



Last Monday, 9 of us found our way to the Alameda County Community Food Bank where we joined with other church groups and individual volunteers to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and to honor him through service. This was an opportunity to learn where the food we drop into the big red bins goes next. Here is the personal reflection of **Alvin Leung** of the day:

“Why are you awake so early? It’s a holiday!” My grandma was surprised that I strayed from my normal schedule of waking up at 9 by waking up at 7:30 on this cold and wet morning. I did not explain the significance of Martin Luther King Jr. day and his contribution to the greater good of

America but I bluntly stated I was going to volunteer at the Food Bank. She then scolded me “The food bank? We can feed you! Why do you want to go to the food bank?” I smiled and left the house to gather with other likeminded individuals.

MLK day? We see it more as another day to sleep in, an extra day off work or even just another 3-day weekend. Like many Americans, I might easily overlook the significance of the distinguished individuals that have molded American history, their contributions and why we celebrate them in the first place. Rev. King once said “Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?” In order to change, we must be the change. We must be the helping hand that picks up those that have fallen down, those that feel helpless and those that have lost hope. The whole point of having a food bank is to help those that are in dire need, hungry and food insecure.

While at the Food Bank, we learned about their work in 3 areas: advocacy, nutrition training and food distribution. I learned about the value of food stamps and how important this federal program is. “These are usually not items that we talk about, especially as Asians, these topics never come up,” piped up Tony. I also learned more about nutrition and health within our community and how many of the foods that we buy, whether fast food or produce, correlated to the health and wellbeing of our community. I learned that low-income communities often experience many more health risks due the inaccessibility to healthy and fresh food. There is a higher frequency of liquor stores/fast food dining in proportion to grocery stores/markets. It prompted me to think about what we might donate into the big red cans during food drives and remembering to only put in items that are nutritious and healthy for others.

At the end of our day, Pastor Emily asked, “Where did you see God?” Richard responded, “I saw God through all the hands of the volunteers that helped bag the apples and oranges.” In fact, that was what we did. We sorted rotten apples from the good ones and moldy oranges from the edible ones. Our job was to bag these fruits so that the Food Bank could distribute them to its many partners throughout the county. If someone were to ask me to bag 500 pounds of fruit for that day, I would have run away. The secret, I learned, is not “you go do it”, but “let’s go do it.” At the end of the day, we found out that together all the volunteers were able to sort and bag almost **20,000 pounds of apples and oranges** in a matter of 3 hours!

My experience at the Food Bank was about teamwork and enlightenment, but it left me asking, “What more can we do to improve the community?”

**Great thanks to all who participated in the Holiday Food Drive.** Together we collected 520 lbs of food and contributed \$418 to the Food Bank! Thank you! Thank you! A big red bin will continue to be at the back of the sanctuary for donations throughout the year.



# THE MESSENGER

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

January 24 2010  
Epiphany 4

## “An Ancient Mission Statement”

Pastor Emily Lin

Text: Luke 4: 14-21

Usher/Greeter: Donna and Steve

Prayer: Becky

Scripture: Richard

Music: Becky

Acolyte: Jenny



**Worship with Us Next Week: January 31, 2010**

**Preacher: Rebecca Wong, Certified**

**Lay Speaker**

**Focus Scripture: Luke 4: 21 - 30**

**Usher/Greeter: Brenda and Jane**

**Prayer: Hoang-Anh**

**Scriptures: Burt**

**MusicAeri**



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*View from the EMC Chair*  
*By Derek Lang*



When I was an entry-level government employee in Washington, DC, we had an annual fundraising campaign (no not taxes!) for employees to voluntarily deduct part of their salary for charities ranging from local school programs to overseas relief funds. We received a booklet listing hundreds of charities, information about the charity, and contact information. In addition to contributing some small percentage of my salary, I spent one week selecting various charities and sending a separate check them for \$100. With each check, I included a slip of paper with a note, "Donated through the grace of God." I could have increased the percentage of salary to be deducted from my paycheck and have the government send them the money. Somehow it seemed more personal and more meaningful for me to write each check and send it myself.

At about the same time, I was attending a local church. Somewhere along the line, the idea of tithing (giving a certain percentage of my income) came up, and I distinctly remember struggling with the idea whether I could give 10% as offering. I do not know if we learned about tithing in Sunday School. As a child, my parents gave me quarters and eventually dollar bills to put into the offering plate. When I got that first real job, that percentage seemed like a lot (note: I know that it is just a guideline). I was living on my own and had to pay my own bills. Even though I was thrifty with my money and single, it seemed hard enough to save from year to year, and even more difficult to give that much to the church. Plus, I considered myself only a temporary member of the church; so maybe there was an excuse not to be vest heavily there. For awhile, I would put \$5, \$10, or \$20 into the offering plate depending on how I felt called each Sunday morning. It was not until I came back to CCUMC and was asked to fill out a pledge card that I really started to think about what it meant giving from my life as opposed to giving from my pocket.

It is often difficult to talk publicly about money. Maybe it is a personal thing. Maybe it is a cultural thing. Church and money – well, that is even more difficult. A friend of mine told me even as recently as this week how she was turned off from a church because they were soliciting funds for a new building and asked her to give up school to get a job so she could contribute (yikes!). I do not know what the magic formula is for deciding when to give or how much to give. I do know that how we view money is part of our growing up process – in secular as well as spiritual life. We are reminded that giving is a spiritual practice. But we also remember that listening is a spiritual practice, and we listen to the Holy Spirit to discern what to give.

*Congregational Care Program ~ By Charlie Ho*

Thanks to those of you who supported the Congregational Care Program in 2009. This past year, we visited elder members of our church family who were not able to join us in worship on Sundays. Under Jane's leadership, we were organized into small teams. Collectively, the small teams made monthly visits to each person on her list. We brought warmth, joy, and simple smiles as gifts; and we shared the love of God. And in return, we received appreciation that is beyond earthly "thank you". Through these visits, many of us developed personal relationships with the visitees as well.

If you would like to join us (or continue) in 2010, please contact Jane or me by email ([JanePYin@gmail.com](mailto:JanePYin@gmail.com) or [CCUMCCharlie@gmail.com](mailto:CCUMCCharlie@gmail.com)), or let us know at church. We will work with you to form the small teams to carpool, and minimize traveling time and mileage.

*Upcoming News and Notes ~*

- **Today, Jan. 24th** - We will observe **Pledge Sunday**. You are invited to prayerfully discern your financial support of the ministries and mission of CCUMC. Please connect with Pastor Emily should you have any questions.
- If you would like to be an **Altar Flower** contributor, please connect with Helena to sign up for your preferred Sunday. Suggested donation is \$10.
- Share your gift of **Hospitality** by signing up with Laura to provide refreshments (and clean up) during our fellowship time after service.
- **February 7th - Health Kits for Haiti** Party. Please see article.
- **Lunar New Year Pot Luck** will be on **February 14th**. The Chinese and English congregation will welcome in the Lunar New Year together! Pot Luck Assignments are as follows:  
A - J Salad  
H - L Dessert  
M - Z Entrée (Meat Dish)  
Please direct any questions to Peggy or Helena
- Coming in April: Benefit dinner for the Kumi Boarding School. Please see article