



LAKE CHAPALA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2018

Upcoming LCUUF Sunday Services

December 2 – “The Deepest Bond: Exploring Our Connection to the Animals that Watch Over Us.” We look at the bond between humans and animals and pay special tribute to those that offer independence and life-saving assistance. You are encouraged to bring your pet to this service. Speaker is Karyn Carpenter. Kathy Koches is service leader.

December 9 – “Let the Mystery Be.” Some of us were taught in our childhood that “Mystery” meant don’t ask those kinds of questions. Others discovered that mysteries were ideal topics for late night speculative chatter. We’ll explore the place of mystery in the world and what it means to us. Expect a little mathematics. Speaker is Rev. Matt Alspaugh. Cate Howell is service leader.

December 17 – Winter Solstice Service. The speaker is Trudy Crippen and Gala Kolmsee is the service leader.

December 23 – Musical Celebration of the Christmas season. The San Juan Cósala children’s choir, under the direction of Cindy Youell, will sing Christmas songs for us. In addition, a special mixed choir composed of some members of our UU choir and some Mexican singers will perform. Kathy Koches will be the service leader. Come and celebrate the season with us!





Message from Rev. Matt

We enter into the holiday season of Christmas, Yule, Hanukah, Kwanzaa, Festivus, even Chalica (a holiday created by Unitarian Universalists), the Feast of Guadalupe, Las Posadas, and Three Kings Day. For many of us this is a time of great joyful energy. There are decorations to put up, a tree, lights, and wreaths, and piñatas to hang. Then there are the fiestas, parties and celebrations, outdoors on the street and in the plaza, with the noise of cohetes and bells, or indoors at home with friends. This is time to prepare the traditional foods, the gingerbread houses and kolaches, and discover new ones, buñuelos, and rosca de reyes.

It is time for the joy of gift giving, choosing or making the ideal item for each of those we care about. There are cards to send, letters to write, photos to reproduce, stamps to buy, then getting all these to a mail point north of the border. We look forward to the exchange—the joy and surprise our recipients will experience when they open our cards and gifts.

For many of us this is also time for solitude and reflection. The increasing dark and the cooling weather invites a turning inward. This is Advent in the Christian tradition, a time of anticipation and preparation. For some this is the turning of the star wheel, the expectant waiting for the return of the sun and a season of lengthening days again. It may be a time of remembrance, of turning over the remains of the year, sifting through the days for some deeper understanding. It may be a time of grieving for persons missing, for opportunities lost. It may be a time of recharge, to be alone but not lonely, germinating, preparing for life in warmer times.

Light or dark: which of these paths is the right way to traverse this season? Our culture certainly celebrates the path of light: note how the word 'dark' has so many negative connotations. But both light and dark are necessary, both are part of the whole, both complete the cycle.

Some of us are drawn, by our personality or temperament, to the light and to togetherness and celebration, others toward the dark of solitude and isolation. The circumstances of our lives may lead us toward one path or the other. Surrounded by children in one phase of life, reflecting on a recent loss in another. Let us honor the value of both the light and the dark path, and find the balance point that makes sense for us this season, in this year, in this phase of our lives.



President's Message

I was informed by my editor (thanks, Kathy) that I was too verbose last month. I'll try to be brief this time. Once again I repeat the Board of Director's mission statement: "...to lead an inclusive community dedicated to spiritual growth, education and social justice." It would be hard to disagree with such a fine, high-minded statement. But words alone are not enough, nor are good intentions. So far we have had plenty of hard-working, dedicated volunteers who by their actions help to make this statement a reality. Many of these goals require more than good intentions and action. Put succinctly, we need money to sustain and grow the Fellowship.

We have passed the formal end of our pledge drive, but it is not too late to contribute. If you were away during the pledge drive, let our treasurer know how you wish to contribute. Every bit helps. My thanks especially to Heidi MacLennan who managed the drive, and also to David Miller and Gary Cleek, members of the pledge team who organized the drive. Thanks also Lorna Dean, for once again working behind the scenes. We have cemented our relations with the Bare Stage. Thank you Jim Bellamy and Eric Luria for establishing our partnership with them. We once again have partners for our shared space for next year.



SHARE THE BASKET

The Share the Basket recipient for the months of December, 2018 and January & February, 2019 is **El Centro de Desarrollo Jocótepec**, the women's health clinic operated by Sylvia Flores. One-half of the weekly offerings which are not designated as pledge money, will go to this organization.



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|----|---------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | Jesse Quarter | 25 | Linda Jessen |
| 15 | Carol Powell | 27 | Frank Howell |
| 17 | Sue Kelley | 28 | Richard Clarke |



WOMEN'S MOVIEGROUP

The LCUUF Women's Movie Group will meet on December 27th. Place, time and movie will be announced soon. Contact Kathy Koches for information.



CHRISTMAS LUNCH - We will be dining together at Go Bistro on Christmas Day. We are scheduled for a 3 pm seating. Cost for this turkey and all the fixing's meal is \$175 per person. **We are taking reservations through December 9 because this restaurant fills up quickly.** Sign up the next two weeks at the fellowship or e-mail Karyn Carpenter at newfugger_wander@mac.com

HOSPITALITY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS - help the fellowship by serving on the Hospitality Committee. Basically, this is just someone to call and book restaurants for our meals out together. Meetings? Once in a while we go to a restaurant to check out their service and food. If interested, talk to Karyn Carpenter or Donna Burroughs.



WELCOMING AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

As we come to the year's end we want to thank all those who volunteered as Assistant Greeters during 2018. Your warm welcome to our members and visitors would not be the same without your support.

Marty Weston, Chairman



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

HELEN WHITE

Helen's first foray into Mexico was in 1968, when she and her husband Bill, visited Mexico City. They have been back regularly (at least once a year, often more times) ever since. At first they traveled by car, then by motor-home and now they fly down twice a year for three months each time to their house in *El Parque*.

I don't want to relate some of their fun-filled stories because Helen Murray White has written a truly wonderful book about their experiences called *Watch Out For Topes*, a two-pronged title exhorting us to slow down for speed bumps and to slow down to just enjoy life. It's available on Amazon and is a delightful read especially for us Lakesiders who will recognize all the references. She also has written two other books, *Fifty-four Days On a Container Ship*, the couple's adventures on such a vessel, and *Butterfield Overland Mail Route*, a fascinating and extensively researched history of Greene County, Missouri and the establishment of a cross country mail route. The route of the title went right past Helen's family's farm in 1857.

One of her most vivid memories was while on the cargo ship, gazing out at the pink world, colored by the glorious sunset at sea. She was asked why she wanted to spend time on a non-luxury ship in the middle of the ocean and wasn't she bored. She replied, "How can one be bored when there are so many new and exciting things to see and experience?"

Helen has a Master's Degree in Education, especially loving, as a student, literature, history, and psychology. She worked as a teacher for a short time, but the work she loved best was as a speech pathologist, especially

in the federal prison in Springfield, MO. Her goal was to help the inmates learn some form of communication in order to reduce their explosive outbursts and possible punishment by staff. In the prison she worked with those medically handicapped by strokes, head injuries, drug overdoses, and oral or throat cancer. One of her former clients who had his larynx removed sought her out at her work place many years later to thank her for helping him to speak again. She found it VERY rewarding and she did this part-time while also working at the family owned insurance agency. Helen grew up on a farm, an only child and has traced her family genealogy back many generations. She got excited about genealogy in her parents' attic, after finding a trunk full of old records, deeds, and documents. She eventually donated the whole lot to Missouri State University Research Department affiliated with Missouri Historical Society. It was from these discoveries that her history book about the mail route was conceived. One of Helen's proudest involvements is in her activism for women's rights. She says: "In the late 70's the Equal Rights Amendment was proposed as an amendment to the US constitution I worked with state groups and The League of Women Voters to secure passage in Missouri. (It did not pass). In 1979, the deadline for securing state votes expired, three states short necessary for passage, the end of the Equal Rights Amendment in the US. I participated in the Fast Break Club, a support organization for women's athletic programs at Missouri State University (to achieve equality with men) and was an original member of Network, a group of women in Springfield who organized for the sole purpose of putting women on city and county boards, being represented in community organizations such as Rotary, and helping them be elected to city and county offices. We disbanded after about six years because we had achieved our goals. I was the first woman elected to the Chamber of Commerce and had some interesting experiences as men adjusted to having a woman in their group."

Helen's one small regret in life is in not having high enough expectations. Who knows what she may have accomplished if there had been opportunities beyond teacher, secretary, or nurse in her day. That was pretty much it for jobs for a farm girl in central U.S. Although, even given those few choices, Helen managed "to do things her way", and succeeded.

Helen is passionate about genealogy, and researching, about family, history, and cooking. She spends a good part of her busy days on the computer. She considers being called a good writer and researcher the greatest compliment you could give her. She is a member of our UU Writers' Group.

Her goals for the future are to research other family lines and write another book. If she could acquire one super-human ability it would be to magically make people love one another. Her advice to others is: "Never give up – on anything". Submitted by Jan Manning



HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

The Humanist Discussion Group will meet not meet in December due to the Christmas holidays. See you in January!



SUNDAY SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Sunday Service Coordinator for December is Kathy Koches and the Coordinator for January and February, 2019 is Catherine Luria. Information regarding services can be found on the LCUUF website under "What's Happening."



Writing for Rights – Dec. 9th

Every year around International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10th, hundreds of thousands of people around the world write letters and e-mails on behalf of someone they have never met. These messages help convince government officials to release people imprisoned for expressing their opinion, stop the use of torture, commute death sentences and end other human rights abuses. This year LCUUF will participate in this important social justice work.

After the service on Dec. 9th, you are invited to help this effort by writing a letter on behalf one of 10 women around the world who have been identified by Amnesty International. Information about the women as well as where to write, how to write and writing resources will be provided. Information is available at <http://writeathon.ca/> or talk to Mardele or Fred Harland. Please participate!



Please send any announcements for January's services to Donna Burroughs at: donna.burroughs@gmail.com



The LCUUF Newsletter is produced to provide LCUUF news to members and friends. Deadline for contributions to the January newsletter is December 20th to be sent to: Editor: Kathy Koches at: kkoches@gmail.com