

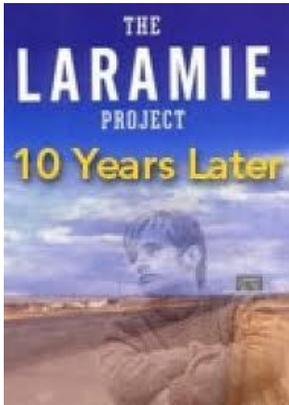


FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

THE LARAMIE PROJECT: 10 YEARS LATER

BY BOBBI KARPINSKI



Matthew Shepard, a young, gay University of Wyoming student, was brutally beaten and left to die tied to a rancher's fence outside of Laramie on October 6, 1998. His death set off a national debate about hate crimes and homophobia. The Tectonic Theatre Project created the play, "The Laramie Project".

In 2008, Moises Kaufman brought his troupe back to Laramie to interview the townspeople again ten years after Matthew's death. Interviewed for the first time were Judy Shepard, Matthew's mother, and the two convicted criminals, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. On October 12, 2009, the 11th anniversary of the death of Matthew Shepard, the theatre group premiered "The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later".

Looking Glass Theatre (LGT) will present this second play about Matthew Shepard on November 7 and 8 at 7:30pm. The eight member cast will portray 55 different characters in a Readers Theatre format.

John Falchi: John has been involved with Interfaith work for Social Justice; United Hate Free, San Diego; the Capital Campaign; and active with LGT since the early 1990's. His most recent role was Oscar Wilde in "Gross Indecencies: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde" in the fall of 2013.

Diane Masser-Frye: Diane has been a member of the Fellowship of Solana Beach for 20 years. Diane has twice done the "Vagina Monologues" at the church. She is taking acting and improvisation classes at Finest City Improv and Point Loma Actors Theatre.

Rose and Eddie Riedel: One year ago, Rose and Eddie found First UU online as they live in Tijuana. Last spring the whole family was involved in "The Enchantment of Beauty and the Beast". Eddie is a supervisor for the County of San Diego. Rose home schools their boys.

Maxine Levaren: Maxine has been a friend/member of First Church for fifteen years, active in Wisdom Circles, adult Religious Education, social justice and rummage sales. She has performed in LGT's productions of "Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde" and "The Enchantment of Beauty and the Beast".

Lydie Lovett: Her primarily theatrical background is in stage management and administration. She is an avid writer and enjoys play writing and performing the spoken word. Lydie is so proud to be in this production after hearing about Matthew's story and visiting the town of Laramie.

John Keasler: John has been a member of First UU since 2000. His many activities include being on the current Board of Trustees, Chair of the First UU Rainbow (LGBTQ) Action Group, Co-Coordinator of the UU Art Guild, Chair of the Art of Pride, Chair of the San Diego Pride Community Advisory Council and a Board Member of San Diego Pozabilities.

David S. Cohen: has appeared on San Diego stages for the past thirty-four years in a variety of roles and settings. He received a 2002 Craig Noel Award from the San Diego Theatre Critics, is an associate guest artist at Lamb's Players, and is known for his evocations of Walt Whitman.

Everardo Aguilar: Everardo's first production with Looking Glass Theater was "Reflections in a Fable" in 1989. He has appeared in many productions since then, most recently in "Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde". Everardo has been a member of First UU for 28 years deeply involved in the work of the church, including Church Board, Social Justice Network, UU United Nations Office Envoy and LGT Board.

Bobbi Karpinski, Director: has been a UU for forty-four years and been involved with theatrical presentations in seven UU congregations. Theatre has been her life for fifty-eight years as an actor, director, and storyteller, including an MA from the University of Michigan.



Suggested donation: \$15 at door, \$12 for students, youth and military with ID. Tickets available at the door or through www.LookingGlassSD.org.

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Gratitude and Giving Thanks

BY REV KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

Welcome to a time when we pay intentional attention to gratitude - it is good to have a season in the year that focuses on gratitude and giving thanks. There are many people, events, things for which I am grateful and the opportunity to serve this beloved community is one of the highest.

I am also grateful to the members of the Board of Trustees who are so dedicated and care about this community. I am grateful to them for their willingness to do things a bit differently than before - especially with how the Ministry Teams are reporting to them this year. This year we are intentional with how the Board and the Ministry Team leaders are talking together about the work of the church. Each month these conversations are centered on one of the four goals in our Strategic Plan, with four of the Ministry teams participating.

One of the reasons I'm excited about this new way of reporting is that I think it fosters an important conversation that is experienced in an atmosphere of reflection and learning - and not just ministry team leaders to the Board members, but also between the four teams that come together in each conversation. This new way of reporting can allow some cross-sharing and learning together as we hear from one another about what is happening in specific programs to help realize our goals.

What I most enjoy about this atmosphere of reflection and learning together is the absence of judgment, criticism or either/or thinking. An environment of reflection and learning allows for mistakes; it allows for some creativity and encourages a spirit of "let's try it and see!"

This kind of environment is expansive and I think allows for a variety of approaches to worship, caring, religious education, doing social justice, connecting with our larger Association, understanding and relating to members differently, participating in generosity in meaningful ways and increasing our presence in the South Bay.

And if in trying something different or new, the results are not what we expected or hoped for, we can always try a different approach, having learned from what we did before.

Faithfully Yours,

Rev. Kathleen Owens

October 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 **November Transformational Theme** is **Gratitude**

Sunday, November 2:

Hillcrest Services—

"Those Who Came Before,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Día de los Muertos," Adam Dyer, Intern;
Kristen Kuriga, Coordinator.

Sunday, November 9:

Hillcrest Services—

"Are UUs Soft on Evil?"

Rev Dr Carolyn Owen-Towle,
Minister Emeritus.

South Bay Service—

"Those Who Came Before,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

Sunday, November 16:

Hillcrest Services—

"Exploring the Koran,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Are UUs Soft on Evil?"

Rev Dr Carolyn Owen-Towle,
Minister Emeritus. (pre-recorded)

Sunday, November 23:

Hillcrest Services—

"All That Is Our Life,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Thank You, . . . Thank You Very Much,"

Adam Dyer, Intern.

Wednesday, November 26:

Hillcrest —

"Thanksgiving Eve Service and Potluck,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister;

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister;

Adam Dyer, Intern.

Sunday, November 30:

Hillcrest Services—

"Leftovers," Adam Dyer, Intern.

South Bay Service—

"On the Doctrine of Discovery,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

THE CAROL TREE

By HAROLD BERGSMAN

Sunday worship goes beyond the walls of the Chalice. One hears music from the loudspeakers on the exit ramp; there are greetings of people coming and going, giving hugs and smiles to friends with words of comfort and cheer. Worship, the extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem, is enhanced by the wall of windows that frame a magnificent tree. Last Sunday my attention was drawn to other visitors to our 'service'. I counted five crows that played among the branches, two song sparrows, three humming birds and a hawk moth, playing, eating and finding shade and a perch on the tree. I decided to give the tree a name. Let it now be known as the Carol Tree. I will explain why in a minute.

Who could remember the tree's real name, *Ficus Retusa*, or perhaps *Ficus Microcarpa*? We see that friend every Sunday and smile, but seldom acknowledge it in any way. The botanical characteristics of Carol Tree state that she may grow to a height of over 45 feet, and that often the width of the tree is equal to the height, that it has light bark, that cuttings taken from it grow easily and finally that it enjoys low humidity.

Where did you come from Carol Tree? I went out and stood under her leafy branches and she whispered in the breeze on her rustling leaves that Carol Smith could provide her history of love. Carol Smith told me that she and her deceased husband donated the ficus tree to First Church and it was first planted in the traffic circle. The tree was dedicated to their son who would now have been 56 years old. Later, it was transplanted to where it now thrives.



From the girth of the trunk and the spread of the tree, I had estimated it to be about sixty years old. Carol told me that the tree had offspring. Cuttings were made, taken to the South Campus and smaller trees are growing there. She also told me that many people had spoken to her over the years about how they loved the tree, what it meant to them. One person told her when she sees the tree, she thinks about a tree of life.

Next Sunday, during the period of meditation, look out and observe Carol Tree and see how she moves in the wind, see her green, shiny vibrant leaves, watch the avian visitors who come to worship, count the birds as you would count your blessings. After service, walk to the tree and introduce yourself, she loves a hand on her bark. Go ahead, 'carpe diem'. "But only God can make a tree."*

*Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918) TREES.





NET NEUTRALITY

BY KATH HILLERY

On the surface, it would seem that the Internet has done much for promoting free speech. On the Internet, anyone, anywhere, can say what they want, and be heard by millions, or even billions of people, right? That may have been true years ago, but now that net neutrality has been struck down by the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals, access to free speech on the Internet is in jeopardy. Senator Al Franken said at a Capitol Hill forum sponsored by the advocacy group Free Press, "It is absolutely the First Amendment issue of our time."

In January of 2014, the D. C. Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the FCC network neutrality rule by stating that the FCC does not have the authority to prohibit slowing down or blocking of data on the internet. The net neutrality rule would have required all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to be neutral to all the data that is transmitted over their equipment. This means they would not be able to block sites they don't like, and they would not be able to charge more for preferential service. Because this rule was struck down, certain internet providers are allowed to create a "fast lane" for those who are willing and able to pay for it. These lanes will allow data from subscribers to be delivered faster than other data from non-preferred sites.

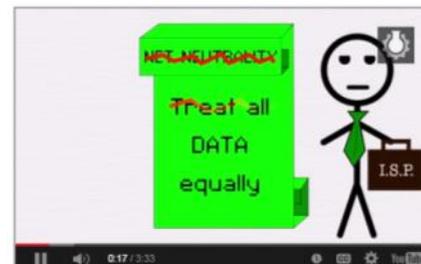
Companies like Netflix and Hulu that send out a lot of data and need it to arrive quickly would benefit from such preferential treatment. Smaller companies, and those that are not-for-profit, would likely suffer, as they couldn't compete financially with the big companies, and their message or service would be harder to find and less likely to be accessed by the average citizen. Without data equality, it would also be possible, and legal, for internet providers to block sites they didn't like. The ACLU lists a number of instances where internet providers have already prevented equal access to data through their services. (See the ACLU website and search for Net Neutrality for more information.) One instance occurred in 2005 when the Canadian telecommunications company Telus blocked access to a website run by

the union that was on strike against them. Both Verizon and AT&T violated net neutrality in 2007. AT&T censored a Pearl Jam concert by shutting off the sound when Eddie Vedder sang negative comments about George Bush. Verizon eliminated access to text-messaging for the pro-choice group NARAL because the group sought "to promote an agenda or distribute content that, in its discretion, may be seen as controversial or unsavory to any of our users."

For many years telecommunications companies have been classified as "common carriers", and as such, have been subject to regulations requiring them to be neutral about the content they carry. Because ISP's have not been classified as common carriers, they are not subject to the neutrality requirement. The January ruling states that the FCC can't regulate ISPs as common carriers.

InfoWorld's Paul Venezia writes that "the crux of the matter here is that the FCC never classified Internet service providers as common carriers, which legally must stay neutral about the content they carry. The FCC could take this opportunity to undo that great disservice by declaring ISPs common carriers. After all, in reality, that's what the ISPs are, and they should be treated as such."

For a further explanation on how net neutrality and the internet work, take a look at InfoWorld's [video explainer](#).



THE GREAT END IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS

Sister Falls and Sister Donahue were two women in the church who were friends and thought it was important to be with and teach in my childhood Sunday School class. Sitting side-by-side together at the table, they tenderly taught stories on the flannel board – with paper Bible figures like Moses and the Ten Commandments, Daniel and the lion's den, and Jesus surrounded by children. As a child, I was fascinated by the flannel board and how paper figures could stay up there on the board – but the stories also drew me in.

Years later, Danny was our youth pastor – a tall, lanky kind of man who loved to laugh and sing. He was the first person I think who ever believed in me as a leader – at his prompting, I preached my very first sermon in the church basement during our Sunday night youth group meeting. His faith in me, and in my ability – a youth who, at that time was shy and hesitant about speaking out, was more important than words can express.

Our own UU historians call William Ellery Channing “the single most important figure in the history of American Unitarianism.” Historians say that “Channing was thrust into the public eye when he replied to the attacks on Boston liberals by Jedidiah Morse and Jeremiah Evarts in 1815. ... He spoke out against slavery and defended human dignity and urged people...to be moral examples through daily living.” Through all of this, children and their growth had his attention. From his earliest days in ministry, Channing was concerned for the education and spiritual progress of children. One of the earliest innovations of his ministry was to invite the children about him after worship.

He states, “The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds upon the young, but to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; ... not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment. In a word,” he writes, “the great end is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish spiritual life.”

... This work can only be done through relationship – a relationship grounded in respect, in creating an environment of trust and care. In this relationship there must be a sense of safety to explore, boundaries to protect and not overburden a young one with too many worries of the day and a relationship that creates a sense of care that allows for a time of reflection so that all that is learned is supported by the values and principles of our faith. Relationships take time to build and consistency on both the teacher and students' part is essential.

...Consistency in our busy, information overloaded rushed lives can feel counter-cultural – consistency is easier to maintain in environments that are created to support this need we have for stability and growth.

...The creation of such an environment means we pay attention to and take seriously the need for space, for some quiet to reflect on our own or with a few others what our longings, our souls are needing...spending time in such an environment allows us to create a way forward to meet our children's ability to think, to be impartial, to cherish an inner life. This is the work of religious education at its deepest core. We are all religious educators and need to be mindful of the opportunities placed before us – to help create rich environments and relationships that will encourage the stirring of minds, and the awakening of hearts and souls.

Excerpted from a sermon given on Sep 21, 2014

To view complete sermon, click here:
<http://vimeo.com/106868897>





JUSTIN MURPHY-MANCINI

BY NANCY FISK

Raised in Massachusetts, Justin has been playing the piano since he was 4 years old. His parents took him to the Roman

Catholic church when he was young, where he learned to love the organ. It was the "coolest thing I've ever heard" he says. He tried to start organ lessons at nine, but he was too short to reach the pedals. At 10, he was tall enough to begin lessons at the University of Hartford, where his teacher was based.

He attended a private high school prep school for the challenge. The ethos of his high school was very progressive and he discovered that he enjoyed composing. When choosing a college, he wanted to find a place that could accommodate his broad interests. Oberlin was that place, because it has a music conservatory across the street from an outstanding liberal arts college.

Because of the proximity of the two schools, he was able to complete a BA in Philosophy, along with a Bachelor's in Music for Organ and composition. He later completed his Master's in Historical Performance. He is currently going to UCSD to complete a PhD in Composition. The program is oriented towards teaching. He is coaching chamber music ensembles as part of his graduate student responsibilities.

Justin has played for churches since he was 13. His first teacher worked for the Unitarians in Hartford, Massachusetts, where Justin participated several times in services. In college, he played for an Episcopal church. He found the job at First Church on the American Guild of Organists listings.

His training is in classical music, with music written anywhere from 1360 to 2013 and everything in between. In his job at First Church, he has heard from the congregation the desire for the diversity of musical style. He works with the worship team to make selections that complement or reinforce the theme of the service. The goal is always to create a cohesive, thematic whole.

Ultimately, working at First Church has much in common with the rest of his experience working for churches. The role that music plays in all religious traditions around the world ends up being fundamentally the same. For him, the music is there to help others find a meaningful connection to the service in their own lives.

He wants to be the very best that he can be at every service. For this reason, he practices 15-20 hours a week. Some pieces may take longer to perfect than others. He is working on some material now that will not be ready for public consumption until the spring.



He says, "Right now I'm trying to make sure that part of my reason for being here is that what I do here is an important part of my life. When I accepted the position, I made the commitment to see myself as a performing musician, and a church musician."

"Doing it in this environment, ties what I do to being in a community and not just be a solo act. What I do is meaningful for me, but it's also important that it's meaningful for other people. I am very cognizant that I'm serving the needs and desires of a lot of people. I play music because it's the thing that I love most in the world but I recognize and it's incredibly important for me to recognize, that when working in a church environment, ultimately what I'm doing is serving the needs of the congregation in that moment."

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