

## **2022 Ann Dillon Award Presentation**

Good afternoon. My name is Thad Smith. I won the Ann Dillon Award last year so the Board gave the additional honor of presenting it this year. This award was created to honor the legacy of Ann Dillon, a much beloved member of our congregation, who died very suddenly in the 1990's. She was a person who did things like wash all the dishes after an event like this and then take home all the dish towels to launder them. She did these things under the radar without fuss or fanfare and so when she was gone, she was a huge loss. This ceremony honors members of our congregation who quietly work doing things that need to be done to allow our beloved community to continue to thrive by presenting an award that honors both them and Ann Dillon.

On March 15, 2020, not only the city but the entire Bay Area was put on lockdown due to COVID and our livestream ministry became our lifeline. From then until now, our livestream ministry has allowed us to continue Sunday services and keep our community together and moving forward. Many people have used their skills to make this happen, and Rev Vanessa and Jonathan Silk have written an excellent history of the livestream ministry which began in the spring of 2019 with the Minns Lecture Series. That history, along with the Ann Dillon Award announcement, will be published in the upcoming issues of both the Flame and Flame PLUS.

In all this time, many people have made our connection possible. Jonathan Silk was beyond extraordinary, a gift from the universe. But looking around week in and week out, it became clear that we couldn't have done it without two others. Eric Shackelford was a steady and requisite presence. With his professional experience as a cameraperson at our disposal and his dependability and enormous commitment to being in the mess and necessity of it all, he was never less than full-hearted. Shulee Ong was the other constant, bringing her experience in documentary filmmaking and the artistry of the camera, as well as her comfort with the technology, to our Sunday effort. Together, they were the rock, the glue, the treasure we needed just when we needed them and they did not fail us.

So many people made Sundays work – Joe Chapot and Alex Darr and Don Shearer and our Sextons, most notably Rob Dela'o – but today, we want to thank two undersung congregants. Our heroes, Eric Shackelford and, Shulee Ong. We literally couldn't have done it, and certainly not nearly as gorgeously, without you! So, this year we have decided to award not one but two *Ann Dillon Awards*. One to Shulee Ong and one to Eric Shackelford!

## Livestream Ministry Chronology 2018 - 2022

Our livestream ministry began in the spring of 2019 with the Minns Lecture Series. Our core member volunteer team consisted of Eric Shackelford, Shulee Ong and Don Shearer led by Communications Director Jonathan Silk.

We started off with a single Canon camcorder, Tripod and a Webcaster 3 device to connect to our Media @ UUSF YouTube Channel and we had just upgraded the Sanctuary sound system in late 2018. Little did we know how important all this would be when, less than a year later, on March 15, 2020, the city had put the entire Bay Area on lockdown and livestream became our lifeline. At the very beginning, with very strict limits on personnel, the core of our Sunday livestream team consisted of Eric Shackelford on camera, Jonathan Silk on Sound/livestream onsite, Joe Chapot moderating the chat remotely and Alex Darr launching almost immediately into hosting a virtual coffee hour on Zoom.

By summer we added a video switcher, a computer to play media and re-enforced the livestream audio. Reiko returned in June of 2020 and Shulee Ong followed soon after, often running the balcony camera which came to be known affectionately as “the Reiko-cam” though it also offered us other more varied angles and images to improve the visual richness of the livestream. We were answering to popular demand and making use of the in-house expertise we had showing up every week.

There was a constant learning curve as Mark and the 4 masked soloists were moved from inside the Sanctuary to right outside the Sanctuary door then shortly after that moved to the Montessori playground which is when we added a second camera and finally into four individual rooms conducted by Mark who stood in the hallway between the Chapel, Fireside Room, Up On Top Hallway, Hallway and Asher Davison right outside the hallway by the window. All this with a line of sight of the pianist playing masked in the Sanctuary. In order to make this happen Eric, Shulee, Jonathan, Scott Miller and Chris Griffin decided the best course of action for new equipment was an updated video switcher, robotic cams and a multi-channel in-ear monitor system that paired with our current audio system. Having the Robo cams made it possible for us to video singers in their own rooms through the windows without getting anyone sick and the in-ear monitor system helped so they could hear the service and each other. We looked like some strange recording studio and even more miraculous, it worked.

Every week was a new challenge and every week was something different but we always rose to the occasion and made it through to the next Sunday.

Singers finally came back inside the Sanctuary masked to sing again then a small team of choir members were able to join them just before summer break. This luxury of singing in the same space ended as Covid infections grew. The singing was moved and all the cameras, microphones, monitors and cabling went the other direction down into Macondray Hall from the Sanctuary.

Another challenge for Eric, Shulee, Jonathan and soon returning to the team was Don Shearer. We added a large display in the Sanctuary so the gradually growing congregation could see and hear the singers singing in Macondray Hall. The choir returned then on Christmas Eve we went back into livestream only service with a prerecorded service from 2019 which was our first Christmas Eve Live Streamed and the last time we had an in-person Christmas Eve service.

Over time, songleaders and now choir have returned into our sanctuary. The recording studios have given way to something that looks familiar but also not – as we have mounted robotic cameras and the two operated cameras and a whole set up to serve the over 760 people who are subscribed now to the livestream we had barely begun using, and no sense of how much we would need it, nearly three years ago.

In all this time many people have made our connection possible. Jonathan Silk was beyond extraordinary; a gift from the universe. But week in and week out looking around Eric Shackelford was the other steady and requisite presence. With his professional experience as a camera person at our disposal and his dependability and enormous commitment to being in the mess and necessity of it all, full-hearted. Shulee Ong also was the other constant, bringing her experience in documentary filmmaking and the artistry of the camera as well as her comfort with the technology to our Sunday effort. They were the rock, the glue, the treasure we needed just when we needed them and they did not fail us.

So, many folks made Sunday's work – Joe Chapot and Alex Darr and Don Shearer and our Sextons, most notably Rob Dela'o – but this year we want to thank two undersung folks. Our hero and our heroine, Eric Shackelford and Shulee Ong. We literally couldn't have done it and not nearly as gorgeously, without you!