



FirstWords

A publication of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego

INTRODUCING THE MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP ARTS, REV. IAN RIDDELL

BY REV KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER



On August 1st, the Rev. Ian W. Riddell will join the ministerial staff as the Minister of Music and Worship Arts—a new position at First Church. Rev. Ian's presence will enliven our worship,

deepen the music and program life of the church, and help us reach out to new areas within the San Diego region.

Rev. Ian is looking forward to working closely with our existing musical staff. He writes, "[First Church] has a long history of excellent and meaningful music and I'm looking forward to working with the talented, committed and collaborative staff . . . Music and worship can transform lives, and not just on Sunday mornings. One of the main focuses of my ministry with you will be to envision ways in which worship and music can infuse all of what we do as a religious community."

Growing up in southeastern Ontario, Rev. Ian "lived my life in the church, with my parents in the United Church of Canada and then singing in the choir at the Anglican cathedral." He came into Unitarian Universalism in the early 1990's when he was hired to be the music director of a new congregation in Victoria, British Columbia. There he found a spiritual home and began to discern his calling into professional ministry.

Excited to be joining the ministerial team here, his responsibilities will include preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and offering ministerial support to the UU Men's Fellowship, especially to its leadership. His presence on the ministerial staff will allow Rev. Kathleen to focus more of her time on outreach to the military community and interfaith actions in the San Diego Region. Rev. Ian's partner, Mark Harrower, is also thrilled to be coming to San Diego. They've been in a committed relationship since 1990 and have "crafted a life together centered on love, absolute honesty, intellectual and emotional

companionship, and trust." Mark is a designer for a large software firm.

Rev. Ian served the UU congregation in Las Vegas for three years before coming to San Diego. Outside of the ministry, he enjoys the various patterns he finds in serial fiction, long-form television shows, comic books, and novels.

Spending time in nature is one of the ways Rev. Ian experiences rejuvenation. He finds "participation in the life of community and the personal practices of lectio divina, (a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer), Taizé singing and movement," help him do the work of rebuilding the world "shaped by justice, kindness and humility . . . and calls him primarily to the work of congregational life—of participating and ministering with a community that has covenanted to walk together in the task of healing self and the world—to sing and listen and speak and act and teach against separation and for the flourishing of life."

It is with great anticipation we await Rev. Ian and Mark's arrival. And, it is with deep gratitude we thank all those whose dreams, dedication, and sharing of time, talents, and treasures have made this new position possible. It is because of them we enter a new time in the life of First Church—a time for a new ministerial focus to further build our beloved community, nurture our spirits with music and worship arts, and allow us to reach deeper into the wider community to act on our values to help heal the world.

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DAYDREAMING AND RE-IMAGINING BY REV. KATHLEEN OWENS, LEAD MINISTER

Though it's been many years since I was in school, I still look forward to the summer months. My schedule doesn't change much now like it did then but the light of day lingers longer and there is a change in the air. Or maybe it's a change in my attitude—up bubbles the desire to play more, to slow down, to take in all this beautiful place has to offer.

This is why I'm grateful for July's worship theme—Contemplation—as in wondering and wandering . . . to daydream and linger. We all need changes of pace, to slow down or a change of scenery—even for just a day. Letting yourself enjoy such a day (or days, if you can) I think creates some kind of space in your mind and heart. In this way I can take a deeper breath and find I notice the people around me.

We need some space to contemplate what is possible, that is not yet here or something we can only imagine. This is the deeper work of summer. And, after time like this, we can more easily move into a sense of Renewal, which is the worship theme of August.

With the various changes in staff, we are in the process of re-imagining the next iteration of our programs. With current staff and some lay leaders, we are working together to create a team and programs that will engage members and friends into a deeper relationship with one another, and the creation of a more welcoming community for all who are longing for everything our faith offers.

With a renewed sense of collaboration and team, the ministers and staff are eager to work in new and different ways to create community, nurture spiritual growth, and act on our values to help heal the world. In the coming months, I wish for you some extra time to wander and to wonder as you do. Where might you linger and find that deeper breath? What spiritual practice might you begin that will bring you a sense of renewal?

And, how might that sense of renewal re-energize you to more fully participate in this community? May you enjoy this precious time.

Faithfully yours,

June 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 **June Transformational Theme** is **Freedom**.

The **July Transformational Theme** is
Contemplation.

The **August Transformational Theme** is **Renewal**.

Sunday, June 7:

Hillcrest Services—Music Sunday
Festival Service of Music

South Bay Service—
"Do You Hear What I Hear?"
Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

Sunday, June 14:

Hillcrest Services—
"Do You Hear What I Hear?"
Adam Dyer, Intern Minister.

South Bay Service—
"The Paradox of Freedom,"
Rev Jennifer Channin, Assistant Minister.

Sunday, June 21:

Hillcrest Services—
"Freedom as a Spiritual Practice,"
Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—
"Sacred Play: A Multigenerational Service,"
Kristen Kuriga, South Bay Coordinator.

Sunday, June 28:

Hillcrest Services—
"Sharing the Good News of General Assembly,"
Rev Kathleen Owens, Lead Minister.

South Bay Service—
No service; General Assembly.

Note: when they become available, the July and August Sermon Schedules can be found at <http://www.firstuusandiego.org/upcoming-services>.



MOMENTS

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

This summer will mark the 1 year anniversary of my arrival at First Church. In this time, you have been patient with me as I've taken time to learn the traditions and culture of this community. You have been courageous with me as we've tried new things and embraced change together. You have welcomed me, challenged me, and journeyed with me over the last months as we have sought out the right questions to be asking to live our commitment to be a vibrant, multi-generational community.

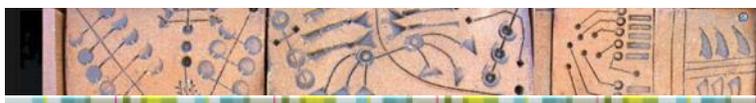
One of my favorite moments in my work with you happened when I was walking hand-in-hand with a 2 year-old member of our community in a social justice action. Behind us, I heard his mom ask his 5 year-old sister, "Do you know what justice means?" She went on to engage in the most patient and thoughtful conversation about justice and why it is important for us to live our values I have ever heard. At that moment, I was reminded why we do the work we do and why I am grateful to be a part of this community.

Moments like that don't happen out of the blue. They happen when families are connected with a wider community that supports and values them. The role parents and guardians play in children's ethical, spiritual, and religious education is huge. A key commitment in our Children and Family Ministries is to support parents in that role. One of the reasons why being a multigenerational community is so important is that it is a way parents can know they are not alone. Take our Children's Religious Education (CRE), for example. Our children and families have been served this year

by an amazing group of dedicated, passionate, and caring volunteer CRE leaders. These leaders have been teachers and mentors to visiting and new families and to families that have been part of our community for generations. Each week these leaders pour their hearts into offering a place where our kids can learn and grow.

It's true we have a lot to celebrate as a community. It's also true there is plenty of work left for us to do as we live up to our commitments. If I have learned anything in my first year here, it is that I serve a community that truly loves its children and families and is committed to the hard work of being a multigenerational community acting on their values to help heal the world. As we continue to respond to the needs of our community and our world, I am grateful to be journeying with you.

There are immediate opportunities to be a part of our Children and Family ministries including helping with the garden, serving on a teaching team, and sharing your gifts and talents in other ways. Contact me to get involved at melissa@firstuusandiego.org.



Editor's Note:

You will have noticed that this is the "Summer Edition" of FirstWords. FirstWords will be on hiatus for July and August.

We will return in September with many new and interesting articles.

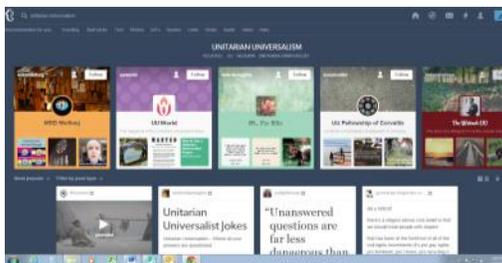
ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED!

BY KATH HILLERY

Online social networks provide a way to communicate with friends near and far. Over half the people in the U.S. regularly use an online social network program. An online social network is a dedicated website that allows users to interact with each other through posts, pictures and invitations to visit other websites or attend an event. Posts are comments or ideas that are shared through the website. They can range from trivial exclamations to expressions of grief to political rantings. In addition to photographs and videos, emoji, (pictorial representations of emotions including the iconic happy or smiley face), can also be shared on social media.

According to an [article](#) in the January 12, 2015, edition of Ad Week, over 87% of people in the U.S. who use a social networking site use Facebook. Currently Facebook is the domain of people 35 and over, with use by younger generations on the decrease. Visit First Church Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FUUCSD>.

Facebook features include a place to share your thoughts with the public, a few selected friends or an individual. In exchange, you can see their thoughts and comment on them, or simply "like" them. The Like button is used to express support or agreement with a post. Facebook also offers a private messaging option where you can communicate with one or several of your friends without inviting all your contacts into the conversation.



Younger people find Tumblr more fitting with their lifestyle. Well over half of the people on Tumblr (yes, there is

only one vowel in the name) are under the age of 44. Tumblr's dashboard, or home page, gives users access to blogs, photos, links, and gifs.

A blog is an electronic diary filled with tales of personal experiences or strongly held opinions. Photos and links, which are connections to other websites, can be shared as well. What sets Tumblr apart from Facebook is its ability to handle Graphics Interchange Format compressed image files or GIFs which load quickly because they are compressed. More importantly, GIFs can have animated effects so they appear as a short video loop. This technology is similar to the way photographs are described in the Harry Potter series.

Other popular social media sites include Pinterest, a bulletin board for posting your favorite photographs, popular with people between the ages of 24 and 34, and Twitter, a social networking site that keeps things short and sweet. Posts on Twitter are limited to a maximum of 140 characters. These characters can include text and links to photos on Instagram, or to other websites.

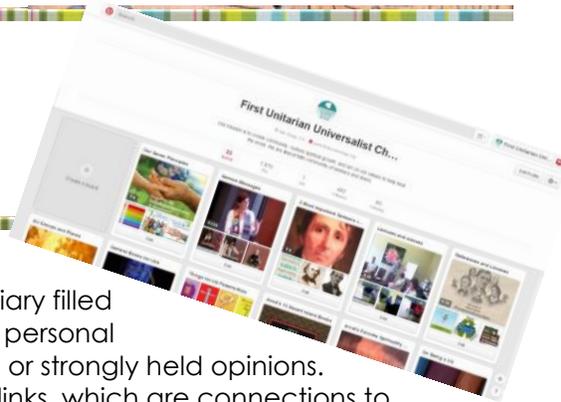
Recently the President got his own Twitter account that goes by the label @POTUS (President of the U.S.). Instagram is a photo sharing website that provides a place to store your photos so you can link to them on other sites like Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter. Almost ¾ of its users are under 45. Many of the photos on Instagram are "selfies," or a photo taken of yourself, by yourself.



Visit First Church Pinterest at <https://www.pinterest.com/firstuusandiego/>

Visit First Church Twitter at <https://twitter.com/firstuusd>.

The availability of social media has revolutionized long-distance communication almost as much as the telephone has. It allows people to chat with friends both near and far. Over the next few years, the greatest growth in social media use is expected to occur in the 65 years old and over demographic. Is it time for you to join the revolution?





THE GENEROSITY OFFERING COLLECTION BAGS

BY CAROLINE CLARK

This is the story of the collection bags we use

every Sunday morning for the generosity offering at First Church. The bags are from the church my family attended in Glasgow, Scotland. I was tired of spilling the baskets that First Church was using, and heard that the church was closing, so I asked my Dad if the collection bags were available. He replied that they were, and he would box them up, and post them to me. And that is how the collection bags came to be here, at First Church. Next year - 2016 - these Collection Bags will be 120 years old - and still in use!

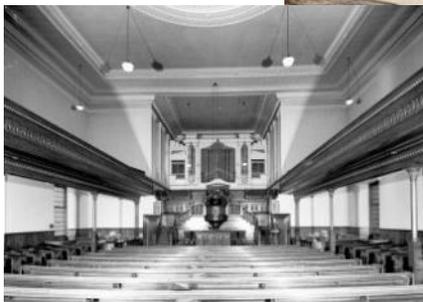
This is the letter that my father included with the Collection Bags, written March 26, 1974:

"I've looked up an old minute book of the Church, and found a minute dated 26th February, 1896, which recorded 'proposed change in the mode of taking weekly offerings viz by bags at conclusion of service, instead of by plate at the entrance' - - so, that's when the bags were put into use. The velvet of the bags was renewed once or twice, but the wooden part remained. A minute of 1st April, 1896, says 'the change in the mode of taking the collections had proved satisfactory, there being an increase in the offerings, especially in the evening services.'



"Your grandfather was appointed treasurer on the 2nd December, 1908, succeeding a Mr McGow [he died at the age of 95] who had been treasurer since 1876. My father - John Robert Brown - was treasurer for 14 years, till his death in January 1923. I was appointed treasurer in September 1947, and am still in that office, dealing with the sale of the site, which we hope to have finalized within the next few weeks.

There were two treasurers between my father and myself.



The church where they came from was [Elgin Place Congregational](#), and our family of five went to that church for as long as it was open. Like all downtown

"You may know this Congregational church was founded in 1803, in Albion Street, then - a new building was erected in West George Street, at Dundas Street, and later sold to the Railway for their Queen Street Station, and the Elgin Place building... was built, and opened in 1856.

"My Great-grand-father, Grand-father, and Father, myself, Mum, you, Rachel, and Jennifer have all been members of the church. Five generations . . . Quite a record to be proud of. Lots of love, Dad."

churches, the congregation gradually moved out to the suburbs, and the folk stopped coming in to the church. Of course, many of the older generation died off, and the younger ones were not interested in the "downtown" place of worship So - the solid, solemn, old building that was once a place of much busyness, faded into just a memory.



GA AT FIRST CHURCH: WARE LECTURER, DR. CORNEL WEST



General Assembly (GA), the annual convention for the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), is in Portland, Oregon, this year. Because it is so close, many of our congregants, including our youth, will be

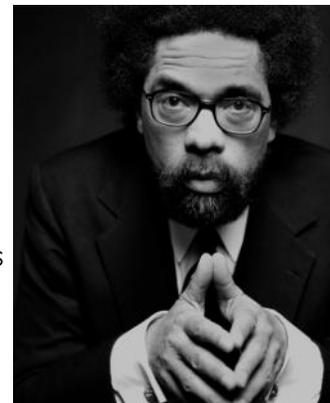
traveling there to attend GA. In order to join in on the excitement, on Saturday, June 27, 2015, at 8PM, we will be presenting the Ware Lecture on video in the Meeting House, livestreaming from GA. Come join your fellow congregants as we view this year's Ware lecture by Dr. Cornel West. The doors open at 7:30 and there will be cake and cookies on the patio prior.

The Ware Lecture is the seminal event of the annual UUA General Assembly -- like a TED lecture just for UUs. The list of lecturers so honored is long and distinguished. Martin Luther King (1966), Kurt Vonnegut (1986), May Sarton (1982), Norman Lear (1992), and Morris Dees (2000) have all been Ware Lecturers at UU GAs. (Past GA Multimedia coverage <http://www.uua.org/ga/past/153406.shtml>.)

From the General Assembly website: <http://www.uua.org/ga/program/highlights/ware-lecture>

"Cornel West is a prominent and provocative democratic intellectual. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard and obtained his MA and PhD in philosophy at Princeton. He has taught at Union Theological Seminary (where he has recently returned to teach), Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and the University of Paris. He has written nineteen books and edited thirteen books. He is best known for his classic *Race Matters*, published by Beacon Press in 1993. His latest books are *Black Prophetic Fire*, which offers a fresh perspective on six

revolutionary African American leaders (Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King Jr., Ella Baker, Malcolm X, and Ida B. Wells) and *The Radical King*, a collection of MLK's writings curated and introduced by Prof. West to reclaim Dr. King's prophetic and radical vision as both a civil rights leader and—more broadly—as a human right activist. Both books were published by Beacon Press.



Dr. Cornel West

Cornel West appears frequently on *Real Time* with Bill Maher, *The Colbert Report*, CNN and C-SPAN, and he makes numerous appearances speaking to audiences large and small on subjects ranging from racial justice and queer rights to climate justice. Prof. West has appeared in over twenty-five documentaries and films, including *Examined Life*, *Call & Response*, *Sidewalk*, and *Stand*. He has also made three spoken-word albums, including *Never Forget*, collaborating with Prince, Jill Scott, Andre 3000, Talib Kweli, KRS-One, and the late Gerald Levert. His recent spoken-word interludes were featured on Terence Blanchard's *Choices* (which won the Grand Prix in France for the best jazz album of the year for 2009).

He has recently been deeply involved in the Black Lives Matter protests and was among those arrested in Ferguson in 2015. Cornel West has a passion to communicate in writings and orations, through music and film, and in solidarity with groups and faith communities committed to justice in order to keep alive the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.—a legacy of telling the truth and bearing witness to love and justice.

To view other GA events live or recorded, go to the [uua.org/ga website: http://www.uua.org/ga/virtual/2015](http://www.uua.org/ga/virtual/2015)



From the youth service on March 24th, 2015.

Hello. My name is Athena Halsema-Fernandez, I am a senior in high school,

and as I am only seventeen years old, I would not presume myself to be an expert in having to move on from the treasure nor the tragedy that life can entail. However, the human experience is not... sufficiently aqueous to allow for a free flowing journey. There are obstacles to surpass in life, and every single person has had to let go of something and move on. I myself in fact, am about to literally move on.

To preface this story, I have lived in the same house, on the same street, in the same quaint neighborhood of North Park for my entire life. Granted, that has been comparably less than some, but it is all I have ever known.

As of last weekend, I was admitted into the University of California in Santa Cruz, which is, astonishingly enough, rather far from my quaint little house, on my quaint little street, in my quaint little North Park. The house in question is not particularly grand nor imposing, it is a small white one story building, but oh, what a story it has to tell.

This house of mine has been through three break-in's, one plane crash, and roughly three tree branches (or rather three tree branches have been through it). It has sturdy walls, a strong base, and a benevolent roof which has had the good grace not to collapse on top of me (shout out to roofs).

I mention this, because over the past few months I have had to consider what was to be done with this house of mine. As I am truthfully the only person

MOVING ON

BY ATHENA ANSELMA-FERNANDEZ

really living in my house, when I leave for college, my house will become an actual empty nest. I can either rent or sell my house. However, it is likely that I will never live in my house again.

And that is okay. If this house of mine has taught me anything, it is that, cliché as it may sound, life moves on. This house has stood over some veritable tragedies; fights with parents, fights with cancer, fights with depression, and even fights with fire (if you will recall the plane crash).

But in the wake of these great struggles, I have always known to take solace in three things. One: I am still here. Two: There is still a roof over my head. And Three: How profoundly lucky am I to see another day. But now, here I am in this literal house of worship, and I see that there are so many other homes that it is time I let go of. My youth group, my camp, my congregation, my house, my things.

Now I have to move on, and let this house be someone else's home, let them fill it with memories, and art, and gardens, and children. It is time to move on. However, all of these, be they tangible or abstract, will never really be gone. To quote from Sirius Black, "The ones that love us never really leave us. You can always find them in here [in your heart]."

It is with those words, and that small assurance that we go out into the world in search of something to be ours. And while it is true that home is where the heart is, the world in turn can be such a wonderful, wonderful place.

And that is an encouraging thought.

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 Adam Dyer, Intern Minister
 Rev. Jim Grant, Affiliate Minister
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations
 Dr. Melissa James, Director of Children and Family Ministry
 Daniel Ratelle, Hillcrest Music Coordinator/Adult Choir Director
 Lynn Mendoza-Khan, Youth and Children's Choir Director
 Lorelei Isidro, South Bay Music Coordinator
 Andrea Newall, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
 Roy Attridge, Handbell Ensembles Director
 Justin Murphy-Mancini, Organist and Pianist
 Kristen Kuriga, Social Justice/South Bay Ministry Teams Coord.
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 Alice King, Young Adult and Campus Ministry Coordinator
 Abby Koch, Executive Administrator and Office Manager
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