



LAKE CHAPALA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP (LCUUF) NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017

Upcoming Services

May 7 - "Is it Love or Is It Chocolate?" (A Chocolate Communion)

Presenter: Linda Conklin; Service Leader: Wayne Conklin

Chocolate is definitely a brain food, stimulating several areas of the brain that control feelings of pleasure, awareness, relaxation and well-being, and some believe it may even be an aphrodisiac. But the greatest pleasure may be in our ability to live in the moment of pleasure.

May 14 - "My Three Moms, Mostly Humorous Stories of Mothers"

Presenter: Karyn Carpenter; Service Leader: Donna Burroughs

Mothers come in various guises and may not always be the person who raised you. Karyn removes the "mush" from Mother's Day by sharing lighthearted stories about moms.

May 21 - "50 Years of Spiritual Practice"

Presenter: Richard Clarke; Service Leader: Carol Johnson

Richard will talk about his spiritual journey, starting with a mother who believed in reincarnation and heard voices, discovering Buddhism as a young man, practicing mindfulness meditation, to the discovery of the nondual teachings of Ramana 25 years ago, which lead to living in India for many years.

May 28 - "Getting Out of Our Heads"

Presenter: Rev. Matt Alspaugh; Service Leader: Fred Harland

Writer and contemplative Richard Rohr has said "the key to a healthy spiritual life is getting out of the top 3 inches of our body." In this service, we explore finding balance by getting out of our heads and into our bodies, all the while not leaving our heads too far behind.

A Message from Rev. Matt Alspaugh



“If you want to practice ministry without air conditioning or heat...” That was the Face book post, by Rev. Daniel O’Connell, that started me on this path to ministry with you. The post went on to describe the opportunity in Mexico with LCUUF. I would have likely skipped right over that post, had my wife and I not just returned from two weeks of Spanish immersion in Mérida, Yucatán, where we had a glorious time. So I explored a little further.

Your opportunity attracted me for a number of reasons. You appear to be a strong, vibrant congregation, young and growing. It is a rare honor to be the first minister to serve a congregation. I am humbled by the responsibility of that role, as we define together what professional ministry means in the Fellowship.

I also look forward to being part of a ministry team with colleagues at First UU Church in Houston, and working to deliver Sunday services and other elements of ministry through teamwork. Having served nearly eight years as a solo minister for a small church, I deeply understand the limitations solo ministers face, especially in an era of greater economic pressure on churches. I am hoping we can explore creating a more expansive and effective

team ministry, as we cross borders with our Unitarian Universalist message.

Finally, I’m excited to be coming to a place as beautiful as Lake Chapala. Having lived in Ohio and Minnesota for many years, I’m looking forward to the change in climate! I also hope to explore the Latin American culture, and to continue with my beginning Spanish study.

A bit about me. Ministry is a second, maybe third, career for me, after a career as an engineer (at Bell Telephone Laboratories) and in marketing at a handful of high-tech startups. I’ve served eight years as minister at the First UU Church of Youngstown Ohio, and before that, served for a year in a hospital chaplain residency in St. Paul, Minnesota. I encountered Unitarian Universalism in my late 20’s, and fell in love with it as a religion that focused on people and on this world; I see our message as more urgent and salient than ever. I live with my wife of 25 years, Liz, a writer, and Rosie, an energetic duck-tolling retriever mix.

Liz and I will be visiting the area from May 24 to 31, when we hope to meet many of you, explore the area, find housing (or at least understand the options), and amuse you with our myriad questions. I will also lead the service on Sunday, May 28, with a sermon titled, “Getting Out Of Our Heads”. I’m very much looking forward to getting to know you, and getting a sense of what our future together will hold.



Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship 2017 Congregational Survey Analysis (Ministerial Search Committee)

31 responses were received to the survey which was designed to tell a prospective minister who we are and what we want. Here is some of the story it told. Now that Rev. Matt Alspaugh has been hired there will be opportunity to determine priorities with him specifically.

Who are we and why do we gather?

Humanism (55%) and ethical religion (45%) have a strong influence on us with atheism (26%), Buddhism (26%), earth-centered spirituality (26%), and agnosticism (19%) also prominent. At 10% are Christianity, mysticism, and theism with naturalistic theism and reincarnation (both 3%) appearing as part of our eclectic influences.

Of the eighteen available reasons (plus "Other") that first drew us to the UU, six reasons ranked above 30%: friendship (84%), celebrating common values (74%), intellectual stimulation, UU beliefs (54%), spiritual nurturing (48%), and UU identity (45%). We continue to attend LCUUF to celebrate common values (90%), fellowship/friendship (84%), intellectual stimulation (77%), UU beliefs (61%), spiritual nurturing (58%), UU identity (48%), music and aesthetic appeal (35%), worship (32%), and community involvement (32%).

Analysis of Desired Qualities, Functions, and Roles of a Minister

At this point in our community life, we want a spiritual leader who will help us grow and develop - an intellectual who will challenge us to develop our minds and engage our world in new and thoughtful ways. The minister will assist us to enhance our skills, improve congregational processes, and foster effective lay leadership.

The third ranking in this section of the survey indicated a desire for a minister who is a gifted facilitator who maintains a low profile while involving others in day-to-day activities. The minister will nurture and strengthen us, enhancing our learning and doing. It is expected that he or she will be involved and influential in Sunday services, Pastoral Care, Social Justice, and Community Involvement.

Analysis of What We Do and Want

A majority of survey respondents find the sermon/talk and words of welcome the most important part of our Sunday services. We want our Sunday services to promote intellectual stimulation and spiritual growth, while highlighting the values of compassion, generosity and increased self awareness. Celebrating common values, fellowship, friendship and intellectual stimulation are the core reasons for our gathering. We generally think growth is good if we maintain our feeling of community.

The most common role expected of leadership in working toward growth included taking action to create diversity in our congregation. Ideas of what we could do better included Community outreach and social justice. Engaging in women's issues, helping local residents in need, and collaborating with other local organizations are ways of engaging with others to fulfill our goals— frequently in ways we cannot accomplish on our own.

A part-time minister, it is hoped, will help us be better, more efficient, and more effective at what we are already doing; assisting us in honing skills and processes to help us accomplish our goals. Primary interest is in improved Sunday services. Highly important are more consistently powerful Sunday service experience and going beyond "greeting" and welcoming to accepting and including visitors.

We are looking for a minister who is a spiritual leader who can help us improve what we do now by: mentoring us, building community, challenging us to engage our world in new and thoughtful ways, helping us to develop more rewarding Sunday services and to be a more active and broad based community. We want the minister to facilitate our maturation in those values that are important to us as a Fellowship.

A more detailed document will be available and posted to the Yahoo Group documents section. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Ministerial Search and Support Community with a question or request. Members of the Search Committee are Teresa Sande (Chair), Trudy Crippen, David Miller, and Tom Dowdy-Winslett.

This report was submitted by Tom Dowdy-Winslett on behalf of the Committee.

President's Report



This is the time of year we take a deep breath. Our snowbird members and friends have headed north and some of the rest of us are planning trips to reconnect with family and/or explore new places. Even in paradise, there is a flow to the year!

It has been a very eventful last few months. We have successfully introduced pledging and at a special congregational meeting on April 2nd voted overwhelmingly to approve the hiring of the Reverend Matt Alspaugh as our part time Minister. Thanks to the Ministerial Search Committee for their efforts in the hiring process.

We are delighted that Rev. Matt and his wife Liz will be here briefly at the end of May. In addition to speaking at the service on May 28th, he will meet with the Board and the Sunday Service Committee. Members and friends will have a chance to meet Matt and Liz at a Congregational Potluck at Heidi's home on Friday, May 26th and at lunch after the Service. Please plan to attend!

Matt will be spending time in Houston in August to familiarize himself with the ministerial team of which he will be a part, and then he and his wife Liz and dog Rosie will be driving to Lakeside. We are thrilled that come September we will have Matt working with us to strengthen our community and deepen our faith.

Several of our regular LCUUF activities will take a break until the fall, but our UU Services will continue all summer. See you there!

Upcoming Activities



POTLUCK DINNER

A LCUUF Congregational Potluck Dinner to welcome Rev. Matt Alspaugh and his wife Liz will be held on Friday, May 26th at 5 p.m. at the home of Heidi MacLennan, Calle San Antonio #107, in Riberas. There will be a sign up sheet at the Services on May 14th and 21st. All members and friends are welcome. Please plan to attend!



Please plan to join Rev. Matt Alspaugh and his wife Liz for lunch at Viva Mexico Restaurant in San Juan Cosala after the service on May 28th. This is our regular last Sunday of the month lunch out. All are welcome!



Happy Birthday

Greetings to the following members with birthdays in May: Kelley (6); Cate Howell (11); Wes Weston (13); Ellen McFarland (14); Sharon Merits (17); Fred Koesling (20)

Member News



It is wonderful to have **Sue and Kelley** back after dealing with major medical issues for a very long time.

Lots of members are travelling this month: These are some trips we know about!

Kathy and Bob Koches are flying to Vancouver, WA where Kathy will have knee surgery on May 30th. Bob will return in June, but Kathy not until July 13th.

Trudy and Lew Crippen are off to Gothenburg, Sweden to visit their son Philip and his wife Ruth. They will also visit Denmark and Norway.

Heidi MacLennan is taking a one week trip to Portland, Oregon to attend her best friend's daughter's wedding.

Susan and Dave Miller will be away most of May to Virginia, Florida and Massachusetts. They plan to shop at Target and eat Chick-Fil-A!

Catherine and Eric Luria will spend a week in Paris, then go down to the Loire Valley to stay in a restored chateau where they will dance (English Country) every evening & possibly in the mornings & visit wineries & other places in the day.

Paul Bennett will spend three weeks in Europe, hiking in Sicily and biking with his sister in England.

Joan Jaquish writes: "2017 is a big transition year for me. In mid May, I'll be selling my house and flying to Italy for a week, on to Amsterdam for another week before taking a "Bike and Barge" tour from Amsterdam to Bruges and then backtracking slowly from Bruges through Antwerp to Amsterdam. I'll be back in Ajijic for 3 weeks at a friend's house and then driving with our fellow UU Joan Ward to Santa Fe (former hometown for both of us) from mid July to the end of September. See you all in October when I settle into a new apartment on the west side of town".

(The editor is looking for a volunteer or two to collect information for the Member News section of the LCUUF monthly Newsletter. If interested, please talk to Mardele)

Membership Committee Request

Our committee is working on several ways to promote our Fellowship and we are considering having a Facebook informational site for LCUUF. But our small committee has limited knowledge in understanding the full scope of having an organizational Facebook page and developing one suitable for our LCUUF. Therefore, we are asking for a person who is very well versed in Facebook applications to attend one of our committee meetings to present information and options. If you have an extensive background and would like to share your knowledge with our committee, please contact Donna Burroughs at donna.burroughs@gmail.com. Thank you.

Church of the Larger Fellowship

LCUUF is a member of the UUA's Church of the Larger Fellowship. Here is how to access their resources:

- Click here to go to [Worship Express](#)
- Find the words **Subscriber Login**
- Username: **WorshipExpress**
- Password: **Clickfor2016Resources!#**

Photo Gallery



Jan displays her jewelry at Emersonian Sunday

This E Newsletter is published monthly to provide LCUUF news to members and friends. The deadline for the June edition is May 20th. Editor: Mardele Harland mharlandmx@gmail.com