



# FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego



## PELLETIERI'S OWL'S NEST



Käthe Larick is the new San Diego UU Cluster coordinator, for the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program, the human sexuality curriculum created by the UUA. This position is funded by a group of generous donors from First Church. The idea was conceived of over a year ago, when several members met

and designed a proposal known as Pelletieri's Owl's Nest. Len Pelletieri sees this position as his legacy to First Church, an innovation allowing the OWL program to become more widespread throughout San Diego County UU churches and community. It's designed to serve all ages, from Kindergarten/First grade, to youth, to adults.

At the elementary level, the program talks about names for body parts, and where babies come from. In the youth program, it begins discussing safer sex and how to have healthy relationships, ones of mutual respect and consent. In the junior high and high school editions, there's also a section on social media safety.

First Church has been very active in its use of the OWL curriculum. It was a field test site for the UUA's revamped junior high curriculum a few years ago. By consolidating the resources available to the cluster for the OWL program, Käthe sees this as an opportunity to provide the program at more levels, more frequently. Since 2008, when she became the Youth Programs Coordinator at First Church, Käthe has already been inviting members of other cluster churches to participate in the OWL program whenever First Church offered it. Now there will be an opportunity to do this with other levels of the program.

Käthe is consulting with the cluster Directors of Religious Education, conducting a needs assessment for the program in its first phase. She'll create a list of already trained facilitators, and find a way to provide refresher courses for those who want more training. There's also a need for more elementary programs in the near future.

Once the program is running smoothly on a cluster-wide level, Käthe sees an opportunity to reach out to those community partners aligned with our beliefs in comprehensive sexual education, such as other liberal churches and charter schools. The current OWL curriculum was written in partnership by the UUA with the United Church of Christ.

Käthe sees this as a service to the community. "Len's legacy is not only life affirming and life changing, I believe it's life-saving as well. It's quite a gift to our San Diego community and I feel very fortunate to play even a small part in it."

For information on OWL from the UUA, visit <http://www.uua.org/re/owl>.

For more information on the current OWL Program at First Church, visit our website at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/owl>.



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## RELEASING OUR FEARS

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

This October, we're exploring the theme of Release in our worship services and Wisdom Circles. It's an important topic to consider for both our individual lives as well as an institution. I think being a part of a community of faith is receiving the challenge to live more fully, learning to live with a deeper sense of awareness and courage and to intentionally celebrate the joy that is possible in our lives. Engaging in the spiritual practice of release is important.

As individuals, I hope that as you're active and participating in worship and small groups, you can begin to release fear that may be keeping you from living a fuller life. I think fear is one of the biggest obstacles to living out our values—fear of what others might think, afraid that we'll be out there alone, fearful that if we're more aware, we might not like what we find inside. All of this limits us. There's is a healthy amount of caution we live with—but too often caution can turn into fear that limits us and who we long to be.

As an institution, I hope that we, too, can release fear that may keep us from reaching out to others, trying new forms of worship, and exploring different kinds of rituals. We're a diverse and growing community with much to offer the people living in San Diego County. We can't let fear of the unknown or untried keep us locked inside our walls.

As we seriously consider this theme, I hope we'll also come into awareness of all the love, hope and care we have and find ways to release those higher qualities out into the larger community. One way we're doing this is through the Caring Ministry Team that will host a workshop on Mental Health Awareness on Saturday afternoon, October 17. We want to be a caring community to all people and learn how best to be of service.

Unleashing and releasing joy, care, love, hope and our intentions for peace for all invites us to embody our principles more fully and find ways to build relationships that will continue creating the Beloved Community. May it be so.

## 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 Release

Sunday, October 4:

Hillcrest Service—

"Learning the Joy of Letting Go,"  
Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister

South Bay Service—

**"Faith at Five Thousand Feet,"**  
Megan Dowdell, Intern Minister

Sunday, October 11:

Hillcrest Service—

"Fear and Love: The Doctor, the Gospel, and the Universalist,"  
Rev Ian W. Riddell,  
Minister of Music and Worship Arts

South Bay Multigenerational Service—

**"Indigenous Peoples' Day: We Walk on Sacred Lands,"**  
Megan Dowdell, Intern Minister;  
Kristen Kuriga, South Bay Ministry Team Coordinator

Sunday, October 18:

Hillcrest Service—

"Growing Our Caring Community,"  
Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister

South Bay Service—

"Growing Our Caring Community,"  
Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister

Sunday, October 25:

Hillcrest Service—

"Release," Rev Jennifer Channin,  
Assistant Minister

South Bay Service—

"Learning the Joy of Letting Go,"  
Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister



## BUILDING A MULTIGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY

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

It's Friday night and, as a brightly stickered paper airplane zooms past my head, I hear peals of laughter. I trace the flight pattern back to one source of that laughter, where a group of adults and kids are sprawled out on the floor, learning how to make these flying vehicles of delight. Just as that laughter dies down into earnest concentration, more laughter draws my attention to the middle of the room where parents and other community members are taking advantage of having a few kid-free moments to connect with each other. I listen to the laughter and I smile.

I smile because I know this Family Dinner, which we hold on the second Friday of every month, is serving the mission we espouse. We are creating community—a vibrant, multigenerational community based on relationships that respect the inherent worth and dignity of all, regardless of age. This night, our time together is filled with laughter. We have been reminded all too often over the past months, that being in a community isn't only about the laughter. Our community has rallied together to support our families and to stand together to act on our values.

Building a multigenerational community is an ongoing process—whether someone is visiting us for the first time or has been a part of this congregation for generations, it is all of our responsibility to invite people into deeper relationship. As a ministry of the whole congregation, our Children and Family Ministries offer all of us a chance to welcome people of all ages into Beloved Community.

There are some exciting new ways that our Children and Family Ministry programs are creating space for community to blossom this year:

**Parents' Lounge:** In our complex world, parenting is challenging. Parents share with me how, in all of the busyness, noise, and demands on our families and children, it's not always easy for parents to find other parents who share their values, let alone find the time to talk with each other. Our Parents' Lounge came about through conversations with parents of school-aged children in our community. Their desire to simply talk with each other happens during a time that is concurrent with their children's religious education. Here, they can create community and nurture their own spiritual growth. Parents are invited to join the Lounge on the first Sunday of every month during the 11:30 am Children's Religious Education time.

**Parents' Night Out** is a quarterly cooperative program, where parents with school-aged children take turns hosting a multi-age fun event at our Hillcrest campus, while other parents drop off their children, go out and return for their children up to 4 hours later. This gives parents a chance to have kid-free time and gives kids an opportunity to form community and build relationships. Our next Parents' Night Out is October 17<sup>th</sup> from 4-8pm. Children are invited to join us for a *Día de los Muertos* party.

Programs are an important part of what we do, creating space for community to form. But the truth is, most of the important work of creating community happens in those little moments. I see those moments all the time—on the floor making paper airplanes, sitting next to each other in our Sunday service, sharing a snack together in Bard Hall or on the Patio after services, sitting in meditation together, or walking side by side in a social action. As we continue our ongoing task of creating a Beloved Community of all ages, we must act as the community we wish to become. Who will you invite into community this month?



# GROWING OUR CARING COMMUNITY: A MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WORKSHOP

BY MARLA ENGLISH

Because our Hillcrest campus is close to the UCSD Hospital, and in an urban area, we're often visited at First Church by persons who are struggling with mental health issues and who are in need of support from a caring community. There are also those within the congregation who wrestle with mental illness, or who have family members with mental illness.

As a result, there is a great need for members of our congregation who come in direct contact with those who visit our campus, to learn how to deal with those individuals with compassion and sensitivity. A workshop on mental health entitled, "Growing Our Caring Community: A Mental Health Awareness Workshop" will be held at the Hillcrest campus of First Church on Saturday, October 17 from 1-5 pm.

On Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Kathleen will preach a sermon on this topic at the Hillcrest campus. The sermon will be followed by facilitated break-out groups to discuss topics related to mental health, that affect people's roles at the church and/or in their personal lives.

The goals for the workshop are to:

- educate congregants about the issue of mental illness and mental health within the church community;
- provide resources inside and outside of the church community;
- promote empathy about the topic—it's not "us and them;"
- reduce the stigma for those who have mental illness among us, so they feel comfortable about reaching out for help; and
- create a long-term "welcoming community" around the issue of mental illness, much as we have in other areas of First Church.

The presenters will be:

- Sonya Hintz, MD, a local psychiatrist and long-time member of First Church;
- Mark Chenven, MD, a psychiatrist with a specialty in child and adolescent psychiatry;
- Lynn Northrup, Ph.D., clinical psychologist for the [UCSD Senior Behavioral Health Program](http://bit.ly/1jvST0o) (<http://bit.ly/1jvST0o>) and member of **UC San Diego Health** First Church; and
- Paula Buchwitz, a peer-to-peer family support group facilitator for the National Alliance of the Mentally ill ([NAMI](https://www.nami.org/), <https://www.nami.org/>) who will share about mental health education, advocacy, recovery and NAMI resources.



We're encouraging anyone with an interest in these issues to attend, especially those from the Hospitality/Welcoming Hands ministry team, worship associates, lay ministers, RE and youth advisors, ushers, greeters, Board members, Wisdom Circle leaders, Practical Care leaders, and anyone struggling with, or who has a family member struggling with, a mental illness.





Youth Programs

**11:30 am Junior High Program**  
Room 114a  
**Grades 7 through 9**

This program includes opportunities for sharing, worship, community building, service and social justice.

On Justice Sunday, the group will learn about social justice or perform community service on or off campus. The group will also enjoy a sessions from popular curricula based on *The Simpsons* or the *Twilight Zone*. Once a month, the youth will enjoy "Games day" with their peers and advisors. All youth are welcome!

**What's Coming Up in the Youth Program?**

**October 2015**

- 11** - Empty Bowls Project (Introductory meeting): All youth are invited to gather in Room 114b between the services to discuss this important food justice project
- 18** - UN Sunday (Part 1) - special recognition of the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations in all youth groups
- 24** - Carnival Construction Overnight - All youth are welcome!
- 25** - UN Sunday (Part 2) - Carnival for UNICEF planned by youth and advisors for the whole congregation and offered after each service. All proceeds go to UNICEF (see the flyer below!)
- 30-Nov 1** - YRUU October Con at 1st UU for youth 14-18 yrs. old

**November 2015**

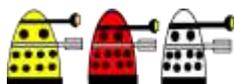
- 7-8** - Jr. High "FUUn & Service" weekend with youth from the San Diego cluster of UU churches - All youth are welcome!
- 15** - Empty Bowls Project (part 2 - Food Drive for Western Service Workers Emergency Food Closet): Youth will collect non-perishable food items for low income workers and their families.
- 20-22** - Coming of Age/Junior High Winter Camp at Camp de Benneville Pines
- 28<sup>th</sup>** - Fun trip to Julian or Bates Nut Farm (to be determined by a vote of the youth groups) - All youth (and families) are welcome!



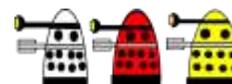
**Halloween Carnival for UNICEF**

Sunday, October 25, 2015  
after each Service

Sponsored by the Youth of 1st UU  
Come dressed as your favorite Sci-fi character



(All proceeds will be donated to UNICEF)



**Food**

Come and see Bard Hall and the lower patio transformed into a fUUn zone with food, crafts, games, dancing and entertainment for all while helping the youth support UNICEF!

**Games**



**Fun for all ages!**





# NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

BY NANCY FISK, EDITOR

Part of the small group ministry at First Church are the Neighborhood Groups. Begun as a way for church members to interact in smaller circles, these groups were organized according to those church members living in a particular zip code. Friends who do not live in the zip code of an area, who would like to join a particular group, are invited to contact the hosts for directions, meeting times and what type of food to bring, if applicable.

When groups get together, they may have a potluck, or share finger food. Some groups are meant to be more social, some multi-generational, some for deeper sharing. Other groups discuss a topic such as recent movies or the Sunday Sermon. Still others may have a program, such as a folk singing duet.

The active groups are listed below. If there is no listing in your area and you'd like to begin a new Neighborhood Group, please contact Chris Christenson at [chris@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:chris@firstuusandiego.org) for directions on how to do so.

## Clairemont / Bay Park

- Contact Newt Ferris at [newtfs@juno.com](mailto:newtfs@juno.com).
- Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays of each month, late-afternoon. Times and locations vary.

## Far-East County (La Mesa and beyond)

- Contact Drew Massicot at [drewmassicot@yahoo.com](mailto:drewmassicot@yahoo.com) or 619-460-2901.
- Meets every other month at various members' homes on a Sunday evening.
- Dates and times are determined by the hosts, but are usually around 6p.

## Near/Middle-East County (Kensington, College, Del Cerro, San Carlos areas)

- Contact Suzanne Hess at [msh6309@gmail.com](mailto:msh6309@gmail.com) or Ann McDonald at [amcd92119@gmail.com](mailto:amcd92119@gmail.com).
- Meets every other month at various members' homes on a Sunday evening.
- Dates and times are determined by the hosts but are usually around 5 or 6p.

## Wider Hillcrest Area (WHANG)

- Contact Rev. Jim Grant at [revgrantuu@gmail.com](mailto:revgrantuu@gmail.com) for details.
- Groups meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month, 5:30-7:00p.

- Because of the size of the neighborhood group, there are three attendee-rotating groups (Groups A, B, and C) that meet simultaneously. Locations vary. The groups all meet the first Sunday of each quarter (January, April, July, and October) at First Church.

## North County Inland

(Includes all communities along the I-15 Corridor: Mira Mesa, Scripps Ranch, PQ, 4S, RB, Poway, Ramona, Escondido.)

- Contact Diane Rush at [rush.family@cox.net](mailto:rush.family@cox.net) or Patricia Christenson at [pakchris@cox.net](mailto:pakchris@cox.net).
- Generally meets quarterly on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays, 4-6p, in members' homes or in parks. They are intergenerational; children are welcome.

## Pacific Beach

- Contact Alec Harootunian at [harootuniana@yahoo.com](mailto:harootuniana@yahoo.com) or Julie McKane at [jmckane38@gmail.com](mailto:jmckane38@gmail.com) for directions.
- Meets every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, late afternoon, at various homes of members.

## Point Loma / Ocean Beach

- Contact Dave Hunt at [uusancal@san.rr.com](mailto:uusancal@san.rr.com).
- Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month, 6-9p.
- Social group of mostly elders. The host may decide on what food to ask others to bring and also prepares a theme or topic for that month's meeting.

## South Bay Neighborhood Group

- Contact Theresa Martin-Werk & Steve Werk at [terrychiro@cox.net](mailto:terrychiro@cox.net) to be included on the email invitation list (or to receive a mailed invitation if you don't have email). Please RSVP.
- Meets on an ongoing basis, every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of even months, i.e. February (02), April (04), June (06), etc. Times and locations vary. The hosts determine activities and start times.
- All members and friends living in the South Bay are invited.

## Tierrasanta

- Contact Marti & John Batchelder at [jbatch2010@icloud.com](mailto:jbatch2010@icloud.com).
- Meets quarterly in the Villa Porto Fino club house at 10690 Escobar Dr. in Tierrasanta.

## University City

- Contact John & Ardath Schaibly at [jhs@san.rr.com](mailto:jhs@san.rr.com) or call 858-453-5990



## TANIA MÁRQUEZ, INTERN MINISTER

BY NANCY FISK, EDITOR

Tania was raised in the Catholic Church and was taught that women didn't go into ministry. She eventually left the Catholic Church and didn't look for another religious home until her first daughter was born in 2003. In her search for a new spiritual home, she came across the website for First Church in Hillcrest. While Unitarian Universalism sounded good, she decided not to attend at that time because she was looking for a community where her whole family, including her limited English-speaking husband, could participate.

Later, in 2009, one of her Facebook contacts, Mar Cardenas, mentioned there were bilingual services at the First Church South Bay campus. Tania attended a monthly potluck, when the services for South Bay were being held on a school campus. She found she liked the messages and the songs. At one service, she loved that the hymns were in three different languages.

She attended a protest for immigration rights in 2010 with Social Justice. A photo of her daughters, Ericka and Itzel, holding a Standing on the Side of Love sign, became a symbol for the website. She joined the church because she wanted her kids to learn to be open to everyone and not be judgmental. In finding a church for her children, she eventually realized that she'd been searching for a community for herself also.

Tania promised herself not to get too involved but ended up doing the simultaneous interpretation of the service as a back up to Mar Cardenas. Eventually, she became the full-time interpreter and did text translations. Shortly after, Tania was invited to train as a worship associate.

One day after service, Arvid asked her if she'd ever considered being a minister. She said she had considered it when she was younger, but didn't think it was a possibility for her. Arvid invited her to lunch, demystified the work of a minister, and offered her all his support during the application process.

Now that she is attending seminary, every experience has been a confirmation of her decision to go into the ministry. Tania teaches Spanish at Southwestern University and attends seminary through Meadville Lombard. She will be a half-time intern minister at First Church for the next two years. During the first year, she'll learn how the congregation works and concentrate on religious education and the administration of First Church. During the 2nd year, she'll do more preaching, teaching and participating in the programming of First Church.

Tania wants people to know she's a product of the South Bay campus and of this community's commitment to create a more diverse and inclusive church. In her words, "This community nurtured me to grow, to respond to my call to ministry." When she told family and friends she was going into the ministry, she was surprised at the reaction and support she received. Her friends and family said it made total sense to them, that she was entering this work. She says, "It's a lot of work, but it feels right."



... **this work**

feels right ...



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