



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Magazine

Summer 2021; Vol 15 No. 6

On the Use of Restorative Processes and Practices

by Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal faith. This means we don't follow a fixed creed handed down from a religious authority; we create a covenant for how we want to be in relationship with each other in this faith community. In 2008, this congregation created a church-wide covenant. As I mentioned in my May 23, 2021 "Real Community: Messy, Imperfect and Needed," this covenant hangs in every room at both our Hillcrest and South Bay campuses. It's also on our website – under the About menu tab, click on Governance; under Guidelines, you'll find our Covenant of Good Relations.

It explains how we'll be together, and says 'we practice the established process of resolving differences.' At one time, this was through a team called the Good Relations Committee. This team created guidelines and a process to be used when covenant was strained or when tension arose. After awhile, it became harder to retain committee members, because the committee wasn't used very often.

In December 2018, we re-centered our Journey Towards Wholeness work. We understood the need for a new process, especially when dealing with conflict and harm. We used the term "Restorative Justice" with the intent of wanting to center the person who experienced harm, inviting them to share their needs in the hopes of repair. As we explored what restorative justice is, and how it's used by different organizations, we learned that a "Restorative Process or Restorative Practices" reflects more accurately the work we want to do.

The restorative process uses a broader lens than the specific label 'restorative justice.' Restorative process centers on an individual who has experienced harm, while affirming the humanity and dignity of everyone

involved in an incident that created harm. There is an invitation to the person to share their experience of harm, and a willingness to engage in listening, naming the needs for repair, and together, creating a plan to move forward, in the hopes of reducing repeated harms and strengthening relationship.

First UU is working with Leonie Smith, from The Thoughtful Workplace and with Ashley McGuire from the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) in San Diego. Soon, we'll begin small group listening circles, focusing first on those still in the congregation who experienced the impact resulting from the Interim Search committee's work in May. Because that impact rippled out to the congregation, there will be other listening circles in which small groups, and then larger groups, can participate.

Goals for these groups include:

- inviting people to share and be heard,
- practicing listening to each other,
- practicing self-empathy and empathy for others
- asking for needs so repair can be made,
- creating processes to help reduce the experience of that harm again,
- strengthening relationships.

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The Summer's Monthly Themes

by Rev. Kathleen Owens, *Lead Minister*



An important part of the worship and program life at First UU is monthly themes. Last summer, a group of worship co-leaders, staff, and ministers engaged in a wide-ranging discussion as we planned for the 2020-2021 church year. Little did we know back then all that would transpire in this year . . . and yet, the monthly themes remain quite relevant.

The themes are reflected upon in worship services, serve as the focus for our Wisdom Circles, and are the basis of some youth and young adult discussions. It was hoped conversations across the generations could be had more easily, if various groups within the congregation focused on the same theme. If you didn't know about the common thread of themes, you now have an opening for many possible conversations—"what do you think of our monthly theme?"

June's theme of Power is a challenging topic for many. Power can have such a negative connotation for many, and abuse of power happens all too easily. We tend to ignore this topic and, in doing so, I think we lose power by not talking about it, by ignoring it.

Power is something we all have, even if it's the power over our own choices and expressed in changing our own mind and behavior. Power doesn't have to be a scary thing or used abusively. Power, in service of our values and principles, can make our lives and the world around us a better place.

In July, the theme of Interdependence is an important balance to the patriotic and the over-emphasis of United States exceptionalism. Interdependence is the 7th UU principle in one word and speaks to the reality that is our lives and world. The climate crisis is a prime example of our interdependence and the need for this country to act in alignment with others to demand and make the necessary changes for sustainability.

Re-Imaging Community is August's theme and brings us full circle from September's theme of Change. As a congregation growing into a deeper understanding of what it means to be a multi-cultural and inclusive congregation, re-imagining community is necessary—requiring ongoing reflection—and can be life-affirming.

This summer, these themes will serve as a starting point for the conversations we need to explore and discuss. These conversations are richer when you participate in them, so join the endeavor to find a deeper sense of connection to each other and this congregation.

Rev. Kathleen

Worship Time:

Live Streamed Worship:

Sunday, 9:30 am

(Bilingual & ASL Interpretation)

<https://www.firstuusandiego.org/>

**June's
Transformational Theme is:
"Power"**

**July's
Transformational Theme is:
"Interdependence"**

**August's
Transformational Theme is:
"Re-Imaging Community"**

Use of Restorative Processes and Practices

Continued

Restorative processes and practice take some time. Unfortunately, it doesn't take much time for conflict, misinformation and harm to spread quickly through a group and congregation. The impact of these can quickly escalate and become complex. Currently, we are relying on outside facilitators to help the congregation with this recent conflict. However, we hope that when people in the congregation are more familiar with the restorative process, they'll help de-escalate conflict and misunderstanding before the impact and complexity grows too wide.

We're still learning about the restorative process. No one can be forced into using it. However, the Church leadership finds this strengthens our ability to face conflict and work through harm, finding ways to repair relationships and move forward.

Using restorative processes and practices will help shift our current culture of avoiding conflict and having harm go unresolved, to experiencing conflict as a signal that 'something is wrong or hurtful and needs to be tended.' Restorative processes are not about shaming and blaming. They're about coming together to listen, share, and stay in relationship, while finding a way to address harm and impact.

I hope you'll join with Church leadership, to learn about and participate in this work, as you wish and need to.

Family Ministry Summer 2021

by Tony Bianca, *Program Director*



As we begin to host small groups on campus and think about gradually opening back up to in-person gatherings, we're aware that, currently, children under 12 are unable to be vaccinated and which creates a natural inequity around who is able to safely participate in live gatherings on our campuses.

Simultaneously, we're thinking about how this reopening offers us a unique opportunity to reimagine our programming in ways that better serve us, and more fully live into what it means to be a Family Ministry Program. While we have programs like Parents' Lounge that focus on parents and have, in the past, experimented with different ways of doing religious education that were more multi-generational, our programming, for the most part, has used what we call the "Sunday School Model." Simply put, the Sunday School Model means children show up on Sundays and are divided by age into different classrooms where they're taught a lesson much as they would be in a traditional classroom.

One new program we're launching in June seeks to move away from the Sunday School Model of Religious Education (RE) while also providing our families with young, unvaccinated children a way to safely participate in programming. On Sunday,

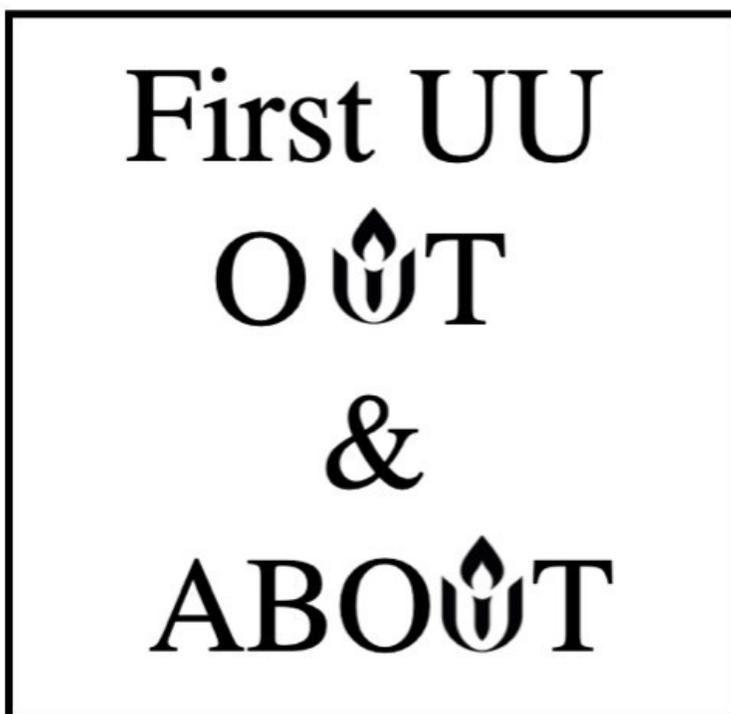
June 27, the Family Ministry Team will host the first of what we hope to be many "First UU oUt & aboUt" events. As the name suggests, these gatherings will take place offsite in outdoor spaces around the greater San Diego area. The goal of these events is to offer everyone in our congregation a chance to create community across generational lines while nurturing our spiritual growth.

The first event will take place at Miramar Lake on June 27 from 2 pm — 4 pm. We'll gather near the concession area at 2 pm for an opening circle. Since

the lake is a reservoir, we'll begin with a brief centering reflection around what "reservoirs" we have in our lives and what we draw on to spiritually, mentally and physically recharge ourselves. We'll then have a little over an hour to enjoy the space. The lake offers both natural and paved trails for walking and/or biking, as well as spaces for just sitting to enjoy the view. Individuals are invited to use the time as they want. Bring a bike to ride, walk with friends

or with others that you've just met, sit and chat—whatever you like. Then, at 3:30 pm, we'll return to where we started for a brief closing circle. You can head home at 4 pm or bring food to enjoy a picnic dinner at the lake.

We hope you and your family can join us as we explore this new way of being a church community. And, even if you're unable to join us this time, stay tuned for more upcoming oUt & aboUt events throughout the year!



Farewell

by Matthew Waterman, *Intern Minister*



I feel like I've said this every week, and to be honest, the meaning has evolved and changed over these past 10 months—but “this has been a difficult year.” This is true for both the congregation and me. It *has* been a

difficult year. We've changed, grown, been knocked down, been pushed to our extremes, and continued forward.

This is the first of several “goodbyes” that you'll be experiencing in the coming months. This is also the month in which *your* Annual Meeting takes place. This is important because this is where you have the power. As members of First UU, you have the power to change *your* community and congregation. This is because it's *your* congregation, and through the democratic process, you can vote to change and make this yours.

Polity is the heart of our faith, we are not a top-down organization, but rather one that is built by members. Your community, your congregation that I've been so blessed to be a

part of, is then part of a larger voting authority—part of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

I've asked throughout the year, and I will push one more time—please vote to adopt the 8th Principle. Then, please work to live the principle—in your lives and in the life of this congregation. It will not be easy, it will not be clean and tidy, it sure will not be perfect, but through the work and struggle, it will find ways to make this community stronger and more resilient.

This is my prayer for each of you and this congregation—resilience and strength. May you find blessings in your life and this community. May you both adopt and live the 8th Principle. May you find your way forward—together. I'll be cheering you on from the sidelines. And, after my year away, I look forward to reconnecting with you in ways that I can.

Regardless of where life takes you and me—you have a very special place in my heart. You've taught me so much and have been my spiritual home for these past ten months. I love you so much and know that through the changes and ups and downs, you'll be stronger in the end. It's not “goodbye,” it's “I'll see you again soon.”

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Our Affiliated and Community Ministers—An Update

First published in October 2018

First UU had been in San Diego for 148 years, yet 2018 was the first time both Affiliate and Community Ministers served and supported our congregation. All are in fellowship with the UUA and the UU Ministers' Association and serve our congregation voluntarily.

Our first affiliate minister, Rev. Jim Grant, writes, "The word 'affiliate' is from the Latin meaning 'to adopt.' The broader meaning has to do with association. I am associated with First UU as an Affiliate Minister as an unpaid volunteer, working in covenant with Rev. Kathleen. My adoption happened several years ago, under the ministry of the Revs. Tom and Carolyn Owen-Towle.

Rev. Kathleen asked me to assume responsibility for Homestretch Sages, a monthly program for seniors in their 70's, 80's, and 90's. I work with a program committee in planning the gatherings. She also asked me to be in touch with persons who are not able to come regularly to Sunday services or events at First UU. I serve as a 'friendly visitor' with folks, helping them stay in touch with the congregation. I occasionally do pastoral calling with people when they are ill or in special need. I am honored to serve our beloved First UU as a volunteer Affiliate Minister."

Löne (pronounced Luna) Broussard, a retired parish minister, also serves as a volunteer Affiliate Minister. She works with Rev. Jim Grant on the Homestretch Sages program, and like Jim, is on call for officiating rites of passage services (weddings, funerals) for people outside the congregation who need a minister. She has also preached at both of our campuses.

We have three Community Ministers affiliated with First UU Church. These ministers have a ministry outside of the congregation and are also in covenant with Rev. Kathleen and Rev. Tania to serve the congregation in specific ways as part of their affiliation with First UU.

The Rev. Julie Forest writes, "In May of 2018, 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. Julie will also serve as the First UU Board President in 2021-2022.

Rev. Katy Kroll Swanson is a 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. They have a daughter, Madelyn, who is 5 years old.

A recent addition to our community ministers, the Rev. Dr. Frank Placone-Willey, is a Marriage and Family Therapist, and a retired minister from Summit UU Fellowship in Santee. He is currently involved with the UU Men's Fellowship group.

Our affiliated and community ministers play important roles in our beloved UU community and, for everything they do, we're very grateful.

Forty Years of Welcoming

by Barbara Davenport

When John Keasler came to First Church in 1999, he was looking for a spiritual home where his being gay wouldn't be a problem. When he found the Rainbow Action Group on the patio and he learned that the Men's Fellowship sponsored a Gay-Straight weekend retreat, he knew he'd come home.

For 22 years, John has been a loyal member and a committed leader, currently co-chair of Rainbow Outreach. I asked him why he thinks that a group officially recognized as an organization of the church in 1981 is still going strong. He said Rainbow Outreach has been doing the same thing for forty years, and that it responds to issues that affect LGBTQ people within First UU and in the larger community.

Forty years, one mission

Rainbow Outreach members know a lot about how important it is to be seen and welcomed, and Rainbow Outreach has always provided a welcoming presence on Sunday mornings on the patio. Patricia Gordon, John's co-chair, remembers that when she and her husband PJ, who was then transitioning from female to male, first came to First UU, "We felt so invisible," she said, "until we connected to Rainbow Outreach."

The pandemic didn't stop its welcoming; Rainbow Outreach now hosts its after service coffee klatch on Zoom at noon on the second Sunday. The format changes, but for forty years the group's mission has been steadfast: to welcome visitors and newcomers, and to make clear that LGBTQ people are not only welcome, but are an integral part of the congregation.

Rainbow Outreach also organizes First UU's contingent for the Pride Parade, where they get to show more than 250,000 participants and spectators that First UU welcomes LGBTQ people.

Supporting trans inclusion

Rainbow Outreach steps up when events affect the

LGBTQ community. In 2008, its members staffed phone banks to urge voters to vote against Prop 8, which aimed to amend the state constitution to prohibit same sex marriages. Recently, trans people, especially youth, have become more visible and face increased hostility. Rainbow Outreach has responded by presenting a six-session UUA workshop on Transgender Inclusion in Congregations.

Now in its second season, the current session is facilitated by members Les GrantSmith and Louise Titlow. A high school music teacher, Titlow says she took the workshop because of her students. "About five percent of my students are transgender or nonbinary," she said. "Another five percent are questioning. That's a lot of kids. They talk very openly about their feelings. They are so brave and I've learned so much from them." This year, she volunteered to facilitate the sessions, "out of a love for my students and for trans people in the church. People want to grow so much that they're willing to be uncomfortable."

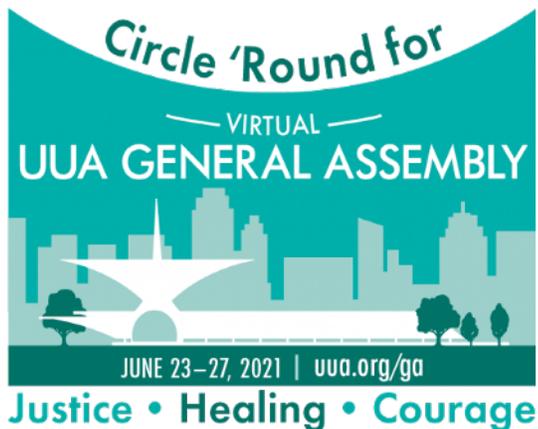
Maggie Marshall, who's in the current Trans workshop, especially likes the focus on radical welcoming. "That means not thinking about how *you'd* want to be welcomed, but how the other person might want to be welcomed. That means a lot more listening and paying attention." The workshop has helped her look at how people—not just trans people, but anyone—may feel when they first come to First UU.

Rainbow Outreach's long-standing work of welcoming, and the very current work of improving our welcome to trans people, speak to the congregation's vital concerns: how we respond to newcomers, and learning to hear one another.

To connect with Rainbow Outreach, come to the Zoom coffee klatch at noon on the second Sunday of the month. The Zoom address appears in the Order of Service that Sunday, and also in the Window. Or call 619-278-1267 and leave a message. All are welcome.

Online General Assembly 2021 - You Can Still Attend!

by Jan Garbosky



General Assembly, the national meeting for the Unitarian Universalist Association, will be held online Wednesday, June 23 through Sunday, June 27. The link to register is <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>.

Last year there were 34 of us from First UU attending. I hope you'll encourage your friends to attend. Last year John Schaibly and Jan Garbosky hosted zoom sessions at the end of each day for anyone who wanted to gather to reflect on that day's experiences. We really built a community and recommended which live and on-demand workshops we enjoyed.

When you sign up, there's a weekly (Friday) GA email with updates or you can attend a "What to Expect at GA 2021?" webinar. Here are some things you might like to know for yourself or to share with friends:

The program:

- The complete 100+ page program book is now available at <https://www.uua.org/files/2021-05/2021%20Program%20Book.pdf>. (You can print the relevant pages for yourself.)

There are scholarships to attend:

- There is plenty of funding for full & partial scholarships. No questions asked.

- Scholarships must be requested during registration.
- Please don't hesitate to ask for assistance.

Workshops and webinars:

- There are more than 70 on-demand workshops you can **watch anytime during GA & throughout the summer on your own.**
- Also, there are 39 live webinars—all of which appear in the on-demand section the day after the webinar—so you don't have to miss out on any webinar you want to see.

Participation Portal:

- This year on the Participation Portal, we can set the time zone to Pacific Daylight Time (default is Central).

Ware Lecture

- Saturday's Ware Lecture will be a dialog between Stacey Abrams and Desmond Meade. Stacey Abrams is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Our Time Is Now and Lead from the Outside*. She's an entrepreneur and political leader. Desmond Meade is a formerly homeless returning citizen who overcame many obstacles to eventually become the President of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRC), Chair of Floridians for a Fair Democracy, a graduate of Florida International University College of Law, and a Ford Global Fellow.

Contact Jan Garbosky (jgarbosky@cox.net) if:

- you want to be informed of end-of-day zoom meetings
- there's someone you think would like information about GA—she would be happy to email or chat with them.

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 Matthew Waterman, Intern Minister
 Rev. Jim Grant and Rev. Löne Broussard, Affiliate Ministers
 Rev. Bonnie Tarwater, Rev. Frank Piccone-Willey, Rev. Julie Forest
 and Rev. Katy Swanson, Affiliate Community Ministers
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 Käthe Larick, Youth Programs Coordinator
 Jenner Daelyn, Connections Coordinator (on leave)
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 Tony Bianca, Program Director
 Chase Pado, Pianist
 Lorelei Garner, South Bay Music Coordinator
 Andrea N-L, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
 Connie Hayes, Bookkeeper / Contoller
 Ray Evans, Maintenance
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 Revs. Dr. Carolyn and Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti

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To view sermon video casts, click on these

YouTube or Vimeo buttons:



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