A photograph of a sunset over Lake Chapala, with mountains in the background and the sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow. The text "Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship" is overlaid in white serif font.

Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

July 2019 Newsletter

Upcoming Sunday Services

July 7 - "A Question of Value" - A purpose driven life, a sense of mission - these are important aspects of a good life. But more deeply foundational is a sense of value, or inherent worth. What is our inherent value? What might be lost if we were not here? Today we'll reflect on our value, both as individual persons, and as collectives of people. In particular, we will explore our board's Open Question on Our Value. There will be a discussion following the service. Additionally, Rev. Matt will have just returned from the UUA's annual General Assembly in Spokane, WA and will offer comments on his experience. Rev. Matt Alspaugh presenter.

July 14 - "God Went to Beauty School" This sermon is inspired by UU ministers, Michelle Buhite and George Beach, and features the poetry of Newbery Prize winning author and poet, Cynthia Rylant. The service will explore the question of what people mean by god, especially in a time of increasing scientific consciousness, how reading helps many of us connect with our inner gods, and why God would choose to become a manicurist, when she could have chosen to be any kind of beautician—hair cutter, colorist, or masseur. Trudy Crippen will give the sermon. Karyn Carpenter will be service leader.

July 21 - "Did Jesus Exist?" - Jesus' historical existence is a matter of faith for billions of people. Yet when we look beyond the accounts of the Christian Bible, the evidence is thin. What can we make of this evidence? What does the evidence, or lack of evidence, mean -- to Christians and non-Christians? We'll try to peel back the layers of this question. Reverend Matt Alspaugh will give the service, Lew Crippen, Service Leader.

July 28 - "Writer's Sunday" - Join us for our annual Writer's Sunday. Members of the UU Writers' Group will be giving short presentations. We have some new members this year who will be part of this annual favorite event. Those members who will be reading include Kathy Koches, Liz Moulder, Sue Kelley.

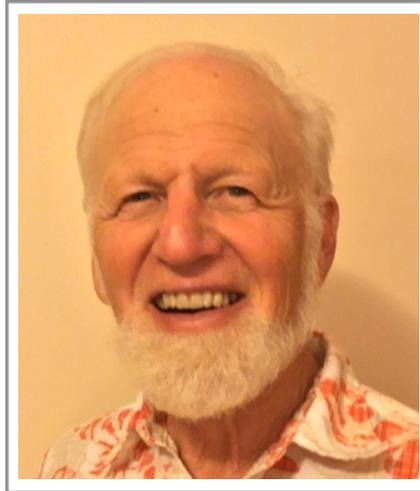
BOARD MEMBER'S MESSAGE

Eric Luria

In 2014, one year after retiring from our medical practice, Catherine & I came to Ajijic for a week-long visit with some close friends who had moved here several years previously. We had a great time enjoying the sun as well as the Northern Lights Festival. Our friends encouraged us to come back the next year for a few months to escape the rain and gray skies of the Pacific Northwest.

We took their advice, really enjoyed our experience here, so in 2016 we came back for 5 months. While we were here, the couple who were renting our house called to ask if we would consider selling it! While we had never even considered moving to Mexico, suddenly the idea was very appealing. We went home, sold our house, and began the big adventure of moving to another country.

We are now happily living at Lakeside and thoroughly enjoying our new life. In particular, we are enjoying our association with the UUF, and the many friendships we have made with the like-minded people we have met here.



With regard to fellowship activity: Recently, two local women, both previously involved in hospice work, approached the board about putting on a short course called "Get It Done: A Dying and Death Workshop". We

are all aging, but do not like to think about dying, and many of us have not done our homework to understand and be prepared for what to do if one of us dies here in Mexico. The course has 2 classes, each 1.5 hours long one week apart. It will cover such topics as advance directives, how to pre-plan disposition of the deceased, funeral homes, and other relevant topics.

There is a nominal fee to cover the cost of the handouts. If there is adequate interest, they would be pleased to do a workshop at UUF. They are available the last week in July and again in mid-September onwards. Please sign up at the fellowship with your interest for July or later in the fall. Contact me for additional information.

SERVICE PLANNING MEETING

Monday July 1, 3 pm

You are invited - ENCOURAGED, EVEN - to join us to discuss upcoming services at a brainstorming meeting Monday, July 1 at 3 pm. Bring your ideas and suggestions for this discussion. We will be meeting at the fellowship. Everyone is welcome.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

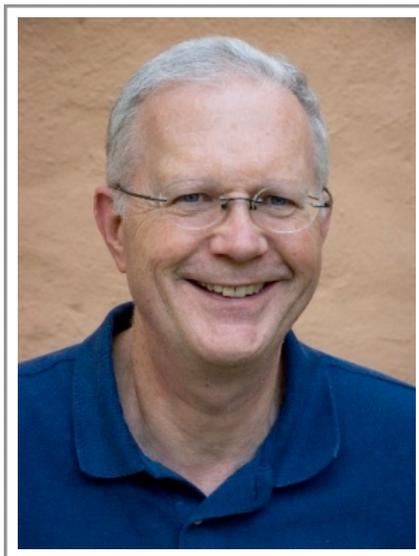
Rev. Matt Alspaugh

I am writing this column during a break in the programming at the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly (GA) in Spokane Washington. I've been here from Monday, participating in the UU Ministers Association's meeting prior to the GA. I come to these gatherings to reconnect with people I know, grow in my ministry, and learn what's current in the UU movement.

I find myself in a peculiar place at this GA, for I serve a Fellowship that is not a part of, and cannot join, the UUA, (or for that matter, join the Canadian Unitarian Council, either.) I'm reminded that at least with the UUA, I am, and our Fellowship is, on the margins. Being on the periphery brings up complex feelings, at once feeling a sense of solidarity with so many others who are marginalized (and much more deeply oppressed, I realize) and also a sense of isolation.

Much of the focus of the UUA right now is on opposing white supremacy culture as it manifests in the USA — a culture that starts with the country's president, pours out into police violence, caging of children, voter suppression, and renewed oppression of LGBTQ people, especially trans and gender-fluid folks. These are tremendously important issues in the USA right now; and as UUA President Susan Frederick Gray likes to say, "This is no time for a casual faith."

But much of what's happening in the USA feels far away to me, as a minister, a migrant to a different country who is trying



to navigate questions of ministry and social justice in this land. I think that is the experience of many of us - that the great concerns in our home countries are of less importance to us here than the great concerns that Mexico puts in front of us.

Furthermore, as a congregation in Mexico, LCUUF has largely had

to go it alone. It seemed that we had few places to turn to for assistance, even with some of the universal challenges of congregational life — things like fundraising, leadership, and conflict resolution. And when we did find support, it sometimes didn't 'fit' us, (because of our unique nature as an immigrant congregation in Mexico), or else the connection didn't last (such as our affiliation with the Houston church, or use of Church of the Larger Fellowship resources).

I do now see a glimmer of possibility. I was grateful to have a long conversation with the two co-leads of the UUA's Southern Region staff, Connie Goodbread and Natalie Briscoe. They see the handful of UU congregations in Mexico and the Caribbean as part of their responsibility to support, and are interested in finding out what help we might need. As we at LCUUF begin to face decisions about growth and outgrowing our meeting space, with fundraising and all the other changes that are inevitable in our future, it's good to know that we have a network of professionals we can tap for advice and guidance. Even in isolation, it's good to build relationships.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

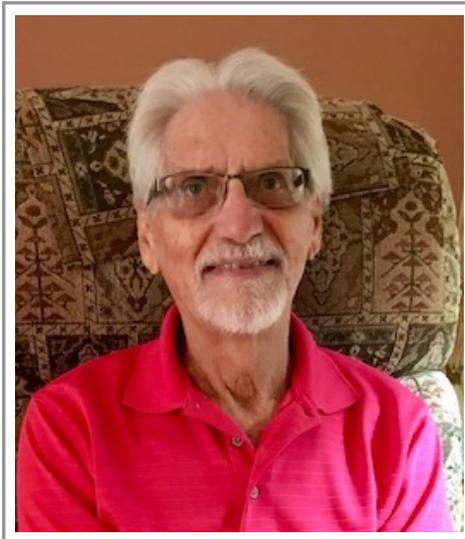
Fred Harland

At Lakeside, a lot of people think they know Fred, mainly because of his involvement with LCS and our Unitarian Fellowship. What they don't know is much about his life before he and Mardele came to Mexico in 1998. Or that, like many others in this Fellowship, Fred spent the early part of his life roaming around the world gathering adventures, philosophies and wonderful stories.

It was on Valentine's Day in 1964 that Fred proposed to Mardele on a park bench in Manhattan. After some suspense, she finally said yes. And after getting married in June, they flew to Ghana, West Africa to teach high school with CUSO (a Canada in organization with some similarities to the Peace Corps).

Those two years in Ghana were life-changing for Fred and Mardele and led to a number of other opportunities. Fred began the CUSO program in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific (initially 8 volunteers, growing to 60), and then, back in Canada, he started a new community college in Regina, Sask. He served as Principal there for 15 years, and later, started an international program linking Canadian colleges to educational bodies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean developing 40 different projects.

At Lakeside, Fred's served on the Board of LCS and started a Great Books discussion group (still going after 20



years) and the popular weekly TED Talks program. Fred and Mardele were part of the group which began the LCUUF. And then, as President, Fred organized a series of events which resulted in pledging and hiring our first minister.

When Fred finished high school he was undecided about what to study—but he knew what he didn't

want. He had come from a long line of United Church ministers and remembers being clear that he didn't want to follow that path. So he enrolled instead in the sciences. But after completing two undergraduate degrees—in arts as well as in science, he did in fact study theology, both in Ontario and in New York. But with theology studies confirming his atheist beliefs, he eventually returned to University to do graduate work in International politics.

In retirement, Fred became involved in competitive running, competing in several provincial and national events and winning several gold medals. He continued to be active in a number of local and international organizations and with Mardele, his work was recognized with a Saskatchewan Global Citizen of the Year award.

Fred says he is most proud of his two children and his long (55 years) marriage. Fred would like to be remembered primarily as an adult educator, helping people to reflect on what's important in life.

JULY LUNCHEON

Sunday, July 28

Each month we go to a local restaurant after services together. In July we will be going to Scallion Ajijic Bistro. Sign up at service. It is important that we have a correct headcount for the restaurant.

CIRCLE SUPPERS

You can still sign up for 3rd quarter circle suppers until July 14. For information contact Bob or Kathy Koches at kkoches@gmail.com

MARGUERITE ROSE PONDER

Our Beloved Marguerite Rose Ponder, age 75, resident of Austin, Texas, and Ajijic, Mexico, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on Sunday, May 26, 2019 from complications due to liver cancer. She was born March 24, 1944 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, the same birthplace as her mother and maternal grandmother.

She worked for 25 years as a biofeedback therapist at the University of Texas at Austin where she helped numerous students handle stress and overcome performance anxiety. Upon retiring, she moved to Ajijic, Mexico which she called her spiritual home.



She leaves behind her loving husband, Jack Prins; her daughter, Elizabeth Skadden, son-in-law David Bench and many other friends and relatives in Texas and Mexico.

Marguerite was a long time member of LCUUF and sang in our choir. Upon her return to Austin from Ajijic, she graciously donated her flute, electronic piano and many other musical instruments to the San Juan Cosala Children's Orchestra.

A Memorial Service will be held Lakeside later this summer.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 20 Bobbe Dannenbrink
- 25 Tom Dowdy-Winslett
- 28 Lew Crippen

Our deepest apologies if we have missed any birthdays in this edition. Our regular editor, Kathy Koches, is in the US and we don't have full access to all the files while she is gone. We will add any birthdays we missed in the August newsletter.