

News from Live Oak – August, 2013

Hail ... and Farewell

Welcoming a New DRE & Teacher; Saying Goodbye to Another

We are delighted to introduce our new Director of Religious Education (DRE) & Teacher, Michelle Mueller. Everyone will all have a chance to meet Michelle on Sunday, September 1.

Michelle will work part-time for us and part-time in the same role for the Berkeley Fellowship of UUs. It is wonderful to have yet another connection to our sister fellowship. *But that's not all ... no that is not all!* Michelle is also pursuing a Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley.



Michelle (pictured at right with her partner) is excited about the possibility of having children & families from Live Oak and those from the Berkeley Fellowship participate in activities together – social events and possibly offering Our Whole Lives (OWL), the UUA's liberal values-based sexuality education program, for a joint class.

Michelle, who earned her M.Div. from the Pacific School of Religion (Berkeley), previously served as DRE for two congregations: the UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ and the First UU Church of Stockton. She says, "These are all congregations of different sizes. I have come to understand what leadership is needed for different sized congregations and am interested in supporting the Live Oak UU Fellowship in its current phase."

We will also explore the possibility of Michelle helping us with Adult Religious Education. She is Wiccan. Perhaps there is interest in learning more about pagan and neopagan traditions. (Michelle will teach *NeoPagan Liturgy: Earth Ritual* at Starr King School for the Ministry this spring and is the volunteer Chair of the [Pagan Studies Salon](#) (also part of the GTU). She is also on the faculty for Cherry Hill Seminary, the only Pagan seminary offering graduate degrees. She teaches courses on family ministry, interfaith, and Greek religion.

She notes, "I have been oriented towards ministry my entire life." She was raised in a Lutheran family, but developed an abiding interest in Wicca at age 12. She became acquainted with Unitarian Universalism through interfaith involvement in high school and college, and solidified the relationship in seminary and as a DRE.

“My ministry celebrates transitions ... growing up, coming of age, coming out, *Our Whole Lives* and emotional development, handfastings, weddings, and supporting people through separations and deaths,” Michelle adds.

And, of course, Live Oak is about to go through a transition. We have been blessed to have Cecilia Owen as our children’s teacher this past year. Please join us Sunday, Aug. 18, Cecilia’s last day with us, to celebrate her ministry with us and send her off to her next adventure (a ministerial internship in St. Louis, MO) with all our love and best wishes. We will all be holding her in our hearts and hope to see her back in the bay area in the future.



Donating School Supplies & Backpacks – And Filling Them, Too!



Thank you to each and every Live Oak’er who brought school supplies (some of them pictured to the right) and/or money for us to purchase backpacks (some pictured left) for the *Equipped 4 Success* school supply drive. In addition to hundreds of dollars of supplies, you provided \$350 in cash that helped us purchase 17 much-needed backpacks.



And, with Kathryn Duke’s leadership, a team of Live Oak’ers (Kris Arrington, Nancy Balassi, Samantha Beran and some of her colleagues, Lisa Fry, Jay Roller, Ximena, Franco, Renzo, & Bruno Rossi, and Richard Stromer) sorted supplies and filled backpacks for students at APC and across Alameda on August 14th.

New Accessibility Certification Program: Pilot Congregations

Live Oak’ers are proud that we value accessibility (we are wheelchair accessible; offer large print hymnals & orders of service; and assisted listening devices.)

The UUA and EqUUal Access recently selected [nine congregations](#) to field test an accessibility certification program. The congregations vary in membership size and are located in different areas of the country. During the next two years, the nine congregations and EqUUal Access, with the guidance of a UUA staff member, will create a fully vetted certification program available to all UU congregations. When they are done, Live Oak will certainly look into it to see if we qualify for certification – and/or what more we can do to reach that goal. Many thanks to Elizabeth Keir for telling us about his program.

Thoughts for Parents

(from pamphlet: *UU Kids Say ... Church Through the Eyes of Our Children*, ed. by Beth Graham)

The topic was Easter in the children's chapel service in a Unitarian Universalist congregation. After hearing the story, the children were full of questions. "Was Jesus a god or something?" "Why did they kill him?" "Didn't it hurt?" And the ultimate query, "What happens when you die, anyway?" Whether responding to the sight of a dead bird, a tragedy in the news, or a beautiful sunset, children are seekers of meaning, attuned to the spiritual dimensions of life.

As Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar writes in [The Gift of Faith](#), "Whether we wish it so or not, our children are religious, spiritual beings.... We cannot choose whether they will be religious, but we can choose how and to what extent we will support, guide, and celebrate this dimension of their nature."

Parents are children's primary religious educators and spiritual guides, but parents do not always feel equipped to fulfill this role alone. It is said, "It takes a village to raise a child." The congregation can be the parents' partner in this important endeavor.

Religious Education Resources We Can Borrow from Our District

The Pacific Central District maintains a library of Religious Education materials (books and curricula). These materials deal with adult faith development as well as for our youth and children. Check out the materials available (http://www.pcd-uua.org/library/RE_library.htm). To borrow something, please contact District Administrator Chuck Rosene, (510-530-1437 or pcd@pcd-uua.org).

Live Oak's Board: Putting Our Mission Where Our Action Is

Our Board of Trustees spent six hours together on Thursday, July 31, deepening their understanding of their roles as trustees and looking at our mission, policies, and organizational structure. Over the coming months, the Board will continue work in all these areas.

At their August 8th meeting, they examined Live Oak's organizational structure, confirmed it was aligned with our mission, and determined how to illustrate that. Below is a statement – and chart -- that came out of that meeting:

Live Oak's organizational structure is based on our mission (*We create loving community through worship and service to others.*) It is our intent that any project we take on, any committee or task force formed, will help us fulfill our mission, by a) building community, b) providing worship or faith development, or c) serving others.

We create loving community through worship and service to others.

Community	Worship, Faith Development, & Religious Exploration	Service to Others
Outreach & Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 4th Parade • Website • Other (press releases, ads, e.g.) 	Worship Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship Leaders • Worship Associates Guest Clergy	Ongoing Service Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alameda Point Collaborative • Harvey Milk Day Celebration • Welcoming Congregation • Transylvania Partnership
Internal Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email list and Listserv • Website • Newsletters • Calendar 	Music Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Director • Choir • Accompanists 	Sunday Plate Donations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To diverse service organizations
Membership Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor follow-up • Integration of visitors, members • Caring Committee • Potluck Coordination 	Adult Religious Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD Discussion Group • 2nd Sunday Discussion Group • Covenant Groups 	Intermittent involvement in events addressing climate change, immigration issues, economic justice, food security, back-to-school help for low-income children
Connecting with Faith Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UUA, PCD (district), & PWR (region) • Berkeley Fellowship of UUs • Interfaith Community of Alameda • Liaison to Christ Episcopal Church 	Children & Youth Religious Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s RE Committee • Director of RE • Teachers & assistants 	Social Justice Team

Governance

Board of Trustees (Elected)

- Finance Team (Budget development & oversight, Stewardship)
- Committees of the Board: APC, Every Sunday Programming, & Welcoming Congregation

Nominating Committee (Elected)

Organizational Support

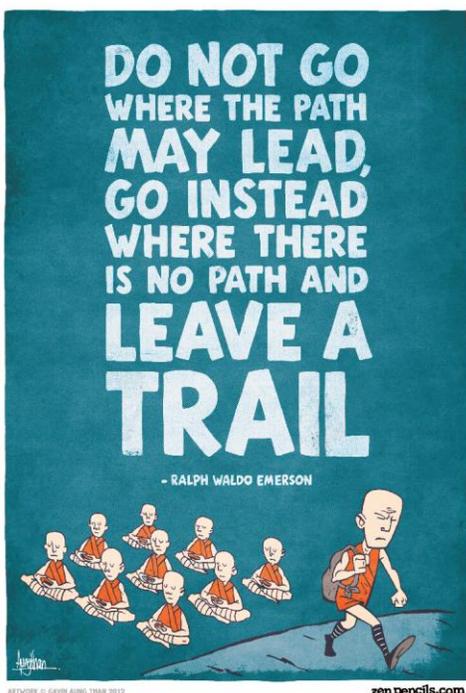
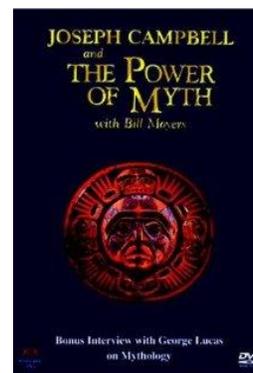
Personnel Committee

- Consultants
- Volunteers

The Power of Myth: Join Us in the Fall for Another DVD Series

Save the 3rd Friday night of the month (starting in the Fall) for yet another DVD series and discussion. We will watch the 6-part series, The Power of Myth, together and have time for discussion after. Watch for more details soon and the date of the first session.

Scholar Joseph Campbell and journalist Bill Moyers dissect the world of mythology as it affects the world's inhabitants, from religions to marriage and pop culture, in this incisive and penetrating documentary. Filmed at George Lucas's Skywalker Ranch and the American Museum of Natural History, their lively conversations touch both the heart and mind, offering myths as the ultimate key to understanding the human experience.



PCD Leadership Day: October 26

Register for this workshop with Wayne Clark, Ph.D., Director of UUA Congregational Stewardship Services. The topic is "Money, Stewardship, and Faith." Clark will address all attendees in the morning. In the afternoon, he'll speak with teams with at least three congregational leaders. This session will focus on creating a Culture of Generosity and how to apply specific techniques to your next annual budget drive.

An alternate session in the afternoon titled "What Keeps our Congregations Spiritually Alive?" will be held for those who will not be participating in the workshop with Wayne Clark. This informal and experiential conversation about the deepening of our collective spiritual life will be facilitated by PCD District Executive Joshua Searle-White and Rev. Jeanelyse Doran Adams.

Registration: \$45 / person, \$55 after Friday, October 4, 2013. [Register here](#). If you need financial assistance to attend, please let us know (lisasfry@gmail.com).