

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

December 2014

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

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

Church Facebook Page: [facebook.com/Old First Presbyterian Church](http://facebook.com/Old First Presbyterian Church)

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

## MAGGI'S MUSINGS

The season of Advent, a time of reflection and preparation before Christmas, begins this year on November 30. If we look and listen to the secular calendar or store windows, we could easily think that Christmas is already upon us and that it has little to do with the birth of Jesus Christ. But we, as disciples of Jesus, work and live by a different calendar. We seek to walk in the way of Jesus – not just during this season – but 365 days a year.

The season of Advent is a gift for refocusing ourselves, for setting ourselves on the path towards Jesus anew. Indeed it is a challenge to keep Christ at the center of our lives and perhaps especially amid everything that takes place in December. Yet, let's see if Advent can be a gift to help us to seek simplicity in all things and nurture our inward faith for outward living.

We are invited to go into Advent with joy, to let go of anxiety and to take on a spiritual practice which embraces simplicity and the meaning of the season. Here are some ways to start:

- ◆ Commit to using the **Advent Calendar** called *Decluttering for Christmas*. (Advent calendars called “Decluttering for Christmas” available at church or can be mailed to you. Simply call the church office. A one dollar donation per calendar is appreciated.)
- ◆ Use the devotional at [www.d365.org](http://www.d365.org). The site is the work of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Episcopal Church. It is written primarily for youth and young adults, but I think is great for all ages.
- ◆ Look at the **Bible readings** for this month. (See the table on the last page of *Shared Life*.) Read the scriptures for each Sunday during the prior week. Let the scriptures work on you and in you during the week. You'll hear them woven into worship on Sunday and experience them differently, more deeply than you might have.
- ◆ Take the bulletin home and pray for those listed in the **prayers of the people** each week.
- ◆ Check out our **Facebook** page and see what poems or insight on Advent which I will put up during Advent.

Frankly, I need the focus of Advent this year. I will be praying for you, and I hope you will be praying for me, as we all seek to develop a life-giving, life-clarifying spiritual practice this year. I will leave you with a poem by the pastor and poet Ruth Burgess who often points me in the right direction.

Peace,  
Pastor Maggi

## Bright Star-Maker God

Bright star-maker God,  
travel with us  
through Advent  
shine into our  
dark corners

lead us into  
ways of justice  
warm us  
with joy and wonder  
bring us  
to new birth.

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## **FAREWELL FROM RICHARD BENEFIELD, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

In the play, which became a motion picture, *Amadeus*, the composer Antonio Salieri wonders whether God is laughing maliciously at him through the Mozart's music. In Peter Gay's brief, award-winning book about Mozart, he states something to the effect... "when Mozart plays God is laughing." Both remarks point to the fact that for some, if not many, great music has a profound ability to move and influence us. There are many, like myself, who have had such experiences, where great pieces of music well-performed have moved us in otherwise unexplainable ways. Is that God speaking through the music?

It has been my honor, privilege, and pleasure to serve Old First Presbyterian Church as interim organist, interim organist-choir director, and, ultimately, Director of Music. I feel I have been a part of this community since my arrival in San Francisco in 2008, when I was given practice privileges on the organ, was the occasional substitute organist, and played a full-length organ recital for Old First Concerts. The most memorable experiences that I will take with me, however, are those involving performances of great pieces of music by our wonderful, dedicated choir. Highlights include Randall Thompson's *Alleluia*, portion of Handel's *Messiah* performed through the Sundays in Lent, and extra-special music on Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday. On a recent Sunday, during a sublime performance of William Byrd's *Agnes Dei* from the Mass for Four Voices, it was as though the congregation were breathing and singing with the choir on every note. At the conclusion of the piece, there was absolute silence. Was God speaking to us through that great music? –Richard Benefield

### **Join us to Honor Richard Benefield, December 21**

Come to worship and coffee hour on Sunday, December 21, when we will thank Richard Benefield for his music leadership at Old First Presbyterian Church. Richard will continue with us through the end of December.

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Preparing the Church for Advent and Christmas, December 6**

Join the Worship Committee at noon, Saturday, December 6, to prepare the Sanctuary for Advent with poinsettias and greens.

### **Honoring Fernando González, December 7**

On Sunday, December 7, all are welcome to join a celebration of Fernando Gonzalez's service to Old First as its beloved sexton and custodian, which ended with his retirement in October. A potluck lunch will be



held in the Fellowship Hall, for which signups will begin at coffee hour on November 16. If you can't attend, please send messages for him to Lori Yamauchi ([lyamauchi@planning.ucsf.edu](mailto:lyamauchi@planning.ucsf.edu)) or send cards to the church office by December 4. Contributions of gift cards from Amazon, Safeway, or other retailers can be sent to the church.

### **Interfaith Food Pantry to be Staffed by OFPC, December 13**

Old First is responsible for providing the volunteer needed for the Interfaith Food Pantry December 13. Come help unload the truck, bring food inside, distribute and clean up later. Contact Dana Nojima or [foodpantry@oldfirst.org](mailto:foodpantry@oldfirst.org). This would be a great opportunity for the practice of giving of yourself in Advent and Christmas.

### **Children's Education through December 14, Resumes in January 2015**

Sunday Children's Education will continue through Sunday, December 14 and will resume after the New Year. "Time with Our Children" during worship will continue.

### **Deadline for Submissions for January 2015 Issue of *Shared Life*, December 14**

Please submit any articles or news for the January 2015 issue of *Shared Life* to Kristi Hoerauf, the editor, on or before Sunday, December 14.

**Christmas Eve Party, December 24, 5:00 to 7:30 pm at the Home of Steve and Sarah Taber**

Steve and Sarah Taber will host their annual Christmas Eve party for members and friends of Old First Presbyterian Church on December 24 before the 8:00 pm Christmas Eve worship service. The Taber's will provide ham, turkey and persimmon pudding. Guests are invited to bring appetizers, side dishes, deserts and beverages to share. Please contact Sarah or Steve to get directions and ideas for what you might bring: [sarah@sstabber.com](mailto:sarah@sstabber.com), [steve@sstabber.com](mailto:steve@sstabber.com), 415-771-3358.

**Christmas Eve Worship, December 24, 8:00 pm**

Join Old First Presbyterian Church for Christmas Eve worship on Wednesday, December 24 at 8:00 pm.

**Church Office Closed for Holidays, December 24 and 25, December 31 and January 1**

The church office will close at 1:00 pm on Christmas Eve, December 24, and all day on Christmas Day, December 25. The pattern will repeat on New Year's Eve, December 31, and on New Year's Day, January 1, 2015. Happy New Year!

**PLEDGES FOR 2015: YOU CAN STILL SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGE CARD**

Your pledge helps Old First Presbyterian Church plan for 2015 with wisdom. If you haven't submitted your pledge for the coming year, please do so. You can drop it in the offering on Sunday morning or send it to the church office by mail: Mark your envelope to the attention of Pledges 2015.

**MARY CULP, MAGGI HENDERSON HONORED BY SF INTERFAITH COUNCIL**

Old First Presbyterian Church member Mary Culp and our pastor, Maggi Henderson, were honored for their service by the San Francisco Interfaith Council at its 17th Annual Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast on Tuesday, November 25. Mary was recognized as one of the 1989 founders of the council, and Maggi was recognized for her service as current chair of the council's board. Among those at the breakfast were US Representative Nancy Pelosi and San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee.

**LARKIN STREET YOUTH CENTER: BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAYS FOR A HOMELESS YOUNG PERSON  
BY DECEMBER 7 AT OFPC, BY DECEMBER 12 AT LSYS**

Bring a Christmas gift to church and help Larkin Street Youth Services brighten the holidays for over 450 young people who stay in Larkin Street's emergency shelters and transitional living facilities or access Larkin Street's drop-in centers and programs.

Gifts do not need to be expensive. Everyday items are much needed. All gifts need to be **new and unwrapped**. Items on the young people's wish lists this year include:

Gifts	Personal Care Items	Clothing/Household
MP3 players	Shampoo/conditioner/lotions	Socks/underwear
Headphones	Deodorant, soap	Shoes/sneakers/flip flops
Bike helmets	Sewing kits and first aid kits	Hooded sweatshirts/jackets
Backpacks	Makeup kits/shaving sets	Business and business casual clothing
Gift cards	Brushes/combs	Ponchos/rain boots/umbrellas
Muni tokens/BART passes	Beauty products	Alarm clocks/watches/small appliances, flashlights
Purses/wallets	Hair dryers	Plates/bowls/dishes/pots/pans
2015 day planners/journals	Toothbrushes/toothpaste	Towels/sheets/blankets

You can drop a gift off at Old First Presbyterian Church on **Sunday, December 7**. Look for the Larkin Street Christmas gift box or check with Bill or Marilyn Campbell after worship. You may also take gifts to Larkin Street's Drop-In Center at 1138 Sutter Street, between Larkin and Polk, weekdays, 9:30-4:30, through **Friday, December 12**. Direct them to the attention of Jessie Backer.

## **CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING, DECEMBER 21**

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Each year, Presbyterians bring our Christmas Joy Offering, to give thanks, and critically-needed support, to eligible PC(USA) active and retired church workers and their families who are struggling with urgent financial needs and income and housing supplements to qualifying retired church workers and their families. The offering also provides grants for clergy vocational training. This offering is a wonderful opportunity for caring Presbyterians who have been blessed with the means to express their generosity and support important needs in the PC(USA) community.

Last year, this assistance program gave 1,324 grants totaling \$5.6 million to Presbyterian Church servants and their families. This program receives half of the Christmas Joy Offering.

The offering also gives vital financial aid that enables deserving students to attend Presbyterian-related racial and ethnic colleges and schools. These institutions, such as Stillman College, a four-year, liberal arts school in Tuscaloosa, AL, have provided quality education to people who have contributed immeasurably to the church at large and the world. Many of the students are the first in their family to attend college and come from low-to-moderate income families.

We can help sustain these important ministries though the Christmas Joy Offering on December 21 or by making an on-line gift at any time during the year. Learn more at [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org).

## **SUPPORT THE SF INTERFAITH COUNCIL WHEN YOU SHOP ON AMAZON**

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Support the San Francisco Interfaith Council when you shop on Amazon. Amazon will donate one-half percent (0.5%) of the price of your eligible *AmazonSmile* purchase to the San Francisco Interfaith Council. Support the council every time you shop at Amazon. It's easy! Simply bookmark and use the following link: [smile.amazon.com/ch/94-3152098](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-3152098). Thank you!

## **THE COLUMBARIUM SOCIETY: COLUMBARIUM UPDATE**

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The Columbarium Society of Old First Presbyterian Church, made up of all those who hold niches or plaques in the Columbarium, meets periodically, and its members are eligible to serve on the Columbarium Ministry Team of Old First. The society held its annual meeting this year on Sunday, October 26, in the church Library.

At the meeting, the Columbarium Ministry Team reported that in 2014 a plaque in memory of former Old First member John Wilber was inscribed and installed, as was a plaque for Shirley Buono, dedicated in her memory by Presbyterian Women. Also this year, Old First member Linda Reyder and her brother purchased niches for their parents, and the ashes of their father, Howard Reyder, were committed there in a private ceremony in October. A double stone, now inscribed for Howard Reyder, covers these two niches. The day after the meeting took place, our church suffered the loss of Pam Byers. Her ashes, too, will repose in the Columbarium.

The Columbarium Fund continues to repay the amount owed to the church for final construction costs. We were able to repay \$4,000 this year, leaving a modest balance and moving us close to retiring this debt.

There are many reasons to choose the Old First Columbarium, some of which were shared among the attendees at the October 26 meeting: that it is a beautiful space; that as San Franciscans many of us are far from our roots and from the family cemetery plot; that we may have no family left in the place we came from; that we are longtime members of this church and may have marked major life events here, such as a marriage; that our mortal remains will rest near those of people who were our friends. If you would like to receive an information packet about niche or plaque ownership, please request one from the church office or contact a member of the ministry team: Tracy Clagett, Bill Feister, Bob Fleming, Linda Reyder, Mary Russell, or Steve Taber.

### **GREENS AND POINSETTIAS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS**

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Help brighten the sanctuary during Advent and the Christmas Season with greens and poinsettias. Each gift of Ten Dollars (\$10) toward greens and poinsettias will be acknowledged by a dedication in the bulletin on the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Please place this form with your payment in the offering plate no later than **Sunday, December 7**, or deliver them to the church office by Wednesday, December 10. Write "Advent and Christmas Decorations" on the memo line of your check or envelope.

Please indicate for each Ten Dollar (\$10) gift, whether the dedication is in honor of someone living, in memory of someone deceased or in gratitude for some blessing.

Your name:
The total dollar amount of your gift:
Your dedication/s (in memory of, in honor of, in gratitude for) – <b>one</b> for each Ten Dollars (\$10) – should read:

### **GLORY TO GOD: THE PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL**

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How can we keep from singing? Buy a hymnal for Old First Presbyterian Church, remember a loved one or honor a saint at Old First, and help us keep on singing. You can fill out this form, attach your check and return it either with your offering on Sunday morning or by mailing it to the church office.

Name of Person/Couple/Family Buying the Hymnal(s):
Telephone Number for Follow-Up:
Total Number of Hymnal to be Purchased:
Total Payment: \$20 x Number of Hymnals: • Make check payable to Old First Presbyterian Church. • Write "GTG Hymnal" in the memo line.
Hymnal Dedication(s): Only One Dedication per Hymnal • Circle "memory" or "honor" for each hymnal purchased. Please print.  This hymnal is given in... (1st Hymnal) memory/honor of _____ (2nd Hymnal) memory/honor of _____ (3rd Hymnal) memory/honor of _____ (4th Hymnal) memory/honor of _____ (5th Hymnal) memory/honor of _____ • For more hymnals please use a second sheet. • You may take one gift card per hymnal purchased.

## REVISED COMMON LECTORY: THE SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER, 2014

Date	Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Psalm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel Reading
December 7	Advent 2	Isaiah 40:1-11	85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
December 14	Advent 3	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	126 or Luke 1:46b-55	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19- 28
December 21	Advent 4	2 Samuel 7:1- 11, 16	89:1-4, 19-26 or Luke 1:46b-55	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
December 24	Christmas Eve	Isaiah 9:2-7	96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)
December 28	Christmas 1	Isaiah 61:10- 62:3	148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

### **OTHER DATES TO NOTE**

Saturday	December 6	Preparing the Sanctuary for Advent, 12:00 noon
Sunday	December 7	Potluck Lunch after Worship, Honoring Fernando González
Saturday	December 13	Interfaith Food Pantry Staffed by OFPC, 9:00 am
Sunday	December 14	Deacons' Meeting, Munro Room, 12:30 pm
Tuesday	December 16	Session Meeting, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
Saturday	December 20	Presbyterian Women, Library, 12:00 noon
Wednesday	December 24	Christmas Eve, Church office closes 1:00 pm.
Wednesday	December 24	Christmas Eve Worship, 8:00pm, Sanctuary
Thursday	December 25	Christmas Day, Church Office closed
Sunday	December 28	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Small Group, 12:30 pm, Library
Wednesday	December 31	New Year's Eve: Church office closes 1:00 pm.

### **The Officers of Old First Presbyterian Church**

#### **Session**

George Becker, personnel; Michael Berg, mission and giving; Bill Campbell, mission and giving; Hsiaochien Chuang, worship; Barry Clagett, finance; Gregory Free, treasurer; Harriet MacLean, planning; Jeanne Kirkwood, clerk of session; Jean Olson, mission and giving; Linda Reyder, worship; Randy Smith, planning; Sally Spencer; Steve Taber, operations; Betty Voris, community-building; Priscilla Yu, Christian education

#### **Board of Deacons**

Cindy Burt, Sam Cheng, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, Leota Parker, Glen Potter, AnnieScott Rogers, and Jian Wang