

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

December 2015

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

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

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

## **Maggi's Musings**

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Advent began this past Sunday, November 28. Advent is a time to prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, which we will celebrate on Christmas Eve. As early as the 4th Century Christians set a time aside for devotion and a deepening of faith in the days before Christmas. This season we are guided by Isaiah 11:1-10. You will see this passage in liturgical art and music and in the word both spoken and read. We have also taken up the tradition of the Jesse Tree inspired by the Isaiah passage. Each week symbols of God's peace will be displayed on its branches.

I encourage you to take up and commit to an Advent practice: Regularly read ( maybe even memorize) the Isaiah passage, read and pray using the devotional booklet "Hark the Glad Sound," or begin to look for small shoots or sprouts of peace in the world. Let's be wild and talk and share with other church members or friends just what we are doing and experiencing during Advent. May God's peace and hope grow in us all, as we move towards the joy of Christmas.

Peace,

Pastor Maggi

## **Maggi on TV**

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Pastor Henderson was interviewed on the interfaith television show *Mosaic* on KPIX-TV Channel 5. The theme was Christmas. The show will be aired 5:00 am on December 20. Maybe someone could tape it so it can be shared with those who don't have a chance to watch.

## **Hark the Glad Sound: This Year's Advent Devotional**

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This year's advent devotional is all about beloved Christmas carols. Our booklet is by a church musician, Barry Bobb, and features twelve carols. Each section highlights the carol's words followed by a short but illuminating scripture passage. Then we have a meditation helping us reflect and dig deep into the meaning. A prayer concludes the written material. "Hear the Song" concludes each section with suggestions for audio or video presentations of the carol on the Internet.

The featured artists are quite varied and include a wide range of musical styles. They include Burl Ives, the Cambridge Singers, the Crash Test Dummies, Mary Chapin Carpenter, The Chieftains, and many more. An enriching possibility would be to repeat a reading on a different day listening to an alternate musical interpretation. Our music director may also include these carols during worship. The twelve carols are: *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *What Child is This*, *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* (a Basque carol), *My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord*, *Of the Father's Love Begotten*, *Once in Royal David's City*, *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime* (Huron carol), *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*, *Where Shepherds Lately Knelt*, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*, and *Mary Did You Know?*

If you have not yet picked up a copy of *Hark the Glad Sound*, check with an usher at worship or contact the church office to have one sent to you.

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**A Stump, a Wolf, and a Lamb! Advent Scripture Study, December 6 and 13, 9:30 am**

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What happens when a shoot comes from the stump of seemingly dead tree? That's the image we have in Isaiah 11, which will be our primary scriptural focus of our Advent worship. We'll even have a bare branch in the chancel. That is followed by the famous "peaceable kingdom" passage of the wolf lying down with the lamb. We will examine these scriptures and the metaphors they present in adult education on two Sundays in December. We will look at why these passages are so important in the Messiah covenants. We will think about where the stumps are in our lives and how we can find hope rising in a new shoot. December 13 is Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath. The class that day will look at the peaceable kingdom passage and how God brings peace and an end to violence. Erwin Barron and Andrea Segura Smith will lead these discussions at 9:30 on December 6 and 13 in the Munro Room.

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**Advent Art**

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During this Advent, the art in the panels behind the choir loft features two biblical themes: "The Peaceable Kingdom" from Isaiah 11:1-10, and "Mary Visits Elizabeth" from Luke 1: 39-45.



In the peaceable kingdom wild beasts, domestic animals, and children dwell together in peace. "They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). The artwork participants water-colored the creatures described in this passage. The real challenge came from the composition, as there were nearly twelve species that needed to be painted.

In the following theme, where Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth, the participants also water-colored and then hand decorated with fabric. Mary is the one wears blue. As the Advent passage moves on the two pregnant women will be added to the center of the art.

– The Worship Committee



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**A Season for Generosity: Pledges for 2016**

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Your pledge helps Old First Presbyterian Church plan for 2016 with wisdom. We received and dedicated our pledge cards on November 29; however, if you haven't submitted your pledge for the coming year, you can still 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 2016.

## **Upcoming Events for Advent and Christmas**

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### **Christmas Potluck, Sunday, December 6**

We will hold our Christmas potluck in the Fellowship Hall following worship on Sunday, December 6. The main course will be glazed ham. Please bring a salad, a side dish or a dessert to share. However, if you don't cook, a minimum donation is all that is necessary to begin the season with a great luncheon.

### **Sing-Along Messiah, Oakland, December 13**

Join Oakland's Annual Sing-Along Messiah at First Presbyterian Church, 2619 Broadway, Oakland. Join others on Sunday, December 13 at 4:00 pm; you can rehearse December 11 at 7pm. There is a suggested donation of \$10 to \$20 but no one will be turned away because of lack of funds. For more information, contact Cyril Deaconoff at [cyril@firstchurchoakland](mailto:cyril@firstchurchoakland) or call First Presbyterian Church at (510) 444-3555.

### **All Faiths' Day at the Interfaith Food Pantry, December 19**

On Saturday, December 19, all the participating churches will work together at the Food Pantry. You can be part of it and meet volunteers from the other churches. Come help unload the truck, bring food inside, distribute and clean up later. Contact Dana Nojima or [foodpantry@oldfirst.org](mailto:foodpantry@oldfirst.org).

### **Christmas Eve Party at Taber Home, December 24**

Members and friends of Old First are invited to the annual Christmas Eve potluck dinner at the home of Steve and Sarah Taber. The Taber's will provide the main course and you are asked to bring **an appetizer, side dish or dessert**. The party starts at 5:00 pm, giving you plenty of time to attend the Old First Christmas Eve service at 8:00 pm. Please contact Sarah to get directions and ideas for what you might bring.

### **Interfaith Winter Shelter Meal, January 3**

On Sunday, January 3, Old First Presbyterian Church will cook and serve a meal at the Interfaith Winter Shelter. Old First back in the day actually housed the shelter in our fellowship hall, so it will be good to get back to our roots. Look for more details in the weeks to come.

### **The Film *Traces of the Trade*, St Luke's Episcopal Church, December 4**

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In *Traces of the Trade*, seminary student and film producer Katrina Browne tells the story of her Rhode Island forebears — the deWolf family, the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. The film follows Browne and nine family members as they retrace the triangle of the slave trade and begin to think about how to address legacies of racial violence in the present. See the film, and enjoy refreshments and discussion with Dain Perry — who made the journey with Browne — as contemporary Christians consider both the problem of racism, past and present, and hopes for reconciliation and repair.

The film will be shown on **Friday, December 4, 6:30 p.m.**, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1755 Clay Street (at Van Ness Avenue): **Free Admission**.

### **Support the Larkin Street Christmas Gift Campaign, December 6**

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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 programs. Bring your **new, unwrapped gift** to church on **Sunday, December 6**. Gifts can include inexpensive, everyday items. A wish list is available in the Narthex and outside the Fellowship Hall. Look for the Larkin Street gift box in the Fellowship Hall or Bill or Marilyn Campbell.

You can also take or send a gift to Larkin Street's new Engagement and Community Center at 134 Golden Gate Avenue (between Jones and Leavenworth Streets) by **Friday, December 11**. The center is open weekdays from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Founded at Old First, Larkin Street offers innovative and comprehensive services that give homeless and at-risk youth ages 12-24 all the tools they need to reclaim their lives and become self-sufficient adults. Three out of four youth who complete Larkin Street's comprehensive program exit the street.

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**Gun Violence Prevention: Take Action! December 12**

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The gun violence prevention movement continues to build momentum in the political arena and social media. Here are two activities you can do now:

- **Call Senators Boxer and Feinstein** at 877-857-1909. This call includes instructions for when you reach a staff member or leave a voice mail. Provide:
  - Your name
  - Tell them to do more to fix our broken gun laws
  - Thank them for working on this issue
- **Go to the Gun Violence Prevention Rally** on Saturday, December 12, 12:30-2:30 pm at the United Nations Plaza. The Brady Campaign and rally sponsors are lining up many speakers on gun violence prevention, including Moms Demand Action. There will be music, food and beverages. Join folks from Old First: Look for the Old First sign.

There are also three online sites with more information about gun violence prevention:

The Brady Campaign	<a href="http://www.bradycampaign.org">www.bradycampaign.org</a>
Everytown for Gun Safety	<a href="http://www.everytown.org">www.everytown.org</a>
Moms Demand Gun Sense	<a href="http://www.momsdemandaction.org">www.momsdemandaction.org</a>

All three groups are on Facebook as well.

—Andrea Segura Smith

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**Christmas Joy Offering, December 20**

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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.

We can help sustain these important ministries through the Christmas Joy Offering on December 20 or by making an on-line gift at any time during the year. Watch for the bulletin inserts at Sunday worship. Learn more at [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org).

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**New Member/Inquirer Classes, January 10 and 17**

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New member/ inquirer classes will be held on January 10 and 17. On January 10 we will start with a lunch at 12:30 pm and conclude at 2:00 pm. On January 17 we will meet at 9:00 am. Please talk with Pastor Maggi, if you're interested. If these times or dates won't work for you, let her know and she will make sure to find a time that works. Call her: 415-776-5552, or E-mail her: [maggi@oldfirst.org](mailto:maggi@oldfirst.org).

**Beginning January 17, 2016**

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**The Story of the Bible: Exploring the Origins and Evolution of the Bible**

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The Bible is not a single book written as an integrated work. Rather, it is a collection of writings produced at different times by diverse communities and has been passed down to us together with a complex interpretive history.

During the first half of 2016, you can get an introduction to the fascinating story of how the Bible came into being as our holy book. Each Sunday at 12:30 (except the second Sunday of a month, Palm Sunday and Easter) beginning January 17, we will present video lectures by Luke Timothy Johnson, a professor at Emory University, followed by discussion.

This course includes who wrote the Bible and why, how it was edited reformulated, the various translations of the Bible, and how different groups of Christians and Jews interpreted it.

You are encouraged to attend the full series to follow the complete story, but each week's lecture stands on its own and it is not necessary to attend all of them to benefit from them. For more information, please contact Steve Taber at [Stephen@sstaber.com](mailto:Stephen@sstaber.com) or (415) 771-3358.

### **Coming in January 2016: All-Church Survey, “Holy Cow!”**

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Old First is beginning a planning process for the church’s future, and our starting point will be a survey of the entire congregation. Experts recommend that congregations look at their mission every five to ten years; and the last time we did this was in 2005, so we are due. We hope that that everyone will take part.

Old First has engaged a national consulting firm, Holy Cow! Consulting. (Yes, that’s its real name.) Holy Cow! has worked with over a thousand congregations and is highly recommended. We will take the same survey that hundreds of congregations have taken, including many in our denomination.

The Holy Cow! survey is comprehensive. It will take twenty to thirty minutes to complete. There are no wrong answers. We can complete the survey online or with pen and paper. All responses will be completely anonymous.

The survey will open on January 10 and close on January 31. When the survey is completed, the results will require interpretation, and a Holy Cow! facilitator will help us with that.

What do we hope we will learn from the survey? Six things:

- An in-depth look at the experiences, perceptions and aspirations of the congregation.
- The congregation's over-all level of satisfaction and energy.
- Where, in a general sense, the congregation would like to see Old First go.
- Some of the critical success factors in getting from where we are now to wherever we want to be in the future.
- A sense of our readiness for change. (As Ken McFayden has said, everybody wants to grow, but nobody wants to change.)
- Discovery of potential resources that we have missed.

The survey is an essential first step in our planning process. Old First wants everyone's participation to gain a good sense of where we are as a congregation. If we do have everyone's participation, the survey will be a big first step.

One of the survey questions asks how effective Old First has been in fulfilling its mission as expressed in its mission statement. You may want to save a copy of our mission statement, so you will have it in mind when you respond to the survey. (Our current mission statement, adopted in 2005, follows this article.)

Watch our website [www.oldfirst.org](http://www.oldfirst.org), our Facebook page, and the Sunday bulletins for updates about this survey.

### **Old First Presbyterian Church’s 2005 Mission Statement**

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#### **Our Purpose:**

To touch the lives of people in the city by God’s surprising grace.

#### **Our Mission:**

Opening ourselves to God, we...

*celebrate* the living God through worship,  
*build* a nurturing community from the diversity of the city,  
*grow* spiritually as informed Christians.

And seeking to touch the lives of others by God’s surprising grace in response, we...

*express* our Christian faith in ways that are relevant to the lives of urban dwellers,  
*touch* the lives of those in our broader community who need a helping hand,  
*practice* stewardship of our resources to support our multi-dimensional mission.

**October 2015 Church Retreat Report  
by Bill Chauvin and Tom Crusta**

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*This is a series written by different people, describing their experience and impressions of the retreat held at Mt. Hermon last month. There may be more in the future.*

We are new to Old First, having joined the choir just a few months ago. We have had the pleasure of singing with Larry Marietta for many years in the San Francisco City Chorus, a wonderful community choir, and we were thrilled to hear that he was now the music director at Old First, and we wanted to be a part of that. We are also friends with Jeanne Kirkwood, and so we have sung for special occasions a few times at Old First, but other than that, we knew little about the community. So when we heard that there was going to be a retreat, we thought it would be a great opportunity to get to know some of the members, and get a better feeling for just what Old First was all about. And we were right.

Three congregations came together for this retreat, and engaged Dr. Roger Nishioka to give a lecture series, and he was wonderful, funny, warm, and insightful. After his talks we would break into smaller groups, with each congregation forming separate groups. Through interaction in the Old First small group, by discussing the lecture series, we came to know some familiar faces as real people. But more than that, we grew to discover that Old First is a warm, welcoming and inclusive community. We felt we were instantly a part of the group, engaging in these discussions, voicing our views, and experiencing the many viewpoints of everyone else. We also came to know a bit about the various outreach opportunities that Old First has to offer. And, perhaps most importantly, through sharing meals, and just chatting, and playing charades and doing jigsaw puzzles, we came to feel that this group, although new to us, were not just new acquaintances, but new friends, and that we were now a part of the Old First community, and that felt very good.

We are both so glad to have had this opportunity to get to know Old First and its members better, and are appreciative of the warm reception, and strong feeling of inclusion that this retreat provided.

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**NEW EDITOR SOUGHT FOR *SHARED LIFE***

After many years of wonderful service as editor of *Shared Life*, Kristi Hoerauf is retiring. Might you be interested in this important ministry at Old First? To find out more about being editor, speak with Kristi or Pastor Maggi Henderson.

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**Help Brighten Advent and Christmas 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, December 20.

Please return this form with your payment in the offering plate no later than **Sunday, December 13**, or deliver them to the church office by Wednesday, December 16. 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.

Submit Box Below with Your Check

Your name:
The total dollar amount of your gift:
Add your dedication/s – <b>one</b> for each Ten Dollars (\$10) – and please state: "in memory of..." "in honor of..." or "in gratitude for..."

### Scripture in Worship during Advent

Date	Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading
December 6	Advent 2	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 1:5-25
December 13	Advent 3	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 1:26-28, (39-45)
December 20	Advent 4	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 1:57-80

### Other Dates to Note

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Saturday	December 5	Advent preparation, Sanctuary, 10:00 am
Sunday	December 6	Adult Education: Advent Scripture study, Munro Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	December 6	Christmas potluck, Fellowship Hall, 12:30 pm,
Sunday	December 13	Adult Education: Advent Scripture study, Munro Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	December 13	Deacons' Meeting, Munro Room, 12:30 pm
Tuesday	December 15	Session Meeting, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
Saturday	December 19	All Faiths' at the Interfaith Food Pantry
Saturday	December 19	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Thursday	December 24	Christmas Eve, Church Office closes at 1:00 pm
Thursday	December 24	Worship Service, Sanctuary, 8:00 pm
Friday	December 25	Christmas Day: Church office closed
Sunday	December 27	Christmas Hymn-Sing and Celebration, 11:00 am
Thursday	December 31	New Year's Eve, Church Office closes at 1:00 pm

### Officers of Old First Presbyterian Church

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#### Session

Christopher Burt, evangelism; Bill Campbell, mission and giving; Hsiaochien Chuang, worship; Gregory Free, treasurer; Kristi Hoerauf, finance; Harriet MacLean, personnel; Dana Nojima, operations; Jean Olson, clerk of session; Linda Reyder, worship; Steve Taber, planning; Betty Voris, community building; Priscilla Yu, Christian education

#### Board of Deacons

Nina Berg, Cindy Burt, Samuel Cheng, Diane Molberg, Alfred Martin, Bryan Nichols, Mary Russell, Randy Smith, Sarah Taber, Jian Wang