

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

January 2012

Church Website: oldfirst.org

Church Photostream: www.flickr.com/photos/oldfirst

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Maggi's Musings

I will admit that I never knew about Epiphany in my years growing up in the church. I don't know whether it simply wasn't celebrated or whether I missed it in the hustle and bustle of Sunday school. It is an easy day to miss if you aren't paying attention. Epiphany can easily be overlooked in the rush from Advent to Christmas. Sometimes it gets tacked on as almost an afterthought to the to the Christmas story.

Ironically, the Gospel of Matthew mentions Jesus birth with less than one verse while the story of the wise man takes up twelve verses in Chapter 2. I have grown to love this celebration in our church calendar. It may be because commercialism hasn't been able to get a hold on this day, which remembers the wise men – the magi – who followed a star to worship this infant king. As an adult, I find myself drawn to these wise ones, these scholars, who discovered a promise in a bit of scripture, longed to encounter the Divine – wherever God might found – and journeyed into unknown lands never quite knowing where they were going or what they would find. Such a risk and such openness to the leading of God!

Somehow without mapquest or a trip agenda they went forth with longing, hope, an open heart and an open mind. I wish I could go into this New Year with just a bit of that same kind of longing, hope and openness. At very least, I would like to go into the New Year with a spirit that follows without quite knowing every step or outcome but that still recognizes God's presence made manifest in surprising ways and ordinary places.

May there be a little bit of Epiphany-wonder in all of us, as we wander into 2012.

Peace,
Pastor Maggi

An Epiphany Prayer By Miriam Therese Winter

Light of the world,
we bow down before you
In awe and adoration.
Bless us and our simple faith
seeking understanding.
Epiphany means
manifestation,
lifting the veil,

revelation.
Reveal to us then
What we need to know
to love you,
and keep your word with fidelity and truth,
courage and hope,
this day and always.
Amen.

Christian Education Coordinator: Paul Tollefson Christopher

Paul is a Bay Area native, the son of a Lutheran Minister. The second to the youngest of six children, Paul is an uncle to thirteen, and a great uncle to five. He attended San Rafael High School and then St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, where he majored in Elementary Education. Ultimately, Paul became a real estate agent, then sales manager and trainer of forty-two real estate sales agents. Teaching, training, and mentoring children and adults has long been a part of his life. Paul has taught Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, was a 6th grade Camp Counselor, and a Peer Counselor. A current volunteer for Project Open Hand and the SF Food Pantry and a recent cancer survivor, Paul enjoys endurance sports – marathons, triathlons, and double century rides. Paul hopes to ride the AIDS/Lifecycle ride this year.



Paul observed our Children’s program in December and is looking forward to beginning the new position shared by Old First Presbyterian Church and St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in the new year. Please keep Paul and our churches in your prayers.

Coming Soon: Easier Parking

While the church has contracted with a new contractor to operate Old First Garage, parking in the structure may be limited or unavailable during the transition. On Sunday mornings, would those who are able to park on the street do so and thus leave the Bank of America Parking lot open for visitors and for those who may need easier access between parking and the church? Thank you.

SF Food Bank Collection Barrel

The Food Bank food barrel was filled after the Christmas Day service. Thank you for your generosity.

Deacons Energize Larkin Street Christmas Gift Drive at Old First

Old First Presbyterian Church members and friends donated an avalanche of Christmas gifts for the 2011 Larkin Street Youth Services gift drive. The Board of Deacons decided to adopt the gift drive and suggested that worshipers bring specific, affordable gift items to church on successive Sundays. For example, the wish list for December 11 included headphones or an alarm clock or shaving cream and a razor. Members donated all of the suggested items and many, many more, resulting in the most generous gift drive since our church began sponsoring them for Larkin Street Youth Services.

Larkin Street Youth Services hosted celebrations on Christmas Day for some 500 homeless and at-risk young people from age 12 to 24. Most of these young people live in Larkin Street’s emergency shelters and transitional living facilities. Others access Larkin Street’s drop-in centers on Sutter Street and on Haight Street. All are treated to traditional Christmas dinners, activities and gifts.

Church Choir Sings Christmas Concert at Sunnyside Conservatory

The Old First Choir's Concert at the Sunnyside Conservatory was a wonderful and heart-warming event. The choir sang for a diverse community audience of parents, children, senior citizens and a few Old First-ers. The Conservatory was filled to the brim and the audience gave a standing ovation to the choir and soloists. We hope that this will become an annual event and will help draw people to Sunday morning worship!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Organ Recital by Keenan Boswell

On Monday, January 9, 7:30 pm, the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents organist Keenan Boswell in recital, accompanied by Ben Graham, percussion, and Zachary Pattison, electronic record/modify/improv playback. This recital is open to the public.

Adult Book Group Seminar, January 15, 9:30 a.m.

We're starting the New Year out right with the first Adult Book Group for 2012: We will meet in the Munro Room at 9:30 a.m. on January 15, and discuss one of what some people maintain is the "best American Short story ever written" – *Cathedral* by Raymond Carver. Copies of the story will be E-mailed to past participants. If you haven't attended one of these great classes in the past, please contact Diane Molberg (molberg@earthlink.net) in order to receive a copy of the story. A second Seminar is planned for February 5.

CROP Hunger Walk, April 29, 2012

The annual CROP Hunger Walk will not take place as usual in October this year, but instead has been rescheduled to April 29, 2012, again around Lake Merced. The Presbytery organizers hope the date change will help us avoid last year's torrential downpour and the competition for space with the Nike Women's Marathon! We want to have ten walkers this year so mark your calendars.

SESSION WRAP: CLERK'S REPORT FOR 2011

Submitted by Clerk of Session, Jeanne Kirkwood

- January: Balanced budget passed; changes in administration staffing; continuing with elders going to deacons meetings; always working in advance of activities.
- February: The session minutes – kept in the Red Book – have been updated and there is an electronic version as well. Building upkeep includes new windows in library (which were broken).
- March: Interviews of the elder/deacon candidates presented by nominating committee; Brad Peterson hired as office administrator.
- April: Regular session meeting suspended in order to reconvene as the Voting Membership of Old First Concerts.
- May: Plans begin for 100th cornerstone celebration and the seed is planted for every member stewardship visitation.
- June: Approval for new Bibles and hymnals; many Old First-ers participated in the Pride Parade carrying the Old First banner and we flew a rainbow banner on the Van Ness side of our building.
- July: No meeting
- August: Session gave thanks for being the beneficiary of the Reverend John Bodo's life insurance policy; the idea of sharing a Christian Education Coordinator with St Luke's Episcopal Church was presented; we agreed to host the November Presbytery meeting; choir gained three new section leaders Tenor, Soprano, and a Bass.
- September: New Carpet in church building, Children's Sunday school begins again.
- October: Sacramento Street hallway bench recovered and banquette replaced with antique church pew, approved Christmas CD sales by the choir.
- November: Garage lease issues arise, Stewardship Season begins, light bulbs replaced in Sanctuary.
- December: Mission Fair and Luncheon, New contract signed with garage operator.

COLUMBARIUM SOCIETY REPORT

The Columbarium Society of Old First Presbyterian Church met in the library on October 30, the Sunday before All Saints Day. The main feature of the meeting was presentation of an updated proposal for a stained-glass window to be located in the balcony-like area overlooking the Columbarium. An artist's conception of the proposed design is currently in place in the window opening and shows vividly what the finished window would look like. It was also reported that one new niche and one plaque had been bought and two previously purchased plaques inscribed and installed to date in 2011. The meeting closed with a prayer of gratitude for the lives of those who are inurned and memorialized in our Columbarium.

Membership in the Columbarium Society is open to all those who have purchased a niche or a plaque in the Columbarium. If you would like to receive an information packet about niche or plaque ownership, please send a request to the church office or speak with a member of the Columbarium Ministry Team.

DINNER AND DISCUSSION: A PROPOSAL FROM STEPHEN TABER

A few weeks ago, I hosted a dinner and discussion on the book *American Grace* and its implications for Old First. This discussion was very rewarding and it occurs to me that this format might be worth repeating. Therefore, I would like offer to host other dinner discussions, at mutually convenient times, during the first part of 2012. The following are suggested topics:

1. Continuation of the *American Grace* discussion, either for those who were not able to attend the first event, or for those who want to explore the topic further. This involves a look at the state of Christianity in the United States and how Old First may more effectively witness to Jesus Christ in 21st century San Francisco.
2. A look at Christianity and politics in light of the upcoming presidential election. As we approach the 2012 election, it is apropos that we, as Christians, take stock of how Christianity informs our view of the issues faced by our nation and addressed by the candidates. Drawing on resources I encountered when I studied this topic at Sarum College a few years ago, we can look at different Christian teachings on social and political issues, as well as the religious tradition of this country, and discuss how they are reflected in the positions of the candidates and how they contribute to a critique of the positions of the candidates.
3. A discussion of *Les Miserables*. In June of 2012, the musical, *Les Miserables* will be presented in San Francisco. Based on Victor Hugo's novel of the same name, this musical is very explicitly a Christian allegory and contains a very explicit theological perspective, with many of the characters representing varying responses to the Christian message. This discussion (and a look at excerpts from a video recording) can focus on an explanation of the allegorical nature of the musical and could be done in conjunction with a group theater night to view the production.

Please let me know if you are interested in any of these ideas. The dinners would typically be on a weekday evening. I can be reached by e-mail at stephen@sstaber.com or by phone at (415) 771-3358.

REMEMBERING DR. KING: OLD FIRST MARCHES ON MLK JR. DAY

The Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Foundation will hold "Renewing the Dream," this year's **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration**, on Monday, January 16, at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Yerba Buena Gardens.

Join other members of Old First Presbyterian Church for the annual MLK Jr. Day march/parade to the Yerba Buena Center and Gardens. Meet at **10:30 am, January 16, at 4th and Townsend Streets** just a block from the CalTrain Station. Look for the Old First sign. E-mail Pastor Henderson, if you're interested: maggi@oldfirst.org

The foundation will partner with the San Francisco Interfaith Council for several interfaith activities, including a tribute to the Selma-to-Montgomery march and the symbolic crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The tribute will take place during the march/parade as it crosses San Francisco's Lefty O'Doul Bridge and as it briefly stops at Willie Mays Plaza at AT&T Park. The interfaith commemoration ceremony at the Esplanade stage at Yerba Buena Gardens will conclude the march/parade, with spiritual leaders from many faith backgrounds reflecting on Dr. King's vision. Last, recognition of San Francisco's first African American school principal, Ms. Leola M. Havard, will take place as part of the celebration programs.

Free and discounted commemorative transit passes on BART, Golden Gate Transit and Ferries and SFMTA are available on a first-come-first-served basis by registering on the contact page at norcalmlk.com. Log-on to the events page at norcalmlk.com for a full list of activities and downloadable activity maps, and subscribe to us on Twitter at norcalmlk for the latest updates on activities and the day's events.

MLK Day Activities: All are free and open to the public.

- **2012 MLK March/Parade** begins at 11:00am at 4th and Townsend Streets (Caltrain Depot).
- **San Francisco Interfaith Commemoration:** 11:45am to 12:15pm at the Esplanade Stage at Yerba Buena Gardens.
- **MLK Dream Address and Special Presentations:** 12:15pm to 4:00pm. There is limited seating; doors open at 11:50am at the Novellus Theater at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.
- **Health Preparedness and Sustainability Festival:** 11:00am to 4:30pm at the Forum at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.
- **2012 Civil Rights Film Festival:** 11:00am to 4:30pm, various screening rooms. See the events page at norcalmlk.com for details.
- **Children's Reading Festival:** 11:00am to 4:30pm at the Children's Creativity Museum/Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.
- **Further Events:** Contemporary Jewish Museum, Museum of the African Diaspora & Children's Creativity Museum from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

OUR HEALTH: A POSTURE OF GRATITUDE

One of the greatest virtues is gratitude. To be grateful is healing because it focuses your attention on all that is good in life. If your attention is on what you already have instead of what is missing, then more of what you are grateful for may show up in your life. What you think about, pray about and *thank* about comes about through God. The following are excerpts from an article that appeared in a church bulletin in a church in Lake County.

Here is a reminder of giving thanks for the simple everyday things that we don't notice. I am thankful for the mess to clean up after a party because it means I have been surrounded by friends. I am thankful for homework because it means I live in country where I am free to study and learn. I am thankful for the clothes that fit a little snugly because it means I have enough to eat. I am grateful for my heating bill because it means I am warm. I am thankful for household chores because it means I have a place to call home. I am thankful for the weariness of aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been productive. Lastly, I am thankful for the alarm clock that goes off early in the morning because it means that... I am still alive.

Be grateful for God is with all of us!

What are you grateful for?

This article was written by Dr. Matthew McQuaid, DPM who practices in Lakeport, California. It is reprinted here with his permission.

FLOWER AND COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS NEEDED FOR NEW YEAR

It's a simple ministry, but for \$50 you can underwrite either the flowers or the hospitality we offer at coffee hour following Sunday worship. Sign up on the bulletin board in the lobby. Your dedication for the gift will appear in the bulletin.

JANUARY DATES

Sunday	January 1	Name Tag Sunday: Wear your own name tag and take a look at others'.
Monday	January 2	New Year's Holiday: Church Office Closed
Saturday	January 7	Welcome: Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
Saturday	January 14	Budget Meeting, Choir Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	January 15	Deadline for February issue of Shared Life
Monday	January 16	MLK Jr. Holiday: Church Office Closed
Tuesday	January 24	Session Meeting, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
Saturday	January 28	Welcome: Community Dinner, 5:30 pm

THE OFFICERS OF OLD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Board of Deacons

Nina Berg, Communion Clean Up, Funding Requests, Flowers/Memorial Donations; **Carol Carter**, Funding Requests, Communion Cleanup; **Tracy Clagett**, Secretary; **Dan Joraanstad**, Co-Moderator; **Craig Kehne**, Coffee Hour, Communion Cleanup; **Diane Lewis**, Funding Requests, Cards; **Harriet MacClean**, Memorial Receptions and Meals; **Dana Nojima**, Co-Moderator, Merchandise Sales; **Glen Potter**, Transportation; **AnnieScott Rogers**, Deacons' Prayer Chain; **Oliver Spencer**, Special Events; **Sarah Taber**, Memorial Receptions and Meals; **Hornghsheng Tu**, Technology; **Priscilla Yu**, Funding Requests

Elders on Session

George Becker, Personnel; **Michael Berg**, Mission and Giving; **Chris Burt**, Worship; **Pam Byers**, Community Building; **Saskia de Vries**, Worship; **Gregory Free**, Finance; **Kristi Hoerauf**, Finance; **Jeanne Kirkwood**, Clerk of Session; **Mary Russell**, Mission and Giving; **John Sebastian**, Planning; **Steve Taber**, Operations; **Betty Voris**, Community Building; **George Yu**, Christian Education