



# LAKE CHAPALA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

## NEWSLETTER- April 2018

### Upcoming LCUUF Sunday Services

**April 1, 2018** - "Resurrection of the Earth" - Rev. Matt Alspaugh is presenting and Fred Koesling is the Service Leader. This is Easter Sunday, sometimes known as Resurrection Sunday, and we'll take a Unitarian Universalist slant on this name, exploring resurrection of our natural world. Realizing our human impact on the earth, how can we work to assure our planet remains viable for future generations? How can we resurrect the centrality of the earth in the human spirit? **Don't forget to change your clocks and "spring forward" or you will be an hour late to Fellowship!**

**April 8, 2018** - "From the Mexican Land – the Religion of Corn" – Bob Koches is presenting and Kathy Koches is the Service Leader. Corn is the soul of Mexico. From it's earliest beginnings until modern times we will look at the importance of corn in the religions of the ancient peoples of Mexico, the cultural importance of corn and the threat to diversity posed by GMOs today.

**April 15, 2018** - "The Starfish and the Spider" – Rev. Matt Alspaugh is presenting and Ellen McFarland is the Service Leader. The UU Choir will sing. Rev. Matt says: "Not long ago, I encountered the book "The Starfish and the Spider", which explored the concept of leaderless organizations. I wonder if there is a larger principle in play; that of organizations, systems, even universes without centers as we know them. Could our concept of "the interdependent web" mentioned in our seventh principle, be alluding to such networks? How might such a concept guide our everyday lives?"

**April 22, 2018** – "Earth Day" - Are we each doing all we can to save our world from destruction? Will world leaders finally come together with urgency to avoid the unfolding catastrophe of a warming, destabilized planet? This year, on Earth Day 2018, we'll join together to celebrate our Mother Earth. With songs and prayers for a new future, we will visualize a healing planet and a safe, secure future for all of us. Carol Johnson will present this year's Earth Day program, with assistance from Richard Clarke and Jan Manning.

**April 29, 2018** - "Born Again and Again and Again" - Rev. Bonnie Vegiard, by video, with personal reflections by Rev. Matt Alspaugh. What does it take to find yourself with an entirely new perspective, one that gives energy and purpose to your life? For many of us, daily routines and obligations can feel like they get in the way. But when you look back, how many different "selves" can you count? Our emotional and spiritual lives include many stops on an infinitely variable path. We'll reflect on how many times we have journeyed to a new beginning



### Message from Rev. Matt

We are about to embark on another experiment, this one expanding how we do outreach. At the February LCUUF Board meeting, we agreed to a trial “Share the Basket” program for three months (March- May). In this program, we will give half of the “loose money” we receive in our offering baskets to an organization that is helping improve the community. (Money that is in marked envelopes, such as for pledge payments, is not included in this sharing.)

These “Share the Plate” or “Share the Basket” programs are found in a large number of Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America. They find that giving part of their offering to community groups helps UUs “walk the talk” about making the world a better place. As a member at one such church put it, “So often there seems to be a disconnect between what we do in our worship and the real world expression of our values. This practice makes a clear and intentional connection.”

For those who have concerns about the impact of these programs on the finances, most congregations have seen an increase in loose offerings that more than makes up for the part given away to other organizations.

Our Board chose an organization to support during the trial: University Vocational Assistance. UVA is a local organization founded to help defray the costs of higher education for Lakeside students. Additionally UVA provides counseling and support to the students through graduation and in most cases, through professional licensing. Founded in 1976, UVA is one of the oldest Lakeside charities, and is able to direct 100% of its donated funds to support the students.

If we continue the program after the trial, we will select other organizations to support for three months at a time. The real challenge in a “Share the Basket” program will be in selecting recipients for our funds. At the board meeting, most of our discussion focused on what kinds of organizations we ought to fund. The discussion raised many questions - which will be ongoing questions for everyone to consider. Such questions may be:

- What do we feel are the most pressing needs?
- How do we identify organizations that are most effective and trustworthy?
- Should we focus locally or in a wider area?
- How do we respond to disasters, like the recent earthquakes?
- Can we be more involved, with hands-on service, in addition to giving money?
- How do we address core issues, i.e. to offer “a hand up, not a handout.”
- Can we avoid unintentionally supporting existing oppression (sexism, racism, and classism) in our giving?

These are complex questions that need careful consideration. We hope to initiate an Outreach Committee (or similar group), which would be responsible for obtaining suggestions of organizations to support, for vetting and prioritizing them, and for publicizing our efforts. From the start, our Outreach group would have to face questions like those above, and lead all of us in exploring them. If you are interested in helping or knowing more, please let me know (at [matt@malspaugh.org](mailto:matt@malspaugh.org)).



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## President's Message

### President Lew Crippen

The new LCUUF Board is an outstanding group with a diverse set of skills: Karyn Carpenter, VP, Gary Cleek, Treasurer, Susan Miller, Secretary, Linda Conklin, Eric Luria and Joan Ward, Members-at-Large. We are, of course, ably assisted by Rev. Matt Alspaugh. I have now had the pleasure of working with this Board during two meetings and am pleased to report that we managed to stay focused for the full two and one-half hours of the meeting, taking time out for coffee and donuts, of course.

At Rev. Matt's suggestion, we take the first 20 minutes discussing a chapter from a book designed to make us a more effective group, especially in addressing issues of a wider scope and further in the future than the next month or so, much as the last Board was able to consider a part-time minister and instituted pledging.

We spent some time during our first meeting drafting a mission statement and covenant. Now our meetings begin with a reaffirmation of that covenant.

*The mission of the LCUUF Board of Directors is to lead an inclusive community dedicated to spiritual growth, education, and social justice.*

- Start and end on time
- If you are not able to come, notify board
- Silence phones
- Listen deeply and listen intently
- Respect ourselves and one another
- Be forgiving
- Speak openly and honestly
- Respect diverse views
- Take our roles seriously, but not ourselves
- Be present and prepared
- Encourage risk taking and innovation

Just as we thank the departing board members, we thank all of our departing snowbirds. Their membership and support are invaluable. Without them we would not be as vital a congregation as we have come to be. And this year we also sadly say goodbye to full-time residents who are returning to snowbird status. *Bon Voyage* Fred and Mardele. We wish all of you safe journeys and a safe return in the fall/winter.



## HUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

The Humanist Discussion Group will meet Monday, April 23rd at 3pm at the Fellowship. Due to so many members traveling in March, we postponed discussion of our March topic to the April meeting. We will be discussing Humanism in a Digital World, or Tech Humanism: How Data and Technology Shape the Future of Meaningful Human Experiences. For further details contact Bob Koches at [bobkoches@gmail.com](mailto:bobkoches@gmail.com) or 766-2299.



## CHOIR NEWS

The Choir will at the service on April 15<sup>th</sup>, which means we will have two rehearsals; one on Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm and one on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm. The choir will take a short break and will resume rehearsals and performances in August. Contact Choir Director, Bob Koches to let him know if you would like to become a new member of the choir. [bobkoches@gmail.com](mailto:bobkoches@gmail.com) or 766-2299





## CIRCLE SUPPERS

The sign-up sheets for our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Circle Suppers (April, May, or June) are on the Welcome Table. Please sign up and indicate if you would like to be a host (and how many you can seat including yourself) or a guest. Assignments will be posted April 15<sup>th</sup>.



## MEMBERSHIP

Currently our committee members are Ellen McFarland, Val Marcum, Liz Moulder, and Marty Weston (Chairperson). We have one vacancy that we want to fill. Please mention your interest to one of our committee members.

We are planning an LCUUF New Member Orientation and Ceremony to take place in a few months. If you would like to become a member of our Fellowship, please discuss your interest with one of our committee members.



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- |    |               |    |                 |
|----|---------------|----|-----------------|
| 11 | Linda Conklin | 24 | Mardele Harland |
| 16 | Peter Jessen  | 24 | Catherine Luria |
| 24 | Gary Cleek    | 29 | Sharon Woods    |



## SUNDAY SERVICE COMMITTEE

The Sunday Service Coordinator for April is Catherine Luria. Susan Miller will serve as the Sunday Service Coordinator for May and June.

The Music Sub-Committee has been formed and is being chaired by Bob Koches. Bob and Matt are working together on getting musicians for Sunday Services and to accompany the choir for April, May, June and July. Elaine Robinson is moving permanently to Lakeside in July and has offered to be our accompanist for Sunday services and for the choir after July. The Music Sub-Committee will also be working on revising the contents and index of the LCUUF hymnal and will arrange for reprinting and binding the new hymnals.

The Sunday Service Committee has accepted the recommendation of the Music Sub-Committee that an electric keyboard be purchased. This recommendation has been forwarded to the Board.



## WOMEN'S MOVIE GROUP

The LCUUF Women's Movie Group will meet on April 27<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. The movie title and place will be announced and e-mailed. Contact Kathy Koches at [kkoches@gmail.com](mailto:kkoches@gmail.com) or 766-2299 if you wish to receive this e-mail.



## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – CAROL POWELL**

Who was it that said you can't judge a book by its cover? Well it's not true for books but it still stands true that you can't judge a person by their looks.

Carol Powell is an example. She lives in a small apartment in a hotel in Ajijic, walks everywhere, and enjoys all the people she meets. She seems like a nice grandmother, which she is, but her past is remarkable – which again is not unusual for most of the ex-pat community here at lakeside.

Carol did not speak English until she entered school at age five, Italian being her mother tongue. She grew up with one sister and a whole heap 'o' Italian relatives in Rochester NY. At 18 she entered a Catholic Convent with the goal of becoming a missionary and was educated to be a teacher. She has a science degree from the University of New York, Excelsior College, plus additional graduate work. She took philosophy classes and was exposed to a wide range of thinking, causing her to begin to question her faith and learning that she *could* question things. She taught in a Catholic school until she was 25 at which time she had a "crisis of faith" and left the convent. She says wearing street clothes for the first time in six years was strange.

It was shortly after this that she was introduced to Unitarian Universalism by a young man she was dating who said she did not have to stick with her Catholic beliefs. Spurred by this eye-opening observation she looked around and found UU, soon realizing it was her spiritual "home".

One of the highlights of her life was when she answered an ad that seemed to promise high adventure and low pay, (just her thing) teaching the kids of a family travelling throughout Mexico. She stayed with them for three months, but returned to Mexico many times later on her own.

Back home, she married, producing her son, Jordan who now lives in Plano, Texas with her two grandsons. This was the first of her four marriages.

She calls herself entrepreneurial and has held many such jobs, including owner/operator of a country inn, restaurant, bakery, and antiques store, from which she learned a high degree of organizational skills. As an example, she and her third husband ran a Christmas tree farm in upstate New York. When she considers the most important job in her varied career, it is her term as a teacher of the Child Development Associates, a 13 month course for adults needing certification to teach nursery school in Florida.

She taught school all over Mexico in her 20's and also for two years after retiring to Ajijic in 2006. She was one of the founding members of LCUUF and served as Board Secretary for four years.

In 2008 she was diagnosed with colon cancer and went through cancer treatment of chemo, surgery and radiation. She says she cannot ever have radiation again as she has had the maximum dose permitted for one body in one life-time. She attributes her son with cajoling her to go through with chemo. She urges everyone to get colonoscopies and other diagnostic tests for cancer. It is so important to catch it early.

Her advice today: think carefully before making life choices. Her passion now is politics, and she carefully follows events in the United States.

A sad footnote: Carol is returning to the United States on August 7th, but will still be close enough in Texas (McAllen) to be able to walk across the border.

Submitted by Jan Manning





The Newlyweds – Joan & Jim Bellamy

Congratulations to Joan & Jim Bellamy – the very first wedding for the LCUUF Fellowship. On March 4<sup>th</sup> Rev. Matt Alspaugh performed the ceremony to join Jim Bellamy and Joan Jaquish as husband and wife.



Joan Bellamy, Rev. Matt Alspaugh & Jim Bellamy



We bid farewell to Fred & Mardele Harland as they return to Canada for the next several months. We look forward to their return next fall and wish them good health & safe travels.



Fred Harland



Mardele Harland



Get Well Wishes to:



Marguerite Ponder & Jack Prins



**PLEASE bring your own cups to UU events.** The fellowship doesn't want to use Styrofoam cups, so please, bring your own and encourage others to not forget. Thank you.



### Styrofoam Facts

By Jan Manning

The environment isn't the only concern we have to worry about regarding Styrofoam – a brand name for closed-cell extruded polystyrene foam commonly called “Blue Board”. Styrofoam (to call it by its common name) contains the chemicals Benzene and Styrene. Benzene is a known human carcinogen and Styrene is suspected. Not only do Styrofoam products contain these lethal chemicals, but a partial breakdown of the Styrofoam, is begun by hot drink and food, causing these toxins to be absorbed into our bloodstreams and tissues.

It takes 500 years or more for Styrofoam to decompose and it never truly degrades so will be around in landfills and the waters of Earth for millions of years. Some cities have banned the use of Styrofoam containers, including New York and Washington, DC. If these huge cities can do it, smaller communities certainly can.

Americans (not to mention the other nations of the world) dispose of 2.3 million tons each year, 25 billion coffee cups, plus all the other bubble wrap, insulation, and containers. Manufacturing of Styrofoam is rated as one of the largest source of hazardous waste, putting workers and others in dire risk.

Biodegradable throw-away containers are in the works, but in the meantime, **PLEASE bring your own cups to UU events.** The Earth thanks you.



Please send future announcements to Donna Burroughs at [donna.burroughs@gmail.com](mailto:donna.burroughs@gmail.com)



***This Newsletter is produced to provide LCUUF news to members and friends. Deadline for contributions to the May newsletter is April 20<sup>th</sup> to be sent to: Editor: Kathy Koches at: [kkoches@gmail.com](mailto:kkoches@gmail.com)***