



LAKE CHAPALA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER - February, 2018

Upcoming Services

The theme for February is the fifth of the six UU Sources: “Humanist teachings which call us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit”.

February 4 - “Reflections on Humanism”

Service Leader: Bob Koches with Jan Manning, Fred Harland, and Trudy Crippen.

A participatory service where members of the congregation will explore their understanding of Humanism as it relates to their journey, ethics and spirituality.

February 11- "What Are We? LCUUF & the Fellowship Movement"

Rev. Matt Alspaugh with Helen White

Our congregation was founded in 2006 as Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (LCUUF). What exactly is a fellowship? How is it different from a church? How are "fellowship people" different from "church people"? We'll explore the history of the Unitarian Fellowship movement, which started in 1945, and consider how that movement has affected the culture and nature of this congregation, even to today.

February 18 - “Sex, Death, and the Evolution of Life”

Rev. Alspaugh with Susan Reynolds

This is the week of Valentine’s Day. It is also Evolution Weekend. We pair these topics to explore the role of sex and death in the evolution of life in our world. We'll also explore what sex and death means to us, we who are the products of evolution.

February 25 – “Rethinking Travel”

Speaker: Karyn Carpenter; Service Leader: Donna Burroughs

Karyn will explore unusual ways to enrich your travel experiences, including the international peace and hosting organization, Servas. The topic will be examined on a photographic backdrop of the island of Sicily.

Congregational Meeting



The LCUUF Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday, January 28th, following the Service and pizza. President Fred Harland called the meeting to order. Secretary Eric Luria reported that 41 members were present. Following are **highlights** from the reports presented and a synopsis of decisions taken.

President's Report *(Fred Harland)*

- Many people have been involved in making our fellowship a wonderful home over the past year. I'll begin with expressing appreciation to our **board members**, with a special word of thanks to those Board members who are retiring: Vice-President **Teresa Sande; and members at large Heidi MacLennan, Joan Jaquish and Trudy Crippen.**
- Although **Gary Cleek** has one more year to serve as **Treasurer**. I want to also thank Gary for doing a yeoman's job of keeping financial track of everything. Our financial systems now involving two countries and at least two currencies makes budgeting and reporting particularly complex.
- This has been a **very significant year** for LCUUF with the hiring and arrival in late August of our **first part time minister, Rev. Matt Alspaugh**. We very much value the professional leadership Matt has brought to us, and are particularly impressed with his listening skills and responsiveness to

our concerns. Our thanks to the Ministerial Selection Committee and also to the Hospitality Committee for organizing small group "Meet and Greet" which provided an opportunity for us to get to know Matt and Liz and them us. The Board has agreed to offer an extension of contract to Rev Matt with a salary increase, based on a very positive Board evaluation. Your approval of the proposed budget will indicate your support for this decision.

- Matt has introduced a number of valuable innovations, including the **Healthy Communication Book** which is available every Sunday for signed comments on any aspect of LCUUF. Indeed, we are a richer and more organized community with Matt as our Minister.
- Many other important events and a great deal of work took place during the past year which will be described in the Committees reports. In addition, Tom and Buddy Dowdy-Winslett organized and facilitated three "Harvest the Power" leadership educational workshops for Board and Committee members which helped us prepare for the coming change; and concerns expressed about pets and safety led to a respectful and engaged congregational discussion that resulted in a policy about dogs attending Sunday Services.
- In conclusion, I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the life of our community over the past year. (Editor: Sixteen people mentioned - too many to repeat here!) Please know that your efforts to make our Fellowship a vibrant and caring community are appreciated. We now look forward with confidence to the many challenges ahead and to being the best Fellowship we can be.

Committee Highlights



(Teresa Sande, Vice President)

Our Fellowship is fortunate to have many members who organized, assisted and participated in enriching our Fellowship through their work in a variety of contexts over the past year. The offering of their time and talents continues to knit us together.

Francisco Urzua & Garry Cleek have continued to organize refreshments after services throughout the year. Francisco is now also opening and closing our facility.

Norman Woods and Lew Crippen renewed at a reasonable increase, the 1 year lease on behalf of Friends of the Fellowship, a generous group that provides the location to the Fellowship, a space we share with the Naked Stage. **Kathy and Bob Koches** have organized quarterly Circle Suppers for our congregation with an average of 32-36 people participating each quarter. As well they organized the Women's Movie Group and Humanist Discussion Group. The patience and goodwill of Fellowship members have brought our congregation together during this exciting time of transition and maturation.

Hospitality Committee Report

(Karyn Carpenter, Chair)

- 5 end of the month luncheons were well attended with 20 - 30 people at each.
- We had a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner at the Crippen's with 50 people in attendance.
- Christmas Luncheon was held at Roberto's with 19 attending.
- 12 Meet & Greet events were held at members' homes to introduce Rev. Matt Alspaugh and his wife, Liz Hill, to the

congregation. A total of 66 people attended.

- A cookie exchange was held in December at the home of Joan Ward with 13 women attending.
- A summer Salad luncheon was held at the home of Karyn Carpenter in August with 23 attending.
- Two special events were coordinated - one to a Naked Stage performance and one to hear the Los Cantantes Christmas concert. Both were followed by dinner at a restaurant.
- We are putting together a survey to find out how members felt about the various restaurants and events to help us better plan for the upcoming year.

Welcoming and Membership

Committee Report

(Marty Weston, Chair)

- The committee's Assistant Greeter program has been highly successful in its first full year.
- "Membership Committee Responsibility Guidelines" were written by Jan Manning and Marty Weston; we revised our Mission Statement and our sign in/up forms.
- Implemented a program for contacting visitors shortly after their visit, sending a reminder to Assistant Greeters and following-up with a thank you. All this is managed by Val Marcum.
- One LCUUF article for the Guadalajara Reporter was written by Jan Manning.
- The Guadalajara Reporter Ad was redesigned by Donna Burroughs and Nancy Jordan Zanot.
- **We had a New Member Orientation and Ceremony for 8 people.**
- Gary Cleek and Wes Weston built a new bar for Member name tags.
- We are researching the reasons or trends why some members are not attending. Donna Burroughs has the lead on this project.

Sunday Service Committee Report *(Mardele Harland, Chair)*

The Sunday Service Committee's mandate is to "plan and organize high quality, diverse Sunday Services which reflect UU principles and sources of faith". With the welcome arrival in late August of our first part time Minister, Rev. Matt Alspaugh, the committee now has professional assistance. He brought experience, new ideas, education and support to service planning and presentation; making the past few months an exciting time of transition and experimentation.

- **52 Services** were planned and presented: 34 member presentations; 4 outside speakers; 1 visiting minister; 4 video sermons; 9 sermons by Rev. Alspaugh; with 44 members serving as Service Leaders. Memorable services included "A Celebration of Summer Solstice" with rituals and crowns; "Animals: a Blessing in our Lives" with readings from the writer's group and "Reflections on Fatherhood" by members of the congregation.
- The **choir** performed at 8 services under the direction of Bob Koches accompanied by Rodrigo Leal Murillo. Mardele Harland regularly accompanied congregational singing on the piano.
- A "**Creating Compelling Sunday Services**" Workshop organized and led by Rev. Matt was held on October 21st. A **Sunday Service Group** open to everyone interested in learning about and discussing Sunday Services was formed and meets monthly.
- A number of innovations were introduced and evaluated i.e. written announcements, sung Chalice Lightening, hymn of the month, music interludes, multiple readings, and greeting your neighbor etc.
- A special thank you to everyone who has contributed time and talent to services over the past year and to all those who made the effort to attend services regularly.

The Outreach Committee Report

Trudy Crippen reported on the work of the Committee and moved a motion to continue our support for the **Women's Health Initiative** with a small increase in funding. Approved.

Financial Reports Pledging Committee *(Lorna Dean)*

- After the first LCUUF Pledge Campaign for the 2017-18 fiscal year was completed in January 2017, instructions on the payment of pledges in pesos were distributed to the congregation in early February 2017. By the later part of February 2017, arrangements had been made with the **First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston** for the payment of LCUUF pledges in U.S. dollars through the Houston church website. This has worked successfully. Gary Cleek has been tracking the pledges and pledge payments on a spreadsheet.
- Committee members and Rev. Matt Alspaugh met on September 12, 2017 to organize the 2018-19 Pledge Campaign. Fred Harland led a meeting on Sunday, October 8, 2017, after the service, to present the 2018-19 Pledge Campaign to the congregation and to distribute the 2018-19 pledge cards and instructions. On November 27, 2017, Rev. Matt Alspaugh and Heidi MacLennan presented a Celebration Sunday service where pledge cards were collected. Heidi MacLennan and Lorna Dean contacted all regular members/ attendees who had not yet pledged for 2018-19 in early January 2018.
- The Treasurer, Gary Cleek, reported the following pledges and pledge amounts for 2018-19, as of January 21, 2018:
USD - \$15,000 (14 pledges consisting of 4 couples and 10 singles).
MXN - \$198,340 (25 pledges consisting of 9 couples and 16 singles).

Treasurers Report *(Gary Cleek)*

Gary reported that LCUUF has ended the current fiscal year with a small surplus. He introduced the proposed budget for 2018/19 noting increases in several line items including Sunday Service Committee, Membership, Hospitality and Outreach. Total income from all sources is budgeted at \$459,340 pesos; with expenditures of \$351,082 pesos, for an anticipated surplus of \$108,258.

Nominations Committee Report

Kathy Koches reported on behalf of the Nominations Committee. She noted that due to resignations, all positions were up for election except Treasurer. The Committee's proposed slate was elected by acclamation. The new Board members:

President: Lew Crippen

Vice-President: Karyn Carpenter

Secretary: Susan Miller

Treasurer: Gary Cleek

Members-at-Large: Eric Luria, Linda Conklin and Joan Ward.

All terms are for 2 years except for Gary Cleek who has one more year to service as Treasurer and Joan Ward who is completing Trudy Crippen's Member-at-large term.

A question was asked about updating our web site and communication systems; and a concern was expressed about the state of the Hymn Books.

At the conclusion of the meeting, **retiring President Fred Harland** was thanked for his leadership over the past four years by in-coming President Lew Crippen and presented with a LCUUF Chalice as a token of the congregation's appreciation.

Message from Rev. Matt



At our Annual Meeting Sunday on January 28, I outlined three ministry goals where I hope to direct my attention in the coming months. Let me summarize them here. If you want to see the sermon-length version, just write me at malspaugh@gmail.com.

Sunday Services

We are trying to build on what is already done well here at LCUUF, so that we continue to offer a consistent, high-quality Sunday morning experience. We seek to develop a greater variety in what we are able to offer, both in content and in presentation: music, visuals, movement, ritual, and so on. We also want to offer more ways for people to get involved, at whatever level of interest or skill they may possess. In part, greater involvement will mean not only more variety but will provide some relief to those who have been asked to do a lot of services.

Care Team

Up until this fall, we had an official Caring Committee, but the committee disbanded. I believe this committee dissolved because it really wasn't needed, because people in this fellowship care for each other quite well. People informally do all the usual things an official committee would do: visiting, offering rides to doctors, preparing food when in need.

But we do have an unmet need — to care for the caregivers. Often, as a person offers care, a boundary line needs to be gently drawn so the care needs do not overwhelm the caregiver. We also might need help in knowing what to do or say when someone comes to us in great sorrow or is in a spiritually bereft place. A care team — note

the change of name from “committee” — might be a resource for people as they navigate how to be helpful and caring, without becoming physically or spiritually burned out in the process.

Outreach

At the Annual Meeting, we voted to increase our budget for a congregational outreach project with Centro de Desarrollo de Jocotepec, a women’s health organization. While this is a wonderful activity, I’d like to see us be more public about our outreach work and possibly develop broader programs. I know that many of you are individually serving the Mexican community, helping in a multitude of ways, and I’d like to hear more about those efforts also. When we do outreach effectively, we ourselves will be transformed. We may at times feel uncomfortable, we may at times fail, but as we do this work, we will gradually learn and understand more about who we are and where we fit into this world.

At the Annual Meeting, I was impressed that we had accomplished so much in the last year. I have faith that these and other goals will be achievable and our fellowship will continue to thrive, grow and promote Unitarian Universalist values in Lakeside.

Member News



Happy Birthday Greetings to those members celebrating birthdays in February:

- Eric Luria (1st)
- Robin McCormick (5th)
- Mary Roam (12th)
- Donna Burroughs (13th)
- Janice Kimball (16th)
- Diane VanBrocklin (16th)
- Susan Reynolds (23rd)
- Liz Moulder (26th)

We are delighted to have many of our Snowbird members and friends back. Welcome!

Please keep Richard Clarke in your thoughts. Richard and his wife Carol were involved in a motorcycle accident a few weeks ago and Richard suffered broken ribs and is in a great deal of pain.

Upcoming Activities



Circle Suppers

Assignments for the first quarter circle suppers, to take place in February and March, 2018, are posted on the bulletin board. Hosts will be contacting their guests to arrange a mutually convenient date and time. This is a great way to get to know other members in a small group setting!

The **UU Humanist Discussion Group** will meet Monday Feb. 26 at 3 pm at the Fellowship. Bring a topic and we will choose which one we will discuss. For questions or to be put on the mailing list contact Bob Koches at bobkoches@gmail.com



Lunch Out after the Service on February 25 will be at La Taverna del Quattro Mori. Join us!

The purpose of this E Newsletter is to provide LCUUF information to members and friends. The deadline for contributions to the March edition is February 20th.

Editor: Mardele Harland