

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

January 2014

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

Moving into 2014 with Gratitude

I find myself keenly aware of gratitude as I move into the New Year. I wish I could say this was true every year. More often than not, I come into the New Year with bit of regret for what I didn't accomplish in previous year and with a touch of exhaustion following Advent and Christmas. But this year is just different and I found myself pondering why.

I believe the difference is rooted in the amazing celebration of the 25th anniversary of my ordination, which we celebrated Sunday, December 8. The service was a joy. I was truly able to worship, as I heard my friend and amazing preacher Mary Lynne Tobin offer the sermon. The gifts were truly wonderful: the stunning scrap book, the beautiful stole, a week's vacation – just to name a few of them. I was also delighted by the offering of so many socks! I will admit my friends thought that was a bit crazy to ask for socks, but I told them that when the weather gets cold we will now have an abundance of warm socks to give out to our guests at the Saturday Community Meals - and that thrills me.

As an aside: I now carry a couple of pairs in my purse and give them out when I meet people who ask for funds. When I answer that I don't give money, but ask "Would you like a nice, warm, clean pair of socks?" they are often a bit surprised but then I see a smile spread and hear a thank you.

The celebration following worship was a fine blending of laughter and joy. It brought my past and this present together. Thank you to all who helped in the celebration! The celebration has not only made me grateful, but has also prompted me both to reflect on all the ways that God has led me in the path of ministry and to take account of how many people God has given me to walk Jesus' way together. I have been very blessed!

Now I find myself going into 2014 with a deep sense of gratitude, of trust, of joy... and of excitement to see where God will lead me in the *next* twenty-five years. It is a joy and privilege to minister with you at Old First Presbyterian church.

Peace Maggi

P.S. I offer you three quotes on thankfulness for your pondering and prayer as you move into the New Year.

- "Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good." — Maya Angelou, *Celebrations: Rituals of Peace and Prayer*
- "When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed." — Maya Angelou
- "If the only prayer you said was thank you; that would be enough." — Meister Eckhart

CRISIS IN SOUTH SUDAN

Mothers, children, families need our prayers and support in a violent time. The Africa Office of World Mission is asking for prayer for the current crisis in South Sudan.

South Sudan nationals continue to suffer the effects of conflict, and following this week's attempted coup and military action, thousands of civilians are seeking refuge, and the border has been closed. The British Broadcasting Corporation reports that the hospital in Juba can no longer cope with the number of injured people being brought in.



Presbyterian World Mission staff members are in contact with the six mission co-workers currently serving in South Sudan. All Presbyterian Church (USA) mission co-workers serving in South Sudan have left the country and have arrived safely in other African nations. Please pray for the

mission co-workers, our South Sudanese church and ecumenical partners, and all South Sudanese people

Presbyterians Respond

This year through the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency (PRDA), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has supported a community-based program to improve agriculture, water-sanitation, and food security in Uror County. A recent grant installment will continue to support PRDA in its work to provide water, food, seeds and tools, shelter, community health training, and other necessities for those in Jonglei State who are displaced due to conflict. PDA has been working in partnership to support those in South Sudan who were displaced during years of war, those suffering the effects of ongoing violence, and those who have been returning home to seek peace. In light of the current situation, PDA has been in close contact with PRDA works, who are safe and eager to continue their ongoing projects supporting and strengthening communities exposed to conflict in South Sudan.

How You Can Help

You can stand in the **GAP** for the people of South Sudan and help the church with this response.

- **Give:** Share your financial blessings by designating gifts to DR000042-South Sudan. Individuals may give online at pcusa.org, or by mailing a check to Presbyterian Church (USA) P.O. Box 643700 Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.
- **Act:** Like us on facebook (PDACares) and share updates with your congregation and others.
- **Pray:** Please pray for the mission co-workers, our South Sudanese church and ecumenical partners, and the people of South Sudan, that they will be strengthened, have their needs met, and be reminded of the enduring hope that is found in Christ.

Gracious God, we lift before you the people of South Sudan who are in the midst of a political and security crisis. Two years ago, we rejoiced with them as they gained independence and became the world's newest nation and now our hearts are heavy as we hear the news of deep conflict which could destroy all they have strived for. We mourn with those who have lost loved ones in this current unrest, with the children and adults who have become traumatized again and again, for those who are injured, imprisoned and hiding. God of reconciliation, send your Spirit of unity and peace to speak to the hearts of those who are inciting violence. Keep our church partners and mission personnel safe and be their 'rock' as they look to you for strength and guidance. Be with our partners the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, the South Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church, RECONCILE, and the South Sudan Council of Churches. Strengthen them with the power of your Holy Spirit as they witness to the strong love of Christ, advocating for peace and justice in a situation that is only hopeful because we follow a resurrected Christ. In whose name we pray. Amen.



San Francisco Interfaith Council

Celebrating our diverse faiths & spiritual traditions • Bringing people together to build understanding • Serving our community

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The San Francisco Interfaith Council invites faith leaders and their congregation members to join in the 2014 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration, and Old First is going to march! We will meet at the **CalTrain Station at 4th and King Streets** in San Francisco at **10:30 am on Monday, January 20**. Look for other Old Firsters and our sign. If you are planning to join us for the march, **contact Sidney Hollar in person or via E-mail - Sidney_Hollar@yahoo.com**.



After the march, the celebration will continue at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens. Once the March/Parade has arrived at Yerba Buena Gardens, the 4th Annual Interfaith Commemoration Ceremony will commence. A host of other activities and programs that will take place to mark the occasion may be found on the San Francisco Interfaith Council's partner organization's website: norcalmlkfoundation.org.

"LESSONS FROM MY WHEELCHAIR:" A LETTER FROM JEANNE KIRKWOOD

Blessings

- I didn't die.
- I wasn't paralyzed.
- I could get back upstairs.
- I had the best surgeon.
- All possible repairs to my knee were made.
- My scaredy-cat Stella became more socialized.
- I learned how to ask for help.

Reflections

It's always been hard for me to ask for help. There was always a vague albeit chronic feeling of unworthiness. And, I came to realize, was concerned about how to pay back any help received. These feelings flew away as it was clear I had no choice – I had to get to the emergency department and I couldn't do it on my own. Once I accepted that I had to start speaking up, help came flooding in from all directions. Friends took me to St Mary's Emergency Department on a beautiful Sunday afternoon and stayed with me during the entire procedure without a whimper. I needed transportation to various appointments and friends stepped up not only with cars but a willingness to attend doctor visits with me.

When the damage to my knee turned out to be worse than expected, I was offered recovery in a one story home which ended up lasting for four weeks. During that time, Stella and my house were both lovingly tended to. Modifications had to be installed in order for me to move back to 35th Ave and all were done swiftly and with care.

Being 100% in a wheelchair, non-weight bearing, was an experience I'll never forget. I had to be hauled everywhere, my wheelchair folded up, loaded into various vehicles, unloaded and reassembled. All transporters handled the tasks without complaint. Getting around my office in a wheelchair was relatively easy and co-workers were quick to offer assistance. One day the fire alarm went off which meant evacuation without using the elevator. One co-worker remained at my side, shielding me while I "butt-bumped" down the stairs (happily from the 2nd floor) and then helping me limp out of the building.

Wheeling around out on the street was a completely different matter. Nothing is as flat as it might look. The sidewalks all slant towards the gutter (for rain runoff?), there are lots of changes in surfaces and there are cracks and holes waiting to trap a wheelchair wheel. The cut-outs which appear to serve wheelchairs are in poor repair and are too steep. Apparently, the degree is to architectural specifications which made me think the degree was determined by an architect who never spent any time in a wheelchair. One of my co-workers noted that she saw mostly motorized wheelchairs. Sure – in the financial district. Check out 6th St and Market and the wheelchairs there are powered by muscle. And yet, the few times I was out on my own, while many pedestrians are walking quickly with noses buried in phones, whenever I got into trouble there was always someone who immediately came to my rescue. Oftentimes I didn't even see their faces as they were behind me, gone as quickly as they had arrived.

Grace

This had always been just a word, a theoretical concept that I really didn't give much credit. Now I've experienced grace being showered upon me from all directions, freely and cheerfully. As I think back on my life I realize that there has always been grace, I just didn't recognize it. I am humbled to now know how much God loves us, to offer this precious gift to us with the hope that we will learn how to spread it around. I'm no longer concerned about how I'm going to pay back all the help that I've received – that's impossible. I can only pay it forward and I certainly will. Sometimes it will be small gestures, sometimes larger ones. My awareness of my environment has been sharpened. I'm working on being mindful, thoughtful, loving and courteous. I feel like Ebenezer Scrooge when he woke up after the visit from the Ghost of Christmas Future and flung open his window, calling out to the street, "What day is it?" And his relief to find out that Christmas was still before him – he hadn't missed it.

God Bless Us, Everyone!

Jeanne Kirkwood, Christmas 2013

UPCOMING EVENTS

Interfaith Food Pantry, January 18

On Saturday, January 18, the Interfaith Food Pantry will be staffed by volunteers from all the participating churches. Some volunteers will be needed to work represent Old First Presbyterian Church. Please contact Dianne Middleton and Jian Wang in order to help. E-mail: foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

MLK Jr Holiday for OFPC, January 20

Note that in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the church office will be closed.

OFPC Annual Meeting, January 26

Old First Presbyterian Church will hold its Annual Meeting of the congregation on Sunday, January 26 in the sanctuary immediately after worship. The meeting will include election of officers (both deacons and elders) and of a Nominating Committee for the coming year, as well as updating the Pastor's Terms of Call.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

On Christmas Eve the offering collected totaled to \$1,183.00. This offering will be split between the San Francisco Foster Youth Fund and the Silliman Water Project in the Philippines. Thank you for your generosity which honors the birth of Christ and gives witness that his light still shines in the world.

San Francisco Foster Youth Fund: www.sffosteryouthfund.org

By raising funds and coordinating donations of goods, the SFFYF provides children with resources not available through the Department of Health Services to meet the special needs of these children and their families. Most services are provided in the form of monetary grants for particular purposes, for specific children. Grants are offered to pay for services for children in any of the following areas: Lessons (music, athletics, etc.), Programs for Enhancement of Self-esteem, Family Visits and/or Travel, Summer Camp, Field Trips.

Silliman Water Project, Philippines

Mission co-worker Cobbie Palm (who has spoken at Old First) heads up the Silliman Water Project, which brings portable water purifiers to storm-damaged areas in the Philippines. Mounted on trucks, these units are taken out to areas without fresh water or the infrastructure to build permanent purifiers. They deliver fresh water quickly and efficiently.

OFPC HOSTS SATURDAY COMMUNITY MEAL ON FOURTH SATURDAYS

Through June 2014, Old First Presbyterian Church will host a free Saturday Community Meal on the Fourth Saturday of each month at 5:30 pm. The first meal for our hungry neighbors will be held Saturday, January 25. If you would like to be a part of this important ministry, please contact the church: saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org. Thanks!

WELCOME MINISTRY CHANGES

In a letter dated December 28, the Welcome Ministry's executive director, the Reverend Megan Rohrer has announced the following: "In 2014 we will be focusing our efforts on helping individuals obtain prescription eye glasses and providing meals and groceries for HIV+ individuals. As a result, we are no longer sponsoring the Saturday Community Dinners... We are also ending our Tuesday Welcome Center. Our last meal will be served on Tuesday, December 31st."

The new program providing eye glasses to those-in-need has already begun with events at several locations including Old First Presbyterian Church. The meals and groceries for HIV+ clients will begin in April in partnership with St Paulus Lutheran Church on Polk Street. Welcome will continue its other meal programs on Sundays at St Francis Lutheran Church at 152 Church Street.

If you'd like to help Welcome's various ministries, please contact Megan: megan@welcomeministry.org.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN JANUARY, 2014

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel Reading
Jan 05	Christmas 2	Jeremiah 37:7-14	147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18
Jan 12	Baptism of Christ	Isaiah 42:1-9	29	Acts 10:34-43	Matt. 3:13-17
Jan 19	Epiphany 2	Isaiah 49:1-7	40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
Jan 26	Epiphany 3	Isaiah 9:1-4	27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matt. 4:12-23

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Wednesday	January 1	New Year's Day: Church Office Closed
Thursday	January 2	Church Office Closed
Sunday	January 12	Deacons Meeting 12:30 pm, Off-Site at The Sequoias
Saturday	January 18	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon, Library
Monday	January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Church Office Closed
Tuesday	January 21	Session Meeting, 7:30 pm, Munro Room
Saturday	January 25	Saturday Community Meal, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Sunday	January 26	Annual Congregational Meeting, Sanctuary, immediately after worship

BIRTHDAYS

January		February			
2	Pam Free	17	Shirley Buono	2	Karen Bene
5	Bill Beaumont	22	Ellen Milligan	4	Bonnie Thomas
5	Carol Carter	26	Jon Blackner	9	Steve Taber
5	Yvonne Cheng	26	Jan Hammock	10	Patrick Berg
9	Joshua Cheng	29	Rose Marie Springer	13	Mary Culp
10	Samuel Cheng			16	Diane Lewis

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; 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, Hornghsheng Tu