

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

February 2017

Church Website: www.oldfirst.org

Like Us on Facebook

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Maggi's Musings

It seems that we are all about love during February: Valentine cards. Heart-shaped candy. Cupids. Red and pink everywhere.

However, we Christians are all about love 365 days a year. It is about loving God, being loved by God and in thanksgiving of God's gracious love we are transformed to love those we encounter every day. It is a love for those near and dear, those in our city and state, and around the world. And maybe the hardest challenge is God's call to love those we don't like and even loving those we don't agree with as well as our enemies. As hate, cynicism and fear seem to be taking hold of the hearts and minds of many, this February we need an extra dose of love, more awareness of God's love and *our power to be agents of God's love* than ever before. So I am offering up a valentine of sorts to the friends and member of OFPC: word to inspire, challenge, heal and lead us.

Peace, Pastor Maggi

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear. —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. —Psalm 145:8

Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love. —Mother Teresa

Which is the greatest commandment of all? Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" —Mark 12:28-31

All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt. —Charles M. Schulz

Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone's face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love? These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and the life to come. Henri Nouwin

When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace. —Jimi Hendrix

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. —1 Peter 4:8

Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope. —Maya Angelou

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. —Jesus Christ

Memorial Service for Jerry Hennis, February 9

A memorial service for Jerry Hennis will be held on Thursday, February 9, at 2:00 pm in the Franciscan Room at the Sequoias.

Congregational/Annual Meeting, Sunday, February 19

We will hold our Congregational/Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 19 following worship. We will nominate and elect deacons and elders, approve Pastor Maggi's package, have an overview of the budget, and reflect on highlights of 2016 and share visions for 2017. Another congregational meeting is called for April 9, Palm/Passion Sunday, to ordain and install elders and deacons.

Upcoming Events

Souper Bowl of Caring, February 5

The Confirmation Class invites you to take part in the *Souper Bowl of Caring* February 5. They will collect canned goods (potted meat, chili, tuna are a big hit) or any loose change you might have and all will go to the SF/Marin Food Bank.

The *Souper Bowl of Caring* grew out of a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat." The prayer has inspired a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world.

This prayer, delivered by Brad Smith, then a seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC (Our own Erwin Barron's Father's Church), gave birth to an idea. Why not use Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football and fun, also to unify the nation for a higher good: collecting dollars and canned food for the needy? Youth could collect donations at their schools and churches in soup pots, and then send every dollar *directly* to a local charity of *their own* choice. (In our case this is the SF/Marin Food Bank.)

The senior high youth of Spring Valley Presbyterian liked the idea so much they decided to invite other area churches to join the team. Twenty-two Columbia churches participated that first year, reporting their results so a total could be determined, and then sending all \$5,700 they had raised to area non-profits.

That was 1990. Since then, ordinary young people have generated an extraordinary more than \$100 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the country. In addition, hundreds of thousands of youth have experienced for themselves the joy and satisfaction of giving and serving, inspiring people of all ages to follow their generous example.

February Potluck, February 5

Want something more than pizza on Super Bowl Sunday? Then stay after worship on February 5 and partake in Old First's highly acclaimed potluck. The Community-Building Committee will supply the entree and all you have to do is bring a salad, side dish or dessert to help fill our table to its max. As usual, if you do not cook or don't have a chance to bring something from the store, a small donation will get your plate filled that day. Don't hesitate to bring guests either. It is a feast for all. Go home to watch either the news or the 3:30 pm Super Bowl with a contented stomach and only worry about snacks for your afternoon activities. See you there!

Book Discussion: *Waking Up White*, by Debbie Irving February 12, March 5 and 19, April 2

Our discussion of Irving's book will take the shape of a four-part class starting February 12 and continuing on March 5, March 19 and April 2. We will meet at 12:30ish in the Library following coffee hour. The discussion sessions will last one hour. At the first class we will share a light meal and will figure out future plans from there. You can get the book at a local book store, the library, or on Kindle. There will also be some one-off discussion groups so keep your eyes peeled for more opportunities.

Universal Day of Prayer of Students, February 19

Sunday, February 19 is the Universal Day of Prayer of Students. Check out the World Student Christian Federation website: wscfglobal.org. Start local by praying for the students, teachers and workers at a local school you pass on your daily journeys through San Francisco and the East Bay.

Special Valentine Offering for Presbytery Hunger Fund, February 19

Old First will receive a special offering on the Sunday after Valentine's Day, February 19, to support the Presbytery of San Francisco Hunger Fund. The Presbytery's Hunger Fund provides grants to highly effective local hunger-relief programs like our own wonderful Interfaith Food Pantry.

Another example of an outstanding local program is the Free Breakfast Program of Irvington Presbyterian Church in Fremont. This amazing collaboration between Irvington Presbyterian Church, Centerville Presbyterian Church and community groups:

- Serves hot, nutritious breakfasts 3 days each week to an average of 165 guests.
- Serves about 35,000 meals and distributes about 9,000 bags of food per year.
- Is an all-volunteer effort with no paid staff.

Unlike One Great Hour of Sharing, which addresses world-wide hunger, the Presbytery Hunger Fund alleviates hunger in our own communities. With our help, the Presbytery Hunger Fund can continue to help support the hunger-relief programs of smaller congregations that can do much more with a little help. On the Sunday after Valentine's Day, February 19, please bring a check to church payable to Old First and put "PSF Hunger Fund" in the memo line, or use a pew envelope and mark the box on the envelope for "Special Offering." Please support this offering generously.

Mardi Gras Party, February 28, St Luke's Episcopal Church

St Luke's has invited Old First to join them on Tuesday, February 28, for their Mardi Gras celebration. The party starts at 5:30 pm with traditional pancakes and fun. A \$10 donation is asked for dinner and adult libations.

Ash Wednesday, March 1

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1, with a joint service with the people of St. Luke's Episcopal Church at 6:00 pm *at Old First Presbyterian Church*. (In Holy Week we will join St Luke's at their church for Maundy Thursday Worship, March 13, 6:00 pm.)

One Great Hour of Sharing, April 16

Start saving your loose change now for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering that will be collected on Easter Sunday, April 16. The fish coin boxes will be available the first Sunday of Lent, March 5 and will be collected Easter.

News

Interfaith Welcome Congregations Exceed Goal for Teddy Bears for Children in Refugee Camps

The Interfaith Welcome congregations that joined together to help refugees have raised over \$20,000 to buy teddy bears for refugee children. The congregations' goal was to deliver 5,000 teddy bears to Syrian children in a refugee camp in Jordan. We exceeded it, thanks to the extraordinary response to the campaign. Research has shown that cuddly, stuffed animals measurably reduce anxiety and provide solace to children coping with loss and disruption. A teddy bear is emergency medicine. It helps a child feel more safe and secure and reduces anxiety symptoms, such as nightmares, bed-wetting and aggressive behavior.

Interfaith Welcome is a group of Bay Area congregations that are working together to:

- Help refugees find safety, welcome, freedom and independence,
- Partner with refugee resettlement agencies so that they can do more for refugees, and
- Engage our congregations and communities to provide awareness, advocacy, direct service and fundraising.

Bill Campbell of Old First and Nancy Levine of Temple Emanu-El lead the group.

Presbytery of SF Congregations Contribute Nearly \$14,000 in Four Months for Refugee Resettlement in Oakland, Presbytery of SF Matches \$10,000

To support its congregations' efforts to welcome refugees and help them rebuild their lives, last September the Presbytery of San Francisco announced an offer to match congregations' contributions to the Oakland office of the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

The presbytery's matching offer applied to contributions that churches made between September 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017, to an overall maximum of \$10,000. Six months before the deadline, Old First and six other congregations quickly contributed \$13,589. The Presbytery added its \$10,000 match.

While small compared with the total need, these contributions will provide real help to refugee families who are arriving in the Bay Area. Until President Trump's January 27 executive order temporarily suspended the refugee program, the IRC's Oakland office was resettling about 450 refugees a year, or about 75 families, and helping them start anew in Oakland. A quarter of these newly-arriving refugees are under the age of five.

Old First's IRC contribution was within the Global Response part of our benevolence budget.

The source of the presbytery match was the presbytery's Peacemaking Fund. This fund receives 25% of local churches' contributions to our denomination's annual Peace and Global Witness offering.

Decades-long missionary dream begins in Malawi: Mission Around the World January 23, 2017 by Tammy Warren | Mission Crossroads

LOUISVILLE – God's plans and timing are different from ours. Just ask the Reverend Dr. Donna J. Sloan. Donna has packed her luggage, figuratively, more than once to answer God's call to mission—a call she has felt since she was nine years old, growing up in Campbell, Ohio. Donna recalls that when a teacher at Campbell Christian Center asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up, she said "I want to be a missionary nurse." Now in her 70s, Donna has been commissioned by the Presbyterian Church (USA) to teach church history and ethics as a long-term volunteer in Malawi.



It is often said that God qualifies the called rather than calling the qualified. While Donna waited for God's perfect timing to begin mission service, she earned a diploma in nursing; a bachelor's degree in sociology; master's degrees in public health, divinity and theology; and a doctorate in interdisciplinary arts and sciences that focused on the inter-relatedness of religion and health. After each accomplishment, as well as after her ordination as a minister in the late 1980s, she thought, "Now I'm ready. God will send me now." Each time, however, she sensed it wasn't God's idea of the right time.

Throughout her careers as a registered nurse, ordained minister and college professor, Donna continued to work in New England, California and Ohio. She also cared for her aging parents for many years and taught philosophy and religious studies at Youngstown (Ohio) State University—courses she will also teach during her two-year mission as a professor at Zomba Theological College in South Central Africa. Students of ZTC represent all five Church of Central Africa Presbyterian synods: Blantyre, Harare, Livingstonia, Nkhoma and Zambia spread across the countries of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

A few years ago Donna met retired mission co-worker JoAnn Griffith, who served in Ethiopia for more than four decades. JoAnn's enthusiasm for mission was contagious and caused Donna to reflect on her childhood dream of becoming a missionary. Donna traveled on a short-term mission to Ethiopia with JoAnn and was excited to work with the Oromo people, especially because she had learned through DNA testing that her ancestral heritage on her father's side is 99.4% from the Oromo people of Ethiopia.

That trip prompted Donna to complete an online application for mission service at pcusa.org/onedoor. She attended an orientation in October 2015, initially planning to serve in Ethiopia. At orientation she learned about the teaching position in Malawi. When she learned the courses she would teach at ZTC were the same as she had taught in Ohio, she became convinced that the timing of the position in Malawi was according to God's plan.

Since her retirement, Donna has been learning to play the harp—another long-time dream. She will take her harp with her to Malawi and continue lessons via Skype.

Even though several decades have passed since she initially recognized God's call, Donna remains excited and expectant about mission work. She's looking forward to all God has planned.

The Reverend Debbie Braaksma, Africa area coordinator, is pleased that Donna has answered God's call to mission. "She is a very special person. Her wisdom and life experiences are so needed in Malawi."

You can support Donna's long-term volunteer mission in Malawi by making a gift at pcusa.org/donate/E074870.

Musical Notes: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

As February is the month of love, this beloved text may come immediately to mind: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" was written by the priest and evangelist Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and first published in *Hymns for those that Seek, and those that have Redemption*, 1747. Frank Baker, in *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, suggests that Wesley's text was inspired by a poem of John Dryden, set by Henry Purcell in his opera *King Arthur*, 1691:

Fairest Isle, all isles Excelling,
Seat of Pleasures, and of Loves;
Venus here will chuse her Dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian Groves.



In 1761 John Wesley set his brother's words to Purcell's melody, calling the tune WESTMINSTER, and including it in *Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed*, 1773. The hymn tune most closely associated with this text is BEECHER, composed by John Zundel (1815-1882) and this text and tune were first published together in *Christian Heart Songs*, 1870. The tune was named in honor of Henry Ward Beecher, who was the pastor of Brooklyn's Plymouth Church, where Zundel enjoyed a 30 year music ministry. In spite of its popularity, many 20th Century hymnologists declared BEECHER to be the worst hymn tune ever composed in modern times.

Beginning in the 1940s, the Welsh hymn tune HYFRYDOL [hih-FRIH-dull, meaning "tuneful" or "pleasant, began to gain acceptance as an "appropriately more dignified" alternative melody. One of the most popular Welsh hymn tunes, it was composed in 1831 by the 19-year-old Rowland Hugh Prichard (1811-1887), an assistant loom tender in the Welsh Flannel Manufacturing Company and a gifted amateur singer, song leader and sacred and secular song composer. – Larry Marietta, Music Director

Pastor's Pet Peeve: "Reply All"

Some days I get a bit distracted when a message goes out about a prayer request, the sharing of some information, or the discernment of problems and solutions... and then someone hits "Reply All" instead of simply replying to the original sender. I suspect that you, like me, get distracted – even overwhelmed – by weeding through these extra E-mails received daily. Somedays I fantasize about launching a "Reply All" message out that says "PLEASE DON'T REPLY ALL!" But I understand that that would just add to the quagmire. There are times when a reply all makes sense – we can all understand that. However, good form requires us all to contemplate a moment when responding to an E-mail and considering whether it can better addressed with a single "Reply" to the original sender rather than with "Reply All." –Maggi

The Sovereign Emblem



“The Sovereign Emblem”

*Whatsoe'er the form of building or the creed professed,
The Cross, bold type of shame to homage turned,
Of an unfinished life that sways the world,
Shall tower as sovereign emblem over all.* –James Russell Lowell, 1819-1891

Dates to Remember

February 4	Saturday	OFPC staffs Interfaith Food Pantry.
February 5	Sunday	Souper Bowl of Caring Food Drive February Potluck after Worship
February 12	Sunday	Deadline for March Issue of Shared Life Deacons Meeting, 12:30 pm
February 19	Sunday	Valentine Offering for Presbytery Hunger Fund Congregational/Annual Meeting after Worship
February 20	Monday	Presidents Day: Church Office Closed Doris Krauss Senior Center Closed
February 25	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
February 26	Sunday	Ushers' Breakfast Meeting
February 28	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm
March 1	Wednesday	Ash Wednesday Worship Service, 6:00 pm

Old First Family and Friends

Prayers of Mourning

We mourn the death of Gerald Hennis, who died January 27 and whose memorial service will be held on Thursday, February 9, at 2:00 pm in the Franciscan Room at the Sequoias.

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Pray for Lois Nason and for Mary Lou Wilson.

Church Officers

Session

Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang, Robin Currier, Kristi Hoerauf, John Kramar, Dana Nojima, Linda Reyder, Betty Voris, Lori Yamauchi, Tom Culp, clerk of session

Board of Deacons

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