

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

February 2015

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 18, with a worship service at 7:00 pm. Lent is, as the PC (USA) website says,

a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Nineveh to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. (The Sundays in Lent are not counted in this reckoning of the time between Ash Wednesday and Easter, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of baptism at the Easter Vigil. In many communities of faith it remains a time to reflect deeply on the theme of discipleship.

During this season often people give something up that gets in the way of in following the ways of Christ. It is a way to examine what has a hold on us and what takes more of our attention than it should.

Alternatively, we might take on a new practice, refocusing our minds and hearts. This year I invite all of us to try taking on a new habit, finding a new practice. Here are two opportunities:

- **THE LORD'S PRAYER FOR LENT: WORSHIP, PRAYER LIFE, ADULT EDUCATION**

To be honest, we often reel off the Lord's Prayer without being aware of what are saying. So, on the Sundays of Lent, we will focus in our worship and praise on one line of this prayer at a time.

Along with this Sunday focus, you might well include the Lord's Prayer in your prayer life during the week, focusing on that week's verse. For example, you might focus on the verse each morning and then see how it affects or informs your day. You could even post insight to our Facebook page!

Adult education will also examine this prayer so central to Christianity. Several leaders will work us through six sessions of *Reflections on the Lord's Prayer: A Lenten Study* from the Thoughtful Christian publishing house. The series will start on Sunday, February 22, and continue through the Sundays of Lent lasting from 9:30 to 10:30 am in the Munro Room.

- **ALL-CHURCH READ: SARA MILES' CITY OF GOD: FAITH IN THE STREETS**

Another option for a new Lenten practice would be joining in the all-church reading of *City of God: Faith in the Streets* by Sara Miles. Many of you know Sara Miles from her book *Take This Bread*. Sara, a deacon at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in Potrero Hill, helped start their food pantry, and encouraged us in starting the Interfaith Food Pantry at Old First.

City of God focuses on Ash Wednesday 2012, when Sara Miles carried ashes out into the street and made this ancient Christian practice new again:

Sarah and her friends left their church building for the actual city of God; the crowded dollar stores, beauty shops, hospital waiting rooms, street corners and fast food joints of her neighborhood. They marked the forehead of neighbors and strangers, sharing blessings with waitresses and drunks, believers and doubters alike. As the story unfolds Sara reflects on her life in San Francisco over the last two decades, where the people of God suffer and rejoice, building community amidst the grit and beauty of the streets. —from the jacket

I just found it was a fascinating look at San Francisco and the meaning of faith and life in this complicated and wonderful city of San Francisco. It is an easy read yet I found myself savoring a line or

delving into an image she presented. It is just a great read. I look forward to discussing it with you. Copies will be available in coffee hour for \$15.00 each. You can also get it on your Kindle, Nook or through the public library.

Peace, Maggi

SPECIAL OFFERING FOR SF PRESBYTERY HUNGER FUND, FEBRUARY 15

Old First will receive a special offering on Sunday, February 15, to support the **Presbytery of San Francisco Hunger Fund**. The Presbytery's Hunger Fund provides grants to highly effective local hunger-relief programs like our own wonderful Interfaith Food Pantry.

Another outstanding local program is the Free Breakfast Program of Irvington Presbyterian Church in Fremont. This amazing collaboration between Irvington Presbyterian Church, Centerville Presbyterian Church and community groups:

- Serves hot, nutritious breakfasts three days each week to an average of 165 guests.
- Served 35,000 meals and distributed 9,000 bags of food in 2013.
- Is a volunteer effort with no paid staff.

The Presbytery Hunger Fund supported the Free Breakfast Program in 2014.

With our support, our Presbytery's churches can increase our collective impact in relieving hunger in the Bay Area. Unlike One Great Hour of Sharing, which addresses world-wide hunger, **the Presbytery Hunger Fund alleviates hunger in our own communities**. Until now, the sole source of funds for the Presbytery Hunger Fund has been the Five Cents a Meal program. Since only a few churches participate in Five Cents a Meal, it generates just a trickle of funds. As we began 2015, the Hunger Fund had only \$87.82—not enough to purchase food for one food pantry for a week. A new funding source is needed to support high-impact, local hunger-relief programs.

We can help change that through our special offering for the Presbytery of San Francisco Hunger Fund. On Sunday, February 15, please bring a check to church payable to Old First and put "Hunger Fund" in the memo line, or use a pew envelope and mark the box on the envelope for "Special Offering." Please generously support this offering.

OUR GIVING MAKES A DIFFERENCE: CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING, CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

This past December, Old First Presbyterian Church contributed \$832.00 to the Christmas Joy Offering, one of the four annual church-wide offerings of the Presbyterian Church, USA. Our Christmas Joy offering helps provide financial assistance to current and former church workers and their families and also enables deserving students to attend Presbyterian-related racial ethnic colleges and schools.

On Christmas Eve the offering received at Old First Presbyterian Church was over \$800, so that \$400 can be given to two non-profit programs that support families in crisis: Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and the Sojourn Chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital.

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Members and Session, February 1

On Sunday, February 1, new members of Old First Presbyterian Church will meet with Pastor Henderson in the Library at 9:00 am, will meet with the Session in Room A at 10:00 am, and will be received in worship, which begins at 11:00 am.

Sign Valentine's Day Cards, February 1

At coffee hour after worship, be sure to add your name to the Valentine's Day cards we will send to members and friends of Old First Presbyterian Church.

Homelessness Salon with Michael Berg, February 4

You are invited to Nina and Michael Berg's house for a discussion of the homelessness on Wednesday, February 4, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. We will start with pizza and finish with our group discussion.

Michael Berg, who has participated in Old First Presbyterian Church's response to homelessness for many years, will start the meeting with the history of our church's efforts and also the present status of homelessness in San Francisco.

After Michael's presentation we will engage in brisk discussion, questions, criticisms, and suggestions. The "salon" format provides group participation and varied ideas. We will be sitting in a circle in the Berg's living room so you may even throw soft objects at anyone you don't agree with – just kidding.

For more information and directions to the Berg's, please contact Michael Berg (cpaberg@aol.com, 415-932-6577) or Glen Potter (glenstevepotter@gmail.com, 415-515-7635).

Adult Education: Sanctity of Life, Every Sunday through February 15, 9:30-10:30 am

This course is exploring the concept that life, being the creation of God, is therefore to be preserved and protected. Starting with how life and death are dealt with in scripture and Christian tradition, we will discuss how Christians differ in the application of this idea. Some Christians observe the sanctity of life by opposing abortion and assisted suicide, while others do so by opposing war and capital punishment and working to save endangered species. We will explore where these ideas come from and why Christians are on both sides of these issues, thereby seeking to clarify our own positions.

- **Session 3, February 1:** This session will discuss the attitude of Christianity toward the sanctioned taking of human life, in such cases as war and capital punishment. When, if at all, can Christians deliberately kill other human beings?
- **Session 4, February 8:** This session will discuss suicide and euthanasia, focusing on when, if at all, life should be ended for humanitarian or other reasons, including assisted suicide and withdrawal of life support. Can life be ended for humanitarian reasons?
- **Session 5, February 15:** This session will discuss Christian attitudes toward non-human life and preservation of eco-systems, including such matters as ethical treatment of animals, vegetarianism, and stewardship of the environment. Does the sanctity of life extend to non-human life?

February Potluck, February 15



Everyone is invited to our February Potluck, set for Sunday, February 15, following worship. The "We Love our Church and Each Other" luncheon will feature another dazzling array of menu items designed to please any and all palates. If you cannot bring a dish to share, you can make a \$5 donation instead. Sign up on Sunday during coffee hour.

Ash Wednesday, February 18

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18. Join us for worship at Old First Presbyterian Church at 7:00 pm as we begin our Lenten journey toward Holy Week and Easter.

OFPC Staffs Interfaith Food Pantry, February 21

Old First Presbyterian Church is responsible for providing all the volunteer staff needed for the Interfaith Food Pantry on Saturday, February 21. Come help unload the truck, bring food inside, distribute and clean up later. Contact Dana Nojima or foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

Congregational Meeting, February 22

After worship on Sunday, February 22, 2015, Old First Presbyterian Church will hold a congregational meeting to take action on the pastor's terms of call and the nominated slate of church officers. (You can also pick up your One Great Hour of Sharing "fish box.")

NEWS

If I Go, a New Novel by Diane Molberg

Old First Presbyterian Church member Diane Molberg is pleased to announce the release of her debut novel, *If I Go*. Of the novel, one reviewer has written:

If I Go is a compelling coming-of-age saga that begins in 1956 in a small town in the American West, and moves to the beginning of the Beat Generation in San Francisco in the early Sixties. The novel introduces Buck Malone, a young writer aching to discover his story, Lorrie Rathburn,

a pretty Rodeo Queen longing for approval, her lover Ray Perez, seeking escape from his violent Mexican-American immigrant father, and beautiful Pauline Moon, a Native American woman who can't be saved either by her talent as a painter or by Buck's love. With shimmering prose and unforgettable characters, Molberg takes readers from the dusty bluffs of Colorado to the narrow streets of San Francisco's artist-filled North Beach. IF I GO is filled with the longings of youth and life on the edge. It asks the important questions: how does a writer truly become a writer? How does our youth echo within us? What does it mean to go away? And what does it mean to come back again? –Ericka Lutz, author of The Edge of Maybe

The book has been released both in an E-version for Kindle, Nook, iPad and other e-devices and also in print. Please log on to Diane's web site (www.dianemolberg.com) to order either the digital or print version. A percentage of the sales to members of Old First Presbyterian Church will be given to the church.

Saturday Community Dinner: Reflections

The Saturday Community Dinner working group asked guests for the feedback on dinners. Some of their responses can be found on the bulletin board in Sacramento Street lobby and Fellowship Hall. Thanks go to Gabby Beck-Engeser for putting this together.

Election Connection 1: Ballot Simplification Committee – A Unique San Francisco Tradition

For those of you who have attended Betty Packard Voris' voter workshop each election, you may be interested in the video created and featured on SF Gov TV as well as YouTube. (Access information is listed below.) The same information also can be found on the web under the SF Department of Elections: Ballot Simplification Committee. Note that Betty Voris goes by Betty Packard in her professional life.

SF Gov TV: Election Connection 1: Ballot Simplification Committee-A Unique San Francisco Tradition

YouTube: <http://youtu.be/O0eBt83XFGE>

Ten-Digit Dialing Mandatory as of February 21

Earlier this year, the California Public Utilities Commission approved two area codes for the region that have been served by the 415 area code. Existing phone numbers will continue, but new local phone numbers will be issued with 628 as the area code. Ten digit dialing will become mandatory for placing *all* local calls in San Francisco on February 21, so remember to change all numbers in speed-dial memories or cell phones to include the area code. And when leaving a message, don't leave people guessing – include the area code with your phone number. The church office telephone number remains 415-776-5552.

Old First Presbyterian Church Pulpit Exchange with St Andrew's East, Glasgow

During this coming summer Old First Presbyterian Church will take part in a pulpit exchange with St Andrew's East Parish Church in Glasgow, Scotland, and the minister, the Reverend Barbara Quigley. Barbara Quigley will minister here and Pastor Henderson will minister there. This exchange offers both congregations and their clergy a chance to learn from each other about the different perspectives, challenges and opportunities of Presbyterian life and mission in different cultural contexts.

Watch for more details in the coming months. Meanwhile you can look up St Andrew's East on FaceBook (search on "St Andrew's East Parish Church") and get to know their minister and members.

THANKS TO OFPC FROM THE HOMELESS PRENATAL PROGRAM

Pastor Henderson received the following letter, dated January 14, from the Homeless Prenatal Program thanking Old First Presbyterian Church for gift of supplies for babies gathered by the church on Epiphany Sunday.

Dear Pastor Maggi and Kind Members,

On behalf of the Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP), thank you for your thoughtful donation of diapers, new baby clothes and gifts collected in observation of the Epiphany on January 4, 2015.

Your continued generosity is appreciated by all of our families!

We also would like to thank you for each year opening your doors to HPP for our annual family holiday party. Your church is a perfect setting for what always turns out to be a lovely celebration for our families. More than 100 families – 185 children! – sat down to a warm meal while enjoying the Christmas carols played by our pianist Don. The children made Christmas decorations [and] had their photo taken with Santa, and each child left with a new book and socks.

We missed having the help of our dear friend Fernando, but we were so happy he joined us for lunch and the celebration. Please extend our thanks to Brad for always helping to coordinate the day and also David for set up and clean up.

Once again, on behalf of the parents who have transformed their lives for their children, themselves, and their communities, please accept our heartfelt appreciation.

Warm thanks,

Martha Ryan, Founder and Executive Director

Added in pen were the following words:

I love the visual [image] of the Feast of the Epiphany and the bringing of gifts to mothers & babies in need. Your service to and involvement in the community we serve is treasured. Thank you for these treasures for our new families. Best wishes for a healthy, peaceful & wonderful 2015 for all! –M.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR CHURCHES BY CAMERON TRIMBLE

- **Ignore the headlines.** Remember, headlines are designed for shock factor and never tell the full story. Headlines about Mainline and progressive churches portray the church as dying. Yes, congregational life is changing and denominational structures are adapting, but the Church is not dying.
- **Dream bigger.** Churches are not fading, but that we are dreaming too small. Obsessed with filling our Sunday pews, we fail to see the multitude of ways we make a difference in our communities the other six days of the week. What can your church do to live its faith so boldly and powerfully that the world is changed by dreaming bigger?
- **Collaborate.** We can't dream alone. Today we face societal challenges that are too large, complex and fast-changing for any one entity to adequately address alone. Work with businesses, government, and other faiths and non-profit organizations in our communities to address the great needs of our age.
- **Simplify.** Most of our congregations were designed in an age when hierarchical, corporate structures brought order and stability to our institutions. Today, we live in a networked, adaptive world where we've got outdated structures that are now destroying those congregations. Free your people to be in ministry, not management.
- **Find Your passion.** Freed up to minister means defining your passions. You will go somewhere as a congregation this year no matter what; make sure it is where you want to go. What do you want to be able to say on December 31, 2015 that you can't say now? As the theologian and civil rights leader, Howard Thurman, reminds us, "Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs are people who have come alive." Where is your church going...with passion and on purpose?
- **Create Your "Don't" List.** Just because your congregation can do something doesn't mean that it should. Stop doing some of those things that take up too much time with too little result. For just one year. See what happens. I bet you will find the Spirit leading you in new, exciting directions.
- **Take Voice Lessons.** Encourage leaders to reclaim their prophetic voices and speak out in protest about the injustices that fly in the face of Christian principles. Reclaim and proclaim our story of a more just and generous Christianity to provide our culture with much-needed hope. Many people who are looking for a community of acceptance and grace guided by Micah 6:8: "God has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." That is what the world is hungry for.

A THANK YOU NOTE FROM TRACY CLAGETT

Thank you Maggi, George, the choir, Don, AnnieScott, Glen, Bryan and Robin, the deacons, Hugh, and all the other members of our blessed church family who produced a memorial service and reception that did full honor to Barry: Just amazing in every part. –Tracy

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

| Date | Day | 1 st Reading | Psalm | 2 nd Reading | Gospel Reading |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| February 1 | Epiphany 4 | Deut. 18:15-20 | 111 | 1 Cor. 8:1-13 | Mark 1:21-28 |
| February 8 | Epiphany 5 | Isaiah 40:21-31 | 147:1-11, 20c | 1 Cor.9:16-23 | Mark 1:29-39 |
| February 15 | Transfiguration of the Lord | 2 Kings 2:1-12 | 50:1-6 | 2 Cor. 4:3-6 | Mark 9:2-9 |
| February 18 | Ash Wednesday | Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 | 51:1-17 | 2 Cor.5:20b- 6:10 | Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21 |
| February 22 | Lent 1 | Genesis 9:8-17 | 25:1-10 | 1 Peter 3:18-22 | Mark 1:9-15 |

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

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| Sunday | February 1 | Christian Education Committee, 12:30 pm, Library |
| Sunday | February 8 | Deacons Meeting, 12:30pm, Munro Room |
| Sunday | February 15 | Potluck after Worship, Fellowship Hall |
| Monday | February 16 | Presidents Day: Church Office Closed |
| Wednesday | February 18 | Ash Wednesday, Worship 7:00 pm |
| Saturday | February 21 | Old First Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry. |
| Saturday | February 21 | Presbyterian Women, noon, Library |
| Sunday | February 22 | First Sunday in Lent: OGHS “Fish Boxes” Available |
| Sunday | February 22 | 4 th Sunday Small Group, 12:30pm, Library |
| Tuesday | February 24 | Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room |

THE OFFICERS OF OLD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Session

George Becker, personnel; Michael Berg, mission and giving; Bill Campbell, mission and giving; Hsiaochien Chuang, worship; Gregory Free, treasurer; Harriet MacLean, planning; Jeanne Kirkwood, clerk of session; Jean Olson, mission and giving; Linda Reyder, worship; Randy Smith, planning; Sally Spencer; Steve Taber, operations; Betty Voris, community-building; Priscilla Yu, Christian education

Board of Deacons

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