

Shared Life of Old First – July/August 2010

Old First's July and August calendars

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

Old First Photostream website -- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/berkniceguy/sets/72157619040811115/>

July 4 and August 2 - Name Tag Sunday *Wear your own name tag and take a look at others'*

July 5 - *The church office will be closed for the Independence Day holiday. The Senior Center will be open*

August 8 - Old First Simple Sandwich Sunday

August 14 - Old First and Giants Outing

Shared Life Deadlines -- e-mail articles to molberg@earthlink.net

4September issue - Sunday, August 15, 2010

4October issue - Sunday, September 19, 2010

♪ Notes from Dr. Jay Pierson, Director of Music ♪

The Children's Song

On July 4, 2010 we will be calling the children up using the original song written by Kenneth Matthews, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord." We will be using this beloved tune until Advent. After Epiphany we will have a new song for the children and will rotate these three throughout the church year. All three songs will include the names of the children...and visitors too!

(Choir Vacation)

The Adult Choir will be taking a break for the month of July. They are a hard working group and need to have a little down time. We will have a variety of soloists providing wonderful music for the July worship services. The choir will return on August 3.

Lectioary

July 4	14 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 2 Kings 5:1-4; Ps 30; Gal.6:1-6) 7-16, Luke 10:1-11 16-20
July 11	15 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Amos7:7; Ps.82; Col.1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37
July 18	16 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Amos 8:1-12; Ps. 52; Col.1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42
July 25	17 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Hos.1:2-10; Ps. 85; Col.2:6015 (16-19); Luke 11:1-13
Aug 1	18 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Hos.11:1-11; Ps 107:1-9, 43; Col.3:1-11, Luke 12-13-21
Aug 8	19 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Isa.1:1,10-20;Ps. 50:1-8,22-23, Heb.11:1-3, 8-16; Luke 12:32-40
Aug 15	20 th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Isa.5:1-7; ps. 80:102, 8-19; Heb.11-29-12:2,Luke 12:49-50
Aug 22	21 st Sunday in Ordinary Time – Jer.1:4-10; Ps. 71:1-6;Hewb.12:18-29;Luke 13:10-17
Aug 29	22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time-Jer.2:4-13; Ps.81:1, 10-16; Heb 13:1-8, 15-16, Luke 14:1, 7-14
Sept 5	23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time –Jere.18:1-11; Ps. 139:1-6, 113-18; Philem.1-21; Luke14:25-33

Maggi's Musings

It really is summer in San Francisco. As The Chronicle newspaper and many magazines come out with their beach or summer readings lists I have been reflecting on my summer traditions. My childhood memories of summer revolve around Camp August-Camp Fire Girl camp near Nevada City, camping with my family and reading lots of books. I am too old for camp, not so willing to sleep on the ground but I still love books. This summer I am going to suggest two summer reads for Old First, recent and a classic: The Shack by Wm.Paul Young, and Letters and Papers from Prison by Dietrick Bonhoeffer. Both of these books are available at the public library, at local books stores, and through amazon.com.

July Reading

The Shack, published in 2007, has been on the New York Times Best Seller list and has sold 2 million copies. This religion fiction book features a unique vision of the Trinity and has gained a whole range of reviews: some call it heretical while others have said it brings theological discussion and reflection to the 21st century. Jason Byassee of Christian Century Magazine writes "the highest compliment we might pay to Young's vision of the Trinity is that it's interesting enough to disagree with. The Shack is a relatively fresh portrayal of the nature of the Triune God who meets us in the midst of our world's pain and brings us transformation."

August Reading

Letters and Papers from Prison, was first published in 1953 and has been an important book for Christians for 50 years. Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran Pastor and theologian. His promising academic and church career was forever altered as he became strong opponent of the Nazi regimen from the very first. Bonhoeffer worked with the Confessing Church and taught at underground seminaries in Germany The Cost of Discipleship, he said, "cheap grace" was a cover or for ethical laxity and preached costly grace. Bonhoeffer's strong convictions ultimately lead to his arrest by the Gestapo and his imprisonment in the Tegel military prison. This book was written during this time and included letters to his family, his fiancé and others. While in prison he ministered to the prisoners and guards alike. At the final service before his execution reflecting on his upcoming death, Bonhoeffer said "This is the end---for me the beginning of life."

You are invited to read one or both books. Talk about them in your small group. Invite a friend, your partner or spouse. Meet for a discussion after church or you can always talk with me over a cup of coffee. Watch the bulletin and check out our website at www.Oldfirst.org for more details.

Happy Reading,
Pastor Maggi

Pray for Our Upcoming General Assembly**“Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38**

The 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will convene in Minneapolis, MN July 3 and will adjourn July 10. The first main order of business will be to elect a new moderator. Six candidates are running for the role of moderator (which is a two year term). You can read about them here: www.pcusa.org/ga219/business/modelect.htm. We give thanks for our own Bruce Reyes-Chow Pastor from Mission Bay Presbyterian Church who has served the church creatively and faithfully as moderator these last two years.

Other items of business include following-up on business from the 2008 General Assembly. The 218th General Assembly appointed task forces and commissions with instructions to report to the 219th from the following groups: Climate for Change Task Force; Committee to Prepare a Comprehensive Study Focused on Israel/Palestine; Special Committee on Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism; Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage; Special Committee to Consider Including the Belhar Confession in the Book of Confessions; Youth Task Force; and the New Form of Government Task Force.

San Francisco Presbytery is sending the following as commissioners and delegates. Please hold them in your prayers! Ministers- Don Griggs, Honorably Retired. Bert Tom, Honorably Retired, Theresa Cho, St. John’s Susan Ashton, Ocean Ave. Elders- Anore Shaw, High Street, Nancy Stukley, John Knox, David Goss, Lincoln Park, Nancy Grawbow St. Andrew’s. Youth Advisory Delegate, Katie Chan, Chinatown. Pray that the Spirit will continue to flow out of each one of the commissioners, delegates and staff who will be part of GA219, blessing them and others as they prepare for the assembly. Pray also that the Spirit will flow from the gathered faithful at the 219th General Assembly, blessing our whole church!

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The Presbyterian Youth Triennium July 20-July 27 in Purdue University in Indiana.

The Presbyterian Youth Triennium is an event sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches (CPC and CPCA) for the purpose of gathering Presbyterian and Reformed young people from all over the United States and the world together for worship, prayer, play and community. The Triennium brings together thousands of youth and also hosts Global Partners, youth from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, ecumenical guests and hundreds of volunteers! You check out their website at www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org

San Francisco Presbytery is sending the following youth and adults. Please commit to pray for them during the event in July that it is an energizing, life changing, and faith growing event! **Youth:** Katie Angelot, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Sterling Bartlett-Preston, Fruitvale, Oakland, Liane Chan, Cameron House/PC Chinatown, Courtney Cunneen, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Laura Cunneen, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Danaye Dickson, Sojourner Truth, Richmond, Michele Ernst, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Neal Fong, Cameron House/PC Chinatown, Lisa Fredenburg, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Timothy Go, Cameron House/PC Chinatown, Sarah Hai, Fruitvale, Oakland, Joshua Hee, PC Chinatown, Michael Holsinger, St. Andrew’s, Pleasant Hill, Felicia Huddleston, St. Andrew’s, Pleasant Hill, Brae Hunter, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Ryan Kam, PC Chinatown, Hannah Klein, First, Alameda, Precious Knightsen, Sojourner Truth, Richmond, Winnie Kojolo, Sojourner Truth, Richmond, Devon McNaughton, Valley, Portola

Valley, Flint Mitchell, Portola Valley, Mallory Moore, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Zack Pacewicz, First, San Leandro, Kazaria Phillips, Sojourner Truth, Richmond, Libby Quibell, St. Andrew, Pacifica, Eryn Read, First, San Leandro, Emmy Rivera, First San Leandro, Scott Saier, Valley, Portola Valley, Julie Scrivener, Valley, Portola Valley, Elva Sullivan, Community, Pittsburg, Nnennaya Umzurike, Community, Pittsburg, Kellie Wiebe, St. Andrew's, Pleasant Hill. Adults: Caleb Badillo, Youth Program Volunteer, PC Chinatown, Ashley Pogue, Youth Director, Portola Valley, Claudia Perkins, Elder, First, Alameda (Triennium Registrar)

SUMMER TRAVELERS: Please bring Welcome your soaps, shampoos, tooth paste and tooth brushes and all those personal grooming items you collect during your travels. The Welcome Ministry's stock is almost gone and the numbers of people at the Saturday Community Dinners is increasing. If you have family members, co-workers, friends that keep a "secret stash" of all those extras ask them to share them with a good cause. You can drop the items off in the church office on Sunday's or during the week. **Sock Sunday/Undie Sunday July 25th.** Sometimes the "basics" become a "luxury" for those living on the streets or on a limited income. Welcome ministry never has enough socks and underwear to give out at the Community Dinners and during the week. Your simple gifts can make a big difference. Please bring **NEW** white tube socks and underwear to worship and place in baskets.

SAN FRANCISCO FOOD BANK barrels in the Narthex are ready to take your donations all summer long.



Hello from the Summer Intern,

I arrived in San Francisco only a week ago and I have already learned so much! I feel so blessed and grateful to be the summer intern at Old First Presbyterian Church. I am so impressed with the work that Old First Presbyterian Church does in their community!

I am originally from San Diego, and I attended UC Santa Barbara where I received a B.A. in Theatre. I currently attend Columbia Theological Seminary near Atlanta, Georgia. In Atlanta, I volunteer with homeless teens through the non-profit StandUp for Kids as well as co-moderate an on-campus club at the Seminary.

This summer, I look forward to preaching, participating in small groups, teaching, attending committee meetings, learning about administration, community ministry, evangelism, worship and pastoral care. I am also excited about participating in onsite ministries such as the Welcome Ministries and The Doris Krauss Senior Center. I will also participate in offsite ministries that are supported by the church including Covenant Network, Larkin Street Youth Services, Network Ministries, Night Ministries, and Temenos Catholic Worker. Thank you so much for welcoming me to Old First Presbyterian Church and helping me further discern my call!

Peace,

Arlo Jones

Old First – Event August 8

Simple Sandwich Sunday Sponsored by the Session or Sx5 in the Fellowship Hall after church on August 8. The session will supply a drink, bread, chips, and condiments and the congregation will bring the fillings-meats, cheese, lettuce-whatever makes a great sandwich! Also bring a book to share and exchange!

Presbyterians and the SF GIANTS!

AUGUST 14, Saturday at 1:10 p.m., wouldn't you love to be watching the SF GIANTS playing San Diego in beautiful Pac Bell Park... a hot dog in your lap and a drink in your hand? Yes, we Old Firsters are repeating our community outing this year. There are 25 tickets available at \$26.00 each. Checks or cash would go to our Music Director and avid Giants fan, Jay Pierson (he even has a PANDA hat) as soon as possible. Buy tickets for you and your loved ones, some peanuts and crackerjack and enjoy the game!

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The Deacons at Old First

Dan Joraanstad

The office of Deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. It is the duty of the deacon to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith. See Book of Order G-6.0400 – 6.0703

The Deacons are organized under a parish plan. Each parish has a set of church members assigned to it. Each Deacon is assigned a parish with the charge of being responsive to the concerns of those people. Such concerns cover a range of life experiences, including but not limited to: death, sickness, the troubled, the newcomer, the home bound, the family or person in significant occasion and transitions. Special care is expressed for each member of the parish through appropriate prayers, visits, services, and support.

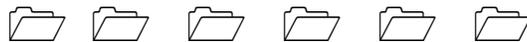
In addition the Deacons participate in the life of the church by helping with transportation needs of parish members, supporting members through prayer, supporting members with particular financial needs or needs for food or meals. The Deacons also participate in the life of the church by handling some aspects of serving communion, coffee hour coordination, and other aspects of the church life.

Decision Making: The Committee has authority to act on its own in all of the responsibilities listed above, under the direction of the Session.

Reports to Session: The secretary shall keep a record of the Board's proceedings, and the Board of Deacons shall submit its records to the Session for approval at least once a year and at other times upon the request of the Session.

Meeting Notices, Dates, Times and Locations: The Deacons shall meet monthly on the second Sunday of the month at 12:45pm. In the event the schedule changes, the co-Moderators, Dan Joraanstad and Heather Losee, shall notify the Church office of the date, time and place of its regular meetings for inclusion on the master calendar. The Deacon Moderators shall notify members and the Pastor of each special meeting by mail at least five days prior to the meeting or by telephone or electronic mail at least three days prior to the meeting, setting forth the purpose, date, time and location of the meeting.

Agendas: The moderator of the Board of Deacons shall prepare an agenda for each stated meeting, which shall be circulated by mail or by deposit in the file folder of each member of the Board of Deacons on or before the Sunday immediately prior to the meeting. Persons desiring to have items considered at a meeting shall submit them for inclusion in the agenda not later than the Wednesday prior to the meeting. At the beginning of each meeting, the moderator of the Board of Deacons shall ask for approval of the agenda. At that time, items may be added or deleted by vote of the Deacons. A list of Parishes and their assigned Deacons is available upon request.



Elders & Session at Old First 2010

Jeanne Kirkwood

Our session consists of 14 elders plus Pastor Maggi as the moderator. The *Book of Order* states that session is responsible for the mission and government of the church. The minimum number of stated meetings is quarterly. Our session meets the third Tuesday evening 11 months of the year. We usually take a “vacation” so we don’t meet one of the summer months. In 2010, it will probably be August. Besides the regular meeting, we gather for special session meetings as necessary. These special meetings are usually called in order to interview potential new members. People can become members: by letter of transfer from another reformed church, by profession of faith which might also require baptism or reaffirmation of faith. After the interviews, the session formally votes on membership. We follow *Robert’s Rules of Order* and a quorum is required for official meetings. The *Book of Order* says the quorum shall the pastor and one third of elders but no fewer than two.

Each meeting has an agenda circulated prior to the meeting. The actual format of the meeting is to open with a devotion and prayer, and move consent/acceptance of the agenda by the clerk. The consent agenda consists of approval for any visitors to attend, observe and have voice; approval of the prior month’s minutes; approval of any special session minutes; approval of the agenda and the membership report. These routine matters are all passed in one motion; however, the session may vote to remove any item from the consent agenda in order to discuss it more thoroughly. Communications received and sent are noted, and then any business is voted on or discussed as necessary. Reports follow, starting with the pastor’s report and then the committee reports. The session committees are Christian Education, Community Building, Finance, Mission & Giving, Operations, Personnel, Planning, Session liaison to Deacons (rotates each month) and Worship.

The meeting wraps up with an evaluation of the meeting – what went well and what could be improved. We move to adjourn in prayer, which sometimes can be singing a hymn. The meetings usually end by 9:00 or 9:30pm.

Each elder chairs one of the above committees plus the clerk of session. The committees consist of members from the congregation – and there is room on the committees for more members! Besides routine business, committees can have standing “sub committees” called Ministry Teams. For example, the choir is a ministry team of Worship. For short term issues, committees may form a Project Team – such as the group that put together the Old First SF Giants Baseball evening; a Project Team under

Community Building. So, besides being a regular committee member, there are also opportunities to serve on a more limited basis.

The normal term for an elder to be on session is 3 years. The elder may serve an additional 3 years but may not serve more than six consecutive years. A break of at least one year is required before going back on session. An elder may join the Board of Deacons immediately after rotating off session. Once a person is ordained as an elder the person remains an elder, even if he/she is not currently serving on session. Therefore, ordained elders are eligible to attend Presbytery meetings (held about 5 times a year) and even to serve on Presbytery committees. We have several elders who are on Presbytery committees. The Presbytery consists of a geographical grouping of Presbyterian churches. In our case, The Presbytery of San Francisco consists of churches in the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda and Contra Costa. The meetings are held at different churches rotating between the East and West Bay. There are over 70 congregations in our Presbytery. Each congregation is eligible to send commissioners to the meetings and the number of commissioners is set according to the church membership - the more members, the more commissioners. We have 3 commissioners and they are elected at the session meeting immediately preceding the Presbytery meeting. In addition, Pastor Maggi usually attends and whenever one of our elders is the chair of a Presbytery committee, that person has a vote. Currently we have 5 votes at Presbytery. Commissioners need not be sitting members of session although we prefer that as commissioners give reports during the following session meeting.

This is an overview. If you want to know more about session and elders in general, you can check out the *Book of Order*. Elders are discussed starting at G-6.0300. Session details start with G-10.0100 and immediately following is a section on Presbytery (G-11.0100). Don't have a *Book of Order*? It might be worth the investment. Or, you can download from www.PCUSA.org. There is a link to both the PC (USA) website and the Presbytery of San Francisco from our website, <http://oldfirst.org>.

Like many members of Old First, I'm both a deacon and an elder. It's an honor and a pleasure to serve in both offices. I recommend it!

Respectfully submitted, Jeanne Kirkwood,
Clerk of Session

Old First Library

While Old First's children's library has gotten much attention lately, it is important to remind the congregation of the significant resources of the main church library. Located off the vestibule to the social hall, this library is a warm and inviting place to sit and read by the fireplace or explore the books in its 1300 volume collection.

The library's collection focuses on theology and devotional literature and serves the needs of everyone from new church members seeking a better understanding of the faith to clergy and theology students researching fine points of scholarship. Included are dictionaries and encyclopedia with brief entries and articles on topics such as spirituality, scripture and the Reformed tradition, to commentaries on books of the Bible, works by noted authors such as C.S. Lewis, and books about Old First and local Christian missions.

Books that deal with aspects of Old First and its history include my history of Old First, several books about Cameron House, a biography of Frederick Billings, one of the founders of Old First (as well as the University of California) after whom the city of Billings, Montana was named, and a history of San Francisco Theological Seminary. Most recently we have acquired a history of Larkin Street Youth Center (founded at Old First) by our member, Bill Campbell, and a history of the Presbytery of San

Francisco by John Hadsell. Members Diane & Evelyn Molberg donated "Bearing the Mystery," a collection of theological writings from a wide variety of writers both fiction and non-fiction. Recently, Old First member Bob Hermann donated a new computer to the library and we have acquired an updated cataloging program, which will make searching for titles more convenient. Old First members are invited to use and enjoy this extraordinary resource. If you have any questions or desire assistance with the use of the library, contact Steve Taber (415-771-3358)

Thank You for Donations to the Alberto Children's Library

We wish to thank the many members and friends of Old First for their generous gift to purchase books for the Alberto Barrios Memorial Children's Library on June 6, 2010. All the books were sold. We raised a total of \$204.55. Your donations are deeply appreciated and will send the children on the journey to the joy of reading and developing a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ. We look forward to the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Team integrating their curriculum with the Library.
Priscilla Yu and Lori Yamauchi

Big Events at Old First

On Saturday, June 12, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and the San Francisco Girl's Chorus Alumnae performed John Rutler's "Magnificant." The church setting for the wonderful classical program was attended by hundreds of concert attendees making this first time concert at Old First a wonderful success. As long term member's of Old First and actively serving members of the Board of Deacons and Session, Dan and I wish to extend our thanks and gratitude to Pastor Maggi Henderson, Music Director Jay Pierson, and Sexton Fernando Gonzales and all who were able to attend this wonderful event. For video clips of some of our program including some clips from the concert, you can go to YouTube and type in Magnificat concerts. As a sample, here is a clip from the first movement of the John Rutter piece, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPBnngmQiZ4>
Yours in faith, Dan Joraanstand, Co-Chair Deacons, Bob Herman, Chair Community Building.

Ordination – Megan Rohrer

You're invited to a historic worship service on July 25, 2010 at 4pm. Seven gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) pastors (including Pastor Megan Rohrer, Executive Director of Old First's Welcome) will be received onto the official roster of the Lutheran church. The service will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church (1111 O'Farrell). After the service, we will Extend the Welcome with a fundraiser for Welcome at the Hamilton Ballroom (631 O'Farrell) with dancing, a silent auction, appetizers and libations. Ticket prices start at \$25. Learn more about both of these events at: www.sfwelcome.org

Background:

In 1990 two San Francisco Lutheran Churches, St. Francis and First United, defied the policy that prevented openly GLBT individuals from serving as pastors when they ordained a gay man and a lesbian couple. As a result the two churches were expelled from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). More than 20 years later, 18 pastors have been ordained in defiance of the church, 3 pastors were removed by trial and countless others were denied the ability to serve openly as GLBT pastors in the Lutheran Church. Now, the ELCA has changed its policies, and on July 25, the first group of GLBT pastors who faithfully served the church, despite their undocumented status, will be recognized by the ELCA.

Additional Info for the Worship Service:

Clergy, seminarians and other professional leaders of all faiths are invited to wear robes or a symbol of their faith. Please arrive by 3:15 for vesting, instructions and a photo and to line up for the procession. Color of the day is Green (though rainbow stoles are always in season) Congregations and organizations are encouraged to bring

banners for the procession. Individuals wishing to send greetings about the event can send them to: The [Sierra Pacific Synod](#) (401 Roland Way, Suite 215 Oakland, CA 94621)

Advent Planning-Early September notice

Oh yes – we kid thee not. Our wonderful liturgical year invites us to explore the season of Advent through the resources of the Lectionary texts and our own Old First experience. Join us in distilling the scriptures and bringing into our Worship the living experience of Advent.

Time: 9:30am 12:30pm

Date: Saturday 25 September, 2010

Where: Old First Sanctuary



The Book Nook-Summer Reading...more!

Fernando recommends for summer reading, [The War of the End of the World](#), and [Conversation in the Cathedral](#), both by Mario Vargas Llosa. Also, [The Tin Drum](#), Gunter Grass; [Life and fate](#), Vasily Grossman and [The Elegance of the Sprocket Wheel](#), Muriel Barbery.

Diane recommends [The Magician's Elephant](#) by Kate DiCamillo (The Tale of Despereaux). DeCamillo writes, "I wanted. I needed. I *longed* to tell a story of love and magic...". It's all here in this wonderful slim volume, for BOTH children and adults. My TBR shelf is sagging from all to be read, but I do hope to tackle [The War of the End of the World](#).

Other want to reads: [That Old Cape Magic](#), Richard Russo, [The Confessions of Max Tivoli](#) Andrew Sean Greer, [Await Your Reply](#), Dan Chaon, [A Gate at the Stairs](#), Lorrie Moore, [Fried Green Tomatoes](#), Fanny Flag and, of course, any Jane Austen!

Our intern, Arlo, writes that one of her favorite books is [The Chosen](#) by Chaim Potok. "I love this book because it allows me to immerse myself in another culture and time (Jewish communities in New York during WWII) and the narrative and characters are beautifully written." She is currently reading [Life Together](#) by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Tomes that need Homes

Have books that you'd like to swap/trade/give a new home to? Send in the title to Shared Life and we can try and connect your book with a waiting reader, and/or bring them to the "indoor Picnic" noted below. Diane is offering [The Kite Runner](#), Hosseini, and [Life of Pi](#), Martel

Birthdays — *in advance, giving you plenty of time to send a card*

Aug 4	Steven LaGatta
Aug 8	Charles Burns, Steve Schacher
Aug 19	Barry Clagett
Aug 20	Helen Kennedy, James Uren
Aug 25	Mary Russell
Aug 28	Britt LaGatta, Leota Parker
Aug 31	Euphemia Felicitas

*Rediscovering Faith Through Fiction*REDISCOVERING FAITH THROUGH FICTION- The Magician's Elephant by Kate DiCamillo

Diane R. Molberg

"It is important that you say what you mean to say. Time is too short. You must speak words that matter."

About The Magician's Elephant Kate DiCamillo wrote: "I wanted. I needed. I *longed* to tell a story of love and magic."

Wanted. Needed. *Longed* (italics her emphasis). Powerful words laden with meaning that we all, if we admit it, feel. That feeling that unless we touch the essence of these emotions, stare into their light and darkness, we will be, somehow, diminished.

An orphaned boy visits a fortuneteller's tent in the market square and asks her if his sister still lives and how can he find her? At his Mother's death he'd promised to always take care of Adele but they were sent to separate orphanages. Desperate to honor his vow to his mother, Peter was stunned when the fortuneteller told him an elephant would lead him to his sister. Angry that she was joking with him, he said: "There are no elephants here." "That is surely the truth for now," she replied. "But perhaps you have not noticed: the truth is forever changing."

Not far from the apartments where Peter lived a poverty-stricken life with an embittered old man, a magic show opened. The magician was "of advanced years and failing reputation" but on that dark winter night, he performed the most astonishing magic of his career. He intended to conjure a bouquet of lilies but instead he brought forth an elephant who crashed through the ceiling of the opera house in a rain of plaster and dust, and landed on the lap of a noblewoman to whom the magician intended to give the lilies. The noblewoman's legs were crushed and she was confined to a wheelchair, the elephant (who was conjured through no fault of his own) was imprisoned in a horse stable chained by the ankles to posts, and the old magician was, of course imprisoned. Only Peter recognized the omen of an elephant suddenly appearing, by magic, in his village. He had hope, now to find his sister, if the elephant could be freed.

At the heart of this tale is the message that there is always something, it seems, that must be set free if we are to have what we Want. Need. Long for. We want, need, long for the truth. Madame LaVaughn visits the magician late every afternoon seeking to understand what has happened to her. Why did the magician do this terrible thing to her, but, he assures her over and over, "I intended only lilies. I intended only a bouquet of lilies." His truth is not hers.

Peter wants, needs, longs for hope. Despite the presence of the jailed elephant, he has no hope of finding his sister. And the poor, aged elephant longs for freedom and possibly forgiveness for crippling an innocent old lady. As a preternatural snow begins to fall, flakes huge and dry, Peter realizes that what has been done must be undone. The magician, whether through old age, lack of talent, confusion, made a mistake and only he can make it right. He made the elephant appear; he must make him disappear. Peter finds the elephant, now an oddity to be displayed at will, at the ballroom of the Countess Quintet. When the huge beast sees the boy standing still and straight before her, she thinks simply, "I knew you would come for me."

To discover if the elephant leads Peter to Adele, if the magician performs an even greater feat by making the elephant disappear, if the elephant lives a long and happy life, you need to read this slim volume. It is, on its own, a gesture of grace, honesty, about trusting that what we want deep in our

hearts and minds we can have IF we pay attention and say what we mean to say, and act with careful intention. And you can believe all of this.

Kate DeCamillo wrote *The Tale of Despereaux* a copy of which is in the Children's Library. Diane and Evelyn Molberg are gifting the Children's Library with a copy *The Magician's Elephant*.



Old First Concerts - \$17 general admission, \$14 students/seniors – www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Sunday, July 18 at 4 PM

Daniel Glover, piano

Works by Barber and Chopin, inspired by nationalism.

Friday, July 23 at 8 PM

Solo Acoustic Wizards: Ancient & Modern

Michael Chikuzen Gould, shakuhachi; Mark Deutsch, bazantar

Sunday, July 25 at 4 PM

Trevor Stephenson, harpsichord

Works by Bach, Handel and Scarlatti.

Friday, July 30 at 8 PM

Ultra World X-tet

Gary Schwantes, saxophones & bamboo flutes; Weishan Liu, guzheng; Winnie Wong, guzheng;

Raymond Froehlich, drums & percussion; Aaron Germain, bass

Fusion of East and West for the 21st Century.

Friday, August 6 at 8 PM

John Ferguson, piano

Works by Beethoven

Sunday, August 8 at 4 PM

Rudy Salvini Octet

Jazz and standards from the Great American Songbook

Friday, August 13 at 8 PM

EUOUAE

Steven Sven Olbash, director

Sacred music from 12th-14th century France, including *Messe de Tournai*, Gregorian chant

Friday, August 20 at 8 PM

sfSound

World Premiere of *Oceanothers* by Erik Ulman, and works by Ferneyhough, Wolff, Schlomowitz and Spahlinger

Friday, August 27 at 8 PM

Yuri Liberzon, guitar

Works by Jarett, the Beatles arranged by Toru Takemitsu, de Visée, Rudnev, and others.

Sunday, August 29 at 4 PM

Lenny Carlson, *guitar* & **Hal Richards**, *reeds & winds*

with Al Obidinki, *stringbass*

Works by Ellington, Gershwin and others.



HELP WANTED: Computer and Network Support. We are looking for a member of Old First with experience in supporting Windows-based computers and peer-to-peer networks. Computer support includes setting up new computers, installing new software, diagnosing and repairing both computer and network problems and helping staff to get the most out of their computer. If you are interested or have questions, please contact John Sebastian at JohnSeb@pacbell.net.

The Officers of Old First Church

Deacons - Nina Berg, Treasurer, Tracy Clagett, Mary Culp, Dan Joraanstad, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Heather Losee, Harriet MacClean, Dana Nojima, Glen Potter, Annie Scott Rogers, Oliver Spencer, Priscilla Yu

Elders - George Becker, Michael Berg, Christopher Burt, Barry Clagett, Saskia de Vries, Gregory P. Free, Bob Hermann, Kristi Hoerauf, Sidney Hollar, Jeanne Kirkwood, Mary E. Russell, John Sebastian, Steve Taber, George Yu

