



LAKE CHAPALA UU FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2020

Upcoming LCUUF Sunday Services

January 5 – "Why Five Genders are Better than Two" – Speaker Doug Mattoon; Service leader Donna Burroughs. We will take a look at several ancient multi-gender cultures to see what they can teach us about acceptance of each other's differences and perhaps lessons that we could use to live peacefully in an increasingly mean spirited world.

January 12 – "The Fire Sermon" by Rev. Gary Kowalski. After graduating from Harvard Divinity School, writing best-selling books on animals and spirituality, and serving a variety of UU congregations around the United States, Rev. Gary Kowalski retired to Santa Fe, NM, to become a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical responder. This morning Lieutenant Kowalski shares parables gathered from the end of a high pressure nozzle: lessons about camaraderie, everyday heroism, handling trauma and grief, and "situational awareness" or firefighter zen. Gary currently serves as part time minister to the Unitarian Congregation of Taos. Come feel the burn!

January 19 – "What Is It About Growth?" LCUUF has had notable growth in recent years. The numbers are up - members, attendance, giving. But are these the only ways we grow? We'll look at other aspects of growth, beyond the numbers, and consider how a balanced, holistic approach to growth might help us avoid growing pains that might otherwise develop. Following this service, we will have a pizza lunch and our Annual General Meeting. Speaker is Rev. Matt Alspaugh; Service Leader is Cat Barnett.

January 26 – "What Unitarian Universalists believe-or don't" Presenter: Fred Harland; Service Leader: Kriss Gang; Reader: Fred Koesling. The service will explore—through readings, hymns and presentations- different "takes" on UU beliefs. There will be discussion following the service.



MESSAGE FROM REV. MATT

As I write this, I look out on a cool, grey, rainy day - the kind of day that doesn't appear in promotional materials for Lakeside. It's the day before Winter Solstice. This Solstice exemplifies change, from times of increasing darkness to times of increasing light in the northern hemisphere. The Solstice was observed by the ancients, and as we well know, Christmas and New Year's Day were placed where they were on the calendar in part to co-opt Solstice celebrations. So, when someone says to you, "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year," they are really saying, "Happy Solstice" although they may not be aware of it. If there's an underlying theme for this time of year, it is "change". Change from dark to light. Certainly other parallel themes emerge, like "hope", "waiting", "birth", but to me these are all manifestations of change. Change is in the air. This is a time for end-of-year retrospectives, questioning, "What changed? "Are things better or worse than a year ago?" This is also a time for thinking about what needs to change in the future. For many of us, these changes take the form of New Year's resolutions. Others of us develop their own ways to reflect past and future change. I have a friend who does a formal end of year review. She takes a poster-board and pastes on it pictures from magazines that represent aspects of the last year for her. (She was a teacher, so she was at home with poster-board, glue, and magazine pictures). She'd then write notes about those images, and reflect what actions to take or changes she might make to help those dreams come true.

Perhaps some of us are reflecting on changes in the past year over which we've had little or no control. These are changes such as illnesses and injuries, or perhaps financial upsets, losses of relationships, even deaths. That these changes are often negative is not surprising, because if we had control over them, we'd have turned them into a different direction. The spiritual question is how do we accept such changes as part of life, or better yet, transform such changes into something that strengthens our well-being? Can we mine them for meaning and wisdom? I think that an important part of what we do here at the Fellowship is to reflect on the changes in our lives, especially those that come unbidden, and try to make sense of them. Certainly one can do this meaning making alone, but it's much easier with support from a group that may include people who've faced similar changes. Being able to share these aspects of our lives is what makes this congregation special. I wish you all peace and strength in the coming New Year.



New Year's Day Taco Party. Alfonso Garcia and family will be making tortillas and tacos at the Fellowship on New Year's Day at 2pm. Please bring drinks to share, leftover cookies and party food. As an icebreaker we invite you to secretly come up with something you are going to do in 2020 that will be revealed to all later at the party. Cost is \$100mx which needs to be paid when signing up. Please let Paula, paulaodom01@gmail.com know if you can bring an ice chest and ice. Paula Odom, Hospitality Chair



Important Meeting Notices

On January 5, 2020, after the service, we will have a discussion about LCUUF's proposed 2020-2021 budget. On January 19, 2020, also after the service, we will have the LCUUF Annual General Meeting. A reminder: All members have voting privileges thirty (30) days after signing the Membership Book. Also, neither proxy voting nor absentee voting is permitted. There will be pizza! Susan Miller, Secretary



SHARE THE BASKET

Our Share the Basket recipient for December, January and February 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



A big thank you to all who participated in Amnesty International's annual letter writing campaign in support of global human rights. Twenty-six people stayed after the service on Dec. 8th to learn about six young men and women around the world who were suffering harassment, human rights abuses and even imprisonment by governments and police authorities. Twenty-five handwritten letters were written to support them and mailed from Denver by Hugh and Claire Jenney. An equal number of supportive e-mails were also sent. Kudos to all who took the time to write a letter and make a difference! Mardele Harland, Coordinator



CHOIR NEWS

Are you ready to take the plunge? The LCUUF choir is starting up again in January. Starting on Friday, January 10th at 10.00 am, choir rehearsals will initially be every 2 weeks with a performance at a service towards the end of each month. Rehearsals will last about 1 hour. Michael Reason has agreed to be the choir's Music Director and he promises to make it fun! There is a choir sign-up sheet where you can add your name and contact details. Sign up now and see how singing in a choir can put a smile on your face!



Susie Lindeman gave a talk about her trip to Romania and visit to the first UU church. She brought back a beautiful embroidery cloth from Romania for our chalice. Trudy Crippen was the service leader.



HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

Climate change is an existential crisis for humanity. Before we get into the throes of a dystopian morass let us explore how innovation is tackling the large problems. During the last two months we explored solutions concerning water shortage and carbon emissions. This month we will explore food shortage and innovations to correct this problem. The Humanist Discussion Group will meet Monday Jan. 27th at 1:30 pm at the Fellowship to talk about new ways to feed the world. If you are not on the mailing list to receive the reading materials and want to be, contact Bob Koches at bobkoches@gmail.com



CIRCLE SUPPERS - WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY SHOULD I SIGN UP?

Circle Suppers are small groups of 6 or 8 people who meet for a potluck dinner at a member's home. The date is set by the host after conferring with their assigned guests (names are drawn from a hat from those who sign up.) The host provides the main dish and guests bring a side dish or dessert. This is a great way to get to know other UUs in a small group setting and has been a very popular event at LCUUF. Circle Suppers are held quarterly and there is a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Table for the first quarter suppers to be held in January, February or March of 2020. We encourage everyone to sign up for these fun dinners. If you have any questions, please contact coordinators Bob or Kathy Koches at kkoches@gmail.com



FELLOWSHIP

HOLIDAY COCKTAIL PARTIES

Members of the fellowship gathered in the homes of Heidi MacLennan, Trudy & Lew Crippen, Joan Ward and Paul Bennett & Paula Odom to celebrate the holidays. Thanks to the hosts and all who attended.





BOARD MEMBER MESSAGE

Lew Crippen, President

The Lake Chapala Board has been busy preparing for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in January. This year, in order that the congregation may more closely examine next year's budget before that meeting, we will have an after service meeting on January 5, 2020. You are encouraged to attend and closely question our treasurer, Jim Bellamy, as well as the Board and Committee Chairs and members as to the details of the proposed budget. Your Board will consider all input and, if necessary, adjust the budget before the AGM on 19 January. We believe that this will allow the budget to be examined and understood by the congregation well before being asked for approval.

As I look back over 2019, I am amazed at the progress of the Fellowship. Service attendance has us bursting at the seams. In order to solve this problem, we have formed the Fellowship Facilities Work Team, about which I wrote in the last Newsletter. We will continue to keep you informed of this team's progress. Currently we have identified a company that will be able to assess any property that meets our final cut and identify problems that will need to be solved before going forward.

We have formally moved a portion of our finances to a stateside non-profit fund. This allows us to be able to pay Rev. Matt, without depending on the services of the First Unitarian Church in Houston, and we have a place that anyone can leave a tax-free legacy. The efforts of Norman Woods, Lorna Dean, Susan Miller and Joan Ward, not forgetting Rev. Matt are greatly appreciated in this effort. A special thanks to Carol Powell, who graciously agreed to be the Fund's representative in Texas.

Although our long-serving Choir Director, Bob Koches has decided to retire (I'm not sure how one can retire from retirement, Bob), we have several people who are continuing to keep our music going forward. In particular Michael Reason, our pianist, Linda Jessen, and Catherine Luria have, and are

contributing significantly to our music program. Thank you all. A very special thanks to Bob for keeping the choir alive during the last several years. Further we have had several guest musicians perform for us during the year.

Our Membership Committee continues to add new people to our congregation. Some of these new members are already actively engaged in the running of the Fellowship and they are all welcome and thanked.

The Fellowship Website has had significant upgrade thanks to the efforts of Karyn Carpenter. A big thanks to her and to Richard Clarke who has taken over the maintenance of the Website

Joan Ward wrote last month about our outreach activities. You are referred to last month's newsletter for detailed information. I remind everyone of the importance of our outreach activities, something that we plan to expand during the upcoming year (come to the budget meeting).

Don't forget that your suggestions and ideas as to a new location for our Fellowship are encouraged and are required by the middle of January, 2020. A big thank you to Kathy Koches, Lori Fjelsted, Mardele Harland, and Norman Woods for their suggestions.

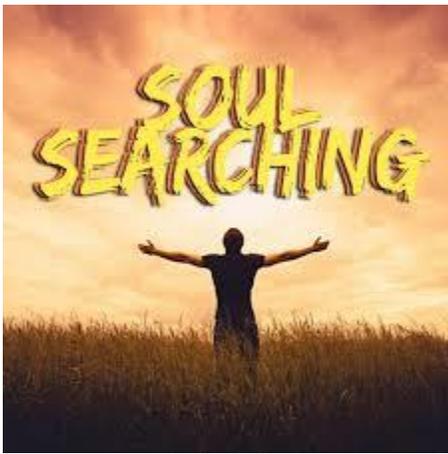
I look forward to the upcoming year and believe that we can and will progress even further in our Fellowship and our service to the community.

Lew Crippen, President



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 03 Cheryl Cholvachuk | 19 Joan Bellamy |
| 05 Kathy Koches | 21 Charlie Jacobs |
| 07 Monica Devine | 25 Paula Odom |
| 10 Karyn Carpenter | 27 Pamela Cucinell |
| 13 David Hudnall | 29 Teresa Sande |
| 18 Linda Samuels | 30 Jan Manning |



SOUL STORIES

In January and February, Liz Hill and I will lead a group session we're calling Soul Stories. Participants will be invited to share a brief story from their own lives, while others listen deeply, listening not just to the words in the story, but to its context and meaning to the person who lived it. The others are invited to comment briefly on their observations and wonderings, with the intention of bringing new insights into what might be old, oft-repeated stories. Even a short, simple story can have deep meaning in our lives and can be a gateway to deeper understanding. The process can open us to changing the story, if we want to, so it has a new meaning for us.

We will meet on January 11th, 25th and February 1st at 10 am, at the Fellowship. Please sign up in advance by emailing Liz at liz@lizhill.net with your interest or sign up on Sunday.

Rev. Matt Alspaugh



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SUNDAY SERVICES

We're trying to create easier ways for people to be involved and help out in the Fellowship on occasional Sunday mornings. Here are just a few ways to help:

Readers for services: Matt is always happy to have people participate in services, for example reading just one poem or short piece.

Sound tech: We'd like to have more people able to set up and run sound, on a rotating basis. It's not hard, and it's important to a good service.

Create slides: Matt builds his slideshows from a template; anyone with basic PowerPoint or Keynote experience could help on occasion.

Contact Rev. Matt or Sunday Service Chair, Kathy Koches, about any of these areas.



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