



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Magazine

February 2023; Vol 17 No. 2

Michael Odegaard on Preserving the Kumeyaay Language

by Nancy Fisk, *Editor*

Michael Odegaard will join us on February 23rd, as our next presenter in the Adult RE Speaker Series, to tell us about his current project to preserve the Kumeyaay Language. This event will be one more step toward establishing an accountable relationship between First UU and the Kumeyaay People.

Michael serves as a Director of the United Nations Association of San Diego to coordinate implementation of the United Nations 2022-2032 Decade of Indigenous Languages' goals, which include securing legal status for San Diego County's two indigenous languages, Kumeyaay and Luiseno (Chamtēela).

In December 2019, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, to draw global attention on to the critical situation of many Indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization, and promotion.

Michael launched Hawaii Bilingual and has been a recognized advocate for the linguistic rights of indigenous, and especially Hawaiian-speaking, peoples. As a “kumu” or teacher, he has been invited to lead traditional blessings of gardens and canoes. When he was asked to do baptisms, Michael decided to

attend seminary in Boston where he also taught Hawaiian language for the Harvard University Native American Program.

Welcomed as a visiting scholar at the University of Hawaii at Hilo Hawaiian Language College, Michael has also been invited to speak as far away as India at indigenous churches, universities, and local indigenous groups and Rotary Clubs throughout San Diego County on the topic of indigenous language rights and revitalization.

Locally, Michael collaborates with Dr. Stanley Rodriguez, the director of *Kumeyaay Community College* since 2018, and a Kumeyaay language instructor at Kumeyaay Community College since 2005.

We look forward to welcoming Michael Odegaard to our Adult RE Speaker Series. Register for the 6:30 pm — 8:00 pm, February 23rd, Zoom event at: www.firstuusandiego.org/adult-faith-formation.html.

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Our Work Together

by Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*



“Something happens when we gather.” If asked, that would be my five-word sermon. That somehow, when we come together, in all the many ways that we’ve learned to come together, something happens. Something magical and important. Over this next year, we’ll gather to celebrate 150 years since the founding of this spiritual community, First UU. We got a head start with the visit from our UUA president Rev. Susan

Frederick Gray in November. We kicked off the official celebration on Saturday, January 28th with all kinds of activities on our patio and some words of congratulations from our mayor, our state assemblymember, and other dignitaries.

Over the next year, we’ll have one or more special events each month: talks, concerts, guests in our pulpit—all geared toward both celebrating our past and imagining our bright future. I hope you’ll join in the fun and the learning during the year ahead.

We’re also continuing our work together, you and I, during this time of Developmental Ministry. We’ve been working on rebuilding trust. Your board of trustees and I are assembling a new Right Relationship Team that will focus not only on resolving disputes that emerge but will also help us all learn how to engage conflict and change in ways that enhance connection and deepen our understanding of one another and our shared commitments.

There’s work ahead across our larger Unitarian Universalist community, as well. At this year’s General Assembly, which will be held June 21-25, 2023, both online and in-person in Pittsburgh, PA, we’ll have important conversations about and then vote on substantial revisions to Article II of our UUA bylaws. That might not sound all that interesting to you, but

Article II is where we talk about what it is that defines our Unitarian Universalist faith. I’ve been deeply moved by the work of our Article II Commission, and I think you all will be, too.

Your Larger UU Committee chair, John Schaibly, and I’ll be engaging First UU in conversations about the revisions to Article II, and we hope to fill our slate of delegates to this year’s General Assembly. Let’s dive into this deeper work of exploring who we’re called to be in the world and how we’ll be together, here at First UU, and in the larger world.

I’ll see you on the patio, on the Zoom screen, or in the meeting house soon and often, I hope.

In faith and service,

Justine

February Sermon Schedule

February's Transformational Theme: "Love"

Hillcrest Worship Time:

Sundays, 10 am, Meeting House, Hillcrest Patio & ***Livestream*** Worship

February 5, 2023

“Centering Love”

Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*

February 12, 2023

“The Blessings of

Congregational Conflict”

Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley, *Guest Minister*

February 19, 2023

“Universalism Heritage:

Uncovering Voices Within the Margins of Our Faith”

Isaac Castro, *Seminarian*

February 26, 2023

“Where the Light Enters You”

Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*

South Bay Worship Time:

1st & 3rd Sundays, 10 am, Suite 104

February 5, 2023

“Love Will Guide Us”

Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt, *Assistant Minister*

February 19, 2023

Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt, *Assistant Minister*

Podcast: The First Source

by Tony Bianca, *Director of Lifespan Faith Formation*



I'm currently working on obtaining a Master Religious Educator Certification in the UUA's (Unitarian Universalist Association's) Religious Educators Certification Program. This program involves extensive reading, the completion of several professional development trainings, monthly mentorship meetings with another Master

Educator (my mentor is Shelia Schuh), lots of writing and reflecting, the creation of a final portfolio demonstrating how I've integrated everything into my work at First UU, and a final project that will be shared with the UUA and LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association). For the final project, I've chosen to create a podcast, in conjunction with our 150th Anniversary Year, called "The First Source."

As you know, the First Source of our UU Faith is "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life." Inspired by Krista Tippett's "On Being" (formerly "Speaking of Faith"), I'll be exploring this source by engaging in conversation with a congregant or congregants each month around questions of spirituality, church, faith, lived experience,

and life in general. My hope is that these conversations will afford us an opportunity to get to know a diverse sample of individuals in our community while also allowing us to explore bigger issues in our congregation and faith tradition.

My first conversation with Caroline Clark was a pleasure to have! Through the lens of her life experience, we discussed issues of church polity, personal spirituality, family, and how one develops and evolves an image of the divine. February's episode, which has already been recorded, will be a conversation with Program Assistant, Kate Collier, in which we discuss emergent spirituality, the spirituality of Veganism, and how theater can be a spiritual practice and an excellent model of communal covenant.

Once all 12 episodes have been released, I'll be creating a companion curriculum that will allow the podcast to be used at First UU and across the UUA as part of a religious education program. Each episode will have accompanying discussion questions that will allow participants to explore the issues discussed in each episode and answer some of those same questions for themselves.

I hope you'll join me on this journey of exploration as I get to know some of our members more deeply and reflect on the wisdom they share and questions they raise. All episodes of The First Source can be found at: <https://spotifyanchor-web.app.link/e/1FdeZ7k8Qwb>

Youth and Young Adult Programs

by Lara Anderson, *Youth and Young Adult Coordinator*

Great news! Youth and Young Adult programs are BACK! Youth aged 12-21 are strongly encouraged to email Lara Anderson at lara@firstuusandiego.org with days and times they are able and willing to connect with one another. Please include your interests and wishes for this space. Keep an eye out for monthly events such as a movie and game night that happened in January.

Young Adults aged 22-35 began gathering in early December. We meet regularly on Mondays from 5:30 pm — 7:00 pm. These meetings include space to discuss issues and topics of interest, time for playing games, enjoying food, and planning events. Lara looks forward

to meeting each and every one of you. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, comments, preferences, or concerns.

February 20, the youth and young adults are gathering to strengthen our writing and poetry skills, play some games and eat some yummy food together. Eva Garcia Mayers is leading us in the writing activities, which is fabulous, because Eva is fabulous.



Chris Chambers, New Social Justice Coordinator

by Nancy Fisk, *Editor*

Chris Chambers started work as our new Social Justice Coordinator in January 2023. Their pronouns are the singular they, their, and theirs and they are 30 years old. Chris became an activist at 16 and has been involved in grassroots organizing ever since. They worked at a food justice project, called Food not Bombs, in Seattle before moving to this area.

Chris moved to Tijuana in 2011 where they continued to work with Food not Bombs (or Comida No Bombas) with people who've been deported and/or are unhoused. They felt this corner of the world has special geopolitical significance, that would challenge their white privilege while allowing them to continue working in social justice. Chris worked with Angela Fujii, our previous Social Justice Coordinator, at Casa Arcoiris, in Tijuana. Most recently, they've worked with transgender asylum seekers, as a paralegal.

Their first experience with First UU was as a recipient of the Generosity offering for Casa Arcoiris in 2019, an LGBTQI migrants' organization in Tijuana, designed to help asylum seekers coming in from Central and South America. Clients receive legal aid, healthcare, and mental health support free of

charge. The organization also provides English classes.

Chris has also worked at Enclave Caracol in Tijuana where patrons can access the Internet, access computers, receive phone calls, use the bathroom, get water to drink. They have several projects there, such as a food kitchen, coffee cart, bike workshop, and a movie club.



Chris was raised in the Southern Baptist tradition. When they turned 15, their ideas about social justice and radical politics broadened. They wanted more inclusivity in their spiritual journey, especially around LGBTQI issues. This led them to join the United Church of Christ (UCC). Chris still works part-time at the UCC church in Poway.

As Social Justice Coordinator, they feel finding the new normal in terms of social justice may look a little different than it has since the pandemic. They would like to see social justice become more of a spiritual presence in the congregation. One of their roles will be to plug in First UU members and friends where they fit into social justice. Also, they'd like to engage the wider community in a way that builds relationships between organizations and movements with First UU.

Keeping the Sabbath on Saturdays

by Isabella Furth, *Pantry Volunteer*

For years, I've been fiercely protective of my Saturdays.

As it is for many people, my work week is a bustle of work and meetings and activity. Sundays are full of church, music rehearsals, and gearing up for the week to come.

But Saturdays! For me, they're the day of rest. There's time for a swim, a walk, an outing, visiting a friend, doing the crossword, cooking. A time to relax, to think, to slow down and make room for things outside the world of work and consumption and productivity. Saturdays are my Sabbath. For years, when faced with any standing commitment, no matter how important or worthwhile—if it meant giving up Saturdays, I would give it a pass.

And then in March 2020, Maureen McNair called me, looking for volunteers to work at the food pantry. On Saturdays.

In that moment, it was an easy call. As the pandemic pushed us into our homes, I was craving people and connection. I wanted to do something to help my community get through this calamity. And in the topsy-turvy lockdown world, time was stretching and contracting in weird ways. With every day blurring into a haze of Zoom calls and sourdough experiments, Saturdays just didn't have that special Saturday vibe.

Besides, I told myself, it'll just be a couple of months. Then everything will be back to normal, and I can have my Sabbath back.

Ha!

That was almost three years ago. My work weeks have returned to something like their pre-pandemic shape. Sundays are filling up

again. And yet I seem quite content to have Saturdays be pantry days—a far cry from years when, if I had to give up my Saturdays for a while, I counted the weeks until I could reclaim them.

But a few days ago, I heard *a podcast* that gave me a bit of insight. In it, Ezra Klein was interviewing Judith Shulevitz, author of *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time*. She described the Sabbath in both Christian and Jewish traditions not so much as a series of prohibitions (don't drive a car, don't read anything but Scripture, don't look at your phone) but as a way of mindfully creating a space and time that is set apart from the demands of the rest of the week. A Sabbath, she said, involves four steps:

- 1) step away from work and the focus on getting and consuming and producing;
- 2) do it in a community;
- 3) make it a regular habit; and
- 4) make it festive, especially by sharing a meal.

Oh, I thought--the pantry isn't stealing my Sabbath energy. It's enhancing it.

What matters at the pantry is not how much money you have or how productive you are. What matters is that we're all there together, gathering food, and sharing it around. It's a shared ritual, held every week (*todos los sabados*, as I say so often) sanctifying a communal space with love, food, care, and fun.

I do enjoy an occasional weekend away from pantry work. And my Saturday afternoons are once again dedicated to walks and crosswords and naps and cooking. But it turns out I didn't need to reclaim my Sabbath from the pantry. I never gave it up.

Front Street Productions Presents

Introduction to Buddhism & Meditation

with
**Jeffrey
Zlotnik**

**Co-Founder of the
Dharma Bum Temple**



7:30 pm Friday, February 3rd



Funded by the First UU
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**First Unitarian Universalist Church
of San Diego**

**298 W Arbor Street
San Diego, CA 92103**

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2023 Community Event Series

- 1/21/23 Tasha Smith Godinez, "Out of the Desert" original harp compositions also featuring artists on viola, percussion and dance.
- 2/3/23 Jeffrey Zlotnik from Dharma Bum Temple.
- 3/4/23 Melanie DeMore's Community Sing Along.
- 3/11/23 Barbershop Harmony Night, featuring Los Bordershop quartet, the San Diego Chorus and special guests.
- 3/26/23 Malesha Taylor, soprano with musicians on piano and guitar.
- 4/2/23 San Diego Children's Choir with the Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir.
- 4/30/23 Natalia Molina Author's Talk "A Place at the Nayarit - How a Mexican Restaurant Nourished a Community".
- 5/11/23 Grossmont College Middle East Ensemble.
- 6/10/22 "Songs of Liberation" with Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Choir of San Diego and special guest Marshall Voit, vocals and guitar.

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