

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

September 2012

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

SEPTEMBER SERMONS

As Pastor Maggi Henderson concludes her sabbatical this month, we welcome both familiar and new faces to our pulpit.

The Reverend **Erwin Barron**, PhD, will preach and celebrate communion on **September 2**. Erwin, our recently named parish associate, has been part of our community for 16 years. Erwin teaches literature at City College and ethics at the Graduate Theological Union. At various times he has served Old First Presbyterian Church as director of Christian education and briefly as interim pastor. Erwin has moderated session meetings during Maggi's absence.

The Reverend **Susan Ashton**, DMin, will preach on **September 9**. A long-time friend of Old First Presbyterian Church, Susan was a parish associate in the '90s and served briefly – along with Erwin – as interim pastor. From 2008 to 2011 she was pastor at Ocean Avenue Presbyterian. During this sabbatical period, she has helped our deacons and elders provide pastoral care.

The Reverend **Elizabeth “Dean” McDonald**, DMin, will preach and celebrate communion on **September 16**. You'll want to meet her, as she's leading our congregational retreat September 28-30. Before moving to the Bay Area last summer with her husband, new SFTS President James “Jim” McDonald, Dean was director of the College of Preachers at Washington National Cathedral and a worship leader there. Earlier she served congregations in Indiana, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. She has taught at the Cathedral School for Girls, Wesley Theological Seminary, and most recently in the DMin program at SFTS. A pastoral counselor, she currently sees clients at the Interfaith Counseling Center at SFTS. *Fun fact:* Dean's husband Jim McDonald and Mary Russell were childhood friends!

The Reverend **Victor Floyd**, Associate Pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church [MCC] of San Francisco, will preach on **September 23**. Before his ordination in the MCC and the United Church of UCC, he served three Presbyterian churches as music director. He received the 2009 Award in Queer Theology from the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the Pacific School of Religion. A frequent conference presenter, he is a proponent of the Iona Community, InterPlay and interfaith dialogue. *Fun fact:* Pam Byers first met Victor when he sang at the 1999 Covenant Conference in Atlanta.

We conclude our Festival of Preaching when Elder **Andy Cheng** preaches on **September 30**. An Old First member since he moved to San Francisco in 1992 and an elder since 1997, Andy serves as a San Francisco Superior Court Judge. Earlier he worked in the City Attorney's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Andy and Yvonne Cheng were married at Old First in 1993 and have three children, Samuel, Joshua, and Annie. Following his mother's example, Sam was ordained as a deacon in 2012.

Pastor **Maggi Henderson** returns to our pulpit on World Communion Sunday, **October 7**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dessert before Lunch: Deacons' Ice Cream Social, September 9

On Sunday, September 9, the deacons present their annual ice cream social to celebrate the start of Christian Education. There will be selections of ice creams, many toppings and other goodies, all for a suggested donation of \$3.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children. Of course it's all you can eat. We are particularly pleased and excited that this year all proceeds will be given to the Al Barrios Children's Library.

Old First in the Redwoods: All-Church Retreat, September 28-30

Carrying on with the venerable tradition of Old First Presbyterian Church retreats, the deacons and a Retreat Project Team led by Dan Joraanstad and Nina Berg have been busy planning for Old First in the Redwoods. Mark your calendar for the last weekend of September (September 28-30). The weekend retreat will be held at Mt. Hermon's modern facility in the coastal mountains of Santa Cruz at an all-inclusive cost of \$212. Scholarships are available as needed and children under 12 are free. You can see more about the center at www.MountHermon.org.

Past retreats have been memorable not only for spiritual refreshment and rest but for deepening relationships among members of Old First Presbyterian Church. The planning process has focused on bringing fun to the forefront. There is plenty of time scheduled to allow for exploration of the beautiful coastal redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains, about 90 minutes from San Francisco. Comfortable accommodations and the ability to spend time with friends and family should make the weekend a time to remember.

The Reverend Elizabeth "Dean" McDonald, DMin – pastor, professor, and family counselor – will lead the retreat weekend. She has served churches in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC. For five years she directed the Cathedral College of Preachers at Washington's National Cathedral. She relocated to the Bay Area recently as her husband assumed the post of president for the San Francisco Theological Seminary.

To register, E-mail either djoraanstad@gmail.com or ninabergsf@yahoo.com by September 9.

FAREWELL AND THANKS TO OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

Our music director, Jay Pierson, DMA, will leave Old First Presbyterian Church in September, after thirteen years of outstanding service in several roles. He and his partner Michael will be moving to North Carolina, where he taught before coming to San Francisco. Jay will conduct a final choral concert at 4:00 pm on Sunday afternoon, September 9, including several of his original compositions. (Mark your calendars now!)

Jay came to Old First Presbyterian Church as baritone soloist and section leader in 1999, and served in that role through 2006. He was baptized and joined the church in 2000. Beginning in 2003 he substituted for then music director Ken Matthews whenever Ken was traveling or ill. Jay became the interim music director in fall 2006 and was hired as music director in January 2008.

Jay has composed more than sixty-five introits, anthems, and hymn arrangements for the choir, which also premiered his *Missa Concordia* (with soloists and chamber orchestra) in October 2009. That concert, which also featured half a dozen compositions by Felix Mendelssohn, was recorded in a CD; he also oversaw production of a CD of Christmas carols in 2011.

Beside his work at Old First Presbyterian Church, Jay has an active private teaching practice and was on the music faculty at Santa Clara University from 2004 to 2007. He has applied his two degrees in voice performance from the Eastman School of Music to helping improve the vocal technique of our mostly amateur choir. His extensive contacts in the local music community have brought many excellent musicians, recently including the *Colla Voce* ensemble, to sing or perform with the choir. He conducted the inaugural concert of the Bay Area Rainbow Symphony in 2008 at Old First Presbyterian Church.

The congregation will have a chance to celebrate Jay's leadership and his many gifts to us in a reception following worship on his final Sunday, September 16. Please plan to be there and let Jay know what the music has meant to you! –*Pam Byers*

OTHER NEWS

2012 General Assembly Strongly Adopts Overture from Old First

The Presbyterian Church met in General Assembly for ten days in Pittsburgh in early July. Susan Ashton attended as an observer; I attended as the official Overture Advocate for an overture from San Francisco (and six other presbyteries), which our session had originally sent to our presbytery.

While there was plenty of high drama, perhaps the biggest news is what was *not* dramatic. At every General Assembly since Old First Presbyterian Church sent its first overture in 1996 (the assembly that gave us “fidelity and chastity”), the highest tension has surrounded the Church Orders Committee. This year, although that committee considered a dozen or so ingenious efforts to re-instate “fidelity and chastity” in one way or another, there were relatively few observers occupying the 300 chairs set up for us, and only 19 people signed up to address the committee. (In past years it's been more like 200.)

After thoughtful discussion, the committee rejected all efforts to go backwards on ordination standards and instead adopted by a two-thirds vote the overture we sent. The assembly itself also defeated retrograde actions and by a more than two-to-one margin passed our overture and requested that it be reported to every presbytery.

The overture which has now been strongly adopted as policy by the General Assembly states the obvious fact that faithful, Bible-believing Presbyterians “hold different views about what the Scriptures teach concerning the morality of committed, same-gender relationships.” Acknowledging that the PC(USA) “does not have one interpretation of Scripture in this matter,” it asks the church to “commit ourselves to continue respectful dialogue with those who hold differing convictions, to welcome one another for God's glory, and not to vilify those whose convictions we believe to be in error.”

The passion that in former years has gone to the Church Orders Committee, this year was spent in the Civil Unions and Marriage Committee. A closely divided committee sent to the floor a recommendation to amend the church's constitution to change the definition of marriage from “a civil contract between a man and a woman” to “a covenant between two people.” After lengthy floor debate, the Assembly voted instead to undertake (another!) two-year study of the meaning of Christian marriage. Sadly, neither the committee nor the assembly paid much attention to the overtures from fourteen presbyteries asking for a ruling to permit pastors to conduct same-gender civil marriages where they are legal, without fear of prosecution in the church courts.

The assembly took action on two Confessions (the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belhar Confession), re-envisioning presbyteries and synods, immigration, gun control, economic justice, and a host of other issues. The other highest profile discussions concerned peace and justice in the Mideast. By a three-vote margin, the Assembly voted against divestment in four companies that (many believe) aid in the Israeli

occupation of the Palestinian Territories; however, it did approve boycotts of Israeli products from the occupied territories.

An admirably brief round-up can be found in a report prepared for congregations by the Presbyterian News Service, which you can download at the website below. Copies of that report are still available from the church office.

<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/publications/assemblyinbrief-individualpages.pdf>

New on OFPC's Website: www.oldfirst.org

Check out the home page at www.oldfirst.org to see the newest outreach effort from the Community Building Committee. A dozen and half members and friends of Old First Presbyterian Church talk about why they come to the church and what they find here. We hope the videos will draw others to come!

We'll record more videos later in the fall to add to the site; so think what you'd like to say! Warm thanks to Barry Clagett for the idea, to Chris Burt for the excellent videography, and to webspinner Kathleen Wulf for making it work!

Search Committee for New Music Director

With Jay Pierson's resignation, a Music Director Search Committee is looking for a new music director. They are inviting local referrals and advertising in appropriate music publications, including local and national AGO (American Guild of Organists) lists. They've already heard from several possible candidates.

If you have suggestions of candidates to consider, or if you have ideas of qualities they should be looking for, please speak with George Becker, chair, or any member of the committee, including Chris Burt, Julia Highlen, Dan Joraanstad, and Robin Raborn.

EMV: Every Member Visitation, Part 2

As part of last year's EMV effort we received many suggestions from our membership regarding Old First Presbyterian Church and its programs.

The Elders and Deacons are revisiting these suggestions over the remainder of the year :

- **Christian Education** - Adult Education: more Scripture and Christ-centered, small groups, study group to attract interfaith families, tailor programs based on the labor force, events/discussions after church over lunch or evenings, Website blog discussions could attract seekers to learn about OFC.
- **Communications** - Website testimonials by members (being done-see the website !!) more interactive options for the broader community to learn more about us
- **Community Programs** - Saturday Food Pantry concerns as well as positive results, Welcome's impact on Old First; the level of funding and its physical effects on building.
- **Fund raising** - Silent Auction, Gift Market
- **Future of Old First Presbyterian Church and the PC(USA)** - Need to retain visitors and younger people, be welcoming at coffee hour, join/do activities with other congregations with assistance from Presbytery contacts, less focus on being Presbyterian and more focus Christ's message, "Who we are" just the age groups most-represented now, 40s, 50s, 60s and up – important to recognize this! More-colorful and informative brochure in the pew racks can help to inform and attract Concerts audiences. Return to assigning "Buddies" of similar interests to new members. Use Pastor Henderson's sabbatical time this summer to discover more about "who we are" in order to continue moving forward

- **Music and Worship** - Praise dancers in worship, Taizé music, orchestra more often, traditional hymns, guitar accompaniment; new hymns and occasional use of appropriate “pop” music, responsive readings, stand when the Gospel is read, variety of current and older hymns for congregational singing
- **Ordination** - Need to acknowledge everyone’s opinions.
- **Seniors Services** - Senior Center funding, volunteers and increasing attendance, Keeping our senior members and visitors connected
- **Social gatherings** - Dinner/lunch circles, parish tea parties, church picnic, all-church retreat (now scheduled for September 28-30 at Mount Hermon Conference Center), gatherings at members’ homes for issues discussions; and welcoming potential new members.
- **Youth Programs** - Involve youth in assisting in Sunday School and in worship.

Fall Stewardship Campaign

Next month we will introduce our Fall Stewardship Campaign through on group events held members' homes. We are looking forward to an exciting fall.

SF Food Bank Contributions Needed

During the month of September, please bring canned fruit to contribute to the San Francisco Food Bank. There is a barrel in the narthex for donated food.

DeCycles Extend Thanks to OFPC

On behalf of all the members of the deCycles, we express our sincere gratitude for accommodating us this year on our Journey of Peace. [Old First Presbyterian Church housed the deCycles riders at the start of their journey, June 18-20, 2012.] More than sixty student cyclists pedaled their bicycles 2,050 miles in 23-riding days from San Francisco to Bloomington, IN. This bicycle trip was a unique and significant accomplishment for these teenagers... These courageous adventurers pushed through deserts, they climbed the continental divides, and pedaled triple digit distances in triple digit heat... Their journey was made possible and much easier because of your church. Your generous hospitality and love will be remembered forever. The deCycles and their families would like to express our deepest gratitude to you and your congregation for hosting them overnight.

Norm & Cricket Houze, deCycles Directors
Bloomington, IN, deCycles website: www.decyclesindiana.org

Hi, my name is Calvin Anderson... I'm about to start my sophomore year of high school and I have already experienced an adventure of a lifetime. I cannot thank you enough for your incredible contribution ... –Calvin

Hello, my name is Kaleb Rich-Harris, I am one of the many Decycles Riders that you showed grace to by letting us spend the night in your church and cooking for us as well.. Thank you for... giving me an educational experience that I will carry on in my life... –Kaleb

My daughter was one of many young people that you hosted this summer as they passed through your town as part of DeCycles, on their way back to Bloomington. I wanted to thank you very much for the kindness and hospitality you shared with them. It was a life-changing experience and our whole family appreciates your support! –Jodi Moon, Teacher of Mathematics

I wanted to thank you personally for the hospitality you showed the whole deCycles group on our cross country adventure this summer. It would not have been a success without your willingness to welcome us into your community. We witnessed the true Christian spirit in action. –Dwight Huffman

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER, 2012

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel Reading
Sep 02	Ordinary 22	Song of Sol 2:8-2	Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9	James 1:17-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
Sep 09	Ordinary 23	Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23	Psalm 125	James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17	Mark 7:27-37
Sep 16	Ordinary 24	Proverbs 1:20-33	Psalm 19	James 3:1-12	Mark 8:27-38
Sep 23	Ordinary 25	Proverbs 31:10-31	Psalm 1	James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a	Mark 9:30-37
Sep 30	Ordinary 26	Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22	Psalm 124	James 5:13-20	Mark 9:38-50

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Saturday	09/01/12	No Interfaith Food Pantry
Monday	09/03/12	Labor Day Holiday, Church Office Closed, No Doris Krauss Senior Center
Sunday	09/09/12	Children's Education Begins, Deacons' Ice Cream Social, Afternoon Choir Concert 4:00 pm
Saturday	09/15/12	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon, Munro Room
Tuesday	09/25/12	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room
Friday	09/28/12	Old First in the Redwoods: All-Church Retreat, Mt. Hermon

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, 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, funding requests, special events; Sarah Taber, memorial Receptions and Meals; Horngheng Tu, Technology