



LAKE CHAPALA UU FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2019

Upcoming LCUUF Sunday Services

August 4 – “Blessing of the Animals. A Reflection on the Endangered Species Around Us” – This week we honor animals and take a closer look at those animals which are native to Mexico and which are on the endangered list. How can we impact the lives of these special creatures? Talk by Karyn Carpenter. Kathy Koches Service Leader.

August 11 – “Chop Wood, Carry Water: Our Social Justice Ministry” – A Zen proverb says, “Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.” Whether we ever become enlightened or not, wherever we are on the path, we feel a yearning, a call, to do our part, to serve others. We want to serve, to help those around us, to make our community strong and healthy, and to make the world a better place. How do we discern the nature and direction of such a call? How do we serve and stay balanced? How do we interact with others, who may have different calls? Sermon by Matt Alspaugh. Roy Haynes as Service Leader.

August 18 – “The Healing Power of Laughter” – How often we overlook the importance of a good laugh. In this service we will examine laughter and how it relates to health, happiness, and our relationships. Plan to come with a sense of humor as we explore, sing, dance and yes, laugh! Talk by Karyn Carpenter. Donna Burroughs Service Leader.

August 25 – “Making Our Way in the Universe: The Path of Religious Naturalism” - Religious naturalism combines a naturalistic worldview, using science as a basis for understanding what is real. This it combines with a religious orientation, including spiritual feelings like wonder and gratitude, and values rooted in nature, such as cooperation within groups and balance in ecosystems. This combination appeals to those of us who approach the world both empirically and emotionally. We'll explore some ideas of Religious Naturalism, among them, its central creation myth, which describes our origin and place in the universe. Rev. Matt Alspaugh will give the presentation and Bob Koches will be the Service Leader



MESSAGE FROM REV. MATT



I've recently been pondering the use of daydreaming as a spiritual practice. Spiritual practices are regular activities that help one in their spiritual development or connection with the divine. Things like meditation, prayer, walking a labyrinth, creative activities like art or music, these can be spiritual practices when taken with the right motivation. But daydreaming?

This wondering began when I encountered an article "Ode to Positive Constructive Daydreaming"* which reflected on the work of psychologist Jerome L. Singer, who studied daydreaming in the middle of the last century. He "differentiated between three styles of daydreaming: 'positive constructive daydreaming', characterized by playful, wishful imagery, and playful, creative thought; 'guilty-dysphoric daydreaming', characterized by obsessive, anguished fantasies; and 'poor attentional control', characterized by the inability to concentrate on either the ongoing thought or the external task." Curiously, most research on daydreaming focused on the negative styles and the costs of mind wandering in performing work and academic tasks. The attitude seemed to be, "we all daydream, it's unproductive, so just stop."

I've been meditating more or less daily for over fifteen years, using various meditation practices. Largely, meditation involves directing the mind, encouraging it to stay focused on some object of meditation (a mantra, the breath, a text, or maybe nothing at all). At the same time, I often engaged in what Singer called volitional daydreaming, choosing to daydream. This side of me comes alive mostly at night. When going to sleep or when I awaken and cannot get back to sleep, I choose to go off into a

fantasy realm, building imaginary worlds in my mind. I now realize that this practice may be a form of positive constructive daydreaming. I note that there is a degree of directing the mind in this activity — that is, I allow the mind to wander, but not too far, and if it wanders toward negative topics, personal issues, the state of the world, I gently draw it back, just like I draw the mind back in meditation when it wanders.

Maybe this kind of volitional daydreaming is in fact a form of meditation, but I'm not sure. I'm not sure because of another curiosity: in the brain, daydreaming is associated with increased activity of the default mode network, a network of parts of the brain associated with self-referential thinking and mind wandering, yet, activity in this part of the brain tends to be reduced during meditation practice.

I've not found a lot of detailed guidance on how to practice positive constructive daydreaming. In general the suggestions are to engage in some mentally unchallenging task, like knitting, gardening, casual reading, or just washing the dishes. Then allow the mind to wander, letting the thoughts flow, without much judgment, and enjoy the time. Or pick an enjoyable object thought, a nice vacation memory, or a delightful 'what-if' scenario, and see where it leads. So consider adopting volitional daydreaming; it could be an enjoyable and worthwhile spiritual practice. I'd love to hear about your experiences.



Jim Bellamy, Treasurer

BOARD MEMBER'S MESSAGE

Two years ago, Joan Jaquish, my future wife, brought me to a LCUUF Sunday service for the first time. What a revelation that visit was. Here was a church that practiced, as well as preached, religious tolerance. Here was a church that welcomed critical thinkers. Here was a church that provided an “open pulpit” where people were encouraged to speak their minds and eschew dogmatism in all its forms. For the first time in my life I had found a spiritual home. Many of you know the rest of my story. Last year I married the girl of my dreams in this same church in a beautiful ceremony presided over by our very own Reverend Matt.

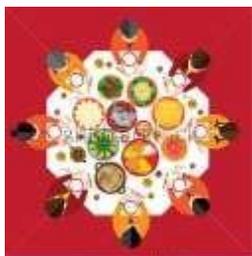
This year you gave me the singular honour of electing me your treasurer. I am deeply humbled by the trust you have shown in giving me this important assignment. Please be assured that I will do my best to earn that trust. I am pleased to report that I do bring some experience to the job. Over the years I have served as treasurer for three other non-profit corporations.

What news do I bring from the treasury? Well, for starters, we are now using new accounting software that tracks our financial affairs more completely. Surplus funds in our bank are also invested conservatively in a Banco Actinver savings account that currently pays 6% interest.



I also bring exciting news for pledging members. Starting immediately, you will have several convenient new ways to make your pledge payments. Most members can now elect to make their payments directly to LCUUF in cash or by cheque drawn on either a Mexican, American or Canadian bank. Those members who desire a U.S. tax receipt will have several additional payment options utilizing a brand-new Texas-based non-profit corporation that has been set up by members of our Fellowship. My thanks to Lorna Dean and her team for making future pledge payments much easier for our members. Our arrangement with The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston is ending and I encourage all members who now pay through FUUH to close their accounts there. Regardless of how you make your pledge payments in future you can rest assured that I will track all payments carefully and provide a mid-year update like the one you received last month.

Finally, let me close by offering my thanks, on behalf of our Board, to all our hard-working members who have made our Fellowship the wonderful community it is today.



CIRCLE SUPPERS

The third quarter circle suppers will be held in July, August and September. Assignments will be e-mailed to hosts and posted on the bulletin board. These suppers are a great way to get to know your fellow UUs. If you need information contact Bob or Kathy Koches at kkoches@gmail.com



CHOIR NEWS

The choir is on hiatus until November when our new Choir Director, Linda Jessen returns from Canada.



AUGUST

01 Val Marcum	15 John De Waal
08 Marty Weston	18 Sandy Wallin
08 Alicia Macnamara	31 Sue Boyczuk
10 Jeanne Haley	31 Carol Johnson
10 Els Abercrombie	

Happy Birthday also to Lamar Allen, who's birthday was July 26th



HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

The Humanist Discussion Group will meet on the fourth Monday August 26 R 1:30 PM at the Fellowship. The topic this month is Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. This is a theme that is playing out around the world. If you have questions or would like the background reading material on the subject contact Bob Koches at: bobkoches@gmail.com.



Good news!

AmazonSmile is now available in the Amazon Shopping App to all AmazonSmile customers using supported Android devices.

See below for instructions to turn on AmazonSmile in the Amazon Shopping App and generate donations for Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fund Inc.

1. Open the Amazon Shopping App on your Android device.
2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
3. Follow the instructions in the Amazon Shopping App to complete the process.

You can always generate donations for Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fund Inc. by shopping at smile.amazon.com. AmazonSmile is a free program and you'll find the same low prices, vast selection, and convenient shipping options as [Amazon.com](https://amazon.com), with the added bonus that AmazonSmile will donate to your favorite charity.



SPOTLIGHT MARDELE HARLAND

My childhood was spent in a small, prairie town in Saskatchewan, an ideal place to grow up; lots of freedom and friends from many different backgrounds. Both my parents were teachers. I grew up with a strong sense that I was a product of immigration. My maternal grandparents were Swedish and my paternal grandparents were Welsh. My favorite grandmother was born in Patagonia, part of the Welsh nationalist colony that travelled to Argentina in the 1870's to escape British interference. In 1902 the colony moved to Saskatchewan. I grew up very aware of ties to other places and cultures.

After spending 5 years at universities in Saskatoon and Toronto studying History, English and Religious Education, I was contemplating at last beginning a career, when on Valentine's Day in 1964 on a park bench in New York City, Fred proposed. We were married in June and in late August flew to Ghana, West Africa to spend 2 years teaching high school with CUSO. Living and working in Africa changed how I thought about the world and what was important. It influenced me to spend most of my working life with International NGOs and voluntary organizations, trying to understand and support local development projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Organizational development has also been a special interest. A highlight for me was working in the Philippines and Indonesia to build local NGO coalitions and encourage cooperation with their Canadian counterparts. I also taught English in Papua New Guinea and Fiji and Community Development in Lesotho.

Music has always been central to my life. I have enjoyed playing the piano and have sung with a number of excellent choirs, including Los Cantantes del Lago here in Lakeside. I am an avid reader and belong to a number of book groups and I love spending time exercising in my warm pool.

Our son, Christopher, an International Lawyer, and our daughter, Renata, a Neuropsychologist, as well as their spouses and especially our 4 grandsons, have hugely enriched our lives, and continue to do so.

Fred and I were founding members of LCUUF. I have enjoyed accompanying congregational singing at the Fellowship for many years, and have served on the Sunday Service Committee off and on since the early days, including several terms as Chair. In 2015 I began the Fellowship Newsletter, and served as editor for three years. The LCUUF community has been a very important part of our lives at Lakeside



Fellowship Meal

On August 25th the Fellowship will be going to Hotel Real de Chapala in Lower La Floresta for their buffet lunch after the service. Please sign up at the round table in the foyer.



SHARE THE BASKET

Our Share the Basket recipient for June, July and August 2019 is Poco a Poco San Pedro Itzicán. Poco a Poco is a nonprofit organization that supports various initiatives in San Pedro Itzicán and the surrounding towns. These remote villages are located along the shore of Lake Chapala, in the vicinity of Mezcala, and are indigenous communities who lack education and support. Health issues, poor nutrition, and little work, together with many social issues, make it hard for these communities to survive. People are willing to learn and work, but it's not easy for them because of the lack of education, and money to make a change to their lives.

Poco a Poco believes that a "hands up - not a hands out" approach is the best way to help. Poco a Poco works on creating small, start up projects to enable local people to earn a living, and encourage and enable children to attend school. Some of their numerous projects include English classes, food share programs, gardening projects, emergency health funds, and more. To learn more about this organization visit their website at www.pocoapocosanpedro.com



PLEASE remember to bring your own cups to UU events. Please, bring your own and encourage others to not forget! You can store your cup in the plastic tub in the library.

LIGHTS FOR LIBERTY VIGIL



Several LCUUF members attended the candlelight vigil at Centro Laguna Mall on Friday, July 12th



Send any announcements for September services to Donna at donna.burroughs@gmail.com



A new member orientation will be held at the Fellowship on August 17th at 10:30 am. Interested parties can sign up at the Welcome table or contact Paula at paulaodom01@gmail.com

Our next New Member Ceremony will be Sunday, August 25th



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