



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

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TONY BIANCA, PROGRAM ASSISTANT

BY NANCY FISK



Tony Bianca is a Baltimore native who recently relocated to San Diego and is happy to be joining the First

UU staff as he begins his life on the West Coast.

After completing his bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance at Loyola College in Maryland, Tony went on study at St. Mary's Seminary for three years as a seminarian for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore. After leaving seminary, he followed in his parents' footsteps and began his 20-year teaching career, during which he earned his Master's Degree in Elementary Education.

During his teaching career, he did campus ministry at Catholic high schools. For eight years, in public school, he taught high school drama, and staged musicals.

In addition to working as a teacher and campus minister in the greater Baltimore-Washington area, Tony directed the Baltimore Gay Men's Chorus for 15 years and has worked as a vocalist and music director in several churches and synagogues, including the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Baltimore, where David Carl Olson is minister. David often told Tony, "You know you're a UU at heart."

For Tony, spirituality encompasses several components. Catholicism is his culture, but he realized one day that the Gospels are not history books. He feels lucky his parents were very liberal Catholics, and he was taught by nuns who were social justice oriented. He likes being at First Church because it gives him a chance to be around like-minded people, who are religious but not tied to a creed. He enjoys his job since it incorporates much of his training—working with education in a church setting.

In his personal practices, he does meditation, incorporating readings, singing or prayer. "I get to define my own higher power now. And what's true for me doesn't have to be true for others, or even true tomorrow." He feels most spiritual when singing for people.

Tony thrives in community, and feels that ideas can become more expansive when shared with others. He also appreciates the way that literature, art, and music can become part of something bigger when shared in community.

While he cherishes his East Coast Roman Catholic roots, Tony is delighted to embrace what he has known for some time: He's really a West Coast Unitarian at heart!

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WHEN CELEBRATION IS CHALLENGING

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

It always feels like the holiday season begins when we reach November. The preparation and scheduling of events begins in earnest. Our monthly worship themes are chosen almost a year in advance and I know that this month's theme of Celebration can be difficult for some of us. It can feel hard to celebrate when there is so much uncertainty, fear, and anxiety about the future of our civic life together, and what will happen after Nov. 8th. It can feel hard to celebrate the holidays when expectations are high and energy is low.

To celebrate can be challenging when one is feeling spent and a bit spiritually hungry. And yet, I think the theme is especially important exactly when we're feeling low energy, or experiencing some spiritual hunger or just wanting that nameless, 'something more.' For me, it's about refining my attention to the everyday moments we experience that can give us reason to celebrate—like the moment when we hear the laughter of a child, see the beauty of a flower, or take in the expansive blue sky above.

It's worth celebrating that this month we honor our veterans, honor their sacrifice and work for more peace in our world. It's worth celebrating that we can appreciate the complexity of our world and make small changes within ourselves that help shift our own attitudes, outlooks, and goals. Celebration doesn't have to mean a big, loud extravaganza. It can simply mean taking the time to name specific people we know, situations and experiences we have had that make our lives better. Celebration can include a quiet appreciation that we continue to live and breathe on this planet today when so many no longer do so.

In trying times, it's important to remember the good, the beautiful, the small acts of kindness, the words of appreciation and to celebrate our awareness of these things and offer our gratitude for them. It may sound too simple, but there's meaning and depth when we take the time to hone our focus and awareness for all that is our life. This way of nurturing our spiritual growth allows for the creation of a larger community which acts on its values to help heal the world. I'm most thankful for, and celebrate, the ability to grow in this community with you.

Faithfully yours,

November 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 [Spanish, English])

November's Transformational Theme is "Celebration"

November 6, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"What Our Civic Responsibility Really Is"

– Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Celebrating Underheard Voices"

– Alix Klingenberg, *Intern Minister*

November 13, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"After the Election..."

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Living Together in Love"

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

November 20, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"Giving Thanks"

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

South Bay Service—

"The Key to Living a Happy Life"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

November 27, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"Ancestors in Training"

Rev. Lone Broussard, *Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Waiting for Justice"

Alix Klingenberg, *Intern Minister*



SHARING OUR GIFTS

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

One day, during coffee hour, a member of our congregation and I were chatting in Bard Hall, as he shared with me his passion for volunteering at the San Diego Zoo. He regaled me with stories of the latest animals and plants, and the looks of wonder and joy on the faces of the kids there as he greeted them with a gorilla hand-replica. Then he pivoted the conversation, and told me this idea he had about giving a special tour for the children and families of First Church. It was a brilliant idea—but it wasn't to be. At least not that year.

A year passed, and we picked up the conversation again. My read of Family Ministries at First Church was that we were ripe for exactly what he had offered. Our kids had chosen animal justice as one of their justice themes for the year, and our parents were interested in finding new ways to build relationships with each other.



At the beginning of October of this year, this vision for how he would share his passion with our children and families came to fruition. One Sunday afternoon, about 30 children and adults met Wayne Savell at the entrance to the zoo. Thanks to his generosity, and that of a few others who donated their guest passes (kids being free in October), we were all able to get into the zoo at no cost to our families. We spent a couple of hours exploring together, with Wayne at the helm showing us cool exhibits, giving us behind-the-scenes insights into the animals and how we can help protect their habitats. From toucans to gorillas, flamingos to fish, it was a glorious afternoon of community and learning.

The reason I love this story is that it's so clearly what it means to be a multigenerational community committed to sharing our passions with each other. Church isn't something we consume; it's something

we create together. It isn't a place where services are provided; it's a place where gifts are shared. Sometimes we're nourished. Sometimes we nourish others. Sometimes it's hard to tell where nourishing ends and being nourished begins. What's beautiful about what we have at First Church is that, unlike so many parts of our lives today, nourishing and sharing happens across generations.

Things we adults may take for granted (knowing the difference between a teaspoon and a tablespoon, being able to put a chain back on a bike, how to find Neptune in the night's sky) are things of wonder for our kids. Things our kids take for granted (that we learn through playing, sometimes the beauty of nature just needs to be stared at, the name of EVERY dinosaur, how to use electronics) are things of wonder for us adults. When we take opportunities to share with each other, we enter into each other's search for truth and meaning.

I look around at our community and I see so many gifts and passions. What's your passion? With whom will you share it?

Here are some ideas for immediate ways to share:

- Gardener needed to work with our homeschoolers, tending our children's garden
- Musicians needed to help lead Music for All Ages
- Organizers needed to help with our supplies
- [Your gift here] needed to share at an upcoming Family Dinner

Whether you're a birdwatcher, biker, or baker—let's talk! We have many venues in the coming months that may be just right for you to share your passion with our children or youth.

JOIN US AND CELEBRATE THE SEASON!

HOLIDAY EVENTS AT FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO
 BY REV. IAN W. RIDDELL, MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS

NOVEMBER

23-Wednesday 5:30 pm Thanksgiving Eve Service and Potluck: HC

DECEMBER

2-Friday 6:00 pm Tree Decorating and Carol Sing-Along: HC
 3-Saturday 6:30 pm Voices in Unity/Emerging Voices Concert: HC
 6-Tuesday 7:00 pm Blue Holiday Service: HC
 10-Saturday 2:00 pm Tamalada [more information soon!] off-site
 11-Sunday 9:30 & 11:30 am December Music Service: HC
 11-Sunday 9:30 am Musical Celebration - Our Lady of Guadalupe: SB
 17-Saturday 6:30 pm Winter Solstice Ritual & Worship: HC
 TBD La Posada sin Frontera [more info soon!] off-site
 24-Saturday 5:30 pm Family Christmas Eve Service: HC
 8:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service: HC
 25-Sunday 9:30 am South Bay Christmas Morning Service: SB
 11:30 am Hillcrest Christmas Morning Service: HC
 12:00 pm Christmas Potluck: HC

For more information see our website at firstuusandiego.org

(HC) Hillcrest Campus
 4190 Front Street
 San Diego, CA 92103

(SB) South Bay Campus
 970 Broadway
 Chula Vista, CA 91911

OWL (OUR WHOLE LIVES) IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY REV. JORY AGATE



In May 2016, the UUA Our Whole Lives (OWL) program asked the Rev. Jory Agate, and Nan Kleiber to train facilitators and then assist them in leading

an OWL program for young adults and youth at the UU Church of the Philippines (UUCP) in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental. The Rev. Rebecca Sienes was both the moving and fund-raising force behind this amazing project.

In the early 1980s Jory spent three years in Dumaguete in the Peace Corps, and is relatively fluent in Visayan, one of the languages spoken by the OWL participants. She has an extensive knowledge of the local cultures, invaluable in providing the language and cultural context for translating OWL's values, goals, and basic information, and making it relevant to the participants. And, while Jory was on the UUA staff, she coordinated the production of the Our Whole Lives curricula. Nan is an anthropologist with a long time commitment to women's health and sexuality education, and had visited UUCP partner churches in 2012.

Rebecca's vision of providing excellent sexuality education for UUs in the Philippines, was the driving force behind this program. She raised the money to pay for the program and recruited 12 young adults, six men and six women, to be facilitators for the OWL program. Jory and Nan trained these facilitators on the teaching techniques, content, values, and goals of OWL. The facilitators had good English skills, and Jory had good Visayan skills. There were several hilarious sessions, learning sex language in one another's languages.

Following this training, 27 youth and young adults arrived in Dumaguete from the small, rural UU congregations on Negros and Manila. The new facilitators prepared and led the many small group discussions at the heart of exploring UU values, and

the content and goals of the Our Whole Lives program. Morning, noon and night—for four full days—participants talked and listened, and learned about Unitarian Universalist values with respect to teaching about sexuality, gender and identity, and many other topics in the OWL program. Everyone attended an HIV/AIDS awareness event in the central square, where Jory gave the invocation. Participants, in pairs, went out into the community to buy condoms. They learned facts and communication skills of use to themselves, and to take back to their congregations, elders and youngsters.

The whole experience was amazing for all involved. Rebecca saw her vision become a reality. Jory and Nan learned entirely new aspects of OWL, and how to teach in a very different culture. The facilitators, participants and UUCP staff and families, all had something new and different happening in their community.

Nan Kleiber was a member of First Unitarian Church in the 1990s. She served as co-chair of the children's Religious Education Committee, and then as the volunteer coordinator of the youth program. She and her husband Pierre raised three children: Michael, Eleanor and Danika, in our RE program. After moving to Hawaii, Nan attended the UU Church in Honolulu. For 16 years, Nan served as the Religious Education Director for this church's congregation.

The Rev. Jory Agate was the Ministerial Development Director at the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). She was the recipient of a 2002 Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program grant, which allowed her and her family to travel to the Philippines.



SHOP AMAZON AND SUPPORT FIRST CHURCH

BY AME STANKO AND JAN GARBOSKY

If you shop Amazon online for some or all of your birthday, holiday, and home purchases, you could be adding to First Church’s coffers with every purchase! It’s another way we can all donate to the church with NO money coming from our own pockets — it would come from Amazon!

Amazon Affiliate

As an “Amazon Affiliate,” if you start your Amazon shopping by clicking our Amazon shopping link at the bottom of every page of our website, ALL of your purchases would pay a 2.0% - 10.0% commission (depending on several factors) paid from Amazon to First Church! From July 2011 through June 2016—with only a few congregation members shopping on Amazon through the church’s webpage—their purchases have added \$1,897 to our funds, or an average of \$379.40/year. Last year (July 2015-June 2016) we surpassed the average, bringing in \$587. Just imagine how many thousands of dollars a year would be added to our church finances if every one of us did all of our Amazon shopping this way!

Here's how it works—from your computer or your smartphone:

Go to our church website (firstusandiego.org).

Click the “Shop via Amazon” button at the bottom of any page on our site and you’ll be taken to amazon.com.

If it’s your first time on amazon.com, click “New to Amazon? Create an account” and follow the steps provided.

If you already have an Amazon.com account, sign in.

Voila! Anything you purchase will be credited towards our affiliate account. Just remember to go to our website first to begin your shopping by clicking our “Shop Amazon” link in the footer of every page of our site.

Amazon Smile

First Church is also a member of AmazonSmile. When you shop at AmazonSmile.com your purchases yield a much smaller donation of .5% to the church. While this isn’t as beneficial as shopping through our affiliate links formerly described, it’s another potential revenue stream for users of AmazonSmile.

So, let’s all get on board and do our shopping through our church website “Shop via Amazon” portal. Is there something you need to buy today? Do it now—by going to the bottom of any page on First Church’s website!

For more info on these and other programs visit our Shop and Support page at http://firstusandiego.org/shop_and_support



THE MURAL AT SOUTH BAY

BY NANCY FISK



The mural began with an idea Barbré Bryan, a member of the South Bay campus, had to bring more young adults to First Church. Her idea was to connect the South Bay campus with Southwestern Community College. To begin the process, Carol Smith, another South Bay member, contacted Nikko Mueller, Assistant Professor of Art at Southwestern.

Professor Mueller and some of his students interviewed Kristen Kuriga, the South Bay Coordinator at that time, and had a long conversation about the church's mission. They learned about our work for social justice, and our aspiration to create the Beloved Community. The students took inspiration for the mural from the work of Diego Rivera.

The Southwestern art students submitted drawings, and

consulted on the result. This summer they painted a mural 8 feet high and 12 feet wide in the Social Hall of our South Bay campus. Elements of the mural illustrate many of the principles important to First Church's mission: caring for the environment; having a multicultural, multigenerational church; and cooperating with other faiths on common goals.

The mural took a week to complete, with lunch provided by South Bay members. One thing Carol Smith appreciated was the way the students collaborated with each other, and that they were all of different ethnicities.

These students: Alexis Avina, Tyler Burnette, Marie Galang, Beck Hayes, Alan Lune, Jose Ruiz, Mark Shoultz and Lerida Vega dedicated their time, creativity and energy to this project. Thanks also goes to their professor, Nikko Mueller.

For the Hillcrest campus, a smaller version of the mural was created to honor the unity of our two campuses. This way, the beauty and significance of the mural is shared with our entire First Church community. It hangs outside the Religious Education office.



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