



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Magazine

March 2023; Vol 17 No. 3

Melanie DeMore, Singer and Vocal Activist at First UU

by Nancy Fisk, *Editor*

Melanie DeMore, a 3-time Grammy nominated singer/composer, choral conductor, music director, and vocal activist will be at First UU the week of February 28 to March 5, 2023.

This preeminent vocal artist helps to preserve the African American folk tradition through song and Gullah stick pounding and believes in the power of voices raised together.

In her presentations, DeMore beautifully brings her participants together through her music and commentary. DeMore facilitates vocal and stick pounding workshops for professional choirs and community groups as well as directing numerous choral organizations across the U.S., Canada, and beyond.

She's a featured presenter of SpeakOut! –The Institute for Social and Cultural Change, working with everyone from Baptists to Buddhists and a founding member of the Grammy nominated ensemble Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir.

DeMore became Music Director for Obeah Opera by Nicole Brooks as part of the Luminato Festival in 2019. She is a charter member of Kate Munger's Threshold Choirs and conducts song circles with an emphasis on the voice as a vessel for healing. In her own words: "A song can hold you up when there seems to be no ground beneath you."



At First UU, she'll be working with the staff, the Women's Choir and the Chalice choir during the week. On Saturday, March 4, she'll lead a workshop called "Song is Service," to teach about

music's power to hold and heal us. We'll learn about ways to use our voices to go beyond performing, envisioning music as ministry, service, and solace. Melanie will also share

about her experience with the Threshold Choir, which brings songs of comfort to the dying. That evening is a "Community Sing" concert. The workshop and concert are free, but registration is required.

On Sunday, she'll guide us in a service called "Music of the Heart," where she'll lead the music and offer a reflection.

Please join us for what promises to be an amazing week of music for the heart.

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Let's Keep On Moving Forward

by Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*



We're heading into a busy time in the next weeks and months ahead. So many exciting things happening as part of our ongoing 150th celebration and as part of our developmental work together. I'm greatly encouraged by the turnout at our conflict engagement workshop on February 12. Please be on the lookout for more and varied opportunities for us to keep having the conversations we need to have.

On Sunday, March 19th, Board President Cora Pendergast and I will host a gathering after worship to continue the conversation we began in December, in which we looked at some of the stories, traditions, rules, and truths of First UU. Cora and I plan to hold additional gatherings in the future, so if you can't make it on March 19th, please be assured there will be many more such opportunities.

John Schaibly, Jan Garbosky, and I will be hosting a conversation about the proposed revisions to Article II of our Unitarian Universalist bylaws. The changes will be voted on at this year's General Assembly. If they pass this year, they'll come back for another vote next year and must pass then by a 2/3 margin. Bylaws are foundational to any organization, and changes to them are not made lightly. Please join the conversation to learn more and consider serving as a delegate to General Assembly this June 21-25 (virtually or in person in Pittsburgh, PA).

I've been with you now as your lead developmental minister for 6 months, and I can feel the trust between us growing. By that I mean we're moving past the stage of politeness and a worry about being "nice." That's not to say we no longer value kindness and politeness, but it feels like we can risk going deeper; we can risk disagreeing and voicing our differences.

The key is for us to maintain our connection to each other and to our shared values even as we speak our own truths. I'm confident we can learn to do this well. You've survived as a community for 150 years; certainly there have been ups and downs, but I can see a bright future for you, and the world needs your gifts, your passion, and your commitment. Let us keep on moving forward together.

From my favorite hymn:

*Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?*

In faith and service,

Justine

March Sermon Schedule

March's Transformational Theme: "Vulnerability"

Hillcrest Worship Time:

Sundays, 10 am, Meeting House, Hillcrest Patio & [Livestream](#) Worship

March 5, 2023

"Music of the Heart"

Melanie DeMore, *Musician in Residence*

March 12, 2023

"Harmony from the Heart"

Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt & Marshall Voit
Music by Los Bordershop Quartet

March 19, 2023

Rev. Lone Broussard, *Affiliate Minister*

March 26, 2023

"Women of the Cloth; a story of early days of UU Women in the Ministry"

Rev. Dr. Carolyn Owen-Towle, *Minister Emerita*

South Bay Worship Time:

3rd Sunday, 10 am, Suite 104

March 19, 2023

"Where the Light Enters You"

Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*

A Time to Word-Smith and a Time to Vote

by Tony Bianca, *Director of Lifespan Faith Formation*



In the “Hebrew Scriptures” class from my second year of Catholic seminary, we discussed the Book of Ecclesiastes. That’s the one with “a time to reap, a time to sow; a time for peace and a time for war; a time to be born and a time to die...” The question we waxed philosophical on was, “If there’s a time for everything, how does one know what’s right in any given situation?”

In other words, could this be used to justify pretty much anything? The professor remarked, (and I’ve hung on to this 30 years later), is that, in this approach, morality isn’t defined by the nature of an action itself. Rather, the moral/virtuous/ethical person is the one who truly “knows what time it is.”

I’m reminded of this while considering the proposed Article II changes to the UUA Bylaws that enumerates our Purposes and Principles. I’m also reminded of the upcoming discussions, processes, votes, and likely, arguments that’ll happen in the near future. I was introduced to the Article II report briefly in Alabama a few months ago and then read the Commission’s Report last month. It’s a 26-page document and you can read it here: www.uua.org/files/2023-02/article-II-study-report-2021-23.pdf

Now, if you’re like me, you’ll be tempted to scroll right down to page 19 and start reading when you see the very bold title “Proposed Revision of Article II”. After all, you’ll think to yourself as I did, “This is where the real meat and potatoes is!” I encourage you to do better than I did.

Don’t skip the first 18 pages. Read the Introduction and the Our Approach section and everything else in those first 18 pages, including the Process and Timeline section.

In the Process and Timeline sections, you’ll find we’re more than 2 years into the process. There’ve been many panel discussions where the commissioners heard feedback about draft versions,

(I attended one), as well as much work, both public and private, that’s already been done, to get to this point in the process.

That doesn’t mean there isn’t room for debate, a healthy expression of one’s reactions to the changes, or even honest dissent. As I prepare myself for the final vote at General Assembly and beyond, I come back to Ecclesiastes and ask myself, “What time is it?”

I know it’s frustrating to be the person who shows up late for a meeting or attends a workshop that’s the 5th step into a process I’m just finding out about. It’s also frustrating to be involved from the start and have someone want to revisit issues that were painstakingly labored over earlier.

With those competing frustrations in mind, here’s what I do to make sure I’m “in the right moment:”

1. I educate myself about what I’ve missed. That means reading the full report and seeking out others who’ve been part of the process, to provide context and background. I do that work on my own and don’t expect the process to pause for me.
2. I hold my feedback until I sense what others are focused on, gauging whether my concerns are shared by others who’re engaged in the process already. If I sense that people I respect and trust have moved on, I do as well.
3. Finally, I ask myself what phase of the process my feedback addresses. If I have a “word-smithing” concern on the day before the final vote to approve the measure as a whole, I ask myself, “Is it likely that, in the past 2 years, a significant amount of discussion and careful work has already been done to craft these particular words?” If the answer is yes, I accept that I came late to the party and move on.

If you’re just finding out about Article II and want to learn about it before GA, look for articles, discussion groups, and RE opportunities to find out more in the near future. What an exciting and interesting time to be part of this faith tradition!

First UU Speaker Series: Peter Bolland on the Philosophy of Abortion

By now we're all familiar with the pro and con arguments surrounding America's most contentious political debate—abortion. But how aware are we of the often-unstated philosophical positions underpinning those familiar arguments?

Join First UU's Adult Speaker Series on Zoom March 23, 2023, at 6:30 pm, as Peter Bolland leads us in this philosophical inquiry into the big questions the abortion debate draws to the surface: When does life begin? What do different religions and wisdom traditions say about that? What does liberty or freedom really mean? Do we own our own bodies? How does the 14th amendment (granting a "right to life") intersect with the 1st amendment (prohibiting the establishment of a state religion)? No matter your current views, join us for this important work. www.firstuusandiego.org/adult-faith-formation.html at the Adult Faith Formation page.

Peter Bolland is a philosophy and humanities professor and department chair at Southwestern College. In addition to his academic teaching at Southwestern College, Peter lectures extensively on a wide variety of philosophical, spiritual, and mythological subjects

throughout the community at venues like The Chopra Center, The San Diego Vedanta Monastery, The Osher Institute of Life Long Learning at San Diego State University, Oasis San Diego, Vision: A Center for Spiritual Living, First UU, and more. He's also a frequent guest speaker at a number of New Thought churches like the Unity Center, Unity of El Cajon, and Chalice Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Peter has spoken at First UU several times.

Don't miss out on this important presentation.



From My Eyes: A Day at the Diaper Pantry

by Sebastian Hochgesang, *Pantry Volunteer*



There are 4-5 freezers and refrigerators that we check the temperatures for. Brrr, they are cold!

My name is Sebastian. I'm 10 years old and I go to Marvin Elementary. My mom and I've been volunteering at the Diaper Pantry since it first opened—about a year and a half ago. In the beginning, it was a little bit hard, but eventually I got used to it. It was nice to get to

know other people in the community. When we're done, my mom and I usually go for a treat after we volunteer. Here are some of the things I help my mom with when we volunteer:

- When we arrive, I put out the sign in the front for people to see so they know where to go.
- I also put out the boxes from the big stack and help organize them by the door so my mom can distribute them to the clients. We give clients diapers, wipes, bread, and female hygiene products.
- I usually do temperature checks



We are open every Sunday from 815-915. Clients are usually already lined up when we arrive to set up.

for the refrigerators and freezers. Because of the food pantry that happens at Saturdays we have to make sure the refrigerators and freezers are staying at a good temperature for all the food.

• Before we leave, I also do the inventory check. We need to have an inventory check because if we are running low on supplies then the diaper pantry can request or buy more diapers.

Since we started volunteering, I just like getting to know all the people and being able to connect



Though lots of our clients are regular and find out about the pantry through word of mouth, we put a sign on the street to help people find us.

with the community in this way. Sometimes it feels sad that people need to come and get these types of basic things, but I think it's good to help people out for those who don't have as much as us or others.



What it looks like when we arrive. All the boxes on the left and right are diapers to distribute!



I help my mom organize all the boxes by the front door to make it easier to distribute them to clients.



We give our clients diapers, wipes, bread, and female hygiene products. Often families will pick up for their extended family and neighbors so we organize the materials in boxes to distribute.

Note from Sebastian's mom (Mindy). Volunteering has been a meaningful and very tangible way for us as a family to create greater connections and serve our local community. We're always in need of more volunteers. For more information, contact Mindy (mindyho@gmail.com) or Deirdre (deirdre@deirdre.com).



To wrap up our shift, we count the number of remaining boxes so my mom knows how many to order for the next shift.

Delegates Wanted for Camp de Benneville's Pacific Southwest Service Area (PSWSA) Assembly

by John Schaibly, *Lay Leader, Larger UU Connections*



*Living in
Harmony with
Each Other and
Our Earth*



2023 Pacific Southwest Service Area Assembly

April 21—23, 2023

San Luis Obispo, CA

Camp de Benneville Pines will hold its first Pacific Southwest Service Area Assembly in San Luis Obispo, April 21-23, 2023. The assembly will feature local Chumash speakers and workshops and field trips in the San Luis Obispo area, in addition to the camp's required annual meeting. It promises to be an informative and rewarding experience.

Camp de Benneville Pines is located in the San Bernardino National Forest, about 100 miles northeast of San Diego at an elevation of 6,800 feet. The mountain hosts a forest of towering pines, cedars, and oaks. It's been a UU camp for the last 60 years. Generations of Southwest UUs have been nurtured by Camp. In turn, campers have built up a well-maintained and well-loved resource.

Camp de Benneville Pines operates as an independent non-profit, supported by the 50+ member congregations of what was

the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

This will be the first annual assembly sponsored solely by the camp, replacing the meeting they always held with the now-inactivated Pacific Southwest District. In order to do business as a non-profit organization, 50 delegates need to register from 15 congregations. First UU can have up to 10 delegates because of our size. We currently have four delegates and need more. Please contact johnschaibly@gmail.com if you would be interested in attending in person or by ZOOM.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.uucamp.org/2023/02/14/2023-pacific-southwest-service-area-assembly/>

And you can register at:

<http://www.congregationbuilder.com/signup.aspx?uc=uucamp&ID=393>

UNA NOCHE DE BARBERSHOP

Los Bordershop Quartet

7:30 pm Saturday, March 11th 2023
First UU Church in Hillcrest

Experience barbershop standards and originals in English, Spanish, and Portuguese!

**Featuring very special musical guests:
MotleyQ and So Noted!**



Free! Registration required.

Classics from Nina Simone, Mahalia Jackson and Abby Lincoln finished with a sweet dose of Spanish boleros.

Mali Irene in Concert with Joshua White

7:30 pm Sunday, March 26th, 2023
First UU Church in Hillcrest
Free! Registration required.

[Get Your Free Tickets](#)



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