



**NEIGHBORHOOD UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

Sara LaWall
Director of Religious Education

301 N. Orange Grove Blvd. Pasadena, CA 91103 (626) 449-3470 Fax (626) 449-3472

Dear Eighth Graders and Parents/Guardians:

During the coming church year, Neighborhood's Youth Religious Education program will offer our eighth graders a class we call Rites of Passage or ROP for short. This program is also known as Coming of Age and honors, celebrates and explores the transition from childhood to youth. Exploring themes like Spirituality, UU Beliefs and Theology, Social Action and Leadership, the curriculum helps them to bring together all that they have learned and experienced in their lives and at church. **At the end of this program, youth will create personal faith statements (credos), which they will be invited to present to the congregation during a special "Rites of Passage" service on June 5, 2011 (mark your calendars).**

By participating in Rites of Passage, we hope each youth will:

- Understand and appreciate Unitarian Universalism in conjunction with their own beliefs and values;
- Gain self-confidence and realize that their feelings are valid and their opinions matter;
- Expand their vision of the world by allowing them to encounter differing views, cultures and life experiences;
- Understand what it means to belong to a congregation as an informed member;
- Realize they are non-judgmentally accepted in our church community, and that it is a safe place for them to be themselves.

The teachers and I will host a **Parent Orientation Wine and Cheese Mixer on Wednesday, October 13, at 6:30pm** to provide an opportunity for parents to hear more about this exciting class and meet the teachers. Childcare will be available upon request for younger siblings. Please RSVP by September 27 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 deBonneville 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.

(OVER)

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 at 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.**
- ❖ **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