

DIALOGUE

Inspired by our UU principles, we are a vibrant, intentionally diverse congregation that models and promotes both locally and globally: love, spiritual growth, service, right relations, and sustainable living.



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Editor: Irving Himmelblau

Religious Diversity in This Edition

Christianity

Norse Paganism

Wiccan

Rev Ellies' Corner



Rev. Ellie Kilpatrick

Beloved Members and Friends at UUFSD,

It is such a joy to be starting another church year together. The Rev. Doctor David Breeden writes, “welcome to this place where certainty transforms to questions. This place that takes what is and imagines what can be,” and I so adore this framing for our year ahead. Every moment with each other is an invitation to move from the rigidity of the past, a story that has already been written, into the present, a story that we are traversing together. The story of the year ahead is one of co-creation. But the most exciting aspect of that creation is in the questions we choose to ask.

Last year, when we began the visioning process to create a mission statement and possible ends, the word that came up over and over again was community. So the question that has been in my heart this year is “what does community look like?” And I adore this question because answering it can have an infinite number of possibilities. The way that I personally answer this question is that community is a space where we can experiment freely; a place where mistakes and failures are a learning opportunity rather than something to be chastised. Community is where people of all ages are always learning and growing in the hopes of making themselves and this world more curious, more just, and more loving.

A few weeks ago, we welcomed Heather Megill as our new Director of Religious Exploration and Fellowship, and already I can feel the energy that she brings to our youth and grown ups alike.

This year, as we begin a construction project that has been 15 years in the making, we will likely have to get creative with many aspects of our community. But with that is the opportunity to make “fellowship” a verb, and not just a location. Because our fellowship is not bound by walls. The fellowship is us - the people. And I can't wait to see all the ways we create fellowship both inside and outside our campus, because that will mean we are coming up with an ever expanding answer to the question of what our community looks like. And that will be wondrous indeed!

With Gratitude and Excitement,
Rev. Ellie Kilpatrick (she/her)



**SIDE WITH
LOVE**

Religious Exploration & Fellowship

Introducing Heather Megill



Heather serves as Director of Religious Exploration and Fellowship (DREF). Her academic credentials include a master's degree in Divinity from Starr King School for the Ministry and a master's degree in Music (Vocal Performance) from SUNY Buffalo. At Starr King, Heather's focus was predominantly in pastoral care and multi-religious studies.

She has taught performance, theory, and practical applications of the arts, and worked with elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as young adults in K-12 schools, college and community theatre organizations. In addition to student and volunteer leadership experience, Heather brings operational expertise and social media marketing and outreach skills.

Heather was raised in the United Church of Christ, attended a Catholic school and has spent most of her adult life finding spiritual connection within the UU tradition. She is the mother of two teenage boys.

Our UUFSD Religious Exploration Fall program will officially begin Sunday September 15th. We are using a wonderful new curriculum from Soul Matters for the 2024-2025 year with monthly themes that will be coordinated with our worship services. This year's overarching frame is "The Practices of Our Faith" to focus on how Unitarian Universalism is a lived faith that inspires us to act, live, and love our values out in the world.



Upcoming RE programs

The UUFSD "Coffee House" - OPENING SOON!

This year, the middle and high school students will create a twice-a-month coffee house experience for our UUFSD community to encourage fellowship and raise funds for a social justice project of their choosing. The coffee house will feature specialty food and drinks, as well as an open mic for poetry, songs, or stories. Keep your eye out for more information!



"This is (Almost) a Christmas Pageant"

December 22nd, 10am Service

Calling all actors young and not-so-young! This December's multigeneration Christmas pageant will include both children and adults in a fun, musical, and slightly amiss mini-production celebrating

the holiday season. No previous acting experience necessary. All are welcome to participate. Sign-ups will begin in late October. Rehearsals will take place following Sunday services beginning in November. Please visit the RE table on the patio for more information.

Our Values In Action

Fill A Belly - June, July, August & September 2024



From Lee Sonny Auerbach - Encinitas Fill A Belly Co-Coordinator What a spread last night by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito! A feast fit for royalty. There was an entire table just for the high end pastries, cookies, and homemade brownies! We feasted on salad, fruit, soup, chili, chicken, rice, pasta, potatoes, meatloaf, vegetables, and even vapor distilled water! Everyone's bellies and hearts were overflowing! There were fun conversations everywhere. The sun was shining through the courtyard with a light, comfortable breeze. There were tables of clothes, baseball caps (for the hot sunny days), backpacks, and even someone left with a donated red beach cruiser bicycle. Absolutely perfect night. Thank you so much to every member of the church that cooks, serves, and breaks bread once a month for our Fill-A-Belly guests (and me). Already looking forward to next month!

For more information on how you can be part of these events contact Terry Goan at: terrygoan@gmail.com.

Our Values in Action

Sunday, June 23 - UUFSD's Climate Group Vegan-Vegetarian Pot Luck



The UUFSD's Climate Group had our fourth fabulous planet-friendly vegan/vegetarian potluck. Each time, more tasty dishes are on the table along fruit plates and salads to cleanse the palate in between all the exotic (and sometimes basic—but delicious) flavors.

After filling our tummies with amazing healthy food we watched the documentary *WHAT THE HEALTH*, advocating a plant-based diet to greatly lower our risk of major diseases. Plus we learned how the meat/dairy/egg industries promote their products with only profit in mind, with the help of government. We had over two dozen film viewers (UUFSD members plus interested newcomers).

The film is free online (YouTube) for those who missed part or all of it and want to increase awareness of what's on our plates, how it got there, and why it is hard to change eating habits.

For more information on there UUFSD Climate Group contact: Sarah Miller at climateactioncoord@uufsd.org



In June, UUFSD's organic garden was well on its way to providing fresh and nutritious food to those in need. Rose Littler-Riedel joined forces with Ron DeMuth, and helpers Charlotte, Kellen, Everett, Tabitha, Kyle, and Katherine. Bamboo structures were painted for pole bean vines. Seedlings were started in separate pots (safe from hungry bugs): beans, butternut squash, and even corn to represent the Three Sisters (Spanish: *Tres Hermanas*), three main agricultural crops of indigenous peoples of Central and North America: squash, maize and beans. When planted side by side, these three crops help each other during growth, resulting in better yields at harvest.



Our Values in Action

2024 Backpack Project



We completed another successful Backpack Project this Summer! We were able to provide much-needed backpacks and school supplies with your generous donations. Betsy Gilpin delivered supplies to St. Leo’s Mission Church in Solana Beach and the Encinitas Center Women’s Shelter. Norma Showalter delivered supplies to Capri Elementary School in Encinitas. The recipients were all very pleased with the donations and expressed their profound thanks to all of you.

The Fellowship thanks Norma Showalter and Betsy Gilpin for coordinating this much needed program.

Palestine-Israel Justice Program - Movie And Discussion July 20, 2024



Thirty-two people including members of UUFSD, First UU Church, Palomar UU and Chalice UU attended the showing and discussion of “Israelism,” a powerful 2023 documentary that has become all-too-relevant since the outbreak of war in Israel/Palestine. Israelism explores American Judaism’s relationship with Israel and young Jews’ rejection of Israel’s systemic brutality toward Palestinians. The discussion was led by Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspough, who is a Jewish UU Minister. This was the first in our series of movies and discussion on the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Our next Film and Discussion is on Sunday, October 6, at 2 pm in Founders Hall. We will present ”1948 Construction and Catastrophe.” Rev Ellie will lead the discussion following the film.

UU the Vote, Sunday, August 11



On August 11, in the core area the, "UUFSD-the-Vote" hosted a “Get Out The Vote” postcard and letter writing event to encourage others across the country to vote. 21 members and friends came together to write 340 postcards to voters in Sumter County, Georgia, and 160 letters to Nevada. Postcards, envelopes, names, addresses, stamps, colored pens and markers were supplied, as were snacks.

If you missed the event, do not worry. You can still pick up a letter writing kit with envelopes, stamps, etc. from Ted Foster on Sundays, after service in the core area.

Since that event people have been picking up more writing kits. As of September 15, we have 38 members participating resulting in 990 postcards and 420 letters being written and mailed.

To participate contact Ted Foster at: uuthevote@uufsd.org



Our Values in Action

Sunday Service, July 28, Sharon Katz & The Peace Train Project



Sharon Katz was born in Port Elizabeth, now known as Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa. As a young teenager during the terrible apartheid era, she used to sneak out to the “Blacks Only” townships by hiding under blankets in the back seat of her friend’s car. There, she began her lifelong mission of using music to help break down the country’s artificially imposed racial barriers.

After getting professional training and a Master’s degree in Music Therapy in the USA, Sharon was ready to return home to South Africa and use her skills as a guitarist, singer, band leader, composer, producer, and music therapist. As soon as Nelson Mandela was released from his 27 years of imprisonment by the Apartheid government, she went to work trying to help her country heal from the wounds of Apartheid.

Together with her Zulu singing partner, Nonhlanhla Wanda, and Marilyn Cohen, director of the City of Philadelphia Mental Health Programs, they formed South Africa’s first, 500-voice multiracial and multicultural band and youth choir in 1992, traveling out to all the still-separated communities to rehearse and start building trust across the Apartheid-imposed barriers.

As the election date came closer and the ethnic battles intensified, they hired a train, *The Peace Train*, and toured the country with their band and choir. Living together in mixed-race compartments and performing together at each stop along their route, they became a moving billboard for Mandela’s message of peaceful coexistence and the transition to a nonracial democracy.

Sharon continues to perform worldwide as Sharon Katz & The Peace Train and has formed bands in South Africa, Ghana, USA, Cuba and Mexico. After a 2019 cultural collaboration with Promotora de las Bellas Artes and its Cuban artistic director, Sharon established a base in Tijuana, Mexico where she worked on an international collaboration that toured in Mexico, Cuba, and South Africa.

Sharon Katz & The Peace Train offer humanitarian work in under-developed areas of South Africa, the USA/Mexico border region, and around the world including music therapy with orphans and communities affected by HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence; food security programs in impoverished areas; conflict resolution in violence-torn regions; schools and community arts programs; and in programs for asylum seekers, migrants, survivors of torture, and youth rescued from trafficking rings.



Sharon with Nelson Mandela



Sharon with Marilyn Cohen and Lisa Shaffer



Our Values in Action

UUFSD Social Justice Fair on Sept. 15



The Social Justice Action Committee invited members and friends to learn about all the programs and projects that we do to live our UU values. Information on all the SJA initiatives were presented and members of the SJA Committee were present to describe the many ways that UU's can find and live their passion for Social Justice in San Diego, Mexico, and for the greater good of our democracy and our world. We encouraged members and friends to get involved in projects they were interested in.

A special thanks to Linda Luisi, Robin Sales, Julia Darling and Ted Foster for all their hard work in putting the Fair together.



Casas de Luz Repurposing With a Purpose



Over the past two years, Casas de Luz has been involved in supporting Ukrainian families arriving in San Diego. We have partnered with Krystsina Shchelkunova who started the non-profit Slavics.org. We have provided a Holiday party and many "shopping" events at the donation sheds. In September we opened the sheds to over 15 families who received beds and other household items. One of those families is the Horchakov family of four.

Natalie, Andrii and their two children, Yeva and Yehor. Andrii is an architect and looking for work in that field. Natalia is an economist and theologian and is looking for work as a bookkeeper.

It's heartwarming to welcome them to San Diego.



Religious Diversity at UUFSD

I am a Christian Unitarian by Daisy Carter



I was baptized Lutheran and raised Episcopalian. My parents always said that we were spiritual, but not religious. What they meant by that was that the bible was inspired by God, but we don't really know exactly what happened. Therefore, all interpretations based on history or text are valid. What that also meant was that people shouldn't know that we're Christians because we shout about it, but by the good works we do. They spent a lot of time trying to make sure we were in ministries that reflected these values, but the older my siblings and I got, the harder it was to find them.

When becoming an adult and deciding to marry outside of the church, I wanted to find a place to raise my family that reflected that willingness to learn and grow, and to lift the community without tearing people outside of that community down.

When we came to UUFSD, even though my husband and I both have religious tattoos on full display, people were welcoming and did not comment. When my husband, who was very obviously trans at the time, introduced himself, there was no questioning him, they accepted him and moved on. When we talked about our non-traditional family structure, people were excited to meet my other partner. The entire time we have been here, not only have people wanted to hear our opinions and knowledge on various topics, but they have shared their knowledge in safe ways to help us grow.

As a Christian, we are meant to follow Jesus, Love God and love each other. The one commandment we are meant to always fall back on is to Love. I have found that the UU church reflects the teachings of Jesus as I have learned them: to love everyone no matter who they are and where they come from, and to give our time and our energy to healing others and making sure they are taken care of.



Religious Diversity at UUFSD

I am a Norse Pagan Unitarian by Antony Carter



I was raised in the UU church, attending First UU of Dallas's Youth RE Program from the age of five (when I decided that an omnipotent deity was silly and illogical) until the moody age of 15 (when I decided that video games held more appeal than the Coming of Age program). Throughout most of that time, I had an itch that atheism wasn't scratching, and neither were any of the other faiths I was learning about in Sunday School. It wasn't until two years after I left the church that I found my religious niche: Norse Paganism, specifically the academically rigorous sect known as Reconstructionism.

The finite nature of the polytheistic deities, the connection to an ancestral culture, the pragmatic approach to morality, all of these made Norse Paganism extremely appealing to me. In retrospect, though, it doesn't shock me that I didn't learn about this faith in a UU environment, and not simply because it isn't common. Love is the central tenet of UUism; in my religion, it is barely an afterthought, with morality centered instead around oaths and bonds of trust. UUism is descended from Christian religious philosophy and embraces it. Reconstructionism is often engaged in analyzing Christian influence on culture and mythology, and excising it in order to unearth the worldview of historical pagans. It's honestly something of a study in contrast.

One important thing that Norse Paganism and UUism have in common, however, is an emphasis on community. Gatherings and feasts are central to either practice. And community is something that is often difficult to find and/or form, especially for a military family that is often on the move from one end of the country to the other, as mine is. So, when looking for that community as a queer, mixed-faith family, the UU church was the reasonable destination.

Coming back to a UU church, this time firmly entrenched in an unrelated religious tradition, meant that I was approaching it less as a religion, a faith, or even a spiritual practice, but rather as an ethical philosophy. While Norse Reconstructionism is fairly theologically rigid, it is very flexible when it comes to ethics and morality. As far as the gods are concerned, as long as I do not become an oathbreaker, my conscience is my own. Compassion and tolerance is not a religious obligation to me, but a utilitarian one. To lift oneself up by lifting everyone up seems the wisest course to me, so why would I act otherwise when the king of my pantheon is a god of wisdom?



Religious Diversity at UUFSD

I am a Wiccan Unitarian by Leithe Miller-Kramer



When I say I'm spiritual, I say it for the matter that I realistically do not align with a specific religion.

I was raised as Wiccan, my family attended "Circle" on every full moon, and many of the holidays. I grew up honoring the elements of the planet we call home, to a God and Goddess, a Mother and Father, to life and its many gifts. It wasn't until my family moved, and pretty much stopped celebrating that I started to actually look into the religion I had been brought up with. Very quickly into that journey I discovered it was initially a sex cult started in the 60's and after that quickly lost interest. Though I no longer really followed the concept of a God and Goddess being the end all be all to creation, I still felt a deep connection to Nature and Spirit.

I came to the crossroads of simply allowing myself to feel the Energy in Life around me, and simply accepted it for what it was. A profound feeling that connected my existence to those I share this beautiful planet with. Everything that came from the Earth, had a meaning, had a little bit of energy or magic in it. I shared such beliefs with my parents who had also begun to separate themselves from Wicca, my mother's words being "because there are too many rules", and my father having found a stronger connection to Buddhism.

I remember many interesting conversations about their spiritual views on the world around us, with my mother and I no longer following any particular religion. Instead, we seemed to find ourselves recognizing many Gods and Goddesses, not as deities in the traditional sense, but more as powerful spirits that different regions of the world attributed to different concepts based upon that particular region or group's understanding of the world, or Nature around them. As my partner, Daisy said, with us trying to navigate our very different religious backgrounds, we are simply all blind men trying to describe an elephant. To me, that suddenly made the most sense. Having been part of a few different rituals/ceremonies, attending a few church sermons/events (including a UU), visiting religious areas, or regions that were saturated with Nature's Life, I found myself feeling such a profound sense of being. There was something to each of these experiences that I simply had no way to describe and no way to fully understand.

So when Daisy suggested that our little family join a UU church I thought it to be a brilliant idea. Not because I thought there would be someone there with similar beliefs as I, but more so that there would be more open-minded people to share conversation with, to share community with, and ultimately, to share this sense of Life with. Since joining the UU church, I have found a sense of common ground in a way I had not felt in a very long time. So many people here have different ideas of religion, different philosophies without the belief that one way is the true way. And for that, I have felt at home spiritually. Not because of the nature that surrounds our common place of service, but because of the nature of the People within that space. After all, we are all blind men trying to describe an elephant.



Happenings

Mount Laguna Campout July 4-6



There is always something new to discover among the friends that come to share a few nights under the stars at Mount Laguna. Sharing food and talking about various subjects openly and without judgement, creating a good opportunity for learning and asking questions. The weather threatened to be really hot, but it wasn't too bad, and with slightly chilly nights. We were able to hike, bicycle, and gather among the fire.

A total bonus, on Saturday night the Mount Laguna Observatory run by San Diego State University Department of Astronomy, provided a lecture and viewing with the 21-inch Buller Telescope. We saw Antares, one of the 20th largest stars, also known as Alpha Scorpii, which is located in the constellation Scorpius. Mount Laguna, year after year, continues to be the venue for the free spirited ones - young and not so young.

Sunday, July 21 - Mathew Brensilver Meditation and Darhma Talk



Approximately 35 people came to the meditation and drama talk given by Mathew Brensilver, MSW, PhD, who teaches retreats at the Insight Retreat Center, Spirit Rock and other Buddhist centers. For more than a decade he was a core teacher at Against the Stream Buddhist Meditation Society. He has taught extensively about the intersection between mindfulness and psychotherapy at UCLA and other universities. He serves on the Board of Directors at Spirit Rock and Insight Meditation Center. Matthew is the co-author of two books about meditation during adolescence and continues to be interested in the unfolding dialogue between Buddhism and science.

The event was sponsored by the UUFSD Friday Meditation Group. For more information on the Friday Meditation Group, contact:

FridayBuddhistMeditation@uufsd.org



Bit o' Fun/Improv Friday, July 26

Fifteen people attended this family friendly workshop, offered by Linda Luisi (and sundry UUFSD chefs). Attendees enjoyed a tasty plant-based meal, then had an opportunity to hone their skills at spontaneous thinking, improvising, and problem solving. No experience was needed—they all had fun together.

Participants learned and participated in basic improv games/story-telling. It was a great way to break the ice.

Linda said that she enjoyed bringing people together to laugh and bond with each other making for a strong and lively community. Here is the feedback from those who joined in:

- they gain confidence as they become familiar with the material
- they look forward to relieve stress
- they enjoy learning about each other
- they sleep well at night

Bit o' Fun/Improv - 1st & 3rd Mondays, 5:30 pm - Information at: improv@uufsd.org

Art at UUFSD

UUFSD Art Club & Urban Sketchers - Sunday, August 4

More than 20 people from Urban Sketchers of San Diego and UUFSD Art Club joined forces to sketch outdoors. While our special campus is not located in an urban setting, UUFSD offers anyone interested in drawing on location beautiful views, buildings, and art work.



No words can express the joy many of us felt while we sketched together at UUFSD. Some in the group were new artists. Others are professional artists who have been sketching for some time. And many in the Urban Sketchers group had never heard about nor had ever been to UUFSD. After two hours we had a “smack down”; that is, we shared our work by laying it all out on the Core Area’s patio bricks.



Each sketcher had a different style. They also used a variety of media. Some worked with graphite. Others with pastel; pen, ink, and watercolor; or electronic tablet.

Each sketcher also focused on a different aspect of the UUFSD campus. There were sketches of Founders’ Hall, the Sculptural Wall in the Core Area, the Memorial Wall, and the garden with its teepee-style poles for growing beans.



New Members



Dorie Sachi's husband, Mike Worthen, has been a UUFSD member for a few years, and Dorie is adding officially herself onto the family membership. She is so excited to get to know everyone! Professionally, Dorie is a semi-retired RN, working one day a week and loves her job; it keeps her reality based, and allows her to work collaboratively with teams to heal their patients. Dorie's biggest passion in life is kinkeeping, taking care of her family and also supporting people and pet friends in need. Mike and Dorie have 4 awesome adult kids between them, a darling 8 mo. old granddaughter, and their dog, Rigby. She is also active in the SD Garden Guild, where she contributes to the newsletter and participates in enriching art, horticulture and culinary endeavors with many women. Dorie enjoys hiking and cycling.



Caitlin McClune is a native San Franciscan who had a 15-year detour in Austin, TX, where she met her sweet husband, Michael. She is queer identified, artistically inclined, and a true lover of the redwoods. Caitlin was ensconced in academia for most of her time in Texas, until she had her son during the high octane year of 2020. All of her priorities dramatically shifted after having a child during the pandemic. Caitlin is interested in connection, above all, and is trying really hard to slow down and listen. She recently read the book "The Overstory," and it's nudged her in a direction she has been seeking for years. Caitlin gets a strong sense that the people at UUFSD understand something about the life-affirming life and is very grateful for all the connections and care she, her husband, and her son, Kieron, have already received. She is interested in reading, camping, gardening and the Buddhist Meditation group. But most of these interests will have to wait till Kieron is a little more independent.



Jason Folkman & Victor Sequiritan. Jason is a San Diego native; graduate of SDHS and UC Berkeley. He loves history and used to be a high school social studies and English teacher, but gave up his career for the children (Kyle 12 and Katherine 11) they adopted from foster care ten years ago; they have two older siblings, but their issues proved to be too profound for them to handle, so they both reside in residential treatment. Victor is a graduate of Mission Bay HS, then proceeded to UCSD, obtaining his Bachelors in cognitive science, then proceeded to SDSU for his Master's, and then his Ph.D is in computational science from Claremont Graduate University.

Victor and Jason have been together since 1996, and are one of the first same sex couples to legally wed in the entire nation. They will celebrate their 20th anniversary of legal marriage July 1 of this year.

Jason states that he is blessed to have a life partner as smart, talented, and compassionate as Victor. He nearly died in 2021 from an extremely adverse reaction to the Covid vaccine. He lost many of his extremities, but fortunately his heart and brain emerged unscathed!

Victor used to be an avid cyclist; he's in the process of having a recumbent bike built for him so he can once again go biking. He also enjoys hiking and being outdoors. Jason enjoys reading and gardening and is interested in the Buddhist meditation groups. The family is vegan and loves to share with others how delicious vegan food can be!