

## **“New UU” Class**

A "New UU" orientation will be held on **Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the church.** The class is designed for anyone who'd like to know more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. It is especially recommended for those considering membership in CUUC. Even long-time UUs transferring from other congregations can benefit by attending the final hour of the program.

Attendees, along with a few church members, will first have a chance to talk about their personal beliefs and spiritual backgrounds. Our minister will be available to explain his role and answer questions. Next will be a segment on the histories of Unitarianism, Universalism and the combined denomination, as well as the 35-year history of our congregation. Participants will also explore the Seven Principles of UUism and their significance in our lives. Over lunch, some church leaders and active members will discuss the variety of programs and activities available at CUUC. The process of becoming a member or a "friend" of the congregation will also be explained.

**The workshop is free, including lunch and child care. If you'd like to attend, please sign up on one of the forms at the Visitors desk in the church foyer or contact Tye Alexander at [newuu@communityuuchurch.org](mailto:newuu@communityuuchurch.org).**

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## **Partner Church Update**

Joan and Duane Mortensen, Anita Van Ouwerkerk and Jian Li met Alex Szeto, President of the Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong and a few other members of UU Hong Kong while they were visiting Hong Kong in June. We brought Texas postcards, UU Partnership pins, and our church's history book to UU Hong Kong and held meetings with them. We enjoyed meeting with the UU Hong Kong friends and would like to share with you a letter from Alex Szeto. We are looking forward to finding ways to deepen our partnership relations. If you are interested in helping, please feel free to contact Jian Li.

Dear Community UU Church of Plano members and friends,

I am a 45-year-old Nuclear Medicine physician working in a government hospital. I was born and raised in Hong Kong, China, married to Ms Flora Lee for 5 years, and just had our first baby boy Ryan on February 8. I was converted to evangelical Christianity in high school and started attending the Alliance Church after I graduated from the university. With time, I realized something wrong with conservative Christian teachings. Examples include the anti-intellectual and anti-scientific attitudes, exclusivism (condemning all good non-Christians, including Buddha and Gandhi, to hell), and anti-LGBT stance. All these resulted from taking the ancient pre-scientific Bible as the “word of God” and then reading it literally. I looked for a more liberal approach to religion and found Unitarian Universalism (UU) on the Internet. I also found the United Church of Christ but realized that UU has truly evolved beyond the boundary of Christianity and allows a degree of intellectual freedom unmatched by all other Christian churches---I can become an atheist or Buddhist and remain in the UU church. The deep

history, the list of pleasantly surprising famous UUs, the organization of the UUA and its many resources such as pamphlets and books, all attract me to this liberal religion and I eventually joined the Church of Larger Fellowship in 1996. Regarding physical church, I turned from my evangelical Alliance church to an Anglican church in 2001. I also took a part-time course in the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary to sort out my theological thoughts and then graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies in 2003.

Finding absolutely no place for liberal religionists in Hong Kong to go, I started an Internet forum for Hong Kong liberal Christians in Chinese language. I managed to gather a few like-minded friends and we decided to form a Spiritual Seekers Society in 2004 and meet biweekly in the evenings. We searched our direction for a while and eventually became the first UU presence in Hong Kong; we renamed ourselves “Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong” (UUHK) in 2009. There is a Progressive Christian Fellowship, a Buddhist Sangha, and a Humanist Group under UUHK. UUHK usually meets on the first Saturday evening of every month, now doing the “Building Your Own Theology” course. Currently, we have 24 members on record but average attendance is only less than 10. We are looking for ways to introduce UUism to people of Hong Kong and China.

I am pleased that UUHK has established a Partner Church relationship with the Community UU Church of Plano under the UU Partner Church Council. That makes me feel connected with the international UU community. I have been communicating with Jian Li regarding her important work of translating UU basics (such as the very name) and resources into Chinese language, and introducing UUism to China. I am very excited to meet with Jian, Anita, and Joan during their trip to Hong Kong. We did a fruitful and enjoyable exchange. In our meeting on June 27, Jian presented to UUHK the issues surrounding translating the name “Unitarian Universalism” into Chinese language. At least two of our members who attended the meeting expressed to me their preference for the option “UU尋道會” (meaning “UU Spiritual Seekers Society” or “UU Dao-seeking Society” or “UU Way-seeking Society”). Anita shared the importance of introducing the church to newcomers as a way to invite membership. I hope to learn from her later on how to do this. In another chat, Jian suggested we seek resources and support, including financial support, from the UUA and/or ICUU (International Council of Unitarians and Universalists), which I agreed is essential for our work to be successful. I look forward to deepening of friendship between our two UU communities, transfer of leadership experience from an established church to a budding group, further communication and co-operation regarding introduction of UUism into China, including fund-finding, translation and publication work, and more. We have a good start, I believe; let us build on this firm foundation.

All the best.

Sincerely,

Alex Szeto

President

Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong