



**NEIGHBORHOOD UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

Sara LaWall
Director of Religious Education

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Dear 6th & 7th Graders and Parents/Guardians:

During the coming church year, Neighborhood's Youth Religious Education program will offer our sixth and seventh graders an exciting class based upon the UU curriculum *Neighboring Faiths*. This curriculum is designed to introduce this class to the faith traditions and practices of other religious groups in our community. What is special about this curriculum is that our youth will explore these religions first hand by visiting the places of worship for the faiths we are studying.

NEW this year – the 6th/7th grade class will be offered at 11:30 only. Attached is a Sunday-by-Sunday syllabus of sorts, which outlines the dates for each of the field trips so your family can plan ahead. Changes to the schedule will be announced. Our field trip days often last the entire morning or even into the afternoon. We also need drivers for each field trip and welcome your participation. To have the full experience of this unique program, we encourage your youth to attend as many of the field trips as possible.

The goals of this program are as follows:

1. To participate personally in the faith traditions of others;
2. To reflect on the unique and universal of religious experience;
3. To explore their own values as they relate to many other faith traditions;
4. To become more aware of the many connections between Unitarian Universalism and other faith traditions;
5. To strengthen commitment to Unitarian Universalist faith and community;
6. To increase their understanding and appreciation of religious diversity.

The YRE committee and staff will be hosting a **Parent Orientation Wine and Cheese mixer on Wednesday, September 15, from 6:30 – 8:30pm** to provide an opportunity for parents to hear more about the curriculum, program philosophy and logistics. Childcare will be provided. Please RSVP by September 6th to Sara LaWall at slawall@uuneighborhood.org or 626-449-3470 ext. 19. Please include the ages of your children should you need childcare.

Our Pacific Southwest District is offering a **winter camp for Middle School Youth** that is designed to dovetail with congregational Coming of Age programs and expand upon the same themes addressed in our curriculum. **Camp will take place the weekend of December 3rd – 5th (Friday evening-Sunday morning) at our UU Camp deBenville Pines.** I strongly encourage your youth to attend. Registration forms will be mailed as soon as they are available. Scholarships are available from Neighborhood and the district.

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New Fee Structure. Families with children or youth in our program are asked to either make a financial contribution (pledge) to the church, or pay a program fee. The fee stands at \$100 per child/youth with a family maximum of \$300 for the year. Should this fee be a financial hardship for any family, a one-year waiver may be requested from either of our Ministers or the Director of Religious Education. If you are new, we encourage you to take your time to get to know us. As such, fees will not apply until the second year of participation in the program.

The following are a few important administrative items about the structure of our program and the year. For further information, please consult the YRE Handbook included in this mailing:

- ❖ **The first day of class will be Sunday, September 19.** This program will be offered during the 11:30 service only.
- ❖ **We request that all families participating in YRE complete a registration form.** These forms are crucial because they include emergency contact information, space to share any special needs and a blanket permission slip for all off-site activities like a walk to the Gamble House. **Please return your completed form no later than August 15th.**
- ❖ **Parent participation required.** Your help is vital to the success of our RE program. Assisting in the classroom, with special projects and at the Lifelong Learning table is expected of all parents. **Please fill out the volunteer requirement section on the back side of your child's registration form.**
- ❖ **Story for all ages: on the second Sunday of every month,** children are invited into the Sanctuary for the beginning of the service to hear a story, then meet their teachers on the patio and go to their classes.
- ❖ **Intergenerational services:** throughout the year, we will have Intergenerational services in which the children and youth (K – 12th) are in the sanctuary for the entire service. These services provide an important opportunity for children 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 in the envelope provided or by leaving it at the Lifelong Learning table. 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!

See you in church,



Sara LaWall
Director of Religious Education