

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

May 2012

Church Website: [oldfirst.org](http://oldfirst.org)

Church Photostream: [www.flickr.com/photos/oldfirst](http://www.flickr.com/photos/oldfirst)

Old First Concerts: [www.oldfirstconcerts.org](http://www.oldfirstconcerts.org)

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## MAGGI'S MUSINGS

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My friend Michelle is a youth minister at a Presbyterian Church in North Carolina. As we were comparing our busy church schedules, she reported that in the last week of April she was getting ready for the final youth group meeting of the school year. I asked does school really get out in April there? She told me no, it is the end of May, but the youth are so busy in May with projects, finals, recitals, sports and graduations, that she decided to not have youth group be one more thing they had to feel guilty about not having time for.

Michelle reported that the youth have "Meet Up" on Mondays at different places to eat around their town and that the youth drop in as the can. Last year they did it for the first time and there were the usual *we-have-never-done-it-this-way* comments. However, this year the parents are thanking her and the youth have learned to treasure those Monday meetings. It gives them time to breathe, to laugh, to mark what is going on around them. Michelle uses the time to plan for all the summer events and she now has the freedom to really enter into all the transitions and growth times that take place in their lives.

I am caught by the idea of having May be not just about being busy but about marking and engaging the busy-ness as an opportunity for transition, change and growth. Our whole lives are about living in the midst of business. Can't we also take time to be a about longing, trusting, believing, expecting to see God at work in the midst of life?

How about Sunday worship being a time when we too can breathe, laugh, and celebrate God's presence in our midst! We aren't limited to seeking God in the sanctuary, to longing for people to come in to 1751 Sacramento. How about going out and seeking where God is at work in San Francisco? How about looking for God's presence, in the busy-ness and the messiness of life? Isn't life about the Holy Spirit at work not only on Pentecost some 2,000 years ago (See Acts Chapter 2) but also at work here and now?

May God's spirit be with three of our own who venture into new places this May:

- Jordan Hollarsmith graduates from Columbia University in ecology, evolution and environmental biology on May 16.
- Maggi Henderson – that's me – begins her sabbatical following worship on Pentecost Sunday, May 27.
- Erin Berg graduates from Oberlin College in neuroscience and comparative American studies on May 28.

Please pray that God's peace and blessing go with Jordan, Erin and myself, and with everyone at Old First Presbyterian Church and throughout the Bay Area.

Peace, Maggi

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **Old First Volunteers Staff the Interfaith Food Panty May 5**

Please send an email to [foodpantry@oldfirst.org](mailto:foodpantry@oldfirst.org) to get on the mail list to sign up, or to let Joy Crosser know ahead of time of Saturdays you'd like to come. All ages and groups are welcome. It's a great opportunity for teens to put in community service hours. We unload the truck beginning around 7:30 - those who cannot lift more than 10 lbs should arrive around 8 a.m.. You will be finished by 11 a.m. Parking is available at the Old First Garage. Please do let Joy know in advance if you are planning to attend at [foodpantry@oldfirst.org](mailto:foodpantry@oldfirst.org).

During the month of May, please bring hot or cold cereal to contribute to the S.F. Food Bank. There is a barrel in the narthex for non-perishable food contributions.

### **Old First Presbyterian Church Anniversary Lunch, May 6**

In 1849 brave and hardy souls, fresh off a ship which had come around the horn, began to worship as a church. Soon thereafter they sent a formal request back East to Presbyterian Church officials asking that a church be authorized in San Francisco. The authority was given and Old First Presbyterian Church became a reality.

Six church buildings later, we worship at Van Ness Avenue and Sacramento Street, where its cornerstone was buried with much fanfare on August 29, 1911. We celebrated that 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in style last fall. Now it is time to celebrate the 163<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the founding of Old First, the oldest Protestant church in California. We will celebrate on Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, after the worship service with a Potluck Dinner. Smoked ribs will be the entre and those attending are asked to bring a salad, side dish, bread or dessert. For those not able to bring food, a donation of \$5 is requested.

A new policy has been adopted by the Community Building Committee in charge of social events. **If you bring a dish for the potluck, have it ready to be served. If it does require any preparation, leave directions for the committee to finish it for serving.** Because of the lack of space in the kitchen, extra people in the kitchen impeded the committee from handling last minute serving details. If salads require dressing to be added, please leave instructions with the salad and the dressing. If items need to be reheated, those too need specific directions. The committee will handle the details and see that the food items are properly displayed and served.

### **Witness to the Resurrection: Memorial Service for Bill Wunsch, May 12**

On Saturday, May 12, at 2 pm we will remember William C. "Bill" Wunsch, a member of Old First Presbyterian Church, who died on April 12. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Old First Presbyterian Church or to the Mission Neighborhood Center, Inc. (Attn: Sam Ruiz, 362 Capp St., San Francisco CA 94110).

### **Pentecost Offering, May 27**

Each year on Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit as a bringer of new life. With the Spirit's coming, we no longer need to settle for business as usual but can know the transforming, redeeming love of God that makes the impossible possible. The Pentecost Offering is one of the four special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Gifts to the Pentecost offering help bring God's transforming, redeeming love to children at risk, guide and nurture young people's growing faith and provide opportunities for young adults to become spiritual leaders—all in the name of Jesus Christ. The benefits are all around us. Presbyterian congregations are finding new ways to minister to children at risk in their own communities. General Assembly programs are advocating for children and developing youth and young adult leaders.

Since 1998, Presbyterians of all ages have raised more than \$9 million for ministries that benefit younger members of God's family:

- Forty percent of the Pentecost Offering is kept by Presbyterian congregations for use in behalf of children at risk.
- Ten percent of the Offering supports General Assembly child advocacy ministries.
- Twenty-five percent goes to support ministries with youth aged 12–18 and those called to accompany them.
- Twenty-five percent goes to Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) opportunities.

For details on how these funds were spent, visit [www.pcusa.org/pentecost/](http://www.pcusa.org/pentecost/). Your dollars really do make a difference!

### **AIDS Walk, Sunday, July 15**

Old First members and friends can join with other Bay Area Presbyterians on Team #1057 – “Presbyterians Fighting AIDS” for the annual AIDS Walk. The 10 km (6.2 mile) Walk takes place in Golden Gate Park starting and ending at Sharon Meadow. Check out the registration and donation information at <http://www.aidswalk.net/sanfran/>. There will also be sign-up and sponsor information at coffee hours until then. This is the schedule: 9 a.m. Sign-In and Awards Open, 9:45 a.m. Opening Ceremony, 10:30 a.m. AIDS Walk Begins, 12:30 p.m. Post Walk Concert, 2:30 p.m. Results

### **All Church Retreat, September 28-30**

Save the dates for Old First Presbyterian Church's all church retreat coming up this September 28-30 at the Mount Hermon retreat center.

### **QuickFact: Pentecost**

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Why do we Christians call our commemoration of the gift of the Holy Spirit *Pentecost*? Doesn't that simply mean “fifty” in Greek?

Everybody knows about the four Sundays of Advent, the twelve days of Christmas and the forty days of Lent, but we often forget what has been called “the Great Fifty Days of Easter.” Just as Jews celebrate the delivery from bondage at Passover and then the gift of the Torah (God's Law) at the feast of Shavuoth (seven weeks after Passover – shavuoth means “weeks”) – so early Christians celebrated Christ's resurrection – another kind of delivery from bondage - and then the gift of God's Holy Spirit at the feast of Pentecost (the fiftieth day after Easter – *pentecoste* means “fiftieth”). So, though Jews count the weeks and Christians the days, both groups celebrate God's gifts.

### **PASTOR HENDERSON'S SABBATICAL**

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One part of Pastor Maggi's “terms of call” is the provision for a sabbatical four years of service. She will begin this sabbatical on the day after Pentecost (Monday, May 28) and will return for the church retreat (September 28).

In preparation for her sabbatical the session has formed a *Sabbatical Group* to ensure that all eventualities are covered. The Worship Committee has the big task of arranging for ministers to preach and to administer communion; this presents us with the exciting opportunity of asking various people, including our own church members to preach. Elders and Deacons, along with the Reverend Erwin Barron and the Reverend Susan Ashton, will take the pastoral role with home and hospital visits. Volunteers will help Brad Peterson in the office with day-to-day tasks. If you would like to help, have questions, or have suggestions, please contact any member of the Sabbatical Group: George Becker, Christopher Burt, Pam

Byers, Saskia de Vries, Jeanne Kirkwood, Mary Russell. Also, please remember Maggi in prayer while she's on her sabbatical. Pray that it may be a time of retreat, renewal, rest and revitalization.

### **YOUR PLEDGE DOLLARS AT WORK**

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*Welcome* seeks to provide a faithful response to poverty and to improve the quality of life for individuals in our community by providing: hospitality; education; food; and referrals for housing, health care and drug and alcohol treatment.

The heart of our activities takes place at Old First Presbyterian Church, including:

- Tuesday Welcome Center: A light lunch from 2-4pm that provides a quiet space for conversation, community, a chance to get mail, books, socks, make phone calls and spend one-on-one time with pastoral support.
- Saturday Community Dinners: A meal served from 5:30-7pm that enables congregations, school groups, addiction recovery groups and other volunteers to learn about poverty and eat with the homeless and hungry. Feeding between 150-300 individuals every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday, participants also receive toiletries, socks and clothing. Many of the volunteers are formerly homeless individuals who want to give back as a way to continue to improve their quality of life and participate in community.

In order to attract additional funding from grants and congregations, Welcome also creates new projects every few years to respond to the needs that participants request at community dinners. In the past these projects have included the Homeless Identification Act and the Urban Share Community Garden Project. Current projects of Welcome that take place at other congregations and sites include:

- The Free Farm: A community garden on the site where St. Paulus Lutheran burned down in the early nineties. This site is a destination for service learning projects, youth groups, college groups and congregational mission projects. It has also created a community of volunteers that serve free vegan lunch every Wednesday and Saturday around noon and have grown and given away nearly 6,000 pounds of free produce.
- The LGBTQ Homeless Youth Leadership Project: For the last three years Welcome has been using the history of local pastors and LGBTQ youth from the 1960's Tenderloin like bible study with contemporary homeless youth. In addition to working regularly at the Faithful Fools and GLBT Center with homeless youth in San Francisco and training them to politically advocate for their rights, share their stories through art, poetry and writing and to improve their quality of life, we have also travelled the country sharing the stories and needs of LGBTQ youth with congregations and met with LGBTQ youth in shelters to record their stories. Welcome has become a national leader on issues of LGBTQ homeless youth. In 2012, last year's LGBTQ homeless youth participants will become mentors for this year's youth and continue the leadership of the project. In 2013 we will be coordinating a conference in DC to gather the youth we have been working with around the country to create a national agenda for LGBTQ Homeless Youth.
- SF Cares: A partnership with St. Paulus Lutheran Church and the Night Ministry that works on advocating for the needs of San Franciscans who are homeless, mentally ill or experiencing traumatic brain injury. All three organizations share a volunteer coordinator. Welcome is creating an online multimedia training for congregational leaders to train them on how participants can work with the homeless and hungry. Multifaith training videos are posted on SF Cares' blog. Another site tailored for Lutherans and supported by special grants is called *Just Lutheran*.

Welcome's activities at Old First Presbyterian Church constitute about 50% of our activities. Other programs are located at other sites, primarily to accomplish one of the original intents of Welcome (to

have programs at multiple location to decrease the burden on OFPC's facility and relationship with neighbors).

## **WHERE IN THE WORLD HAS MEGAN BEEN?**

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*A Letter from the Reverend Megan Rohrer, Director of Welcome*

In 2011, I preached and presided at more than 89 church services (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Unitarian Universalist, Congregational and Swedenborgian), presented at 13 universities, national conferences or congregations, had blog posts read by 96,975 individuals (not counting articles written for the ELCA's Living Lutheran), had 18,694 *youtube* views and performed two adult and one child's baptisms.

Already in 2012, I have traveled to Baltimore, New York, Long Island, Chicago, and Minneapolis recording the stories of youth in shelters and encouraging congregations to support their LGBTQ youth through our LGBTQ Homeless Youth Leadership Project. So when someone asks me why I'm not around San Francisco as much as I used to be, I respond: "as long as there is homophobia in the rest of the country, there will always be homeless individuals in San Francisco and on Polk Street."

It is also a reality that in this changing economy Welcome has needed to become more global in its work. This is why we have begun educating congregations around the country to respond creatively to the poverty in their backyards. Our program has not only changed to address the increased economic need throughout the country, it has also enabled Welcome to diversify its funding and gain access to larger grants.

As I get ready to head back to New York next week and to Houston the following week, I wanted to take a moment to thank the congregations, individuals and foundations that enable Welcome to keep our doors open during this rocky economy. Each time I return from a trip, my office is filled with donations of toiletries, shoes, socks, clothing, blankets and non-perishable items.

Welcome has been a bit different from other non-profits in that way. Instead of spending most of our money on stuff that we give away, we connect with congregations and individuals and are able to get nearly all of the food, clothing and health items that we give away donated. And as Welcome's only staff person working with more than 350 volunteers a year, I am keenly aware that your financial support literally ensures that I have a home to come home to.

Those who give to Welcome when their finances are abundant, I thank you. Those who give when there isn't much to give, I thank you. Whatever the reason or the size of your gift, I thank you. Thank you for supporting our work and letting us carry your mission to the streets of San Francisco, the internet and across the country.

Megan

## **RESOURCES FOR DEVOTIONS AND BIBLE STUDY**

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### **The Discipleship Study Bible: NRSV Including Apocrypha**

Pastor Henderson has found a new, useful study Bible: The Discipleship Study Bible (New Revised Standard Version). One reviewer said, "While many study Bibles are either conservative and focus purely on personal piety or else are so full of historical-critical details that the average reader gives up in frustration, The Discipleship Study Bible maintains a strong emphasis on issues of social justice and service while respecting the importance of personal spiritual growth." This edition includes colored maps and a concordance. These hardback Bibles cost \$20 (a 40% savings over retail). They are on sale from the church office.

**REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN MAY, 2012**

Date	Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Psalm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel Reading
May 6	Easter 5	Acts 8:26-40	Psalm 22:25-31	1 John 4:7-21	John 15:1-8
May 13	Easter 6	Acts 10:44-48	Psalm 98	1 John 5:1-6	John 15:9-17
May 20	Easter 7	Acts 1:15-17	Psalm 1	1 John 5:9-13	John 17:6-9
May 27	Pentecost	Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalm 104:24-34	Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21	John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

**OTHER DATES TO NOTE**

Saturday	May 05	Old First Presbyterian Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry
Sunday	May 06	Name Tag Sunday: Anniversary Lunch following worship
Saturday	May 12	Welcome: Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
Sunday	May 13	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30 pm
Sunday	May 13	Deadline for Next Month's Issue of Share Life
Tuesday	May 22	Session Meeting, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
Saturday	May 26	Welcome: Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
Sunday	May 27	Pentecost Sunday
Monday	May 28	Memorial Day: Church Office Closed Pastor Henderson Begins Sabbatical

**The Officers of Old First Presbyterian Church**

**Session**

George Becker, personnel; Michael Berg, mission and giving; Chris Burt, worship; Pam Byers, community-building; Barry Clagett, finance, Saskia de Vries, worship; Gregory Free, finance; Jeanne Kirkwood, clerk of session; Mary Russell, mission and giving; Randy Smith; Steve Taber, operations; Betty Voris, community-building;

**Board of Deacons**

Nina Berg, funding requests, communion clean up, flowers/memorial donations; Carol Carter, funding requests, communion cleanup; Samuel Cheng, Tracy Clagett, secretary; Dan Joraanstad, co-moderator; Craig Kehne, coffee hour, communion clean-up; Diane Lewis, funding requests, cards; Harriet MacLean, memorial receptions and meals; Dana Nojima, co-moderator, merchandise sales; Leota Parker, Glen Potter, transportation; AnnieScott Rogers, deacons' prayer chain; Oliver Spencer, special events; Sarah Taber, memorial Receptions and Meals; Hornghsheng Tu, Technology