

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

January 2015

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

This Sunday, January 4, we begin celebrating Epiphany. During this season we remember the wise men that followed the star to Bethlehem to worship the infant Jesus. (See Matthew 2:1-12.)

Epiphany is the celebration of God's manifestation or self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God's covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Christ. –from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship*

The word “epiphany” – from the Greek *epiphaneia* – means “appearance” or “manifestation” of God, and shares roots with the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god. For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. For many this has been a time to reflect on what we will bring to offer of ourselves to God as follow Jesus this new year of 2015.

Last year people picked up Epiphany star words at worship. These included words such as “**discovery,**” “**forgiveness,**” “**vigilance,**” “**zeal,**” “**confession,**” “**examination,**” “**heart,**” “**lenience,**” and “**grace**” – to name a few. Mine was “**concentration.**” For months it hung on the pulpit as I preached and when my mind was swirling on details and the next thing, it encouraged me to breathe, to be fully present, and to focus on what I was doing at that moment. I wonder how your star words interacted with your life this year. I invite you dust your 2014 words off and reflect on how it may have shaped or informed your year. In worship on January 4 you will receive a new word. If you're not in worship you can get one from the ushers in the coming weeks. Let us – as individuals and as a community – look for moments of God's light, for *aha!* moments, for clarity as we seek to follow Jesus anew season.

Peace, Pastor Maggi

OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW IN FAITH

New Members/Inquirers Classes, January 18 and 25, Library

Classes for new members and inquirers will be held in the library on two Sundays, January 18 and 25, from 9:00 am to 10:30 am. Speak to Pastor Maggi or E-mail her (maggi@oldfirst.org), if you would like to know more or to let her know that you'll attend.

Adult Education: Sanctity of Life, Starting January 18, Munro Room

"Sanctity of Life" is a five-part adult education program lead by Steve Taber. Starting Sunday, January 18, Old First's adult education program starts a five session class on the sanctity of life. This course will explore 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 1, January 18

This session will cover Christian concepts about the nature of life and, in particular, discuss scriptural passages and theology that are the basis of Christian thought regarding life and death.

Session 2, January 25

This session will discuss how Christian teaching affects attitudes towards abortion, including scriptural references to abortion and how scripture deals with the "personhood" of a fetus. Does the killing of a fetus violate the sanctity of life? What does our faith tell us about factors such as the role and responsibilities of the mother, the father, and the community?

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?

Note: The classes will be held on Sunday mornings at a time to be announced in early January. Please check the church bulletin or web-site after January 11.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

New Church Officers for 2015

The Old First Nominating Committee for 2015 is formed and ready to consider suggestions for the next class of Deacons and Elders! Your Nominating Committee consists of the following members: Randy Smith (Committee Chair), Tracy Clagett, John Sebastian, Buddy Tate Choy, Michael Bene, Cindy Burt, and Harriet MacLean. We hope to receive all suggestions for nominations by mid-February 2015. Please listen to your heart and ponder if it is your time to serve your congregation as a Deacon or Elder. You don't have to wait for the Nominating Committee to ask you! If you have recommendations for Deacon or Elder – including yourself – please send a short email to NomCom@oldfirst.org.

Presbytery of San Francisco Hunger Fund

The congregations of the Presbytery of San Francisco offer much-needed programs to alleviate hunger in our communities. The presbytery's Hunger Fund supports programs like our own wonderful Interfaith Food Pantry through grants. The Interfaith Food Pantry served 282 households in December.

Another example of an outstanding program that the Presbytery Hunger Fund has supported is Irvington Presbyterian Church's Free Breakfast Program in Fremont. This is a collaboration among 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 completely volunteer-run effort with no paid staff.

With our support, our Presbytery's congregations 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 here in our area. 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 a tiny trickle of funds. This is why a new funding model is needed.

Old First will receive a special offering on Sunday, February 15, to support the Presbytery Hunger Fund. We can write checks to Old First and write "Hunger Fund" in the memo line or use a pew envelope and mark the box on the envelope for "Special Offering." Please consider generously supporting this offering.

Your Pledge for 2015

Your pledge helps Old First Presbyterian Church plan and budget for 2015 with wisdom. If you haven't submitted your pledge for the coming year, please do so. Pledge cards are available from an usher or the church office. You can then 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 2015.

New Address for Craig Kehne

Craig Kehne has moved. He is now at Eden Villa, 2750 Geary Boulevard, SF CA 94118. Eden Villa is a block and a half west of Masonic Avenue. Note that the entrance door is around corner to the west on Wood Street.

Epiphany Sunday, January 4: Diapers, Baby Wipes, Clothing

This coming Sunday, January 4, we will celebrate the Epiphany. Epiphany means appearance or revelation and refers to the three foreign wise men from the East – not Jews but Gentiles – who learn of Christ’s birth and come to honor him and to bring him gifts.

We too will remember children in need, so for our offering next week please bring packages of **diapers, baby wipes and infant clothing**. These will be collected and passed along to the Homeless Prenatal Program, a non-profit serving expectant mothers and new-borns who are homeless or living in our city’s shelters.

OFPC Staffs Interfaith Food Pantry, January 10

Old First is responsible for providing the volunteer needed for the Interfaith Food Pantry, Saturday, January 10. Come help unload the truck, bring food inside, distribute and clean up later. Contact Dana Nojima or foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

MLK JR DAY MARCH, JANUARY 19



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 19**. 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.

KUDOS!

Christmas Eve Offering: LSPC, Sojourn Chaplaincy

Thank you to all who contributed so generously on Christmas Eve: The offering totaled over \$800 and will be given to two non-profit programs that support families in crisis: Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC) and Sojourn Chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH).

LSPC organizes communities impacted by the criminal justice system and advocates to release incarcerated people, to restore human and civil rights and to reunify families and communities. Among their programs is the Family Unity Project: Staff members meet with parents in prison who struggle daily to maintain relationships with their families. They talk with children who wish they knew their parents, and work within communities decimated by incarceration and missing mothers, fathers, daughters and sons.

Sojourn Chaplaincy is a multi-faith chaplaincy and spiritual care program at SFGH that was originally formed and developed in 1982 when the Episcopal Diocese of California partnered with SFGH to establish an HIV/AIDS ministry for hospital and outpatient patients. Sojourn provides a critical element of the care offered at SFGH by attending to the spiritual needs of patients, staff and their families.

OFPC Helps Bring Christmas to Homeless Youth

A huge thank you to all Old First members, friends and staff who generously brought Christmas gifts to church to 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 participate in Larkin Street's drop-in centers and programs.

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.

Larkin Street Youth Services Honors OFPC Member Bill Campbell

Larkin Street Youth Services honored Bill Campbell with its Volunteer of the Year Award for 2014. Larkin Street was started at Old First Presbyterian Church, and Bill was one of the leaders of that effort. A member of the board for many years, Bill has written 25-year and 30-year histories of the nonprofit. He currently serves on Larkin Street's Honorary Board and its Marketing Committee.

Bill and his wife, Marilyn, collect day-old breads and pastries six days a week at La Boulange Bakery and deliver them to Larkin Street sites. Marilyn is a full-time Larkin Street volunteer and a previous recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award. In accepting the award, Bill noted that he is not even the Volunteer of the Year in his own family, but he knew that Larkin Street "couldn't give the award to Marilyn every year."

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN JANUARY, 2015

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel Reading
January 4	Epiphany Sunday	Jeremiah 31:7-14	147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9) 10-18
January 6	Epiphany of the Lord	Isaiah 60:1-6	72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
January 11	Baptism of the Lord	Genesis 1:1-5	29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
January 18	Epiphany 2	1 Samuel 3:1-10, 11-20	139:1-6, 13-18	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
January 25	Epiphany 3	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	62:5-12	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Thursday	January 1	New Year's Day, Church Office Closed
Saturday	January 10	Old First Presbyterian Church Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry
Sunday	January 11	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30pm, Munro Room
Saturday	January 17	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Sunday	January 25	4 th Sunday Small Group, 12:30 pm, Library
Tuesday	January 27	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; Barry Clagett, finance; 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, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, Leota Parker, Glen Potter, AnnieScott Rogers, and Jian Wang