



LAKE CHAPALA UU FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER- SEPTEMBER 2019

Upcoming LCUUF Sunday Services

September 1 – “The Transient and Permanent in Unitarian Universalism” In 1841, Rev. Theodore Parker gave a much acclaimed sermon called “The Transient and Permanent in Christianity,” in which he explored what was worth keeping, versus what could be let go of, in Christianity (at least for Unitarians). We reconsider that topic for modern Unitarian Universalism as a whole. What is at its core? What is ephemeral, at the periphery? Rev. Matt Alspaugh will give the sermon, Lew Crippen service leader.

September 8 – “Why I Don’t Believe in Borders” The sermon will be based largely on a talk by United Church of Christ minister, Rev. Jerald Stimson, and written in 1993. This service will help us look at longtime US border issues. Kaya Reed and Trudy Crippen will deliver the service

September 15 -” Stories We Tell Ourselves” We often believe old stories that we tell ourselves — stories that are often harsh and judgmental, victim stories, stories that are no longer true, and may never have been true. These are called ‘thin stories’ in the practice of Narrative Therapy. Instead of continuing to tell these stories, we seek to replace them with hopeful, helpful, and more honest ‘thick stories’. These we seek to thicken with more detail and historical evidence. What are the thin and thick stories in our lives? How might we change negative stories into positive ones? Rev. Matt Alspaugh will give the sermon. Curtis Kirker service leader

September 22 – “Grow Your Mind, Grow Your Brain” Brain research shows you can grow and change your brain. You can use its natural plasticity to make a better life. You can slow down aging, rejuvenate your immune system, and be happier, more energetic and more fulfilled. Recent research results will be discussed, including how areas of the brain grow and change with ongoing meditation, how your immune system changes, and the many ways that meditation slows the aging of your brain, body and skin. Also presented will be simple ways that you can start today to make your life better and slow the effects of aging. Talk by Richard Clarke. Service leader: Carol Johnson

September 29 – “UU and You’...Reflections of Diverse Paths to being a UU.” We are Unitarian Universalists who know that we need not think alike to love alike. We are from many beliefs and backgrounds: people with religious backgrounds, people with none, people who believe in a God, people who don’t, and people who choose to let the mystery be. Roy Haynes will lead a program featuring various members of the Fellowship on how they have chosen to be Unitarian Universalists after coming from other faiths. They will help explain how such a seemingly diverse group of people are able to share their search for truth with each other in the same fellowship.



MESSAGE FROM REV. MATT

I don't think of myself as strongly intuitive, but I am picking up on the energy around the Fellowship in the last few months and it is positive! There seems to be positive excitement in the air, people seem to really enjoy being part of our congregation.

Last Saturday, we had an Orientation for people interested in joining the Fellowship, and gained 11 new members as a result. This is the most that have joined at any time since our founding. Now, summertime is usually our slow time, but over this summer, we've had good attendance (July's average was 51 persons). Because of that attendance, summertime Sundays feel a little different than Sundays at other times of the year.

We've begun a conversation about our Social Justice work as a congregation. Our first question: what do we already do to help the community — either as individuals or as a Fellowship? At a service on August 11, many people wrote what they are doing on colorful paper hands, which were pinned to the cloth at the front. (If you'd like to add your words to a hand, extra hands are on the altar table up front). I was amazed at how many different things people are doing already, from helping individuals in the community to deep involvement with other service organizations.

Our Pledge team is already off to an early start this year. This is important, as we depend on the consistency of pledge payments for effective funding of our operations.

Our discussions on the Board's Open Questions continue to guide us. In particular, we're beginning to think about how to respond to the growth that we are seeing. We're exploring ways to increase our seating, particularly in the winter high season. We have even broached the topic of two services. In the longer view, we're beginning discussions about whether it makes sense to buy or build a larger facility. An initial conversation about this topic will be held on Friday, Sept 13, at 10am at the Fellowship. Please see the column in this newsletter from President Lew Crippen for more details.

One thing that continues to surprise and enchant me is how this Fellowship is so different from most UU congregations elsewhere. We are, after all, a group of mostly retirees. We are mostly people who have deliberately relocated to this remarkable locale, embedded in a Latin culture. I've discovered, sometimes to my chagrin, that my brilliant ideas imported from congregations in the north sometimes just don't fit well here. That might be the experience of others of you, who come from thriving UU congregations up north, where you've been involved with many creative and effective ideas and programs. We welcome your creativity and experience, but be ready: I think we all have to learn to tweak and shape our ideas so they will truly benefit this Fellowship. This is an exciting time for the Fellowship, and a great place to be!





President's Message

Our annual pledge drive is about to kick off. Lorna Dean has written an article in this edition of the Newsletter that includes fairly detailed instructions on how to pledge. As you are all aware in addition to the very visible things that you see each Sunday and during the week, the operation of the Fellowship has costs that, while not glamorous, nor visible each day, are nonetheless necessary for our day-to-day operations. Your continued support is gently but urgently requested in order to continue and further our goals, just as that current support funds our operations today. Thank you for that support. Please continue to provide that support for next year. I also thank the Pledge Team for their work of last year and their ongoing work for the upcoming year: Heidi MacLennan, Dave Miller, Lorna Dean, Rev. Matt, and new member Fred Koesling.

As most of you are aware, our Fellowship no longer has the support of the financial services of Frist Church, Houston and we are now using our own resources to receive funds in USD (see Lorna's article for details). That we are able to accomplish this is due to our non-profit fund (a registered, US-based non-profit). This is the accomplishment of a combination of ideas and work by a small, determined group of people, including Rev. Matt. In particular, the efforts of Lorna Dean and Norman Woods are greatly appreciated.



Open Question Considerations

We recently held a series of three open question forums after services. These were primarily to

help the Board better understand the Fellowship and to be used as a guide for future direction. Those open questions related to our growth, our Sunday Services and value (both the value that we can bring to the Fellowship and the value the Fellowship can bring to us. The discussion on Sunday Services, was encouraging in that the feedback was very positive. The services have been improving over the last couple of years and are at quite a high standard. Thank you Matt! However there remain some problems with the sound system, although it too has improved. Many of the members have enjoyed the music, especially since Michael has been playing regularly. There was a very strong desire among the membership that we continue to have at least half the services lay led by our members.

The question on values was almost entirely taken up by discussions as to how Fellowship members can become more actively engaged with the local community in areas of need. There was a strong feeling that we could be doing more than we are currently, although there was also recognition that many members were actively engaged in support of the local community. Some members felt that they preferred to lend their support as individuals, rather than as a group. As I write this we are in the process of identifying a member to coordinate community outreach activities.

The growth discussion has caused quite a bit of discussion at the last two board meetings. To this end I am asking Board Members, members and friends of the Fellowship and a few others to meet for an open discussion on Friday, 13 September from 10 pm to noon. The focus will be on our future physical facility. While I expect full participation from the "round-table", ideas, comments and critiques from all will be considered and are welcome. All members and friends of LCUUF are welcome and you are encouraged to attend.



PLEDGE CAMPAIGN 2020-21

The Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has a pledging system to help us plan our budget for the year, and to assure us that we will have sufficient income to pay for our part-time minister, our expenses, and any outreach projects that we decide on. A *pledge* is the amount that you are promising to donate to the Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for the next fiscal year.

PLEDGE CARDS - Pledge cards for 2020-21 will be distributed starting on Sunday, October 6, 2019, and will be available on the Welcome Table on Sundays after that. Please fill out a pledge card with your name and *annual* pledge for the LCUUF fiscal year, February 1, 2020, to January 31, 2021. Be sure to indicate the currency in which you plan to pay your pledge. Put your completed pledge card in an envelope and put it in the collection basket on any Sunday. Only one pledge card is necessary for the year. Payments need only your name. Pledge amounts are confidential and known only to the Treasurer and the Pledge Team.

PAYING YOUR PLEDGE for 2020-21

Any pledge payments paid from February 1, 2020, through January 31, 2021, will be credited to your pledge for the 2020-21 fiscal year. If you pay your pledge early, be sure to indicate what fiscal year it is intended for.

The Pledge Team has arranged several methods for paying your pledge for the fiscal year 2020-21. First choose the currency of your payment (Mexican Pesos, U.S. dollars or Canadian dollars), then decide if you can use a U.S. tax receipt.

If you *do not* need a U.S. tax receipt, the simplest ways of paying your pledge are:

- Mexican pesos in an envelope in the offering basket on Sunday. Your name must be on the envelope in order for the payment to be credited against your pledge.
- A Mexican, U.S. dollar or Canadian dollar check, made out to:
Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, A.C.
and put in the offering basket on Sunday.

If you *do* need a U.S. tax receipt, it is important to direct your pledge to our charitable organization in Laredo, Texas, known as: **Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fund, Inc.** Our website at <http://lakechapalauu.org/paying-your-pledge-in-us-dollars-2020-2021-year/> specifies several methods you can use to direct your payment to **Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fund, Inc.** and receive a U.S. tax receipt.

There are more detailed instructions for the various choices of paying your pledge in each currency at: <http://lakechapalauu.org/pledge/>

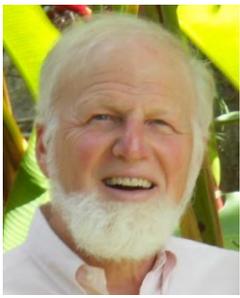
PRESENTATION ON PLEDGING

On the first Sunday of the Pledge Campaign, October 6, 2019, after the service and coffee, Lorna Dean will give a PowerPoint presentation on pledging and making pledge payments.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions on pledging, you may contact a member of the Pledge Team at PledgeTeam@LakeChapalaUU.org

Lorna Dean
Member of the Pledge Team



Eric Luria

Board Member Message

Have you noticed how many people have been coming to our Sunday services? This is in the middle of the “low” season, yet most of the seats are full. In addition, 13 new members joined at the end of August. We are clearly attracting new people and may well be short on seats in the peak season. The board has called a special meeting for Friday, September 13th from 10 to 12 Noon at the Fellowship to begin having a thoughtful discussion on the future of LCUUF. Some of the options we will consider are:

- 1) Doing nothing; this will limit the size of the congregation which can be accommodated.
- 2) Find an existing building in Ajijic to rent or buy; this would most likely entail renovation to meet the needs of the congregation.
- 3) Design and build our own building.
- 4) Your ideas. Please join us to listen and share your ideas and concerns about our future.

We held our first “Get It Done Workshop” about preparing for a person dying at Lakeside. Over 20 members participated and the consensus was that it was excellent. Many important topics were covered. While many people have the necessary documents in the US or Canada, such documents have no legal standing in Mexico. It is critical to have a Will, particularly if you own property here, and also a Power of Attorney. Discussion was had in detail regarding Advanced Medical Directives and the topics to discuss with your doctor. Information was provided about what to ask during a visit to a funeral home. Finally excellent tips were provided on how to organize the myriad of paperwork needed. The workshop was well thought out and efficiently presented. We plan to present another “Get It Done Workshop” in the winter. I strongly encourage you to attend.



SEPTEMBER

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 05 Penny Humphreys | 20 Maynard Merits |
| 09 Tonja Murphy | 26 Lori Fjelsted |
| 17 Heidi MacLennan | 30 Nancy Jordon-Zanot |



HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

The Humanist Discussion Group will meet on the fourth Monday, September 23 @ 1:30 PM at the Fellowship. Just how safe is your cell phone? We will focus on health and safety issues, including cell phone and wireless radiation. If you have questions or would like the background reading material on the subject contact Bob Koches at: bobkoches@gmail.com.



Fellowship Meal

On September 15th the Fellowship will be going to Viva Mexico in San Juan Cosalá for lunch after the service to celebrate Mexican Independence Day. Please sign up at the round table in the foyer.



SHARE THE BASKET

Our Share the Basket recipient for September, October and November is NCA. NCA is a non-profit, charitable organization, incorporated and registered in 1977 in Chapala, Jalisco, Mexico. As of the first of June, 2019, we currently have 200 children actively sponsored.

Scholarships for Education. NCA assists qualifying, underprivileged children and young adults in the Lake Chapala area (from Ixtlahuacán de los Membrillos to San Pedro Itzicán to Jocotepec) to achieve their maximum educational potential: NCA supports the cost of their school fees, books, supplies and uniforms, and where indicated, provides an income supplement and/or assistance with related medical needs. NCA has helped several thousand young Mexicans over the past thirty-five years. NCA alumni are now practicing lawyers, doctors, accountants, marine biologists, teachers, engineers, and successful professionals in other disciplines. NCA is a volunteer-based, hands-on organization, supported by several local community fund-raising groups and activities. This local community support enables NCA to guarantee that 95% of all donated sponsorship funds are received directly by the students. Local community support pays for the NCA Chapala project office and staff.

FOR THE LOVE OF EDUCATION



CELEBRATION OF LIFE

A gathering of Lakeside friends to celebrate the life of LCUUF Member, Marguerite Ponder, will be held at the Fellowship on Wednesday, the 18th of September from 2pm-4pm. All are welcome!



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



CIRCLE SUPPERS

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



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