

March 2010

Shared Life of Old First Presbyterian Church

Old First's March calendar

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/oldfirst/>



March 7—Name Tag Sunday

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

March 14—Spring Ahead: Daylight Savings Time !!

Daylight Saving Time returns Sunday, March 14. Set your clocks ahead one hour before you go to bed Saturday night, or you'll get to church just as everybody is leaving.



EASTER AND HOLY WEEK

Sunday, March 28, Palm Sunday — 11:00 a.m. - Worship with Procession of Palms

Thursday, April 1, Maundy Thursday – 6:30 p.m. - Service of Worship with communion.

Friday, April 2, Good Friday – 8:00 p.m. – Tenebrae, a Service of Light and Darkness, with Scripture readings, and choral music

Saturday April 3 —5:00 p.m., Easter Vigil Service for families with young children at Grace Episcopal Cathedral; 9:00 p.m., The Great Vigil of Easter, Grace Episcopal Cathedral.

Easter Sunday, April 4 - 9:00-10:30 am – Pancake Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall; suggested donation, \$4.00 11:00 am – Worship Service of Resurrection and communion, with the Old First Choir and brass.

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

4 April issue —Sunday, March 14

4 May issue —Sunday, April 18

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Lectionary

Isa.55:1-9; Ps.63:1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Jos.5:9-12;Ps.32; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

Isa. 43:16-21; Ps.125; Phil.3:4b-14, John 12: 1-8

Isa.50:4-9a; Ps.31-9-16; Phil.2:5-11

Luke 19-28-40; Ps.118:1-2, 19-19

Luke 22:14-23 or Luke 23:1-49

Dear Congregation,

March 1st finds us working our way through the second week of Lent. Lent seems to be one of few holy days that the media and sales has not been able to usurp. They may have been able to overshadow Ash Wednesday with Mardi Gras and the celebration of the resurrection gets covered up as an excuse to eat chocolate eggs, but Lent still our own. Why not this year really claim and live into Lent, this 40-day preparation for Easter? Take and read one of the Lenten devotionals found in the narthex. Why not make the time to get up a bit earlier or get home a bit later and go to the Sunday morning or Thursday night Lenten Study? More of an online person? Go to the PC (USA) website www.pcusa.org/devotions/ and read a daily devotional. What could be easier than that? Discover a bit of quiet during the work week and visit neighbors at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on the corner of Van Ness and Clay, whose Sanctuary is open from 11:30-1:30 Monday-Friday for a time called "Lunch Time With God." The world, our work, our worries, just the daily rituals of life can take so much of our attention and our energy. Why don't we, this Lenten season, give just a bit of our attention to God, to building up a hunger, a longing for Easter, for Christ in our lives? Author Ann Weems in her book, Kneeling at Jerusalem, encourages us to look for the Holy in the unholy mess that is our world, that is our lives.

The Holy in the Ordinary

Holy is the time and holy is this place, and there are holy things to be said,

Let us say to one another what our souls whisper...O Holy One, cast your tent among us; come into our ordinary lives and bless the living!

Forty days stretch before us, forty days of hungering after faithfulness, forty days of trying to understand the story, and then, Holy week...O God, if every week were holy...

These forty days stretch before us, and those of us who believe, yearn to feel your presence, yearn to be Your people, and yet, the days fill with ordinary things with no time left for seeking the holy.

Spiritual contemplation is all right for those who have the time, but most of us have to make a living.

Most of us have to live in the real world where profanity splashes and blots out anything holy...

Where, O Holy One, can we find you in this unholy mess?

How, O God, can we find the holy in the ordinary?

May it be so.

Peace, Pastor Maggi

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING – Mary Russell

Jesus said, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-27)

In this passage, Jesus has now appeared to His disciples for the third time since His resurrection, and he exhorts Simon Peter three times to tend and feed His sheep, the true expression of Jesus' compassion for us. This is the theme of this year's One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, to be received on Easter Sunday, April 4. The Presbyterian Church website, www.pcusa.org, provides this information on the Offering.

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities. Recognizing that the hope we have in Christ is lived out in our hope for one another, we respond with gifts that help our sisters and brothers around the world find the hope for a brighter future.

The Presbyterian Hunger Program receives 36 percent of undesignated One Great Hour of Sharing gifts, while the Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance each receive 32 percent. Please look at these website locations to see how our offering is used to help people in need around the country and around the world. The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance reports that they continue to respond to the crisis in Haiti. As of January 28, 2010, in addition to a key expert being assigned to Haiti to carry out assessments, \$409,000 has been sent to assist with emergency needs. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is responding as a member of the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together).

The response in Haiti is still in the relatively early phase of emergency relief. The most effective way to respond is through financial support. PDA is not requesting material aid, other than the preparation of Gift of the Heart hygiene and baby kits, to replenish the supply after more than 35,000 kits have been directed to Haiti

Adult Education Classes – Sundays, 9:30 am, Munro Room

Adult Christian Education continuing in March

The Soup and Study sessions beginning at 6 p.m., and ending at 7:30 p.m. and repeated on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. will continue in March. Each lesson includes a series of daily Bible passages that may be read and studied before or after the lesson as a Lenten discipline. This study will help to reaffirm our knowledge of and belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior. As Paul wrote to the Philippians 2:9–11, “Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

March 4 and 7 Bread of Life, Light of the World, Good Shepherd and True Vine

March 11 and 14 Messiah, Christ

March 18 and 21 Son of God, Son of David, Son of Man

March 25 and 28 the resurrection and the life, The way, the truth and the life

Mission Statement of the Presbytery of San Francisco

The focus and priorities of the Presbytery of San Francisco adopted April 2009

Old First Presbyterian is a part of a larger regional body of churches called a Presbytery which spans from San Francisco to Palo Alto and from Oakland to Danville. It is a large and diverse group regionally and theologically. To learn more about our Presbytery look at our website:
<http://www.presbyteryofsfs.org/>

Our focus is to renew our relationship with God and one another through intentional prayer, worship, and community building so that we may faithfully engage in service to God. In the midst of this renewal of relationships we will engage in the following areas of activity:

I. Creating partnerships with congregations to serve as the primary community for the growth of Christ's disciples in their service to the world.

II. Nurturing relationships with minister members to serve congregations in fulfilling their mission.

III. Expanding the understanding of our diversity and our gifts to become a healthier body of Christ.

New Officers Elected-Class of 2011

At the February 14, 2010 Annual Meeting, the following new officers for the class of 2011 were elected.

Elders serving three-years

Saskia DeVries

Greg Free

Sidney Hollar

Jerry Stuart

Steve Taber

Deacons serving three-years

Harriet McLean

Glen Potter

Annie Scott Rogers

The 2010 Nominating Committee:

Pam Byers, Betsy Chiao, Emmy Clausing. Phil Pollock, Alternate.

Report submitted by 2009 Nominating Committee

Pat Amdur, Emmy Clausing, Dana Nojima, Jean Olson, Phil Pollock, John Sebastian, Chair, Rose Marie Springer.



Exciting developments for 2010 in the Senior Center!

The Senior Center Art Class – Bonnie Thomas

Six Monday's beginning March 1 through April 5. 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the Munro Room. Materials will be provided.

Session 1: The Dawn of Art.

Paleolithic, Neolithic, Sumerian and Babylonian Art

Exercise: Make a Cave Painting

Session 2: The Ancients

The Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans

Exercise: Make a Hieroglyph

Session 3: The Middle Ages

Migratory, Byzantine and Gothic art

Exercise: Make a Stained Glass Window

Session 4: The Renaissance, Mannerism and Baroque

Michaelangelo, DaVinci, Rubens

Exercise: Drawing in Perspective, Use of Light and Shadow

Session 5: Neoclassicism, Romanticism

Art of the Enlightenment, American and French Revolutions

Exercise: Expressing an Ideal

Session 6: The Modern World

19th Century Realism and Impressionism, 20th Century Art

Exercise: Make an Expressionist Drawing

Bonnie Thomas fell in love with Western art while wandering across Europe with a backpack nearly 20 years ago. She's attended design studio and art history survey courses in and around San Francisco ever since. A member of Old First Presbyterian Church, Bonnie is pleased to share her sensibilities and enthusiasm for the world of art, design and architecture with the Doris Krauss Senior Center.

Materials will be provided.



Looking Back – March 1985 at Old First

Prompted by the highly favorable response to its Advent booklet, the Worship Commission of Old First, 1985, began contributing a monthly devotional page to Shared Life drawing on the wealth of talent and inspiration in our congregation. The first contribution was a contemplative poem in the spirit of the season, from Susan Baker-Lehne. The first stanzas are remembered here:

Reflections from the Stillness

I read
of the value
of solitude,
silence,
prayers;
of these quiet paths to
encounters with God,
myself,
my world.

BUT —
if solitude
is truly a

do I want it?

Thanks to Bill Wunsch and Bill Campbell for archiving issues of Shared Life. Excerpts from past issues will continue appear in forthcoming issues.



Thanks from Mary Lou Wilson

Last year we said: Old First knew how to party. This year we say: Old First knows how to “Really Rally ‘Round!” We could have had a dozen pots of homemade soup, but we had planned ahead before Mary Lou’s gallbladder surgery. The surgeon was pleased with the result and if he’s pleased, we are pleased!

We thank all of you for your many prayers, cards, calls, transportation. Maggi came to the hospital several times to offer a prayer. It was an interesting experience and every day in every way, life is getting better.

The last statement the surgeon said to us was, “You can eat and do anything you want.” Some people think the “do” part is dangerous...we shall see!



Small Groups at Old First-Bill Campbell

Small Groups have been a part of congregational life at Old First for many years. With new members and changes in our congregation, some people may not be familiar with Small Groups, but may be interested in this kind of church participation. Bill Campbell shares this information.

In general, Small Groups at Old First can be defined as individuals coming together in a person’s home on a regular basis for community, relationship building, and spiritual growth. We hope to compile a literature reference list for those who don’t know what to read next.

Please contact Jean Olson, Adult Education, or Bill Campbell if you’re interested in participating in a small group, would like more information, or are currently in a small group and would like to welcome other(s). Bill can be contacted at 415/922-5312 or bcampbell@chapop.com.



The Book Nook

What's that You're Reading?

This is a new feature of Shared Life that will appear periodically. You're invited to send the title of a book you're currently reading (you need not have finished it), along with a short, quick comment on it. (see excerpts below). Of special interest are books the small groups are reading, novels, poetry, history, and non-fiction. Share the title and ideas with others.

I read Alice Hoffman's *The Third Angel*, and wasn't very impressed. There are three stories, moving backward in time through three generations. The stories are interrelated but each is complete in itself. They describe three women living in London and focus on poor choices each of them made in relationships. The writer touches on the importance of forgiving oneself, but I found the writing rather predictable, and the ending flat. I'd give it about 4 points out of a possible 10. *Rose Marie*

Olive Kitteridge An interesting novel-in-stories. Strout's empathy with Olive grows through each story. At times the writing is elegant and lyrical Minor quibble: some stories could have a more cohesive plot and at times it reads more like a short story collection than a novel. *Diane M.*

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. Larsson, a writer who suddenly appears with a trilogy like no other. It leaves us caught in intrigue and suspense around two characters, Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander, the girl with the dragon tattoo; the same character appears in *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*. All of these are very good. I recommend them highly.
Fernando

Listening For God, Volume 3 contains works by a variety of authors such as John Cheever, Mary Gordon, Wendell Berry, Oscar Hijuelos, Reynolds Price, Louise Erdrich, Tess Gallagher and Tillie Olsen. Each volume comes with a DVD with a short interview by or about the author and her/his particular piece. Our discussions are focused on the interesting challenge of how each story discerns the author's revelations of where God is in the characters' lives. *Mary Russell*

New Books of Interest

Image www.image.org is a gorgeous multi-layered magazine focusing on the intersections between Art, Faith and Mystery. www.artsandfaith.com is an on line discussion of these pathways. Please take a few minutes and look at the Image website.

Image's vision/mission is to Build Bridges between Faith and Imagination. They now publish high quality books of interest to those seeking to build, renew, and understand how faith works in their lives. Here are just a few.

Bearing the Mystery: Twenty years of Image. One volume contains the best fiction, poetry, essays, and visual art from Image's twenty years. Nearly seventy writers including Annie Dillard, Patricia Hempl, Ron Hansen, Kathleen Norris, Ann Patchett, and twenty visual artists with sixteen glorious color plates. This book is a treasure-hoard of reading for the individual and perfect reading for small groups. \$30.00

Bless this House: Prayers for Families and Children by: *Gregory and Suzanne M. Wolfe.*

An excellent foundation for all families desiring to deepen their spiritual journal together. Includes dozens of prayers appropriate for both everyday and special events, including mealtimes, bedtime, and holidays. \$19.95

Unveiling: A Novel

By Suzanne M. Wolfe The debut novel by one of Image's own. An art conservator goes to Rome to clean a medieval triptych that might be a lost Flemish masterpiece. In the process of cleaning, she finds that layers of her own soul are also being stripped away. \$19.95

Drop, Cover, and Hold On!

Heather Losee offers details on the proven safest way to protect yourself during an **Earthquake!**

Emergency management experts in the United States, the Red Cross, and other official preparedness organizations all agree that "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" is the appropriate action to reduce injury and death during earthquakes. This article contains important information that may save your life in the next earthquake.

Official rescue teams who have been dispatched to the scene of earthquakes and other disasters around the world, and have searched for missing victims in collapsed structures, continue to advocate use of the internationally recognized "Drop, Cover and Hold On" protocol to protect lives during earthquakes.

Given the dynamics of earthquakes and their effects on structures, "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" are the single most useful instruction that you can follow to protect yourself in the majority of situations.

Studies of injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes over the last several decades indicate that you are much more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects (TVs, lamps, glass, bookcases, etc.) than to die in a collapsed building. The "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" position will protect you from most of these injuries. If there is no nearby space beneath a table or other furniture that can provide protection from these objects, then you should get next to a large piece of furniture such as a sofa, cover your head, and hold on to the furniture when it moves. If there is no furniture, get next to an interior wall if possible. If you are in bed, the best thing to do is to stay where you are and cover your head with a pillow.

If a building does collapse, rescue teams will methodically search through the rubble for victims, using tools, search dogs, and electronic instruments that can detect the presence of live people. The main goal of "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" is to protect you from falling and flying debris and other nonstructural hazards, and to increase the chance of your ending up in a Survivable Void Space if the building actually collapses.

In conclusion, the "Drop, Cover and Hold On" protocol, when performed correctly with an awareness of your surroundings, remains the most effective single piece of advice that you can follow when an earthquake occurs.

Please continue to pray for the recovery of our neighbors in Haiti and prepare yourself and your family/friends by staying informed about earthquake safety.



OLD FIRST CONCERTS, \$17 General, \$14 Seniors (65 or older) and \$14 full time students with a valid I.D. Children under 12 are free. www.oldfirstconcerts.org

**OLD FIRST CONCERTS PRESENTS *THE PINK TRIANGLE PROJECT*, A CONCERT
COMMEMORATING THE HOMOSEXUAL VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST**

Saturday, March 6, 8:00PM

Old First Church
1751 Sacramento Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
776-2809

The Pink Triangle Project, a multi-national collaboration, will feature the world premiere of a new composition for oboe, piano and chorus, *Sonata Für Oboe and Klavier mit Männerchor*, written by composer StefanHeucke commemorating the homosexual victims of the Holocaust. The concert will feature oboist Susan Eischeid, pianist Maila Guitierrez-Springfield, and the men's chorus Zephyrus conducted by Paul Andrew Neal. Canadian poet

Gina Roitman will read a new poem written in memory of the Pink Triangle prisoners. The program will additionally feature the Bridge Players performing a string quartet by Czech composer Viktor Ullmann. Works by Desprez, Barber, Horvit, Schubert, and Schul, among others will also be included in the program.

On The Road with Buddy-Buddy Tate Choy

Sleeping on a bus, if one can call it that, is dicey. I have finally moved out of denial and into reality; my 67 year old body does not react as it did when I was 17 (which was the last time I rode a bus anywhere in the United States). I told my Chicago friend, Phyllis, that I thought I was in the Peace Corps again, riding those interesting but ancient buses in Honduras. Aging creeps up on me at the oddest moments, especially when I am sitting in a cramped Greyhound bus seat trying to sleep. I wish I had brought along a filmmaker friend, who could record all of these interesting moments of my bus-riding life.

In Denver, Greyhound changed to Trailways. The bus was brand-new, smelled new, had television screens, radio inputs in every seat, and a toilet that was immaculate stainless steel, toilet paper, and even a bottle of hand sanitizer that was anchored with five bolts to the wall (do people steal hand sanitizers from buses?). But, alas, looks are deceiving. The ride was smoother, the bus driver was female and chatty, the movies shown were from the 1950's ("The Return of Rin-Tin-Tin", and "Operation Pacific," starring John Wayne). The seat was softer, but it was still a bus. I read a lot so noticed that bus riders are not readers. Late in the night the only light on would be mine as I was reading. Along the 52 hours, I didn't notice anyone else reading.

Nov. 18, 2009

The brand-new, Bright Red, Trailways Bus in Burlington, Iowa. Dan, our friendly bus driver announces that everyone must get off the bus so that it can be cleaned for the last leg of our long journey. Everyone disembarks and receives a re-boarding pass with an admonition from Dan that if we lose the pass, you will have to walk to Chicago, and he laughs. I wonder if the Greyhound Training Manual has a special section on "bus comedy?" Dan also announces this will be the last time we will see him. "The end," he says, "has come for me in Burlington, Iowa but the bus will go on". Bus comedy. When we are called to re-board, the young Greyhound counter lady admonishes us that we must have our re-boarding pass to get back on the bus. "No pass, no bus --- you walk," she says. More bus comedy.

Pamela is our new driver for a non-stop trip from Burlington straight into Chicago. She says many on the bus have connections to make in Chicago, so she will be driving with due haste and as much speed as possible because she knows how it feels to miss a connection. She also announces the wonderful virtues of the brand new bus (beautiful red color) that we are inaugurating. She points out the new seats (still cramped), the TV screens (still old movies), the spanking new toilet (really a stainless steel latrine), and the smooth ride (still a bus ride).

Rediscovering Faith Through Fiction-Diane R.MolbergAlice in Wonderland. Lewis Carroll

When she thought it over afterwards it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural.

This started as a half-dream. Easter. Wonderland. Transformations. Magic and mysticism and taking a leap of faith.

There is, in one of our bookcases, a copy of Alice in Wonderland inscribed: “To Evelyn with Love, Daddy. 1927.” The spine is tattered, the pages incredibly soft and yellowed. My mother has often told me her father said this was a book for adults, not children. I open my own copy, inscribed “Happy Birthday, Dear Heart. Je’t aime beaucoup. Mother.1972.” (You simply can’t “kindle” these kinds of inscriptions.)

Alice’s adventures are not unlike the promise of Easter and the Resurrection. Alice falls into darkness: “Down, down, down,” yet she moves through this experience alert and observant, not fearful. As she tumbles over and over, she pays attention to what she sees. Walls of the deep well are lined with bookshelves, cupboards, maps, pictures, and a jar of “ORANGE MARMALADE” that she snatches on her way down, only to discover it’s empty.

During her underground experience, she changes in almost communion-like transformations. She drinks from a vial that says “DRINK ME,” and becomes too small to reach the gold key that will let her through a door. She then eats cake from a box that reads “EAT ME” and becomes huge. She knows she not the same, but “If I’m not the same, who am I?”

Alice gathers information as she makes her way through a maze of odd creatures who dispense illogical advice. A caterpillar sits on a mushroom smoking a hookah and asks Alice who she is. “I know who I was this morning,” she says, “but I think I must have changed several times since then.”

The facts grow more bewildering with each experience. As part of the Mad Hatter’s Tea Party, she’s asked to solve riddles: “why is a raven like a writing desk?” *; aphorisms that make sense except to the Hatter or the Dormouse; and stories that have no beginning and no end. She observes a croquet game between playing cards who use flamingos as mallets, listens to a mock-turtle’s story, and watches lobsters dance.

What do these images mean? To Alice, a curious dream, but could Wonderland represent a universal moment of change, of questioning who we are and how we move through the adventures of our Christian lives, emerging as if resurrected from a “dull” reality, to begin anew. Do Alice’s adventures in Wonderland epitomize the promise of Easter?

*“because it can produce a few notes, although they are very flat...”.



The Officers of Old First Church

Board of Deacons - Nina Berg, Communion Clean up, Financial Requests; Betsy Chiao, Memorial Receptions; Hsiaochien Chuang, T-Shirt/Card Sales; Mary Culp, Treasurer, Financial Requests; Pam Free, Moderator, Financial Requests; Dan Joraanstad - Nominating Committee/Restructuring Task Force; Heather Losee - Secretary, Prayer Coordinator, Financial Requests; Dianne Middleton, Transportation; Dana Nojima, Coffee Hour; AnnieScott Rogers, Prayer Coordinator; Sarah Taber, Meal Coordinator, Memorial Receptions; Oliver Spencer, Special Projects

Session of Elders - Rosemary Bledsoe, Congregational Care; Christopher Burt, Worship; Pam Byers, Personnel; Carol Carter, Session Liaison to Deacons; Jeanne Choy Tate, Special Projects; Barry Clagett, Finance; Greg Free, Treasurer; Stewardship; Bob Hermann, Evangelism Jeanne Kirkwood, Clerk of Session; Alfred H. Martin, Worship; Bryan Nichols, Christian Education; Charles Olson, Operations; Jean Olson, Christian Education; Mary Russell, Mission; John Sebastian, Corporation President, Planning