Encore Vocal Ensemble. Facility rentals by outside groups represent a significant source of revenue for First UU, so it’s important that things run smoothly.

All of these details fall to Rose, who in her spare time serves as RE Director for the small Community Church of Poway, and home schools her two teenage sons from the family’s house—Eddie’s ancestral home—in Mexico. In retrospect, it’s no wonder our First UU Scheduler is adept at performing balancing acts. She’s had plenty of practice.

Staff

Rev. Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister
Rev. Ian W. Riddell, Minister of Music and Worship Arts
Rev. Tania Márquez, Assistant Minister
Rev. Sadie Lansdale, Intern Minister
Rev. Jim Grant and Rev. Lône Broussard, Affiliate Ministers
Rev. Bonnie Tarwater, Rev. Katy Swanson, and Rev. Julie Forest,
Affiliate Community Ministers
Robie Evans, Director of Operations
Dr. Melissa James, Director of Family and LifeSpan Ministry
Käthe Larick, Youth Programs and OWL's Nest Coordinator
Angela Fujii, South Bay and Social Justice Ministry Team
Coordinator
Jenner Daelyn, Connections Coordinator
Pam Bates, Development Manager
Lynn Mendoza-Khan, Children, Youth & Women's Choir Director
Lorelei Isidro, South Bay Music Coordinator
Andrea Newall, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
Justin Murphy-Mancini, Organist and Pianist
Connie Hayes, Bookkeeper / Controller
Lori LeSage, Administrative Assistant
Tony Bianca, Program Assistant and Handbell Program Director
Rose Riedel, Scheduler
Ray Evans, Maintenance
Mark Epler, Event Coordinator
Revs. Dr. Carolyn and Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti

Board of Trustees

Matt Mazzeo, President
Les GrantSmith, Vice President
Rhiannon Smith, Secretary
Sue Marberry, Treasurer

Kathleen Garcia-Horlor, Patrick Nichols, Richard Costantinou, Chuck Northrop,
and Sarah Ormond, Trustees; Ingrid Brinton, Youth Member of the Board

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