

News from Live Oak – November, 2013

A Thanksgiving Offering

America's Table: Celebrating Our Diverse Roots & Shared Values

"In a world too often threatened by differences, Thanksgiving is a day to appreciate how our various backgrounds make America vibrant, while our democratic values unite us and keep America strong. *America's Table*®: *A Thanksgiving Reader* tells this story and helps us express gratitude for being part of it."

America's Table was created by the AJC [American Jewish Committee] following the events of September 11, 2001. For eight years, working with other organizations (listed below), they published small books of readings designed to be read, in whole or in part, around the Thanksgiving table. The quote to the right is one example from the book.

Profiles of individuals, whose lives and work exemplify these themes, complement the brief narrative. These include accomplished Americans we recognize (John Lewis, Nina Totenberg, e.g.) and those we may not (Jean Nganji, a Tutsi from Rwanda; Tasneem Shamim, from India; Chung-Wha Hong, emigrated from South Korea at 11, e.g.).

*Not every journey was easy.
The first arrivals sometimes shunned
those who followed.
Not every journey was voluntary.
The first African slaves landed in Jamestown
a year before the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth.
Not every journey was righteous.
Native Americans were devastated by a new
nation's need to conquer, cultivate, and build.*

The AJC's Belfer Center for American Pluralism continues to distribute these annually in cooperation with these human relations organizations:

NAACP
National Council of La Raza
National Urban League
National Conference for Community and Justice
Cuban American National Council

Islamic Supreme Council of America
Japanese American Citizens League
New America Alliance
Organization of Chinese Americans
Korean American-Jewish American Council

Reading the narrative in the booklet takes only 7-10 minutes, but adds great significance to the gathering. Narratives (readings) are the same in all the books, but profiles of people change each year. All the booklets are still available as PDF downloads:

http://www.ajc.org/site/c.ijlTI2PHKoG/b.2178713/k.59D6/Americas_Table_Get_Copies.htm.

(Many thanks to Mary MacKay for the tip on this resource.)

4th Sunday Worship Services In Full Swing: Mark Calendars!

Last month we celebrated worshipping together on a 4th Sunday for the very first time. Guest preacher Patrice Curtis, a candidate for UU ministry, led a thoughtful and celebratory service for us.

And with the hard work of our own Worship Chair, Richard Stromer, we have 4th Sundays programmed through the end of this year and well into the first half of 2014. Most of these services will be led by guest clergy. On **November 24**, for example, our guest minister will be Rev. Sonya Sukalski, assisted by Worship Associate Jay Roller. They will look at how the best of activism and community organizing pair with socially conscious media to address the many challenging issues of our time.



On **December 22**, we welcome Worship Leaders Mary MacKay and Richard Stromer, who will share a special Christmas service with us, based on one that Mary put together for her congregation in Honolulu.

Please mark your calendars and remember that you can now worship with your Live Oak community on the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of every month. (And, of course, join us on 2nd Sundays for the Adult Discussion Program led by Ty Meier.)

Live Oak's Generosity -- \$20,000+ -- Supporting Many Programs

Together, we have donated more than \$20,500 to non-profits (mostly local) since our first meeting for worship on November 23, 2008. This money has been collected Sunday after Sunday in what we call our Good Neighbor Cash Collection. And here are the organizations we have supported:

- [Alameda County Community Food Bank](#)
- [Alameda Homeless Network](#)
- [Alameda Meals on Wheels](#)
- [A Home Away from Homelessness](#)
- [A Home Within](#)
- [Berkeley Free Clinic](#)
- [Christ Episcopal Church](#) (Thanksgiving meal)
- [Ecology Center](#)
- [First Place for Youth](#)
- [Homeless Prenatal Program](#)
- [It Gets Better](#)
- [Marine Foundation Toys for Tots](#)
- [Oxfam America](#)
- [People's Grocery](#)
- [Planned Parenthood](#)
- [Playworks](#)

NOTE: Playworks, an organization we've supported several times, was recently featured on *All Things Considered* on NPR. It's a great story. [You may listen or read it](#) here. Glad we are supporting this one!

In addition, we have supported many UU organizations – Standing on the Side of Love, the UU Partner Church Council, UU Service Committee, UU Ministry for the Earth, and UUSF Guardian Group helping LGBT refugees resettle in the bay area.

November 20: Transgender Remembrance Day

The 13th Annual International [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) (TDoR) will honor transgender and gender variant individuals killed due to anti-transgender violence around the world over the previous 12 months.



An Alameda County-wide event will be held in Oakland Friday, November 18, at Preservation Park, 668 13th Street. Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; event starts at 7:30 p.m. Free. [RSVP on Facebook.](#)

Typically, a TDoR memorial includes reading of names of those who lost their lives during the year and may include candlelight vigils, art shows, food drives, film screenings, marches, and more.

TDoR, which occurs annually on November 20, was founded in 1998 to memorialize the murder of Rita Hester in Massachusetts. Gwendolyn Ann Smith, a transgender graphic designer, columnist, and activist, initiated the day, which has evolved into an international day of action. For other events held around the bay area, just search for: Transgender Day of Remembrance 2013.

Mark Your Calendars!

Live Oak's Annual Winter Concert: Sunday, December 15, 3:00 p.m.

Enjoy an eclectic blend of vocal and choral music from Spirituals to Classical to Christmas Jazz, directed by Mark Daniel, with guest pianist Bill Ganz. And Live Oak youth Avery Roth-Hawthorne will play a French horn solo for us. (Congrats to Avery, recently selected from more than 11,000 applicants as one of 170 *YoungArts* winners. *YoungArts* is considered by many to be the most prestigious youth arts competition in the country.)

The whole choir will entertain us as well as soloists, duets, and ensembles. There is no charge for this concert. All are welcome – members, friends, and guests.



There will be a short break after the concert (about 3:45 p.m.) and then our regular Sunday worship service will begin at 4:00 p.m. Join us for both the concert and the worship service -- or come for one or the other.

Interested in Expanding our Adult Religious Exploration?

The Adult Religious Exploration (ARE) team is looking for a meeting date early in January to begin our own exploration of what opportunities we would like to organize to meet the needs of our congregation. That means it is not too late for *you* to come on board and be part of this effort.

What would it mean to be on the ARE committee? Well, probably four meetings per year (with some assignments in-between, of course). For example, we will (a) canvas congregational needs and interests; (b) research possible offerings; (c) select curriculum; (d) recruit teachers; and (e) promote ARE to the congregation. You will not be asked to be a teacher or facilitator, unless that is what you prefer to do. Being a part of this team should provide a highly interconnected experience.

Another advantage: Since this will be the first time we start this work, we can really make it whatever we want it to be and see how the congregation responds. If you are interested or have questions or suggestions, please contact Darlene Pagano (dpagano@igc.org).

APC's Harvest Festival: Great Success!

More than 400 people enjoyed the Harvest Festival this year. The guests had a great time exploring the farm, carving pumpkins and learning interesting facts about things that grown on this urban farm -- and, of course, playing the carnival-style games. That's primarily where Live Oak'ers lent a hand.

Many thanks to the Live Oak crew of volunteers:

- Nanci Balassi
- Katie Cameron
- David Fry
- Lisa Fry
- Hazel Fry
- Peter Hand
- Isaiah Hand
- Ximena Rossi
- Renzo Rossi
- Bruno Rossi
- Richard Stromer

And, of course, thanks to Kathryn Duke who was busy helping in other areas of the festival. Note: It was delightful to see Jackie Jenks and Lette Stockwell (and their children) there, as well as Annabelle & Tallulah with their Nana. (Photo right: Richard Stromer and youth)

By the way, did you taste any of the food served at the festival? Did you know all the food served was grown on the farm and prepared by APC residents, staff and volunteers? Now – by popular request – APC has posted a number of their [recipes on-line](#). Mmmm. Take a look.



Games Night: Many Thanks!

The Membership Team and Children's Religious Exploration (CRE) Team provided supper and time to play together last week. Twenty people (kids and adults) enjoyed this always fun event. (Photos by David Fry)

Many people brought games (Dominos, Apples to Apples, Settlers of Catan, and more). Folks brought munchies to keep us going through the night. And we were delighted several people brought friends! Always a good thing to do.



Many thanks to all of those Live Oak'ers who made this such a success (making and bring food, coming early to set-up, staying to clean-up; and to a few who did several of those tasks: Nanci Armstrong-Temple, Nancy Balassi, David Fry, Lisa Fry, Kate Hand, Judith Heller, Bill Hieb, Sally Kennedy, and Darlene Pagano. And thank you to those who brought games and snacks – and to those who helped with clean-up!

Watch for the next Games Night (probably in February)!

Live Oak UU's Caring Committee

If you know of someone in our congregation who needs a visit or some other simple need such as a meal, you can contact one of the members of the Caring Committee to see if we can be of any assistance:

- Nancy Balassi nbalassi@aol.com (510-523-7605)
- Jay Roller jaybroller2002@yahoo.com (510-338-0690)
- Sally Kennedy deskennedy@att.net (510-655-9672)

2nd Sunday Discussion Group

We are very excited about this program, which really adds to the spiritual aliveness of our community. Live Oak'er Ty Meier, who leads the discussions, is an excellent facilitator. We meet at 4:00 p.m. in the Guild Room (just off the Parish Hall). Join others for a chance to get to know one another better, to explore questions that deepen our relationships with each other and the world, and to enjoy a simple meal afterward. Childcare provided, of course. See you next on December 8th.

Caroling on Christmas Tree Lane in Alameda

Live Oak members Kim Rankin and Dave Keys (and young William) recently moved to "Christmas Tree Lane" in Alameda (see SFGate's description of [Christmas Tree Lane](#)). They have invited Live Oak folks to come to their place to sing Christmas Carols on the lawn on Sunday, December 15, 6:30 p.m. This will be after our Holiday Concert, worship service and potluck that Sunday. Kim has also invited singers from Montclair Presbyterian Church (MPC), where she works, to join us. Kim's address is 3251 Thompson Ave. (the real name of Christmas Tree Lane).

Kathryn Duke notes she and Niels live very near Christmas Tree Lane and would love to stroll on over after the potluck. She says, "Anyone who is thinking of joining Kim and others should let me know. Plan to park in front of -- or near -- my house and then we can walk the one block down to Christmas Tree Lane. Believe me, you do not want to try to park anywhere on or too near that block of Thompson any evening in December, and especially on a weekend. It will be jammed with people, cars, and maybe even Santa and some elves." Let Kathryn (kathryn.saenz.duke@gmail.com) know if you are coming and meet her at her home, 2964 Southwood Dr.

Tolling of the Bells Service

On November 3, we celebrated *Our Beloved Dead* in our worship service (led by Darlene Pagano and Kris Arrington). In addition to the traditional Tolling of the Bells, the service featured a lovely altar where members and friends placed pictures and tokens of loved ones. Listen to the [homily and search for meaning](#). (Photo by Neil Planchon)

This was also the first time a Live Oak service incorporated music played on Christ Episcopal's pipe organ. Thanks, Kim Rankin.



Nominating Committee Seeking Potential Leaders

Judith Heller, Sally Kennedy, and Richard Stromer (our Nominating Committee) will soon begin the task of finding nominees for our Board of Trustees and for the Nominating Committee. If you are a member and interested in taking on a leadership role, please let one of them know. And, if they come to you, please seriously consider the offer to work with current board members to serve our fellowship. It's a very fulfilling opportunity.

In the Holiday Spirit: APC's Holiday Wish List

APC says, "We are so touched by all of the offers of support for APC residents that we have already started to receive." APC answers the most frequently asked questions and offers suggestions on how you can lend support to APC families this holiday season.

- 2 **new** computers for the Education and Teen Centers

If you would like to contribute to this effort, donations of gift cards, in any amount, to **Best Buy** are appreciated. Two new computers will help us make better use of our online academic program and allow older students to tackle more advanced computing tasks.

- Gift cards for teens

Always the hardest to shop for, gift cards in denominations of \$15-25 to stores like Old Navy, Target, Kohl's, Payless Shoes, movie theaters, etc. will help the holidays bright for this very special group of young people. There are 140 teens and very young adults in the APC community.



- Welcome baskets for new families

All of our resident families have transitioned out of homelessness, and the vast majority of residents lack the resources to establish a new household. Supporting them with household basics helps set the stage for future success. Items requested:

- Laundry soap
 - Dish soap (liquid)
 - Green cleaning products
 - New bath towels
 - New dishtowels
 - Laundry baskets
 - New Sheet sets (twin and double are most in demand)
 - Bath soap/shampoo & conditioner
 - Toothpaste and toothbrushes (adult and children)
 - Diapers and wipes
 - Pots & pans (basic set)
 - Food storage with lids (basic set)
 - Grocery gift cards
- New Sheets and Pillows for children

We've made a special effort this year to help educate our families on preventing and spreading lice. New sheets and pillows will help keep our kids nit free. Requested items:

- New twin sheet or bed in a bag sets for children aged 10 and younger
- New pillows
- Mattress protectors (twin)

Q: Do you have an Adopt-a-Family program?

A: No, APC does not facilitate adoption/sponsoring particular families in our community. Why? APC is home to 200 households and it is important to us that we distribute our resources equitably. We believe that by supporting our programs, your gift will have a deeper impact in our community.

Q: Can my office/organization organize a drive for APC?

A: Absolutely! We can always accept any quantity of items for our welcome baskets, gift cards, or sheets for children. If you are interested in hosting a drive for any other items, please [contact us](#) first, before beginning your drive to ensure that your drive idea is a good fit for the APC community.

Q: We would really like to host a toy drive. Can APC use toys?

A: Yes, and no. We do not have a way to distribute individual toys to children, however, we would encourage you to consider “adopting” the Education or Teen Center incentive program. In both centers, kids have the chance to earn *Education Bucks* by completing homework, doing volunteer work, etc... that they can spend on items in the Education Store. The system is a great motivation to keep the kids engaged in services that help them build stronger academic and life skills. Items in need are:

For teens:

- Gift cards (increments of \$10 and \$15) to stores like Old Navy, Target, Starbucks, etc...
- Novelty socks – stripes, argyles, brand name sport socks
- Accessories – trendy bracelets, scarves, earrings, bags, baseball hats and gear for local sports teams etc...
- Headphone earbuds

For youth:

- Board games
- Art/craft/science kits
- Backpacks/Lunchboxes
- Snazzy school supplies

Q: When would you like donated items delivered?

A: Ideally by **Friday, December 20**. Donations may be dropped off at 677 W. Ranger Ave between 9am-1pm and 2pm and 6pm Monday-Friday. (This entire article is on-line, too, should you wish to encourage others to help: <http://apcollaborative.org/in-the-holiday-spirit/>.)

