

Lewisham Unity

Minister Report May 2024 AGM

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Reporting Period June 2023- May2024

Prepared by Rev. Julio Torres

On a personal note, the minister, Julio, wishes to convey his heartfelt gratitude to the congregation as they are his first official ministry since his induction to the role of ministers. After planning on going into the ministry in 2010, and training since 2014; he couldn't have asked for a more lovely congregation to build the beloved community of peace, abundance and equality.

Since June 2023, Lewisham Unity has hosted 50 worship services (taking off two weeks in December 2023). The membership dropped from the year prior to 10 people. Our Committee of three have been stalwart in ensuring the administrative responsibilities of the congregation are taken care of adequately. The congregation hired on a quarter time minister (myself, Rev. Julio Torres) and we hired a quarter time administrator, Zoe in the summer of 2023.

The major challenge the congregation face is two tenants who have not honored the request to leave the premises in April 2023. The congregation has hired solicitors to handle this however the process has been drawn out for various reasons since July 2023. Rev. Julio Torres continues to be in dialogue with the solicitors. We as a congregation set out to be a socially conscious "landlord" however, it is now financially unstable to do this. We hope to do some repairs and improvements to the ground level. This will help with our desire to be a more accessible and community centered organisation. Additionally we hope to rent out the first floor to an organisation who will use it during the day time. The funds will support the continued operations, allow for more programming potential and spiritual growth opportunities for the congregation.

Regarding programming, we have held 50 worship services on Sundays. 18 have been led by Rev. Julio, 8 by interfaith minister Rev. Lindsay Stevens, 20 lay led by the congregation, 1 by our minister emeritus Rev. Claire MacDonald, 3 by Jeff Hilson (Poet). Rev. Lindsay Stevens has led our celebration of the 8 wheel of the year celebrations in Neopaganism (Equinoxes, Solstices, Harvest days and Samhain). Rev. Julio leads a monthly formal worship service and several informal worship services known as Cafe

Connect. We aim to have all the services which have been recorded to be uploaded to Youtube for mass viewing. Our quarterly themes in 2023 were “Movement and Embodiment”, “Freedom and Liberation”, “Orphans, Widows and the Lost”; and in 2024 “Sacred Unity”. We held our annual summer picnic, water service and Trans Day of Remembrance service. For the next few months, Julio will be leading worship services using *Soul Deep: Exploring Spiritual Conversations together*. Our member, Joel has also been leading Dances of Universal Peace monthly. The Gardening group has been engaging with the garden and property as well as they can with the occasional issues from our tenants, disrupting a few plans (due to drainage issues, and an open lot). Additionally we are having difficulty with removing a van from our parking lot.

Our membership has remained steady at 10, however we have had several beloved visitors who come regularly. We have a website and As such we continue to have a gardening group, and have members involved in Unitarians for Climate Justice, Unitarian Friends of Palestine and Citizens UK. We haven’t had any weddings, funerals or other life/ coming of age related ceremonies.

We hosted our away day on 17 March 2024. Nine of us were in attendance and we reaffirmed a desire to keep going. We want to continue to make our space community oriented, making it a place where we can recharge, rest and renew, where we can engage in social justice, and many more.

(((Julio to update report for Januanry to December 2023.))))
No warm welcomes in Decemeber