Minutes – Thursday, Nov. 14 , 2013
Live Oak Board of Trustees Meeting
David & Lisa Fry's apartment

Board Members Present: Darlene Pagano, Kris Arrington, Kathryn Duke, Jay Roller, Kate Hand
Others Present: David Fry, Lisa Fry, Richard Stromer.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m., with a quorum of five members. Jay did an opening reading and lit the chalice.

1. **Approve/Modify Agenda:** The board unanimously approved revising the agenda to add discussion of a possible Thanksgiving event, and also a review of Live Oak's responses to a UUA survey of Emerging Congregations.

2. **Treasurer's and Finance Officer's Report:** David Fry provided some clarifying information on the budget and financial statement documents that he had emailed earlier to the board. It appears we are on track with our budget to date.

3. The draft of the **October minutes** was reviewed and discussed, with particular attention to Section 9, which summarized a discussion by the board on Development of a Written Policy Regarding Hiring of Live Oak Members. (A decision on that matter was not reached at that meeting). The draft minutes were unanimously approved by the board, and will now be posted on Live Oak's website.

4. **Policy of Hiring Members/ Friends.** There was a lively discussion about whether to hire members for ongoing paid positions in our congregation. People recalled the September board meeting in which Nanci Armstrong-Temple attended specifically to address this issue. At that time, she described her experiences growing up in another UU congregation in which it was not unusual to hire members. She had also shared with the board her strongly held views about a congregation's best approach to interpersonal relationships and decisionmaking affecting its members, and advocated for a "think first about hiring a member" approach to hiring staff.

   Board members acknowledged the considerable benefits of maintaining flexibility in hiring decisions, and of being able to hire a member if that person seems the best candidate for a paid staff position. At the same time, several people stated their strongly-held belief that paying a member for regularly occurring, ongoing work benefitting the congregation (*i.e.,* a paid staff position) opens the door for congregational tension sometime in the future.

   Every board member noted the important arguments on both sides of this question. The strength of these competing arguments was reflected in the discussion ending with a non-unanimous vote, which is a rare event at Live Oak board meetings.

   Action Item: After some discussion about wording for the overall concept, it was moved and seconded that the board create a written policy regarding hiring of members and friends, which policy would be added to Live Oak's existing compilation of written policies, and which appears below. The motion was approved by a 4-1 vote.

   > **Paid staff: Background**: Within our lay-led fellowship, we who are Live Oak members and friends contribute our time, talent and treasure to create loving community through

worship and service to others. Those few people chosen by our congregation for a paid staff position are professionals who wouldn't otherwise bring their expertise and ongoing commitment to fill a need not being addressed by our existing members and friends volunteering their time and abilities.

Policy: It is Live Oak's policy to hire as paid staff only people who are not members or friends of our congregation. This has been our unwritten policy since Live Oak was created, and is now affirmed by this policy statement.

5. **Growth Committee**. Darlene reported that the Growth Committee has met again. She has been told the Committee now says that the two stipulations in their award letter must be met. Live Oak's proposal for funding to support congregational expansion is still pending, although the timing and exact nature of next steps is not known at this time.

6. **Board Committee reports**.

- **Welcoming Congregation**. Lisa provided a statement to other Committee members about what the Committee has done so far. They are talking about bringing to the Jan 29, 2014 congregational mtg a vote as to whether we will apply to have the UUA will list Live Oak as a Welcoming Congregation.
- **Child Safety**. Nothing to report this month.
- **Alameda Point Collaborative**. Kathryn reported that last month's Harvest Festival at APC, like the Festival the previous year, included a notable number of Live Oak volunteers helping with the carnival (where children practiced choosing the appropriate recycling bin, made corn husk dolls, played simple carnival games) and with some of the "passport" stations (where children learned about the honey, fruits, and vegetables coming from the bees, trees, and crops at APC). This year's Festival attracted 400 people who are residents of APC or of the larger outside community.
- **Every Sunday Programming**. There is talk of discontinuing the Second Sunday discussion groups if attendance doesn't increase. On some 2nd Sundays only five people have attended, including the facilitator. However, at the most recent gathering there were nine people, which is a sufficient number to plan to continue this activity.

7. **Election of new board members.** This year Live Oak has a Nominating Committee of Richard Stromer, Sally Kennedy, and Judith Heller. They will reach out to the congregation for candidates to replace Darlene and Kris, who are leaving as their terms end in early 2014. The Board does not participate In the Nominating Committee's work.

8. **Thanksgiving event?** There has been an inquiry about whether Live Oak will again organize a Thanksgiving gathering. The board decided It's too late on start organizing such an event for this year, but we will put this topic on our "annual calendar" to discuss earlier next year.

9. **Emerging Congregations Survey**. Lisa spoke about the draft version of preliminary answers she and Darlene had prepared as a response to a UUA survey of Emerging Congregations. Several board members then suggested a few additions to the excellent start these two people have made. Lisa will incorporate those suggestions, then send in Live Oak's responses to the survey questions.

Jay gave our closing reading at 8:59 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

--Respectfully submitted by Kathryn Sáenz Duke, Secretary of the Board