



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Publication

May 2018; Vol. 12, No. 5

WE PERSIST! THIRD ANNUAL WOMEN'S CHORUS CONCERT

BY RHEA KUHLMAN



The
Third
Annual
Women's
Chorus

Concert to benefit the women supported by Women's Empowerment International, WE PERSIST!, will take place on Saturday, May 19 at 7 pm in the Meeting House, followed by a wine and dessert reception in Bard Hall at 8 pm.

This year, the Chorus is honored to be joined by Congolese singer, Matrída David, and members of her Umoja Band. Matrída, driven from her homeland by war, grew up in the Nyarugusu refugee camp in Tanzania. She started singing and performing gospel music at age 7. By the time she was 17, she was leading the refugee camp's 100-member church choir, writing music and performing both at camp and around the country.

Matrída was accepted into the UN's refugee assistance program and moved to the United States with her children in 2016, settling in San Diego. Here she became a client of WE's San Diego partner, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which has helped Matrída to re-start her singing career in a new land. She has continued to write and produce new music with the band members that are still in the Nyarugusu camp, sending digital files back and forth for recording.

She has also formed a band here locally with other talented Congolese musicians—The Matrída Umoja Band. Their lovely, joyful music, sung in Swahili, English, and other African languages, gets audiences up on their feet to dance, laugh, sing, and enjoy beautiful "umoja" (unity) together.

Matrída plans to use her musical gifts to lead a fundraising effort to support her family and friends who have been left behind in the Nyarugusu camp, including a group of 120 orphans and 80 widows. In

that regard, she's like many of the refugee and immigrant women helped by WE in San Diego, as concerned with supporting those she left behind as with building a new life here, for her and her family.

In addition to WE's partnership with IRC, WE works with partners in Tijuana, Honduras, Haiti and Uganda to help vulnerable low income women start small businesses. These businesses allow women to send their children to school, provide basic health care, and put food on the table. The businesses instill a new sense of self-worth in women, raising their status in the family and in the community, and reducing instances of domestic abuse and violence.

Whether in the U.S. or outside of it, all these women share a common trait: they persist, no matter what obstacles are thrown in their path. They remain undefeated, and therefore so do we, persistently striving to insure full economic and social inclusion for marginalized populations.

To learn more about Women's Empowerment International, visit www.womenempowerment.org.

Tickets for the concert (\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door), can be purchased at <https://firstuusandiego.org/womens-choir>, or Sundays on the patio through May 13. For assistance with tickets or a ride to the concert, please contact Chris Smith at (619)300-7477.

Please attend the concert on May 19 to hear Matrída's uplifting story, and the joyous, irrepressible music of Matrída and the First UU of San Diego Women's Chorus.

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BUILDING RESILIENCE

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

What a worship cycle we've been through in 2018—from *Beginnings* in January, to *Prophetic Engagement* and then on to *Disobedience* and *Agitation*. It's been quite an arc, really, and now we move into strength with May's theme, *Building Resilience*.

With the known and unknown challenges that await us, building resilience can carry us through, reminding us we're not alone on this journey. When carefully built, resiliency can become a celebration. I think resiliency is built in a variety of ways and one of the surest ways is through repetition.

Action or practice that is grounded in Love, can help us connect with the spirit of life, and the web of life. This can center us and bring us into closer contact with one another, into a deeper awareness of who we are in our heart of hearts. When we practice living our principles into action in our daily lives from this center, resiliency grows in us. We are then made stronger to withstand the challenges in our lives.

In our society which offers so many distractions, we can lose our focus, become overwhelmed, get lost in the details, and miss the bigger picture—the grander view. Building resilience means you keep showing up, continue asking questions, listening from the heart to hear life calling you on to more awareness, and a deeper purpose for being on the planet.

Building resilience requires creating a better balance in your life. Where is your life out of balance? How might you slow down, listen to your heart, create the balance you need? In some of my earliest journals as a teen, the need for balance was a main theme. This need has followed me well into adulthood. In the spring and summer months, the natural beauty all around pulls me from my desk and away from the computer to remind me there's another reality, just waiting outside.

During this coming season of programs and worship, may you find more balance and encouragement as we build resiliency together.

Faithfully,

May 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)

May's Transformational Theme is "Becoming Resilient"

May 6, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Becoming Resilient"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

Music Sunday

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

Lorelei Garner, *South Bay Music
Coordinator*

May 13, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

Festival Music Sunday

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

South Bay Service—

"To Make a Dream Come True"

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

May 20, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Water in the Desert"

Sadie Lansdle, *Intern Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Where Things Go Wrong"

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

May 27, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

"Nourish the World"

Emese Bodor, *Balasz Scholar*

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

South Bay Service—

"Here and Now"

Sadie Lansdle, *Intern Minister*



THE KEY TO RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

BY DR. MELISSA JAMES

One of the biggest barriers I hear people talk about, when asked to lead anything that involves multiple generations, is they don't think they know how to do it. This comes up when I ask adults to work with children and youth (and vice versa) or younger adults to work with older adults (and vice versa). It's true that working across generations takes a skill set; one which many of us have spent many years developing. It's also almost always true that if someone is inviting you to lead something multigenerational, that person already sees that skill set or the potential for that skill set to grow in you!

This cross generational work is important because it's key to building resiliency, among many other reasons. The main thing research on resilience in children and older adults has in common is a connection to community. Children gain resiliency by being in relationship with people who care about them unconditionally, challenge them to think in a growth mindset, help them get a sense of mastery, and model resiliency (among other things). In older adults, resiliency is directly linked to their "social connectedness." How do we build resiliency as a community? By being together across generations!

There are two great opportunities in May and June to build this resilient community:

This year we will once again offer our **Skillz SUUndays** for our summer religious education program across generations. Last year we had a blast learning Chinese calligraphy,



origami, hand tool safety, fencing, sewing, dance,

electronics, gardening, astronomy, and so much more!



I invite YOU to share a skill this summer! The commitment is one Sunday during the 9:30 service. There are leaders in the room to help guide the children so you just need to focus on sharing your skill with a group of 3-5 kids at a time. Before you say, "That's nice, but I don't have anything to teach." Let me remind you—you know more than you think you do (and you have more to learn!).

The Skillz shared in this program range from what we take for granted as simple skills to complex tasks that push us to do what we didn't know we could do. Can you make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich? Then you have a skill to share! Can you play hopscotch? Then you have a skill to share! Can you build a self-watering planter! You get the idea. Practicing and getting down even a seemingly simple task can be a process filled with joy, frustration, and awe for our children. Let's talk about your skill or go ahead and sign up on the patio at Hillcrest!

Sometimes sharing across generations comes in the form of simply being together. **All Church Camp** is a great opportunity to just be. All Church Camp is one of the bright spots in the church year for many people in our congregation. If you've been to camp, you may feel this way. If you've not gone, perhaps this year you can join us and find out why people feel this way! From workshops to worship to hanging out on the porch together, this is a weekend that builds relationships that span the year.

All Church Camp is June 1st -3rd. Register at <http://www.firstusandiego.org/all-church-camp> or donate to the scholarship fund today!

DINING FOR DOLLAR\$ 2018—BIDDING BEGINS APRIL 29TH!

BY ROBIE EVANS AND LOUISE KLINKE; DINING FOR DOLLAR\$ CO-CHAIRS

- ✧ Kids Meet Goats...
- ✧ Vacation at a B&B in Costa Rica, Alaska or Utah...
- ✧ Enjoy a poolside lunch and afternoon...
- ✧ Experience “Around the Church in 80 minutes” with your First Church staff...
- ✧ Fly to Catalina Island Airport for a hamburger...
- ✧ Give poetry, wine, Karaoke, hiking, birding, desert geology a try...
- ✧ Meditation, campfire, backyard BBQs or pancakes...
- ✧ Join others in cooking classes or savory gourmet meals from around the world...



These are just a sample of the Dining for Dollar\$ (D4\$) events being hosted this upcoming year! Bidding starts on Sunday, April 29 and continues May 6 and May 13 in Bard Hall on our Hillcrest campus after each worship service.

Thirteen years ago, we started this amazing fundraiser extravaganza at First Church. Over the past couple of years, we’ve raised as much as \$60,000 yearly, towards our church’s general operating budget. But, that’s not the best part. The social and community-building aspects of the events hosted by Members and Friends of this congregation far outweigh the fact that it’s much more than a major fundraiser. It gives us a chance to:

- ✧ work with others to dream up, organize, and co-host events;
- ✧ meet new people;
- ✧ deepen existing relationships while attending events with friends;
- ✧ do things we’ve never done before; and
- ✧ find ways to ensure everyone is able to participate on some level, regardless of family or financial issues.

So, now it’s time for the “bidding frenzy” to begin, after each worship service on April 29, May 6, and May 13—at both campuses—using a “Silent Auction” bidding process. Folks who can’t make it to

the bidding tables are encouraged to make “remote bids.” Please contact Lisa Lambiase for remote (proxy) bidding at lrmbiase@gmail.com or 619-987-2871. Also, there’ll be lots of D4\$ volunteers onsite available to help you with bidding and/or questions. On May 20 in Bard Hall, events that still have open spaces, will be available to bid on.

This year, there are 107 offerings—including classes, outdoor activities, family events, tours, and hikes in and around San Diego and the county, plus lunches, teas, and dinners. You won’t want to miss bidding on a fun time with the great people in our church community.

To participate you’ll need two things:

1. Your personal Bid Number (which you’ll receive when you stop by the Dining for Dollar\$ table on April 29, May 6, or 13) and
2. Your Bidding Booklet (available online on the church website, sent via email, or picked up at the Dining for Dollar\$ table)

Bid early, bid late, and bid often. Just be sure you and your family don’t miss out on the fun!



THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S RACE: WHY IT MATTERS

BY ISABELLA FURTH

The District Attorney’s race may be the most important issue facing San Diegans on the June 5th ballot. Yet it’s a position many people know little about.

The District Attorney is the county’s chief prosecutor. One of the most powerful people in the American criminal justice system, the DA decides what charges to file in a given case and what the special circumstances may be.

Will it be a misdemeanor or a felony? Will the defendant be accused as a juvenile or an adult? What sort of sentence or punishment will be involved? Will the case even go to trial, or will charges be dropped or changed?

The DA is the one who decides it all: who goes to prison, who will face the death penalty, and who gets a second chance to rebuild their life.

Two women are running for this powerful position in San Diego.

The current Interim District Attorney, **Summer Stephan**, was appointed to the post by former DA Bonnie Dumanis, who stepped down in 2017. Stephan has served in the San Diego DA’s office for more than 25 years and has been Deputy DA since 2012.



November runoff—so it’s especially important that San Diegans educate themselves about the race and the candidates. Rev. Kathleen Owens emphasizes the connection between this race and our values as Unitarian Universalists working towards justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. “Educating ourselves about the DA position and that office’s impact on the people of San Diego is very important,” she says. “And it fits with Goal 2 of our Strategic Plan—Challenging systemic oppression to transform San Diego into a region that is more just, equitable and compassionate—because we want to be sure to elect leaders who reflect our values and goals.”

There will be a forum featuring both candidates on Monday, May 14 at 6:30 pm (doors open at 6:00 pm). It will be held at City of Hope International Church (COHI), located at 4999 Holly Drive, San Diego, 92113. Attendees will get to hear first-hand from the candidates about how they view the job, their vision for criminal justice in San Diego, and to ask any questions they may have. First Church members are warmly invited to attend.

If you prefer not to make the drive yourself, the Organizing for Justice group at First UU will be chartering a bus to take people to COHI from the Hillcrest campus; a van or carpools will be leaving from South Bay. (Contact Newt Ferris or Julie Schauble-Nguyen for more details, or to reserve a spot.)

At a time when San Diego, like cities around the country, is searching for ways to make our criminal justice system more just, more effective, and more accountable, this race is more important than ever before. We hope you’ll be able to join us at COHI on May 14.



Her opponent, **Geneviève Jones-Wright**, has been a Public Defender in San Diego since 2006.

The race will be decided in the June primary—there will be no



MAGGIE MARSHALL, SUNDAY FLOWER ARRANGER

BY NANCY FISK

If you've ever admired the flowers in front of the pulpit on Sunday, thank the person who creates these arrangements, Maggie Marshall. Maggie took over the volunteer position from Martha Woodworth, who did it for 10 years. This is Maggie's second year arranging the flowers.

When she was young, it was Maggie's mother who did the flower arranging at the church they attended. So, it's ironic this is the latest of the volunteer jobs Maggie has held at First Church. She has worked ten years on Dining for Dollar\$, committee member of the Intern Ministry, has done events for our church and facilitated Wisdom Circles.

Maggie uses several criterion when planning an arrangement. She considers our faith holidays; the theme of the month; the message of the specific sermon; and how to honor the current season. When doing the arrangement for a specific dedication, she consults with the person requesting the dedication, asking about favorite



types of flowers, and the meaning behind the dedication. "I'm now trying to use more plants (wood, seashells, rocks etc.), and other environmentally sustainable items, repurposing things that can be used in several arrangements.

"I feel my calling and the focus of my spiritual practice is paying attention to the delicate work of how people are welcomed and helping them deepen connections to each other. I strive to listen, watch, welcome, and greet others, while

communicating our UU values. And now I have added beauty to that collaboration," she adds.



"Thinking about the design, selecting the flowers, greens, and the vases, making the arrangement and helping setting it up on Sunday morning is a tiny, yet hopefully, nurturing part of welcoming everyone into the Meeting House." according to Maggie. It encourages deeper listening and compassion on her part. She's been told that some people use the

arrangement on the chancel as a way to center themselves before the service.

For a sermon Rev. Ian did, titled "A Weighty Matter," she thought the arrangement should also have breadth and weight. Instead of cut flowers, she used a large magnolia branch to deliver the message.

The biggest surprise for her is that the children love it when she sneaks fruit or vegetables into the arrangement. They get a kick out of carrots in the jar for Easter, and asparagus for St. Patrick's Day.

If this article has moved you to dedicate an arrangement for a Sunday service, you have several options:

- ✧ you can donate to the church to buy flowers and make the arrangement;
- ✧ Enjoy doing the arrangement yourself; or
- ✧ hire a florist to do an arrangement for you.



Maggie keeps the church flower calendar and would love to schedule your flowers for an appropriate Sunday service. Contact her at maggiemarshall2@gmail.com.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEER, MATT MAZZEO

BY ELAINE TWAMLEY



Massachusetts native Matt Mazzeo grew up in the Boston area, one of three siblings in an extended Italian-American family. He attended Catholic schools from kindergarten

through twelfth grade, and then went to Northeastern University in the early 2000's. After graduating with a BA in history, he stayed in the area managing the Northeastern University Bookstore.

Four years ago, Matt had an a-ha moment, asking himself, "Is this all there is?" He decided to move to a different area and renew his life. He debated among Seattle, Denver, and San Diego—luckily for us, he chose San Diego. He came here with no job, only one friend in the area, and gradually rebuilt his life. His first job here was as an assistant manager at a CVS store, where he still works today.

His only friend in the area, Rhiannon Smith, introduced him to our young adult group, and a wondrous chain of events was set in motion. First, he volunteered to work on the rummage sale. "Here," says Matt, "I met many new friends and now my West Coast grandparents, Mike and Georganne Hctor." Matt's involvement with the young adult group deepened, until not long after, he became a trustee on the Board of Trustees, then the Vice-President, and now President until the end of June.

Matt really didn't know what to expect when he started Board service. Would he be choosing

paint colors? Landscaping materials? He was happy to find the job involved mainly making policy decisions. He particularly likes the half hour discussion of diversity that is part of every Board meeting. Matt says, "We are sensitive to common issues of diversity, but what about the issues we know less about? What's it like to be body shamed? What's it like to grow up in a biracial family? How do we get out of our own personal bubble?"

When not working for us or CVS, Matt loves exploring popular culture, particularly movies and TV. A certified cinephile, he has a long list of favorite movies, particularly all the Star Wars films. He even has a Star Wars tattoo!

Says Matt of our Unitarian-Universalist faith, "This religion speaks to me as no other ever has. Here we have a loving community that welcomes everyone, cherishes everyone. Our first principle is key. I came to San Diego knowing almost no one and our church became my home. Now I am trying to give back as much as I can." A grateful church community thinks Matt's mission is accomplished and then some.



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for our
Volunteers

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