

News from Live Oak – January, 2014

A Hearty Thank You to Live Oak ... from the Children at APC

The holiday season at Alameda Point Collaborative was simply amazing. The care and concern shown for our resident families is just what makes our community such a special place. APC sent Live Oak (and others) a note saying, “We think that the best way to kick-off 2014 is by sharing our gratitude for all who helped to make last year special for APC residents!”

Gift Card & Toy Drive for Kids and Teens

APC then added, “We would like to extend a special thanks to the following organizations that generously supported APC's holiday efforts. Together they donated more than \$1,000 in gift cards and hundreds of holiday gifts for APC youth. In addition to helping families provide gifts for their children during the holidays, this support will enable APC kids to access additional materials they need throughout the school year to support their academic goals.”

- **Live Oak UU Fellowship**
- Novartis
- VF Outdoor

Live Oak wishes to thank Nancy Balassi and Renee Harper for organizing this drive – and for some fun announcements to publicize it! And, of course, many thanks to each of you for your generous donations.

Seeing all these smiles is truly thanks enough!



And Speaking of Giving ...

Woo-hoo! In 2013, Live Oak members and friends gave almost **\$7,000** to 13 different organizations (many of them multiple times) through our Good Neighbor program. That's what we call our policy of giving our entire collection plate on Sundays to outside non-profits whose values are in keeping with ours.

Curious what we've given in total since our very first service in November-2008? The answer: **\$24,839.32**, plus

- 7 bags of school supplies
- Target gift cards for APC
- Holiday gifts (socks, games, e.g.) for APC children and youth
- And more than 110 toys to the Marine's Toys for Tots program.



Generosity *is not
an act, it's a way of life*

We are a small -- but very GENEROUS -- group! Many thanks to each of you!

Live Oak UU: Five Years ... And Growing

The Stewardship Committee (Roger Hallsten, Niels Kjellund, Darlene Pagano, and Jay Roller) is busy planning the spring stewardship drive with the theme *Five Years and Growing*. We will kick off our campaign on our 5th anniversary (Sunday, February 23) and finish with a Celebration Dinner on Saturday, March 29.



In between, there will be 4 house parties: two in Alameda and one each in Berkeley and Oakland. The parties will all be in early March. Dates and locations will be announced shortly.

We'll gather in small groups to socialize and to talk about what we want to see our Fellowship accomplish in the next few years utilizing our financial gifts, time and talent. Stay tuned for more details, but be sure you save the date (Saturday evening, March 29) for an all Fellowship festive dinner.

Welcoming Congregation: Affirmed at Congregational Meeting

Woo-hoo! We have done a great deal of work to demonstrate – to ourselves and to others – that Live Oak UU is, indeed, a Welcoming Congregation, a safe and inclusive congregation for those who identify as LGBTQ. At our January congregational meeting the members present voted unanimously “to affirm that Live Oak UU Fellowship is an open, inclusive and welcoming congregation that now wishes to be recognized by the Unitarian Universalist Association as a Welcoming Congregation.”

We’ve now sent materials to demonstrate our progress and work to the UUA’s LGBTQ Ministries’ office. Our package included “[Live Oak Fellowship’s Action Steps](#),” and links to a [list of LO newsletters](#) with articles relevant to our Welcoming Congregation work and status and/or to LGBTQ issues. We also suggested they check us out on our website, especially these pages:

Home page: <http://uuliveoak.org/index.htm>

FAQs for visitors: <http://uuliveoak.org/faqs.htm>

Who We Are: <http://uuliveoak.org/about.htm>

Our Mission & Vision: http://uuliveoak.org/vision_statement.htm

Faith in Action: http://uuliveoak.org/faith_in_action.htm

Newsletters: <http://uuliveoak.org/newsletters.htm>



The LGBTQ Ministries will review our materials and let us know within a month if they agree that we have made enough progress to be identified as a Welcoming Congregation. Of course, there will always be more work to do – and we look forward to continuing our efforts.

Our thanks to our Fellowship’s Welcoming Congregation Committee: Bernadette Alexander, Lisa Fry, and Richard Stromer.

New Board and Nominating Committee Members Elected

At our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 12th, we elected two new members to our Board of Directors: Roger Hallsten and Renee Harper. Many thanks to both for stepping up to this new leadership role. Roger and Renee, who both have served on boards in the past, will join Kathryn Duke, Kate Hand, and Jay Roller to complete our board.

We also elected Niels Kjellund to the Nominating Committee. Niels will join Judith Heller and Richard Stromer to complete this team.

And, of course, our sincere thanks goes to those who have been serving our congregation and are finishing up their terms. Much gratitude to Kris Arrington and Darlene Pagano, board members, and Sally Kennedy terming off the Nominating Committee.

Adult Religious Education (ARE) Committee

Live Oak's Adult Religious Education (ARE) Committee met this month. The team includes (so far!) Darlene Pagano, Richard Stromer, and Tom Wilson (with our Director of Children's RE Michelle Mueller consulting). The team welcomes more folks to join them – and/or to offer ideas.

Below are five areas we believe Live Oak can build a program around -- after ascertaining the interests of the congregation. Watch for a congregational survey on wants and interests regarding Adult Religious Exploration to be delivered to you by our 5th Anniversary commemoration in February.

- Spiritual Literacy/Religious Literacy
- Personal Spiritual Practices
- UU Survey course(s) History, theology, worship, etc.
- Spiritual Perspective of Money --in practice. (also other major choices in life in later series: Work, Parenting, Civics, Intimate Relationships, Vocation, etc.)
- Social Justice Questions. (including following annual GA Congregational Study/Action issues)

Record Number of Attendees: Concert & Solstice Service

We had our largest crowd ever on Sunday, December 15 – for the Holiday Concert and Solstice Service. At least 87 people enjoyed the hard work of our choir and choir director – and the service, *Return to the Light*, led by Nanci Armstrong-Temple and Peter Hand (with Richard Stromer leading the Solstice ritual).

Live Oak Caring Committee: There for Us All

If you – or someone you know in our congregation needs a visit or some other simple need such as a meal, contact a member 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)

Live Oak UU Fellowship's Mission:

We create loving community through worship and service to others.