

News from Live Oak – September, 2011

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Wow! We are gathering steam! Below, in calendar-order, is a list of things to learn more about and to put on your calendar. Don't miss out.

Sunday, September 18

Worship & Fellowship

- *Desire & Creativity* (Jody Savage and Mindy Mull)
- Children's Religious Education (CRE) classes resume
- Watch for news about our new CRE teacher



Friday, September 30 & Saturday, October 1

The New UU: Adult Religious Education for ALL of Us

Darlene Pagano, Peter Hand, and Vicky Jensen (with several others) will lead us through a program to help us deepen our understanding of UUism.

The program addresses the needs of newcomers who want to know more about who we are and what we believe. It also provides opportunities for current members to share what it means to them to be a Unitarian Universalist. It gives newcomers a chance to examine their own personal stories in the light of our Unitarian Universalist tradition and heritage. It provides a chance for newcomers and long-timers to connect. It provides an explicit invitation to become a member.

The New UU is a series of six workshops addressing important themes in UU congregational life: Worship And Theology; History; Covenant And Polity; Religious Education or Faith

Development; Social Justice; and Membership. Participants will learn about UUism not only by hearing about it, but by doing it -- exploring their own theology and its intersection with the tradition.

We would love to see every adult participate in this class. There is no charge for the class or for childcare. (For childcare, we do need to know who is coming by 9/25 so we will have adequate coverage and materials for the children.) Watch for more about this program.

Sunday, October 2

Worship & Fellowship AND Our First Ingathering

To Stand in Awe (Richard Stromer & Peter Hand)

Our first Live Oak *Ingathering* of new members – Watch for more about this very special event. *Ingatherings* are ceremonies to welcome new members. This one will have a bit of a twist – and you won't want to miss it.

Interested in more information about becoming a member of Live Oak UU Fellowship? Please read our Membership page on our website: <http://uuliveoak.org/membership.htm>. If you want more info – or are ready to make the commitment, speak with any board member (Peter Hand, Jody Savage, Darlene Pagano, Vicky Jensen, or Lisa Fry). And do consider coming to the Adult RE class described above. It is a perfect way to start off your membership.

Sunday, October 23

Congregational Meeting

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

And we will learn more about what the costs would be to make The Home of Truth more wheelchair accessible so that we could choose to stay there, if that's our choice.



Sunday, October 30 or Sunday, November 13

Listening Campaign, Cottage Meeting

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 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.

You may ask why we should focus on those who have not found us. As UUA President Peter Morales says, there is a spiritual hunger among those who come to congregations like ours that we have a moral obligation to address. It is also in our self-interest to be a growing congregation. If you have been a part of an organization in a trend of growth or decline, you will know growth can be exciting, while decline can sap the juice out of participation.

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 numbers and 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.

Missed a Service? You've Missed a Couple of Doozies

We have had a number of wonderful worship services in the past few months. If you had to miss one or more, remember we post homilies and reflections on our website: <http://uuliveoak.org/past-services.htm>.

The most recent addition to that page is from the Labor Day weekend service with Kim Rankin and Judith Heller addressing "these uncertain times." Do take the time to listen. This is a topic that affects us all. All the Summer services are also on-line now. Please check them out.

Choose a Group: Small Group Ministry Wednesday Evening or Sunday Daytime Groups Forming

It's taken us a bit longer than we thought to figure out the logistics for the new Small Groups, but we are ready for you to sign up NOW!

Here's some basic info on what Small Group Ministry (SGM) is. Members of an SGM group get to know one another and deepen their own spirituality by participating together in discussions of topics of universal human significance. The topics are intended to focus the group's attention on the things we have in common just by being human.

These are not study groups, debate societies, or therapy sessions. The topics are the means to the end of getting to know ourselves and each other. By watching and listening to each other grapple with the topics, the participants learn about each other in a different way than they would by serving on a committee or meeting at a coffee hour or some other social event.



At the first gathering of each group, those present will decide together how often to meet, where to meet, and how to manage the facilitation of the group.

If you choose to be in an SGM group, you will be asked to make attendance at your SGM meetings a priority. We also ask that you give the group a chance – attend for four sessions. In the experience of the congregations that have tried SGM, four meetings is what it takes to give the group a chance.

Do you want to join the group that will meet on Wednesday evenings or the Sunday daytime group? Do you want to be in a group, but neither of those time periods works for you? Email Lisa Fry (lisasfry@gmail.com) and let her know your choice.

Please reply ASAP. We hope to get both of these groups started within the month.