

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

May 2014

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

DAVID ALTSHULER, SEMINARY INTERN

Dear Old First friends:

May 25 marks the last day of my internship with you all. I wanted to pause a moment and say with deep sincerity, “thank you.”

It’s been quite a ride for me. Some things changed and some things didn’t. I’ll start with the latter. In September of 2013 you welcomed me into your community with such warmth and support. I remember the first day that I met Maggi; she took me to lunch at *Ti Piacerà*—yummy. The following week I met with a few session members. We ate much simpler homemade soup made from SF Food Bank vegetables, and bread left over from the Saturday meal. I now have an understanding what that second experience was about. Old First tries to use local, excess resources to serve its community. Our world needs more of that kind of attitude and ministry. Then I met the entire congregation. I believe it was at my first Sunday service at Old First that I blundered through my liturgical role, which was embarrassing, but most of you didn’t blink an eye. I’m still blundering from time to time, but they’re important moments to me because they’re evidence that I get to end my internship with the same sense of warmth, acceptance, and support that I received when I got here. It’s a tremendous blessing!

What changed? Some of you know that I chose a church internship for the very fact that I wanted to avoid it. Maybe that’s strange to hear from a burgeoning minister, but it’s true. My ministry was originally formed around hospital chaplaincy, not parish ministry. Because I experienced myself as a hospital chaplain, I had a good excuse to avoid preaching, teaching, or leading liturgical practice. But gratefully, I had a sense that any form of Presbyterian ministry wouldn’t work if I couldn’t find an identity within the church, as well. That’s been the single most significant change for me here. I discovered a parish identity. I feel such joy when I get in touch with that fact. Another great blessing!

Again, thank you to all of you. I wish you all the best in the coming years, and hope we will maintain some level of connection in future.

With much love and gratitude,

David Altshuler, Seminary Intern

OLD FIRST ON FACEBOOK

Old First’s Facebook page is updated at least weekly by a team that includes Erwin Barron, Pam Byers, Bob Hermann, Dan Joraanstad, and occasionally Pastor Maggi and Brad Peterson.

If you haven’t yet “liked” our page, please do so! Check it often for current info about goings-on at the church. The pix and posts of church services, community dinners, food pantries, choir anthems, and ideas to ponder get numerous views and interesting comments.

The April Fool’s Day posts announcing our Pastor Maggi’s appointment as the new rector of St Luke’s Episcopal Church got more than 750 “views” and dozens of comments! As the “announcement” allegedly quotes Maggi, “Why become an Episcopalian? Prettier vestments! Bigger rectory for blow-out parties! Awesome incense! And all my old sermons will be new again!”

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

On Palm Sunday, Old First Presbyterian Church joyfully received three new members, all of whom joined by Reaffirmation of Faith.



Dick Meimban, born in Manila, immigrated to San Francisco last spring. He and his mother Lolita Ramos (who sometimes accompanies him to Old First) live near the church. Dick became a Christian in 1983 and for ten years focused on street ministry in Manila. In the 1990s he went to Vietnam as a teacher of English. He currently teaches computer use to seniors as part of SF Senior and Disability Action. He helped cook the April Community Dinner.

Eder and Angela Duenas were raised as Roman Catholics in Bogota, Colombia. Eder began attending Old First at the invitation of his Diamond Heights neighbor Bob Fleming. A doctor in Colombia, Eder now practices as a massage therapist (“Magic Hands Massage”). He and Angela maintained a long-distance telephone romance for many months before Angela immigrated earlier this year. Pastor Maggi officiated at their wedding at Old First on Valentine’s Day. After working in business and accounting in Colombia, Angela is now focusing on learning English.



PAM BYERS NAMED 2014 SFTS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA

Pamela Byers, a ruling elder at Old First Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, has been named San Francisco Theological Seminary’s 2014 Distinguished Alumna for her work removing a ban on the ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians. Byers earned a master’s degree in theological studies over a 10-year period while working as executive director of Covenant Network of Presbyterians.

When Byers helped to found that organization in 1997, she thought it might take 10 months to change the policy that excluded gays and lesbians from ordination as ministers, elders, or deacons in the Presbyterian Church (USA). “It was such an obvious reform, but it took 14 years,” says Byers, 66, who describes taking the job as a call. “Still, it was very satisfying to see that goal achieved on my watch.”

Byers, who already had a PhD when she enrolled at SFTS, says she entered the seminary master’s program because “the opportunity for lay people to get a serious theological education is a real luxury.” She adds, “It helped a great deal with my work, being better able to understand and frame theological and biblical arguments and also to understand church history.”

Jerry Van Marter, a distinguished SFTS alumnus and director of the Presbyterian News Service of the Presbyterian Church (USA), served on the Alumni Council’s nominating committee that chose to honor Byers. “What the committee found compelling,” he says, “is that Pamela built Covenant Network into one of the most effective and inclusive organizations in the entire church – and those values really embody what SFTS is all about.”

On a personal note, Van Marter added, “I was thrilled when Pamela’s name bubbled to the top. She is a seminary graduate who has chosen to live out a Christian vocation as a lay person rather than a minister, and she is well known and much loved in the Presbyterian Church for her perseverance.”

by Patricia Corrigan

Note: Pam will receive the award and offer remarks at the SFTS Commencement, Saturday, May 24, at 9:30 am, on the campus in San Anselmo. All are invited. For directions or ride coordination, speak with Pam or Pastor Maggi. Also note that the commencement will be outdoors in Bouick Field; so bring sunscreen, hat, and water.

SERVING OUR NEIGHBORS THROUGH COMMUNITY DINNERS

For more than fifteen years, Old First has welcomed homeless and marginally housed neighbors at twice-a-month dinners at Old First. For most of those years, the dinners were organized by *Welcome!* formerly known as the Homeless Ministry.

Late last year, *Welcome!* redefined its focus and moved away from serving meals. The session believed that offering hospitality in this form is a core part of our ministry and witness to the city. The session agreed to undertake responsibility for continuing a monthly dinner, at least for six months – now extended to twelve months. A Project Team including Gabriele Beck-Engeser, Michael Berg, Pam Byers, Betsy Chiao, Bill Feister and Maggi Henderson has overseen the monthly meals while working toward a long-term plan.

At least for 2014, Old First is serving a full, home-cooked dinner to 150 – 175 homeless or marginally housed neighbors on the fourth Saturday of every month. Nearby St Paulus Lutheran Church and Trinity+St Peter's Episcopal Church are currently helping to provide meals, and we anticipate inviting other Presbyterian churches in the City to participate in the fall.

Each month we need 15–20 volunteers, in addition to the cooks. Volunteers come from 4:30 to 7 p.m. to set the tables, serve our guests, offer hospitality and conversation, and clean up. You can sign up during coffee hour the two Sundays before each dinner, or by writing to saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org. Or ask Pam Byers (pambyers.sf@gmail.com) to put you on the regular list to be invited each month.

If you have questions or suggestions, please talk with any of the Project Team members. Or better still, come and volunteer one Saturday. Most people who've done it once find it so rewarding that they keep returning. Come and see for yourself!

FROM THE BOARD OF DEACONS

Dear Members of Old First Presbyterian Church,

We have a new board of deacons and have said farewell to those whose terms are over. During this time, parish assignments were passed out, and you may have been assigned to a different deacon. If so, in the next week or two, you will likely hear from your new deacon with information how to contact her or him. In the meantime, if you have a need, any one of us will be glad to help you, as well as any of the outgoing deacons.

AnnieScott Rogers and Bryan Nichols, Co-Moderators, 2014 Board of Deacons

STOP HUNGER NOW: A NOTE FROM JOSH CHUCK, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHINATOWN

Thank you for helping to coordinate the Stop Hunger Now event at Presbyterian Church in Chinatown [Saturday, April 5]. I thought it was a success, as we had 41 volunteers pack 10,152 meals together! We at Presbyterian Church in Chinatown really appreciate your partnership and hope to collaborate more in the future.

If any of you has any feedback on the event, feel free to let me or the entire group know. My two cents: I think if we were to do this again, it would be nice to do a little icebreaker and short activity to illustrate the issue of hunger in the world. But overall, it was a pleasure working with you to serve those in need. This link has photos I took, feel free to use them however you need.

<https://drive.google.com/a/cameronhouse.org/folderview?id=0B68FuniWfTjQQ3A2cTlydkRjNUE&usp=sharing>
Finally, I want to let you know about Cameron House's annual carnival coming up on May 3. Many of you have partnered with Cameron House in different ways, and I invite you to get involved in what I consider to be our signature community event. It combines youth leadership development and creativity with alumni and volunteer involvement, while being a very family-friendly community event open to all. We are still looking for volunteers that day and shifts are usually 90 minutes each. I can help you arrange that if you'd like. Otherwise, I just hope you can spread the word and make it out yourselves!

Take care and God bless! Josh Chuck

CONSIDER A PERPETUAL PLEDGE: LIVING OUT MY RESURRECTION FAITH

As someone who is a long-time member of Old First, I acknowledge that the church relies on my annual pledge to continue its service to Christ. I also acknowledge that that I will not live forever and when I am gone, the church will no longer be able to rely on my pledge. In other words, the passing of a mortal person lessens Old First's ongoing mission.

However, this does not necessarily have to be the case. A bequest of an amount of money equal to twenty times my annual pledge, when deposited into Old First's endowment, would allow my annual pledge to continue, adjusted for inflation, in perpetuity. With such a bequest (or a greater one, if possible), each of us who is able to do so can enhance and enrich Old First's witness to Christ and ministry to San Francisco for generations to come, providing a lasting foundation for our continuing work.

Anyone interested in exploring the making of a bequest to Old First may contact Barry Clagett or any elder.

FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD... MATTHEW 25:35

If you meet someone by Old First's door or you see some in the neighborhood who is hungry, there is always peanut butter and jelly and other food items in a blue bag in the church fridge. Bread or croissants can be found in the fridge or the freezer. Often there are leftovers from others meals that can be shared. You are invited to go into the kitchen and make the some sandwiches. Why not take someone with you to help? Pastor Maggi reports that when people ask her for money or help she says "We don't give out cash at the church," or "We're unable to offer what your are looking for," but continues, "however, if you're hungry can I get you something simple to eat. Do you like PB&J sandwiches?"

UPCOMING EVENTS

Night Ministry 50th Anniversary, May 3

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the San Francisco Night Ministry by joining us in several celebrations still to come. Wesla Whitfield and Mike Greensill have often performed at Old First, and they will be here again on Saturday, May 3, at 8:00 p.m. as a part of the anniversary there will be a reception following the concert, and admission will be \$50, \$20 for seniors and students. This is a great opportunity for Old First members to show appreciation to this ministry which has so faithfully supported and ministered to the marginalized in our city. Watch for other announcements about future events in this year of celebration.

It's Our Anniversary and We Are Going To Celebrate, May 4

May 4 marks the 165th Anniversary of Old First. To celebrate we are hosting a potluck after worship in the Fellowship Hall. We will be serving a honey-baked ham and turkey dinner with salads. Side dishes and desserts will be supplied by those attending. We will accept cash donations from those of you who don't cook. So don't worry. You will not be turned away. Plan on staying after worship and helping us celebrate. A short but highly interesting program is also planned for your enjoyment.

Temenos Catholic Worker 20th Anniversary, May 9

Join the Reverend River Damien Sims in remembering his twenty years of service among the sex workers and the homeless in San Francisco at Saint. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1755 Clay Street at Van Ness Avenue, Friday, May 9.

Anniversary Banquet with Will Tuttle, 5:00 pm: Will Tuttle, PhD, the author of *The World Peace Diet* will speak at the banquet. The meal is free. For More information contact River by telephone 415-305-2124 or E-mail temenos@gmail.com

Philip Workman Memorial with Helen Prejean, 7:30 pm: Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and *The Death of Innocents* will speak as we remember the unjust death of Philip Workman and those who are on death row today. For more information, contact Vicki Yeley by phone 650-364-3346 or Email: philipworkmanmemorialbanquet@gmail.com

Christian Education, May 11 and 18

The Christian Education Committee will hold a two-session program *TRIGGER: The Ripple Effect of Gun Violence* on two Sundays, May 11 and 18, at 9:30 am. in the Munro Room. Please invite your friends and neighbors to attend this important program.

Every day we see story after story on death and injury from gun violence. Every year there are 31,000 deaths due to gun violence, including 19,000 suicides. The debate on gun control and Second Amendment rights continues and there is no progress toward a solution. Take the time to engage in discussion to explore the question "What can we do to prevent gun violence?" and consider next steps for action.

The program features a documentary, produced by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, which shares the story of how gun violence impacts individuals and communities and examines the "ripple effect" that one shooting has on a survivor, a family, a community and society. Andrea Segura Smith will facilitate the program.

Old First Art and Architecture Tour, May 11, 18, 25

As Old First celebrates its 165th anniversary, it is appropriate to acknowledge the tangible reminders of our heritage, including our worship space and its adornment. Our building, in the Byzantine/Romanesque style, was completed 102 years ago and, in subsequent years it has been adorned with stained glass, ceiling stenciling and works of art that contribute to the worship of God in that space.

The building and its art work have interesting stories and during May, Steve Taber, who has participated in or overseen much of the building's fabric and art over the past twenty-five years, will lead a tour of the church to explain the history and meaning of what we see and possibly take for granted every Sunday.

Tours are planned for May 11, 18 and 25 and will start immediately after worship in the narthex and will last about half an hour, ending in the church library. If you are interested, please E-mail Steve at stephen@sstaber.com, or just show up.

Jamieson Prevoznak on Western Esoteric Traditions, May 25

The Christian Education Committee will host Jamieson Prevoznak, a student at San Francisco Theological Seminary on Sunday, May 25, at 9:30 am in the Munro Room.

Jamieson is in the third year of the master of divinity program at the seminary. He hopes to pursue ordination through the Presbyterian Church (USA) to become a chaplain in the United States Navy where now he is currently serving as an ensign and a chaplain candidate. He already has over ten years in the military. He is a member of St. John's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco and currently serves as intern at San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church in West Marin.

Jamieson will speak on Western esoteric tradition, their foundational period in ancient Egypt and Greece, the document known as the "Hermetica," and its principle character/author Hermes Trismegistus.

This class will view the long history of Western esoteric traditions from their origins in ancient Egypt and Greece, through their early modern and high modern foundations in the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and into the contemporary traditions and new religious movements. This class will be conducted from both academic/educational and practitioner/believer points of view.

SF Bike to Worship Week, May 25-June 1

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and the San Francisco Interfaith Council are sponsoring a Bike to Worship Week. Visit the coalition's website for more details: sfbike.org/worship/

EASTER BREAKFAST REPORT

Christians are told to feed the hungry. On Easter morning, Old First Presbyterian Church did just that. The largest crowd in recent history consumed 22 lbs of sausage links, 16 lbs of pancake batter mix, lots of syrup, five gallons of juice, and 33 lbs of freshly cut mixed fruit. We fed members, guests, neighbors and street people. It was a joyous morning and celebrated all that is good in our church. Thanks to all who came and shared. Alleluia!

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN MAY, 2014

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel Reading
May 04	Easter 3	Acts 2:14a, 36-41	116:1-4, 12-19	I Peter 1:17-23	Luke 24:13-35
May 11	Easter 4	Acts 2:42-47	23	I Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
May 18	Easter 5	Acts 7:55-60	31:1-5, 15-16	I Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
May 25	Easter 6	Acts 17:22-31	66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	Luke 24:44-53

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Saturday	May 03	SF Night Ministry Concert, 8:00 pm, Sanctuary
Sunday	May 04	OFPC Anniversary Lunch, 12:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Sunday	May 11	Christian Education, TRIGGER, 9:30 am, Munro Room
Sunday	May 11	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30 pm, Munro Room
Saturday	May 17	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Sunday	May 18	Christian Education, TRIGGER, 9:30 am, Munro Room
Tuesday	May 20	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room
Saturday	May 24	Saturday Community Meal, 5:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Sunday	May 25	Columbarium Ministry Team, 12:30 pm, Library
Monday	May 26	Memorial Day, Church Office closed

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, Linda Reyder, Randy Smith, Sally Spencer, Steve Taber; Operations, Betty Voris; Community Building; Priscilla Yu; Christian Education

Board of Deacons

Nina Berg, Cindy Burt, Carol Carter, Samuel Cheng, Hsiaochien Chuang, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, Dana Nojima, Leota Parker, Glen Potter, AnnieScott Rogers