



**We are now having in person services and NO RESERVATION is required. There will no longer be a limit to the number of people who can attend. Masks will be required and we will continue to maintain safe distance spacing of chairs.**

**May 1 – Flower Communion.** The Flower Communion is a celebration of the beauty of the world around us, of its diversity, and of the diversity of each of us. If possible, please bring a flower from your garden, vase, or the roadside to the service. If you are planning to join on Zoom, please send a picture of yourself with a flower to [richard@infinitepie.net](mailto:richard@infinitepie.net), or just have a flower with you for the service. Rev. Matt Alspaugh will be the presenter and Heidi McLennan will be the Service Leader.

**May 8 – Mothers' Day.** Members Sue Kelley, Roy Haynes, Pamela Cucinell and Kathleen Pharis talk about their mothers. Cat Barnett will be the Service Leader.

**May 15 – Meditations on Beauty.** We all have a sense of beautiful things when we encounter them, and they can carry us away into profound emotion, even move us to tears. Is beauty inherent in the world? Or is beauty simply “in the eye of the beholder?” Or is beauty a cultural thing, something we learn as we move through the world? We'll explore these questions as we explore the nature of beauty. Rev. Matt Alspaugh will be the presenter and Dee Dee Camhi will be the Service Leader.

**May 22 – Pathways to Liberation and Empowerment.** Hidden in plain sight. We depart our Mama's womb with the experience of profound loss. Living a meaningful life we inevitably experience more painful losses. I submit to you that woven into our experience of loss is a tried and true pathway to wholeness. David Roth will be the presenter and Cate Howell will be the service leader.

**May 29 – The Good Life and Social Justice.** An outgrowth of Rev. Matt's service on The Good Life, Fred and Mardele Harland organized a 4 session workshop for people interested in enhancing their lives. This Sunday some workshop attendees will discuss their experiences with living a happy life, a rich life, a meaningful life. They will also discuss barriers that may have to be overcome to make life happier, richer, and more meaningful. Susan Miller will be the presenter and Carol Johnson will be the service leader.



We are also meeting on-line, at our usual time, Sundays at 10:30, using a service called Zoom. Here's how to get set up. We suggest you do this before the meeting.

To join via video on your computer, tablet or smartphone, please click the link below – you will be stepped through downloading a free app that will let you connect to the meeting. <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/233941792>  
Meeting ID: 233 941 792

Or, for audio, just dial-in by your location

- +52 229 910 0061 Mexico
- +52 554 161 4288 Mexico
- +1 253 215 8782 US
- +1 301 715 8592 US
- +1 778 907 2071 Canada
- +1 438 809 7799 Canada
- +1 587 328 1099 Canada
- +1 647 374 4685 Canada

Elsewhere? Find your local phone number: <https://us04web.zoom.us/u/fnTR4N3JJ>

We encourage you to try to connect early, to get things set up. However, you won't be able to join the service until about 10:00am on Sunday. But it's good to get set up early.



### MAY BIRTHDAYS

03	Doug Mattoon	17	Sharon Merits
07	Tom McClure	19	Liz Hill
11	Cate Howell	20	Fred Koesling
14	Ellen McFarland	31	Kaya Reed



## MATT'S MESSAGE

A few weeks ago, I attended a meeting of Unitarian Universalist ministers at a retreat center outside of Houston. This group included some twenty ministers from Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and me. We hadn't met in person in almost three years, so it was a bit of a homecoming. I was grateful to see them out of their Zoom boxes and in the flesh. As a retreat topic, we focused on how the pandemic has affected us, how we have been changed, and what will be different for us in the future.

Even as I talked about the pandemic with my peers, we were also living the changing norms around the pandemic. This meeting was held in Texas, in a mask-optional space, and few people wore masks. I did my own personal risk analysis and decided I was reasonably safe in our very large, well ventilated room. So I stripped down. It was a little uncomfortable, and I felt a little naked without my face covering.

At the same time, I was happy to help the group out with offering a Zoom connection for those who could not attend in person due to job or health requirements. This was a wonderful thing, for we have ministers who work as chaplains or in community organizations and have limited ability to travel to events like this. Zoom allowed them to participate.

This morning, I heard a talk by Jane McGonigal, a futurist who uses massive multiplayer games as simulations to forecast the future. In 2010 she ran a simulation about a global respiratory pandemic. The simulation predicted issues like social distancing, mask discomfort and conflict, as well as the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories. One fascinating prediction was

that the primary reason people would break quarantine was to go to religious worship, which as we know, has turned out to be the "number one super-spreader risk worldwide." Her advice to religious leaders was, "you need to go virtual." This was over ten years ago!

As I've mentioned before, we're in the endemic phase of this pandemic; the risks are reduced but not gone, and there will still be outbreaks and spikes. We will continue to develop our ability to offer hybrid, in-person and on-line services and other programs. We're not perfect at this; we had a stumble on Sunday (April 24) with our equipment, which we are investigating and will resolve. But we are committed to hybrid services and programs, and will continue to evolve and improve what we offer.



## LCUUF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| President       | Kriss Gang      |
| Vice President  | Charles Jacobs  |
| Secretary       | Cat Barnett     |
| Treasurer       | Lorna Dean      |
| Member at Large | Catherine Luria |
| Member at Large | Dee Dee Camhi   |
| Member at Large | Susan Miller    |



The LCUUF Newsletter is produced to provide LCUUF news to members and friends. Deadline for contributions to the June newsletter is May 25th and should be sent to Editor, Kathy Koches, at: [kkoches@gmail.com](mailto:kkoches@gmail.com)



Kriss Gang, President

## BOARD MEMBER'S MESSAGE

It has been three months since I was elected as board President and so far, all has gone well. I continue to be amazed at the level of collaboration and cooperation that exists within this Fellowship, with a special shout out to the Care Committee. It certainly has not been the case at other Fellowships or Churches where I have belonged, So LCUIF is a breath of fresh air. I am happy to report that your board has been busy. Immediately following the general meeting, we held a virtual board retreat which was facilitated by my friend and former cohort from what was the Midwest Heartland District, Lisa Presley. She was both the district executive and conflict consultant. I got to work with her in both capacities at my former congregation. Today she is the Congregational Life Consultant for the Midwest Region. Her time and talent were put to good use during our two-day retreat. As everyone on the current board has worked together on many other committees and projects, we did not need to spend time on board relations activities and were able to address topics that will serve to enhance the life and work of our fellowship as we move into a post-Covid world—well less restrictive one at least. We were immediately able identify several areas of action that the board will be working on this year. They include:

- Reviewing our congregational values statement and engaging the congregation for input
- Assessing our relationship to the Mexican community
- Assessing opportunities to reach out to other UUs in Mexico.

As a new board we navigated the closing and opening of our doors as the Omicron variant hit lakeside and learned that the hybrid services support structure we have built is stable and flexible enough to enable us to quickly adapt to changing government health mandates and requirements. We continue to monitor government

health websites for any potential changes that could affect us in the future. In March and April Fred Harland facilitated a workshop call Good Life, based on a Sermon Rev. Matt delivered in November 2021. The workshop was conducted across four sessions and was well attended. As a result of the workshop, participants identified the following list of activities that they would like to see resumed or initiated:

- Resume fun group activities, such as the Circle Suppers, that were put on hold because of Covid.
- Create more discussion groups on UU-related topics.
- Explore Small Groups Ministry.
- Have the Board explore setting up a Social Justice Group that would keep on top of the issues, provide education for the rest of us, and encourage us to be involved.

The good news is that action has or will be happening for each of these activities. The board has greenlit the resumption of social activities and already Circle Suppers are being planned, plus the men's dinner and movie group will begin starting in May. The board has already been discussing the initiation of small group ministries. At least one member has expressed interest in starting a group and I expect others to follow. I am willing to facilitate a workshop or discussion series on our UU history, digging deeper into topics I have covered in three services I have delivered on our history. By fall we should see concrete plans put into action. And finally, the board has begun discussions on forming a Social Justice group that will explore how we as a congregation can identify issues we would like to address, how to engage with the community successfully and appropriately, and what social justice educational elements would be needed to initiate, support and inform our efforts. On April 10<sup>th</sup> we heard Jaco Roets of South Africa describe a strategy that has helped under-served communities find their own agency and power with the collaboration from outside sources. He has indicated that his group is working with several communities in Jalisco, so there may be some opportunities to partner here or mirror what they are doing. In May Susan Miller will be leading a service on "The Good Life and Social Justice". It is hoped we can follow up with a brainstorming/discussion session to identify who is willing to actively participate and how we can move forward on social justice. As I said at the beginning, it has only been 3 months, however they have been busy and I believe a productive three months...with much more to come.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Kathleen Pharis

Almost 5 years ago, in October 2017, I traveled to Lake Chapala for the first time, and actually my first time in Mexico — with the intent to stay! I had been looking for somewhere to live outside of the US after retiring from a 30 year stint as a public school teacher (most of that in junior high) in central Louisiana. I was looking for a place where I could enjoy beautiful landscapes and weather, and where I could spend some deep quality time enjoying my long-standing passions: theater, music, and creating the many kinds of art I'd not had the time or energy to pursue during my years of teaching. I wanted to be around people who shared my love of the arts, and who were fun and uplifting. I wanted to get to know the people of another culture. I wanted to learn through life experiences beyond the borders of the places I'd lived most of my six-and-a-half decades. Through the years, I had traveled all over the US, and in Europe, and really wanted to live somewhere else as I started my next chapter after retirement. I finally decided on Ecuador — but about six months before I planned to move there, Ecuador's immigration system started going through some changes that made it much more difficult to become established as an expat there. Meanwhile, I had a friend from the US who lived in Guaymas, Sonora, and he kept encouraging me to look into Mexico instead. I had never considered Mexico, partly because I had never been here, nor learned much about it, and sadly had some misconceptions about many things here. Happily, however, my friend in Guaymas mentioned this place called Ajijic, which was full of artists and opportunities for being involved in all the artsy things I was looking for! So the research began, and pretty quickly I decided the Lake Chapala community was the place for me! And I have never regretted it!



I spent most of my life in the state of Louisiana (aside from a couple of years after college, in the 70s, in New Mexico near Santa Fe). I was the oldest child and only daughter of very loving and committed parents, both of whom died several years ago, and grew up with two younger brothers. My youngest brother died at age 45 of AIDS-related complications. My other brother and his wife live near Lafayette in south Louisiana's "Cajun Country". I get back up there to spend some time with them about once a year now. I have one son, Jonathan, who is my joy and an extraordinary human being who never ceases to amaze me. He has been living in South Korea, teaching English, since 2010, and we do not get to visit in person nearly often enough — I am eternally grateful for Skype!

My experience with Unitarian Universalists was basically non-existent until I was an adult. I only knew one person who was a UU — and she happened to be a good representative of what I now know UUs hold dear and stand for. During my formative years, and with only the best intentions, my parents raised my brothers and me in the Southern Baptist denomination. So I grew up in this fundamentalist Protestant ideology, and accepted that belief system quite rigidly for many years (until I was in my mid-fifties, about 15 years ago). However, we are all on a journey, and some of us have had to conquer a certain amount of ingrained fear that to venture off the road - that we were taught was the ONLY road - would bring certain damnation to ourselves AND to the countless others we were born to "be a witness to". I regret that it took me so many years to venture to look around and discover the wider scope, but I am grateful beyond measure that I am now able to see it, and participate in that bigger picture! In my mid-fifties, a variety of circumstances and new-to-me ideas began leading my thoughts toward reconsidering the tenets of the religion I'd grown up with, and I finally left behind those beliefs and the practices of that religion. For a long time after breaking away, I wanted nothing to do with anything that smacked of religion or church. I reveled in my free Sunday mornings! I was no longer tethered to teaching Sunday School, to practices for various services throughout the week - every week, and special presentations for every high holy day in the church calendar! However, about two years ago, I started acknowledging that I missed some of the good aspects of "church", for want of a better word: the community, the personal connections, and the working together with others to effect change for the good of humanity and the world. I started being open to finding a group where I could experience and participate in these

things again, without the demands of adhering to dogmas or creeds. Eventually, I ran across a video on Facebook with a link to a UU service here. I saw several people in this one service who I'd gotten to know through theater here - people I enjoyed being around and respected. I searched out the LCUUF website, and read it all! I felt comfortable with and also inspired by what I read there, and decided this was a group I wanted to be involved with as I travel the path I am exploring now. This was a good call! Here at LCUUF, I have felt welcomed, I have experienced challenges to dig deeper, and I have learned about new possibilities for serving the people and communities I have chosen to be a part of in this wonderful state of Jalisco. I am happy and grateful to be here and a part of this fellowship



## HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

The Humanist Discussion Group will meet on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 4pm. Via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86577912863>

We will discuss the topic "how has the Ukraine war changed the world order" This will include but not limited to the unintended consequences toward globalization, climate change, food shortage and the struggle of democracy versus autocracy.

If you wish to receive the reading materials prior to the meeting and are not on the mailing list please contact Bob Koches at: [bobkoches@gmail.com](mailto:bobkoches@gmail.com)



## SHARE THE BASKET

Our policy for Share the Basket, during the coronavirus crisis, has been: If we collect more than MXN 5,000 pesos in any month, the full amount will go to an organization providing assistance to low-income members of the Lakeside community. If we collect less than MXN 5,000 pesos in donations in any month, the balance will be subsidized from the LCUUF treasury, as long as this is financially feasible.

If you pay your pledge or make a donation to LCUUF by PayPal, by Bill Pay, or pesos directly to Lorna Dean or David Hudnall, you may specify the amount that you want to donate to the Share the Basket program.

Tepehua Centro Comunitario is our recipient for Share the Basket donations in May 2022.

<http://tepehua.org/>



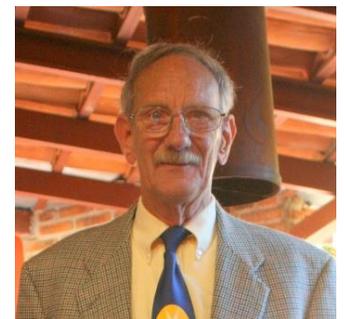
*Helping a Village to Help Itself*



We lost two of our long-term members in the past few months. They will be greatly missed.



Frank Howell



C.B. Kelley