

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

July/August 2016

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## PC(USA) Leaders Issue Post-General Assembly Letter to the Church, June 25, 2016

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*"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, there is a new season in the Presbyterian Church (USA), as witnessed by the actions of the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016). The body of 594 commissioners who gathered June 18-25 in Portland, Oregon, elected Co-Moderators Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, and J. Herbert Nelson as the Stated Clerk. Both were historic, and both signal a new way forward for our church.

The business decisions made by the body also were transformative for the 1,572,660 members and 9,642 churches of the PC(USA). The work wasn't easy, and involved careful deliberations. Collectively, the body acted on nearly 100 overtures by discerning the will of Christ.

Among other things, we now have a new addition to our Book of Confessions – the Confession of Belhar. It is the first of our confessions that comes from the global south. And, the PC(USA) has a new Directory for Worship; and Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures. God is truly guiding us to be more faithful and just to all of God's creations.

Much discussion has been taking place around the identity and purpose of the denomination, and this week the assembly voted to create a 12-member Way Forward Commission "to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA)," and a 15-member 2020 Vision Team to "develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation."

To quote Stated Clerk-elect J. Herbert Nelson, "We are not dead ... we are alive, we are reforming and we are transforming this world, one person at a time."

Looking outward, the assembly voted to engage in selective, phased divestment from fossil-fuel companies through the PC(USA)'s Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee, and re-affirmed a two-state solution for Israel-Palestine.

Please know this is only a snapshot of the actions taken, and just a glimpse at where God is leading this denomination. Complete business actions can be viewed at [www.pc-biz.org](http://www.pc-biz.org).

We are, brothers and sisters, in a new season. It's exciting, but also a little scary. Yet in the midst of it all, take comfort that God is still guiding and controlling all – and we need not fear. God is calling us to hope, and to God be the glory!

**The Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly**

**The Reverend Denise Anderson and the Reverend Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderators of the  
222nd General Assembly (2016)**

**Ruling Elder Tony De La Rosa, Interim Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency**

*For a wrap up of the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, visit the PC(USA) website:  
<https://pres-outlook.org/tag/ga222/>*

## **From OFPC's Vigil for Orlando, for Those Killed, for Those Who Live**

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### **Jeremiah 31:15**

Thus says the Lord:  
A voice is heard in Ramah,  
lamentation and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping  
for her children;  
she refuses to be comforted  
for her children,  
because they are no more.

### **Prayer**

Oh God, there is too much violence, too much hurt,  
too much anguish and loss.  
There is too much misuse of religion  
to justify the hurting of others.  
Take the anguish of our hearts and the hearts of so many,  
and hold us.  
Hold especially those whose family members and friends  
have died as a result of the violence in Orlando.  
In our grief let us not be paralyzed,  
but rather emboldened to foster a different way.  
Let our tears water the seeds of compassion  
and foster a renewed commitment to understanding and love.  
Let this begin where we live  
and may it spread into the world. Amen.

## **Session Report, May Meeting**

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Old First Presbyterian Church Elders met on May 24. Among the many discussion items, the following are some highlights.

- The Stewardship Committee and the Fall Stewardship calendar is in the process of being formulated. Additional detail will be forthcoming soon.
- The Mission and Giving Committee opened a discussion on the PC(USA) "We Choose Welcome" initiative to support congregations across the country and to encourage national and local leaders to honor the heritage of welcoming refugees and immigrants. It was moved by committee that Old First Presbyterian Church join the PC(USA) "We Choose Welcome" Initiative, and that we communicate that "We Choose Welcome" in all appropriate ways available to us. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Operations Committee moved to start painting rooms in the order of most needed. First up is the Munro room, and the painter is Patrick Gavin who has done painting for the church in the past and has a recommendation from a member of the committee. The motion was seconded and passed. – Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

## **Old First Goes on Record to "Choose Welcome," Offers Opportunities to Help Refugees, Leads Interfaith Welcome Collaboration**

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In May, our congregation formally joined the national campaign of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and over 50 other faith organizations to welcome refugees of all faiths and nations as neighbors. Old First immediately acquired a "We Choose Welcome" banner, and on Sunday, June 5, Kim Pham took a selfie of worshipers behind the banner. Among the many smiling faces were visitors, the visiting Chandler Children's Choir from Chandler, Arizona, and adults who accompanied the choir on its tour.

We have posted the We Choose Welcome photo on Old First's Facebook page, website and the sandwich board that is on the sidewalk outside the church on Sundays. We are displaying the We Choose Welcome banner in the Sanctuary.

Thirty people completed the Old First We Choose Welcome project team's questionnaire during May. All who responded indicated the ways that they would like to help refugees who are being resettled in the Bay Area. (Thank you!) Although the online questionnaire response period is now

closed, anyone who would like to volunteer can contact a member of our We Choose Welcome team, Mary Russell, Sarah Taber, Sally Spencer and Bill Campbell.

Questionnaire responses demonstrated great interest in donating or contributing money to buy items to fill Welcome Kits for newly arriving refugees. The We Choose Welcome team plans to carry out a small scale, pilot project to acquire all the items needed for a refugee Welcome Kit and assemble and deliver them. We will begin in early September, and we hope to learn from the experience and then scale up in 2017. When the details are firmed up, the team will communicate details to the congregation.

Meanwhile, more congregations are joining our interfaith refugee welcome group. Representatives of six Presbyterian churches, as well as those from Jewish, Roman Catholic, Episcopal and Mormon congregations, are meeting monthly. Mission Committee chair Bill Campbell is leading the interfaith initiative, and a reporter for the Jewish community publication J Weekly recently interviewed him for an article on the collaboration. The story is in the June 2 issue. Visit the website to read the whole article: <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/77735/interfaith-coalition-set-to-welcome-syrian-refugees/>

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### **SF Interfaith Council Honors Old First for Winter Shelter**

The San Francisco Interfaith Council has recognized and thanked Old First and other congregations that participated in the Council's 2015-2016 Winter Shelter. Courtney Blake and Amberle Gallup led the Old First team that prepared and served a wonderful Southern Sunday dinner at the shelter. The Council's certificate of appreciation is posted on the bulletin board outside the Munro Room.

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### **Responding to God in a New Day: Twenty-Somethings Visit Aging Congregations**

The Reverend Rodger Nishioka, the leader for one of Old First Presbyterian Church's previous October all-church retreats, is one of the best storytellers. Here are brief capsules of two of Rodger's stories. These stories may give us some ideas about what an aging congregation can accomplish. Both stories concern young adult visitors to churches whose members were mainly in their sixties, seventies and eighties.

#### **Upper Montclair Presbyterian Church**

One Sunday, a 25-year-old man visited the Presbyterian church in Upper Montclair, New Jersey. (I will call him John.) John signed the friendship pad, and the next day the pastor called him. The young man mentioned to the pastor that he had just graduated from Gonzaga Law School in Washington State and he had gotten a job with a law firm in Newark. Now, he had to pass the New Jersey bar exam, and to do that he needed to learn New Jersey law. The pastor said that a member of the congregation might be able to help and asked whether it would be okay if this member contacted John.

The next day, Harold called John and introduced himself as a retired lawyer. Harold invited John to Harold's home for dinner with Harold and his wife, and Harold offered to see if he perhaps could help John prepare for the bar. John accepted the dinner invitation, and afterward Harold invited John to return once a week for dinner and a prep session for the bar. A week later, Harold said he had compared Washington law and New Jersey law and they were different in some areas. Harold laid out a study plan for preparing comprehensively for the bar. With Harold's help, John not only passed the bar, but he got the highest score from that sitting for the New Jersey bar. Not until later did John learn that Harold had served for many years as a justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court.

When John was married in the Upper Montclair Presbyterian Church, he asked Harold, who was in his 80s, to be a groomsman in his wedding. Harold later said that this honor meant more to him than all of the other honors and tributes that he had received in a long and distinguished public life.

### **First Presbyterian Church of Des Moines**

A young couple moved from New Jersey to Iowa after graduating from Rutgers. Two Sundays, they visited First Presbyterian Church in Des Moines. [*Editor's note: This is the church where Jeanne Kirkwood was baptized.*] They didn't sign the friendship pad. ("They're not stupid," Rodger Nishioka said.) They slipped out after the service without speaking with anyone.

Soon after that, the young woman (I'll call her Ann) felt a lump in her breast. When the biopsy came back, the oncologist called Ann and asked her to come in with her husband to see him. Ann had stage 4 breast cancer. When Ann went in for surgery and was answering in-take questions, she was asked whether she had a church. She could not remember the name of the church that she and her husband had visited those two times, but she gave enough information that the hospital chaplain was able to figure out what church it was.

The chaplain called the pastor, who remembered seeing the couple, but did not know their names. The pastor made contact with the young couple and spent most of the day of Ann's surgery at the hospital with them. The day Ann came home from the hospital, a woman from the church appeared at the door. She brought dinner and asked if she could come in and put it in the refrigerator. She did that, and then she asked Ann if she would like to talk for a bit. They spent 45 minutes talking, laughing and crying. The woman mentioned that she noticed that the house needed cleaning, and she said that she loved to dust and vacuum. She asked Ann if she could clean, just the first floor, where she wouldn't be a bother.

The next day, a man from the church appeared at the door, and he brought dinner and put it in the refrigerator, too. He told Ann that he noticed that the screen door needed repair and that he liked to fix things. He had a tool box in his car. It wouldn't be any trouble; he could do it about 20 minutes.

This church of 80-some members provided meals for the young couple every day for six months.

When Ann was first diagnosed, her parents, her husband's parents and her best friend from college all flew in to see her in Des Moines. Ann's plan at that time was to return home to New Jersey, where her family was; but ultimately she decided to stay in Des Moines. Ann said, "Whether I have six weeks, or six months, or 60 years, I am going to die in my church."

At one point, the couple invited their 20-something friends from work to come over and help eat some of the casseroles that filled the freezer. Their friends asked where all the casseroles came from, and the couple told them from the church. The church got seven new adult members from these friends, and they significantly lowered the average age of the congregation.

### **Responding to God in a New Day**

We learned at the retreat that our faith response is being called to change. God is doing new things in new ways, Rodger Nishioka told us, and our challenge is to learn how the Holy Spirit is calling us to respond. As we begin an in-depth planning process next year, our challenge will be to discover where God is leading us and how to respond to God with new vision and energy and in new ways. It may in different ways than the Upper Montclair Presbyterian Church or the First Presbyterian Church in Des Moines. Whatever direction God leads us, we should not underestimate the power

of the Holy Spirit or the gifts and talents that we can share. If we connect them, they will reflect Christ's light to the world.

### **Statements of Faith by New OFPC Deacons and Elders**

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Newly installed deacons and elders have agreed to share their personal written statements of faith in the next several months of Shared Life. Each month will feature one of these inspiring statements.

#### **Betty J. Packard Voris, Session, Class of 2017**

Since as long as I can remember, I have known there was a God. My grandmother starting taking me to church when I was very little and I grew up in the American Baptist church with her. I have always believed that God watches over me as my heavenly Father, Christ died for my sins to allow me the privilege of living in heaven when I die and the Holy Spirit is ever present in my life to comfort and guide me in good times and bad. I have always found that in despair there has been hope. There also have been times when I have been asked to do something I deeply did not want to do it, but a quiet voice somehow urged me to say yes because it was the right thing to do. I have had few regrets.

Even in the worst of times, I cannot remember ever blaming God or rejecting him. I often have been frustrated with my life, but just as often have asked for peace or help through prayer. My usual comment is that I wonder when God is going to remember that my middle name is Jane and not Job. I have never felt forgotten, just disappointed and/or sad. I believe God has given me life for a purpose and it is my free will to personally commit to being a loving person and achieving good for others in both my personal and my professional life. From my early times of holding an office in the local and state Baptist Youth Fellowships, teaching children during Sunday School and summers as church camp counselor to my roles today in volunteering in activities created for society's greater good, I have always believed that it is what God intended for me to do. I often am surprised when complimented for doing something that I consider ordinary. Using my God-given talents both in church and in society is, to me, an understated way of celebrating God.

And while church has always given me comfort and a loving extended family, I see attending church as only a part of God's expectations. I believe that being honest in all my dealings, being a good friend, comforting those when they are in need, sharing a smile with strangers and letting others know I care about them is equally important. I believe I was put on earth for a purpose and it is not yet finished. Someday I will share God's home with Him who loves me and all those I love who have gone before me. Only then will I know how well I have lived my life.

### **Upcoming Events**

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#### **Addiction and Recovery Sunday July 31**

The Presbyterian Church (USA) suggests that every congregation schedule a Sunday to bring forward the issues of addiction and recovery. We at Old First are fortunate to have many members who are open about their own recovery and many family members who have struggled/are struggling with parents, children, brothers and sisters who are addicted to drugs/alcohol. On Sunday, July 31 we will share stories, with particular emphasis on the ways that faith and spirituality lead us to a better understanding of addiction and recovery. If you would like to participate in this service, please speak to either Michael Berg or Susan Ashton. –Susan Ashton

#### **Old First's Summer Picnic Potluck, August 7**

Old First will host its summer picnic potluck following worship on Sunday, August 7. This potluck will feature only salads, side dishes and desserts. The menu is designed to please any and all palates without the heat and the ants as well as display the creativity of Old First's cooks. Everyone is

invited. Those attending are asked to bring a salad, side dish, or dessert. However, as always, if you do not bring a dish to share, a small donation of \$5 will suffice. –Betty Voris

### **Presbytery of San Francisco Meeting Dates**

- Saturday, August 27 at Christ, San Leandro (short business meeting)
- Tuesday, September 20 at Broadmoor, Daly City (Wild West Regional Meeting)
- Tuesday, September 27 at Park Boulevard, Oakland (Central Regional Meeting)
- Tuesday, October 4 at Grace, Walnut Creek (Far East Regional Meeting)
- Tuesday, November 15 (1 week later than usual!) at First, San Mateo (regular business meeting)

### **Senior Center FunRaiser, October 1**

If you missed last year's Senior Center FunRaiser, you won't want to miss this year's extravaganza on Saturday, October 1. The Fellowship Hall will be filled with tasty hors d'oeuvres, punch and wine, music, a silent auction featuring – among other treasures – some very fine wine, a raffle, a sing-along and several surprises. Portraits of Senior Center Regulars will add to the décor, once again created by the ingenious Daniel Pearch. This fundraiser promise to be fun, so circle the date on your calendar and plan to attend. –Betty Voris

### **Second All-Church Retreat, October 14-16**

#### **Mount Hermon Christian Conference Center**

If you attended our retreat last year or missed it, you will want to make sure to reserve on your calendar the weekend beginning Friday evening October 14 through lunch on Sunday October 16. Once again we, along with Calvary Presbyterian, will partner with First Presbyterian Church, Burlingame for a fabulous time in the redwoods of Santa Cruz County. In 2015 we had the privilege of having the Reverend Rodger Nishioka as our inspiring retreat leader. There were break-out sessions for the individual churches and also time to meet folks from the other congregations. In addition, there is comfortable lodging, very good food, leisure time and other group activities. As always, Old Firsters played charades, worked on jigsaw puzzles and enjoyed talking with each other.

Burlingame Presbyterian Church has been going to Mount Hermon for many years and they have the logistical administration under control; yet, we have the opportunity to participate in planning the specifics along with Calvary.

Details will be revealed as they become available – this is a “heads-up” announcement!

–Jeanne Kirkwood

### **OFPC Officers**

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#### **Session**

Chris Burt, Community Building; Bill Campbell, Mission and Giving; Hsiaochien Chuang, Worship; Robin Currier, Personnel; Kristi Hoerauf, Finance; John Kramar, Planning; Harriet MacLean; Dana Nojima, Operations; Linda Reyder, Worship; Betty Voris, Community Building; Lori Yamauchi, Christian Education

Tom Culp, Clerk of Session; Greg Free, Treasurer; John Kramar, President of the Corporation

#### **Board of Deacons**

Bryan Nichols, Moderator; Nina Berg, Cindy Burt, Riley Kramar, Alfred Martin, Diane Molberg, Emily Olson, Mary Russell, Randy Smith, Sarah Taber, Jian Wang



### Revised Common Lectionary for July/August, 2016

Date	Day	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
July 3	7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Isaiah 66:10-14	Psalm 66:1-9	Galatians 6:(1-6) 7-16	Luke 10:1-11, 16-20
July 10	8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Deuteronomy 30:9-14	Psalm 25:1-10	Colossians 1:1-14	Luke 10:38-42
July 17	9 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Genesis 18:1-10a	Psalm 15	Colossians 1:15-28	Luke 10:38-42
July 24	10 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Genesis 18:20-32	Psalm 138	Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)	Luke 11:1-13
July 31	11 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23	Psalm 49:1-12	Colossians 3:1-11	Luke 12:13-21
August 7	12 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Genesis 15:1-6	Psalm 33:12-22	Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16	Luke 12:32-40
August 14	13 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Jeremiah 23:23-29	Psalm 82	Hebrews 11:29-12:2	Luke 12:49-56
August 21	14 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Isaiah 58:9b-14	Psalm 103:1-8	Hebrews 12:18-29	Luke 13:10-17
August 28	15 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost	Proverbs 25:6-7	Psalm 112	Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16	Luke 14:1, 7-14

#### Dates to Note

July 3	Sunday	Keenan Kelsey Preaching, 11:00 am Video Lecture: Story of the Bible, Munro Room, 12:30 pm
July 8	Friday	Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: Basically British, 8:00 pm
July 9	Saturday	OFPC Staffs Interfaith Food Pantry
July 10	Sunday	John Kramar Preaching, 11:00 am Deacons Meeting, 12:30 pm Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: Erik Jekabson's Vista Nonet, 4:00 pm
July 17	Sunday	Keenan Kelsey, Preaching, 11:00 am AIDS Walk San Francisco
July 22	Friday	Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: Charles Curtis, 8:00 pm
July 24	Sunday	Leslie Veen Preaching, 11:00 am
July 31	Sunday	Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: San Francisco Piano Trio, 4:00 pm
August 7	Sunday	Keenan Kelsey Preaching, 11:00 am
August 12	Friday	Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: New Piano Collective, Ghost Variations, 8:00 pm
August 13	Saturday	OFPC Staffs Interfaith Food Pantry
August 14	Sunday	Deacons Meeting, 12:30 pm Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: New Piano Collective, 4:00 pm
August 19	Friday	Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: Gaude, 8:00 pm
August 21	Sunday	Keenan Kelsey, preaching, 11:00 am
August 23	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm
August 28	Sunday	Margaret Trezevant Preaching 11:00 am Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: Thomas Schultz, piano, 4:00 pm
September 4	Sunday	Keenan Kelsey Preaching 11:00 am Old 1 <sup>st</sup> Concerts: Mike Greensill & Friends, featuring Wesla Whitfield, 4:00 pm
October 2	Sunday	Pastor Maggi Henderson Returns to the Pulpit, 11:00 am
October 14-16		All-Church Retreat at Mount Hermon





**Starts at Sharon  
Meadow in Golden  
Gate Park**

### **Event Day Schedule**

**9:00 am**  
Registration Opens  
**9:45 am**  
Opening Ceremonies  
**10:30 am**  
Walk begins  
**12:30 pm**  
Post-Walk concert  
**2:30 pm**  
Results!

### **Volunteer!**

Volunteers are a critical component to a successful AIDS Walk San Francisco! Please contact the AIDS Walk office at 415.615.9255 (WALK) if you are interested in volunteer opportunities.

### **Join Presbyterians Fighting AIDS Today!**

**AIDS Walk San Francisco** is a community walkathon to help raise awareness and funds for the fight against HIV/AIDS. This year's event benefits Project Inform, Project Open Hand, San Francisco General Hospital Ward 86, and over 40 other San Francisco Bay Area AIDS service organizations. Come join the Presbyterians Fighting AIDS Team in their 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year at AIDS Walk San Francisco!

### **How to Join Our Team:**

- Register on-line at [sf.aidswalk.net](http://sf.aidswalk.net), click "Register" and fill in your information. Then continue to "Join A Team," and select **Presbyterians Fighting AIDS - 1057**.
- You can also call AIDS Walk San Francisco at **415.615.9255 (WALK)**

### **Why You Should Walk:**

- To support the mission to end the suffering that HIV/AIDS causes and to give back to the San Francisco community.
- The money raised helps provide much needed services such as housing, transportation, counseling, home care, prevention education, legal, mental health, HIV testing and support groups.
- Join in fellowship together during the Walk and at the post-Walk picnic.

### **How to Get More Involved:**

- Invite others to join our Team! Announce the Walk at your service, in your bulletin, or newsletter.
- Encourage your youth groups, small groups, and bible studies to walk with us.
- Contact Marc Jung (Team Leader) at [marc@missionbaycc.org](mailto:marc@missionbaycc.org) or Sylvia Marton (AIDS Walk Team Coordinator) at **415.615.9255 (WALK)** or by email at [SylviaM@aidswalk.net](mailto:SylviaM@aidswalk.net) with any questions.