



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego



KEN HERMAN, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST, RETIRES

BY NANCY FISK

Ken Herman was the director of Music/Organist at First Church for 43 years. In that time, he played organ, piano and arranged for musicians at First Church services. He played the organ at First Church's 125th anniversary celebration in Balboa Park. He organized and played for concerts in the Meeting House. He was president of the Unitarian Universalist Musician's Network (UUMN) twice. Ken attended St. Olaf College in Minnesota where he received a Bachelor's of Music in church music. He has a Master's from San Diego State University. He came to First Church in 1968 and became the organist. He then became Director of Music in 1970. Between 1974-1976, he lived in San Francisco. In January 1977, he came back to First Church as the Director of Music/Organist.

There was always music at First Church but until Ken came, there wasn't a music program. When he came, the organ was ailing, and they had one tiny grand piano. When he left, First Church had one of the better pipe organs in San Diego County and 3 grand pianos. When he started as music director, there was one small adult choir. When he left, there were 5 different choirs, for adults, youth, and children, and 2 handbell ensembles.

In 2005, after Paula Johnson led a successful fundraising drive for handbells, Ken started the first handbell ensemble. A few years later, he recruited Roy Attridge to lead a 2nd handbell ensemble, which has led to Roy being hired as the current handbell director.

During services, Ken wanted to provide as much variety as could be presented at a high level of performance. He played classical music, gospel, ragtime, swing and Broadway, among other styles. He always did this in the context of the service. He once did a collaboration with San Diego State University with Joe Waters and the group Swarmius, an electronic music group.

When Ken hired musicians to participate in the service, he wanted them to understand what First Church was doing in worship. "It doesn't matter how good they are, if they aren't tuned to that hour in the Meeting House, it would be difficult to receive the music." He also observed what they

were doing when they weren't playing. As an example, Ron Robby, a Symphony cellist, whose heritage is Jewish, played for First Church a number of times. Then Ron played during the flower communion, and heard the story of Norbert Capek, who was killed in 1942 for opposing the Nazi regime. When Ken turned to Ron, he was singing the hymn for the flower communion while weeping, it so moved him.

Ken mentored and taught young musicians at the church. Wes Hawkins was not only a music student, Ken was his first German teacher. Claire Olmstead, who plays piano and wind instruments and Jill Cassaboom, who plays piano and organ, were two other students. He taught Anishka Lee Skorepa, who sings opera locally. "I wanted to make them more than pianists and organists. I wanted to make them well-rounded musicians. And that by playing in the services, they would come to understand that their music is not only for themselves but for the wider community and especially for their spiritual growth."

Ken currently plays for a local Lutheran church, works for immigration justice, and reviews for the website, www.sandiegostory.com. He has written music reviews since 1978, when Donald Dierks from the San Diego Union asked him to help cover the San Diego music scene. He also wrote for the Los Angeles Times, San Diego edition, between 1984-1994, where he had a weekly column, with reviews and feature stories.

Ken is organizing a farewell concert with musicians he has worked with over the years on Friday, October 10, 2014 at 7PM. Musicians will include Lynn Mendoza-Kahn, Anishka Lee Skorepa, Chris Hassett, and Barbara Scheidker, among others. Ken will play a few solos and then work in collaboration with the other musicians. There will be a fancy dessert reception afterwards. The concert and reception are free. All are welcome to attend.

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Transitions

BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS LEAD MINISTER

This summer has been filled with numerous transitions for our community, beginning with the retirement of Ken Herman, the Director of Music and Liz Jones, Director of Religious Education. I have begun my work as your Lead Minister with the addition of new staff, Rev. Jennifer Channin as Assistant Minister, and Melissa James, Ph.D. as Director of Children and Family Ministry.

Dan Ratelle is stepping into the new position of Music Coordinator for our Hillcrest campus and Lorelei Isdori is the Music Coordinator for our South Bay campus. With the arrival of our new Intern Minister, Adam Dyer – we finally have our staff in place for an exciting year ahead.

The staff would like to invite you to an Open House for the administration building on Sunday, September 7th between services and after the second service at the Hillcrest campus. With monies left over from the fire restoration project, we were able to paint the walls, install new carpet and re-organize the offices. The paint colors are the same as in the Welcome Center which ties the campus buildings together and it feels great – like a fresh start.

This year, the Diversity Action Group of the Board, along with ROAR with SOUL/Journey Toward Wholeness team (those who address anti-oppression/anti-racism/multi-cultural issues) will work together with the Ministry Team Council leaders more intentionally, as they focus on identifying and removing cultural, physical and attitudinal barriers to full participation in this congregation. I'm proud to say that the Worship and Program Ministry team will also engage in this work by offering the Military Ministry Toolkit class, beginning in the fall and winter months.

In October, I will continue the Wednesday night Coffee and Conversation discussion groups we have enjoyed in years past. The Rev. Jennifer Channin will support the Wisdom Circle and Small Group ministry teams.

The wheel of Life has been turning for First Church in recent months. There has been the joy of new births and adoptions in this congregation. And the community has experienced some unexpected deaths of dear members. The shock of their deaths is still settling into our understanding.

Transitions, continued on Page 3 ...

September 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 September Transformational Theme is
Forgiveness & Reconciliation

Sunday, September 7:

Hillcrest Services—

"We All Need A Little Help,"

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

South Bay Service—

"We Begin Again in Love,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

Sunday, September 14:

Hillcrest Services—

"One Truth, Many Names: The Intersection of Hinduism and Unitarian Universalism,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

"The Best They Could Do: Living Beyond the Faith of Our Parents ,"

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

Sunday, September 21:

Hillcrest Services—

"The Great End of Religious Instruction,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—

Multigenerational Service:

Adam Dyer, Intern Minister, and Kristen Kuriga, South Bay Coordinator

Sunday, September 28:

Hillcrest Services—

"We Begin Again in Love,"

Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

South Bay Service—

"One Truth, Many Names: The Intersection of Hinduism and Unitarian Universalism,"

Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.



An Introduction

BY MELISSA JAMES, PH. D., DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

As I have been thinking about how to introduce myself to you, I find myself coming back to a driving factor that helped me feel connected to this community and a position like the Director of Children and Family Ministry: I love to learn! I love it. I love to help others teach and learn together.

I come to this congregation with an eclectic background. I have been creating and running educational programs for many years in a variety of settings, both church-based and secular. Most recently, I worked as the Director of Education on an organic farm here in San Diego. This meant that I got to help children and families explore the world through hands-on experiences on the farm. We grew vegetables, cared for chickens and cooked farm fresh food. I have a passion for food justice and this work gave me the ability to learn and help others learn about the role of sustainable farming in creating a world where all can flourish.

I have taught everything from toddlers to seminarians. I, myself, am seminary trained and credentialed in my home tradition, Lutheranism. I moved to California over 8 years ago to earn a Ph.D. in Ethics and Social Theory. In both my seminary and doctoral studies, my focus was on the connection between faith and social justice. I continue to teach at the university level as an adjunct in sociology and philosophy at local universities.

I came to Unitarian Universalism through the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Oakland. I began teaching there as the toddler instructor as I worked my way through school at the Graduate Theological Union. Even though I came from a different religious tradition, I fell in love with what Unitarian Universalism offers in terms of a foundation for learning and identity. As I moved into more and more leadership, eventually becoming the Children and Family Ministry Coordinator, I realized that there is a great gift in the UU tradition that allows for a depth and breadth of exploration for all ages. I am very excited to be a part of this community as we learn and grow together.

I am grateful for the warm welcome I have received here. I am inspired by the gifts and dedication of all of the volunteers and partners in ministry that have built a solid foundation for the children's religious education program and family ministry here at First Church. I look forward to working alongside the whole congregation to keep building on this foundation to create a community that meets the needs of today's families, whatever those families look like.

What will this look like for us? It will look like lifting up so much in this community that makes us strong—those relationships, practices and traditions that give us hope and shape our identity. It will look like trying some new things, some behind the scenes and some out front. In all of this it will be a picture we create together.

As my time unfolds here I will be doing a lot of listening. Consider this my invitation to you—please come in for tea. The toys are out and the tea is set. My office is open to you. I want to hear your stories, your experiences, and your hopes for children's and family ministries in our community. Drop me an [e-mail](#) to set up a time. If you see me out and about the neighborhood (I often walk to work), please say hello!

Thank you for entering into this journey with me.

... *Transitions, continued from Page 2*

In the midst of such loss, it is important to come together as a community – to remember those who are gone, to be inspired by their lives and by how they contributed to this community in so many ways. Belonging to and participating in this community ensures that our individual lives mean something larger than just ourselves; belonging to this community enables that influence to ripple out in many ways.

It is the nature of life that there will be more transitions in the months to come. May we continue to come together to share, to celebrate and continue this great journey together, creating a community of care and kinship, nurturing one another in spiritual growth and together act on our values to help heal the world. This is why we gather – let us do so in joy.

Faithfully yours,

MEET MELISSA JAMES, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY

By NANCY FISK

Melissa James has lived in San Diego for 2 years, after working her way down the coast of California for the last 8 or 9 years. She grew up in Minnesota, went to school in Iowa, and did seminary training in Chicago as a Lutheran but had colleagues connected with Meadville Lombard Theological School, the Unitarian Universalist seminary in the Midwest.

She then attended Graduate Theological School in Berkeley, where Starr King is part of the consortium of classes. She became more and more familiar with UU philosophy through sociology classes. She became a toddler instructor at the Oakland UU Church, while she worked on her doctorate. She eventually took over as the coordinator of Children and Family Ministries there, at the request of the Director of Religious Education. She graduated in 2012 with her PhD in Ethics and Social Theory.

She has always been interested in the connection between faith and spirituality and working for justice in the world. This degree allowed her to understand the world, how it works and coupled that with the ethics of "who do we want to be and how do we become that person?" And "how do we do that as spiritual beings? How does the divine fit into this?"

One of the ways she finds her calling is through an organization called Farm to Faith San Diego. As the sole member of this organization, she consults on issues of food justice. In particular, she works with the Lutheran and Episcopal Campus Ministry at SDSU. They do a lot of anti-poverty work, within the student body, working on food justice issues, including converting a backyard into a garden and creating food security.

When she moved to San Diego, she asked people which faith community was doing interesting and important work focused on social justice. First Church was the answer she received. When the position came open at First Church, she saw that from the children's programs up through the broader community programs, to the themes running through the strategic plan, that this is where she could be part of a community whose passions were the same as hers. To help shape the education of that community was exciting to her.

Her partner is Abby, who is in training to be a psychotherapist. Abby completed an internship at the LGBT Center and has started a private practice here in San Diego. The rest of Melissa's family lives in the Midwest.



Her primary goal in her new position is to get to know the community and the families she will be working with. She wants to know how families experience our community. Who are the families we are accountable to? Are we a place that families want to be a part of? What does it mean to be a family? That can be code for families with small children. It could also mean families whose children are grown, or families that have chosen not to have children.

The thing that allows her to be at First Church with integrity and authenticity, is the fact that she is committed to each one of the 7 principles. She can teach those principles while holding to the fact that she comes from a different tradition, much like others in the congregation who come from other traditions. She can teach children what it means to be a UU, and to explore that with them.

What guides her spiritually is the tension between is and ought. As she puts it, "There is so much in the world, there are sparks and reflections of greatness, oneness of the divine, that's the is. We are able to be our best selves. To be that fully is the ought that we're striving for, the most just, the most kind. But we're not there yet. There are all sorts of reasons for that. What drives me is entering into a community that will lift up what is as we seek the ought."



**lift up what is as
we seek the ought...**





1,000 FAMILY RUMMAGE SALE

FIRST UU CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO
FRIDAY, SEPT 26 SATURDAY, SEPT 27
WWW.FIRSTUUSANDIEGO.ORG/RUMMAGE-SALE

1,000 FAMILY RUMMAGE SALE

BY SUZETTE SOUTHFOX AND DAVID NEWBOLD

The first 1,000 Family Rummage Sale was held in 1998. The eighth one will take place Friday and Saturday, September 26-27, from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm at our Hillcrest campus. This year, for the first time, the sale will take place over two days and we hope to make over \$25,000. The proceeds from this popular event support the operating budget of our beloved church which covers such things as gas and electric bills and staff salaries among other necessities.

The 1000 Family Rummage Sale is one of the best organized and well supplied rummage sales in San Diego. Over the years such lay leaders as Jan Garbosky and her late wife, Bonnie Russell, Susan Riegel Harding, Dave Hunt and others, have worked tirelessly to coordinate 14 sales department including antiques and collectables, boutique, children and youth and furniture.

A sale this size takes over 200 volunteers and encompasses most of the church campus. The roll-up-your-sleeves work takes place over 9 days; September 19th through September 27th. Volunteering is time guaranteed to make a difference and a great way to participate in the growth of our beloved community. Past volunteers have said that working the Rummage Sale is one of the best community building activities they had ever experienced. Volunteers receive training, have set shifts, are provided dinner, have first pick of our new church T-shirt and qualify to attend the infamous Pre-Sale on Thursday night.

Not only a popular community event, this sale is a great way for people to recycle, and an important

place for individuals with limited incomes to shop for their families at thrift store prices. Last year, there were 127 people lined up by 7am, the first in line arrived at 4:30 in the morning!

Donations for the Rummage Sale will be accepted from September 19 through 24. Pick up is even available for those who are unable to bring in their donations. Additionally, there will be one large pick up at our South Bay Campus following worship services on Sunday, September 21.

When you come to the sale, you'll find an atmosphere that is festive and fun as people shop. The Friends of de Benneville Pines run a hot dog stand and on Saturday, our youth will be selling pastries and Italian sodas. Unitarian Universalist outreach is conducted as our Sunday Welcome Table is staffed by friendly volunteers.

If you can't volunteer, you may be interested in supporting our volunteers through providing food, beverages and supplies. This year the organization and coordination of our sale is being executed by a Core Leadership Team which consists of former volunteers, new members, long time members and young adults. The Core Leadership Team co-chairs are Georganne Hctor and Kath Hillery; the members-at-large are David Newbold, Rhianna Smith, Matt Mazzeo, Treesa Southfox, and Isaac Castro. Staff support is provided by Suzette Southfox, Director of Membership and Development.

For more information about our 1,000 Family Rummage Sale, please follow this link:

<http://www.firstuusandiego.org/rummage-sale>

Come to A Celebration Reception for Liz Jones

September 21, 2014, Welcome Center patio, 12:30-3:30 pm

All are welcome

Liz is retiring as the Director of Religious Education. She will be recognized at both services for her many accomplishments at First Church.



9 CONGREGATIONS, 90 PEOPLE, \$7500

BY IRENE GRUMMAN

People of Faith Helping Neighbors in Need is the slogan of UPTOWN Faith Community Services, which dares to respond to the economic injustices of our day with kindness. We walk beside those we help, affirming the dignity and worth of every person.

Uptown is a storefront in North Park, open Monday to Friday, 9AM to 3PM, serving 100 or more people daily. First UU help found this outreach in 1984. The Center provides a safe place to receive mail. Clients use computers to look for work, stay in touch with family, and find information about resources. Volunteers distribute groceries Tuesday and Friday at 9AM, and donated clothing and hygiene items every day. Clients can obtain vouchers to reduce the cost of vital ID cards at the DMV.

The April 5th Walk to support UPTOWN Faith Community Services brought out 90 people, 70 of whom walked the 3.5K from University Christian Church on Cleveland Ave to the UFCS Center at 30th St and Polk. They came from nine supporting congregations, the Promise Program for middle-schoolers, former clients, and the general community. UU walkers or breakfasters were Cynthia Burton with her daughter and friends, Betty and Rev. Jim Grant, Roger Lundbohm, Irene Grumman and Kathy Hughart.

You can help by supporting our fundraiser Oktoberfest, Saturday October 25th 6-9 PM at Imperial Tower Rooftop, 6th Avenue & Kalmia. Enjoy German food, beverages, music, a silent auction and a spectacular view over Balboa Park. Tickets will be available at \$55 in mid-September. Contact Irene Grumman (6g5rumman@gmail.com).

You can also donate on the [website www.uptownfaith.org](http://www.uptownfaith.org). While we cannot serve meals or store fresh food at the Center, we can give out a few dozen apples, carrots or other fresh produce in a day, as well as bagged snacks such as pretzels, nuts, granola bars and the like. Reading glasses are very welcome. Socks and underwear are the most requested item. Bring donations to 4101 30th Street, Suite B, at the corner of Polk Street, or to the bin at the Social Justice Ministries Table on Sundays.

Volunteers from UU find rewards in giving. Kathy Hughart says, "When I get through here, I thank my lucky stars for what I have!" Len Pelletteri loves to encourage clients searching for work. Dan Fisher, Julianne Albright, Tom Owen-Towle, Patti Dahl, Jessica Koehne, Irene Grumman, Pam Brannigan and Tom Marshall find meaning and gratitude for their own lives as they offer practical help. All of us can see ourselves and those we love in the struggles of our clients.

Len and Irene also now serve as First UU's representatives on UPTOWN's Board of Directors.

SAVE THE DATE for the intergenerational sock hop, pizza party and service project November 21st in Bard Hall, 6-8PM.

Thank you First Church, and South Bay, for caring.



WHAT IN THE WORLD WIDE WEB?

BY KATH HILLERY

Have you ever wished that Sunday's sermon had a rewind button? Maybe you missed the service due to illness or you became distracted when that hawk flew by the window. Through the magic of the World Wide Web, you can replay videos of the sermon on your internet-connected computer at no charge. The website Vimeo hosts over 200 videos of First UU Church's sermons from as far back as 2011. Current and previous ministers, interns and guest speakers are featured. Access to videos on Vimeo is free. Vimeo asks you to join or log in, but neither are required to see the videos.



Vimeo was created in 2004 to host user-created videos. The 1st UU Church of San Diego has its own channel on Vimeo at vimeo.com/firstuusandiego. (The blue text is called a hyperlink, and if you put the cursor on it and click your mouse, your computer will take you

to the webpage.) Each video is displayed with a "thumbnail," or small picture from a portion of the video. Clicking on the picture will load the video into a webpage, and clicking on the triangle on the lower left will start the video streaming, or playing. The video will pause if you click the double vertical bars at the lower left as shown in the picture of Reverend Kathleen below. You can also access the 1st UU Vimeo channel by clicking on the hyperlink below the thumbnail on the front page of the church website.

Now sharing a sermon with a friend is as simple as sending an email. Each video has a unique location on the internet. The location is identified with a number that follows the words "vimeo.com" in the address bar of the web page showing the video. That address can be copied and pasted into the body of an email message. To copy and paste, move your cursor to the address bar at the top of the screen, line your cursor up with the

beginning of the address, press the left mouse key and drag the mouse across the entire address. When the entire address is highlighted in blue, release the left mouse button and depress the right mouse button. Several options will appear. Select "copy." The highlighted information will be stored on the "clipboard," a small memory area in your computer that holds on to things for you. Open your email program and click in the main body of the email, then paste the address from the clipboard by clicking the right mouse button again and selecting the "paste" option. Address the email to as many recipients as you like, and include some explanatory text before sending the email.

One of the best features of watching video online is the rewind function. As the video plays, two bars grow across the bottom of the screen. The slower bar, which is often red or blue, shows how much of the video that has played back. To repeat something, move the cursor to the bottom of the screen to display the control panel. Click on the slower bar with the left mouse button and drag it to the left while the button is still depressed. Release the button and the video will resume playing from the new location. Dragging all the way to the left will restart the video from the beginning.



Vimeo is just one online resource used by First Church to impart its message. Experiment with Vimeo and share sermons with your friends. The best way to learn to use a computer and the internet is to use it. The next time you think "there's nothing good on TV," maybe it's time to get inspired by a sermon.

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