



The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica

September 22, 2011

Dear Parents of High School Youth,

September has arrived, and our 2010-2011 YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) program has begun! With the guidance of adult advisors, this group empowers teens to create their own vision and mission for their program. In addition to Sunday-morning discussions and activities, YRUU also takes part in social justice projects, organizes social gatherings, and will plan and lead a Sunday worship service for the congregation in March. This is an opportunity for youth to continue where the Coming of Age program left off, as they and their advisors explore what it means to be young and UU, how our UU principles inform how we live our lives, and what power young UU's have to change the world. This year's advisors are Chris Brown, Emily Linnemeier, Dan Patterson and Jennie Roberson. It is our goal to work with the youth to create a community of shared leadership where youth are supported as leaders of their own group.

We encourage members of the group to participate in district conferences and our annual national conference, General Assembly (GA). **In the summer of 2012, GA will be held in Phoenix, Arizona June 20-24 – this will be our group's "big trip" of the year, so put it on your calendar now!** GA is an incredible opportunity for youth to participate in the business of our faith on a national scale. More specific details will come later — but mark your calendars now!

As last year, we will be alternating YRUU meeting times between the 9:00 and 11:00 services, meeting in Room 1 upstairs. Generally, the first and third Sundays of the month are at 11:00, and the second and fourth at 9:00, but always refer to the official calendar or the weekly RE UUpdates email to be sure. This alternating schedule was discussed at our September 10th Youth Orientation dinner, and I received 13 responses to the survey subsequently emailed to all YRUU families. Based on this feedback, keeping the alternating 9:00/11:00 schedule is the best fit for the needs of our group as a whole. Most families are able to make the split schedule work; a few can participate only at 9:00 or only at 11:00. This schedule allows families who find it easiest to participate in either the earlier or the later service to attend at least half of the sessions without disruption to their schedules, and allows our YRUU youth to meet together in a single group, something that we feel is very important for group bonding and effective programming. We know that an alternating schedule can be confusing, so we'll be sending it to you again and again throughout the year, just to make sure everyone has it handy! We're also including a copy of the schedule with this letter. We'll send it again every few months. And we'll also highlight the meeting time for YRUU in each week's RE UUpdates email.

This group is ever evolving and changing and it is a very exciting time to be part of the Senior High. The following are a few important administrative items about the structure of our year.

- **Event Nights for COA/YRUU will be held monthly.** Beach bonfires, pool parties, bowling, laser tag... there's lots of fun in store for our youth this year! Please see the accompanying event page for details about this year's youth event nights. Parents have signed up to coordinate each event (June is still open, though – can you help?), and details as well as permission slips will be mailed out to all participating families at least a week prior to the event. Youth will want to come to church only if they feel they have friends here, and one hour of class time per week won't create real friendships – unstructured and fun social

opportunities will. I hope very much that your youth will take part in these opportunities to connect with their fellow COA & YRUU participants.

- **All families participating in RE must complete a registration form for each of their children.** These forms are crucial because they include emergency contact information, space to share any special needs or allergies child may have and other important information to help us get to know your child. If you have not already turned in a registration form, one is included in this mailing. Please complete it and bring it on Sunday.
- **The UCCSM RE UUpdates email is sent weekly** to provide updates about what will happen in class this week, a calendar and announcements for upcoming events, at-home suggestions for engaging with the themes we're exploring this year, and more. This is a primary means of communication with all of our RE families - if you are not receiving this email, contact me right away so we can get you on the list.
- **Parent participation required:** Your help is vital to the success of our RE program. All parents are asked to contribute some of their time to our RE program this year. There are many different ways to be involved, which require varying levels of commitment. **Please fill out the volunteer commitment form which is attached to your child's registration form.**
- **Snack Signup request coming soon:** We would like to ask parents to sign up to bring a modest snack for their child's class this year, taking the burden off of the shoulders of the volunteer teachers who already do so very much for our program. You will be contacted soon with a request to sign up for a few Sundays during the year. Information about any food allergies as well as suggested snack items will be provided. Sharing food together is part of what binds us together as a caring community of faith, and our kids take snack time VERY seriously! Please help us keep our tradition of providing in-class snacks going.
- **Children/Youth Choir:** Does your youth like to sing? Seth Houston, our new music director, is starting an occasional children's/youth choir that will perform a few times a year during Intergenerational Services. Rehearsals will be from 9-9:15 on Sundays (meet in the cottage rather than going to the sanctuary for the first part of the service) for a few weeks leading up to the performances. Contact Catherine@uusm.org if your child or youth is interested in participating. **The first rehearsal is THIS WEEK - Sunday, September 25th!** The choir will also rehearse on 10/16 and 10/23 for performance in service on 10/30, as well as 11/13 for performance in service on 11/20. Please plan to arrive by 8:50 so the group can be ready to start at 9:00 sharp – fifteen minutes isn't very long to rehearse!
- **Intergenerational services:** Throughout the year, we will have occasional Intergenerational services in which the children and youth are in the sanctuary for the entire service. These services help us celebrate being together as one UCCSM community of all ages, and also provide an important opportunity for young people to experience first-hand the way their parents worship in the sanctuary when they would usually be in their classrooms.

Please return the registration form as quickly as possible. It can be turned in to my box in the main office, or at the Lifespan RE table in Forbes Hall during coffee hour on Sundays. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your involvement; thank you for recognizing the need for religious education in your children and youth's lives...thank you for adding your presence to this community. We are thrilled to have your family among us and look forward to an exciting year together!

See you in church,

Catherine Farmer Loya,
Director of Religious Education
310-829-5436 x105
Catherine@uusm.org