



First  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church of San Diego

# FirstWords

Our Monthly Publication

October 2018; Vol. 12, No. 8

## THE GOOD RELATIONS COMMITTEE

BY NANCY FISK

The Good Relations Committee was formed at First UU to address conflicts that may arise in our community. We recognize that in any congregation, but especially in one as active and as committed as ours, conflict may arise between members and groups within the community, and is a natural part of human relationships. The Good Relations Committee (GRC) is dedicated to creating and maintaining healthy relationships in our diverse religious community.

The Good Relations Committee believes that conflict can be addressed directly and resolved constructively, in an atmosphere of respect and in keeping with our democratic principles. When conflicts arise, they can cause tension, creating difficult situations that require more than a casual conversation to be resolved. The more comfort we, as a community, have talking about conflict, the more ability we have to create the harmony we'd like to experience in this community. If we learn to talk through our conflicts, we'll come out stronger for the effort.

The GRC has had varying levels of visibility in its years of existence. This October, the GRC is hoping to raise that visibility, to give the congregation new tools for dealing with conflict. One of the committee's goals is to offer opportunities for congregants to learn about positive communication styles within religious and spiritual communities, and about conflict within communities, including the nature of conflict, how to recognize it as it

develops, how to manage and resolve conflict constructively, and how and where to seek help.

Another goal is to provide information and recommendation to the congregation's leaders, working with the various Ministry Teams to identify potential sources of conflict and providing consultation and recommendations where appropriate.

There will be a service on October 14th focusing on conflict, where the Good Relations Committee will be introduced. By bringing multiple voices to reflect on how conflict and disagreement are part of our lives and the importance of how we, as a community, respond and live into those conflicts, First UU can be a healthier community for all.

The members of the committee are Alpa Patel, Nancy Fisk, Michael Gilgun, Christina Imhoof, and Rev. Ian Riddell. Please

contact any one of us if you need advice about a conflict, are in conflict with another member or group, or if you simply want to talk over a particular issue you find difficult to deal with on your own.

We look forward to hearing from you.



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# SHARING THE STORIES OF WHO WE ARE October Sermon Messages

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



Our transformational theme for the month of October is “The Stories of Who We Are.” In so many of our cultures, this time of year is one of honoring our ancestors—of feeling that they are closer to us, of sharing the stories of those who’ve gone before. It’s the time of Samhain and Día de Muertos and Hallowe’en—when stories are holy—when we tell the tales of our families and communities—when we share our experiences.

And that sharing needs to be heard. As we strive to create a community in which each of us can tell our story, we strive for a community where each of us is heard. And, so, we strive to listen as well. Not just in the way we listen to the radio in the background or the news or the gossip of our neighbors.

Sometimes we walk through the world with an attitude of “OK, impress me”—always responding with “But ...” Or, we refuse to listen at all to anyone from an opposing position or political party. When we’re faced with a new set of ideas—or a person we don’t know or understand—we might respond immediately, reflexively, with “Well, that’s not my experience ...” or “You’ve got it all wrong.” I don’t think that’s real listening.

In his Hillcrest sermon in September, our Intern Minister, Stevie Carmody, talked about a kind of “listening that conveys respect.” Listening to another person in a way “that conveys that you might have something to teach me.”

I hope we can listen with new ears. Listen not just for information or argument, but for hope and heart and connection as well. Listen not just to build knowledge but to build relationship.

I hope we can listen to new people. People from a different culture, of a different age or class. Who love this community and have different experiences and stories to tell about what that looks and feels like.

I hope we can share our stories with each other and hear each other with loving, curious minds. And, I hope we can continue to build this community centered in relationship and loving curiosity.

Faithfully,

*Rev. Ian*

## Celebration Times:

Hillcrest Campus: Sunday, 9:30 am and  
11:30 am (ASL Interpretation)  
South Bay Campus: Sunday, 9:30 am  
(Intergenerational, Bilingual)

## October’s Transformational Theme is “Stories of Who We Are”

### October 7, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

#### “Writing New Stories”

Rev. Ian W. Riddell, *Minister of Music & Worship Arts*, and  
Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, *Director of Music & Worship Arts at UU Congregation of Ann Arbor, MI*

South Bay Service—

#### “How to Measure 10 Years”

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

### October 14, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

#### “Covenant and Relationship”

Rev. Ian W. Riddell, *Minister of Music & Worship Arts*, and the  
Good Relations Committee

South Bay Service—

#### “On Lines”

Stevie Carmody, *Intern Minister*

### October 21, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

#### “The Power of a Word”

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

South Bay Service—

#### “The Stories We Tell”

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

### October 28, 2018

Hillcrest Services—

#### “Día de Muertos”

People of Color Lay Leaders

South Bay Service—

#### “Día de Muertos”

Rev. Tania Márquez, *Assistant Minister*

## LISTENING RESPECTFULLY TO CHILDREN

BY TONY BIANCA, INTERIM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

*“The first duty of love is to listen.” Paul Tillich*

I’ve worked for two years here at First UU and it’s been abundantly clear from the outset that staff, volunteers, and congregants love our children. This became evident to me when I saw how those who interact with children, on the whole, are genuinely interested in and respect what children have to say. We don’t just care for them; we care with them. Apart from the individual interactions I’ve witnessed and been a part of that demonstrate this, I’ve also seen this deep listening impact the way we develop and adapt the programming we offer for our children. I’d like to share with you a few ways our current Children’s Religious Education (RE) programming is adapting in response to what we’ve heard from our children and parents.

Last year, we noticed that our RE classes for children ages 7 & up was just not engaging them. The curriculum wasn’t hitting the mark and the kids seemed less and less enthused. In January, we revised what we were doing to finish the year in a way that was more engaging. Then, over the summer, Dr. Melissa, I, and a few others went to work planning a program that would better meet their diverse needs.

This October, the results of last summer’s work will come to fruition as we launch a new parallel track RE program for children ages 7 and older. Students in that age range will have two class options on Sundays: UU Explorers and The Lab. UU Explorers is a more traditionally structured class where students can continue to explore our UU values through story, art, experience, and song. The Lab is a more student-driven class where students will listen to the

week’s story ahead of time and come to class prepared to use the available resources to explore a “big question” they’ve come up with about life, spirituality, and the nature of the universe based on that story. For more information about either of these two classes, you can check out our church website: [www.firstuusandiego.org/children](http://www.firstuusandiego.org/children)

Another way we’re responding to our children’s voices is by shifting our “Wizards of Wonder” classes to the 9:30 RE time slot and combining our 5/6 Class with our 7&Up class for a bi-monthly, multi-aged RE experience! Many of the students in our 5/6 year old class were concerned that they would have to choose

between K/1 OWL and Wizards of Wonder, both of which took place at 11:30 on Sundays. Additionally, many of our children have told us that they have deep friendships with other children who happen to be in a different grade level and are saddened that they are in different RE classes.

This new way of scheduling Wizards of Wonder eliminates the need for our younger children to choose between two programs

that they like and allows all of our children to have some RE time each month with their friends in different grade levels. For more information about which Sundays are “Wizards of Wonder” Sundays, keep an eye on The Window or contact me ([tony@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:tony@firstuusandiego.org)) to be added to our Weekly RE Newsletter.

It’s an honor to serve our children here at First UU and I’m always eager to hear about what people love about our programming and how they think we might make it even better. Please reach out at any time with your ideas, concerns, or to see how you can help support our programming.



## REMARKS AT THE BORDER WALL

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS



*From a rally at the border in San Ysidro in March 2018, in response to President Trump's visit.*

I'm the Rev. Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego answering the call of Love. We are here to

speaking the truth – that unless we are of Indigenous Native American or Mexican heritage, we are all immigrants on this land.

We're here to name the truth that immigrants have always made this country better, that we need bridges, not walls. Walls divide people from their families and loved ones, interrupt the natural flow of water, keep animals crossing from one side to the other. Walls divide and we know that divisions never add to an environment, a

country, or a people. Walls and division only bring less; division encourages fear, only serves the elite in power, never the people.

Today, as a member of San Diego's faith community, I speak against walls and separating families. Scripture says we are to welcome the foreigner, we are to be kind, treat all well. My faith tells me that we are all connected, that



Photo Credit: Ame Stanko

what happens in Tijuana and San Ysidro, affects us all in California, in the United States.

We live in an interconnected web of life and dividing that web means the web will not survive. My faith tells me that we are one human family. We want the money spent to build the wall to, instead, be put into building up the local economies in all communities along both sides of the border. If the government wants fewer immigrants, then stop raping other countries of their natural resources, creating the road that leads right back to the United States. (See [www.harvestofempiremovie.com](http://www.harvestofempiremovie.com))

Stop creating poverty conditions in other countries and then being angry when people are migrating for a better life. That makes no sense. We want government to do its job: create a clean DREAM Act for Dreamers and their parents; repair our cruel, broken immigration system now, and create a worker program that allows

for a temporary work force for the betterment of the people and our businesses. We people of faith call on our elected leaders to LEAD – with action; stop with words that go nowhere and to bravely act so that our country's ideals become a reality.

*Rev. Kathleen is on sabbatical thru November 28. The theme of her journey is Sacred Geography.*

## OUR COMMUNITY MINISTERS

Last month we highlighted our Affiliate Ministers, retired ministers who work on a volunteer basis for First Church. This month, we continue to highlight our Community Ministers who also volunteer with First Church. These ministers offer their gifts and talents to support the ongoing mission of First UU Church, both inside our congregation and in the larger community. We have three Community Ministers affiliated or connected to First UU Church. These ministers have a ministry outside of the congregation and are also in covenant with Rev. Kathleen, Rev. Ian, and Rev. Tania to support and serve the congregation in specific ways as part of their affiliation as a Community Minister.



**Rev. Bonnie Tarwater** was the first affiliated Community Minister. Her ministry is through an organization called Our Church Home and is a counseling practice. Coming from a Christian identity as a Unitarian

Universalist, she has met with our Christian Study group and created a multigenerational Earth Day celebration in April that drew many San Diegans to our Hillcrest campus.

**The Rev. Julie Forest** is also a Community Minister affiliated with our congregation. She writes, “In May, your Board of Trustees voted to endorse me as a community minister. After finishing my interim ministry with the Palm Springs/Rancho Mirage church, I retired from



parish ministry. As a community minister, I offer spiritual direction to folks both UU and non-UU. I provide clergy coaching to other UU ministers and, as a support to First UU Church, I have preached at our South Bay campus. I am part of a neighborhood group, participated in Building Sacred Ground and attend worship on many Sundays at the Hillcrest campus.”

**Rev. Katy Kroll Swanson** is the third affiliated Community Minister serving as a part-time Hospital Chaplain at Sharp Metropolitan Medical Center in San Diego and occasionally ‘floats’ to other Sharp Hospitals. She writes, I’m a “nearly lifelong UU who grew up in the UU Church of Long Beach. . .



My gifts are providing pastoral care to individuals and families who are facing an illness or crisis. In the hospital I serve as an interfaith chaplain, I enjoy the fast pace of the hospital and am a valued member of the interdisciplinary clinical team.” Rev. Katy has preached at our South Bay campus, is a co-leader of the Caregivers’/Allies’ Support Group, and supports Lay Ministry at the request of Rev. Tania. Rev. Katy and her husband Steve are members of First UU Church, and have a daughter, Madelyn, who is 2 ½ years old.

Our community ministers play important roles in our beloved UU community and, for everything they do, we’re very grateful. During Kathleen’s sabbatical, you may see them in one of our pulpits, teaching an Adult Religious Education class, or in services.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

BY ANGELA FUJII, SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM COORDINATOR



Greetings from your Cluster Social Justice Coordinator! I've been traveling to each of the San Diego cluster congregations to meet folks and learn more about what justice work is already happening and I am impressed by the breadth and depth of that work.

On Labor Day, I had the privilege and opportunity to participate in the Deep Interconnection, Active Hope workshop led by Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspaugh. Sarah and I envisioned this as a way to bring UUs together for reflection, ritual and renewal. This was my introduction to Joanna Macy's "The Work That Reconnects," and I'm am thankful for the space that we shared and relationships and connections that we built, through Sarah's skillful facilitation. I look forward to being able to offer more cluster-wide opportunities for learning and community-building in the future.

As a cluster, we're now in the swing of Pride season, which began with our annual participation in the Hillcrest Pride Parade. We were represented at South Bay Pride in Chula

Vista on September 8th, with volunteers and participants from Summit and both campuses of First Church. We'll conclude with Pride by the Beach in Oceanside on October 13th which will bring together folks from Chalice, Palomar and San Dieguito. Now that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has released the Welcoming Congregations Five Pillars of Welcome Renewal program, we're looking at ways our congregations can support one another in this renewal process and work together to ensure that we remain "current" across the cluster.

I will be using the [SUUN \(San Diego County UU Network\) website](#) to provide information and updates about the cluster. Please check the calendar for upcoming events. My hope is that this will become the go-to source for this information. Keep an eye out for this monthly article to stay informed about social justice across the cluster.

With hope, Angela

## MUSIC AND WORSHIP NEWS

### Worship Workshop with Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout

Friday, October 5, 6:30 pm-9 pm and Saturday, October 6, 9 am-4 pm. All who are interested in our worship, and how we can imagine new ways of worshipping together are invited to join us as we welcome Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, Director of Music and Worship from the UU Congregation of Ann Arbor, MI. He will lead us in broadening our understanding of ways of music and worship, decentering whiteness in our worship, and opening possibilities for inclusion and representation. To RSVP, or for info contact Rev. Ian at [ian@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:ian@firstuusandiego.org).

### Hiring Teams for Music Director Positions

We have hiring teams to search for new ongoing directors for our Women's, Youth, and Children's ensembles. Women's Chorus Director: Rhiannon Smith, Kay Chandler, and Karin Walin. Children's and Youth Directors: Dylan Vaughn, Kia Bordner, and Katelyn Sutton. We will revise job descriptions, seek applicants, and interview applicants in collaboration with Rev. Ian. If you have questions or input to offer, contact Rev. Ian at [ian@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:ian@firstuusandiego.org).

## REFRESHMENT OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

BY TONY BRUMFIELD

*This reflection was part of the service in July 2018.  
The theme of the summer was refreshment.*

When I was first hired to work in a jail, I cringed at the thought. Me? Working in a detention facility? That's not going to work. I thought I would be happier working on an organic farm, not a detention facility.



I was surprised to discover that my first assignment was as a landscape teacher at the men's facility near Descanso. One of my responsibilities was to maintain an organic vegetable garden. The men I supervised were delighted to get out of the dorm to dig up the earth, plant seeds, water, build irrigation systems, and cut the grass.

**Lesson 1:** What refreshes the human spirit? Work! Humans like to be useful, and they like being physical. Humans need to move their bodies.

**Lesson 2:** These men were refreshed by being outdoors, seeing the hills that surrounded them, reaching into the earth to pull out weeds, walking barefoot in wet grass, listening to the wind, and breathing clean mountain air.

**Lesson 3:** My students were refreshed by preparing food. We harvested onions, cilantro, peppers, and tomatoes, and made our own fresh salsa. I brought in corn chips and we had a feast. We celebrated the work that we had accomplished.

My next assignment was to teach computer skills to adult women at the Las Colinas Detention Facility. Every week, three women would be released from jail, and I would receive three new students. I asked them about their families, their experience in school, and their work history. For example, I would say, "When you were in school, what made you cringe and think 'I never want to do that again', and what part of school made you think, 'Oh, I want to know more about that.' I wanted to know what they were curious about.

**Lesson 4:** Human beings are refreshed when they have control over their lives, when they learn things that are useful and relevant to their lives, and when they have choices that feed their curiosity.

All my students longed to create something for their loved ones. I encouraged them to use the computers to compose images and poetry and I provided the art supplies they needed.

**Lesson 5:** The human spirit is refreshed in the act of creativity, and the act of giving.

All my students, young and old, come alive when they listen to music.

**Lesson 6:** Humans love music! They love to listen to music, they love to sing, and they love to dance. I can't tell you how much fun we had when we could let loose, sing, and dance. My heart is filled with joy just thinking about it.

When my career at Las Colinas was ending, one of my students seeing the sadness on my face, told me that the time she spent in my class refreshed her spirit and made her incarceration bearable. She said that I was the first person to really listen to her and talk to her like she was a human being, not like there was something wrong with her. **Listening really is an act of love.**

**Lesson 7:** Humans need love: they need somebody who is interested in who they are, who they are becoming, and they need to be that person to somebody else.

I didn't expect it but working in detention facilities has grown and fed my spirit. To my surprise, it's been very much like working in a garden. When I water the earth, I don't know what's going to come up, but if I refrain from passing judgment and embrace whatever happens, I've learned that every single thing that grows is unique and beautiful and makes the world a better place.

**Staff**

*Rev. Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister*  
*Rev. Ian W. Riddell, Minister of Music and Worship Arts*  
*Rev. Tania Márquez, Assistant Minister*  
*Stevie Carmody, Intern Minister*  
*Rev. Jim Grant and Rev. Löne Broussard, Affiliate Ministers*  
*Rev. Bonnie Tarwater, Rev. Katy Swanson, and Rev. Julie Forest, Affiliate Community Ministers*  
*Robie Evans, Director of Operations*  
*Käthe Larick, Youth Programs and OWL's Nest Coordinator*  
*Angela Fujii, Social Justice Ministry Team Coordinator*  
*Jenner Daelyn, Connections Coordinator*  
*Pam Bates, Development Manager*  
*Lorelei Garner, South Bay Music Coordinator*  
*Andrea Newall-Lockett, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director*  
*Justin Murphy-Mancini, Organist and Pianist*  
*Connie Hayes, Bookkeeper / Controller*  
*Lori LeSage, Administrative Assistant*  
*Tony Bianca, Interim Religious Education Coordinator and Handbell Programs Director*  
*Rose Riedel, Scheduler and South Bay Administrative Asst.*  
*Ray Evans, Maintenance*  
*Mark Epler, Event Coordinator*  
*Revs. Dr. Carolyn and Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti*

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