

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

February 2013

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

The Season of Lent



Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 13. The people and choir of St. Luke's Episcopal Church will join us and our choir for worship at our church that evening at 7:00 pm. During Holy Week we will journey to their church for worship on Maundy Thursday, March 28.

The Lenten journey from the ashes of death to resurrected life begins on the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday. This day is a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. This first day of Lent reminds us that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ. The first step of this journey calls us to acknowledge and to confront our mortality both individually and corporately. In many traditions, this is symbolized through the imposition of ashes — placing a cross on one's forehead. During the imposition of ashes these words are repeated again and again — “You are dust, and to dust you shall return” — which remind us that we are mortal, finite creatures. (See Genesis 3:19.) However, the cross of ashes also reminds us that we are made in the image of God and marked as God's own.

On Ash Wednesday we begin our trek through the Lenten desert toward Easter. I have to admit, I often long for a day, a time to start anew, to follow the ways of God with commitment and intention. For company on this trek, a devotional booklet, *Called to Life, Called to Love: Lenten Reflections from the Works of Henri J.M. Nouwen*, will be available at worship on February 10. Or you can get the Presbyterian Daily Prayer app and have psalms, scripture readings from the Daily Lectionary and prayers sent to your iPhone, iPad or other device each day. (Visit www.pcusa.org for more information and downloads.)

So let's begin our Lenten journey together, let's start the pilgrimage toward Easter with worship on Ash Wednesday. I ask that you pray for the church, for the staff, for each other as we enter the season of Lent with expectation and hope that God will indeed work something anew in us.

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Being a pastor is mix of the holy and the practical. As many of you know we have been searching for many months for a music director for Old First Presbyterian Church. We are thrilled that Richard Benfield has said yes to us and to God's call to be our music director. Those of you who have been in worship during the past three months have heard Richard's skill on the organ and the results of his work with our choir as our interim music director. You can learn more about Richard by reading his résumé inside this issue of *Shared Life*.

Peace, Maggi

NEW DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Résumé: Richard Benefield, DMA

Richard Benefield, an Alabama native, was educated at Baylor University (B.M., M.M.) and received the first Doctor of Musical Arts degree ever awarded by the New England Conservatory of Music. His organ teachers include George McSpadden, Joyce Jones, and James David Christie. He studied conducting with Thomas H. Dunn and Helmut Rilling. His singing teachers included Richard A. Robinson, Berton Coffin, and Shirlee Emmons.

In more than thirty years as an active church musician, Richard has held various positions in Alabama, Texas, Georgia, and New England. In Boston he was baritone soloist at the historic King's Chapel under the leadership of Daniel Pinkham. He was organist and director of music for St. Peter's Church, Osterville, MA, for St. Stephen's Church, Providence, RI, and for Barrington Congregational Church, Barrington, RI.

Richard first met composer Daniel Pinkham when he was engaged to sing the leading baritone role in the Southwestern U.S. premiere of Pinkham's chancel opera, *The Passion of Judas*. Through a long and fruitful relationship with Pinkham, Richard has been a singer, conductor and organist in numerous first performances of Pinkham's music, including the premiere of Pinkham's Sonata No. 3 for organ and strings, commissioned for the dedication of the organ at St. Peter's Church, Osterville, and the premiere of *The Garden of the Muses* (nine movements for solo organ) commissioned by Harvard University for the celebration of Mozart's 250th birthday. Richard played the world premiere of the latter work at Harvard, with additional performances in Boston, cities in New Hampshire and Texas, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in New York City and at Old First Presbyterian Church in San Francisco as part of the Old First Concerts series.

Richard has written on the music of Daniel Pinkham for *The American Organist*. He is also the author and editor of *Motets for One Voice by Franck, Gounod and Saint-Saëns: The Organ-Accompanied Solo Motet in Nineteenth Century France*, published in 2003 by A-R Editions in its series "Recent Researches in Musicology."

Before migrating west to San Francisco to become founding Executive Director of The Walt Disney Family Museum, he was Deputy Director of the Harvard University Art Museums and Keeper of the D.A. Flentrop organ in Harvard's Adolphus Busch Hall—the instrument made famous by the late E. Power Biggs. In September 2012, he was named Deputy Director of Museums for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco incorporating the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, the second museum where Benefield has worked that has a world-famous pipe organ. He now oversees the care and programming of the great Spreckles organ at the Legion of Honor.

Benefield is married to John F. Kunowski, who is a financial services professional with Fidelity Investments, and they live on Russian Hill with their lagotto romagnolo named Rupert.

NEW EDUCATION FUND ESTABLISHED AT OFPC

A family at Old First Presbyterian Church has given a significant gift to the church to support, inspire, and enhance both children's and adult education. The givers have said that the gift is *...in honor and in memory of our parents. Our parents were strong believers in and supports of the central role of education in individual lives, including Christian education. We, too firmly believe that Christian education constitutes a core mission of the church, our church, providing nurture and enhancing conviction in the Christian faith, provident spiritual guidance for all members to the church, which in turn invigorates membership, participation and support for the church.*

Pastor Maggi adds,

The gift comes out of the sense that the old models and set patterns of education that have served us so well in the past decades no longer fit our 21st century urban church. This gift gives us the opportunity to try new kinds of education approaches, to offer classes and programs, bring in speakers and teachers, and do shared projects with other churches. Our desire is that we will deepen and grow in faith and spiritual nurture. This gift gives us the means to dream, to vision, to explore, to try new things so that we can find a way to meet the spiritual hunger in this church in this city. I am just plain excited to see who this gift will inspire us.

Thanks be to God for the generous givers who may inspire others by their generosity!

ADULT EDUCATION SERIES BEGINS FEBRUARY 17

Lenten Short Story Series

Have you ever felt trapped by past decisions and unable to move into the future? Are you unlucky and feel like that is ruining your life? Do you feel as if you washed up shipwrecked on an island and are waiting to be discovered? Are you a Misfit? Can you be forgiven?

These are some of the questions explored in the short stories we will read in an adult education series for Lent. Diane Molberg and Erwin Barron will be co-teaching this Sunday morning class beginning, February 17 at 9:30 am in the Munro Room. Join us as we discuss the theological and philosophical implications of these famous, literary works. Copies of the stories will be available at coffee hour or on line via computer links you can find on Old First Presbyterian Church's website.

Dates

February 17	“Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway
February 24	“The Rocking Horse Winner” by D.H. Lawrence
March 3	“The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” by Gabriel García Márquez
March 10	“A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor

Website links

Ernest Hemmingway	http://www.has.vcu.edu/eng/webtext/hills/hills.htm
D.H. Lawrence	http://www.dowse.com/fiction/Lawrence.html
Gabriel García Márquez	http://www.utdallas.edu/~aargyros/hansomest.htm
Flannery O’Connor	http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~surette/goodman.html

NEWS

New Food Pantry Coordinators

Old First Presbyterian is glad to announce that Diane Middleton with the help of Logan Donaldson and Kim Pham with the help of Jian Wang have agreed to serve as food pantry coordinators for our church. Let's keep Diane and Kim in our prayers as they help us serve the hungry in our neighborhood. We also thank for the past help of Betsy Chiao and Saskia deVries.

Thanks from Leota Parker

I would like to thank the Church members who attended my watercolor show and especially Betty Voris for giving their Christmas party there. My watercolors were well received and I was able to raise \$50 in tithes for the Church. Everyone who attended had a good time and I was able to become better acquainted with several of the Church members which was a big plus. My son did the planning and was able to obtain two rooms of the McGuire Real Estate company to display my watercolors to great advantage. -Leota

Christmas Joy and Christmas Eve Offerings

Old First members and visitors contributed \$566 to the Christmas Joy offering this year. For more than 70 years, Presbyterians have given generously at Christmas to support the unmet needs of families who have devoted their lives to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA). This year's offering is being shared equally by the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, which provides critical assistance to Presbyterian church workers and their families, and Presbyterian-affiliated racial ethnic schools and colleges, which enable students to develop their gifts and find their calling.

The Christmas Eve offering of \$590 was split, half going to support the San Francisco Interfaith Council Winter Shelter Program and half to the Presbyterian Disaster Relief Program for Hurricane Sandy.

E-Scrip: Super-Easy Way to Support OFPC

E-scrip is a program under which participating stores credit a percent or two of your purchases, using credit cards you register, to Old First Presbyterian Church. Each store has slightly different rules and contribution limits; but they can add up, especially if lots of us sign up! Safeway, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Nordstrom, and many other businesses – both stores and on-line retailers – participate.

It is very easy to sign up. Go to <http://www.escrip.com> and select the "Welcome" tab. The first question they'll ask is what organization you want to benefit. Old First Presbyterian Church is already registered in the program. You provide your other information and your purchases will automatically start accruing dollars for Old First.

Note: If you used to participate, please note that you need to renew your membership from time to time. If you think you're already participating, go to the "My eScrip" tab and it may well prompt you to reaffirm your participation.

Larkin Street Youth Services Holds Training and Staff Meetings at OFPC

Beginning last fall, Larkin Street Youth Services has been holding frequent training sessions and bi-monthly staff meetings in the Fellowship Hall at Old First Presbyterian. Last summer Marilyn Campbell put Larkin Street staff in contact with Brad Peterson, Old First Presbyterian Church office administrator. Regularly scheduled two-day training workshops for Larkin Street staff began in late September. In December Larkin Street held their first afternoon staff meeting at the church and have now booked the Fellowship Hall for all six staff meetings in 2013. Thus Old First Presbyterian Church contributes to Larkin Street's mission by making meeting space available at an affordable price and keeps our historic church building a busy part of our neighborhood. Leadership at Larkin Street is thankful to have this additional meeting space so close to their office, and Brad and Fernando González, Old First Presbyterian Church's sexton, have appreciated Larkin Street's friendliness and responsible use of the building: A win-win relationship.

LOOKING AHEAD

Annual Meeting and Lunch, March 3

After worship on Sunday, March 3, the congregation will hold its annual meeting in the sanctuary. Lunch will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

OGHS: Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

Since 1949 Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with those in need. Our gifts assist those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and help to empower the poor and oppressed. Watch for information and OGHS envelopes in March.

Our undesignated gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing support the following agencies and programs:

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** receives 36% of undesignated gifts. *Community Arise* is a groundbreaking program that brings major faith community domestic disaster training under a common umbrella curriculum. The curriculum is appropriate for a wide range of audiences: potential volunteers; faith-based and secular community groups; disaster response groups (long-term recovery, pre-disaster planning, or immediate post disaster); and denominational and community decision-makers.
- **Presbyterian Hunger Program** receives 32% of undesignated gifts to witness to the healing love of Christ and to bring hope to communities and individuals struggling with hunger. Our gifts will help to end hunger worldwide.
- **The Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People** receives 32 % of undesignated gifts, has approved grants totaling \$215,852 to 14 self-help projects in the United States. Projects range from a small farming cooperative seeking to build hoop houses in which group members can grow crops almost year-round, thus enabling them to compete in the market in Watha, NC, to a project that will focus on advocacy against worker exploitation in the community and education of immigrants by providing tools to improve members language and job skills in Springdale, AR. Grants enable members and non-members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to form partnerships with economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people in order to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

**REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY:
THE SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS IN FEBRUARY, 2013**

Date	Day	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel Reading
Feb 3	4th Sunday after Epiphany	Jeremiah 1:4-10	Psalm 71:1-6	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	Luke 4:21-30
Feb 10	Transfiguration Sunday	Exodus 34:29-35	Psalm 99	2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2	Luke 9:28-36, (37-43)
Feb 13 7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2,12-17 or Isaiah 58:1- 12	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Feb 17	1st Sunday of Lent	Deuteronomy 26:1-11	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16	Romans 10:8b-13	Luke 4:1-13
Feb 24	2nd Sunday of Lent	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18	Psalm 27	Philippians 3:17-4:1	Luke 13:31-35 or 9:28-36

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Sunday	February 10	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30 pm, Munro Room
Wednesday	February 13	Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm
Monday	February 18	Presidents' Day, Church Office closed
Tuesday	February 22	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room

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; Bill Feister, Christian education; Gregory Free, Treasurer; Jeanne Kirkwood, clerk of session; Mary Russell, mission and giving; Randy Smith, Steve Taber; operations; Betty Voris, community-building.

Board of Deacons

Nina Berg, flowers/memorial donations; Carol Carter, funding requests, communion cleanup; Samuel Cheng; Joy Crosser; 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; Horngsheng Tu, Technology.