

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

January 2016

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

EPIPHANY LIGHT

FOLLOW THAT STAR

Once a small star led wise seekers to Bethlehem,
Now bright lights dazzle and lead us astray;
Worldlywise people, seduced by prosperity,
How can we hope to find Jesus today?

Seek out the family who circle their precious one,
Body or mind needing care night and day;
See the star shining where costly love's pouring out;
How can we hope to find Jesus today?

Turn to the neighbours who stand by the outcast one,
Labelled, rejected, with nowhere to stay;
See the star lighting the exiled one's homecoming;
How can we hope to find Jesus today?

Watch for the country that welcomes the stranger in,
Fleeing from hunger, from tyranny's sway;
See the star shine where the door's ever opening;
How can we hope to find Jesus today?

Mark where a nation renounces its weaponry,
Sharing wealth round to provide work and play;
See the star shine where the earth finds new cherishing;
How can we hope to find Jesus today?

Offer your gifts where the seeking ones yearn for them,
Welcome the love which they more than repay;
Healing comes swiftly where human hearts turn again;
Turn to the star and find Jesus today.

—Anna Briggs

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

We will hear the Epiphany story in worship on Sunday, January 10. The *Book of Common Worship* reminds us that

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 following the star 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.

We still believe that God is revealing God's self to us in our daily lives. On this Sunday we will ask that God help us to learn a "new thing," to follow in new way, to be open to the light of love, peace, and change in our daily life.

God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this on-going epiphany the work of Christmas.

In preparation for worship, take the time to reflect on your *Star word* for 2015. I just may ask you to share your reflections on how your word interacted in your life this past year. You will also receive your new star word for 2016 in worship; we will have extras in the narthex.

A woman once said that, if the wise men had been wise *women*, they would have brought diapers, baby clothes and a hot meal for the holy family! Well, you can be a wise woman or a wise man this year by bringing an Epiphany gift to honor the Christ Child on January 10. Please bring diapers, baby wipes or baby clothing. These will be collected and passed along to the **Good Samaritan Family Resource Center**, a non-profit working with young immigrant families. Learn more about their work at www.goodsamfrc.org.

May we follow God's light this year with courage, hope and peace.
Peace, Maggi

ALL CHURCH READ: MISSION HIGH

In January we will read Kristina Rizga's *Mission High: One School, How Experts Tried to Fail It and the Students and Teachers Who Made It Triumph*. We will then form discussion groups in February and March.

Author, Kristina Rizga, was part of Mission High for four years. Her school, San Francisco's oldest comprehensive public high school, was rated a "low performing" school in 2010; yet 84% of the graduating class was accepted to college. Student surveys, graduation rates and attendance rates were some of the best in the country. Maybe standardized test scores really couldn't describe a school that thrived and changed lives. Qualities like critical thinking, intellectual engagement, curiosity, and reliance aren't measured by standard tests. This book tells the amazing stories of remarkable students, dedicated teachers and caring administrators.

Pastor Maggi says she can't put it down and finds herself inspired and challenged and proud of this San Francisco institution. Harriet MacLean is impressed with the way Mission High leverages its diversity to create a caring and cohesive school community where everyone feels safe and honored for who they are.

There will be a limited number of books available for sale in church starting January 3 for \$18.00. Mission High is available on Kindle and from the SF Public library.

Holy Cow! PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

Old First is inviting you to complete the Church Assessment Tool (CAT), an on-line survey developed by *Holy Cow! Consulting* that will provide a clearer picture of who we are as a church and what directions might be important for our future. **Your response is very important.** The

information gained from this assessment will be valuable in helping Old First and its session as we make decisions about our future.

In a few days, you will receive an email with a unique link to the CAT. Beginning January 10, we are asking you to go online by clicking on the link provided and tell us about your experiences in and priorities for our church. Please do not discuss the survey or your answers with others as this may influence their answers.

The survey period starts on January 10 and runs through January 31. Please be sure to take the survey during this time period. It takes twenty minutes to a half hour and it is necessary for you to answer all of the questions in one session, otherwise your responses will not be counted.

If you need a paper copy, please call the office (415-776-5552), and we will provide one for you, along with a self-addressed stamped return envelope.

All answers are strictly anonymous. We have no way of matching any assessment to a particular person, so please feel free to candidly share your perceptions, opinions and experiences. Our future together is dependent on your participation and honest answers. If you have questions, please contact Steve Taber at (415) 990-8104.

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE: VIDEO PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Beginning January 17 and continuing most Sunday afternoons at 12:30 pm through the first half of 2016, you will have an opportunity to learn a great deal about the Bible – how and by whom it was written, how it was transmitted to us in its present form, and how people of many faiths and denominations have interpreted it.

Taught by Luke Timothy Johnson, with discussions lead by Old First's Steve Taber, the class will give you a good understanding of how the Bible came into being and what it means in today's world. There are 24 lectures and you can benefit from participating in any of them or all of them. Please stop by the Munro Room on January 10 at 12:30 and check out the first lecture.

In January the CE committee will begin a three-part study of Immigration, with discussion led by John Kramar. The first session on January 10th will focus on scripture teachings and historical Christian traditions of welcoming the sojourner and foreigner among us. From those foundations, class participants will be asked to come up with a moral framework to use in following two sessions. The second session on January 24th will take a look at historic immigration practice in the United States – from colonial days to the present. Participants will be asked to share any personal immigration stories for themselves and families in this second class, as well as collectively select one or two “hot topics” from the current political/cultural debate to tackle in the final session. Finally, in the last session on February 7th, the class will debate and discuss “a faith filled response” to the issue or two selected by the group, and where appropriate discuss ways to put that response into action! The sessions are designed for discussion style learning, with optional read-ahead material for those interested. But even if you just want to listen, all are welcome to participate. If you are interested in getting the brief read-ahead materials as the class progresses, please send a request to John at JWKramar@msn.com. John has spent the past 25 years working in the field of immigration as an attorney, and as a federal employee in the roles of Asylum Officer, Refugee Officer, Citizenship Officer, and currently as the local immigration District Director for DHS in the Northern California.

MLK, JR DAY MARCH, JANUARY 18



The San Francisco Interfaith Council invites faith leaders and their congregation members to join in the 2016 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 18.** 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 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.

IN MEMORY OF THE REVEREND FORREST CUMMINGS

We remember and give thanks the life of The Reverend Forrest Cummings who died Sunday, December 13, 2015. We ask that that you keep his wife Pat DeVine in your prayers. Forrest's memorial service will be at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek on January 18 at 2:00 pm.

BEGINNING BEYOND THE MYTH: EMILY DICKINSON'S VISION

Whether it is her conflicted faith, her mysterious self-chosen isolation, or what she wore, Emily Dickinson has continually intrigued our imagination. But perhaps none of her poetry has been as provocative as her "religious poems." This second reading group will continue to discuss selected poems that reflect Emily's deeply personal struggle with the prevailing religious beliefs of her time through discussion of selected poems focusing on Jesus. Copies of the poems to be discussed will be sent to members already on the book group class list, or by contacting Diane at molberg@earthlink.net, or when you see her in church. Copies will also be available in the church office.

Beginning Beyond the Myth: **January 31, 2016, 9:30 am, Munro Room**

Recommended text: *Final Harvest* (paper) or *The Complete Works of Emily Dickinson*

NOMINATING DEACONS AND ELDERS

It is time again to nominate church members for the offices of deacon and elder. This year the Nominating Committee is chaired by John Sebastian and includes Buddy Tate Choy, Sally Spencer, Lori Yamauchi, Steve Taber, and Cindy Burt.

Deacons and elders are chosen by the people. The *Book of Order* says that “*Elders should be persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel, both within the church and in the world.*” It further says that the office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is a ministry of “*sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, of exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, warm sympathies and sound judgment should be chosen for this office.*”

Would you please pray and think about who might be called to be a deacon and or an elder? The committee needs your nominations. Please speak to the person you’re considering... and ask if they are willing to be nominated. Or you might speak to a member of the Nominating Committee and ask them to reflect on the one you think might be called to serve. You can also contact the committee by sending an E-mail to nomcom@oldfirst.org or by using a nomination form available in the narthex on Sunday mornings.

RETREAT REPORT: MICHAEL BERG

This is the end of a series written by different people, describing their experience and impressions of the retreat held at Mt. Hermon.

Old First was well represented at the 47th All-Church Retreat at the Mt. Hermon Conference Center. We were joined by First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame and Calvary Presbyterian Church here in San Francisco. The featured speaker was Dr. Rodger Nishioka, who was born in Honolulu and raised in Seattle at the Japanese Presbyterian Church.

A preacher’s kid, Rodger recently completed a research study of young adults in their 20s and 30s and had much to share with us. We particularly noted that Rodger’s research highlighted the importance of welcoming new folks to Sunday service. People are attracted to a “warm” church where an effort is made to personally connect with everyone. Dr. Nishioka even had the audacity to suggest that a personal sharing of the peace may be more important than the sermon during worship. So get out there and share the peace next Sunday!

Perhaps the most important message shared by Rodger was to not be disturbed by shrinking congregations and the changing demographics of our Church. God is continually showing us a new way, and our goal as believers in Christ is to discern that new way and bring it to fruition. Many of us pondered what that meant for Old First and I am sure that many conversations will follow. But Rodger's bottom line was this: Rejoice and be happy, we are God’s children!

Our gathering Saturday night was especially blessed as Old Firsters met to have some fun. We had plenty of treats and libations and played an entertaining game of charades, an Old First tradition.

Kudos goes to Bill Chauvin, who was joined at the retreat by his partner, Tom Crusta. Bill took a slip of paper from the container holding charade phrases and successfully pantomimed “Hockey Fantasy Draft-ESPN” which had incorrectly been included on the same slip of paper that contained the real charade phrase “Dune”. Thinking about it now, I am not sure any of us could have pantomimed “Dune.”

Well, as you can tell, the retreat was a great success. We started an important conversation about Church growth that will continue amid the congregation and had some fun in the process. Are you listening, watching, praying, loving, creating? God is showing us a new way... and we must discern it.

GRATITUDE

Education Committee Receives Gift from Author Diane Molberg

Based on a percentage of purchases by Old First members of her first novel, *If I Go*, Diane Molberg has donated \$100.00 to the Old First Education Committee with appreciation for everyone’s support. Thank you, Diane.

OFPC Advent Art, Jesse Tree, Poinsettias

Thank you to all who offered their time, talents and treasure for the Advent art, Jesse tree and poinsettias: Such a gift to the eye and the heart. You may take poinsettias home after worship on either January 3 or 10.

Larkin Street Youth Services Clients Receive Gifts from Old First

A huge thank you to all Old First members, friends and staff who generously contributed Christmas gifts 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 engagement centers and programs.

Gifts included an array of clothing, pocket calendars, journals, day planners, kitchen items, makeup kits, fragrances, electric and manual toothbrushes, toiletries of all kinds, razors, cash and ever-popular gift cards for such retailers as Ross, Target and Safeway. Thank you to everyone who supported the gift drive!

Larkin Street offers innovative and comprehensive services that give homeless and at-risk young people 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.

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.

PEWS FOR SALE, NOT RENT!

How would you like to have a solid reminder of Old First in your home? We have the item for you. How about an official Old First Presbyterian Church pew? There are four pews in the Children’s Chapel (in the bay closest to the narthex) that would love to have a new home. They are made with solid Mississippi redgum wood. To get your own OFPC pew, please contact Dana Nojima.

INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY

Old First Presbyterian Church is responsible for providing all the volunteers for the Interfaith Food Pantry, Saturday, January 9. Come meet other people of our church you may not know, and work

together for our neighborhood. Volunteers are needed to unload the truck, get all the food inside, distribute it, and clean up afterwards. You'll be amazed at how much gets done in such a short time. Contact Dana Nojima or email foodpantry@oldfirst.org.

OFPC OFFICERS

Session

Christopher Burt, Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang: Worship, Gregory Free: Treasurer, Kristi Hoerauf: Finance, 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

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN JANUARY, 2016

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel Reading
January 3	Christmas 2	Jeremiah 31:7-14	147:12-20	Ephesians 1:3-14	John 1:(1-9), 10-18
January 6	Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
January 10	Epiphany 1	Isaiah 43:1-7	29	Acts 8:4-17	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 17	Epiphany 2	Isaiah 62:1-5	36:5-10	1 Corinthians 12:1-11	John 2:1-11
January 24	Epiphany 3	Nehemiah 8:1-10	19	1 Corinthians 12:12-31a	Luke 4:14-21
January 31	Epiphany 4	Jeremiah 1:4-10	71:1-6	1 Corinthians 13:1-13	Luke 4:21-30

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday	January 1	New Year's Day: Church Office Closed
Saturday	January 2	No Interfaith Food Pantry
Sunday	January 3	Old First cooks the Interfaith Shelter meal at St. Mary's.
Saturday	January 9	Old First staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry.
Sunday	January 10	Christian Education: Migration and Immigration, Munro Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	January 10	New Member/Inquirer Class, Library, 12:30 pm
Saturday	January 16	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon, Library
Sunday	January 17	Christian Education: Migration and Immigration, Munro Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	January 17	Christian Education: Story of the Bible Video Series, Munro Room, 12:30 pm
Sunday	January 17	Deacons Meeting, Classroom A, 12:30 pm
Monday	January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Church Office closed
Saturday	January 23	Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall, 5:30 pm
Sunday	January 24	Christian Education: Migration and Immigration, Munro Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	January 24	Christian Education: Story of the Bible video series, Munro Room, 12:30 pm
Sunday	January 24	4 th Sunday Small Group meeting, Library, 12:30 pm
Tuesday	January 26	Session Meeting, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
Sunday	January 31	Christian Education: Poetry of Emily Dickinson, Munro Room, 9:30 am
Sunday	January 31	Christian Education: Story of the Bible video series, Munro Room, 12:30 pm

