



First
Unitarian Universalist
Church of San Diego

FirstWords

Our Monthly Magazine

November 2022; Vol 16 No. 9

UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray at First UU on November 13th

by Nancy Fisk, *Editor*

On Sunday, November 13th, UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) President Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray will lead worship at First UU San Diego's Hillcrest campus. This service in November will mark the pre-kickoff to the year-long celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of this congregation.

Susan is the first woman to be elected to the office of UUA president. As president of the Association, she's responsible for administering staff and programs that serve its more than 1,000 member congregations. An engaging speaker, Susan acts as principal spokesperson and minister-at-large for the UUA.

The Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray began her six-year term as president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in June 2017. Susan brings a strong focus on mission and strategic planning to her leadership at the UUA as it works to dismantle systems of white supremacy.

As president, Susan has emphasized that this is no time for a casual faith and no time to go it alone. She has represented the UUA in the 2017 Charlottesville protests against white nationalist violence, has worked in conjunction with the Poor Peoples Campaign on issues of poverty, witnessed at the US-Mexico border for immigrant justice, and partnered with local advocates to expand voting rights in Florida. In addition to her regular column in *UU World*, Susan has written for *Vice*, *Sojourners*, and numerous local papers.

Prior to her election, she served as Lead Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix, Arizona, where she was a national voice

for immigrant rights. Susan played a critical role in the long-term campaign to end the constitutional violations of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

Susan is a life-long Unitarian Universalist with roots at Eliot Chapel in St. Louis, Missouri. During her time at Harvard Divinity School, she served as Student Minister of Religious Education at the Winchester Unitarian Society (1991-2001). Susan also served as Intern Minister and Sabbatical Minister at the First UU Church of Nashville, TN (2001-2003), and served for five years as Minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Youngstown, OH (2003-2008). Prior to ministry, Susan worked briefly in the field of genetic sequencing following her Bachelor of Science in Molecular Biology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Susan is married to the Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray, a minister with dual fellowship with the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Christian Church Disciples of Christ (DOC). They live in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with their teenage son and family dog

Please join us for worship on Sunday, November 13th at 10 a.m. in person or online, as we welcome Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray to First UU.

In this issue:

- Rooting for First UU by Rev. Justine Pg 2
- The Long Arc by Tony Bianca Pg 3
- Rainbow Action Group at First UU by John Keasler Pg 4
- Kate Collier, Program Assistant by Nancy Fisk Pg 5
- Darryl F. Walker and The Saxations Pg 6
- Welcome As Spiritual Practice by Jan Garbosky Pg 7

Rooting for First UU

by Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*



As I write this, the Padres are still playing well into October; it's fun to have a new home team to root for! That's a bit how I think about pledging at the congregations where I serve. It's a tangible way for me to say, "I'm all in, joining my fortune with yours and rooting for your success, for our success!"

There are so many gifts at First UU: the beautiful campus with plenty of room to meet outdoors and inside. But even greater than the physical beauty, is the depth of love and commitment I witness in you. Even beyond your financial generosity, you care for one another. You invite one another into spiritual community. You work to make the world more just, more welcoming, more loving. Do we do all this perfectly? No. That's why we covenant to honor one another's humanity with grace and to find our way back to each other when we fall short of our ideals. That's it—simple, but not easy. We humans can do great things, and we can also cause real harm.

In the coming weeks, look for more information about the board's and my plan for creating a Healthy Congregations Team—you'll all be invited to make recommendations for members of that team. And, also look for opportunities for all of us to develop our skills in working through disagreements and conflicts in ways that strengthen our connection to one another. These are our people; we belong to one another.

On Sunday, November 13th our UUA President, Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray will preach. This visit from Susan will serve as a pre-kickoff to our year-long celebration of 150 years since the founding of this congregation. We have staying power, my friends. Let us rejoice and be glad!

In faith and with deep appreciation,

Justine

November Sermon Schedule

**November's
Transformational Theme:
"Change"**

Hillcrest Worship Time:

Sundays, 10 am

Hillcrest Patio & **Livestream** Worship

November 6, 2022

"Celebration Sunday"

Rev. Justine Sullivan, *Lead Minister*

November 13, 2022

UUA President

Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray

November 20, 2022

"Transgender Day of Remembrance"

Rev. Dr. Omega Burckhardt, *Assistant Minister*

November 27, 2022

"World Aids Day"

South Bay Worship Time:

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

November 6, 2022

"Music Sunday"

Lorelei Isidro-Garner, *Music Coordinator*

November 20, 2022

"Transgender Day of Remembrance"

Lay Leaders

The Long Arc

by Tony Bianca, *Director of Lifespan Faith Formation*

While at the recent Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Conference in Birmingham, Alabama, I was exploring the BHAM City Walk, a beautiful public space under the freeway, and discovered a walking labyrinth much like the one on our campus. As I walked it, I was reflecting on the work we've done so far at the conference this week and the nature of labyrinths.

Like many circular labyrinths, this one had four quadrants, the entry point, and the center. Within each quadrant, the arcing paths were short and there was a turning point about every two or three steps. As I moved from the third to the fourth quadrant, however, the path took me along the outside edge of the labyrinth, about 3/4 of the way around the long, outer edge. I realized, at this point, I was nearing the center but, because this was the longest arc, it was possible, if only for a brief moment, to forget that I was in a labyrinth. I could see the snaking, twisting path that I had walked already, as well as the center I was moving toward, but the path seemed easier and required less focused attention.

For me, this resonated with the work I've done,



both personally and in community, around social justice and dismantling systems of oppression. Early on, it seemed easier to identify the problems, the issues, the injustices, and biases within myself and society. But as the journey toward justice progressed, there came a



point when it became easy to believe I had reached an end before I had actually done so. The path of the past snaked and twisted so obviously in comparison to the much subtler portion of the journey I was currently on, that I was momentarily lulled into a sense of completion—a “good enough” point. But I've heard that siren song before, those voices calling me—calling us—to “look how far we've come,” mistaking the plateau for the mountaintop.

And then came the 4th quadrant. Again, the twists and turns resumed and, nearer the center, they came with increasing frequency. The illusion of having reached a destination faded and I was, once more, aware of the labyrinth—conscious of the path I was walking with a renewed focus on my next step.

I'm grateful for the opportunity I had at the conference with other UU religious educators to renew that focus. Grateful for the reminder that I'm still in the labyrinth of this work. And I hope to continue in this work in our congregation with that focus intact, and with more tools to help others walking that long arc to recognize that we've not reached the center.

Rainbow Action Group at First UU

by John Keasler

Part of a series honoring the 150th anniversary of First UU this year, reviewing the history of different groups at First UU.

1978 was the first time a rainbow flag was used in the San Francisco Gay Rights Parade and the year Supervisor Harvey Milk was assassinated. It was also the year that LGBT congregation members laid the groundwork to come out to the greater First UU community.

Ministers Carolyn and Tom Owen-Towle, were approached by a long-time First UU member to create a curriculum to promote open participation of Gay and Lesbian members. The educational series led to regular social gatherings and discussion and sermons on diversity and inclusion.

In 1981, a recognized social education group for LGBT concerns—Gay-Straight Awareness Group--was formed. Two LGBT Continental Convocations were held at the First UU in 1986 and 1987. The Convocations were also sponsored by the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) office of Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Concerns.

First UU created an AIDS Task Force and hosted Thanksgiving dinners for AIDS victims and their caregivers. The Scott Carlson Thanksgiving Dinner, as it came to be called, was held in Bard Hall for many years and was organized originally by Scott himself. When Scott died, friends took over. Eventually the San Diego LGBT Community Center took over the dinner, where it is still held every year.

Mama's Kitchen, providing nutritional services for people with AIDS and other debilitating conditions, used Bard Hall Kitchen as their first kitchen in 1991 for a time. They then moved to The Huddle, where Special Delivery spun off, then to the Disciples of Christ Church in downtown, before getting their own building on Home Ave.

First UU leaders took part in political actions such as supporting the anti-discrimination "Human

Dignity Ordinance." They were also instrumental in creating Our Whole Lives (OWL), the human sexuality curriculum for the UUA, and Welcoming Congregation materials, a curriculum created to welcome LGBT members to our denomination. Out LGBT members served in greater numbers on church committees and as officers and members of the Board. We also saw more LGBT people in First UU ministerial roles—including the first lesbian Lead Minister of a large UU congregation.

The Gay-Straight Awareness Group became Gay/Lesbian Outreach (GLO) which eventually became Rainbow Outreach and then the Rainbow Action Group (RAG or Rainbow Action). Rainbow Action continues the participation in the annual Pride Parades, the AIDS Walks and sales and distribution of Mama's Pies. Rainbow Action also produces panels and sponsors speakers on various education topics of interest.

Rainbow Action ensures First UU maintains its designation as a Welcoming Congregation by coordinating events and activities which meet yearly renewal competencies. Since May 2019, a major component has been organizing and facilitating ten 6-week Trans Inclusion Workshops attended by 66 congregation members.

Once a month Rainbow Action hosts a social Coffee Klatch and a Rainbow Walk. You can find the links to both on the First UU website, firstuusandiego.org or in the newsletter, the Window.

I highly recommend that you read the thoughts of First UU LGBT pioneers George Kaufman, Everardo Aguilar, and Jan Garbosky in *Living Liberal Religion*, pp 215-225 on these coming out days.

Editor's note: Copies of *Living Liberal Religion*, by Jim Boone, are available for free in the First UU library.

Kate Collier, Program Assistant

by Nancy Fisk, *Editor*

Kate Collier was hired in September 2021 to be Program Assistant when there were no in-person services at First UU. She assists Tony Bianca, Director of Lifespan Faith Formation, with the Religious Education program. Her first project was to organize the Religious Education spaces that hadn't been used in two years, such as the Crafts Room.

Since the reopening, she's been more involved with setting up the spaces for outdoor worship and Religious Education activities. Currently, she's a leader for the PreK - 1st grade classes.

Kate grew up in the congregation. She was



5 or 6 years old when her father, Mike Collier first brought her to First UU. Mike Collier did the sound for Looking Glass Theater and Kate also became involved. She was Penny in "Honk" and Gertrude McFuzz in "Seussical." Another group she was part of was Voices in UUnity, the youth choir at First UU under director Lynn Mendoza-Khan. She volunteered with RE when she was in high school.

She attended San Diego Unified's School for the Creative and Performing Arts, then completed a BA in Gender Studies at Mt. Holyoke College in 2018, before returning to San Diego. Kate's been studying German since 2013 and has just returned from a month-long stay in Germany with a family there.

She enjoys the fact that Unitarian Universalism is a non-creedal religion based on a collection of shared principles. Those principles resonate with her. She also enjoys the sense of community, the openness, and the willingness to learn and grow together at First UU.

Kate likes working with children because they surprise her. Working with them is a place where she can be fully present.

Kate is a vegan and an animal lover. Her hobbies are singing and musical theater.

In July, Kate went through Our Whole Lives facilitator training and hopes to participate in that program soon. Welcome back to First UU, Kate!

DARRYL F. WALKER AND *The Saxations*



MOTOWN & MORE — — — SHOW — — —

Live 11-piece band with special guest The Saxations, four-piece female saxophone group playing motown classics to modern hits.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH 7:30-9 PM

**First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego
298 W Arbor Street San Diego, CA 92103**



FUNDED BY THE FIRST UU OUTREACH AND GROWTH FUND

Free! Registration Required
Reserve your seats at
FirstUUSanDiego.org

► **FREE PARKING IN OUR LOT**



Welcome As Spiritual Practice

by Jan Garbosky, *Marketing Action Group (MAG) member*

We often think “welcome” is for newcomers when, in reality, experiencing a feeling of belonging—of feeling welcome—happens (or not) EVERY time any of us (new or long-time members) enter the fullness of our congregational space. Not just physical space but how we treat each other at meetings on and off Zoom, at First UU sponsored events, when socializing with others, and when we run into each other in the larger community. “Radical welcoming” is how we’ll grow individually and as a congregation when each individual experiences the message “bring your culture, your voice, your whole self—we want to engage in truly mutual relationship” with each interaction.

Being welcoming isn’t something we are, it’s something we do. Working toward becoming radically welcoming is a spiritual practice helping us live into our 1st and 8th principles and our commitment to becoming an anti-oppressive/anti-racist beloved community. While we’re each tasked with creating that sense of belonging for each other, there are opportunities for us at the congregation level at both South Bay and Hillcrest as we gather for services. A small but dedicated team of Welcome Volunteers currently serves in several key positions, and there’s room for more Welcome Volunteers to ensure that every week a full team can be ready to meet anyone and everyone that comes to our campuses.” Greeters, Welcome Table Volunteers, and Ushers are needed at Hillcrest and Welcomers are needed at South Bay to work with our Connections Coordinator, Jenner Daelyn.

Welcome Volunteers are essential to creating a warm and inviting experience for anyone coming to First UU for a worship service. Here is more information about each volunteer position:

- **At Hillcrest:**
 - Greeters are the first point of contact for anyone coming to campus for the first time. They greet everyone who arrives, as well as help newcomers know how to find the Welcome Table and the Meeting House.
 - Welcome Table Volunteers answer general questions, collect visitor forms, assist with name tags and name tag purchases, and help people access The Window, First Words, and other information.
 - Ushers hand out Orders of Service, clarify mask usage, assist with accessibility, and do some light tidying of the Meeting House after service.
- **At South Bay:**
 - Welcome Volunteers staff the Welcome Table, hand out Orders of Service, answer questions, and greet everyone who arrives.

Volunteers are scheduled for 30-60 minutes, once a month on the days of worship services.

To volunteer for any “Welcome” position at either campus, please contact Jenner at jenner@firstuusandiego.org or 619-398-4443. For insights on what it’s like being a “Welcome” volunteer, feel free to contact on the patio or via email [Caroline Clark](#), [Steve Howard](#), [John Keasler](#), or [Rhea Kuhlman](#).

Whether you volunteer or not, let us live into the future we dream of by acting in ways that include, support, and welcome everyone who finds their way to us for the first time or the ten thousand and first time.

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