

News from Live Oak – April 7, 2010

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***GREAT NEWS!!* New Part-Time Choir Director Starts This Month**

We are delighted to announce that Susan Schon Sonnemaker will direct our choir, starting on April 18th. Susan (and several other candidates) auditioned with 15 members of our choir a few weeks ago. The choir is quite excited to begin working with her. And, again, many thanks to team of Live Oak choir members (Debra Temple, Jay Roller, Sally Kennedy, and Kate Hand) who wrote the job description, contract, advertising, read resumes from eight candidates, interviewed seven of them, and organized the choir audition of three.

Susan, who will be moving permanently to the Bay Area in June, is currently the Choral & Musical Theatre Director for Carson High School (Carson City, NV). In addition, for several years she has served as the Resident Music Director for the Brewery Arts Center Summerstock Theater. And in 2009, she was named *Nevada Music Educator of the Year*.

Be sure to come to our April 18th service (celebrating Earth Day) to meet Susan and hear our choir. As many of you know, Kim Rankin has filled in, as her time allowed, as choir director. She, along with the others who have performed this function for us over the past year (Kate Hand, Vicky Jensen, Jay Roller, Kate Rowland, and Debra Temple), are thrilled to have Susan on-board to direct all of them. Woo-hoo! Come celebrate with us!

Poetry As Fundraiser

Boulevards & Blind Alleys, a collection of Ruth Levitan's poetry is on sale for \$20, all of which goes to Live Oak UU Fellowship! Ask Ruth or Lisa Fry to see a copy of the book. Thank you, Ruth, for sharing your poems -- and the profits. We've already received \$320 from booksales. But, more important, 16 people are enjoying Ruth's writing. Watch for more about this later.

Religious Exploration Workshop: Sun., April 25, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Don't miss the Children's R.E. Workshop on April 25 (2:00-4:00 pm in the cottage at the Home of Truth). This promises to be another great community-building and fun gathering for all of us. Our RE Consultant, Carol Bodeau, has terrific insight and experience to share with us as we develop a meaningful and fun program for us and for our children and youth.

Because "RE" isn't just about kids (or adults) in a structured class, the workshop will cover other aspects of our community life. Don't miss this event. Our Children's RE committee looks forward to involving many people in the education of our youth. We hope you will consider being one who makes a difference in the lives of our younger members.

To help us know how many people to plan for, please RSVP with Laura Prickett (prickett_l@yahoo.com, 510.848.8749) or Kate Hand (pkhand@sbcglobal.net, 510.540.8337).

Congregational Listening Meeting

Close to 20 Live Oak members and friends joined together on March 28 at a meeting called by the Board of Trustees. The purpose of the gathering was:

- To invite feedback from the congregation on how the board is doing
- To invite feedback on how the fellowship is doing
- To offer an apology from the board: The board recognized we dropped the ball regarding the chalice gift presented to Live Oak recently. The board had intended to notify the congregation before the presentation was made, but did not communicate that need to the worship leaders. We apologized for our role in causing hurt to some of our members.

After the listening exercises the group moved to a totally different aspect of community life: providing suggestions or comments in three categories: 1) We want more of ... , 2) We want less of ... , and 3) New directions/other. The complete list is at the end of this newsletter. Note: the complete minutes of the congregational meeting are posted on our website at:

<http://uuliveoak.org/governance.htm>.

A Fellowship Calendar: Hooray!

Remember the old TV show *You Asked For It*? Well, indeed, people have been asking for a fellowship calendar. Check it out: <http://uuliveoak.org/calendar-large.htm>. Whenever you have an event to add to this calendar please email Lisa Fry (lisafry@gmail.com) or Ruby Reay (rurubux@hotmail.com) with the details (date, time, place) and they will add it to the calendar.

This calendar has the dates of worship services and congregational meetings already. We will happily add fellowship committee meetings, choir practices, Live Oak social justice activities, and more. Many thanks for the suggestion to post a calendar. We appreciate your input.

Miss a Service? Listen to or Read Selections On Our Website

For a short time we posted homilies and some reflections from previous services on our website. It turned out to be a huge chore. But then, thanks to Jim Freschi, we had a digital recorder to make the job less cumbersome. You will find a number of items newly posted at <http://uuliveoak.org/past-services.htm>. (Some are audio files, some are PDFs.)

Below are the services just added to the page. Some include a homily, some a homily and reflection, a few include the Story for All Ages. And the Feb. 21st service includes an audio file of our choir singing the new version of *Come, Come Whoever You Are* (words by Rumi; music by Dale Zola who generously granted permission to post this). (Sound is pretty good, despite the fact that the choir was not directly miked.)

- April 4 -- Being Redeemed
(Worship Leader: Richard Stromer; Worship Associate: Susan Mayer)
- March 21 -- To Err Is Human, To Forgive ...?
(Worship Leader: Kim Rankin)
- March 7 -- Compassion for Our Red State Family Members
(Worship Leader: Jay Roller; Worship Associate: Judith Heller)
- February 21 -- Before You Yell at the Blind Man: Cultivating a Compassionate Heart
(Worship Leader: Kate Hand; Worship Associate: Nanci Armstrong-Temple)

Looking for an Easy One-Shot Way to Contribute?

Volunteer for potluck duty: Contact Judith (510-847-3719 or at jheller@fogcty.com) to volunteer to set-up and/or clean-up! Not a big job, but important! Thanks.

District Assembly: For Adults and Kids!

Our district (Pacific Central District) offers us the opportunity to hear outstanding speakers, a huge selection of workshops, a concert, and vendors offering clothing, art, chalices, and more. In addition to adult programming, there is full-time FUN programming for children and youth.

This year's two keynote speakers are well-known and inspiring. And don't miss the two moving worship services (Friday night and Sunday morning).

DA is almost here: Friday, April 30-Sunday morning, May 2, in Fremont – almost our back yard. Registration is open now. Don't delay. (Child & youth registration deadline: April 16. Adults with meals: April 23. Walk-ins (no meals) accepted day of event.)

Click here for additional details and to register. A sliding scale makes this more affordable. <http://www.pcd-uua.org/events/DA-2010/index.htm>. You can make a weekend of it and stay in the conference hotel. Or save money by driving back and forth.

Let's demonstrate to the district the vitality of Live Oak UU by showing up in strength.

July 4th Plans: Shall We Worship or Play?

This is the last chance for a few people to step forward to organize a July 4th outdoor social event instead of a regular worship service. If this is to happen, a task force needs to be formed right away. Please contact Kathryn Duke (kathryn.saenz.duke@gmail.com) if you are interested in this planning process. (Please bear in mind that Kathryn is simply acting as contact person and will not be a member of the task force). Richard Stromer says if a social activity is arranged the WLs will also plan a brief ritual as part of the day.

List of "Likes and Wishes" from the March 28 Congregational Meeting

"What We Need to Realize our Vision"

During the March 23, 2010, congregational meeting, those present were asked to write their thoughts in three categories:

- What we need less of ...
- What we need more of ...
- New directions/other

Less of

- Waiting for "someone" to start something so you can join - You're someone!
- Fiddling with the sound system

More of

- Our great "documentation" process - Put as much as we can out for others to read
- Discussions of topics, e.g. the theme of the worship service or sharing our spiritual journeys
- New members
- People inviting their friends to services
- People making calls to Live Oakers they haven't seen in a while to invite them to services
- Chances to hang out, parties, game nights, meetings like this
- Making beautiful music together like we did yesterday
- Inspirational kids' RE program that my kid says "I loved it!" about afterwards
- People stepping forward to fill the spots when Judith puts the call out for kitchen help or when a part planner for July 4th is needed
- Asking each other "what do you mean...?" and it not be a challenge or criticism.
- Finding ways for the children to feel seen and cherished by the adults.
- More folks stepping up to take leadership roles
- I love lay-led worship services
- Music (not a criticism, just like it)
- DYADS for the choir, anyone -
- Time TOGETHER in meaningful relationship
- Group gatherings for FUN.
- Outreach to larger community, esp to help us grow; publicity about us
- People taking leadership role
- Activities for all
- Social Justice activity
- Being Open, joining in, accepting others
- Contact folks we have not seen in a few weeks
- Effort to get new people (bringing friends, publicity, sign in front)
- Effort to bring visitors / new folks into activities, planning, being part of "us"
- Ties to other organization(s) whose work we admire
- Support and welcome for visitors & newcomers - systematically
- Relaxed social occasions
- Guest worship leaders & musicians
- Pastoral care resources

New directions / other

- Would like to expand the worship program to include outside guests, i.e.:
 - Buddhism
 - Hindi
 - Sufi
 - Islam
- Would like to have a great variety in the music program - i.e. classical, Cajun, Zydeco, Salsa, Jazz
- We need a congregational CALENDAR where everyone posts, of course
- Social justice support and visibility
- A fellowship men's group
- Social service project for adults and kids
- Specialized interest covenant groups
- Be careful not to burn out our leaders
- Outreach
- Initial discussions about how big (ideally, if not realistically) we want to be in the next year or so; what is a size to sustain programs we want
- RE, social justice, music, etc. -- How do we get there?
- Intergenerational, where adults & kids are paired up (as in secret buddies) or activities that include all ages (not sure what, but I'll come up with some), game times, craft times, music activities, etc.
- Regular covenant groups meeting possibly in people's homes
- Special interest groups, play readings, inspirational or humorous readings
- When we are bigger
 - Multi-week adult RE classes, e.g. couples class, Low Carbon Diet
- Welcoming Congregation
- Having people write brief biographies to be published so we can get to know each other better