

*Happy Holiday*

## LCUUF NEWS OF THE WEEK



Lake Chapala Unitarian  
Universalist Fellowship



Issue 92

Dec 22- Dec 29, 2024

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Attend our weekly services in person or via Zoom on Sundays at 12:00pm CST. We are located at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, San Lucas 19, Riberas del Pilar.

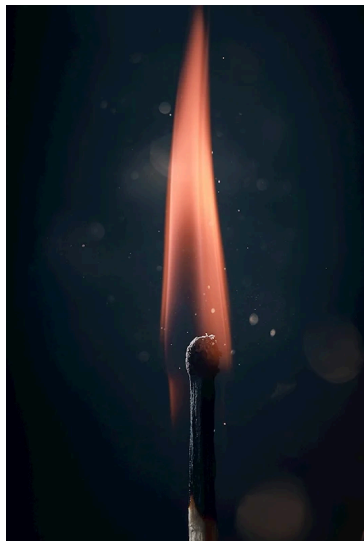
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## UPCOMING SERVICES



### **This Week: Dec 22**

**"Dwelling in the Darkness"**  
**Rev. Matt Alspaugh**  
**Carol Johnson, Service Associate**

We have just experienced maximum darkness, with the Winter Solstice one day previous. While this is a season of light, in many traditions, what underlies that joy is the dark. Are we afraid of the dark? Do we avoid it? Or can we engage the darkness with the light?



### **Next Week: Dec 29**

**"Enter the Silence: Awaken the Spirit"**

**Presenters: Rev. Tim Boeve, Rev. D'Vorah Kelley, Jane Castleman.**

Join us for this Taize inspired contemplative service as we transition from 2024 to 2025. Through music, readings, and time for silent contemplation, we will Enter the Silence and Awaken the Spirit. Guest musician Areli Medeles (cello) will join our Music Director Michael Reason (piano) for classical music and chants. The service will include an explanation of Taize.



## Pledge Campaign Status as of Dec 20

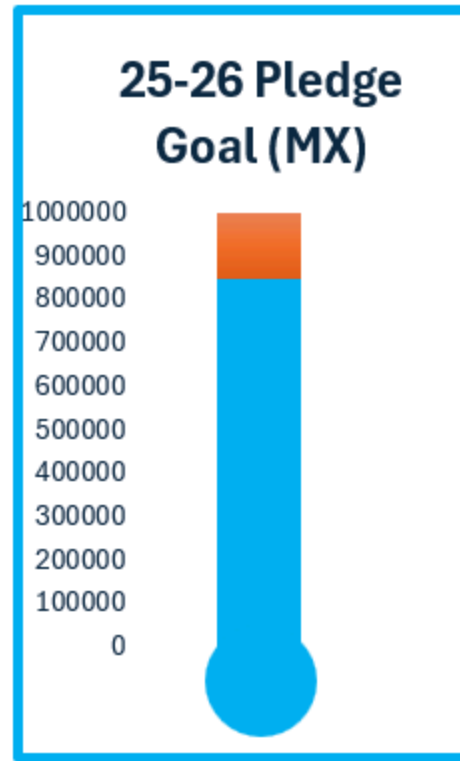
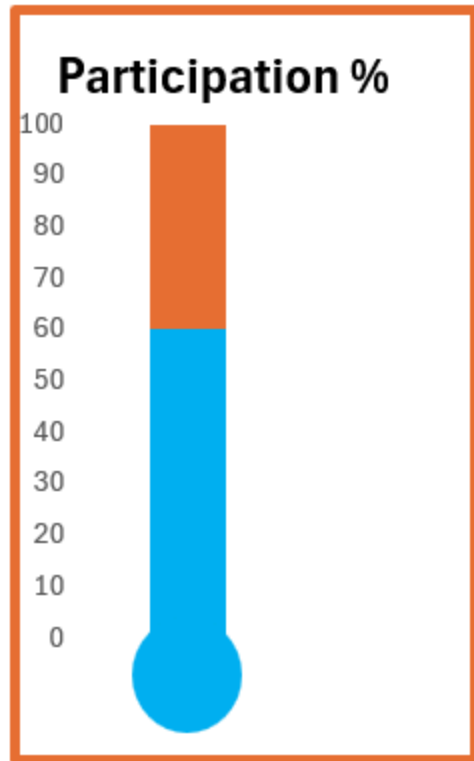
Active Members Participating	60 %
Pledge Revenue Goal Achieved	85 %

**Please Make Your  
Pledge For 2025-  
2026 NOW!**

Thank you to all who have pledged. If you have not yet made your pledge you can contact Al Castleman at [ajcastleman@yahoo.com](mailto:ajcastleman@yahoo.com) or click on the button below to get a pledge card. Here where the campaign stands to date:

The sooner we hear from you the sooner we will know about all the things we can afford to do in 2025

**Make Your 2025-2026 Pledge**



## December Board Report

Your Board of Trustees met for their December meeting on Monday December 16th. Present were President Kriss Gang, Treasurer Al Castleman, Vice President Ted Fahy, At-large members Paula Odom, Catherine Luria and Cate Howell and guests Larry Pihl-nominee for treasurer in 2025 and Dee Dee Camhi and Bob Koches representing the Sunday Service Committee. I have asked that the Sunday Service Committee have a representative at each of our board meetings as a way to improve communications between our two groups.

In addition to monthly reports, Treasurer Al Castleman reported that last Sunday's pledge push yielded great results and as of December 20 we have received pledges totally 85% of our targeted goal from 60% of our pledge units (an individual, family or couple). He reported that this will help greatly toward preparing the 2025-2026 budget. He also reiterated that a more important goal was to receive a pledge from 100 of the congregation. If you have not made a pledge or contacted Al with your intentions, you still can do so. We also had a discussion about expenditures yet to be detailed for the new



budget.

The board also took time to discuss the formation of a Finance committee/team to take on the responsibilities of managing all financial business for the board. The plan is to have a committee in place during our next fiscal year.

Finally, I presented a “draft” report on the results from the recent congregational survey. We received 62 responses from a membership of around 90 members. A reasonably good response rate. Here are highlights from the report:

#### General Interest

We received a very positive rating for Fellowship services and activities. We received a rating of 8-9 out of 10 for important areas like quality of services, Fellowship activity engagement experiences and overall satisfaction with the LCUUF—very reassuring results.

For future services, the topics of interest we should take into account for future service planning are interesting. In order of preference they were:

- Mexican history (43%)
- Death and dying (35%)
- Theological studies (35%)
- Hunger and poverty (21%)
- Spirituality (21%)

Regarding other activities members would like to see, unique suggestions included: walking groups, book club group, monthly or quarterly gatherings like the holiday gatherings, brown bag lunches after services, trivia night and more small group discussion groups.

#### Sunday Services

The overall rating for Sunday Services was very positive with 72% of the respondents indicating a 8-10 out of 10 level of satisfaction. When asked if you would like to help participate or prepare a service, again a majority of 58% indicated they would be willing to prepare a service. 40% said they would participate as a reader, 47% as a researcher and a surprising 45% said they would help out as a greeter. All very encouraging results. One area for improvement which was mentioned multiple times was regarding our hymns, specifically the desire for more “singable” hymns or song leaders-both of these issues are being addressed by the Sunday Service Team.

#### Demographics

A majority of respondents (80%) live here full time, another 12% are here part of the year. More interesting is that there are roughly an equal number of respondents falling into each category for number of years as a member. One interesting demographic change is that a majority of respondents have a previous history of attending a UU congregation. For the last survey 3 years ago, only about a third of respondents had previous UU experience. In this survey a third of the respondents had no UU experience.

#### Finally

In the last question, do you have any comments or suggestions, there were 34 written responses mostly complimenting Rev. Matt, the community, the services and the

welcoming atmosphere. There was also appreciation expressed for the fact we were doing the survey. One good suggestion that stood out was about focusing on who we are as a congregation and what are our goals and vision. This is something the board will definitely be addressing in 2025.

As I reflect back on this past year, I believe we have been blessed with abundance and success. However we have unfortunately lost too many dear members. We successfully navigated a move to our new space at St. Andrews and have enjoyed many new collaborations with their congregation. Our membership has increased (slightly) and we are financially sound (which I was never able to report at my last congregation) We truly have a blessed community.

Just a final reminder that our board meetings are open to anyone. We meet on the third Monday of the month at 1:30, usually at a board member's home. Also be sure to mark your calendars for our Annual General Meeting on Sunday January 19th following the service.

Kriss Gang

President, Board of Trustees.



### THANK YOU!

"Thank you to all those who purchased bookmarks so beautifully created by Adele St. Pierre. A total of 1660 pesos has been donated to LCUUF. Thank you Adele.

### New LCUUF Members

Welcome new members Elly Contreras-Vermeulen and Ramiro Contreras to LCUUF. They signed the membership book after the service on Sunday Dec. 15.



## Please Help Operation Feed Collect Personal Items For Their Families

Operation Feed is collecting personal items for their families this holiday season. The list of items needs is on the right. There will be a basket to collect the items which will be by the entrance of the church starting this coming Sunday.

Operation Feed is collecting *Personal Care Products* to pass out to our Families at Christmas Time.



- Bar Soap
- Liquid Soap
- Hand Sanitizer
- Toothbrush
- Hairbrush
- Pads
- Body Wash
- Body Lotion
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Comb
- Shampoo



## St. Andrew's Annual Angel Tree to Help Feed Lakeside Children

Every year the St. Andrew's Congregation presents an "Angel Tree" for the purpose of raising money during the holidays for a local charity. The idea is for members to buy a "Star" to place on the tree. This year they have chosen **'Proyecto de los Nino's'** as the charity

and for the proceeds to go towards meals provided to their clients. To make it easy to donate, they have done the "meal math" for you. Based on the \$18 peso per meal formula. For example:

- \$ 250 pesos will give one person 1 week of meals
- \$ 400 pesos will provide that same person almost 2 weeks of meals
- \$ 500 pesos will provide a home bound person meals for 2 weeks

We will of course accept donations at what ever level you feel comfortable.

St. Andrew's has invited LCUUF to participate. If you are interested, Outreach members will be in the garden space before our service at the Angel tree with the dedication Stars.

# New Years Day Taco Party

It is time to purchase tickets for the annual LCUUF New Year's Day Taco Party. The event will be held in the garden area at St. Andrew's starting at 1:00pm. Please bring a beverage to share and left over cookies or snacks to share.

The cost for the event is \$200 pesos per person. You must purchase your tickets in advance. There will be no ticket sales on the day of the event. Tickets can be purchased before or after services on Dec. 2, Dec 15 and Dec. 22. For questions or information, contact Barley Donahue at [barleydonahue@gmail.com](mailto:barleydonahue@gmail.com).



## For The Love Of Chocolate and LCUUF

Hanna Frederick, LCUUF member and professional chocolatier, has brought her talent and treasure to LCUUF in the form of the most wonderful Chocolates. She has been crafting her custom chocolates and selling them before and after services. This holiday season she will be selling her

chocolates every Sunday from now through Christmas. (except November 30th)

Hanna uses 70% dark organic chocolate made in Tabasco MX by CACEP. Lo carb, no sugar added to the ganache. Real fruits, nuts, no artificial stuff. Very Healthy!

The cost is 15 pesos per chocolate. If possible bring a plastic container or plastic bag for your purchases.



100% of the proceeds will go to LCUUF. A most delicious way to support our congregation.



**Video Recording for the December 15th**





## **Mindfulness With Richard Clarke**

**Recorded on Thursday December 19th**



## **December Humanist Discussion Group Holiday**

The Humanist Discussion Zoom Meeting will be on Holiday Break during December. We will be back in January. If anyone has topics they would like to discuss this next year, please email them to [bobkoches@gmail.com](mailto:bobkoches@gmail.com). Happy Holidays.

## Monthly Women's Group Brown Bag Lunch!

In addition to the 1st & 3rd Mon ZOOM women's group meetings we are adding an IN PERSON BROWN BAG LUNCH at 12N on the 4th Monday. Please contact Trudy if you plan to attend.

trudycrippen@gmail.com

## WEEKLY AND MONTHLY EVENTS

Click on the "+" for details

### Humanist Discussion Group Dec Break

+



No Discussion for December

The Humanist Discussion Zoom Meeting will be on Holiday Break during December. We will be back in January. If anyone has topics they would like to discuss this next year, please email them to bobkoches@gmail.com. Happy Holidays.

[Click to join on Zoom](#)

## **Women's Group: 1st , 3rd and 4th Mondays** +

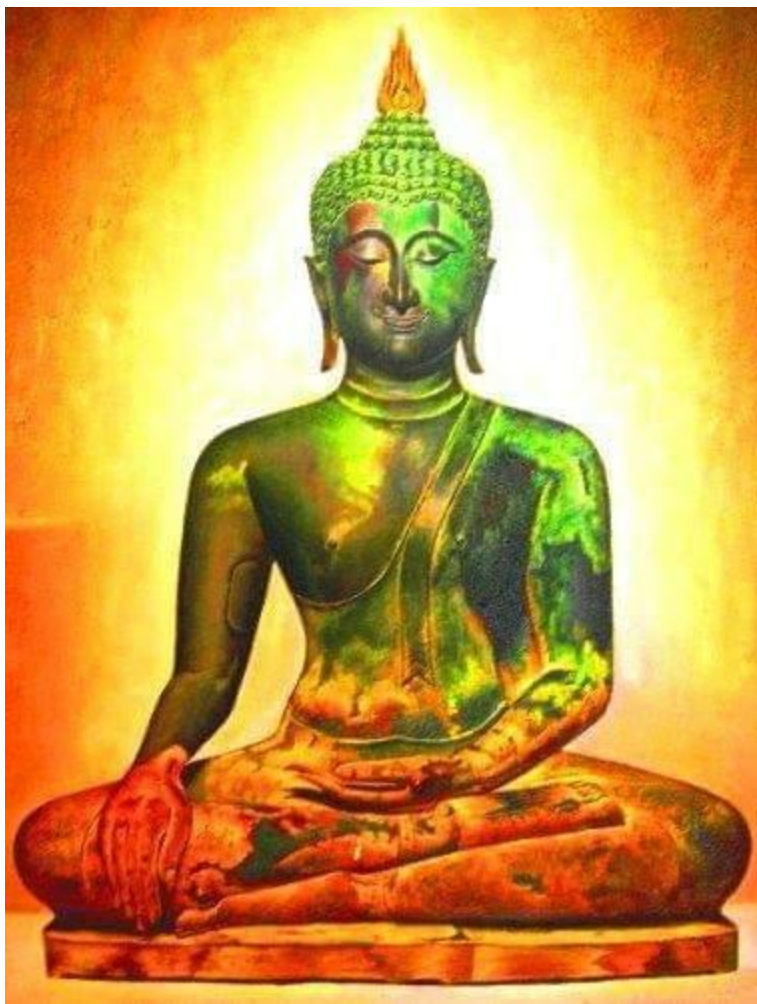
12pm - 1pm 1st and 3rd Mondays Monthly Catherine Luria, Facilitator: Contact CLuriaARNP@gmail.com for topics. Now you can join us for a brown bag lunch on the 4th Monday of each month at Trudy Crippen's house. RSVP Trudy if you plan to attend. trudycrippen@gmail.com

## **Healing Circle Monthly: 2nd Thursday 4pm** +



This is a group gathering to focus on healing, peace and well-being. Our methods employ Reiki distance healing. This is group, not individual work. All LCUUF members are welcome regardless of experience. Facilitators: D'Vorah Kelley and Pamela Cucinell, Reiki Practitioners

## **Zoom Meditation Lessons: 3-4pm Thursdays** +



Mindfulness is the fountain of youth for the mind. It enhances clarity, boosts mood, and keeps stress at bay. Meditation not only helps you age gracefully but also lets you savor life's every moment. Richard Clarke, Facilitator. To find out more contact: [riberasmeditation@gmail.com](mailto:riberasmeditation@gmail.com)

[Click to join on Zoom](#)

### **Coffee "Above" The Plaza: Thursdays 10:30am**

+

Meet other UUs for weekly conversations at Los Gringos (above the ice cream place) on the Plaza. Bring a friend!

### **Open Zoom Conversation: Fridays 2pm**

+

Conversation is open to all questions. Email Richard Clarke at  
arunachalakinle@gmail.com

[Click to join on Zoom](#)



## BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

**Bill Frayer, December 8**

**Johannes Bjorner, December 9**

**Roy Haynes, December 10**

**David Roush, December 14**

**Carol Powell, December 15**

**Carol Cumming Spiers, December 15**



Susie (Seibert) Seattle, December 17

Linda Jessen, December 25

Larry Pihl, December 26

Flo Rhodes, December 26

Richard Clarke, December 28

Lake Chapala Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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