



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Magazine

December 2022; Vol 16 No. 10

Author Medea Benjamin on the War in Ukraine at First UU December 12

by John Falchi

The Social Justice committee is sponsoring a talk by author Medea Benjamin on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 7 pm on her new book *The War in Ukraine: Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict* (coauthored with Nicolas J.S. Davies). Russia's brutal February 2022 invasion of Ukraine has attracted widespread condemnation across the West. Government and media circles present the conflict as a simple dichotomy between an evil empire and an innocent victim. Benjamin and Davies insist the picture is more complicated.

Benjamin talks about the killing of over 40,000 civilians, many more armed forces on both sides, and the terrible environmental devastation the continuous bombings of the country's infrastructure have caused. She sets forth a strong case for us to take part in convincing the U.S. Government to join with the Ukrainian Government in negotiating an end to this senseless conflict.

The Ukrainians have forced the Russians back from Northern Ukraine, but also from the Southeast, which the Russians have claimed to now be part of their country. This makes a much better time for the Ukrainians to negotiate with the Russians on some sensible terms for leaving Ukraine.

Skillfully bringing together the historical record and current analysis, the book looks at the events leading up to the conflict, surveys the different parties involved, and weighs the risks of escalation and opportunities for peace.

This is a conflict that is increasingly difficult to resolve, one that could conceivably escalate into all-out war between the U.S. and Russia—the world's two leading nuclear powers. It's imperative both sides understand this and give diplomacy a chance.

We're privileged to have such a promoter of peace among us as our honored guest. In 2012, Medea was awarded the U.S. Peace Memorial Foundation's Peace Prize. She's also the recipient of the 2014 Gandhi Peace Award, as well as the 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Prize from the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

The Peace Resource Center, Veterans For Peace, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Climate Mobilization Coalition, Activist San Diego, Green Party, Friends Meeting, and First Unitarian Universalist Church present:

Medea Benjamin

co-founder of Code Pink and long-time activist will discuss her book,

War in Ukraine:

Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict

- How this war began and how we can end it
- How we can come together to make peace, save Ukraine from further destruction, and save all of us from nuclear war
- Stop burning fossil fuel and convert to clean energy for military as well as civilian operations
- Take care of each other and our environment in our common home on Earth



Russia's brutal February 2022 invasion of Ukraine has attracted widespread condemnation across the West.

Government and media circles present the conflict as a simple dichotomy between an evil empire and an innocent victim.

In this concise, accessible and highly informative primer, Medea Benjamin and Nicolas Davies insist the picture is more complicated.

Medea will sign copies of her book after her talk (\$17 each).

**Monday, December 12 at 7PM in the Meeting House of First UU
4190 Front St, San Diego, CA 92103**

Turn left on W. Arbor Drive back to the entrance of the parking lot for free event parking

Allied organizations are welcome to table in the courtyard from 6 to 7 PM.

Donations to help cover our expenses for this event will be welcome!

In this issue:

An Invitation from Rev. Justine Pg 2

A Letter to Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray Pg 3

New Year's ResolUUtion by Tony Bianca Pg 4

Upcoming Front Street Productions Concerts Pg 5

Women Together: A History by Nancy Fisk Pg 6

First UU 2022 Holiday Calendar Pg 7

An Invitation from Rev. Justine

by Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*



Dear ones, I see in you a longing to return to what was before, before the pandemic, before the U.S. presidential election of 2016; and I'm sorry to say that what has passed is passed, and our job is to discern and proclaim our new story. To do that, we do need to look back some, to see where

things got off track, and to see what healing is needed. Please come to our congregational workshop on Sunday, December 4th, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. A light lunch will be served on the patio. The workshop will be live-streamed from the sanctuary with breakout sessions for those watching remotely on Zoom. So, those watching at home you will watch the livestream and be placed in breakout rooms on Zoom. You will find the zoom log in information on the member's page of the [website](#).

Although masks are no longer required in the Meeting House or other indoor spaces, some groups may choose to continue wearing face-coverings when meeting indoors on campus, especially as we head into the holidays and flu season. Let's make it okay to choose to mask, and remember, if you feel unwell or you think you might have been exposed to Covid-19, please stay home, rest, hydrate, and test.

In faith and with deep gratitude,

Justine

December Sermon Schedule

December's Transformational Theme: "Wonder"

Hillcrest Worship Time:

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

December 4, 2022

"Hillcrest Music Sunday: 'Time' for All Ages"

First UU Worship and Music Team

December 11, 2022

"Comfort and Joy"

Rev. Bruce Knotts

December 18, 2022

"Hannukah & Advent 4 Peace"

Marshall Voit and Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt

December 25, 2022

"Christmas Day"

An Online Only Worship Service

Hillcrest Special Services:

December 21, 2022, 6 pm

"Blue Holiday Vespers"

Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt and Marshall Voit

December 24, 2022, 4:30 pm

"Christmas Eve Family Service"

Tony Bianca, *Dir. of Lifespan Faith Formation*

December 24, 2022, 8 pm

"Christmas Eve Candlelight Service"

Rev. Sullivan and Rev. Dr. Burckhardt

South Bay Worship Time:

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

December 8, 2022

Lay Leadership

December 18, 2022

Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*

A Letter to Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray

by Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*

I recently wrote a thank you note to Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, who preached at First UU on Sunday, November 12th. Since the letter was all about you, I thought I would share it with you here.

Dear Susan,

Thank you so much for your visit on Sunday, November 12th, to First UU San Diego. Your sermon about courage and fear and letting go in this liminal time was exactly the message these good people needed to hear.

I had two goals for this visit from you. The first was that the congregation would see that they are part of something larger, and it was wonderful to have you and so many UU luminaries in our meeting house: members of the President's Council, the Executive Vice President, other UUA staff. And the Meeting House was fuller than it has been in a while, with all these folks wanting to come out and see the UUA president. We have a member who is 102, and she was planning to attend with her daughter (after many months away), but unfortunately, she was injured in a fall a few days before the service. She is recovering well, and I trust we will see her again soon.

The second goal was that you and other prominent UU leaders would see the strength and beauty in this congregation as they write their new story. For years they were "the flagship church in the Pacific Southwest." They were the ones who offered help and rarely sought help for themselves. More recently, they have experienced some painful conflict, and I think they have worried they would now be seen as a

"troubled church." But as I watched you listening to the story of their courage and success in the face of great challenge, I could see admiration and appreciation for their gifts in your eyes. And my prayer has been that they could witness you and your colleagues seeing them, as I see them. As a beautiful, imperfect (as we are all imperfect) community of faith that is working through the challenges of living through a pandemic and combatting centuries of white supremacy culture that harms us all and keeps us from fully appreciating each other's gifts.

I am so grateful to you, dear Susan, for your ministry in the larger world and in and with our congregations. You are the president, but you are also always a minister, and we have been blessed by your leadership and your loving presence. Thank you.

In faith,
Justine

Rev. Justine Sullivan, First UU San Diego



New Year's ResolUUtion

by Tony Bianca, *Director of Lifespan Faith Formation*



Here we are in the last month of 2022 and I realize, with equal parts excitement and panic, that all the things I've been saying, "we plan to start that in January," are but one short month away from starting! And with all

these programs re-starting, the Lifespan team could sure use your help. So, if you're searching for a New Year's resolution, consider getting more involved with some of these programs!



We'll once again begin to offer the comprehensive human sexuality program, Our Whole Lives ("OWL"). We'll start this spring with the 7-9th Grade level. If you've already been trained as a Jr/Sr High Owl facilitator, we could sure use your help!

We'll also be starting up our Children's Music Program again in January. Twice a month, Program Assistant, Kate Collier, will offer a group for children in grades K through 2nd. That group will focus on basic music skills



and learning simple songs for Worship Services. I'll be leading the 3rd Grade-and-up group that will have a similar focus, but be able to handle more advanced music. We've also purchased a children's handbell set and will begin using those with the children as well. Perhaps we'll even work up to a combined piece with our adult and children's handbell ensembles!



Finally, I'll be launching my Masters-Level Credentialing Project in January: a podcast in which I'll interview different people from our congregation and explore their spirituality and lived experience. I hope this will be a fun way to get to know more about some members of our community as we celebrate 150 years as a congregation and look toward who we'd like to be in the next 150!



If you're interested in learning more or would like to volunteer to help with these and/or other of our Lifespan Programs as part of your New Year's ResolUUtion, contact tony@firstuusandiego.org.



Grossmont
AFRO-CUBAN
Ensemble

Tuesday, December 13th
7:30-9pm
First UU Church in Hillcrest

The Grossmont College Jazz Ensemble
directed by Music Dept. Chair, **Derek Cannon**
with
The Grossmont College Afro-Cuban Jazz Ensemble
directed by **Manny Cepeda**

SPECIALIZING IN POPULAR AFRO-CUBAN AND BRAZILIAN MUSICAL STYLES SUCH AS THE MAMBO, CHA-CHA, BOSSA NOVA, SAMBA, MERENGUE, AND AFRO-CUBAN 6/8.

REGISTER FOR YOUR FREE TICKETS **FIRSTUUSANDIEGO.ORG**



WINTER SCHMINTER:
A HANUKKAH / SOLSTICE CONCERT
FEATURING YALE STROM & HOT PSTRÖMI

Thursday,
December 22nd
7:30-9pm

Free!
Registration
Required.

Reserve
your seats at
firstuusandiego.org

Women Together: A History

by Nancy Fisk, *Editor*



Part of a series, highlighting different groups, honoring the 150th anniversary of First UU, which begins in January 2023.

In 1980, spurred by Rev. Carolyn Owen-Towle, an intergenerational planning committee inaugurated a program where women could talk in an atmosphere of friendship, understanding, and social intimacy. The idea was to bring UU women together, without the preoccupations of their worries at work or at home, their children, or their partners in beautiful outdoor settings. These gatherings became known as Women Together.

Eventually, these gatherings included mothers with their teenage daughters, and nursing mothers with their infants.

The retreats were a place where women had the time and ambience to:

- Tell their stories, become friends, talk about what really matters to them as women
- Share music, worship, meditation, meals and walks
- Be playful, laugh together, dream, think and
- Be social witnesses

In the beginning, retreats were held in Jacumba and at the Rosarito Beach Hotel. Carolyn McDade, the composer of the UU Hymn, “Spirit of Life,” spoke on “Ministry in

Music” in Rosarito. Five years at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside followed, with the theme “Her Story” being interpreted in many different ways. Skits developed in workshops were presented at each retreat, ranging from the poignant and serious to the wild and zany, with diverse perspectives. Carolyn Owen-Towle’s sermons during the worship service were always enriching. Other retreats included Ramona, Camp Cedar Glen in Julian, and DeBenneville Pines.

The theme, “Wise Women,” started a tradition of having a panel of women over 70 years of age tell their stories as part of an oral history; other themes were “Anonymous was a Woman,” and “Our Similarities, Our Differences, and Our Power.” Planning the retreats required the detailed work of a committee for much of the year before the retreat. They were able to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Women Together retreats in 2005.

The current Women Together group meets in the spirit of those retreats. Instead of an annual retreat, there are monthly meetings, on second Saturdays, from noon to 2:00 pm at the Hillcrest Campus. Their next meeting will be on December 10th, for a time of sharing, support, fun, and sisterhood! For more information, questions, requests, or suggestions please contact Jackie Spierman, 619-305-9321. All self-identifying women are welcome to attend.

This article contains excerpts from the book, Living Liberal Religion, by Elbert J. Boone, copyright 1998, p. 208-210. Free copies of the book are available in the First UU Library.

First Ull San Diego 2022 Holiday Calendar

December 2, 6 pm, Bard Hall Tree Decorating Party

December 8, 6:30 pm, Zoom Adult RE Speaker Series

December 13, 7:30 pm, Meeting House
Grossmont College Afro-Cuban & Jazz Ensembles

December 15, 6 pm, Bard Hall Parents' Night Out

December 21, 6 pm, Clark Chapel
Blue Holiday Vespers Service

December 22, 7:30 pm, Meeting House
Yale Strom's "Winter Schminter" Concert


December 24, 4:30 pm, Meeting House
Christmas Eve Family Service



December 24, 8 pm, Meeting House
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 25, 10 am, YouTube
Christmas Day Online Worship

Staff
 Rev. Justine Sullivan, Lead Minister
 Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt, Assistant 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
 Robie Evans, Director of Operations
 Tony Bianca, Director of Lifespan Faith Formation
 Rose Riedel, Office Manager
 Jenner Daelyn, Connections Coordinator & Congregational Assistant
 for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 Lara Anderson, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator
 Kate Collier, Program Assistant
 Pam Bates, Scheduler
 Marshall Voit, Music Director
 Lorelei Garner, Music Coordinator
 Andrea Speiro, JUUL Tones Ensemble Director
 Tomás Acosta, Collaborative Pianist
 Connie Hayes, Controller / Bookkeeper
 Ray Evans, Maintenance
 Joshua Morrison, Janitor
 Mark Epler, Event Coordinator
 Revs. Dr. Carolyn and Dr. Tom Owen-Towle, Ministers Emeriti

Board of Trustees FY 22-23
 Cora Pendergast, President
 Everardo Aguilar, Vice President
 Sue Marberry, Treasurer
 Karen Lamphere, Secretary
 Leland Beck, Rosalba Ciampi, Steve Howard, Gay Hybertsen
 and Valerie Jaques —Trustees

ONLINE email & Web Addresses
 First Words Editor & Submissions, Nancy Fisk:
nfisk1@juno.com
 To be added to the E-mail List:
firstwords@firstuusandiego.org
 Scheduling of Church Property Requests:
schedule@firstuusandiego.org
 The Window submissions (Church bulletin):
[window@firstuusandiego.org](mailto>window@firstuusandiego.org)
 Care Network: carenetwork@firstuusandiego.org
 First Church Web Sites:
 Main Website: <http://www.firstuusandiego.org>
 South Bay Campus:
<https://www.firstuusandiego.org/south-bay-campus.html>
 To view sermon video casts, click on these
 YouTube or Vimeo buttons: 
 Giving: <https://www.firstuusandiego.org/giving.html>
 Click on these Amazon Affiliate or iGive buttons for your
 online shopping and First Church
 receives a portion of the sales.
 Secure and private.



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

4190 Front Street (GPS use 298 W Arbor Drive)
San Diego, CA 92103-2098

Phone: 619-298-9978

E-mail: mail@firstuusandiego.org

POSTMASTER:
 Send address changes to:
 First Words, 4190 Front Street,
 San Diego, CA 92103