



First
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FirstWords

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MEET LORI LESAGE, OUR NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT!

BY NANCY FISK



Lori LeSage

Lori is the new Administrative Assistant, who joined us this summer. Lori heard about the job at First Church through Pam Bates, our Development Manager and Scheduler. Lori worked with Pam at two previous jobs. At TransWestern Publishing, a Yellow Pages company, Lori worked in contract input and

graphic design, first as a composer, and then was promoted to Supervisor. She had Pam as a manager. When Lori worked with Pam again at Biotone, she was once more impressed with Pam's calm, strong demeanor as a manager and supervisor. They became Facebook friends, and Lori noticed Pam's posts were spiritual without involving God. Lori thought she would be interested in a church that was comfortable with those kind of posts.

When Pam said there was a job opening for an Administrative Assistant at First Church, Lori was intrigued enough about the church to apply. She appreciates the communication between staff members and finds the staff is welcoming without reservation. The staff acknowledges her contributions and is supportive of her settling in here. The working atmosphere feels healthy and fulfilling. She enjoys being busy, and is learning the rhythm of her job--Sundays and Mondays are relatively quiet, while Wednesday and Thursday are very busy, as she prepares the *Window*, the Order of Service and PowerPoint slideshow that need to be ready for Church on Sunday. She also helps produce this First Words newsletter once a month, and works on the Membership Directory. Her days off are Friday and Saturday.

Raised in a conservative Christian tradition, Lori found that questions she asked were not being answered satisfactorily, and she felt more and more disconnected from her religion. Women were not given positions of authority, and she was enough of a feminist to be offended by this. She finds spirituality in nature and believes in energy and reincarnation, things her former religion was also not comfortable with. She left her church five years ago and has been searching ever since for a place that would accommodate all of her beliefs.

What she likes about Unitarian Universalism is the blending of philosophies and spiritual pursuits. She appreciates our dedication to social justice. When she saw that First Church offered Buddhist sanghas, pagan celebrations, and meditation, in addition to our more traditional Sunday worship service, that spoke to her. Her hope for this next year is to settle into her job and attend some of the classes on campus, to experience that part of First Church.

Lori has two adult children, her son, Nick, 21, and her daughter, Kimee, 17. Both live at home and attend Cuyamaca College.

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EXPERIENCING CHANGE

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

We're a multi-generational, multi-cultural learning community which means we open ourselves to trying new and different ways to be in community together, worship together, study together, have fun together, and do the work of justice together.

All of this can mean we experiment, change things around, and invite people to reflect together about what we've learned because of the changes. We've been experimenting with our worship liturgy in a variety of ways—from singing the same meditation hymn throughout the whole month (to really learn it and sink deep into the meaning of the words and the music), to changing the order of the elements in the order of service (remember the 9/11 service?) among others.

And we'll continue to do more of this! We're not changing for change's sake, but rather, we want to truly offer bold and engaging worship experiences—where people can experience a sense of the sacred, of connection and community. Some important things to remember with these experiments are how an open mind can help one's experience. Though you may not like a change, someone else might. If your need is not met this week, maybe next week it will be. And, it's very helpful and important to offer feedback that honors the intention of the change, and not just relay its impact.

Assuming we're all in this together is a helpful way to start the conversation when changes happen that are uncomfortable. I've learned this lesson best in the various multicultural experiences I've experienced and continue to experience. I think the most important thing is that we continue to learn and grow in different ways. And different is not good or bad, it's just different.

We'll be hosting the UU Christian Fellowship conference (October 14 and 15) and other events that will create opportunities to increase our learning and reflecting together. I hope you'll participate with an open mind, readying to experiment together so that we might more fully live out our mission of creating community, nurturing spiritual growth, and acting on our values to help heal the world.

Faithfully yours,

October 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])

October's Transformational Theme is "The In Between"

October 2, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"Jesus and the Closeted UU"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Atonement and Forgiveness"

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

October 9, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"Atonement and Forgiveness"

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

South Bay Service—

"Celebrating the Bigger Story"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

October 16, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"The Homecoming Game"

Rev. Jake Morril, *Executive Director, UUCF*

South Bay Service—

"Naming the Secret: Mental Health Awareness"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

October 23, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"Naming the Secret: Mental Health Awareness"

Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"The Hour of the Wolf"

Alix Klingenberg, *Intern Minister*

October 30, 2016

Hillcrest Services—

"A Día de Muertos Celebration"

Tania Márquez, *Intern Minister*, and
Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Service—

"Celebrating Día de Muertos"

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



TEACHING OUR VALUES THROUGH RELATIONSHIP

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

More than 65 years ago, the Universalist minister, Angus MacLean, spoke about what was then a revolutionizing concept in liberal religious education, when he put forth that “the method is the message.” While his writings on this are nuanced, there’s one main point I keep going back to that has so much relevance for us still today. MacLean argued that our values, those things we hold most dear and seek so fervently to deepen within ourselves and pass onto our children, by nature are taught not through lessons but through relationships. It’s in how we live out our values that our children experience them and learn to embody them. Much of his influence lives on in the way we’ve done religious education or reimagined what it means to provide religious education for children, youth, and our families.

One of the greatest gifts of our multi-generational community is the group of dedicated Children’s Religious Education (CRE) leaders and youth advisors who serve our children and family each week. These are adults from a wide range of backgrounds. Some are parents; many are not. All share a dedication to living out what it means to be a multigenerational community through working directly with our young people. Their care, compassion, and creativity is astounding. Each week our classrooms are filled with the relationships and best practices that reflect a modern day embodiment of MacLean’s charge to liberal religious education.

This year we have some exciting program changes in the Sunday morning Children’s Religious Education and Family Ministry offerings. After nearly 20 years, we’re retiring the curriculum

we’ve used for a 2- and 3-year-old class called “Celebrating Me and My World.” This curriculum has served us well and we’re grateful for the many years of dedicated service by our leaders who faithfully taught it. We’re switching to an updated curriculum that also allows us to rearrange the age groupings. This fall we’ll offer a 3- and 4-year-old class instead of our 2s and 3s. This change happened in conversation with the CRE leaders and parents of those age ranges.



I’m delighted about a new curriculum called “Chalice Children,” as it creates more space for our young learners to experience new depths and possibilities for developmentally appropriate engagement with Unitarian Universalism. What’s even more exciting to me is that, as a multigenerational community with a dedication to holistic family ministry, “the

method” of which MacLean spoke isn’t limited to the classrooms. Our religious education goes beyond the classrooms and into every moment of our communal life where relationships are lived. Our coffee hour interactions, our worship time, our moments in passing—all become key moments in lifespan religious education.

How we embody our values and principles in subtle and overt ways becomes the living experience. Whether we realize it or not, each moment we’re in community here, we’re all religious education leaders and students. Let’s strive ever more to be so intentionally and openly, reaching across generations to share and grow in our responsible search for truth and meaning together.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THIS FALL

BY REV. IAN W. RIDDELL, MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS



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

Adult Religious Education in our congregation is going through some transformation this year. We recently celebrated the long service of Chris Christenson, and we're grateful for all he brought

to our learning community. Staff, ministers, and volunteers are sharing support and connection for all of our education offerings. We're glad to welcome Tony Bianca as part-time Program Assistant, and are always grateful for the volunteer support of our Adult Education Team members in welcoming and supporting presenters.

We continue to share many opportunities for learning and connection throughout the coming months. Be sure to check out the Window and our website for ongoing activities. Music, movement, and meditation all continue in our weekly and monthly groups.

Many of our ministry teams are offering opportunities to learn more about ourselves and our tradition. For example, keep your eye out for a series of "Bringing General Assembly Home" events this fall and winter. We'll

experience a sermon or speech or worship presentation from our annual conference and explore its meaning together.

Our "Building Sacred Ground" sessions help give newcomers (and longer-term folks, too!) an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and the way that our congregation is structured. They provide an opportunity for participants to explore their own spiritual journeys and ask curious questions of our ministers.

But what are the next steps in deepening people's connections to our religious tradition, in developing spiritual attitudes and practices, in broadening philosophical and theological understanding, and in growing participation and leadership within our congregation? Individual classes and sessions taught by our ministers, staff, and lay leaders have offered some of this exploration over the years.

This year, the ministers and staff have been researching and pondering together what an intentionally crafted curriculum of "next steps" might look like for us. We're examining what we've done in the past and looking at what other congregations do. We will be working with the Adult Education Team over the next months on this exploration.

Stay tuned!



UUA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AT GA 2017

BY NANCY FISK

Delegates to the June 21-25, 2017 General Assembly (GA) in New Orleans, will be voting on the next Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) President. For the first time, instead of serving one term of four years, with an option to be re-elected to a second four year term, the new UUA President will serve one term of six years.

A UUA Presidential Search committee was formed three years ago, and First Church member Liz Jones served on that committee. Initially, the committee chose two candidates for UUA President, Rev. Alison Miller and Rev. Sue Phillips. Rev. Sue Phillips dropped out due to conflicts between her candidacy and her role as Regional Leader for the UUA's field staff in New England. To allow for a healthy competition, the Search committee invited other candidates to run by petition. Candidate endorsement petitions must have been signed by 25 congregations in order for a candidate to run for UUA President.

Currently, three candidates are running; Rev. Alison Miller, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, and Rev. Joanne Pupke. Anyone else interested in running for UUA President has until February 1, 2017 to submit a petition for nomination.

Below are some quotes about the candidates from the UU World, the magazine for the UUA:

Rev. Alison Miller, Senior Minister at Morristown Unitarian Fellowship: For Miller, solidarity with others means advocating for marriage equality, income equality, immigrant justice, and for efforts to end gun violence in politically conservative Morristown, New Jersey, where she is in her eleventh year as senior minister of Morristown Unitarian Fellowship. "I believe I am the person who can lead us in saying a resilient and relevant and robust 'Yes!' to our faith," said Miller. "I feel called to shape the future of our faith in ways that invite us to grow in spirit, to create powerful change, and to lead with love."

Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Minister at the UU Congregation of Phoenix. Susan is the President of the Pacific Southwest District UU Ministers' Association. She was endorsed by the UUA Presidential Search Committee after Sue Phillips dropped out. A long-time activist for immigrant rights, she was instrumental in making the Phoenix General Assembly into Justice GA 2012. "That model showed that when you're clear about your mission, it can move congregations out of conflict," she said. "We struggle with conflict in our Association and our congregations, which hampers our ability to grow. But when you have something important to do, you've got to work together, and that sense of mission draws the best out of people."

Rev. Jeanne Pupke, Minister at First UU Church of Richmond, Virginia: She has served in Richmond since 2006, and was consulting minister of the UU Fellowship of Central Oregon in Bend (2004-2006). She was a UUA trustee (2009-2013) and chaired the board's Finance Committee. Once a Catholic nun, she was an executive for Diemakers, Inc., and Batdorf & Bronson Coffee Roasters before entering the UU ministry. A director of UU Legislative Ministry of Virginia, Pupke frequently testifies for women's, LGBTQI, and youth rights. Pupke has completed a two-year course in spiritual direction. She is running "because in this time of rapid change in the religious and social landscapes, we need a President who inspires, one with proven executive skills, highest level Unitarian Universalist leadership experience, an unfailing voice for social justice, a person with a heart for the congregations and communities of our faith and a clear vision for a stronger, more dynamic UUA."

The candidates will be speaking to congregations around the country in the lead up to General Assembly 2017. One forum was held at General Assembly 2016 in Columbus Ohio, where all three candidates spoke about their vision for the UUA. For video of that forum, refer to this link: [Presidential candidates forum 2016](#).



BECOMING A DELEGATE AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

BY NANCY FISK

In order to vote for the next UUA President at the New Orleans General Assembly, June 21-25 2017, you must first become a delegate and receive your voting card. Each congregation in the UUA is granted a certain number of delegates, based on the membership reported to the UUA. First Church is allowed 15 delegates.

A delegate can either attend GA or be an offsite delegate. The UUA has offsite delegates to make General Assembly more accessible to those who cannot afford to travel or stay in the cities where GA is held. When you become a delegate, you are sent a link that allows delegates to view the business meetings as they are happening online, and to vote during those business meetings. This may require that a delegate be awake very early in the morning, depending on the time difference.

As a delegate, you'll also have access to some of the workshops presented at GA, either through video or audio.

Apply to be a delegate through Denominational Relations, part of the Larger UU Connections Ministry Team. Applications will be available online at the First Church website (www.firstuusandiego.org) in January or February.

The deadline to apply is the end of March. On the application, you are asked to explain how you've been involved in the church and why you want to become a delegate. If there are more applications than the number of delegates allowed, the Larger UU Connections Ministry Team will evaluate applications to increase diversity among delegates, considering factors such as age and gender. Each delegate will be reimbursed part of their GA registration fee by the Ministry Team.

As a delegate, you're required to attend all business meetings, whether you're at GA or offsite. You'll not be told how to vote, but you are expected to inform yourself about the issues being considered. The GA website (www.uua.org/ga) has a page that explains the responsibilities of delegates. It also provides links to the agenda and other items delegates will need to make informed votes. The links will be up closer to the time of GA.

After GA, you'll be expected to submit a report of what you experienced at GA. This may be on anything that particularly moved you or interested you. You'll also attend a debriefing of GA with the other delegates sometime in July. At the end of September, there is a GA luncheon after the second service, where you'll present your report.

More Life Slices, a Second Helping

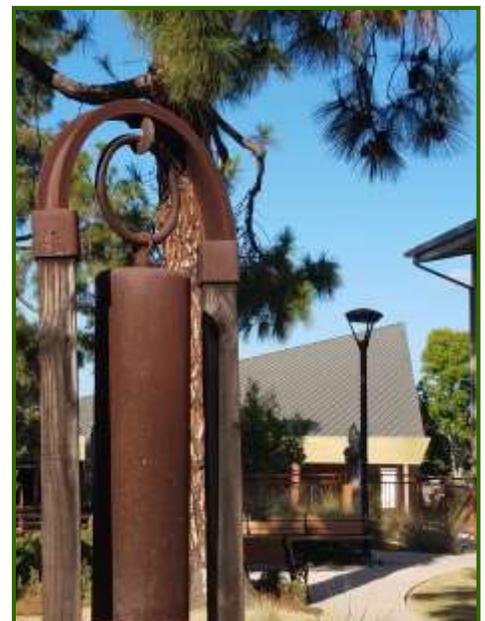
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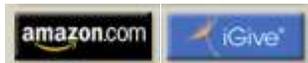
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