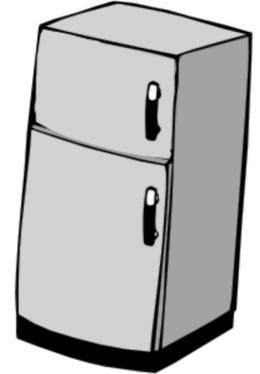




RE-Frigerator Page



We Celebrate...

Our theme for November is Blessing. That's a pretty logical choice for the month that includes Thanksgiving in the United States. There are a lot of ways of understanding the word *blessing*, but one of them is a prayer of thanksgiving, like you might have before eating, especially on a special occasion like Thanksgiving.



Then again, you can think of a blessing as anything

you might give thanks for, rather than the prayer of Thanksgiving itself. Good food to eat is a blessing. Gathering with family and friends is a blessing. Hav-

ing a safe place to gather is a blessing. Freedom to practice (or not practice) religion according to your own conscience is a blessing. Trees turning color or flowers starting to bloom is a blessing.

There are more blessings in life than you can possibly keep track of—but it's a good practice to think of as many as you can and to be grateful.

**Family Quest
of the Church of
the Larger
Fellowship**

Nov. 2017



We Honor...

Lydia Maria Child, author of the famous Thanksgiving song "over the River and Through the Woods" seems like an appropriate person to honor for November.

Child was a well-known author in her day, who wrote novels as well as shorter pieces for women

and children.

Although she was a Unitarian, she was often dissatisfied with the Unitarian churches of the 1800s, which were not as open-minded as she was (or as they are today). Like most modern UUs, she felt that people should be open to learning from all religions, and that we should focus on the moral teachings of Jesus rather than on what she called "superstitious rubbish" like the stories of him performing miracles.

She was excited when a group of Unitarians started the Free Religious Association in 1867, so that she could belong to a religious group that truly shared her views. Lydia Maria Child was a strong and outspoken opponent of slavery and supporter of women's right to vote, and amongst other work she edited an anti-slavery newspaper and wrote a book designed to help freed slaves learn to read.

Although her sweet song about an old-fashioned Thanksgiving is a classic, there's a lot more about this fiery lady that has been a blessing!



Talk About It!

- ☺ What are blessings in your life?
- ☺ How are you a blessing to other people?
- ☺ What blessings do you wish for others?
- ☺ What blessings do you wish for yourself?
- ☺ Does your family say a blessing before meals? What do you do?
- ☺ What do you think would be a good thing to say (or sing) before meals to express gratitude for blessings?

Act...

Thanksgiving is the time of year when many food banks or food pantries rely on getting donations to help people who might not be able to afford food to enjoy their holidays. A good way to share your blessings this time of year is to go through your cupboards or make a special trip to the grocery store to collect canned goods or other foods that won't spoil to donate to your local food bank. (Please check dates on anything you donate from home to make sure it's still good.)

Or, if you're up for a bigger pro-



ject, organize your church, your school or your neighborhood to collect food to donate together. Or ask the food pantry for a list of

items they would most like to have and make a flier with that information to hand out to people as they go into the grocery store. You can be outside waiting with a barrel or laundry hamper or bunch of bags to take donations of food for the food pantry.

Of course, you'll need a grown-up with you on this project (preferably one who has agreed to drive the donations to the food pantry).

Nurturing the Spirit

Does your family say a blessing before meals? Having special words you say or sing can not only be a good way to remember to be grateful, it's also a nice way to have something that is special to your family.

So why not create your own family blessing? It could be words you all say together, or a song you all sing, or a question that each person answers in their own way. You could have the same blessing every day, or different blessings that different people lead.

How do you write a blessing? Well, how do you say thank you for all the biggest things and all the tiniest things that make your life good? You could put that in the form of a poem that rhymes; or to a simple tune that you already know, like "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" or "Three Blind Mice." Or you could use plain words that come from your heart, like "Thank you to All that Is for the gift of being part of All that Is."

Draw a picture of something that's a blessing in your life.

Practicing the Principles

Our seventh UU Principle affirms:

~~~~~  
Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.  
~~~~~

There are lots and lots of blessings in life, but none bigger than the fact that we get to live on this beautiful planet with air we can breathe and water we can drink and food we can eat.

People can get very greedy in how we treat our shared planet, wanting to take as much as they can get without caring about the effect on those around them—human, animal or plant. But when we remember that we are part of a web of blessings that makes life possible for all of us, then we are more likely to make choices that respect the needs of the rest of the web of life.

When we remember that we are part of an enormous web of interconnected blessings, we are more likely to remember that we, to, can be a blessing to the world.



Read more about Lydia Maria Child: <http://uudb.org/articles/lydiamariachild.html>

Hear the song "Over the River and Through the Woods": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5G3Vclp6Y8>

More on how to help your local food bank: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/29/how-to-help-food-banks_n_789362.html