



LAKE CHAPALA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER - December, 2017

Upcoming Services

The theme for December is the fourth of the six UU Sources: "Jewish and Christian teachings".

December 3 - "UUs and Judeo-Christian Values: Exploring Our Roots".

Speaker: Kathy Koches; Service Leader: Bob Koches . Kathy will talk about how UU's draw from their Judeo-Christian roots and the values we can learn from them.

December 10 - "Living In Times of Darkness"

Rev. Matt Alspaugh with Joan Jaquish. As we come into the time of darkness, of waiting, of Solstice, we explore how the Christian tradition deals with darkness, obscurity, and uncertainty. Does the dark have something to offer us?

December 17 - "The Gift of Light"

Speaker: Donna Burroughs; Service Leader: Karyn Carpenter.

Donna will speak about her experiences with Judaism as a young woman in New York and the celebration of Hanukkah.

December 24 - "Christmas Eve Music Service"

Bob Koches and the LCUUF Choir with a message from Rev. Matt Alspaugh.

We'll continue our holiday tradition of choir, carols, and candles. Join us!

December 31 - "Two Minutes to Run" Linda Conklin leads a participatory

service. We all have possessions that are very important to us. If you only had two minutes to pack and run to safety, what is so important that you can't leave it behind?



Board and Committee News



From the Board

The date for the LCUUF Annual General Meeting has been set for January 28th, 2018. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. In addition to reports from the President and Committees, the budget for 2018/19 will be presented and elections held for the Board and Nominating Committee. All AGMs are important, but given the major developments of the past year, this one even more so. The January Newsletter will include the AGM agenda and information about the elections.

From the Pledging Committee

Although our Celebration Sunday is past, it is still possible to fill out a pledge card for the fiscal year beginning Feb. 1. Pick up a form on the Welcome desk, fill it out and drop it in the collection basket. If you are a member and have not completed a card, expect a friendly call. Remember if your circumstances change, you can always adjust your commitment.

From the Membership Committee

This year is coming to an end rapidly and it was our first full year having the Assistant Greeter program. **Our committee wants to thank every Fellowship member and attendee who volunteered to be an Assistant Greeter.** All of you are truly an asset to our Fellowship and committee. You are the ones who have made visitors and members feel welcome. Your contribution has made this small program hugely successful and we hope you will consider being an Assistant Greeter during 2018. Thank you for your support.

From the Hospitality Committee



HOLIDAY MUSIC – Members of the Fellowship will be attending the **Los Cantantes holiday concert on Wednesday, December 6 at 4 pm.** Please purchase your ticket up from any UU member of the choir (Kathy or Bob Koches, Donna Burroughs, Mardele Harland, Catherine Luria, Marion Blackmer). Cost for adults is \$250. Following the concert we will be going to Cosinart for dinner together. Please let Karyn Carpenter or Lorna Dean know if you would like to join us so we can make reservations.

WOMEN'S COOKIE EXCHANGE will take place **Monday, December 11, 11 am at the home of Joan Ward.** Sign up is by email. If you have not received an email about this, please let Karyn Carpenter know at newfhugger_wander@mac.com

CHRISTMAS DINNER - Join members of the Fellowship for **Christmas dinner at Robertos. Reservations are set for 2 pm Christmas Day.** Select from ham, salmon or turkey. A special vegetarian plate will be prepared by request. Sign up during December at the Fellowship. Cost - \$250 pesos excluding drink or tip.

Other Activities

The LCUUF Choir will practice at the Fellowship on the following Fridays at 2 p.m.: Dec. 8th, 15th, and 22nd. Contact bobkoches@gmail.com for information.

Mindful meditation is ongoing on Saturdays at 3. Contact Richard Clarke at richard@infinitepie.net

English Country Dancing continues at the Fellowship on Sun. Dec. 10th. Contact Catherine or Eric Luria for information.

Member Spotlight



Els Abercrombie

(By Jan Manning)

We all know how travel and living in another country affects us – it is life affirming and mind broadening. It makes the world grow in size and become AMAZING! It makes us believe anything is possible. Els is a good example of this phenomena. She has lived in (in no particular order): Australia, the United States, Holland, Austria, Turkey, and Mexico.

Elsje Jantina Adamse was born in 1933 in Dordrecht, the Netherlands. Her childhood, with a well-known artist father, a teacher mother, and three older siblings was happy and carefree - until May 10, 1940. That was the date that Nazi Germany invaded. Following the brutal bombing of Rottendam on May 14th (The Rottendam Blitz) Holland capitulated and Germany began five years of occupation.

Els continued to go to a Montessori school, and, despite the instability of the war years, all was seemingly calm. But says Els, even though things seemed relatively ordinary, there was always the feeling of dread. She adds, "The last two years of World War II were the worst in every aspect. There was so much hunger, cold, and worst of all fear. It was during this time that some of my most vivid recollections occurred". On May 5,

1945 Holland was liberated by the Brits and Canadians.

While a member of the UU writers' group at Lakeside a few years ago, Els wrote about the war years for her children and grandchildren in a small book called "**Oma Tells...**". It is filled with photos of the era and is a wonderful read.

Els went on to become a kindergarten teacher and in 1955 married Adolf William Abercrombie also from Dordrecht, whom she met at a dance.

Shortly after the birth of their first child, "the most incredible experience of my life", Els and Dolf moved to the United States. They were sponsored by a Deacon of the Presbyterian Church of whom Els says, "our sponsor was a wonderful man and to make him and his wife happy we joined the church and were baptized. I had grown up with atheist parents".

Dolf soon got a job as an engineer with BF Goodrich and they were transferred to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where they became American citizens to simplify logistics with work. Then finally came a foreign assignment and it was to ... Holland! Yes! Els says she was so happy that their now four children would learn first- hand of their heritage. They were there for six years.

Next they moved to Australia, then back to Holland, back to the U.S. and one more move to Turkey, before retiring to Ajijic in 1997.

Els studied piano as a child in Holland, and loves classical music. She now enjoys what she calls, "playing around with simple Chopin waltzes".

She is probably proudest of her strength to adapt to all the countries she lived in throughout her life, and also of their six awesome grandchildren.



Message from Rev. Matt

“This has been a time of dramatic change within the Fellowship, including the initiation of pledging, an ordained minister leading many of the services, and experiments with aspects of the services.” Thus began a note inviting people to participate in a congregational conversation on Sunday November 19, after the service. There, many people spoke, and they had many comments, mostly about Sunday services. We have too many hymns; we don’t sing enough; we need more lay led services; or have the right amount; we need paid musicians; we should cut video services ... these were some of the comments related to Sunday services. Others related to broader topics, such as our connection with the Houston congregation and my workload. Overall, the gathering was lively, and people were cordial, listening to and supporting each other, and I was grateful for such healthy, thoughtful feedback.

Later in the week, the Sunday Services Group explored some of the comments about Sundays in greater detail. We realized that some of the comments opened into deeper issues for consideration, which may lead to more experimentation. For example, a comment about missing the discussions after the services led to a conversation about how those might be announced more effectively. We also realized that many people didn’t stay for discussion because they had difficulty hearing. So on Sunday, November 26, we met in our main space so that we could use the microphone in the discussion. We will certainly continue to refine such discussions, but that change was a step in the right direction for this concern.

As a side note, **the next Sunday Services Group meeting is on December 22, at 10:30am at the Fellowship, and is open to everyone interested in Sunday Services.**

As we go forward, the Board and the Sunday Services Committee will take up some of the larger questions raised, and further changes will certainly emerge. We all need to understand that change brings up all forms of complex emotions for each of us. We may be optimistic and hopeful, yet at the same time fearful or wary. We may be glad that something that has long bugged us might be fixed, and at the same time, we may feel a sense of loss of the way things were. We wonder how we might have input into change, even as we recognize that at some point, input must end because a decision must be made. We need to be aware that vitality in any organism, including our Fellowship, requires that the organism change in changing times.

Happy Holidays everyone!



Happy birthday Greetings to the following members who have birthdays in December: Jesse Quarter (1st); Carol Powell (15th); Sue Kelley (17th); Linda Jessen (25th); Frank Howell (27th); Richard Clarke (28th)

This Newsletter is published monthly to provide LCUUF news to members and friends. The Guest Editor for the January Newsletter is Kathy Koches (kkoches@gmail.com.) The deadline for contributions is December 20th.