



## Wow! Lots of News!

Greetings!

In this issue (in order):

- Welcoming Our New Choir Director / Pianist
- Lots Happening with Our Children & Youth Religious Exploration Group
- Busy Social Justice & Service Group
  - Volunteers Filled Backpacks (Equipped for Success campaign)
  - Thanking Nancy B: Distributed Backpacks & More at APC
  - Come to the First Documentary in the Group's Film Series (9/13)
- Gratitude: Recognizing Our Own
- Cosmos: A Personal Journey: Watch & Discuss on 3rd Fridays
- Small Group Ministry Openings: Interested?

### New Choir Director / Pianist Helps Grow Our Choir

We are delighted to introduce our new Choir Director & Pianist, **Adrian Borcea**. His piano music is already delighting all on Sundays. And the choir thoroughly enjoys working with him. In fact, the choir is growing in numbers, as well as in musical skill!

Adrian is originally from Bucharest, Romania. He attended a special High School of Music in Bucharest before moving to Portland, Oregon, to continue his studies. Several of his original compositions were performed in a fundraising show produced by the [Snowman Foundation](#) (formed to fill the gap in music left by a lack of funds in Portland schools). While a student, Adrian was awarded second place in the Piano Concerto Competition, performing J. S. Bach's Clavier Concerto D minor. He currently is a vocal coach, composer, piano teacher (SF State and private lessons), and pianist / choir director for us and another church in San Francisco.



Adrian earned a Masters in Music in piano performance from San Francisco State University where he won the first William Corbett-Jones Piano Award. He and his wife (also a musician) are the founding directors of the [Forest Hill Concerts Series](#) which sponsors performances by varying musicians every Sunday in San Francisco.

## What's Up? Lots! Children & Youth Religious Exploration (CYRE) Are Busy!

We have a lot going on in RE this fall! On September 20th, we'll begin our *Love and Justice Project* by giving each child and youth \$15.00. We'll ask each of them to use the money to help the world be a more loving, just place. Our class time will focus on generating ideas and making practical plans. In about a month, our congregation will have the pleasure of hearing from each child and youth about his or her project.



We also have an exciting unit on food coming up. Working together in the kitchen, we will make stone soup, hold a popcorn sale, and *build* (yes, build!) with Jell-O (which was invented by a Unitarian). In addition to preparing food, we'll also be getting ready for our annual *Dia de los Muertos* service by creating decorations for our *ofrenda*.

Our class has some serious artistic flair, so this is sure to be a treat.

And we'll be volunteering as a group in one of the gardens at Alameda Point Collaborative some time in the next month. Our date is still being worked on, but we hope to have many grown-up helpers join us. Stay tuned for more details.



We are also fortunate to have found a wonderful new teaching assistant, **Elena Waller**. A recent college graduate, Elena brings a wealth of teaching experience to our classroom. She's worked in elementary classrooms and summer arts programs, and we are delighted to have her join us!

And what did we do this past week? We learned the history behind the flaming chalice symbol and made our own chalices. See below.



## **Social Justice & Service Group: Thanks for Service Completed ... and Another Opportunity**



Many thanks to Live Oak'ers, **Nancy Balassi, Lowell Brook, Renee Harper, Jay Roller, and Richard Stromer** who made speedy work of filling several overflowing shopping carts filled with backpacks full of school supplies. This is the 3rd year in a row that we've provided a team to help fill backpacks for the *Equipped for Success* campaign. And, of course, many of us contributed money through our Sunday collections to purchase the supplies. We gave the campaign \$453 this year -- and \$1,319 over the past three years.

**Woot!** Extra kudo's to **Nancy Balassi** who also volunteered at Alameda Point Collaborative's *Back to School Community Fair* on August 21, helping distribute backpacks -- and getting the children and youth fired up for school.

### **Next Up: Coastal Clean up Day!**

The Coastal Clean up Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 19, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 at Crown Memorial Beach in Alameda, a good inter-generational community service opportunity. [More details](#) about this family-friendly opportunity.

### **Social Justice & Service Group Presents a Film Series: Starts This Sunday, September 13, 4:00 p.m.**

Beginning this month, Live Oak will host a monthly documentary film series on the 2nd Sunday of each month. The Social Justice & Service Group (SJS) team are excited to share *Unnatural Causes*, the acclaimed documentary broadcast by



PBS and now used by thousands of organizations around the country to tackle the root causes of our alarming socio-economic and racial inequities in health.

*Unnatural Causes* crisscrosses the nation uncovering startling new findings that suggest there is much more to our health than bad habits, health care, or unlucky

genes. The social circumstances in which we are born, live, and work can actually get under our skin and disrupt our physiology as much as germs and viruses.

Join others this Sunday, September 13 (4:00 p.m.) in the Guild Room (the building behind the sanctuary) to watch the first episode, [In Sickness and In Wealth](#), followed by the opportunity to discuss the issues brought up in the film. There is a short clip of the film on [our website](#).

## Heartfelt Thanks to ...

**Judith Heller, Sally Kennedy, Jay Roller, Jackie Roth, and Richard Stromer**, Live Oak's Choir Director Search Committee. They reviewed resumes, interviewed candidates, and arranged for a choir try-out for the finalist (see info about Adrian above). Thank you all for sharing so much of your time and energy. You found a superb talent!



## Adult Education / Faith Development: Watch and Discuss Carl Sagan's Cosmos 3rd Fridays

On the 3rd Friday of each month, starting Friday, September 18, Live Oak adults will gather to watch one episode of Carl Sagan's [Cosmos: A Personal Journey](#). This show has been considered highly significant since its broadcast.



In the first episode, "*The Shores of the Cosmic Ocean*," Sagan describes the cosmos and a "Spaceship of the Imagination" (shaped like a dandelion seed). The ship journeys through the universe's hundred billion galaxies, the Local Group, the Andromeda Galaxy, the Milky Way, the Orion Nebula, our Solar System, and finally

be coming.

## Small Group Ministry: Interested In Joining a Group?

Sometimes known as "covenant groups" and "chalice circles," [Small Group Ministry](#) is a vital part of many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Groups of 8 - 12 people meet regularly, usually monthly, to reflect on and discuss significant life topics.

Small groups are a great way to get to know other people -- and to get to know yourself. Over time, participants build deep connections with one another, with the congregation, and with the sacred.



Whether the topic is "good and evil," "mindful living," or "letting go," the conversation is respectful and caring and leads to greater understanding. In each session, facilitated by a member of the congregation, all participants have an opportunity to share their perspectives, tell their stories, and listen deeply. The time together is structured: Groups begin and end with centering readings and often include a time of silence before the sharing begins. Many small groups engage in annual service projects, putting their faith into action.

Live Oak UU currently has two Covenant Groups: one meets twice a month on Wednesday evenings (in different members' homes); one meets once a month, almost always on the first Friday of each month (in a home in Oakland). The Wednesday group would be happy to welcome 1 new member. The Friday group would be delighted to welcome 1 or 2 new people. (Both groups include men, women, singles and paired folks of various orientations.) If we have enough people interested in being part of a group, we might be able to start a 3rd group. If you are interested in more information -- or being a part of one of these groups -- please email [Darlene Pagano](#).

Email options: We maintain two separate email lists. One gets ONLY reminder announcements of upcoming worship services. The other gets those notices, plus information about congregational meetings, activities, religious education, newsletters, and more. You are welcome to be on either list. Please let Lisa ([lisasfry@gmail.com](mailto:lisasfry@gmail.com)) know if you wish to be moved from one list to the other -- or if you wish to be removed from our email list altogether. Note: We also have a listserv for members & friends of Live Oak. You may join it, at any time, by sending an email to [uliveoak-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:uliveoak-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

