

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

October 2013

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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

As most of you know, the Session decided to have a seminary intern from San Francisco Presbyterian Seminary for the year. It has been over a decade since we have had an intern. We are using a new model and sharing one full-time intern with St. John's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco. I am convinced that we are just the kind of thriving, urban churches that ought to be training future pastors. We are stepping out in faith on funding for the intern position and ask that you listen thoughtfully and prayerfully for wisdom during this year's Stewardship season as you decide on your pledge for 2014. I want you to commit yourself to praying for David and for his work here and at St. Johns. Please tell him your name more than once and make him feel like he is a part of Old First. Don't assume he knows why or how we do ministry here, so share with him, educate him and be open to his questions, because in his question we may also learn and begin to see our ministry in a whole new light. Invite David to lunch after church, we know how to eat here. Here are a few words from David Altshuler. -Maggi

### **From David Altshuler**

Pastor Maggi asked me if I could say a little something about myself, why I'm excited to be at Old First, what I hope to bring to Old First, and how you might be able to support me as your incoming intern.

First, thank you so much for your generous warm welcome! It was a refreshing surprise. I noticed that many of you described Old First Presbyterian Church as an eclectic, committed group of people trying to carry out God's will as best as you can understand it. What I find unique and brilliant about your self-definition – and other congregations' definitions for that matter – is that we really are a group of people that wouldn't normally associate with one another. It seems that our desire for God makes it possible. The irony, I believe, is that it is this unique circumstance that gives us the ability to influence change in our relationships, ourselves, and in the world.

I grew up across the bay in Mill Valley. If you were around in 1970, some of you might remember the song "Mill Valley" that was recorded by a third grade class from Strawberry Point Elementary School. Just to set the record straight, I was a third grader then, but at Park School, and wasn't involved in the recording. But I can imagine that I might have responded affirmatively in the years it became popular – anything to get attention.

I found the church in my early 40's after a long career in corporate America that left me wanting in meaning and purpose. What I discovered about myself, however, was that I had a passion for people, authenticity, and depth of relationship. I even imagined becoming a talk show host or a storyteller at one point because they both contained relationship as a central element of their existence. But they weren't to be. When I told my sister that I might become a chaplain, she said, "Of course you're going to be a chaplain. That's what you're about." It was an amazing statement from a person who wasn't religious or interested in religion, and was later repeated by number of other people in my life.

So, I discovered chaplaincy, a vocation with a description that's come closest to a purpose I could describe for myself. It utilizes all the principal elements of my curiosity and joy: one-on-one and small group relations, listening, God, storytelling, authenticity, meaning making, and intimacy. Most of the other occupations I tried contained some of these elements, but none had them at their core.

Why am I excited about an internship Old First Presbyterian Church? I really didn't know if I would be excited when I started. I met with Maggi over the summer and shared dinner with a few session members, too. Each time I experienced a sense of authenticity followed by gratitude. That pattern seems to continue. For example, I really appreciated that you allowed me to fumble around on the chancel last Sunday. It helped me relax and realize that I can make mistakes and be a beginner at Old First. I suppose that's a great start to the question. I'll let you know how it turns out!

What do I hope to bring to Old First? As a newcomer to the church environment, I relate to other new or potentially new members. So, I hope that I might offer some fresh perspectives that might assist the church in furthering its desire to be a welcoming, inclusive, and healing place for anyone looking for a place of restoration and hope. I also hope I can offer my role as a chaplain to anyone who would like a home or hospital visit. Jesus, suffering on the cross, said to the other sufferer, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." It's quite a metaphor for chaplaincy.

If you're interested in supporting me on my journey, just continue to do what you've already started. Recognize that I'm a beginner at Old First, expect my human frailties, and take the risk of sharing your candid observations and suggestions. In return, I will do my best to hear you and keep my natural defenses in check.

Thank you again for your generous welcome. I sincerely look forward to my internship at Old First Presbyterian Church.

See you soon!  
David Altshuler

david@oldfirst.org

## **DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE**

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There are three Sundays in October and November when we remember things important to the Presbyterian Church (USA). One is **World Communion Sunday, October 6**. Celebrated on the first Sunday in October each year, World Communion Sunday was started in 1933, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by Hugh Thompson Kerr, who had been moderator of the General Assembly. It spread, and was especially emphasized during World War II to emphasize that we are one church. We also usually gather our Peacemaking Offering on World Communion Sunday. This offering is divided among the General Assembly, and our congregation, presbytery and synod for their own particular peacemaking efforts.

**Reformation Sunday** is observed on the Sunday closest to October 31 (**October 27** this year). This was the date when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses about church reform, which was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

On **All Saints' Sunday, November 3**, we will remember church members, friends and loved ones who have died since All Saints' Sunday last year. To include someone's name in the remembrance, you can fill out the insert in the Sunday bulletins and place it in the offering plate, or you may inform the church office by E-mail (brad@oldfirst.org), by phone (415-776-5552), or by mail. (Let the church office know the person's name, birth and death dates, and relationship to you - no later than Thursday, October 24.)

All of these days are important to us: On Reformation Sunday, we consider how we can best transform and reconcile the ways we live out our call to be Christ's church. On World Communion Sunday, we think of the living church – our friends, our family, fellow Christians, former members of Old First Presbyterian Church who have moved away – all worshiping and celebrating communion on the same day. On All Saints' Sunday, we remember the church triumphant, the church at rest – those who have died, but who no less than we, are members of Christ's body.

## **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

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### **Congregational Meeting to Elect Nominating Committee, October 13**

After worship on October 13, the congregation will meet to elect a Nominating Committee to identify candidates for election of elders and deacons. A slate of Nominating Committee members will be presented and voted on. Once elected, this committee will begin discerning candidates for both the session (elders) and the board of deacons for the class of 2016. The congregation will then elect members of the session and of the board of deacons in January.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **Alberto Barrios Children's Library Open House: A New Look and Book Fund Raising Event, October 6**

Celebrate the renovated Alberto Barrios Children's Library on Sunday, October 6, immediately after worship. The room was repainted by a visiting youth group this past summer and has been furnished with a new round table and chairs – you will like the rearrangement of the room.

At the same time, there will be a book fund raising event to support the continual growth of the book collection. A list of recommended titles for purchase will be provided. This will be a time to view and support the Library.

### **Interfaith Food Pantry, October 12**

Old First Presbyterian Church is responsible for staffing the Interfaith Food Pantry on Saturday, October 12. Please contact Joy Crosser ([jrcrosser@gmail.com](mailto:jrcrosser@gmail.com)), if you can help.

### **San Francisco Presbyterian Youth Group, October 12**

The new group for all Presbyterian youth in San Francisco meets once a month. "Homeless Immersion" on Saturday, October 12, will be our next all-day event. The youth will spend the day helping a variety of homeless aid programs and will have an educational tour guided by Welcome ([www.welcomeministry.org](http://www.welcomeministry.org)). That evening they will see what living on the streets is like.

### **San Francisco Night Ministry Fundraiser, October 19**

In celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the San Francisco Night Ministry will hold its fall fundraiser at St. Mark's Lutheran Church Saturday, October 19, at 5:30 pm. There will be a dinner, silent auction, and live auction. Contact [www.sfnightministry.org](http://www.sfnightministry.org) for tickets.

### **Stewardship Season Begins October 20**

Stewardship Season at Old First Presbyterian Church begin on Sunday, October 20. Each fall we consider our pledge of support for the coming year. Watch the Sunday worship bulletins for further information.

## FALL BACK!

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### **Daylight Savings Time Ends, November 3**

Daylight Savings Time ends November 3, and we return to standard time. Please remember to set your clocks back before you retire for the night.

### **Something Greater Workshop Series, October 6 and 13**

This series is led by Jeanne Choy Tate, author of *Something Greater*. It is helpful, but not required to have read the book before attending.

*From the Interdependence of Biblical Families to the Independent Individual, October 6, Chapters 2 and 3*

- What can our individualistic culture learn from the interdependence of Biblical families?
- How did American culture become so individualistic?
- How does America's individualism impact our faith and Christian values?

From the beginning of the Biblical story in Genesis, Yahweh enters into history through families. Hebrew households stood at the center of the society and the whole community took responsibility for the religious upbringing of children. When Jesus came, he welcomed people into an even broader understanding of family relationships at the center of faith. Yet, even though the church began in family households, as Western culture has developed, family households and caregivers now have little influence in the public arena of civic life. Influenced by a psychology of individualism that promotes "freeing" children to be unique individuals, many parents choose not to pass their faith along to their children.

*Claiming a Heritage of Faith in an Individualistic Culture, October 13, Chapters 6 and 7*

- How does culture influence a child's concept of God?
- You talk of faith as a living story, but aren't our traditions supposed to be unchanging?
- How do the values of faith communities provide a balance to the individualism of mainstream culture?

American Christians sometimes confuse their identity as a people of faith with national identity. The myth that America is a Christian nation persists despite the fact that faith is often ridiculed in popular culture. When Christians are strongly identified with the mainstream culture, they fail to see its impact their faith and values. If the church wishes to maintain its counter-cultural heritage of justice and healing, Christians must be willing to critique their relationship with mainstream culture.

### **Hold on to Your Ballot! October 27**

Bring your voters' pamphlet and questions to a meeting after church on Sunday, October 27. Betty Voris has agreed to lead a discussion on the various measures we will all be voting on November 5.

The dueling measures regarding 8 Washington, a development project proposed for the corner of Washington Street and the Embarcadero can be confusing. Learn how the measures got on the ballot and why. Judge for yourself which, if either, measure is worth your vote. Christian Education is again sponsoring this event, which was a big success when we held it prior to the last election. Hope to see you there.

**REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER, 2013**

Date	Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Psalm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel Reading
Oct 06	Ordinary 27	Lamentations 1:1-6	Lamentations 3:19-26 or Psalm 137	2 Timothy 1:14	Luke 17:5-10
Oct 13	Ordinary 28	Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7	66:1-12	2 Timothy 2:8-15	Luke 17:11-19
Oct 20	Ordinary 29	Jeremiah 31:27-34	119:97-104	2 Timothy 3:14-4;5	Luke 18:1-8
Oct 27	Ordinary 30	Joel 2:23-32	65	1 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18	Luke 18:9-14

**OTHER DATES TO NOTE**

Sunday	Oct 06	World Communion Sunday
Sunday	Oct 06	Something Greater: Adult Education discussion, 12:30 pm Munro Room
Saturday	Oct 12	Interfaith Food Pantry Staffed by Old First Presbyterian Church
Saturday	Oct 12	Community Dinner, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall,
Sunday	Oct 13	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30 pm, Munro Room,
Sunday	Oct 13	Something Greater: Adult Education discussion, 12:30 pm Fellowship Hall
Saturday	Oct 19	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Tuesday	Oct 22	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room,
Saturday	Oct 26	Community Dinner, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall,
Sunday	Oct 27	Reformation Sunday
Sunday	Nov 03	All Saints' Sunday

**The Officers of Old First Presbyterian Church**

**Session**

George Becker, personnel; Chris Burt, worship; Pam Byers, community-building; Barry Claggett, finance; Bill Feister, Christian Education; Greg Free, treasurer; Jeanne Kirkwood, clerk of session; Jean Olson, mission and giving; Mary Russell, mission and giving; Randy Smith, planning; Sally Spencer, at-large; Steve Taber, operations; Betty Voris, community-building; Priscilla Yu, Christian education

**Board of Deacons**

Nina Berg, Carol Carter, Samuel Cheng, Joy Crosser, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Dana Nojima, Leota Parker, Glen Potter, AnnieScott Rogers, Sarah Taber, Horngsheng Tu