

Shared Life of Old First – October 2009

Old First's October calendar

http://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/calendar.aspx?cei=196947443&event_date=3/30/2007&ci=L6H2G1J4F0K5N8N8H2&igd=

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October 2009

Shared Life

of Old First Presbyterian Church

Missa Concordia world premiere, Oct 18

The Old First Choir will present the World Premiere Performance of *Missa Concordia* written by music director Dr. Jay Pierson. This neo-romantic work for chorus, orchestra and soloists is the culmination of a three-year project by the composer. Joining in the performance of this beautifully melodic work will be distinguished soloists, Louise Toppin, Twila Ehmcke, Brian Thorsett and Chad Runyon. (See Jay Pierson's article on page 4.)

Also performed will be choral and organ music by Felix Mendelssohn in celebration of the 200th Anniversary of his birth. Organists will be Dennis Flynn and Bill Vaughan, with soloists Kaileen Miller, soprano; Jennifer Panara, mezzo soprano; Richard Aragundi, baritone.

Ticket prices will be \$15 regular admission, \$12 for students and seniors.

Christmas Gift Markets, Nov 22 and Dec 6

Please mark your calendars for some very special Christmas shopping opportunities again this year, presented by the Peace & Justice, and Mission & Giving Committees. Your purchases from the items provided by Old First Deacons, the Doris Krauss Senior Center, and the Peace & Justice Committee's Fair Trade products (coffees, teas, chocolates, olive oil, etc.) will directly benefit their programs. Larkin Street Youth Services will also participate and will receive their full benefit from your purchases.

You'll be able to make contributions to two Presbyterian-supported organizations. As last year, you can select from some of Alternative Gifts International's diverse list of programs in the U.S. and other countries, providing assistance for farming, education, medical and other needs (www.alternativegifts.org), and select a gift card with information on that gift to send to the person(s) you're honoring (the cards and envelopes are large enough that you can include a couple of precious family photos also!) And returning this year will be handicraft gifts created by Palestinian craft producers in and near Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Galilee, etc., supporting women, refugees and people with disabilities (www.sunbula.org). You can read more about each of these organizations at their websites, and also on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) website, www.pcusa.org.

Also, we'd love to have *additional volunteer help* with Alternative Gifts International tables – set-up and clean-up, pasting program information into gift cards, taking money/checks, and keeping track of the gifts purchased. We also need special Christmas treats to be served at the coffee table on both Sundays.

Gay Men's Chorus Benefit for Larkin Street, Oct 24

In a cabaret-style performance, the SF Gay Men's Chorus will showcase its Vocal Minority ensemble and finest solo voices in a special matinee of "What a Wonderful World," 2:00 pm, Sunday, October 24, at the plush Lodge at the Regency Center, Sutter and Van Ness. All proceeds will benefit Larkin Street Youth Services, now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Since it was founded as a grassroots effort led by Old First Church, Larkin Street has helped over 70,000 young people to move beyond the street and equip themselves for productive lives. Today Larkin Street offers housing, medical and counseling services, educational and job training programs at 13 sites across the city.

Tickets for this event are \$45, \$35 and \$25 and are available at available at (415) 865-ARTS (2787) or https://www.sfgmc.org/events_calendar.shtml.

Maggi's musings

A busy kitchen

Did you know that at least three groups during the week use our kitchen? It's the Senior Center, The Welcome Ministry and all the groups at Old First.

Church refrigerators seem to produce leftovers out of nowhere, and left unattended I swear they multiply on their own. Since I often store and cook my meals at church I notice "orphaned" food left until a brave soul like myself goes and throws it out.

If you have leftovers from a meal or an event, please don't put back in the fridge thinking "someone" will eat or drink it. If it is for the Senior Center or the Welcome ministry, put a note on it and date it and let someone from those groups know that you have left them food.

If you are going to use the food for another event, please date and mark whose food it is. So take those leftovers home with you or compost them. Pour out that half-used liter of soda and recycle the bottle or mark it, date it and/or let Welcome or other folks know that you have left them food. There are labels hanging from the right side of the fridge, near the dishwasher.

Pastor Maggi

P.S. While on the subject -- always wash whatever dishes and utensils and clean the kitchen after you use them. Don't just leave them in the sink or near the dishwasher. As your mama used to say "the mess doesn't clean itself!"

October 4 – Name Tag Sunday

Wear your own name tag and take a look at others'

Peacemaking Offering, October 4

On World Communion Sunday, we will join with Presbyterians everywhere in the Peacemaking Offering. Each congregation is encouraged to retain 25 percent of the Offering for local ministries of peacemaking. Twenty-five percent is used by presbyteries and synods, and fifty percent is used by the General Assembly ministries through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

The Peacemaking Offering was created in 1980 to support the efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to live out a deeper commitment to peacemaking as part of our faithfulness to God. It is one of four special offerings designated by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s General Assembly.

Adult Education Classes – 9:30 am, Munro Room

October 4 -- Discussion of Health Care Reform

October 11-25 -- Erwin Barron will share some lectures and discussion from his City College Bible class. Come get a flavor of an academic Bible survey course, and maybe learn some things you didn't know about the Bible

October 11 - A Very Brief Overview of the Entire Bible - a timeline and history of all of the events in the Bible and roughly how they fit into world history

October 18 - Problems in Translating the Bible - looks at some of the issues in translating the ancient texts of the Bible into modern language we can understand. We'll even try our hand at translating some passages ourselves.

October 25 - A History of the Bible in English - ever wonder why we have so many different versions of the Bible? We will look at how the Bible got translated into English and the way it has come down to us today. Also, we will examine at least ten different English translations available today.

Children's classes

On World Communion Sunday, October 4, the children will take part in the service with their joy. They have been learning about what it means to be welcomed and to be welcoming. Because we are loved and welcomed, we welcome others., and part of being welcoming is to work for peace.

October 11-25, the topic will be Bartimeus. Stories of Healing and Vision will be learned through stories, drama, music and art.

In November, The Widow's Mite will introduce concepts of stewardship.

Church Stewardship pledge report

Old First's ministry and program operations depend on a relatively smooth flow of pledge payments through the year. Currently, pledge payments are under budget, resulting in a tight cash flow situation.

If your pledge payments are not current, please consider getting up to date. This definitely will help the church financial position.

Lectionary

Oct 4	27 th Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Ps 26; Heb 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16
Oct 11	28 th Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Job 23:1-9, 16-17; Ps 22:1-15; Heb 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31
Oct 18	29 th Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Job 38:1-7 (34-41); Ps 104:1-9, 24, 35c; Heb 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45
Oct 25	30 th Sunday in Ordinary Time -- Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Ps 34:1-8 (19-22); Heb 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52
Nov 1	All Saints' Day -- Isa 25:6-9; Ps 24; Rev 21:1-6a; John 11:32-44

The writing of *Missa Concordia*:

the story of a composer, a computer and a cat (Part II of III)

Dr. Jay A. Pierson

A brief continuation of an amazing story...

It was on August 27, 2009 that I received the e-mail version of the September *Shared Life* which contained an article on *Missa Concordia* and my four-legged friend, KiddyPuss. It was also on that day at 5:30 pm that my dear KiddyPuss took her last breath.

She was a tired little girl, and she let me know a few days before that she needed to leave me. The vet was to be here at 7:00 pm to help her along, but KiddyPuss had her own agenda. For about an hour, Paul felt the failing heartbeat and I stroked her gently. And in an instant, she sighed and closed her eyes.

Her 19 years on this earth had come to a close and her time with Paul and me became a wonderful and bittersweet memory. The melodies and rhythms in my *Missa Concordia* will be forever tied to this amazing little girl, whose fur I am still brushing off my keyboard computer, clothes and bedding.

On October 18th at 7:00 pm, my brain will be packed with the logistics of conducting a full length choral concert -- all the music, entrances, notes, players and cues coming together in one accord. But in those moments when the oboe is soaring above the voices and the harp is sounding celestial arpeggios, I will think of this beloved little girl, sitting on this composer's lap, quietly and patiently, providing a loving purr that would fill the silences. Many thanks to those of you who held her in your prayers.

What are small groups, anyway?

Jean Olson

There are many paths to Christian education at Old First. Pastor Maggi's **sermons** on Sunday mornings reach the highest percentage of the congregation and provide interesting material linked to the Scripture readings for the day and always presented in a lively fashion with illustrative stories. **Sunday morning discussions** are led by a variety of folk and cover many topics including study of books of the Bible, current social issues, spirituality, prayer, etc. **A Lenten Soup and Study** is held on Thursday evenings during Lent (and repeated on Sunday mornings). The discussion follows a single theme through the series. Last year we studied Brahms "Requiem". **Whole church retreats** provide education as well as fellowship. Pastor Maggi has introduced the **Read-a-Book-Together** concept with discussions at various times to accommodate everyone.

However, with the exception of Pastor Maggi's sermons, more of our members participate in **small groups** to gain Christian education than any other offering.

What are small groups? Small groups are collections of 6 to 10 people who meet together on a regular basis (once or twice/month) to study together at individual's homes. They also pray together and for one another. They sometimes also get together socially for a meal out or a show, etc.

What do small groups study? Small groups study the Bible, theology, Presbyterian beliefs, spirituality, etc. using books and other resources.

Can I join a small group? The Christian Education committee is interested in introducing people to current small groups that have vacancies and would also like to start new small groups as needed. These may be based on a common interest or some other feature. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Jean Olson at sfkidney@sbcglobal.net.

All Saints Day Remembrance, Nov 1

Though it is a very old tradition in the church, 2007 was the first time OFPC participated in this ritual. At the beginning of the service, the names of this congregation's members, friends and family who have died since the last service are read. Between each name a bell is tolled. On this day we proclaim our trust in the power of the resurrection and remember the promises as stated in Revelation that "we shall be God's people and God shall be us and will wipe away every tear from our eyes. Death shall be no more, and never again shall there be sorrow or crying or pain."

If there is someone you want to have remembered in this service, please send the information to the church office - Cheryl@oldfirst.org - by Monday, October, 26th. Please be sure to include the person's name and date of death, your own name and relation to the deceased.

Presbyterians beat last year's AIDSwalk contribution

Congratulations ! The numbers have been added up at the AIDSwalk San Francisco office, and they show that our Presbyterian team raised \$4,300, which is higher than last year's amount. Yes, we achieved this milestone despite the weak economy! Congratulations, and thank you to all the team members, sponsors, and supporters. who helped make this event a success!

Be Ready to Share!!

Michael Berg

Nina, Patrick and I spent an early morning at Old First Church this last Saturday helping distribute food from our Food Bank program to some friends and neighbors who need a little help in these tough times. I was amazed to see over 20 volunteers helping in the effort, many of them new to our church, several of them fellow Presbyterians.

Many of our Food Bank clients are Asian women who are trying to care for their families; a Cantonese-speaking volunteer was helping communicate with them. I can imagine a similar scene 103 years ago as members of Old First helped distribute food to the community right after the San Francisco earthquake. Times may change but Christian traditions bridge the gap – loaves and fishes, rice and vegetables, pita bread and apple-flavored sausages. The menu items may change but the love of Christ is eternal and brings us joy wherever we go. I am proud to be counted among the faithful here at my home away from home, Old First Presbyterian Church

Fall is in the air and our season of stewardship is about to begin. Stewardship for a Christian never really begin and ends, but we do have a season of giving when we reflect on the great gifts of talent, time and money that are bestowed upon us and we make next year's financial commitment to the church.

You will be hearing much more about our stewardship campaign over the next couple of months. The Stewardship Committee (Craig Kehne, Connie Johnson, George Yu and I) are taking our lead from 1 Timothy (6-18) to "...be rich in good deeds and be generous and willing to share."

Ours is a modern urban church that seeks to spread the word of a loving and gracious God through worship, prayer, community commitment and Generosity. You noticed that I capitalized that last word!! Christ's people are indeed generous. Join our family, make your pledge early and help us in this great work.

Spread the good news, Jesus Christ is coming. I hear his footsteps.

Anne Lamott “Will Write for Food,” Nov 21

Anne Lamott, author of *Traveling Mercies*, *Grace (Eventually)* and *Bird by Bird*, will appear at Old First in a fundraising event for the food program of WELCOME on Saturday, November 21, at 7:00 pm. Watch for more details.

SF Giants 5, Colorado Rockies 3, Old First 24

Jeanne Kirkwood

Saturday August 29, 2009 was an unusually spectacular day. Warm and clear - no wind! The lovely weather continued on into the evening with a softness in the air not usually felt in San Francisco during August, or actually any month.

Twenty-five tickets to the Giants/Rockies game were purchased, which gave us a group discount and *Old First Church SF!* flashed on the scoreboard, bottom of the 3rd inning. Our seats were on the View Level, third base side, which gave us a spectacular sight of the brilliant half moon hanging over the field. Early in the game, a barge floated into McCovey Cove and soon we were treated to acrobatic bicycle tricks performed by young men in Giants jerseys. Oh – and there was a baseball game, too.

Barry Zito was hot for 8 and 1/3 innings before being chased by a homer from the Rockies, ruining the shut out. The Giants' bull pen worked hard to lose the game for Barry however Brian Wilson came in to close out the game when the tying run was at the plate. Hurrah!

Interest in the game ranged from a couple of hardcore pencil & paper score-keepers to preferring to chat with a neighboring section's four-year-old to someone who asked how many points the Giants had scored. In other words, everyone found something to like or learn.

Now you're sorry you didn't come. Never fear – this will become an annual event, so watch for sign-ups in 2010.

This event was made possible by a Project Team of the Session Community Building Committee comprised of Jeanne Kirkwood, Jean Olson, Bob Hermann and Dan Joraanstad

*Andrew Y.S. Cheng, Yvonne Chan Cheng and their children
Cordially invite you to attend the
Official Ceremonies for the Investiture of
Andrew Y.S. Cheng
as Judge of the Superior Court of California, City and County of San Francisco
Thursday, December 3, 2009
Seating at 5:30 p.m. -- Ceremony at 5:40 p.m.
Milton Marks Conference Center, Hiram W. Johnson State Building, 455 Golden Gate
Reception to follow in the State Rotunda*

See the Renewed Children's Library Oct 18

You are invited to drop in to the Children's Library at Coffee Hour on Sunday, October 18, to see the expanded collection of books and the new, comfortable arrangement, including bean-bag chairs.

The Alberto Barrios Memorial Children's Library was established in 2000. Since then the collection has been expanded and moved into Classroom B. In the last several months, Priscilla Yu and Diane Molberg have been reorganizing the books, establishing guidelines for the use of the library, and purchasing new books to further support its education program.

Rediscovering Faith Through Fiction

Silver Pennies

Diane Molberg

You must have a silver penny to get into Fairyland.

Silver Pennies: Modern Poems for Boys and Girls. Editor: Blanche Jennings Thompson.

What is your earliest memory of falling in love with words? Your first magic image, the most tender remembrance that comes with that moment?

For me, it was night. I'm a child and it's a cool autumn night, or maybe frosty winter. The high, clear Colorado sky arches dark and full of mystery over my mother and me as we walk hand in hand from the garage to the back door of our house. "Tell me the star one," I ask, and her voice fills the night and she recites the Sara Teasdale poem, "Stars."

*Alone in the night / On a dark hill / With pines around me / Spicy and still,
And a heaven full of stars, / Over my head, / White and topaz / And misty red;
Myriads with beating / Hearts of fire / That aeons / Cannot vex or tire;
Up the dome of heaven / Like a great hill, / I watch them marching / Stately and still,
And I know that I / Am honored to be / Witness / Of so much majesty.*

That is my earliest memory of the beginning of wonder and love of books. My mother gave me my own copy of *Silver Pennies*, and I could read "Stars" whenever I wanted, but I learned to love the feel and smell and weight of a book that preoccupies me even now. Today, the pages of my copy of *Silver Pennies* are soft as old cloth. They smell, not of childhood, but of time, the edges are yellowed. Is there a greater treasure than this?

We are profoundly blessed at Old First with the Al Barrios Memorial Children's Library. Here, the books smell of book, the edges are smooth, all waiting to be softened by the hands of children, parents, time.

There are stories of Christmas, of creation. There are prayers, psalms, parables, and songs. There are stories of God by well-known authors: *Are You There God? It's me Margaret* by Judy Blume, and books for our young children, *Old Turtle* and *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth*. There are stories of David, Moses, and Noah for all ages. There are stories of Jesus to capture a child's imagination and bring their faith to new discoveries through literature.

The Al Barrios Children's Library has an outstanding collection of Fiction, again for all ages. For middle school we have the complete Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys collections. The complete *Chronicles of Narnia*, and the brilliant writing of Madeleine L'Engle, beginning with the popular, *A Wrinkle in Time*. We have an elegant, hard back edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland/Through the Looking Glass*, and *Anne of Green Gables*. There is a significant collection of Biblical Resource/Reference books including Atlases, dictionaries and encyclopedia and a collection of Christian VHS tapes for use by parents and teachers.

Thanks to this truly outstanding collection of over two hundred books in the Al Barrios Memorial Children's Library, that magical "first moment" is waiting for parents and children to help discover new and beautiful paths into their faith.