



LAKE CHAPALA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

March 2016

Upcoming LCUUF Sunday Services

(We have moved! Our new location is in Riberas, Hidalgo #261 - across from the Catholic Church and in front of the Baptist Church.)

March 6th: “Celebrating LCUUF’s 10th Anniversary “I Am What I Am”

Speaker: Trudy Crippen; Service Leaders: LCUUF Members. Coffee and Anniversary Cake follow the Service.

March 13th: “Can Unitarian Universalism be translated into Spanish?”

Speaker: Rev. Jorge Espinel; Service Leader: Fred Harland

Visiting Minister Rev. Jorge Espinel will share his experience as a Unitarian Universalist living in Colombia. (See Rev. Espinel’s Bio Page 5)

March 20th: “The Victory of Love”.

Speaker: Helen White; Service Leader: Bill White.

Helen will examine how we are not limited by what is intolerable, but inspired by what is possible.

March 27th: “What a Belief in Reincarnation Means to Me”.

Speaker: Lorna Dean; Service Leader: Karyn Carpenter.

Lorna will share how a belief in reincarnation helps direct her life and the choices she makes. The LCUUF Choir will sing the "Benedictus" from the UU Mass.



LCUUF Celebrates 10 years!

Early in 2006, Barbara Lauer and Trudy Crippen called a meeting at Melanie's Restaurant to discuss forming a Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Snowbirds Fred and Mardele Harland and 2 others showed up. We decided to start holding services and see what happened!

Our first service was held on March 5th, 2006 in donated space provided by Melanie's Restaurant in Danza Del Sol. Our lay-led services attracted US and Canadian UU's and other interested individuals, including year-round residents, snowbirds, and vacationers.

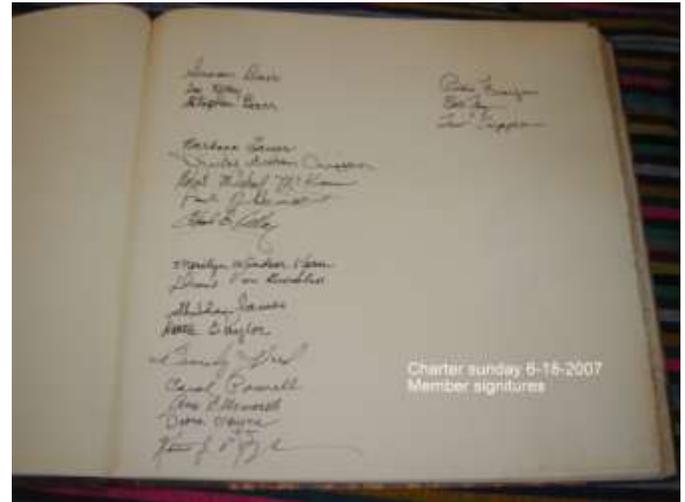
With attendance increasing and winter approaching, we moved to our second home at Pedro's Gourmet Restaurant on Ocampo.

The growing fellowship soon required another move. Negotiations with the Lake Chapala Jewish Congregation resulted in a move to their building in May, 2007, where we happily held services until October 2013, when we moved to Sol Y Luna on the west side of Ajijic.

And now we are on the move again. On March 6, 2016 (our 10th Anniversary) we will hold our first Service in Hidalgo #261, which we are sharing with Naked Stage.

In the beginning, most decisions were made by Barbara and Trudy, with support from others. In September 2006, a Steering Committee was formed, chaired by Fred Harland. The committee worked for many months developing our statement of purpose and membership criteria. These were approved at a congregational meeting on

March 19th, 2007. Charter Sunday followed in June with 20 people signing the Membership Book.



(R to L- Barbara Lauer, Trudy Crippen, Steve Barr, Sue Kelley and Susan Barr)

LCUUF bylaws were approved and elections held a few months later. Our first Board consisted of President, Steve Barr; Vice-President, Trudy Crippen; Treasurer, Bob McKeown; Secretary, Ana Ellsworth; and Members-at-Large, Susan Barr, Paul Bennett and Lew Crippen.

Much of the on-going work of the Fellowship is carried out through standing committees.

The **Sunday Service** Committee is responsible for planning our services, which have evolved in a number of ways over the years.

Sue Kelley's donation of her mother's piano, and Mardele Harland's playing greatly helped our singing, as did the formation of a choir.



Development of a Sunday Service Manual led to standardized Orders of Service and provided access to a wide range of resources; as did our Library which was started and is still maintained by Sue Kelley. Purchase of a projector has added another dimension to our services. For 10 years we have been a Lay Led Fellowship, with our members taking responsibility for planning and leading services and presenting most talks. A Visiting Minister program, now financially supported by the UUA, has helped us to grow and develop.



El Pilar Fish Farm

Outreach to the Mexican Committee has been part of our Fellowship from the early days, beginning with support to the Villa Infantil Orphanage in 2007. LCUUF financially supported the El Pilar fish farm in Riberas for several years and then began supporting the Hungry Children of Mezcala school feeding program, which members continue to support. At the recent Annual

Meeting, the decision was taken to also support a Women's Health Clinic.

We are an aging congregation of mainly expatriates living far from family. So it is not surprising that **Pastoral Care** has been a major priority for us and continues to be so. We are grateful to those members who have spent countless hours providing various levels of support to members in need. Recently, Pastoral Care Workshops were held, and a comprehensive "Emergency Registry" has been developed and is currently being completed by members.

The **Membership Committee** has responsibility for attracting and retaining LCUUF members. One hundred and eleven (111) people have signed the Membership Book since Charter Sunday in 2007. But not surprisingly, the number of active members is lower – 69 as of our last Annual General Meeting. Several members have moved away, and a few have died or resigned or lost interest for various reasons.

A **Covenant of Good Relations** and a Conflict Resolution Plan were developed and approved at the AGM in 2015 in which "we covenant to treat ourselves and one another with respect".

LCUUF has a number of ongoing **programs**, including a monthly discussion group, men's movie group, writer's group, and many social activities such as Circle Suppers, Potlucks and after Service lunches.



The Fellowship maintains a Directory and communicates with members and friends in a number of ways. We have a WEB site, a Yahoo group and most recently this pilot Newsletter.

LCUUF has survived and thrived over the past 10 years, thanks to the commitment and active involvement of its members and friends. And so we look ahead to the next 10 years with anticipation and confidence!



From Susan & Steve Barr:

Greetings and happy 10th anniversary to all of you at Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship! We were so lucky to have been a part of the very beginnings of the Fellowship in 2006. After just a few weeks of living in Ajijic, we were eating breakfast at Melanie's Restaurant and saw a group of people with a sign on the back of one of their chairs with a big UU on it. It turned out that it was the first planning meeting of those interested in forming a UU Fellowship. From that beginning, we started meeting at Melanie's on Sundays.

Eventually a steering committee was formed and by-laws created. Steve was elected the first President and Susan was a member at large on the board and also served as chair of the Sunday Service Committee. Steve is proud to have been instrumental in our move to the Synagogue and in working with an attorney to achieve AC (non-profit) status. Steve, with Mardele and Sue, worked on a visiting ministers program. We're so happy to see that that now has become an established program. While we were on the board, LCUUF joined the Church of the Larger Fellowship.

It's gratifying to see how the congregation has grown and prospered and to know that we had a part in it. Even though we won't be with you all on your 10th anniversary, our hearts will be there. We will always remember our time in Ajijic and all of the wonderful people we met. Having attended many other UU churches we can truly say that LCUUF stands out as the best! We wish for you many more years of success.



(History compiled by Mardele Harland from many sources. Pictures by Kelley)

Visiting Minister



Rev. Jorge Espinel

Rev. Jorge Espinel was born and raised in Colombia. He studied at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, USA and graduated with a master's of divinity in 2013. He was ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in 2014 and shortly after returned to his country of origin. As director of the Latino ministry, Jorge works as a local consultant for the ICUU and in close cooperation with the Church of the Larger Fellowship and the International Office of the UUA to provide support to Spanish speaking U/U's around the world.

In addition to speaking at the Service on March 13th, Rev. Espinel will spend the week of March 14th meeting with LCUUF Committees and the Board of Directors.

LCUUF News and Activities



From the Membership Committee:

The **New Member Ceremony** scheduled for March 6th has been postponed to March 13th. If interested in joining or for more information, please contact Chair, Donna Burroughs



Easter Brunch

Come join us after the service on Easter Sunday, March 27th for a traditional Mexican buffet brunch at Restaurant Diego & Nicole in Riberas. From the Fellowship go west on the Carreterra to Calle San Diego (exit before the Mirasol entrance) and turn left towards the lake. Go to Calle Los Angeles and turn right and go one block to Av. De Pilar and turn left. The restaurant is at the end of the road, right on the lakefront. The buffet brunch is a full buffet and includes coffee, tea and juice. The price is \$110 pesos per person. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Table.



The next meeting of the **Atheist, Agnostic & Humanist Discussion Group** will be **March 28th at 3 pm** at the Fellowship's new facility.

Our topic in March (postponed from February) will be The Question of Consciousness. One of the age old questions is, are we conscious or are we just a bunch of neural pathways in the brain and how do we know the difference? We will explore the nature of consciousness from both a philosophical and scientific approach. For more information contact Bob Koches.



Choir News

The LCUUF Choir will be performing a special piece at our Easter Service – the “Benedictus” from the Missa Brevis Pro Serveto, the Unitarian Universalist Mass.

The text for the mass was written by Rev. Fran Dearman, Minister of the Unitarian Congregation of Mississauga, Ontario. Music was composed by Tobin Stokes, former composer- in-residence for the Victoria Symphony. The goal was to craft a written text to serve as the basis for a piece of commissioned music, unashamedly complex, modeled on the Missa Brevis, singable for Unitarian choirs, engaging both a theistic and non-theistic hearer. The translation from the Latin is:

“Speak blessing. Blessed is she whose hands bear loving kindness. Blessed is he who walks in peace. Blessed be. Go your ways.”

Choir: Note that there will be no practice on Monday, March 7th; the next practice will be Monday, March 21st at 9:30 at the new Facility.



The LCUUF Women’s Movie Group will meet at the new facility in March. The date and movie will be announced. Come and join us for a fun filled afternoon. Bring your own cushion, beverage and snack.



The Leal Family

Monday, February 15th was a tragic day for the Leal family. Early in the morning their dog was killed by a bus and upon returning home from burying the dog, they found the family house and business engulfed in flames and almost totally destroyed.

Rodrigo (R)(19) is our choir accompanist, and his brother Eric (15) and sister Cecelia Yael (18) have sung with our choir.

Collections for the family were taken at our Services on February 21st and 28th. A GoFundMe account has been established specifically to rebuild the home and business. You can donate on line at <https://www.gofundme.commqp28pq>. Donations of household items, clothing etc. are also welcome. Contact Bob or Kathy Koches for details.

This monthly Newsletter provides LCUUF information to members and friends. This edition ends a six month pilot project. Please complete the Newsletter Evaluation; the decision whether or not to continue with the Newsletter will be based on your responses.

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