

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter from Old First Presbyterian Church

July/August 2018

Website: www.oldfirst.org

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Maggi's Musings

This June I found myself thankful once again to be a Presbyterian.

I am proud of the work of the 223th General Assembly (GA) of the Presbyterian Church (USA), which took place in St. Louis, Missouri, June 16 through 23. It was truly a work of the people and that includes *our* people, commissioners from our own presbytery, people we know and love. Among them were Jeanne Choy Tate, who was co-moderator of the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, and also Brook Scott, our former seminary intern, who was a seminary student commissioner. They took part in the work of the church, of our church.

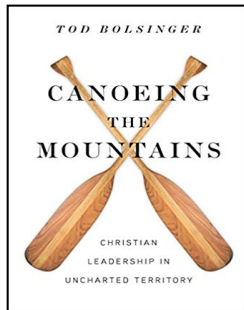
We often talk about the church being the body of Christ and about how we are connected to God and each other. Through that connection we embody God's love in the world and do so in many and various ways. Our commissioners to GA wrestled with what it means to put God's love into action.

Sometimes I just get so focused on what is happening here in SF, and lately much of my concern, my energy, my praying has been about our homeless neighbors. But reading about the work of the GA lifts me out of my own focus into the heart of the world, into the passion of others living out their faith: GA wrestled with climate control, family separation, race and inequality just to name a few of the issues. GA approved two historic overtures. One affirms and celebrates the gifts of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the church. And the other affirms the rights and dignity of transgender people, non-binary people and people of varying gender identities (see Old First Face Book page for the full document.)

I wouldn't have imagined this possible even four years ago, when I was a commissioner to the GA. You can read about some of the work, our work in the Renewing the Vision document inside this issue of *Shared Life*. It is kind of like a taste, an appetizer to tease your interest to learn more. It has excited me. I hope you get excited too. Visit the GA's website and go exploring: <https://ga-pcusa.org>, but come to the report on GA that Jeanne Choy Tate will offer us on Sunday, August 15, at 12:30 pm, as well. Her personal perspective will bring GA alive for us.

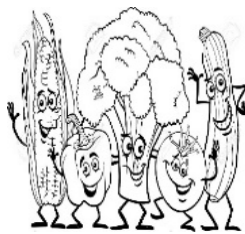
I look forward to seeing how my own passion and vision will be renewed by GA's work this summer. Let GA inspire you too as we journey in the ways of Jesus.

Canoeing the Mountains: Reading for the PneuMatrix/Adaptive Change Group



Canoeing the Mountains by Tod Bolsinger is being read by the PneuMatrix/Adaptive Change group – the group that has hosted the “Thinking Together” discussions these past Sundays. Why don’t you read the book and join in the adventure? The book is available for only \$10.00 either from the Albert Barrios Children’s Library or at coffee hour after Sunday worship.

Old First Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry, July 14 and August 18



Please mark your calendar and let Dana Nojma know that you can lend a hand at the Interfaith Food Pantry on Saturday, July 14, and Saturday, August 18: nojidt@gmail.com. We need seventeen helpers from 7:30 am to 10:45 am to unload the truck, to distribute food and to clean up.

As always - if you can only make it for the early or late shift - that's still a great help. And share this message with others who might be looking for volunteer opportunities.

Report on GA 2018 with Jeanne Choy-Tate, July 15

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) met this past June in St. Louis, Missouri. Old First member Jeanne Choy-Tate served the assembly as co-moderator of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns. She will report to us on the assembly and its results on Sunday, July 15, at 12:30 pm in the Munro Room.

Saturday Community Dinner, July 28 and August 25



Help host, serve and eat the Saturday Community Dinner on Saturday, July 28 and August 25. Volunteers are welcomed in the early afternoon to prepare the food and also from 4:30 pm on to set up the room, to serve the meal, to eat and to clean up. Let us know that you can help. Send an E-mail to saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org

Support the Vision Project Workshop, August 6-10

The International Rescue Committee offers opportunities to support the next Vision Project workshop for middle school and high school refugee girls. The workshop venue will be First Presbyterian Church in South Berkeley.

Opportunities to help include:

- Providing workshop supplies,
- Providing breakfast pastries, snacks or lunch, or
- Interpreting for 1-3 girls whose native language is Spanish, Arabic, Dari/Farsi, Tigrinya, Somali.

If you would like to help, please let Marilyn or Bill Campbell know.

Ice-Cream Mission Trip Fund Raiser, August 12

Come support our Mission Trip participants at an ice-cream social fund raiser on Sunday, August 12, at coffee hour! You can hear about the mission trip to San Diego that Eva, Branch and Maggi will have taken and eat ice-cream to support that work!

The trip is sponsored by Calvary Presbyterian Church. There are at least two other Presbyterian churches in the city taking part. This will be an amazing way for our churches to work and worship together as partners. Eva, Branch and Maggi will travel on July 29 and return on August 4. They will go to San Diego and work with the Sierra Service Project (SSP).

The trip will take them to San Diego's "South Bay" – Imperial Beach, National City, and San Ysidro. Living and working in the same community with those it serves is very important to SSP. This is one of the reasons SSP makes such an invaluable mission partner. This will be SSP's fourth year serving in San Diego County, but their first in South Bay. Youth will visit Friendship Park, a park on both sides of the US-Mexico border. Volunteers will have the opportunity to sign up for a day trip to Tijuana or stay in the US for a day of learning and serving.

Both groups will meet at Friendship Park on their respective sides of the border to have a shared experience of what it feels like to be separated from friends and loved ones across the border. They will hear from people living and working in the border areas including a pastor from the Methodist Church of Mexico who will lead the group in a bi-national prayer. After that, they will spend the day engaged in different service learning activities.

Save the Dates! Mt Hermon Retreat October 19-21, 2018

OK, so the baseball season has hardly begun and the Warriors are sniffing heavily at another World Championship — BUT it's time to think about the All Church Retreat at Mt Hermon in the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains. We will be teamed up again this year with First Presbyterian Church, Burlingame and the above dates are secured. The speaker will be Steve Schibsted. He is currently serving as interim at First Presbyterian Church, Berkeley and previously served as head of staff in Chico. While the theme and topic of the retreat have not been set yet, I'm sure they will be inspirational and it will be wonderful to be together with all our friends. Please mark your calendars - you won't want to be double booked!

Jeanne Kirkwood

Thanks to His Supporter from Andy Cheng

Old First Friends,
2018]

[June 7,

As most of you already know, all four judges won on Tuesday [June 5]. The margin in my victory was 65-35, which I attribute to your strong support and efforts to get out the vote.

I have been blessed to know many of you for over 25 years. Thank you for all that you have done, for all of your prayers, and for your unflagging support.

I am on a plane to see my parents in an hour, but I wanted to reach as many of you as possible to say thank you...

Blessings to each of you.

Andy

Successful Gift Card Drive Puts Money in Refugee Families' Pockets

Old First completed its gift card drive for refugee families by raising over \$600 in Safeway, Target and Starbucks gift cards, plus over \$2,300 in checks and cash that the Mission Committee will use to buy more gift cards. These contributions, plus Old First's match, will soon be available for the International Rescue Committee's Oakland office to help needy refugee families who have been resettled in local communities from Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and other war-torn countries. Thank you to all who so generously contributed to this drive and all who are keeping refugees in their prayers!

Old First Hires New Bookkeeper: Mary Ann Reynolds

In June Mary Ann Reynolds joined the Old First Presbyterian Church staff as a part time bookkeeper. She will work closely with Old First treasurer Greg Free and Finance Committee elder Kristi Hoerauf. If you are in the church office on a day she is working at Old First, please introduce yourself to her and welcome her to Old First.

Community, Hospitality, Coffee Hour!

Coffee hour is a simple, but important ministry for Old First: We continue our fellowship begun in worship, and we welcome our guests. Can you sponsor this ministry? For \$50 you can support our Christ-like hospitality and commemorate a person or give thanks for a blessing with a dedication in the bulletin. Find the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board or call the church office.

Brad Visits Barbara Quigley in Glasgow

Brad Peterson, Old First's office admin, will visit the Reverend Barbara Quigley, minister of St Andrew's East Parish (Church of Scotland) while he and his husband John-Elliott spend their summer vacation in Glasgow. Barbara "swapped pulpits" with our Pastor Henderson in the summer of 2015, so Brad got to work with her on a daily basis during the week. He and John-Elliott also had the opportunity to host Barbara and her daughter Eilidh – in California to for the Valley of the Moon fiddle camp – at their home for lunch.

Brad is looking forward to seeing Barbara and her daughter again, and also to meeting her husband, the Reverend David Firth (Methodist Church of Great Britain), and their dog, Angus (big, friendly). He and John-Elliott are also looking forward to hearing choral evensong at St Mungo's Church (Glasgow's medieval cathedral consecrated 1197), biking from Edinburgh to Rosslyn Chapel (built 1446), riding the Falkirk Wheel (a boat lift between canals built 2002) and hiking part of the Antonine Wall (begun 142 by the Romans). Brad's last day in the office at Old First will be July 23; he returns to the office on Tuesday, August 14.

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

For James Uren for continued healing from a recent surgery. He is home again and appreciates emails, visits and phone calls from his OFPC family.

For Mary Culp continuing to heal from recent hip surgery.

For Linda Reyder for continued healing of broken fingers after a fall.

For the Reverend Erwin Barron for strength, positive energy and enduring faith during cancer treatment.

For Erwin's husband, Coy Abellano, for strength and encouragement during Erwin's treatment.

For Vincent Gresser as he works toward recovery, strength, and feeling safe.

For Jack Rozzell as he continues treatment for chronic pain.

For Dortha Reade for continued healing following cancer surgery.

For Lorraine Bellesi recovering from cataract surgery.

Dates to Remember

July 2	Monday	Mission Committee/We Choose Welcome Team, 6:30 pm
July 4	Wednesday	Independence Day: Church Office Closed <i>Note: Bible Study will meet! 10:30 am</i>
July 8	Sunday	Board of Deacons, 12:30 pm
July 14	Saturday	Old First Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry, 9:00 am
July 21	Saturday	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon
July 28	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
Aug 12	Sunday	Deadline for September Issue of Shared Life Mission Trip Ice Cream Social, 12:30 pm
Aug 18	Saturday	Old First Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry, 9:00 am Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon
Aug 25	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
Aug 28	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm

OFPC Church Officers**Session****Class of 2019**

Tom Culp, clerk of session
Robin Currier
John Kramar
Lori Yamauchi
Priscilla Yu

Class of 2020

Bill Campbell
Hsiaochien Chuang
Daniel Pearch
Linda Reyder
Virginia Webb-Pekelnicky

Class of 2021

Kristi Hoerauf
Dana Nojima
Stephen Taber

Board of Deacons**Class of 2019**

Riley Kramar
Emily Olson
Mary Russell
AnnieScott Rogers

Class of 2020

Beth Arnaoot
Courtney Blake
Cindy Burt, moderator
Glen Potter
Jian Wang

Class of 2021

Sarah Taber



RENEWING THE VISION:

Kindom building for the 21st century

by Leslie Scanlon, *Outlook* national reporter

The 223rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) St. Louis, Missouri – June 16-23, 2018

Presbyterians took to the streets at the 2018 General Assembly, with hundreds marching from the convention center to the City Justice Center with \$47,200 in donations – money the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) collected during opening worship, and which was used to bail out people incarcerated for minor offenses who could not afford to pay their fines or make bail.

It's a "passion for ministry and the love of Jesus that drives us out of the church and into the streets," J. Herbert Nelson, stated clerk of the PC(USA), said during a midweek rally.

This was a General Assembly that felt viscerally linked to the news of the day: climate change, immigrant parents being separated from their children at the borders, gun violence.

Over and over, this question came up: ***How to put faith into action?***

Floretta Barbee-Watkins, pastor of The Avenue Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, preached that it's easy to get discouraged, but Jesus, faith and love move people forward even when they are weary. The PC(USA) has "made some bad biscuits," Barbee-Watkins said, but confession and a willingness to "deal with the urgent needs of our siblings and the church" propel Christians to action. She challenged: "Beloved, rise up, let's make some new biscuits."

Climate change. The assembly voted 332-178 to continue corporate engagement with oil and natural gas companies, working through the denomination's Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee, rather than to divest the PC(USA)'s holdings in fossil fuel companies. This was one of the hardest-fought issues at the assembly, with 40 presbyteries supporting an overture for fossil fuel divestment, saying the church has waited long enough to act to protect the earth, and with others contending it's better to stay at the table and use the investments as leverage to push for industry changes.

Family separation. The assembly voted 484-34 to approve a resolution calling for an immediate end to the government's policy of separating parents from children as migrants attempt to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. It calls for federal authorities to promptly reunite parents and children who have been separated, and to place families "under the care of the community," rather than in detention.



Per capita. The assembly approved a General Assembly per capita rate of \$8.95 per member for 2019 and \$8.95 for 2020 – up from \$7.73 per member in 2018. That was a source of constant tension during this assembly: How to meet urgent ministry needs, from drug addiction to mental health to ministry with small churches, while not raising per capita so high it raises resistance from mid councils and congregations?

The Way Forward. The assembly approved a report from the Way Forward Commission, which the 2016 General Assembly created to consider changes needed at the top levels of the denomination. The action will mean a new, more equitable governance structure for the PC(USA), A Corporation (a secular corporation used to conduct church business). Also part of that proposal: a financial sustainability study and a commitment to translate PC(USA) resources into languages other than English.

Leadership. Taking four ballots to do so, the assembly elected as its co-moderators Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Cindy Kohlmann, an educator and a mid council leader, a ruling elder and a minister, two “audacious, spirited, bold, unapologetic women,” as Cintrón-Olivieri put it. She is a native of Puerto Rico, for whom Spanish is her first language.

Race and inequality. From preaching to marching to overtures, the need to confront structural racism and systemic inequality echoed through this gathering. As a sign of that commitment, the assembly voted 352-160 to begin the long process of adding Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” to the PC(USA)’s Book of Confessions.

World concerns. The assembly spoke to concerns around the world — including in Yemen, Korea, South Sudan and Nicaragua. One tangible example: The assembly agreed to make the PC(USA) a partner with a Salvadoran church working to reduce gang-related violence in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador — violence that’s causing people to flee for their safety.

#MeToo. The assembly voted 474-19 to have the PC(USA) confess its failure to listen to survivors of pastoral sexual misconduct; to report annually the number of sexual misconduct charges brought in the denomination; and to set up a task force of survivors of sexual abuse.

Social justice. This assembly felt pulled to public advocacy. It called for a moratorium on imposing the death penalty. It asked Presbyterians to pray for a movement of the Spirit to end gun violence. It voted to affirm the dignity and humanity of people of all sexual orientations. Time and again, the assembly acted to tell the world, “This is what Presbyterians stand for.”

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The Presbyterian
OUTLOOK