

News from Live Oak – October, 2011

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Welcoming Carol Thomas Cissel, Our New Children's Religious Education Teacher



Our Children's Religious Education (CRE) Committee is delighted to introduce you to Carol Thomas Cissel, Live Oak's professional teacher. Carol first met and taught our children on Sunday, October 2. If you did not meet her then, please do introduce yourself to Carol in the coming weeks.

Carol will work for us 8 hours per month (preparing lessons and teaching on Sundays). A second year Master of Divinity student at PSR (Pacific School of Religion) in Berkeley, she is focused on becoming a UU parish minister when she completes her graduate degree in 2013.

We are blessed that Carol will be working with us and our children. She is an experienced CRE educator, having taught children at the UU Church of Silver Spring, MD. She is also a certified facilitator for the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education program. And Carol brings strong pastoral care skills, familiarity with UU congregational life, and excellent communication skills to the Live Oak community.

Carol who proclaims "her enthusiasm for the open, ecumenical loving tradition of Unitarian Universalism," looks forward to helping us develop a strong program for our children and youth. Utilizing the UU curriculum, *Toolbox of Faith*, as a starting place -- Carol and the CRE Committee hope to help our young people develop an understanding of Unitarian Universalism and an appreciation for the beliefs of other religions. But more than that, we hope each young person will fully experience the joy of learning and playing together -- and in being an integral member of a loving UU church community.

A bit more about our new teacher: In addition to being a full-time seminarian at PSR, Carol is serving as a ministerial intern with two Bay Area congregations: the UU Fellowship of Redwood City and the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of San Francisco. "Parish ministry is definitely in my future. I think that working with different types of churches is an excellent way for me to serve others, while preparing to become a UU minister." This will be a busy year for her.

She is a brand new resident of California, has three adult children and one adorable, but demanding cock-a-poo pup (Max). "Serving others and walking beside them as they move through all of life's joys and sorrows is what I want to do with the next phase of my life."

Many thanks to Lisa Fry and Kate Hand, the current members of the CRE, who reviewed resumes, interviewed candidates, and, with joy, selected Carol. If you would like to work with this committee, please contact Lisa (lisasfry@gmail.com) or Kate (pkhand@sbcglobal.net).

Successful Adult Religious Education: New UU

Seventeen adult Live Oak'ers attended the 7-hour Adult Religious Education program earlier this month. Many thanks to the presenters: Lisa Fry, Peter Hand, Sally Kennedy, Darlene Pagano, and Richard Stromer who lead us through this UUA curriculum and helped those present deepen their understanding of UUism and learn more about the workings of Live Oak UU. (So sorry Renee Harper was ill and could not present the section she had prepared.) And a special round of applause for Darlene Pagano who organized this event (lining up presenters, arranging for childcare, providing lunch, securing the workshop space, and helping get so many attendees)!

It was delightful to have so many new people there along with longer-term folks. Everyone left glad that they had attended and energized to get involved, particularly in moving forward on social justice activities.

Caring Committee – Keeping Tabs



If you know someone in our community (including yourself) who has a health issue or is in need of some services that our Live Oak community might be able to provide, please contact either Jay Roller (JayBRoller2002@yahoo.com; 510-295-7832) or Sally Kennedy (deskennedy@att.net), the Caring Committee coordinators.

Thanksgiving Dinner & Vespers: Will You Help?

Last year we enjoyed a marvelous Thanksgiving meal together, followed by a short and meaningful vespers service. People brought friends, family, and colleagues to this delightful gathering. Kate Hand and Kim Rankin organized the event last year. And everyone there said, “Let’s do this every year!”

But Kate will be out of town this year and Kim not able to take a lead role this year, though she is willing to assist.

Are you willing to step up? Lisa Fry has already offered to help with the publicity and the evite. We know Kim’s on-board.



We would love to have a couple of folks to carry this forward. It need not be a lot of work. Willing to help? With what part – organizing; set up; clean up; inviting others to join us; creating a short vespers service? Respond to Lisa Fry (lisasfry@gmail.com; 510-419-0953) asap so we can get this going! Looking forward to hearing from you!

Welcoming New Members

We are delighted to recognize four people who joined Live Oak in the past months. Most need no introduction. We are honored that Kris Arrington, Richard Arrington, Bill Hieb, and Mindy Mull signed the membership book and accepted the responsibilities of membership in this community. All four were recognized in our Live Oak Ingathering ritual on Sunday, October 2.

Because no members of Live Oak had ever been so recognized, we also “ingathered” all the members present. It was a sweet and memorable ceremony. Many thanks to Richard Stomer for putting together the ritual.

We now plan to schedule Ingatherings twice a year. We look forward to welcoming more people into our community. You do not need to wait for an Ingathering or an invitation to become a member. When you have been coming a while and feel that this is your faith community, let us know. We recommend reading about the meaning of membership on our website (<http://uuliveoak.org/membership.htm>), too.

When you are ready to sign the membership book, speak with Lisa Fry, Membership Chair, or Peter Hand, Board President.

Listening Campaign, Cottage Meetings: Oct. 30 & Nov. 13

As Peter Hand has said in an earlier newsletter, we have barely begun to consider what Live Oak might mean to those who have not heard of it or decided to be a part of it. This is one reason why we have begun our first listening campaign. Many spiritual and justice-seeking groups have used this approach to create a space where people can speak from the heart about their deepest values and aspirations, and identify their energizing common purpose.

We want Live Oak to feel alive and thriving; to inspire; to be an exciting and integral part of its members' lives; to be known for its spirit, its values, and its contribution to the world. We want to be strong enough to experiment, to take risks.

All these aspirations require us to grow – in depth of our commitment, in numbers, and in diversity. The alternative is a slow dwindling of energy and purpose. The experience of churches of all faiths is that common purpose, "mission" for lack of a better word, can be an energizing force both within a community and in its relations to the wider world. Along with allowing us to better know our own -- and one another's -- values and visions, the board's hope for the listening campaign is that it clarifies for us all Live Oak's unique gift to the world.

Perhaps it is something we are already doing, or perhaps it is an unspoken yearning each of us is half-afraid to speak aloud. Whatever it is, when we have articulated it, we will be able to say to those we invite to Live Oak what they are getting into, and why this thing we do is so great they should come check it out.

Sunday, October 23: Congregational Meeting

Join us in the cottage at The Home of Truth at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 23 to discuss possible sites (Christ Episcopal Church, First Congregational Church, and The Home of Truth) for us to use as our church home.

Available Tuesday Evenings? Small Group Ministry

The Wednesday night Small Group is going strong, as is a Friday night group. Now we have 4-5 people interested in forming a Tuesday night group, but we're looking for a few more people to get that group going. Please consider this wonderful way to get to know other Live Oak'ers better and to address your own spirituality. Do you want to join the Tuesday group? Email Darlene Pagano (dpagano@igc.org) and let her know.