

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

May 2016

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Maggi's Musings

Pentecost is celebrated on May 15: Pentecost is about new creation, new creation of us, of the church, of the world. It is a story that is so wild, spirit-filled, uncomfortable, that even Hallmark hasn't been able to market it! A great overview/reflection is found in Companion to the Book of Common Worship.

According to the Pentecost story in Acts 2:1-13, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower witnesses to the resurrection. Sounds from heaven, cosmic language, the rush of a mighty *ruach* (wind, spirit, breath) invaded the house in which the apostles gathered, and appeared to them as a burning fire. Tongues of fire touched their nerve centers. A power — the unseen power of God — moved among them and gripped them. The Holy Spirit is unseen, like the wind, which is why the Old Testament calls it *ruach YHWH*, “the wind/breath of GOD.” (Compare John 3:8.) The Spirit is the “unseenness” of God working among us.

According to Joel (2:28-29) the *ruach* is to open everybody to God's future. People young and old will dream and will have visions of hope; they will be able to loose themselves from the way things are now, because God is establishing a whole new economy of creation. The Holy Spirit breaks us out of our preoccupation with ourselves and frees us to serve neighbors, loosens our grasp on possessions, and sets us to loving people. New creation is what Joel is talking about. Pentecost is new creation.

The book of Acts tells the story of the outcome of Pentecost's new creation: people witness in word and in deed to the risen Christ. At the outset, the newborn church immediately tumbled out into the streets to witness to God's mighty works in the languages of people all over the world. By the end of the story, a tiny, Spirit-filled community of faith that broke from its present order has spread across the continents with incredible power to bring new things into being. With the gift of the Spirit, all things become possible.

Therefore on the Day of Pentecost we celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit which draws us together as one people, helps us to comprehend what God is doing in the world, and empowers us to proclaim, in word and in deed, God's plan of reconciling all people in the name of Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

Without the gift of the Spirit, Christ's church dries up and withers away, and we are left with only our broken selves. With the gift of the Spirit, all things are possible. A Spirit-filled community of faith opens its eyes to needs in the world and sees what's missing. The Day of Pentecost is the climax of the Great Fifty Days of Easter*, celebrating as it does the gift of the Spirit to the body of Christ — the church.

I am caught by the image of the Spirit, the wind, the breath of God whose role it is to open us up to God's future, new creation in us. (Dare I say, cause change in us?) Yet, honestly it is really hard to

change, sometimes I prefer the same because it easier, familiar, automatic. Yet, without the Spirit the church dries up and withers away.

I want to have the “ears to hear,” to have the courage to follow the Spirit. I long that this will develop during my sabbatical, May 30-September 30. I hope that the Spirit will blow through my life, that I will be renewed and opened up once again to God’s creativity. I hope you too will encounter God’s presence in new ways, not only through the preaching and teaching that you will encounter, but also by discovering that the Spirit works through the whole body of Christ-church empowering the people to be about God’s work. May the power of Pentecost blow through us, nudge us, push us forward into God’s vision for new life.

Peace, Maggi

*Pentecost is Greek for the “fiftieth” day, that is, the conclusion of the Great Fifty Days of Easter.

Statements of Faith by New OFPC Deacons and Elders

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. New elders on Session include Robin Currier (personnel), John Kramar (planning), Betty Voris (community building), and Lori Yamauchi (Christian education). New deacons on the board include Riley Kramar, Emily Olson, and Mary Russell.

ROBIN CURRIER (ELDER, CLASS OF 2019)

- I believe God created the universe.
- I believe God sent his only son to walk among mortals. Jesus came among us to teach us to care for one another. He came to take away the fear of death through the introduction of a better place after life.
- I believe Jesus suffered horribly and gave his life to show us that faith is not easy and that a life of good works is worth suffering for.
- I believe the Holy Spirit calls us into community to help one another. It also calls us to help those who do not share our beliefs. A community of faith can be our most valuable tool against evil and suffering.
- I believe faith is a great mystery. As long as we continue to try to understand the mystery individually and in community we will be better people and working toward the role God sees for us on earth.

DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE OF *SHARED LIFE*, MAY 8

We welcome David Griffith as the new editor of Shared Life, the monthly newsletter from Old First Presbyterian Church. David begins as editor with this issue. Please send your articles and notices for next month’s issue to him – sharedlife@oldfirst.org – by Sunday, May 8, the deadline for the June issue.

OFPC STAFFS INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY, MAY 14

Old First Presbyterian Church will provide all the volunteers for the Interfaith Food Pantry, Saturday, May 14. Contact Dana Nojima or email foodpantry@oldfirst.org to volunteer.

Share Gladly: The Pentecost Offering, May 15

*We were glad to share not only God’s good news with you
but also our very lives because we cared for you so much. —1 Thessalonians 2:8*

The Pentecost Offering is devoted to ministries that support our young people during their “first third of life,” the time from childhood through young adulthood. This third of life is a time when spirituality, emotional health, cognitive development and relationships take shape. This time

influences life choices and actions well into the future. This is a time when the church, and we, can nurture and guide children and youth by sharing with them God's good news and leading them on a path toward a bright and faith-led future.

Here's how the Pentecost Offering is used:

- Forty percent of the offering stays with our congregation to make an impact in the lives of children at risk, youth and young people locally.

The remaining 60% supports ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

- Twenty five percent provides opportunities for young adults to serve in communities around the world and grow as leaders through transformative Christian service.
- Twenty five percent supports ministries for youth. Young people will begin to discover their path in life—learning more about their faith, finding fulfilment in serving others and growing in their relationship with God. Some will make lifelong friends. Some will deepen their commitment to Christ. Some will be called to their vocation. All will benefit from these faith experiences.
- Finally, ten percent supports vital ministries to improve education and provide a safe haven for children across the globe.

We will receive the Pentecost Offering on the day of Pentecost, May 15. By sharing gladly we can help provide opportunities for young people to forge a deep and lasting faith on which to grow and build their lives. –Bill Campbell

HONORING GRADUATES, MAY 22

Old First Presbyterian Church will honor our three graduating high school seniors, Logan Donaldson, Camryn Hollarsmith, and Samuel Cheng, in worship on Sunday, May 22.

SERIES OF VIDEO LECTURES ON THE STORY OF THE BIBLE RESUMES

Returning on May 15 and continuing most Sundays, Old First will show a series of lectures, in video format, on the Story of the Bible. These half-hour lectures will be shown in the Munro Room after worship at 12:30 p.m. and will be followed by a brief discussion. The course of lectures, of which nineteen remain, cover the origins of the Bible, how it came together as a book, how it has been translated, edited, interpreted, and regarded as the Word of God by Christians.

The lecturer is Luke Timothy Johnson, the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia. Professor Johnson earned a PhD in New Testament Studies from Yale University, as well as an MA in Religious Studies from Indiana University, an MDiv in Theology from Saint Meinrad School of Theology, and a BA in Philosophy from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. –Stephen Taber

SAVE THE DATE: SECOND ALL-CHURCH RETREAT, OCTOBER 15-17, 2016

MOUNT HERMON CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER

If you attended our retreat last year or missed it, you will want to make sure to reserve the weekend beginning Friday evening, October 15, through lunch on Sunday, October 17. Once again we will partner with Calvary Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, and 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, PhD, as our inspiring retreat leader. There will again be a speaker, 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

WHAT’S OLD FIRST DOING TO ASSIST REFUGEES?

This is an update on what Old First is doing to assist refugees fleeing the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries.

- At the end of last year, our Session added \$4,000 to Old First's 2015 benevolence budget. The Mission Committee decided to donate this entire sum to the International Rescue Committee (www.rescue.org). The Mission Committee chose this nonprofit because of its outstanding work in comprehensively responding to the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time and because our committee was confident that Old First’s contribution would be effectively and efficiently used.
- Second, in January, our Session included a new item in our 2016 benevolence budget specifically to assist refugees. Old First also dedicated the offering from our Maundy Thursday worship service entirely to Opening Doors (www.openingdoorsinc.org). Opening Doors, a Sacramento nonprofit linked to our denomination through Church World Service, helps to empower refugees, immigrants and human trafficking survivors to achieve self-sufficiency. Worshipers donated both in-kind items and funds for this cause.
- In addition, beginning last fall, we started conversations with other congregations about joining together to help refugees. Our contacts led to an initial meeting in March in which five congregations, Mission Bay Community Church, St. John’s Presbyterian Church, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Congregation Emanu-El and Old First, participated. We formed subgroups to research three topics and report back at the group's April meeting. Old First’s initial task is to investigate how congregations can most usefully support the work of nonprofits that are resettling refugees in Northern California through in-kind and cash donations. We created a list of questions that we are using to interview three nonprofits, the International Rescue Committee, Opening Doors and Catholic Charities.
- Last and definitely not least, in January, John Kramar led an important three-part Christian Education series on Migration and Immigration. John shared a wide range of information and insights to a full room of attendees. All who attended gained a much better understanding of Hebrew and New Testament texts and traditions, this country’s history of migration and immigration, U.S. laws concerning immigration, refugees and asylum seekers, historic and current immigration debates, and opportunities to help.

If you would like to learn more about Old First’s response to the refugee crisis, including how you can help, please contact Bill Campbell or Mary Russell of the Mission Committee. **NOTE:** If you are travelling to Sacramento in a sedan or small passenger van and can transport approximately ten file-size boxes of donated materials to Opening Doors, contact Bill Campbell.

OLD FIRST CHALLENGE-GRANT AIDS SAFEHOUSE IMPROVEMENTS

Old First for many years has supported San Francisco SafeHouse, one of only six residential programs in the U.S. entirely devoted to supporting women in leaving the traumatization of prostitution. At SafeHouse, ten women at a time are in a safe, sober and confidential location for an eighteen month transitional housing program. Residents receive comprehensive recovery services, including individual and group therapy, substance abuse treatment, medical and dental care, nutrition and fitness training, vocational guidance and paid internships, money management and computer literacy skills.

SafeHouse hoped to make improvements to its facility, and SafeHouse board member, architect and Old First member Jim Fagler estimated they would cost \$4,000 to \$5,000. Old First's Mission Committee offered to match on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to \$2,000 that SafeHouse raised for the project. SafeHouse quickly met the challenge, and Old First made the \$2,000 special contribution. This challenge grant is in addition to Old First's regular benevolence support for SafeHouse

–Bill Campbell

WITH GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS: PAT DEVINE-CUMMINGS

“In gratitude to my Old First family for all your care and support at a time of deep personal loss for me as well as for my husband Forrest's son and family. We were all very touched by your love. God's blessings to each of you.” –Pat Devine-Cummings

OLD FIRST MEMBER HONORED

On April 3 Betty Voris was honored by the San Francisco Symphony Volunteer Council as one of three 2016 SFS Volunteers of the Year. Awards were presented in a champagne-dessert reception in the Wattis Room of Davies Symphony Hall following the afternoon concert. These annual awards, begun in 2004, are made in conjunction with Volunteer Month which highlights the varied roles volunteers play towards the success of the symphony. SFS staff members nominate volunteers for the award to the Volunteer Council, which determines the recipients of the award. Currently there are more than 1,800 volunteers for the symphony.

The celebration was attended by many symphony volunteers and guests. In addition to a plaque, Betty received a corsage, bouquet of flowers, bottle of champagne and complimentary tickets for two for a future evening of dining and concert. Vertical banners announcing the winners will remain on display in the hall during the month of April. Old First congratulates our member, Betty Voris on this recognition of her volunteer work.

EASTER BREAKFAST A SUCCESS

From the satisfied smiles on the faces of those attending the Easter Pancake Breakfast, it was a huge success. Members, guests, families, street people, we fed them all. No one left hungry. So many pancakes were eaten that after using twenty pounds of pancake batter, a volunteer was sent to purchase more. Leftover eggs, fruit and candy were quickly consumed during the coffee hour.

Thanks to all who colored eggs, purchased supplies, flipped pancakes, filled empty pitchers and platters, and helped in the kitchen, fellowship hall set-up and clean-up. A special thanks to those who not only attended but sat with strangers and welcomed them into our Old First Easter family. The entire Easter morning was truly God's love at work. –Betty Voris

NO LONGER NEED YOUR OFPC ELECTRONIC KEY CARD?

If you have a white plastic key card (or other brass keys) for Old First that you no longer use, would you please turn them in to Brad in the church office. The company that supplies electronic key cards to us has been slow in providing additional cards, and Brad has need of old ones to re-program. Simply put your old keys in Brad's mail-box in the church office or mail them to the church with “attention: Brad” on the envelope.

OFPC OFFICERS

Session

Chris Burt, Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang, Robin Currier, Kristi Hoerauf, John Kramar, Dana Nojima, Linda Reyder, Betty Voris, Lori Yamauchi.

Board of Deacons

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

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY FOR MAY, 2016

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	Epistle	Gospel
May 1	6 th Sunday of Easter	Acts 16:9-15	Psalm 67	Revelation 21:10, 21:22-25:5	John 14:23-29 or 5:1-9
May 5	Ascension of the Lord	Acts 1:1-11	Psalm 47 or 93	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
May 8	7 th Sunday of Easter	Acts 16:16-34	Psalm 97	Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21	John 17:20-26
May 15	Day of Pentecost	Acts 2:1-21	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b	Romans 8:14-17	John 14:8-17 (25-27)
May 22	Trinity Sunday	Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31	Psalm 8	Romans 5:1-5	John 16:12-15
May 29	2 nd Sunday after Pentecost	1 Kings 18:20-21, 30-39	Psalm 96	Galatians 1:1-12	Luke 7:1-10

MAY DATES TO NOTE

May 1	Sunday	Old First Concerts: Music Teacher's Association of California, Festival of Music by French composers, 4:00 pm
May 6	Friday	Old First Concerts: Jupiter Chamber Ensemble, Music for Piano, Strings and Woodwinds, 8:00 pm
May 8	Sunday	Deacons Meeting, 12:30 pm
May 14	Saturday	OFPC Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry
May 15	Sunday	Pentecost Special Offering Video: Story of the Bible, 12:30 pm Old First Concerts: Trio 180, Russian Trios for Piano and Strings, 4:00 pm
May 22	Sunday	Video: Story of the Bible, Munro Room, 12:30 pm Old First Concerts: ZOFO, Recent Compositions for Piano, 4:00 pm
May 24	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm
May 29	Sunday	Video: Story of the Bible, 12:30 pm

UPCOMING DATES

June 5	OFPC Anniversary Celebration Potluck
August 7	Summer Picnic Potluck
October 15-17	All Church Retreat