

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

February 2014

Church Website: www.oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

When I came to be the Pastor Old First Presbyterian Church seven years ago, I inherited a number of traditions in the worship service. Some were comfortable and others were unfamiliar. In the ensuing years, our worship has become more a blending of traditions which reflects not only my style and sense of worship and the congregation's practice and traditions, but also occasionally – at least when we are open to them – ways that are new to both of us.

One of the congregation's practices we've kept up that I delight in is the passing of the peace. Following Children's Time, the young people lead the congregation by saying "Peace be with you," to which the congregation answers "And also with you." Passing the peace is an ancient tradition rooted in scripture that embodies our identity as peacemakers (Matthew 5:9; 2 Corinthians 5:20) that trains our hearts, hands, and tongues in the ways of peace. The gesture is simple and yet so profound. It is a communal greeting and response based in the welcome of Jesus and it reminds us that all are welcomed, loved and valued by God.

Yet if truth be told, it can also make us feel a bit awkward and can feel a bit weird at times. At its best, it moves us out of our comfort zone and pushes us to embody God's hospitality. At its worst, I see guests who stand awkwardly and seem to be almost passed over as we go greet those we know. I was caught by an article by John Buchanan called "Members only?" in *Christian Century*. Buchanan relates his experience as a visitor in churches and explains how sometimes this rite communicates that the church is more of a closed corporation than a place of welcome. As he says, the peace is more than "good manners" – it is also "Christian spiritual practice," one we need to develop and work with. I invite you to read this article with care, reflect, talk with others and see how in this next month you might embody and extend the peace of Christ in our church and in the world.

Peace, Pastor Maggi

Member's only

Jon M. Buchanan, editor/publisher

Christian Century, January 22, 2014, Re-Printed by Permission

WHEN THE CHURCH was under siege, the ritual of passing the peace was important to members who were meeting in secret and literally hold on to one another for dear life. Today it's meant to serve an important function in worship.

But I have come to dread this part of the service. I have visited two small congregations several times lately. Both include the passing of the peace. The presiding clergy person invites worshippers to greet one another with a handshake and the words "Peace be with you." (Why don't we say "The peace of Christ be with you"? We don't mean the generic 1960s peace that was communicated with a V sign.)

After the clergyperson says, “The peace of the Lord be always with you,” and we respond, “and also with you,” all hell breaks loose. People leave their seats, walk around and greet nearly everyone else in the room. Robust conversations ensue. There is laughter, sometime raucous, as two member share an inside joke. People discuss the results of a football game or yesterday’s storm. As a visitor, I shake the hands of the people immediately around me and then venture tentatively into the aisle. There I encounter a barrier that might as well be a sign announcing “Members Only.” I’m on my own and not sure what to do. I feel as if I’ve intruded in someone else’s family reunion. I slink back to my pew, pick up the hymnal and read a few verses.

The ritual that’s intended to affirm community often does anything but that if you happen to be a visitor. Instead, congregation members are communicating clearly to strangers that their church is a closed corporation.

To be fair, in both congregations there was a person who seemed to understand what was happening and greeted me warmly, asking my name. But most were busy renewing existing relationships.

The same dynamic is in place at the coffee hour. God friends, longtime members of the congregation, are so happy to see one another that a visitor may stand apart and alone, balancing a coffee cup and cookie and carefully examining the pattern of the tiles in the fellowship hall ceiling.

The hospitality of welcoming the stranger is not only good manners but also Christian spiritual practice. But sometimes a Christian ritual that’s meant to affirm community, love and unity among believers can be exclusive, awkward and off-putting to people who are new or not part of the community. When this becomes true about the passing of the peace, when it’s become a liturgical social hour for members only, we need to reevaluate it.

SESSION’S SPECIAL APPEAL TO THE CONGREGATION

The session reviewed Old First Presbyterian Church’s budget for 2014. Despite much discussion and careful consideration, the session could not balance expenses with income, and was left with a \$12,500 deficit for the year. While we had nine new pledges during the fall pledge campaign, the overall pledge total was 4% under the 2013 pledge amount. This reduction reflects the loss of several members during the year.

The session made budget cuts where possible but hesitated in making cuts to benevolences, several of which support OFPC activities. The only other areas that could be cut to cover such a deficit are personnel and maintenance of the building. However, session is dedicated to no additional cuts in these vital areas.

The Session then decided to pass a balanced budget that included a \$12,500 Special Appeal to the congregation. This Special Appeal is for new 2014 pledges by those who have not yet pledged and for increases to 2014 pledges already made. We have already received several pledges of support for the Special Appeal and hope that you will join us. You will be kept apprised of our progress.

Please send your pledges and contributions to the Special Appeal to the church office marked Attention: Barry Clagett, Special Appeal. We have been blessed by God and are called to spread the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

THE ALBERTO BARRIOS CHILDREN'S LIBRARY
CURL UP WITH A NEW BOOK

Books are shelved in the Children's Library by categories as listed. Fiction books are shelved by F, and alphabetically by author's first three letters of last name

Bible

Milton, Ralph. *Lectionary Story Bible—Year A*.

Includes many engaging stories from both the Old and New Testament. Usually two stories with pictures from the lectionary are included for each Sunday of the church year. Wonderful resource for Christian education teachers, worship leaders, and families.

Biography

Asim, Jabari. *Fifty Cents and a Dream*.

This is an amazing story, beautifully written. True story about the hardships of a boy, Booker T. Washington, who was determined to overcome the road blocks of life, and became in the end one of the leading educators in this country.

Giovanni, Nikki. *Rosa*.

This is the well-known historical act of Mrs. Rosa Parks who refused to give up a seat on a Montgomery, Alabama city bus. This act of courage was one of the major turning points in the Civil Rights Movement. A book that children and adults will love to read, with beautiful illustrations.

Telgemeier, Raina. *Smile*.

Based on a true story of the author. *Smile* is told from the perspective of Raina. A wonderful, heart-warming graphic book, with much substance for middle school-aged girls who have gone through the trauma of physical and emotional changes.

Fiction

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*.

This was a #1 *New York Times* best seller. It tells the story of a boy born with a facial deformity that has prevented him from going to a regular school. Starting fifth grade, he wants nothing more than to be treated as a regular kid. The story converges into a community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.

Rowling, J.K.. *Harry Potter: the Complete Series*.

The entire *Harry Potter* epic is ingenious, brilliant and engaging. It encourages young readers to read; the series is filled with the important themes of good vs. evil, the power of love, and the value of good choices.

Holidays

Paterson, Katherine. *A Stubborn Sweetness and other stories for the Christmas Season*.

Katherine Paterson, two time winner of the Newbery Medal and National Book Award, has written a collection of modern-day short stories of real-life people of all ages who have forgotten the true meaning of Christmas. Through unexpected ways, each in the end realizes even in the darkness, there is the vision of hope and light.

Weber, Susan. *Nativities of the World*. Gibbs Smith, 2013.

This is a book, beautifully illustrated, of nearly one hundred nativities, in a variety of styles, including blown glass, wool, recycled bicycle parts, etc. Artisans range from all over the world: the Czech Republic, Guyana, Bangladesh, and many more.

For further information, Priscilla Yu and Lori Yamauchi would be happy to assist you.

GLENDA HOPE RADIO INTERVIEW

On January 20, the Reverend Glenda Hope, Presbyterian teaching elder, community activist and non-profit leader, was a guest on KQED Radio's interview program *Forum* hosted by Michael Krasny. She spoke about her work, especially with the Network Ministries.

If you didn't hear the broadcast, and would like to listen, it is available by podcast on KQED's website. Here is the link for *Forum*'s archive: <http://www.kqed.org/radio/programs/forum/>. When you get to that page, choose the date of the program – simply click on January 20.

CYNTHIA KANG RECEIVES JEFFERSON AWARD



Cynthia Kang was a 2013 Jefferson Award winner for her service to the Doris Krauss Senior Center. For over ten years Cynthia has been cooking lunch weekly for the seniors who meet at Old First Presbyterian Church every Monday. Congratulations, Cynthia!

ALL FAITHS' DAY AT INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY, FEBRUARY 8

On Saturday, February 8, the Interfaith Food Pantry will be staffed by volunteers from all the participating churches. Some volunteers will be needed to represent Old First Presbyterian Church. Please contact Dianne Middleton and Jian Wang in order to help. E-mail: foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

SATURDAY COMMUNITY MEAL, FEBRUARY 22

Be hip! Be retro! Volunteer!

Help cook, host, serve and clean up after the Saturday Community Meal on Saturday, February 22. You get to eat, too! Let us know that you can volunteer: saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org.

INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS, MARCH 2

New officers were elected at the Annual Meeting of Old First Presbyterian Church on January 26. The new officers will be ordained and installed during worship on Sunday, March 2.

Elders: Pam Byers, Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang, Jeanne Kirkwood, Harriet Maclean,
Linda Reyder

Deacons: Cindy Burt, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, AnnieScott Rogers, Jian Wang

SF NIGHT MINISTRY CONCERT, MARCH 23

Celebrate the arrival of spring by enjoying beautiful music and supporting the vital work of the San Francisco Night Ministry at their spring concert "Spring Song." Musicians will include members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, and the concert will be followed by a chocolate and champagne reception.

The concert will take place on Sunday, March 23, at 4 pm in the beautiful setting of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street. Tickets at \$20 for adults and \$10 for seniors and students can be ordered through Brown Paper Tickets or purchased at the door.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY, 2014

Date	Day	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel Reading
Feb 02	Epiphany 4	Micah 6:1-8	65	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Matthew 5:1-12
Feb 09	Epiphany 5	Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)	112:1-9, (10)	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Matthew 5:13-20
Feb 16	Epiphany 6	Deuteronomy 30:15-20	119:1-8	1 Corinthians 3:1-9	Matthew 5:21-27
Feb 23	Epiphany 7	Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18	119:33-40	1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23	Matthew 5:38-48

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Saturday	Feb 08	All Faiths' Day at the Interfaith Food Pantry, 9:00 am
Sunday	Feb 09	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30 pm, Munro Room
Saturday	Feb 15	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon, Library
Monday	Feb 17	Presidents' Day, Church Office Closed
Saturday	Feb 22	Community Dinner, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Tuesday	Feb 25	Session Meeting, 7:30 pm, Munro Room

The Officers of Old First Presbyterian Church

Session

George Becker, Personnel; Michael Berg, Mission and Giving; Pam Byers, Community-Building; Bill Campbell; Barry Clagett, Finance; Hsiaochien Chuang; Gregory Free, Treasurer; Harriet MacLean; Jean Olson, Mission and Giving; Linda Reyder; Randy Smith, Planning; Sally Spencer, At-Large; Steve Taber, Operations; Betty Voris, Community-Building; Priscilla Yu, Christian Education

Clerk of Session

Jeanne Kirkwood

Board of Deacons

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