

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

February 2018

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Maggi's Musings

Ash Wednesday (February 14, this year) ushers in the season of Lent. It is marked with a shared service at St. Luke's Episcopal Church (Clay Street and Van Ness Avenue) at 6:00 pm.



Every year I attempt to write something which will bring us as a community and as individuals into a deepening of awareness of God's presence, God's word, God's direction, God's challenge in our lives so that the world-changing event of East really can shake us up, can really wake us up. So, I find myself on a search for inspiration: I explore materials, talk with friends, open myself up to wisdom that will do just that. But instead of something new this year, I discovered words which I wrote in 2014, which still speak to me.

Our Lenten journey starts with the ashes of death and leads to the resurrected life celebrated on Easter Day. The six-week journey of Lent is a time to turn around, to change directions, to repent. It is a opportunity for us to prepare for the mystery and joy of Resurrection by taking on a new discipline that empowers us to be witnesses of Christ's healing and new life... or by letting go of an old habit that gets in the way of fully following the Risen One.

*This year I am *not* going to make half-hearted vows, over-ambitious vows to undertake or give up something grand, vows that inevitably seem to last only a week or so. This year I am simply going to seek to add five minutes to my daily prayer – five more minutes to reflect or simply to be quiet. If I do this three times in my week, I will be thrilled. And, if I am able to do more, I will count it as a blessing. In this very small thing I hope to find the "holy in the ordinary" – as Ann Weems calls it. (See her poem on the next page.)*

So this Lent I am going to be more focused in my reading, with the expectation it will give ways to open me up to God's presence, word, direction, and challenge. I invite you to pick one of my readings or choose your own. If you make a commitment do it with a balance of dedication and grace.

1. I am going to open and use the Church's Lenten devotional ***A Wondrous Love*** -by Henri Nouwen and C.S. Lewis. Why don't we use this individual devotional in a communal way by adding our reflections, insights, sharing a great line on Old First Face Book page.
2. I invite you to join me in reading ***Life Last Gift-Giving and Receiving Peace When a Loved One is Dying***-by Charlie Garfield. (See more information about the book in this Shared Life.) During this last year it feels like there have been many deaths in our church family and in the lives of our members and I find myself thankful for ways to deepen my caring and to stay engaged during so much loss. This book offers wisdom and guidance on how to support those we care for during the last days of their lives with grace and kindness.

- The Session has gotten a grant through the Presbytery to work with a group called PneuMatrix with a number of churches on learning and building adaptive change leadership. We are using the book *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* by Tod Bolsinger. A small group will meet with Rev. Jim Kitchens and work on this together. I am going to commit to read the book deeply and with an open spirit to see what I might learn rather than in a hurried manner just trying to get through the pages. We would covet people reading it alongside the group. You can order a copy on Amazon or download it on your Kindle.

My prayer, my desire, my hope is that God will break into our lives with new insight, wisdom, love, and peace this Lenten season. May it be so.

Peace, Maggi

The Holy in the Ordinary

by Ann Weems

Holy is the time and holy is this place,
and there are holy things that must be
said.

Let us say to one another what our souls
whisper...

O Holy One, cast your tent among us;
come into our ordinary lives
and bless the living!

Forty days stretch before us,
forty days of hungering after faithfulness,
forty days of trying
to understand the story,
and then, Holy Week...

O God, if every week were holy...

These forty days stretch before us,
and the those of who believe

yearn to feel Your presence,
yearn not be Your people;
and yet, the days fill with ordinary things
with no time left
for seeking the holy.

Spiritual contemplation is all right
for those who have the time,
but most of us have to make a living.

Most of us have to liven the real world
where profanity splashes and blots out
anything holy.

Where, O Holy One,
can we find You in this unholy mess?
How, O God,
can we find the holy in the ordinary?

Annual Meeting, February 4 at the End of Worship

Old First Presbyterian Church will hold its Annual Meeting at the end of worship on Sunday, February 4, to review the church's budget and the pastor's compensation package

Benefit Concert for Refugees, Friday, February 9

On Friday, February 9, at 7pm, Friction Quartet will present a benefit concert at Zion Lutheran Church, at 495 Ninth Avenue at Anza. One hundred percent of all contributions will benefit Sea of Solidarity, an amazing, all-volunteer nonprofit that is helping refugees who are living in desperate conditions on the Island of Lesbos, Greece, and in Turkey. After the concert, Zion will host a free reception. The requested contribution is \$15 per person or \$25 per family. The 38 Geary bus stops at Anza. Please pick up a flyer in the Narthex or in the Coffee Hour.

For more on Sea of Solidarity, please go to <http://www.seaofsolidarity.org/>. The highly praised Friction Quartet both interprets new music and performs masterworks of the string quartet repertoire at the highest level. For more on the Quartet, visit www.frictionquartet.com/about-fq. This concert is sponsored by Interfaith Welcome.

Ash Wednesday Worship, February 14 at St. Luke's

For the beginning of Lent we will join St. Luke's Episcopal Church, our neighbor one block away. Worship will be at St Luke's – 1755 Clay Street at Van Ness Avenue and will start at 6:00 pm. Old First's Pastor Henderson will preach.

Devotionals for Lent: "A Wondrous Love"

This Lent the Worship Committee has selected "A Wondrous Love" by Henri Nouwen and C.S. Lewis. We have had separate devotionals by each of these leading spiritual writers of the 20th century in the past but now we have them brought together in one booklet. They both offer deeply personal insights and understandings plus pastoral sensitivity that assist readers in our Lenten journey. These devotionals are free and available from the ushers or the church office. Call or send an E-mail and a copy will be sent to you.

Christian Education in Lent: Spiritual Disciplines and Practice

This Lent the Christian Education Committee is offering an educational series on spiritual disciplines and practices. More details will follow in the weekly bulletins.

The Narrative Lectionary in Lent and the Easter Season

The Narrative Lectionary is a four-year cycle of readings for use in worship. The texts show the breadth and variety of voices within Scripture.

The Narrative Lectionary was initiated by Professors Rolf Jacobson and Craig Koester of Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota. The experiment involving congregations across North America began in 2010 and continues to grow. Though the Revised Common Lectionary has united the church in its reading of scripture and has given much-needed structure, it doesn't present scripture -- especially the Old Testament -- in a way that helps people to become fluent in the first language of faith. The Narrative Lectionary is an attempt to take nine months to do just that.

This Lent at Old First Presbyterian Church, we will follow the Narrative Lectionary from the First Sunday in Lent, February 18, through Pentecost, May 20. Why don't you read the scripture before worship and see how the Spirit and the scripture work in you?

Narrative Lectionary

Year 4 – John (Revised 4/24/17)

February 18 *Jesus Raises Lazarus*

First Sunday in Lent

John 11:1-44: Raising Lazarus, Jesus as the resurrection and life.
(Psalm 104:27-30)

February 25 *Jesus Washes Feet*

Second Sunday in Lent

John 13:1-17: Footwashing as a sign of Jesus' love and example.
(Psalm 51:7-12)

March 4 *Peter's Denial*

Third Sunday in Lent

John 18:12-27: Jesus' trial before Annas, Peter's denial.
(Psalm 17:1-7)

March 11 *Jesus and Pilate*

Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 18:28-40: My kingdom is not from this world.
(Psalm 145:10-13)

March 18 *Jesus Condemned*

Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 19:1-16a: Jesus is condemned, they have no king but Caesar.
(Psalm 146)

March 25 *The Crucified Messiah*

Palm/Passion Sunday

John 19:16b-22 or John 12:12-27: Triumphal Entry, Sign above the cross proclaims the crucified king.
(Psalm 24)

March 29 *Jesus' Last Words*

Maundy Thursday

John 19:23-30: Woman, behold your son; I thirst; It is finished.
(Psalm 26:3)

March 30 *Jesus the Passover Lamb*

Good Friday

John 19:31-42: Jesus' bones are not broken, water from his side, a royal burial.
(Psalm 31:9-18)

April 1 *Resurrection*

Resurrection of Our Lord

John 20:1-18: Empty tomb, Jesus calls Mary by name.
(Psalm 118:21-29)

April 8 *Thomas*

Second Sunday of Easter

John 20:19-31: Jesus gives Spirit, appears to Thomas.
(Psalm 145:13-21)

April 15 *Paul's Conversion*

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1-19a: Paul and Ananias, each called into Christ's service (locally and globally).
(Matthew 6:24)

April 22 *Paul and Silas*

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:16-34: Paul and Silas in prison at Philippi, jailer and his family are baptized.
(Luke 6:18-19, 22-23)

April 29 *Paul's Sermon at Athens*

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:16-31: Sermon at Athens: What you worship as unknown, I proclaim to you.
(John 1:16-18)

May 6 *Partnership in the Gospel*

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Philippians 1:1-18a: Paul in prison, thankful for the Philippians' partnership in the gospel.
(Luke 9:46-48)

May 13 *The Christ Hymn*

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Philippians 2:1-13: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who became obedient to death.
(Luke 6:43-45)

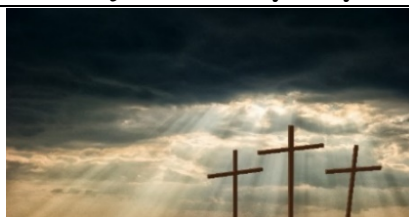
May 20 *Pentecost, Rejoice in the Lord*

Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21; Philippians 4:4-7: Gift of the Spirit as miracle of communication. Rejoice in the Lord always. The peace of God.
(John 14:16-17)

For more information about the Narrative Lectionary, visit Luther Seminary's website for a video introduction to it and more information: <http://www.workingpreacher.org/>

Toward Jerusalem by Amy Carmichael, 1867–1951



Opening our windows toward Jerusalem,
And Looking thitherward, we see
First Bethlehem,
Then Nazareth and Galilee,
And afterwards Gethsemane;
And then the little hill called Calvary.

One Great Hour of Sharing: Easter, Sunday April 1

One Great Hour of Sharing, makes a difference in the world. We will take up this offering on Easter Sunday April 1st. Get your **Fish Boxes** to start saving your loose change for the offering. The offering goes to these three programs:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees. Receives 32% of funds raised.
- Presbyterian Hunger Program takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed. Receives 36% of funds raised.
- Self-Development of People invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues. Receives 32% of funds raised.

Nominating New Deacons and Elders

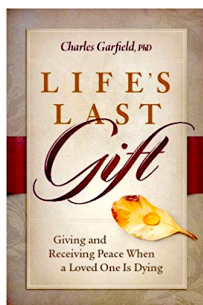
It is time again for us to nominate elders and deacons. The ministries of deacons and of elders form the supporting skeleton and pulse of the body of the church.

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 persons you’re considering and ask them if they are willing to be nominated. Or you might speak to a member of the church and ask them to reflect on those you think might be called to serve. You can also contact the committee by sending an E-mail to nomcom@oldfirst.org or by speaking with one of the Nominating Committee members.

All Church Lenten Read *Life Lasts Gift: Giving and Receiving Peace When a Loved One Is Dying* by Charles Garfield.

Garfield’s book is available for \$10.00 from the church office or at coffee hour. You can also order it yourself for your Kindle from Amazon. Charles Garfield founded Shanti (housed on Polk Street), to train volunteers to be with the dying. Shanti later became San Francisco’s first Community based agency supporting people with HIV/AIDS and became a model for volunteer groups all over the world. Pastor Maggi heard him speak at the San Francisco Interfaith Council’s Worlds Aid’s Day service and promptly bought ten books and has since ordered more. It is a pointed, deep book for all of those that have cared for or will care for those who are dying.



Garfield writes “*This book is for you if one of your loved ones has been diagnosed with a life-threatening illness; if you’ve just heard the bad news about a friend or acquaintance and don’t know what to do or say; if you’re contending with the ups and downs of someone’s cancer, heart disease, AIDS, or potential terminal condition; if the prognosis is bleak, and you don’t know how to balance hope with reality that time is short; whether your heart is overflowing with love for the other person right now, or you’re caring for someone who sets you on edge.*” He reminds us that there is one promise that the dying need to hear from those that love and care for them: “*I choose to be with you in a*

healing partnership, though I know you are dying I will stand with you in the midst of despair.” Garfield says “I’d like to help you make this brave and comforting choice. It can be life’s last gift.”

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

For Marita Taber, Stephen Taber’s mother, who is in declining health.
 For James Uren for continued healing from a broken dominant left arm.
 For George Yu for successful gall bladder surgery and during his recovery period.
 For Priscilla Yu for supportive prayers.
 For Lori Yamauchi’s father, Joe, who is undergoing radiation therapy for laryngeal cancer.
 For Dorothy, Brad Peterson’s mother, who has suffered a stroke.
 For Mary Lou Wilson, recovering from a broken hip and surgery.
 For Jack Rozzell, recovering at home after hospitalization.

Prayers for the Mourning

For John Kramar and his family on the death of his mother, Cecilia Eva Kramar, December 26.
 For the family and friends of Old First member Amanda Leto, who died January 2.
 For Joe Sheffey III (David Griffith’s partner) on the death of his father, Joseph Sheffey Jr., January 1.

Dates to Remember

February 4	Sunday	Worship with Annual Meeting, 11:00 am
February 6	Tuesday	Mission Committee, 6:30 pm
February 11	Sunday	Deadline for March Issue of <i>Shared Life</i> Board of Deacons, 12:30 pm
February 14	Wednesday	Ash Wednesday Worship, 6:00 pm at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church
February 19	Monday	Presidents Day: Church Office Closed
February 20	Tuesday	Worship Committee, 7:00 pm
February 24	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 p.m.
February 27	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

OFPC Church Officers

Session

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 Kristi Hoerauf
 Dana Nojima

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 John Kramar
 Lori Yamauchi
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