

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

March 2014

Church Website: www.oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

An Ordinary Lent

Lent begins with a joint Ash Wednesday worship service at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on March 5 at 7:00 pm. Our Lenten journey starts with the ashes of death and leads to the resurrected life celebrated on Easter Day. The six-week journey of Lent is a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. It is an opportunity for us to prepare for the mystery and joy of Resurrection by taking on a new discipline that empowers us to be witnesses of Christ's healing and new life... or by letting go of an old habit that gets in the way of fully following the Risen One.

This year I am *not* going to make half-hearted vows, over-ambitious vows to undertake or give up something grand, vows that inevitably seem to last only a week or so. This year I am simply going to seek to add five minutes to my daily prayer – five more minutes to reflect or simply to be quiet. If I do this three times in my week, I will be thrilled. And, if I am able to do more, I will count it as a blessing. In this very small thing I hope to find the “holy in the ordinary” – as Ann Weems calls it.

Won't you join me on a journey through an “ordinary” Lent?

Peace, Maggi

The Holy in the Ordinary

by Ann Weems

Holy is the time and hold is this place,
and there are holy things that must be said.

and yet, the days fill with ordinary things
with no time left
for seeking the holy.

Let us say to one another what our souls
whisper...

O Holy One, cast your tent among us;
come into our ordinary lives
and bless the living!

Spiritual contemplation is all right
for those who have the time,
but most of us have to make a living.

Forty days stretch before us,
forty days of hungering after faithfulness,
forty days of trying
to understand the story,

Most of us have to live in the real world
where profanity splashes and blots out
anything holy.

and then, Holy Week...
O God, if every week were holy...

Where, O Holy One,
can we find You in this unholy mess?

These forty days stretch before us,
and the those of who believe
yearn to feel Your presence,
yearn to be Your people;

How, O God,
can we find the holy in the ordinary?

New Officers at OFPC: Installation of Elders and Deacons, March 2

Newly elected officers will be ordained and installed during worship on March 2: Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday before Lent begins. The elders-elect are Pam Byers, Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang, Jeanne Kirkwood, Harriet Maclean and Linda Reyder. Deacons-elect are Cindy Burt, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, AnnieScott Rogers and Jian Wang.

When these officers are installed, they are asked the Constitutional Questions prescribed by the PC(USA) Book of Order (part of our church's constitution). Pastor Henderson suggests reading them before the service, tuning into the words during the installation, and then meditating on them during the forty days of Lent.

Constitutional Questions to Officers and Congregation

- *Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? **I do.***
- *Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you? **I do.***
- *Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? **I do.***
- *Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions? **I will.***
- *Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit? **I will.***
- *Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world? **I will.***
- *Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church? **I do.***
- *Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. **I will.***
- *Deacons: Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? **I will.***
- *Elders: Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? **I will.***
- *Congregation: Do we, the members of the church, accept Pam Byers, Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang, Harriet MacLean, Linda Reyder and Jeanne Kirkwood as ruling elders and Cindy Burt, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, AnnieScott Rogers and Jian Wang as deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ? **We do.***
- *Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church? **We do.***

Lent Begins: Ash Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 pm, St Luke's Episcopal Church

Old First Presbyterian Church will join St Luke's Episcopal Church for a joint worship service on Ash Wednesday, March 5, at 7:00 pm at St Luke's Episcopal Church: 1755 Clay Street at Van Ness Avenue. Our Pastor Maggi Henderson will be the preacher. Parking stickers will be available from Kristi Hoerauf.

Daily Devotions for Lent in Print

Two devotional booklets are available for daily devotions in Lent: *The Lord's Prayer for Lent* by Vern Gundermann is new this year. There are also copies of *Called to Life, Called to Love* by Henri Nouwen from last year. Both will be available in the narthex after worship. If you would like one of them mailed to you, please call the church office and specify which one you would like.

On-Line Devotions by Computer, Smart Phone, Who Knew!?

We really are in the 21st century. Daily readings for Lent are now available via E-mail or smart phone text.

- The PC(USA) office of Theology and Worship offers the daily scripture readings via your electronic devices. Visit www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/feeds/atom/daily/.
- This office also has an app for your phone, just use the words "daily prayer" – the app is available for just a small cost. You'll receive daily prayer for both morning and evening.
- You can also find another great on-line daily devotional for Lent and the whole 365-day year from d365 at www.d365.org.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST: THE LAST SUNDAY *BEFORE* LENT



“Hope of the Ages,” an Excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, pp 148-149)

The Sunday immediately prior to Ash Wednesday is an appropriate time to celebrate the Transfiguration of the Lord, because this event marked a transition in Jesus' ministry in which he “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51), where he would die.

In Jesus' transfiguration, we are assured that Jesus is the hope of the ages. Jesus is the One who fulfilled the Law given through Moses, the one dreamed of by the prophets, of whom Elijah is the greatest.

In celebrating this event, we rejoice in the divine majesty of Christ, whose glory shone even when confronted with the cross. It is given us for our journey through Lent toward the agony of the cross and the victory of the empty tomb. We celebrate this mystery in order that our faith may be renewed. We are transformed into the new being in Christ as we join Christ in his death and resurrection in Lent and Easter.

(Pictured: The Transfiguration of Christ, Giovanni Bellini, 1455)

SOUP AND STUDY: LENTEN STUDY OF HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*

A study of Parts 2 and 3 of GF Handel's *Messiah* will be offered on Thursdays during Lent from 6:00-7:30 pm in the Munro Room. Soup, bread and fruit will be available at a modest cost as we delve into the texts and music of this glorious work. Each session will be repeated the following Sunday 9:30 am.

The choir will sing many arias and choruses from *Messiah* during Lent and the Hallelujah Chorus on Easter. Join us for this opportunity to learn how the Biblical texts and musical settings combine to deepen our understanding of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as portrayed in Part 2 and of the importance of faith in the redemption of the world as seen in Part 3 using materials from Kerygma.

Come for one or for all of the classes. Jean Olson will be teaching. There will be parking in the Old First Garage as may be available or, better yet, take a bus or park on the street.

Soup and Study Schedule	
Dates	Movements
March 6 and 9	He was despised; Surely he hath borne our griefs; And with his stripes; All we like sheep
March 13 and 16	All they that see him; He trusted in God
March 20 and 23	Lift up your heads
March 27 and 30	I know that my Redeemer liveth; Since by man came death; Behold, I tell you a mystery; The trumpet shall sound; Then shall be brought to pass; O Death, where is thy sting? But thanks be to God
April 3 and 6	Why do the nations so furiously rage together? Let us break their bonds asunder; He that dwelleth in heaven; Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron
April 10 and 13	Hallelujah! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

OLD FIRST LIBRARY AND LENT

by Stephen Taber

The season of Lent is a good time to deepen your understanding of Christian faith or to answer questions you may have about Christ and his ministry. Old First's library, an excellent collection of more than 1,300 books focusing on religious subjects, is open for the use of all members and provides a resource for both in-depth reading and quick answers to questions.

In approaching the library, it is best to understand the different types of books available. Included are:

1. **Bibles.** You may ask how many copies of the same book you need, but our library offers many Bibles for different purposes. There are different translations, and it is interesting to compare translations to see the variety of ways in which a particular passage is rendered. There are annotated Bibles, with footnotes and articles explaining and commenting on the text. These range from single volumes such as the Oxford Study Bible, to multi-volume sets such as the Interpreter's Bible and the Anchor Study Bible. I am particularly fond of the latter because it includes both line-by-line explanations and essays that tie together themes.
2. **Commentaries.** Commentaries generally do not contain Biblical text, but provide commentary on it. There are sets of commentaries covering all (or almost all) of the books of the Bible, such as Calvin's Commentaries and Interpretations, and other commentaries that cover only a single book, such as Romans and Psalms.
3. **Dictionaries and Encyclopedias.** These are books that contain short articles about particular subjects, organized alphabetically. They are particularly useful if you want to read a short (one paragraph to two or three pages) on a specific topic. These books are usually related to certain broad subject areas, such as Christian Education, the Reformation, or Church History. I usually refer to one of these books when I want a quick overview of a subject.
4. **Books on Particular Topics.** Many of our books are in the collection because they explore particular topics, such as "religion and science," or are written by notable authors such as Karl Barth, C.S. Lewis, or Jacques Ellul.

For Lenten reading, the following books may be of interest:

The Death of the Messiah, by Raymond E. Brown (226.07 BRO). This two volume set contains a detailed analysis of the Gospel narratives relating to Christ's crucifixion and the events leading up to it.

The Day Christ was Born/The Day Christ Died by Jim Bishop (232.2 BIS). This book contains a narrative retelling of the story of the crucifixion.

The Story of Jesus (246-REA). This profusely illustrated book recounts Jesus' life, death and resurrection using works of art through the ages.

Old First's library is in the process of being re-catalogued and when that is completed, there will be a complete description of how to use the catalogue. Meanwhile, you are welcome to browse the collection or ask Steve Taber if you need help finding a book.

GLORY TO GOD: THE NEW PRESBYTERIAN HYMNAL

by AnnieScott Rogers

When I attended the workshop on the new hymnal, I was not excited about it, and didn't think we needed one. The facilitator of the workshop was dynamic, and showed us many things about the new hymnal that surprised me. Many of the hymns are written to embrace other cultures than the WASP culture I have known in other hymnals. There was a dynamic gospel song that rocked the sanctuary (126 Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child) and another that addressed Asian culture, referring to the "rice of life" (524 The Rice of Life). That is something to which we in California can relate.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

Interfaith Food Pantry: OFPC's Turn, March 8

Old First will staff the Interfaith Food Pantry March 8. If you are able to help unload the truck, distribute food or clean up that day, please contact Dianne Middleton or Dana Nojima foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

Friendship Banquets at OFPC, Starting March 11

Old First welcomes the Friendship Banquets to our church on Tuesdays beginning this March. These meals are sponsored by SF CARES a cooperative venture led by our neighbor Saint Paulus Lutheran Church (which has moved into the old Bargain Barn/Daniel and Spencer store at 1514 Polk). The program serves a quality three-course-meal on the second through the last Tuesday of each month at 4:00pm to individuals living with HIV/AIDS. As in a restaurant, guests make reservations in advance.

Why this Meal is Important? 56% of individuals living with HIV/AIDS in San Francisco do not have enough food to regularly take their medications. For many HIV+ individuals, their food insecurity is due to limitations on income that are a part of local and state health care requirements. The Friendship Banquet provides restaurant quality meals and hospitality for some of the most vulnerable residents of San Francisco.

How Can You Help? Hosts are needed to prepare a three course meal for about 45 guests. You can sign up to help one-time, once a year, once a month or more often. Groups bring the ingredients and cook or heat prepared food at Old First Presbyterian Church, where the meal is served. If you're interested in hosting a meal, but costs are a barrier, the SF CARES volunteer coordinator, or Jordan Ward, the Program Director, can work with you to get many of the ingredients for the meal donated. Call Jordan at 415-673-3572.

If you're in the church on Tuesdays, welcome Jordan and the volunteers. In so many ways how we use our building can be a meaningful expression of mission and witness to Christ's welcome and compassion for the world.

OFPC Saturday Community Meal, March 22

Old First Presbyterian Church will host its monthly Saturday Community Meal on Saturday, March 22. Help cook, host, serve and clean up afterwards. You get to eat, too! Let us know that you can volunteer by sending an E-mail to saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org.

SF Night Ministry Benefit: Spring Song, March 23, 4:00 pm, St Mark's Lutheran Church

Celebrate the arrival of spring while you support the San Francisco Night Ministry by attending "Spring Song," a concert to benefit the Night Ministry. Performers will include members of the **San Francisco Opera Chorus** and the folk group **Vocal Divine** of *herchurch*. A chocolate and champagne reception will follow the concert, which starts at 4:00 pm, Sunday, March 23, at Saint Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell Street between Franklin and Gough Streets. Tickets at \$20 for adults and \$10 for seniors and students can be ordered through Brown Paper Tickets or purchased at the door. For more information, visit the Night Ministry's new website: www.sfnightministry.org.

LENT AND SAN FRANCISCO'S MUSEUMS

Lenten disciplines can take many and various forms. Their immediate form need not always be introspective. And God's presence and voice can show up in more places than we expect. Here are some "alternative" opportunities for your Lenten journey that you might undertake alone, with other Old Firsters, or with friends.

Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission Street, www.thecjm.org

On display now are two interesting exhibits. One is Days of Frog and Toad and the World of Arnold Lobel (through March 23). Arnold Lobel was an author of children's books, and especially an illustrator. He won the Caldecott Prize for his books. Frog and Toad are characters in a series of books about them, but there are other books he wrote as well with other characters. Lobel also illustrated books written by other authors.

The other exhibit is *Arthur Szyk and the Art of the Haggadah*. This is an illustrated text to use for the Passover *seder*. The illustrations are about 8 x 10 inches, and have intricate patterns and colors. They resemble a medieval illuminated text. The text is written in Hebrew, but in a small scale. The writing from a little distance looks like musical notes. If you have reading glasses, take them with you to see all the wonderful details of the illustrations.

California Academy of Sciences, 55 Music Concourse Drive, www.calacademy.org

The California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park will admit San Francisco residents with no admission charge on weekends during March. You must take ID that shows your address to receive free admission.

February 28-March 2	94110, 94114, 94117, 94127, 94131, 94132
March 7-9	94116, 94122
March 14-16	94108, 94109, 94115, 94118, 94121, 94123, 94126, 94129, 94133
March 21-23	94102, 94103, 94104, 94105, 94107, 94111, 94112, 94124, 94130, 94134, 94158

De Young Museum, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, deyoung.famsf.org

The de Young Museum holds the Bouquets to Art exhibit March 18-23. Flower arrangements are made to go with a selection of paintings. Some attempt to be an exact replica of the painting, some don't. There's a variety of shape and texture in the flowers that doesn't exist in the paintings; the flower arrangements are sculptural, and always interesting.

NEWS: SFTS SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH PHILIPPINE DIVINITY SCHOOL

On February 20, 2014, San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Silliman University Divinity School. This agreement will facilitate the promotion of common areas of interest between the two educational institutions, including faculty and student exchanges, the sharing of resources, and research collaboration. SFTS president, the Reverend Dr. James McDonald, and Silliman president, Dr. Ben S. Malayang III, formalized this new relationship with the signing of the MoU on the Silliman campus.

"Today we are beginning a new partnership between two historic institutions with deep roots in the Presbyterian church," said McDonald. "This is an incredible opportunity for both the Silliman and SFTS communities. The cross-cultural exchange facilitated by this agreement today will provide students from both settings with even broader opportunities to grow and serve in God's world."

Silliman University Divinity School offers a variety of programs, including a revised Bachelor of Theology and a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program; two-year M.Div. thesis tracks with majors in Biblical Studies, Theology, Pastoral Ministry, Christian Education, and Spiritual Care; and a Master of Arts in Peace Studies.

The morning before the MoU signing, members of delegations met with Silliman University Divinity School faculty, during which time the university gave a brief overview of its history, mission, goals, and academic programs. In recent years, Silliman designed and implemented a Continuing Calamity Response Program, which is now serving the communities affected by Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan last November. The typhoon was the strongest ever recorded and wreaked massive devastation across the central islands of the Philippines.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN MARCH, 2014

Date	Day	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel Reading
March 2	Transfiguration of Christ	Exodus 24:12-18	2 or 99	2 Peter 16:21	Matthew 17:1-8
March 5	Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12	51:1-17	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
March 9	Lent 1	Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7	32	Romans 5:12-19	Matthew 4:1-11
March 16	Lent 2	Genesis 12:1-4a	121	Romans 4:1-5, 13-17	John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9
March 23	Lent 3	Exodus 17:-7	95	Romans 5:1-11	John 4:5-42
March 30	Lent 4	1 Samuel 16:1-13	23	Ephesians 5:8-14	John 9:1-41

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Sunday	March 2	Transfiguration Sunday
Wednesday	March 5	Joint Ash Wednesday Worship, 7:00 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Saturday	March 8	Old First Presbyterian Church Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry
Saturday	March 15	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Saturday	March 22	Community Dinner, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Tuesday	March 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; Jeanne Kirkwook, clerk of session; 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

Board of Deacons

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