

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

March 2018

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## Maggi's Musings

This year Easter Sunday falls on April 1, April Fools' Day. While it caught me a bit by surprise, I rather like the pairing. April Fools' Day is celebrated around the world with slightly different traditions but all center around practical jokes and hoaxes. In my childhood, a favorite prank was taping a piece of clear fishing line to a dollar bill and laying it on the sidewalk. When someone came by and tried to pick up the dollar bill, I whisked it away and jumped up from behind a hedge and yelled "April fool!" and hopefully shared a laugh.

I've also enjoyed viewing the 1957 BBC prank broadcast of a film in their Panorama news program purporting to show Swiss farmers hand-picking spaghetti, in what they called the Swiss Spaghetti Harvest. The BBC was later flooded with requests about purchasing spaghetti plants, forcing them to declare the film a hoax on the news the next day.

To watch the 1957 Panorama report on the Swiss Spaghetti Harvest, visit this website: [http://hoaxes.org/archive/permalink/the\\_swiss\\_spaghetti\\_harvest](http://hoaxes.org/archive/permalink/the_swiss_spaghetti_harvest)

I was intrigued to learn about a tradition of pranking in Mexico on Holy Innocents' Day. After the prank, the person yells out "innocent forever!" with the meaning of "clueless." However, the cry "innocent forever" captured my attention, as another meaning of "innocent" is free from moral wrong, not corrupted. To me innocent means to be pure, to be hopeful, to see the good in any situation, to assume the best of a person, to seek love over hate, to forgive freely, or even perhaps to follow a teacher whose actual career of teaching and leading lasted only three years. Starting to sound familiar? Easter morning was about surprise: Jesus was not dead! Jesus was risen!

To Mary and the other women at Jesus' tomb, the angel said "Don't be afraid. Jesus is not here. Go and tell the others." And the tomb is still empty, Jesus is not dead. Christ is risen - crazy, life-changing words. It can't be proved, only experienced, and we are invited into the joy of that experience.

So I find myself imagining that we respond to the holy joke this way:

**Christ is Risen!**

To which, in holy innocence and laughter, we reply:

**Christi is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

## Holy Week and Easter at Old First Presbyterian Church



**Palm Sunday Worship**, March 25, 11:00 am

**Maundy Thursday Worship** joined by St Luke's Episcopal Church,  
March 29, 6:00 pm

**Good Friday Worship**, March 30, 8:00 pm

**Easter Pancake Breakfast**, April 1, 9:00 to 10:30 am

**Easter Prelude with Organ and Voice**, April 1, 10:30 am

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**Easter Sunday Worship, April 1, 11:00 am**

**Lenten Spiritual Practices Series, Every Sunday through March 25**

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All are welcome to join the Lenten Spiritual Practices class from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, which will run through March 25. This is an opportunity to deepen your faith and spirituality by learning about different spiritual disciplines, and actually trying them out. The discussions in March will address spiritual practices of fasting, justice work and spiritual reading. The sessions will be held in the Munro Room, except on March 11, when we will meet in Room A. Light refreshments will be provided.

Lori Yamauchi

**Celebrating a Roundtrip Journey from Syria: A Cloth for OFPC's Communion Table**

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It was a long and sometimes twisted journey but the result is special. On Easter Sunday, a beautiful hand-crocheted silk tablecloth embellished with a cross, goblets and grapes will adorn the chancel table. Its story, full of mystery and intrigue, is a simple exchange of love between Christian women thousands of miles apart.

It all began more than four years ago when Tala, a Presbyterian witness for peace preached at Old First in fall of 2013. While chatting with members of our Presbyterian Women (PW), she mentioned that her aunt lived in Syria and was involved with Hook & Thread, a small Syrian organization of Christian women who supported their families by knitting tablecloths, pillow covers, book marks, purses, etc. Those listening to her stories about life in Syria were inspired to do something. Their answer: PW would order a cloth for the communion table to present to Old First. I was designated to contact the organization. Their website was rather sparse in communication details but I finally was able to contact them via Messenger. The organizer sent me pictures of examples of their work. It took a couple of monthly meetings before PW decided on a pattern and it took me almost a month to get an answer. It wasn't what we wanted to hear; we loved the green-colored cloth but unfortunately were told that the green dye in the silk didn't wash well and wasn't recommended, so we agreed on white. The organizer assigned the task to a woman living elsewhere in Syria and she excitedly accepted. I sent measurements of the table and what we would need in size as well as the pattern we loved. No problem, I was told, and we would pay upon receipt of the tablecloth. And so we waited. And waited. And waited some more. Newspaper articles continually told us of the bloodshed and chaos in Syria. We worried about the fate of the women. Almost a year went by and suddenly on my phone were pictures of a woman holding part of a tablecloth. It was our Syrian sister and she wanted us to know that the cloth was almost half- finished. It was painstakingly crocheted with love, she said. I instantly saw it was not the pattern we ordered but was told that communication sometimes is difficult when one doesn't understand English. The picture of the tablecloth was beautiful and, even partially completed, we could see it was special. No longer did the pattern matter; the tablecloth would be amazing.

Time went on and another year passed. A few times I was asked if I had heard from Syria. No, I had not. Then in the middle of December I came home and a package was on my porch with a return address from a clergyperson in Arizona. I opened the box with curiosity and was more than surprised to find – the tablecloth. With it was a note from a pastor in Arizona who had been visiting the group in Syria and brought back the tablecloth to ship to us. We opined that shipping to and from Syria probably was impossible. The note mentioned the tablecloth was finished in October and then forwarded to the organizer who then gave it to their friend to bring back to the states to send to us. A bill was enclosed and the pastor said that if we sent him

a bank check, he would take it back to them when he returned to Syria on January 3. A certified check was mailed in plenty of time for the pastor to have it for his return trip. We have to assume that the Syrian women of Hook & Thread have their money and are now putting it to good use.

When we joyfully celebrate Easter this year, we also will rejoice in the love of Christ between those women thousands of miles away, who together created this beautiful and loving cloth, and us at Old First. Alleluia!

Betty Voris



### **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Easter Sunday, April 1:**

**“You shall be called repairers of the breach.” -Isaiah 58**

It seems that the divisions we face as a nation, sometimes in our work environment, and sometimes with friends and family are widening into chasms that can't be crossed. We feel loneliness and despair as we hold out our hands only to have our gesture ignored or rebuffed. How then can we repair the breaches we face?

On Easter Sunday, we can act in concert with other Presbyterians around the world, coming together in **One Great Hour of Sharing**, the Presbyterian Church's largest, collective effort in which we work to heal a multitude of wounds afflicting our world. The offering is allocated in the following manner:

**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** receives 32% of the funds raised. This program

supports efforts ranging from long-term recovery for people devastated by last fall's hurricanes to supporting schools in Syrian refugee camps.

**The Presbyterian Hunger Program** receives 36% of the funds raised. Grain storage facilities in Sierra Leone and Cameroon, fuel-efficient stoves in Guatemala, and wells and hand pumps in Sierra Leone and Liberia are tangible results of this program. In addition, this multifaceted program trains communities around the world to develop the capacity to address their own needs.

**Self-Development of People** receives 32% of the funds raised. This program works with low-income communities across America to overcome oppression and injustice. Their projects target literacy, skills development, issues facing farmers, and many more.

**How to Give:** On Easter Sunday, One Great Hour of Sharing envelopes will be available to support these programs. In addition to the envelopes, offerings of loose change can be amassed in fish coin boxes that are now available at the church and will also be collected on Easter Sunday. You can also send a check to the church with "OGHS" on the memo line or make a

donation on-line or via text. Simply visit Presbyterian Mission's website to learn how to do so: <https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/OG999999/>  
One Great Hour of Sharing is real chance to feel part of something much, much larger than our individual concerns. On Easter Sunday, the divisions that separate us from others can shrink as we realize what a great collective endeavor we are undertaking.

### **Worship Committee**

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Once again it's time to prepare ourselves and our sanctuary for Lent and Easter. As a reminder, please consider donating a lily in honor of, or in remembrance of, or in thankfulness for someone special to you, which worship will purchase and place around the sanctuary. The cost will be \$15. Also the same, write your dedication and put it in the offering plate or E-mail it to the church office admin: [brad@oldfirst.org](mailto:brad@oldfirst.org).

The members of the Worship Committee are grateful to David Griffith for sponsoring the special arrangements and also ferns for Holy Week and Easter in honor of and in appreciation for the Worship Committee. We will extend our Easter celebration by placing the ferns in the window niches as a continued reminder of the presence of our Risen Lord. Though the ferns will remain in place, please do take and enjoy the lilies after the Easter service.

Linda Reyder and Hsaiochien Chuang, Worship Committee Co-Chairs

### **A Note from Seminarian Liz Zupp's Shepherding Committee**

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Old First is privileged to have Liz Zupp as our intern for this term. While Pastor Maggi is her supervisor, she also has a Shepherding Committee to help her during her time with us. Erwin Barron is the Chair of this committee and the other two members are Linda Reyder and Jeanne Kirkwood.

Besides working at Old First and beyond ten hours a week, Liz also has an ambitious set of goals. She is diligent about her classes and grades. She will be with us until May, 2018.

We have a schedule to meet regularly with Liz to assist her with her agenda. Besides preaching she also wants to develop and hone skills in Public Leadership, Theological Reflection, Congregational Business and Leadership and Pastoral Care and Counseling:

- Public Leadership - learning how to connect with various local organizations which help others in the community and to support Old First's efforts in these areas;
- Theological Reflection - observing where theology is in day to day life;
- Congregational Business and Leadership - what does it take to understand the day to day operation of a church as well as the big picture;
- Pastoral Care and Counseling - developing skills to interact with members of the congregation in a supportive and listening role.

As you can see, Liz has a lot on her plate! We can all help her by speaking supportively to her (reminding her of our names), by participating in our established outreaches such as the Food Bank and Community Dinners as well as supporting any new projects. Also, let's all notice where we see Jesus every day and through our own lives. She will be coming to various session committee meetings so please welcome her and explain what you are doing. Finally, encourage her communications with congregants.

One particular item that the Shepherding Committee is charged with is to give her feedback on her sermons. We have a form to fill out and it would be helpful to her if she had more than the

three of us! If you would like to participate, please ask Erwin, Linda or Jeanne for an evaluation sheet. She is scheduled to preach March 4 and April 29. Once you have completed your evaluation, you may either put it in her inbox in the church office, or scan and email to her (liz@oldfirst.org). She also keeps office hours, generally on Wednesdays from 10:00-3:00 in the room adjacent to the elevator, north of the Munro Room. Call first!

Jeanne Kirkwood

### **January Session Meeting Report**

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Session met on January 23 and covered the following items:

- Elders planned the congregational meeting called for February 4 in order to present the current budget and for the congregation to approve the pastor's pay package.
- There was a discussion about the 2018 Budget and a motion to approve the revised budget was passed.
- It was noted that the next Presbytery Meeting will be February 13 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. Bill Campbell, Jeannie Choy-Tate and Hsiaochien Chuang were elected commissioners.
- There was a motion from the Operations Committee to approve adding grills on the Sacramento Street sidewalk level windows, and the motion passed with one vote against.
- The Mission Committee reported about recent activities and upcoming Welcome Events and education on Implicit Bias.
- The Worship Committee reported they are preparing for Lent and the early Easter season. Ash Wednesday services will be held jointly with St. Luke Episcopal on February 14.
- The Operations Committee reported about needed audio and signage updates, and ongoing projects including lighting, wall patching, intern office, room C, new office computers installed, new carpet in Munro Room, and library fireplace repair.
- The Finance Committee reported that the church still needs a bookkeeper. **[Suggestions for a bookkeeper would be welcome. Please give names of possible bookkeepers to Greg Free or Kristi Hoerauf. –the editor]**
- The Christian Education reported that future focus would include Interfaith activities, spiritual disciplines, racism and working with incarcerated people.

Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

### **Reflections on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Freedom March and Women's March 2018**

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For years, Old First members and clergy have participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Freedom March. Last year, several Old First members participated in the Women's March, both in Washington, DC and in the Bay Area. So, what was different this year when Old First joined thousands in the King Day Freedom March on January 15 and the Women's March on January 20?

This year, Old First clergy, members and friends were marching and standing for women, immigrants, people of color, people of all faiths (especially Muslims), people of all sexual orientation, housed and the homeless, and people of all age groups. Many of us are disturbed by and concerned about the heightened polarization of views in the US, and the sentiment expressed at our highest levels of government, as well as by some white Americans, including Christians, against women, immigrants, Muslims, black and brown Americans. The events following the King Day March and the rally preceding the Women's March were filled with calls for prayer and action, starting with examining and changing our own prejudice and bias, showing

compassion toward those under assault and those being ignored, and exercising our vote and right to express our views to the government at all levels, but especially to members of Congress. The signs, posters and speeches expressed both rage and optimism – rage against the hatred and violence unleashed by the Trump administration and those behind it, and optimism that the collective efforts of millions of people will effect change and stop the hatred and violence. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moment of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” Where do you stand?  
Lori Yamauchi

### **Aging and Disability Resource Centers of San Francisco**

San Francisco’s Aging and Disability Resource Centers offer the general public free information and assistance on issues affecting older people and people with disabilities, regardless of income.

Information and referral services include:

- Housing and Shelter
- Translation
- Benefits
- Transportation
- Food & Nutrition
- In Home Care
- Health & Wellness
- LGBT Programs/Services
- Caregiver Assistance/Support
- Other community resources

For more information, call or visit an Aging and Disability Resource Center, or call the ADRC supervisor’s office at 415-750-8720.

- Richmond Senior Center: 415.752.6444
- Geen Mun Activity Center: 415.438.9804
- OMI Senior Center: 415.334.5550
- SFSC Aquatic Park Center: Spanish -415.202.2982, Chinese-415.202.2983
- South Sunset Activity Center: 415.566.2845
- Openhouse – Main Office at LGBT Community Center: 415.347.8509
- Toolworks – Main Office: 415.733.0990x613
- Bayview Senior Connections: 415.647.5353
- 30th Street Senior Center: 415.550.2221
- Self Help for the Elderly – Main Office: 415.677.7585
- Downtown San Francisco Senior Center: Spanish-415.202.2982, Chinese-415.202.2983
- Western Addition Senior Center: 415.921.7805

## Operations Update

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Old First will be installing grills on the street level windows on the Sacramento Street side of our church. These will be in a style similar to the grills already on the on the Van Ness side of the church. Over the years the church has had consistent issues with the street level windows being broken. Last year we had multiple occurrences of broken windows including one incident of the widow casements being broken out with entry into the building. This update is to help insure the security of the church and its occupants.

The Operations committee consists of Dana Nojima (chair), Christopher Burt, Chuck Olson, Kim Pham and Steve Taber.

## The Sovereign Emblem by James Russell Lowell, 1819-1891

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*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.*

## Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

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For Stephen Taber's mother, Marita, who is in declining health.

For James Uren for continued healing from a broken dominant left arm.

For Lori Yamauchi's father, Joe, who is undergoing radiation therapy for laryngeal cancer.

For Brad Peterson's sister, Randi, who has been diagnosed with stomach cancer.

For Mary Lou Wilson, for increased appetite, energy, and willingness to complete her rehabilitation following hip surgery.

For Pam Free's mother, facing vascular surgery to restore circulation to her leg.

## Easter Day! April Fools' Day? 1 Corinthians 1:21

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For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.

**Dates to Remember**

March 7	Wednesday	Mission Committee, 6:30 pm
March 11	Sunday	Deadline for March Issue of <i>Shared Life</i> Deacon's Meeting 12:30 pm
March 17	Saturday	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon
March 20	Tuesday	Worship Committee, 7:00 pm
March 21	Wednesday	PneuMatrix, 6:00 pm
March 24	Saturday	Old First hosts the Interfaith Food Pantry: 9:00 am Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
March 25	Sunday	Palm Sunday Worship, 11:00 am
March 27	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm
March 29	Thursday	Maundy Thursday Worship, 6:00 pm
March 30	Friday	Good Friday Worship, 8:00 pm
April 1	Sunday	Pancake Breakfast, 9:00 am Prelude with Organ and Voice, 10:30 am Easter Worship, 11:00 am
April 2	Monday	Church Office Closed

**OFPC Church Officers****Session****Class of 2018**

Chris Burt  
Kristi Hoerauf  
Dana Nojima

**Class of 2019**

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

**Class of 2020**

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

**Board of Deacons****Class of 2018**

Nina Berg  
Alfred Martin  
Randy Smith  
Sarah Taber

**Class of 2019**

Riley Kramar  
Mary Russell  
Emily Olson

**Class of 2020**

Beth Arnaoot  
Courtney Blake  
Cindy Burt  
Glen Potter  
Jian Wang