

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

March 2015

Church Website: oldfirst.org

Church Photostream: flickr.com/photos/oldfirst

Old First Concerts: oldfirstconcerts.org

Maggi's Musings

This year as we move into Lent and prepare for One Great Hour of Sharing, I remain grateful for the transformations made possible through this special offering. In places like Kitui, Kenya; Asheville, North Carolina; and Iona, Michigan, those most in need are finding hope and help through the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Self-Development of People program, and their partners in ministry. In this media-driven environment of “the next big story,” it is easy to be distracted from the reality faced by our brothers and sisters around the world where poverty, disaster, and war cause displacement and suffering.

This is why we continue to give to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). When we give this year, we give in faith—assured that staff in the three OGHS programs will respond in Christ’s name to the cries of our sisters and brothers throughout the next year. We trust that they will respond as they did in West Africa in the wake of the devastating Ebola crisis: immediately, directly, and through local partners wherever the emergency occurs. But equally important, we know that they will remain in those areas long after the news cameras have moved elsewhere, and stay with local people as they continue rebuilding lives and communities.

Feeding the hungry, helping people build up their own livelihoods, responding to disasters—these are all ways that your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing change lives, communities and the world. You will hear more about the offering in worship on during March.

That brings me to the challenge, which also relates to our support of One Great Hour of Sharing. While we trust our OGHS programs to respond to the needs of our poorest and hungriest neighbors, those programs can only do so to the extent of our generosity. I challenge each of you to take a “fish box” found in the narthex. As you put coins or bills in, take time to offer prayers of thanks and of concern for others. You might give thanks for a kindness shown to you. You might say a prayer for whatever group or individual is in the news. This can be one of your Lenten spiritual practices. Then on Easter Sunday add to our special offering through OGHS. You can use the special envelope in the bulletin and place it in the offering plate that day or mail it to the church. Make sure you write clearly on your check or envelope that it is for OGHS. Start dropping your coins and bills in your fish box and consider increasing your gift to the offering—you’ll see how giving opens your heart to God’s work in your own life.

I hope you will join us April 5 for Easter Sunday worship and that you will join Christians all across the country in opening their hearts to witness tangibly to the abundant love of God through One Great Hour of Sharing.

Peace, Maggi

Holy Week and Easter Sunday

Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday, March 29, Worship 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday, April 2, Worship 6:30 pm

Good Friday, April 3, Tenebrae Worship Service 8:00 pm

Easter Sunday, Christ’s Resurrection, April 5: Pancake Breakfast 9:00 am, Worship 11:00 am

Practical Matters

Daylight Savings Time Begins March 8

Daylight Savings Time begins next Sunday. Make your clocks “spring forward” one hour before bedtime on Saturday night.

Ten Digit Dialing

To reach the church office from within the area of the 415 and 628 telephone codes, you must now dial a 1 and the ten digits for the church, that is, 1-415-776-5552.

Like Us on Facebook!

Old First has active presence on FaceBook. Check it out to see what is happening!

On-Line Devotions by Computer, Smart Phone

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: www.presbyterianmission.org/devotion/feeds/atom/daily/.
- This office also has an app for your phone, use the words “daily prayer” – the app is available for just a small cost. You’ll receive both morning and evening prayer.
- You can also find another great on-line daily devotional for Lent and the whole 365-day year from d365 at www.d365.org.

Prayers in Worship: Mission Yearbook on FaceBook, Twitter

Have you ever wondered where the prayers for the world in Sunday’s prayers of the people come from? Pastor Maggi finds them in the Presbyterian Mission Yearbook, a publication of the Presbyterian Mission Agency in both hard-copy and electronic versions. You can subscribe to get Presbyterian Mission Yearbook stories and prayer E-mail. Navigate to www.pcusa.org/yearbook. You can also follow the yearbook on Facebook and Twitter (@MYB4Prayer).

Interim Music Director Larry Marietta

The search committee for a new Music Director is pleased to announce that Larry Marietta has been hired to serve as our interim music director. This does not preclude him from consideration for the position as music director at Old First, as this is not a “called” position.

Larry is originally from Pittsburgh, PA. His music education includes a Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance Major with Voice Minor from the West Virginia University (for the geographically challenged, WVA is not that far from Pittsburgh), Certificate in Advanced Choral Conduction from Aspen Institute of Music, Masters of Fine Arts in Conduction, both choral and orchestral from Carnegie Mellon University and an Advanced Choral Conduction Certification from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. He has been a lecturer and accompanist at Holy Names University in Oakland and a lecturer introducing opera at Contra Costa College in San Pablo.

Upon moving to San Francisco in the mid 1990’s, he served extensively at First Congregational Church in Berkeley as organist and director. He became the director of the San Francisco City Chorus in 1997 and he continues to serve in that position.

Larry started as interim on February 8, 2015 and stepped into the position with just one rehearsal with the choir on the previous Thursday. By the time you read this edition of *Shared Life*, you will have had a chance to experience his talents at the organ, piano and conducting the choir. He also played at Craig Kehne’s memorial service.

Christian Education for Lent, Sundays in Lent

The Sunday morning adult education program for Lent continues every Sunday through March 29, from 9:30 to 10:30 am, in the Munro Room. These sessions will be based upon "Reflections on the *Lord's Prayer: A Lenten Study*. Each class is a stand-alone unit so you can come to one or all.

Leader	Session	Topic
Brian Nichols	March 1	Your kingdom come, your will be done.
Alfred Martin	March 8	On Earth as it is in heaven.
Erwin Barron	March 15	Give us this day our daily bread.
Diane Molberg	March 22	Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Mary Russell	March 29	Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil.

All-Church Read: Sara Miles's *City of God*, Discussion Sessions March 11 and 15

Join in the all-church reading of *City of God: Faith in the Streets* by Sara Miles. Copies are available for \$15.00 each on Sundays at coffee hour. There will be at least two opportunities to discuss the book.

The first discussion session will be held on **Wednesday, March 11**, at 6:00 pm at Thai Spice, 1730 Polk Street: Get a bite to eat and then discuss the book. Please E-mail Maggi (maggi@oldfrist.org) by **Tuesday, March 10** to let her know you're interested.

A second discussion session will be held on **Sunday, March 15**, after worship at the church. Fresh fruit will be available, but feel free to bring your lunch. Again, let Maggi know, if you can make it.

Art Project for Lent

This Lent, you are invited to participate in art that symbolizes what we as Christians are seeking within our community and around the world: comfort from God in the midst of human suffering. We will pray and weave yarns/strings to cover a cross made out of steel nails. The art will be display in the sanctuary from the second week of Lent for participation. Further information will follow. –Worship Committee

Interfaith Food Pantry, March 21

All the churches join together in providing volunteers for All Faiths' Day at the food pantry on March 21. Come help unload the truck, bring food inside, distribute and clean up later. Contact Dana Nojima or foodpantry@oldfrist.org.

Easter Day Pancake Breakfast, April 5, 9:00 am

Our annual Easter Pancake Breakfast featuring pancakes, sausage, fruit, juice, coffee/tea will be held in the Fellowship Hall from 9 am to 10:30 am on Easter morning. See you there!

Stop Hunger Now, April 25

On Saturday, April 25, Old First will participate again with Stop Hunger Now to package 10,000 packages with sufficient ingredients to make a number of meals. Specific details will be forthcoming, but the location will be the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown.

Stop Hunger Now distributes food and other life-saving aid to vulnerable children and families around the world, and works to help end world hunger. We package and ship meals to feed people in need through community-supported meal-packaging programs that engage half a million volunteers a year.

Since we were founded in 1998, we have provided over 140 million meals in 51 countries. This year, we will package 45 million meals, and ship over \$9 million in donated aid, mainly vitamins and medical supplies. We continually strive to be good stewards of the contributions we receive. In 2013, we carefully managed administrative and fundraising costs, allowing us to invest 88.5% of expenses in our programs.

Feature Story: Muslims Stand with Christians against Attacks on Churches in Niger

Niger, West Africa: February 25, 2015

Special to Presbyterian News Service, Josh Heikkila, Mission Co-Worker

On January 16 and 17, in response to satirical cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed published in France, extremist elements in the West African country of Niger destroyed churches and Christian homes and businesses in the capital, Niamey, and the regional capital, Zinder. In all, more than fifty churches of various Christian denominations were burned. Dozens of Christian families were left homeless. The PC(USA) partner in Niger, the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger (EERN), lost five church buildings, two manses, and homes belonging to a half dozen member families.

Although the government of Niger at first appeared slow to prevent the attacks, it has strongly denounced the violence. The President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, asked this of his country's people: "What have the Christians of Niger done to deserve this? Where have they wronged you?" In the aftermath of events, the president met with Christian leaders and promised government assistance in rebuilding churches and ensuring their continued safety and security.



A Sunday School still burning at Niamey, Niger, after Islamist demonstrations on January 17.

The EERN runs several primary schools as well as a health facility, and although some were also attacked, local Muslim residents came out to protect them. In an incredible show of solidarity, many Muslims stood up to safeguard churches in their neighborhoods and to shelter Christians who were physically threatened. Although a small group of people took advantage of the political and religious climate to perpetrate these acts, the overwhelming majority of Niger's population seems shocked and saddened.

In the fall of 2013, the Reverend Sani Nomaou, then President of the EERN, came to the US as part of the PC(USA)'s International Peacemaking Program. He visited churches and presbyteries in New York, Virginia, and Minnesota, speaking about the EERN's efforts to build peace in Niger.

In response to the January attacks, Nomaou told BBC radio: "I call on every single believer in Niger to forgive and forget, to love Muslims with all their heart, to keep up the faith, to love Christ like never before. I implore believers to see all Muslims in Niger as our brothers and sisters. I am saying this with tears on my cheeks. Although it is painful, and what we are experiencing is really difficult, we are God's children. We must love our persecutors. We must welcome them into our houses, give them food when they are hungry, give them a drink when they are thirsty. We are called to be different. We are people of peace. Let no one seek revenge. God will strengthen us in this difficult time. Muslims in Niger, we love you with the love of Jesus Christ."

Not long after these events, on the weekend of February 6, Niger faced another serious threat to its peace and security when the Nigerian militant group Boko Haram attacked Niger for the first time, striking the far eastern city of Diffa. In response to the attack, Christian families quickly fled, fearing for their safety. The EERN was able to safely evacuate all of its members from Diffa, as the military of Niger began a campaign to fight off Boko Haram, and has found temporary refuge for them on church grounds in the central city of Maradi.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has three mission co-workers currently in Niger, who are in safe locations and are being well cared for by EERN. "We ask Presbyterians to join the EERN as they pray and work for peace in Niger, together with their Muslim neighbors," said Debbie Braaksma, who heads PC(USA)'s Africa Area office. "We appeal for support, to help rebuild burned churches, and to care for those who have been forced from their homes due to the violence." To learn more about what is going on in the PC(USA) and with people of faith around the world go to pcusa.org.

Gene Phelps has New Address: Sonoma CA

Old First member Gene Phelps has moved to Sonoma, California, to be closer to family. To drop him a letter or card, contact the church office for his new mailing address.

A Story from Glasgow: Excerpts from St Andrew's East Parish Newsletter

The following is an excerpt from the January edition of the monthly newsletter from St Andrew's East Parish Church of the Church of Scotland in Glasgow. This coming summer Old First Presbyterian Church and St Andrew's East will exchange pastors. You can also learn more about St Andrew's East by visiting them on FaceBook.



Stewardship

Thank you to everyone who came to our "talents" coffee morning in November. What a wonderful array of skills we have in St. Andrews East.

Also a big "well done" to the folks who braved the snow to come to the pot luck supper and games night on 16th January: lots of fun and good food. (Some very competitive people! Pointing no elbows!)

We will be having a fish supper and film night on Friday 20th March at 6pm. Any suggestions for a film, let me know. Some people have already spoken to me, so get in quick.

– Elizabeth [a member of the parish]

Lilies and Music for Easter

Old First Presbyterian Church invites you to add to the Easter celebration at Old First Presbyterian Church by making a donation toward Easter lilies for the sanctuary and special music for Easter Sunday worship. Submit your contribution and dedication to the church office by **Monday, March 16**. Your contributions can honor someone living, remember the dead or give thanks for a blessing.

- The suggested contribution for **EACH gift and dedication is \$20**.



- To be included in the Easter bulletin, all contributions must be received at the church office no later than **Monday, March 16**.
- For each gift of \$20, please submit your name, your choice of **either lilies OR music**, and ONE dedication in memory, honor or thanksgiving of someone or of some event.
- Lilies will remain in the Sanctuary until after worship on the Second Sunday of Easter. At that time, the lilies may be taken home, shared with a friend, or planted in your garden. (Brad has seven in his garden that have come up from previous years, and they look like they'll bloom in time for Easter.)

Thank you in advance for your contribution to our Easter Celebration!

Preaching Lectionary at OFPC: The Sundays in March, 2015

Date	Day	1 st Reading	2 nd Reading
March 1	Lent 2	Exodus 17:1-17	John 4:1-42
March 8	Lent 3	Isaiah 35:4-7	John 9:1-41
March 15	Lent 4	Ezekiel 37:1-14	John 11:1-46
March 22	Lent 5	1 Kings 17:8-16	John 12:1-11
March 29	Passion Sunday/Palm Sunday	Mark 11:1-11	Mark 15:1-15

Other Dates to Note

Sunday	March 8	Deacons Meeting, 12:30 pm, Munro Room
Saturday	March 21	All Faiths' day at the Interfaith Food Pantry
Saturday	March 21	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Sunday	March 22	4 th Sunday Small Group, 12:30pm, Library
Tuesday	March 24	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room
Sunday	March 29	Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday, Worship 11:00 am
Thursday	April 2	Maundy Thursday, 6:30 pm
Friday	April 3	Good Friday, 8:00 pm
Sunday	April 5	Easter Sunday, Pancake Breakfast 9:00 am, Worship 11:00 am

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