



Standing Against Hate Generosity, Gratitude, Games, and More

Dear Lisa,

We are starting a new year with lots of news. Articles listed in order of appearance in this newsletter.

- Toys for Tots! Thank You All
- "The Little Church That Could:" Live Oak's Giving for the Year
- Children & Youth Religious Exploration Plans
- Standing Against Hate: Supporting the Alameda Islamic Center
- Gratitudes
- Shall We Start a Book Club?
- Ready to Play More Games: March 12
- Keepsakes in the Attic: a Lovely Article
- Adult Faith Development DVD Series: January 15

Live Oak'ers Are So Generous. Many Thanks!

What a wonderful response to the request from our Social Justice & Service Group to support the **Toys for Tots** program again this year. In addition to an sizeable collection of toys and sporting goods, folks donated almost \$400 in cash. Many thanks to **Nancy Balassi**, who offered to shop for the kids with money donated during the December 20 service.



Before heading out to shop, Nancy checked with **Jim Franz** (the organizer for the Toys for Tots distribution at Christ Episcopal Church) to learn what items were still needed. Jim told her instead of toys and games they really needed gift certificates for the teens. She bought just what he suggested: ten \$20 gift certificates for **Big 5** (sporting goods) and ten \$20 gift certificates for **Books, Inc.** Again, thank you all for your generosity!

And, Nancy, thanks for shopping!

We are the *Little Church that Could!*

Whoa! In the past year (January 1-December 31, 2015), members and friends of Live Oak UU Fellowship gave **\$8,455.00** in cash & checks -- and probably another \$300 more in canned goods and toys -- to 21 different organizations. We gave to several organizations multiple times, including:

- Alameda County Community Food Bank



- Alameda Point Collaborative
- First Place for Youth (supporting foster youth)
- Guardian Group (LGBT asylum-seekers)
- Planned Parenthood
- UU Service Committee

Children & Youth Religious Exploration (CYRE)

On December 20th, we had a wonderful turn-out of children and youth for our holiday concert and worship service. It was a joy to see and hear them singing with the choir and holding up their candles during our closing ritual.

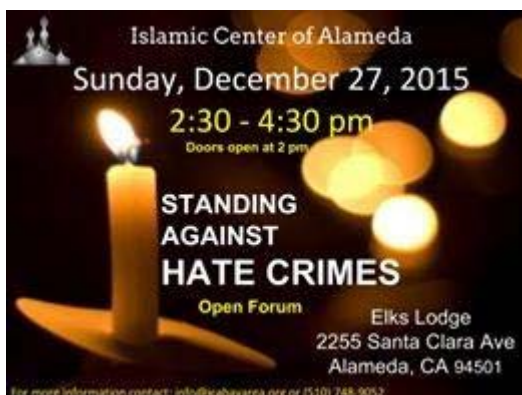
In early January, we had a "hunger banquet," an activity that allows children to see how food is distributed among people of high, middle, and low incomes. It was eye-opening to many of them (especially those who only had one cup of rice, while another had pizza), and some were inspired to do another "hunger banquet" with the entire fellowship. If you are interested in helping to plan one (possibly for a second Sunday), please get in touch with me or **Nancy Balassi**.



January and February will feature lessons on science and building. We'll learn about famous Unitarians like **Frank Lloyd Wright** and **Tim Burners-Lee** (the father of the World Wide Web). On January 24th, we'll have a Take-Apart Party, when children and youth are invited to take apart broken machines and electronics to see their inner-workings. If you have any appliances you no longer need, please let me know. We'd love to use them for our class!

Standing Against Hate: Live Oak'ers Support Islamic Center

In December, a large glass window at the [Islamic Center of Alameda](#) was shattered. They also received derogatory phone calls and people driving past yelled negative comments at Muslims. In response, the Center hosted an open forum entitled **Standing Against Hate Crimes** on Sunday, December 27. They invited folks from other Alameda faith communities to join them, including those of us from Live Oak.



Unfortunately, the event overlapped our worship service -- and many of us were out of town. We are grateful that **Nancy Balassi** and **Bruce Langley** attended. Nancy reported:

In addition to **Imam Musa Balde**, **Rev. Michael Yoshii** (Buena Vista United Methodist), **Rabbi Allen Bennett**, and



Joel Britton (Socialist Workers Party) spoke. Nancy wasn't there for the question and answer period (because she had promised to help at Live Oak), but Bruce stayed. Neither of them got the sense that the Islamic Center was asking for any particular type of support. Rather, it was more of an informational meeting so the community could learn more about what Islam is -- and isn't.

Nancy noted what struck her most was how fervently the Imam wanted to convey that Islam is a peaceful religion. "We feel quite saddened that someone would take it upon themselves to do something so harmful to people who are peaceful. We work with the community and have a good relationship. We teach nothing but peace."

Michael Yoshii said, "We have to learn from history." He reminded folks that during World War II, many in his congregation were immigrants from Japan, taken away to concentration camps under the Roosevelt administration." He cited war hysteria, racism and lack of leadership as the reason for these incidents.

Follow-Up: There will be a planning meeting soon to discuss an interfaith gathering. **Rev. Laura Rose** (First Congregational Church of Alameda) will convene the meeting. A poll went out last week to select the meeting date.

More Live Oak'ers to Thank

Many Live Oak'ers give freely of their time and energy for our fellowship. We are always grateful for them. And each month we try to recognize some.

We were so proud to have Live Oak represented in the Climate Rally in November. Many thanks to **Roger Hallsten, his son Jason, and Renee Harper** for taking time from their busy lives to push forward action on this important issue. More thank you's to come.



Interested in Starting or Joining a Book Club?



Recently several people expressed interest in a group that would read a common book (fiction) and then get together to discuss it (and choose the next book). This idea came up during the November Games Day. Any interest? If so, [email Lisa](#) to let her know you might be interested.

If we get enough people, we'll then figure out details (night of the week, how often to meet, start a list of books to read, e.g.). The group would probably meet in someone's home (or in different homes).

And Speaking of Games: How About Saturday, March 12?

Many Live Oak'ers (and their friends) like to play games! Woot! We're looking at reserving a room at Christ Episcopal for Games Night on Saturday, March 12. This would be for everyone -- ALL ages (kids, teens, adults)! We would start early enough to enjoy a meal together and then bring on the games. Are you interested?

The always popular [Chicken Foot Dominoes](#) would certainly be available. What else? Last time we played a couple of hotly contested rounds of [Word on the Street](#) while another group played [Pickomino](#). Save the date!



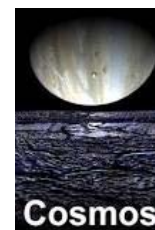
Keepsakes in the Attic

"What keepsakes remind you of the communities that have touched you? Are they tangible items, or perhaps stored carefully in memory and story? Take a moment to bring them out of storage, either literally or in your mind's eye. Remember, reflect, and be grateful."

Enjoy the touching article the quote above comes from: [Keepsakes in the Attic](#), by Gail Forsyth-Vail is the Adult Programs Director in the UUA Faith Development Office.

Adult Faith Development: Watch & Discuss DVDs Together

Our next gathering is THIS Friday, January 15 (7:30 p.m.). We'll be watching episode 4 of **Cosmos: A Personal Journey**, "Heaven and Hell." The group will also decide if we want to continue watching this series or if we want to watch another. We welcome your input on what we should consider watching. If you plan to join us, please [email Lisa](#) to let her know you're coming.



Email options: We maintain two separate email lists. One gets ONLY reminder announcements of upcoming worship services. The other gets those notices, plus information about congregational meetings, activities,

religious education, newsletters, and more. You are welcome to be on either list. Please let Lisa (lisasfry@gmail.com) know if you wish to be moved from one list to the other -- or if you wish to be removed from our email list altogether. Note: We also have a listserv for members & friends of Live Oak. You may join it, at any time, by sending an email to uuliveoak-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

[Live Oak UU Website](#)
[Live Oak UU Facebook Page](#)

