



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego



LIZ JONES RETIRES

BY NANCY FISK

Liz Jones has served as the Director of Religious Education (DRE) at First Church for 21 years. She retired this year in August. We celebrated her work on

September 21st at a special service based around religious education. Liz came to San Diego in 1976. She was a member and a volunteer at First Church until she was hired in 1993 as the DRE.

When Liz began her job as DRE, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) had just adopted the 7 principles. Liz was able to work with the curriculum that gave children the words to say what Unitarian Universalism was. "It used to be that the kids could tell you everything about other world religions, but they couldn't talk about Unitarian Universalism. The curriculum talked explicitly about who we were as Unitarian Universalists in words that children could comprehend."

The children do an affirmation every Sunday in front of the congregation that states, "We are Unitarian Universalists, a people of open minds, loving hearts and welcoming hands". She knew that this had made an impact when she received a note from a mother that said her young daughter was running around the house grumbling to herself. When asked why she was grumbling, the daughter said, "I'm angry and I don't like being angry, because we're Unitarian Universalists and we're supposed to have open minds, and I don't have an open mind when I'm angry." Liz says, "When a 7 year old can say that, then you know they're understanding the meaning of the words. It may seem like rote learning, but it's something that they own. If we give them the basics and they make their own meaning in and around the information, then they can own it and keep it.

There have been hundreds of volunteers over the years helping with the religious education (RE) program. Liz states, "You're not the only one doing church. It's hard to take credit for anything in particular. No one runs an RE program by themselves.

I credit the volunteers with helping me. I couldn't have done it without the RE teachers. And some of them have been doing it for as long as I've been there. People like Patty Hinojosa, who's taught for well over 15 years. Betty Grant will always be there if there's a need. Richard (Mac) McDonald is always there. Paula Johnson spent years behind the scenes, getting out supplies, putting away supplies. There are people I can always count on when there's a hole in the schedule."

Liz will be working with the UUA and First Church in her retirement. She's on the UUA Presidential Search committee which has another 5 years to run. She has joined the LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators and Directors Association) Integrity team. She's working with Meadville Lombard Theological School in the Fahs Collaborative with the Angus McLean religious education archives. Angus McLean was a religious educator and a professor at Tufts. She will also work in the archives at First Church, starting in January. She plans to come back to First Church as a member on Sundays after a year has passed. She has some curriculum pieces she wants to write for the UUA. "I'm still a religious educator. That hasn't changed just because I don't work at First Church now."

She wants to get her loom back out and start weaving again. But she can't do that until she digs out her studio, which is currently buried in 21 years of materials from her RE work.

When asked what was the most surprising thing about being a DRE, she said "I never thought I would travel as much as I have. I've been all over the United States and to the Philippines. I didn't expect to do that."

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New Worship Themes

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

The first goal in our 2013-2018 Strategic Plan is to "Provide bold and engaging worship and programs to meet the spiritual needs of a diverse, intergenerational and multicultural community." Early in September the worship staff, and many leaders met to discuss the Sunday morning experience on both of our campuses. The first part of the morning was spent discussing the creation of an Emergency Response plan. If there is a medical emergency or protesters interrupting the service, we want to be ready. The staff is continuing to create a more comprehensive plan that includes responding to natural disasters and fires. We will share this plan with the whole community later this fall. We hope that a plan will not be needed and we are glad to have a plan in case of emergencies.

The second part of the meeting was spent with the worship staff, lay leaders and worship associates reviewing the worship themes for the year. We shared together our hopes to include larger concepts that fit within the year and a larger, seasonal arc in our worship life. After much discussion and thinking, the worship themes for this church year are:

Autumn Themes

- Sep - Forgiveness and Reconciliation
- Oct - Chaos
- Nov - Gratitude

Winter Themes

- Dec - Light
- Jan - Justice
- Feb - Love

Spring Themes

- Mar - Letting Go
- Apr - Resurrection
- May - Interdependence

Summer Themes

- Jun - Freedom
- Jul - Contemplation
- Aug - Renewal

And your worship staff is committed to keeping various points of view in mind when creating services; we want to keep in mind the larger concepts of geography and borderlands (what it means to consider these themes while living in San Diego), challenges and our physical self.

With these new ideas, themes and a more inclusive worship staff, I think we are in for an exciting, challenging, comforting, rich year in worship.

I look forward to worshipping with you this year.

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 October Transformational Theme is Chaos

Sunday, October 5:

Hillcrest Services—

"Living in Chaos,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Building the Plane While We Fly It,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

Sunday, October 12:

Hillcrest Services—

"On the Doctrine of Discovery,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"Which Came First ... The Chicken or the Cart?," Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

Sunday, October 19:

Hillcrest Services—

"The World Needs Chaos Muppets,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

South Bay Service—

"On the Doctrine of Discovery,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

Sunday, October 26:

Hillcrest Services—

"Hinduism and You,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

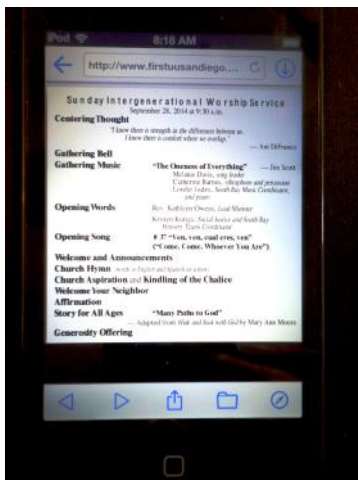
"The World Needs Chaos Muppets,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

AIRPLANE MODE AND QR CODES

By KATH HILLERY

Have you noticed the new announcement at the beginning of Sunday's services: "Please set your phone or tablet to airplane mode"? Did that make you wonder what a jet plane has to do with sitting in church? Smart phones, which are phones that connect to the internet, and tablets, which are hand-held computers that include ipads and Android tablets such as the Galaxy Tab, can be used in place of the paper Order of Service.



When an electronic device is set to airplane mode access to cellular service and to Wi-Fi is turned off. This assures that the phone will not receive a call or notice which could disturb the service with a ring or buzz. When in airplane mode, a smart phone or tablet can still be used for all of its self-contained functions, such as displaying documents, taking pictures, making notes or doing a calculation. The only thing you give up is communication from the outside.

Airplane mode was developed as a response to the requirement that electronic devices be shut off during airplane take offs

Each week the church posts a hyperlink on its website and on Facebook that automatically downloads a copy of the Order of Service and the slide show for the coming Sunday's service. These documents can then be viewed on the screen of your tablet or smart phone. By viewing on your device, you save the church paper, ink and electricity. In addition, you get a close-up view of the slides and song lyrics.

Another way to get the order of service on your device is to use a QR code reader which works in conjunction with the device's camera. You may have seen the Quick Response (QR) code posted on a sign outside the Meeting House. This two dimensional bar code tells your device to go to the internet and download the Order of Service. You will need to install a QR reader application on your device to make this option work. There are free QR code reader apps available in the iTunes Store and at Google Play.



and landings. While each individual cell phone only emits a small amount of radio frequency interference, a whole plane-load of them can create so much interference that the pilots' ability to communication with the control



tower is compromised. Cell phone and tablet makers developed a way to shut off the device's connection to the outside world while preserving the self-contained functions of the device. This solution resulted in no more interference problems and passengers can still play Candy Crush (ask Nancy Fisk about this popular video game).

Wi-Fi is a radio connection between a device and a router that connects to the internet. There are three routers at First Church – one for the community, one for Religious Education, and one for the administration. Seek out a Young Adult or Youth member of First UU to learn the password for the community Wi-Fi.



LOVE IN ACTION SPEED DATING

BY NANCY FISK

Penelope Burton, a youth from the South Bay congregation, has participated in social justice work since she and her mother, Cynthia Burton, moved to San Diego 3 years ago. She works with the Hillcrest Youth Center and is a student ambassador for her school, E3 Civic High, the high school located in the Central library in downtown San Diego. Penelope and Angela Garcia-Sims, also a member of South Bay, met when they participated in an action to promote immigration reform, delivering handwritten cards to senators. When Angela came up with a way to acquaint others with the joys of social justice work, she recruited Penelope to help.

The result is Love in Action Speed Dating, where participants will hear about the different opportunities for social justice at First Church from the people who are currently involved with those teams. Angela says, "It'll be fast, fun and participants will get to do an action that day for their preferred issue."

Love in Action Speed Dating takes place at First Church in Hillcrest on October 11, Saturday afternoon, from 1-4:30. The event will lead off with an explanation of the purpose of the event, which is to promote awareness and involvement in First Church social justice. Participants will then be divided into groups that go to a different social justice group every 10 minutes. The youth will be there to help shepherd the groups according to the schedule.

The social justice groups will include:

- Civic Engagement with Newt Faris, the San Diego Organizing Project, and voter outreach volunteers
- Economic Justice with John Schaible, Christine Imhoff, Jill Hansen and Irene Grumman from the Uptown Community Service Center

- Immigrant Justice with Cynthia Burton, Julie Schauble, Angela Garcia Sims, Penny Moreau, Kay Chandler, Jean Lockett, Chole Diaz and SOLACE leaders. SOLACE is our listening presence in the Otay Mesa Immigrant Detention Center.
- LGBTQ Rights with John Keasler
- Reproductive Justice with Karen Lamphere and Jan Gallo
- UU Service Committee/UU Social Justice Ministry California with Kathy Smith

At the end of the speed dating, there will be a pair share in Bard Hall to reflect on what the participants learned from their experience. There will then be an opportunity to return to a preferred team to participate in a mini action.

Penelope says she is participating because this will be "great for young activists because you can't always do it alone, and adults have resources that aren't always available to youth. The more people who participate in social justice, the stronger your cause becomes." After doing social justice with the South Bay group, she wants to help people for a career. "There's nothing better than getting together and helping people."

According to Angela Garcia Sims "Civic engagement is the key. If we don't vote, if we don't have a democratic system, we don't have justice."

The community and the cluster churches are encouraged to participate in this event. For more information, contact First Church at 619-298-9978.

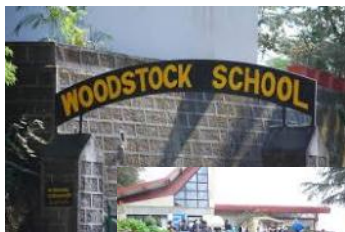


PUJA, WORSHIP, MEDITATION, NAMAZ: IS IT ALL IN THE NAME?

BY HAROLD M. BERGSMA

A friend mine from the choir has asked me a couple of times if the words 'UU Worship Service' bothers me. So this is my reply:

"How did you like the worship service this morning?" Overheard during coffee hour. I did not get close enough to pick up on the reply but it caused a wave of existential reaction, nonetheless. My last year of secondary school was in a boarding school called Woodstock, in the foothills



of the Himalayas. Every Sunday morning after breakfast all the boys would line up and pass inspection; clean trousers, hair slicked down, and of course, shoes shined. We would walk as a group up the steep hill more than a mile to the evangelical church. About

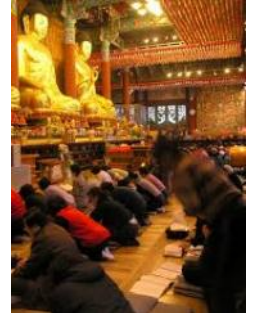
halfway there, two boys, who were the only ones wearing neck-ties, left the group and headed into the dense jungle singing, "Oh come to the church in the wildwood, Oh come to the church in the dale!"* Within minutes they settled down in a secluded green haven and smoked beedies, which were cheap, potent, native, tobacco leaves rolled up like a mini-cigar. Worship service.



A number of times, when I lived in India I went to Hindu temples to watch individual believers do puja. A large black phallic stone was anointed with oil or milk, incense smoke filled the air, and

flowers were placed near or on the stone, lingam, symbol of Lord Siva, humming and softly calling out their invocations, bowing, touching heads on the ground, seeking blessings. Worship service.

Buddhist temples draw a constant stream of the worshippers to assist them in their journeys to enlightenment and bring blessings on them and their families. Observe that some are deep in meditation, deep in concentration and mindfulness of the Buddha. Mantras, sacred sounds are hummed, drummed, played to enhance meditation and enlightenment, seeking nirvana. Mudras which are sacred hand and arm gestures, give the worshipper a personal tactile body motor response which enhances the Mantras by creating a trance-like state, while others twirl prayer wheels. Worship service.



Five thousand answer the call to prayer on Friday and kneel in rows in the Jumma Masjid Delhi, responding to the caller of the holy words of the Quran; standing, kneeling, prostrating and putting heads to the ground in their namaz of Allah. 'La Ilaha Illa Allah Mohammed Rasul Allah. "There is only one God and Mohammed is His Prophet." Worship service.

The choir of the First UU Church of San Diego, while singing Wana Baraka, (Kenyan religious song) looks down from the choir loft on the faces of some two hundred who have congregated; among them democrats, atheists, agnostics, deists, Buddhists, Christians, and mystics gathered for the first Sunday U U Worship Service led by their pastor, Rev. Kathleen Owens.



Worship: reverent honor or homage paid to a sacred object, personage, god, or the 'Spirit of Truth'. Service: a ceremony that has religious meaning.

I am heading off into the woods. Join me?

*"Come, come, come."

*The Church in the Wildwood. A song by William S. Pitts 1857.



AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB STEVENS

BY NANCY FISK

Bob Stevens was called to go to Korea when he was a reserve Marine. When he was called up, his wife Betsy was expecting their first child. He went to Dana McLean Greeley, the minister of his Unitarian Universalist church, who wrote a letter to his command, that resulted in Bob being stationed in North Carolina, instead of going to Korea. Later he attended to a school in Kansas where he trained to be an air traffic controller.

He went to Boston University in the 50's and received an undergraduate degree in Education. Later, he finished a doctorate in Human Behavior. At Boston University, Bob took Comparative Religions, where Martin Luther King, Jr. was a classmate. Bob wrote his doctoral (Doctor of Human Behavior) dissertation on "The Effects of Living with Violence on Pre-teenage Children" using the children of Belfast, in Northern Ireland as his subjects.

Bob taught in the San Diego Unified School District for 29 years after 4 years of teaching in Quincy, Mass. He was at Silvergate Elementary in for 13 years, 2 or 3 each at Bird Rock and Cabrillo and the last 11 at Sunset View, all elementary schools.

Growing up, Bob was a Methodist, which was too strict for him. Betsy's parents were married in the Unitarian church. When Bob and Betsy married, they became Unitarian Universalists (UUs) after looking at several churches to belong to.

In 1970, he went to UCLA and participated in the exchange program known as the Fulbright Teacher Exchange. He taught outside of Cambridge, England for a year, while the teacher he switched with taught here. During the year, he was instructed to take the 5th grade class swimming. When he told them to get ready for swimming, he was shocked that this meant the children stood by the side of the pool and stripped down to their underwear and got in.

The farming village where they stayed was a mix of professionals and farmers, on the Thames. While there, they also decided to attend a UU church. The one nearest to them met in the back of an antique store and had 8-10 parishioners. They enjoyed their stay in England so much that they went back there to live for a year after Bob retired from teaching. They have been back several times since and are still in touch with the teacher with whom they did the exchange.

Their first visit to First Church was a picnic at Balboa Park, back when the church building was on 6th avenue. They have participated in religious education, the UU Women's Fellowship, and the Board of Trustees among other things. Bob worked on rewriting the church constitution. Betsy was President of the Board of Trustees in 1974-1975.

When asked what he enjoys about being a Unitarian, Bob replies, "It's people who are living their religion. It's the people who are greeting others at the welcoming table, where you are met with smiles. The sermons are positive about our lives, our reality." Bob's main spiritual philosophy is that he enjoys living. He feels at home in the church.

Betsy and Bob have 5 children, Eric, Margaret, Judy, Patty and Carol. Margaret is also a teacher. Their daughter, Patty Hinojosa is a member of the church and teaches Religious Education. Their granddaughter Tanya is a history teacher at Patrick Henry High.



Even though he was a retired teacher, Bob has taught religious education for 12-15 years. He finally retired from even teaching religious education for while. But he missed it so much that he has reupped for another year of religious education teaching at First Church.

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