



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego



PETER BOLLAND, GUEST LECTURER AND MUSICIAN, COMES TO FIRST CHURCH

Peter Bolland, a professor at Southwestern College, lectures extensively on a wide variety of philosophical, spiritual, and mythological subjects at venues such as The Osher Institute in the College of Extended Studies at San Diego State University and Oasis San Diego. He's a frequent guest speaker at a number of New Thought churches such as the Unity Center, Unity of El Cajon, and Vision: A Center for Spiritual Living, where he also leads a Satsang, the first Wednesday of each month.

Peter has been invited by the UU Men's Fellowship to give a series of lectures at First Church on Mondays in May, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Bard Hall. Then, on, Monday, June 8, his last appearance with us will be a concert. Frank Kocher of San Diego Troubadour describes Peter's music as "the hybrid style country-rock ushered in by Neil Young, Gram Parsons, and the early Eagles, among others . . . but manages to . . . giv[e] his songs his own flavor."

Lecture Topics

May 4th—**Thoreau, Gandhi, and King – The Politics of Right Action**

The twentieth century was a time of unprecedented war, chaos and human suffering. But it also ushered in an unprecedented era of non-violence. In India, Mahatma Gandhi led a non-violent revolution defeating the most powerful empire on earth. In America, Martin Luther King led the civil rights movement and forever changed the racial and spiritual landscape of America. Both Gandhi and King cite Thoreau's essential essay "Civil Disobedience" as a manifesto of moral political action. Join us as we trace the spiritual and philosophical roots of these three remarkable leaders and search for solutions to today's vexing social and political problems.

May 11th—**The Masks of God**

In the world's many religious and mythological traditions the infinite, mysterious source of the cosmos is commonly personified as a god, a goddess, or an entire pantheon of gods. Yet if God-concepts are masks, as Joseph Campbell asserts, then what do those masks conceal? And what do they reveal about the people who make them? How and why have God-concepts and religious philosophies developed so differently in the east and in the west? Join us for this inquiry into the variety and meaning behind the world's many masks of God.

May 18th—**The Bhagavad Gita**

We will explore India's most beloved sacred text, the Bhagavad Gita. Composed around the time of Christ, the Gita is the plain-talking culmination of the rich philosophical traditions begun in the earlier Vedas, Upanishads and Buddhist texts. Like all literature, it is best approached in layers. What does the Bhagavad Gita teach about God, duty, ethics, war, society, consciousness, human nature, violence and the beauty of being alive? A favorite book of Gandhi who carried chapter two in his pocket his whole life, and of Thoreau who brought only one book to Walden Pond, his copy of the Gita borrowed from his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson. Very few books have had this long a reach or this profound an impact.

May 25th—**The Nature of Love**

For millennia, philosophers have wondered about love. It is obviously a central, formative and essential human experience. But what is it exactly? What are the different kinds of love? What kinds of errors occur when we mistakenly conflate or mistake one kind of love with another? Do we misuse the word "love?" What are the distinctions between compassion, altruism, aesthetic appreciation, erotic attraction, family or tribal bonding, personal need, pathological obsession, kindness, etc? Working with classical sources and contemporary examples, we will examine the experience of love from a number of perspectives and bring clarity to the complex and multi-faceted phenomenon of love.

June 8th—**A Musical Evening with Peter Bolland**

Peter is an extraordinarily gifted and talented songwriter and musician. Seating may be limited.

For more information, contact Michael Dorfi, UUMF, <mdorfi@cox.net> 619.466.5952.

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Interdependence at First Church

BY REV KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

Interdependence is the worship theme this May—a perfect time to share with you the various ways staff and lay leaders are in a dynamic and ever-evolving relationship of interdependence, to ensure this community is growing healthy and strong.

As your Lead Minister in this year of transition, I've created some special working groups with lay leaders and staff members to ensure our shared ministry continues to thrive. One of the first groups I created was a Transition Team. This team, made up of the Rev. Jim Grant, Sue Marberry, Dave Hunt, and Benita Berkson, meets monthly with me to discuss "the big picture" of our community and together we talk about issues that need attention as we move through this year of change. I'm grateful for the work of this group.

Another new working group is Financial Development, formed to address one of the Board's top concerns, financial sustainability for the future. To address this concern, I invited Dave Hunt, Cathy Sang, and Kirk Gardner to help me. These three generous folks all have development experience and are creating, with me, a plan and strategy for long-term development for our congregation.

Jan Garbosky will work with me as the lay-leader for our Generosity Ministry Team. Together, she and I are envisioning a way to create a deeper sense of cohesiveness and energy within the GMT, and a plan that will take us into a sustainable future. Suzette Southfox remains as a staff coordinator of the GMT as well as the Membership Ministry Team.

I'm also grateful for another group whose work will help our Strategic Plan stay relevant and functional as we move into year three of the current five year plan. Board members Michanne Hoctor-Thompson, Marcia Biller, and former Board member Julie Schauble-Nguyen join with me, the Rev. Jennifer Channin and Kristen Kuriga to revisit and write strategies for each of the four goals in the plan, that focuses the work of our eight ministry teams. These strategies will be shared and reviewed by both lay leaders of the Ministry Team Council and staff. This year's annual report will have an update on this important work and how the process is coming along.

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May 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])

The **May Transformational Theme** is **Interdependence**

Sunday, May 3:

Hillcrest Services—

"Hopers Unite,"

Rev Dr Tom Owen-Towle, Minister Emeritus

South Bay Service—

"Living Our Seventh Principle,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

Sunday, May 10:

Hillcrest Services—

"Living Our Seventh Principle,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Mother's Day Service: Nurturing Life,"

Kristen Kuriga, South Bay Coordinator

Sunday, May 17:

Hillcrest Services—

"Trans*forming Love,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister and
Dr Melissa James, Dir of Family Ministry

South Bay Service—

"The Good, The Bad, The Ugly,"

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

Sunday, May 24:

Hillcrest Services—

"Memorial Day: At Play in the Web of Life,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Hopers Unite,"

Rev Dr Tom Owen-Towle, Minister Emeritus

Sunday, May 31:

Hillcrest Services—

"Wisdom from Black Canyon,"

Rev Jim Grant, Associate Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Memorial Day: At Play in the Web of Life,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.



GARDENING AND INTERDEPENDENCE

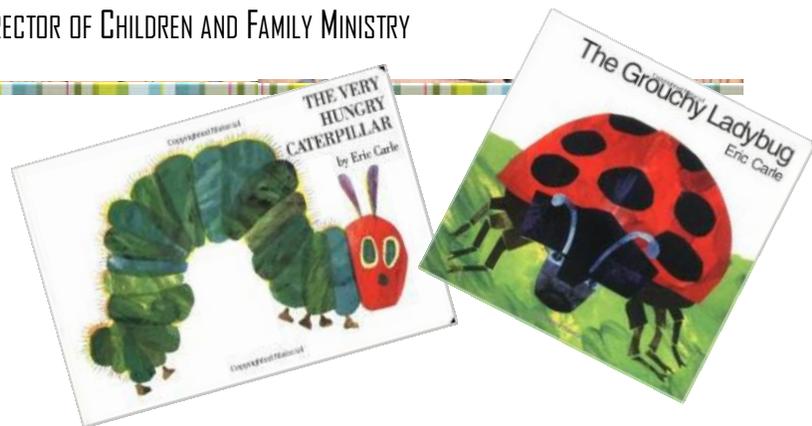
BY DR. MELISSA JAMES, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Nestled between some of the classrooms and the canyon is a small patch of land on our Hillcrest campus, known as the Peace Garden. Through the years, many dedicated and passionate people have poured their love into this space. This summer, it will become the learning lab for our Children's Religious Education programs to explore interdependence.

Gardeners among us know about interdependence. They know if the soil is unhealthy, no plant truly stands a chance. They know companion planting certain flowers next to certain vegetables invites helpful insects and repels harmful ones. For many, gardening is a spiritual practice. You plant and hope, actively waiting for each phase of life to emerge—the sprout, the leaves, the fruit, the seed and finally, the death of a plant as it leads to new life.

Perhaps you are more like me, and your thumbs are less than green. Despite my years working in food justice and farm-based education, I'm still a novice at actually growing things. This makes me ever more aware of my interdependence within the food system. I know my food had to be produced, processed, transported, and distributed before it ever reached my shopping basket. My interdependence with the ecosystems where my food was grown and the people who were a part of the entire process makes food a spiritual practice for me. My commitment to our ailing planet begins with my fork.

All of these are important reasons for people of all ages to learn about food, nature, and gardening. But, really, the reason we will be spending the summer in the garden is because playing in the dirt and eating food that you grew yourself is fun! Who wouldn't want to learn about our UU principles if it means building a home for worms, using real hammers to make real garden structures, and watching the seed turn into a real plant? That is why this summer, our Children's Religious Education program isn't going to just study our seventh principle, valuing our connection with all life and nature—we're going to grow it and live it! That is why I am thrilled to introduce our summer programs:



An Eric Carle Summer (preK-1st grade 9:30am)

Kids will journey through life cycles with the tiny seed and the hungry caterpillar, discover along with the grouchy lady bug how bugs can be helpful, and grow with a whole cast of colorful characters. Based on the popular books by author Eric Carle, this curriculum connects story, art, and action in a summer long exploration of our seventh principle.

Gardens and Games! (2-6th grade 9:30am)

In these fun and dynamic classes, older kids take the lead in completing hands-on projects, as they create an edible children's garden. We'll use games and gardening to connect our UU principles to the food we eat, the water we use, and how we care for the Earth. Through building garden beds and worm composting bins, to planting seeds and tending plants, kids will gain skills they can take home, learning to have confidence in their everyday actions as they make a big difference in the world.

Rainbow Adventurers (K-6th grade 11:30am)

Together, we'll share in a chapel service that includes stories and songs focusing on one of our Unitarian Universalist Principles. Children will then choose from a number of exploration stations, where they can explore the principle through play and create tangible representations of that principle.

Are you a gardener? Have you been wanting to be a part of our children's religious exploration? Contact [me](#) about how you can be a part of our summer programs!

MEET CHEF MARCUS TODD: KITCHEN MANAGER

BY KATH HILLERY

Chef Marcus Todd is stepping in as our new Kitchen Manager. He and his wife Laura have been members of First Church for five years. When they discovered their first child was on her way, they started seeking a church for their family. They lived near Joy Gorian, and she invited them to try First Church. When they arrived, they felt at home, and they've have been here ever since.

Chef Marcus grew up in Sonoma, CA, and attended the Walt Disney Culinary School in Orlando, Florida. After working at Disney's best restaurant, Victoria and Albert's, for two years, he got his Bachelor's degree and returned home to California.

When it comes to food, Chef Marcus loves eggs and everything else. Because his wife and two children, Rachel and Alexander are vegan, he's an experienced vegan chef. He looks forward to working with a variety of groups to create fantastic food-oriented events.

On-line Food Handler Certification

Food service is an important part of the Church's community-building process. Working in the kitchen is a rewarding experience and also loads of fun. The Church's Social Hour, held every Sunday after each Worship Service, is a place where friends are cherished, good food and drinks are consumed, and souls and bodies are nourished. To provide safe and nutritious food for any other gathering that includes food, it's necessary that everyone who works in the Welcome Center kitchen has proper food safety training and a Food Handler's certificate.

It's now possible to earn a Food Handler certificate by completing an online class in less than 2 hours. The County of San Diego has recently authorized three companies to offer online courses and to certify Food Handlers after successful completion of the course and a multiple choice exam. The cost of the courses range from \$12 to \$18.



Our new Kitchen Manager, Chef Marcus Todd, also offers food safety training to small groups of five to ten people at no charge. If your group would like to schedule a training with Marcus, contact our Director of Operations, Robie Evans, at (619) 398-4433.

If you like to work with food, and want to serve the church community on a Sunday morning, please consider using one of these three agencies to earn your certificate, or schedule a class with Chef Marcus. After successful completion of the course, please send a copy of your certificate to our Director of Operations at Robie@FirstUUSanDiego.org, and contact Kath Hillery at (619) 582-3070 to schedule your on-the-job training session.

The Kitchen is also seeking helpers willing to act on their environmental values by washing dishes after Social Hour so we can use reusable plates and cups instead of disposable products.

You can view details on the courses at the County's Food Handler Certification webpage at http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/deh/fhd/food/pdf/publications_fhschools860.pdf.

COMPUTERS LARGE AND SMALL

BY KATH HILLERY

In 1946 when Dick Tracy first used his two-way wrist radio, the idea of a communication device on one's wrist was fantastic and farfetched. In the same year, the first electronic general-purpose computer was announced. Developed during World War II to compute ballistic firing tables, the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, known as ENIAC, weighed more than a locomotive engine and was the size of house. Ever since the development of ENIAC, computers and communications devices have been getting smaller, lighter, faster, and smarter. And now, wrist worn smartwatches are a thing of the present rather than a dream for the future.

In the mid 1970's, computers became small enough to come into the home and office. Desktop computers were about the size of a portable sewing machine and they revolutionized communications and computation. Desktop publishing capabilities and number crunching with spreadsheets became possible and affordable. In addition, computer games came into the home and modernized leisure time.

Laptop and notebook computers were the next revolution. They hold all the power of a desktop computer condensed into the size of a briefcase or textbook. Released from the electrical cord, these computers are used in innovative ways because they are portable. Smaller still, is the netbook computer which lacks a disc drive and a conventional hard drive. They rely on the internet for their software and storage capabilities. Netbooks are approximately the size of our hymnal, Singing the Living Tradition.

Tablet computers are smaller still and are displacing netbooks from the marketplace. About the size of an Order of Service and thinner than a slice of bread, a tablet offers more computing power than the early desktop machines. They have

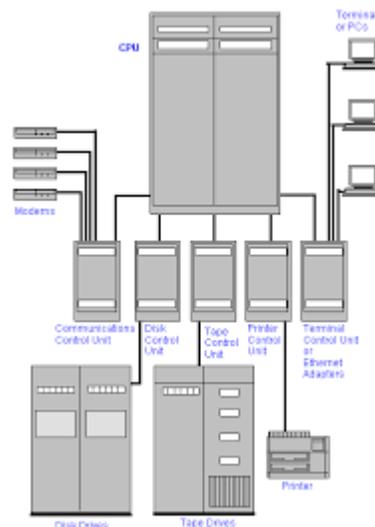
a touchscreen interface that substitutes fingers or a stylus for the mouse and a keyboard. A virtual keyboard display appears on the screen to allow typed input. Tablets can connect to the internet and have a camera and many other helpful utilities such as a calculator, a stopwatch and an audio recorder. They can also run apps, or applications, that are computer programs that do a specific task. Some apps are games, while others are utilities like the Swiss Army app that has a flashlight, a mirror, a compass and a bubble level. Other apps help you count calories and track your weight loss or keep in touch with friends.

Smart phones were developed concurrently with the tablet computer. These phones combine the power of the tablet with the utility of a cell phone.

About the size of a 3 by 5 card, these devices can communicate with the internet and allow you to make a phone call or send a text message (the modern equivalent of a telegram). Many people use their smart phones for research on the go. In fact, a smart phone can be used to select a restaurant, make a reservation, and get directions to that restaurant. They can also be used to invite that special person to dine at that restaurant.

The latest and smallest computer on the scene is the smartwatch. Working in conjunction with a smart phone or tablet, the smartwatch brings the computer and telephone to your wrist. In addition to the expected utilities such as a calendar and clock, a smart watch can play music, allow you to see texts and emails, and even count your steps. The new Apple Watch can tap the wearer instead of ringing or vibrating when a call is received or an appointment is pending. The Apple Watch will be released in June.

What seemed impossible in the 1940's is now reality. Dick Tracy would be impressed with the capabilities of today's technology.

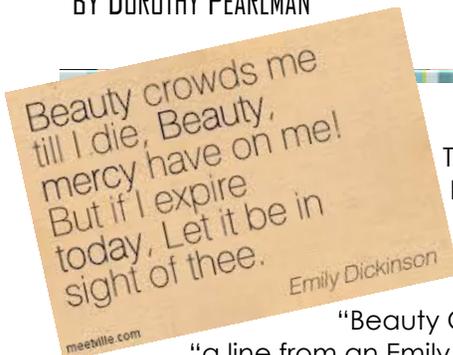


UU WOMEN'S RETREAT 2015

BY DOROTHY PEARLMAN

Camp de Benneville Pines

Register for Camp!



The UU Women's Retreat this year will be at de Benneville Pines from May 15-17. The theme is

"Beauty Crowds me till I Die,

"a line from an Emily Dickinson poem. The

theme speaker is Rev. Dr. Carolyn Owen-Towle, the minister emeritus from First Church.

Join together with other women from the district for a weekend in the mountains. There will be a variety of workshops and time to read, relax, and hike, as well as belly dancing, drumming and singing. Carolyn Owen-Towle describes her experience with beauty and nature in this way: "There is an odyssey in each of us – a story that reminds us of where we have been and tends to point us toward where we are going. As I reflect upon my life, I recognize threads that have run pretty consistently throughout the years. One of these is the quest for beauty: beauty of thought, beauty of art and culture, beauty of attitude and will. Today, I am involved in the art world and surrounded by the beauty I love. In sharing with you, I will endeavor to coax the threads of your odyssey from you.



It was the beauty of the natural world that dazzled me from the first moment I can remember. I grew up in the foothills of Mt. Baldy, not far from camp. A third generation Californian, I spent my days climbing trees, gingerly hopping from rock to rock barefoot in the streams, saving baby birds from the barn cat, hiking in the hills and wondering about life's meaning.

The smell of sagebrush instantly zaps me back to that place and those precious youthful years. Through the decades, I have come to recognize that beauty in its many forms lives at the core of my philosophy, my view of people, and my service to the world. The truth is I cannot live without beauty. Oh, I recognize that all is not beautiful; so much is at risk, and humanity's pain often obscures the

rainbow. However, the quest for beauty has led me through years of challenging and satisfying ministry and now once again into the art world, which was my legacy.

My hope is that in sharing with you, your memories and affirmations will gain new meaning for you.

Women of the district, please join me to explore further how the beauty of the natural world lights our lives. It will be a peaceful weekend in the mountains at our beautiful retreat site, de Benneville Pines.

For registration information, go to www.uucamp.org, and click "Register for Camp." Or contact the camp registrar at registrar@uucamp.org.



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When I was elected as the Lead Minister, I wanted to create a stronger sense of shared ministry, to focus on leadership development, and to do the work necessary for the fulfillment of our strategic plan. I am honored that so many lay leaders have given of their time this year to be part of this work—working interdependently with staff to make sure our congregation runs smoothly and is strong for the coming years, as we continue to live out our mission: to create community, nurture spiritual growth and to act on our values to help heal the world.

This is an exciting time in the life of our community. I encourage you to get involved and find out how interdependence plays out in your life and your work here at the church.

Kathleen



CLIMATE JUSTICE CONFERENCE: AN INTERVIEW WITH LAURA TODD AND ALEXANDRA KOVALICK

BY KATHY SMITH

Kathy Smith, our church's Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Representative (UUSC), recently interviewed Laura Todd and Alexandra Kovalick about their experience in March, when funds from the Fair Trade Table at First Church allowed them to fly to Washington, DC, to advocate for climate justice. This Youth Advocacy event was led by the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), with nearly 300 other young adults from all over the U.S. participating.

Why were you interested in applying for a scholarship to attend the Climate Justice Conference?

Laura: I was particularly excited about the advocacy training. I want to believe that I can make a positive impact; that if I have something to say to our nation's leaders, they'll listen. After attending the conference, I believe that more strongly than ever. What observations and learnings did you receive from the various workshops?

Alexandra: I attended a workshop on bringing a member of Congress to your church or school. This could be very beneficial, if we host an event that we'd like Scott Peters to attend. Laura attended a workshop on how to lobby successfully in your district and what you must do afterward to hold your senator or representative accountable.

What will you be bringing back to us at our church, or be inspired to do to continue working on Climate Change as a Moral Issue? How will you make these opportunities possible for others at our church?

Laura: I intend to continue advocating in a similar way here in San Diego. One of the biggest learnings I brought back from the conference is that when a few people are visiting a politician's office together, it can have 10 times the impact of just one person speaking up. If anyone would like to accompany me to Congressman Scott Peters' office when he is in district, or would like me to accompany them to visit their representative, please contact me via email: ppq79@hotmail.com.

What was it like to advocate for legislation in Representative Peters' and Vargas' offices?

Alexandra: We received a lot of positive feedback from our Senator's and Representative's staff members regarding the initiatives we were asking them to support. We're very fortunate to live in a state that already recognizes the need to protect the environment. However, it's crucial we continue to lobby until substantial action is taken in fighting the ever-increasing carbon emissions that are released into our atmosphere.

For anyone interested in learning more, these are the issues we advocated for on Capitol Hill:

The [Shaheen--Portman Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness \(ESIC\) Act](#), designed to "spur the use of energy efficiency technologies ... while also fostering job creation. This bipartisan bill uses a variety of low cost tools to reduce barriers for private sector energy users and drive adoption of off-the-shelf efficiency technologies that will save businesses and consumers' money, make America more energy independent, and reduce emissions." More information can be found at: <http://www.shaheen.senate.gov/priorities/issues/energy/>

The [PREPARE Act](#) which was introduced last Congress and hasn't made it to the floor this year. We asked our representatives to take this opportunity to become original co-sponsors of this bill, which would help coordinate preparations for extreme weather events. It would also save money in the event of a disaster instead of waiting to address the situation after a disaster hits. You can read the bill, in summary or in full, at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/5314>

Laura: I'd like to thank everyone involved in helping make this experience possible for me, including you, Kathy, as well as the Fair Trade table and Climate Justice teams, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and UUSC organizer Pamela Sparr, who teleconferenced with me one week before our trip and worked with all the UU delegates.

Important Note: There is an urgent need for substitute and regular volunteers at our Fair Trade Table, which supports Leadership Development for Young Adults and others. The commitment is one Sunday a month. Contact Julie McKane: jmckane38@gmail.com.

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