

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

October 2018

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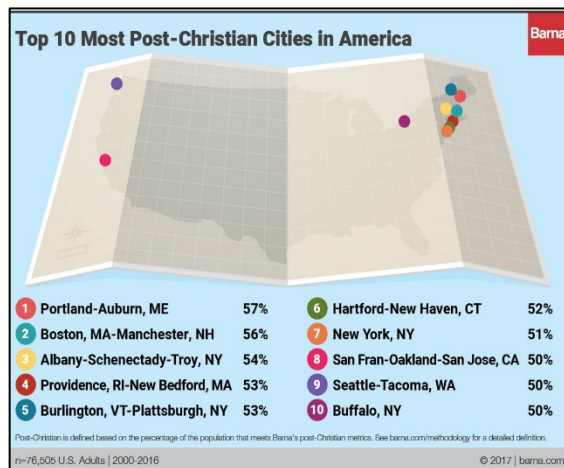
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Maggi's Musings

Even though I flunked statistics in college my first time out, I have always been interested in research and data. I know to take it with a grain of salt and also that numbers/reports don't give answers as much as they offer a window for reflection, an opportunity to look at views outside of my own place in the world and can open me up to new ideas.

I have often been interested in what Barna Group of Ventura, California, puts out. Barna has been "conducting and analyzing primary research to understanding culture trends related to values, beliefs and attitudes and behaviors since 1984." (You can do internet search and get postings from them at no cost.) They often have intriguing reports on the life of faith and particularly the church.



This week an E-mail article came across my desk with the headline "The Most Post-Christian Cities in America: 2017." I eagerly clicked to learn more and discovered that San Francisco is number 8!

The report begins: *It may come as no surprise that the influence of Christianity in the United States is waning. Rates of church attendance, religious affiliation, belief in God, prayer and Bible-reading have all been dropping for decades. By consequence, the role of religion in public life has been slowly diminishing, and the church no longer functions with the cultural authority it held in times past. These are unique days for the church in America as it learns what it means to flourish in a new "Post-Christian" era.*

You may well ask what is a post Christian? Barna used assent to nine or more of the following statements to define "post-Christian" persons:

- Do not believe in God
- Identify as atheist or agnostic
- Disagree that faith is important in their lives
- Have not prayed to God (in the last week)
- Have never made a commitment to Jesus
- Disagree the Bible is accurate
- Have not donated money to a church (in the last year)
- Have not attended a Christian church (in the last 6 months)
- Agree that Jesus committed sins
- Do not feel a responsibility to "share their faith"
- Have not read the Bible (in the last week)
- Have not volunteered at church (in the last week)
- Have not attended Sunday school (in the last week)
- Have not attended religious small group (in the last week)

- *Bible engagement scale: low (have not read the Bible in the past week and disagree strongly or somewhat that the Bible is accurate)*
- *Not Born Again*

I suspect many of you were not surprised to find out where we are on the list. We have been living this reality for years. It is one of the reasons I feel amazed and blessed when visitors come to worship: It is a truly *countercultural* act. It also makes me thankful for you who are part of this church community. You are truly *exceptional*.

These statics don't make me feel like giving up, for I feel people still have a spiritual hunger, a longing for community, a desire to find a way to live that offers peace, hope, wholeness, challenge and guidance on how to live as loving, fully engaged people. And the world certainly still needs people to actively love it.

I think the way of Jesus addresses those desires and longings and offers a way to live not just for myself but for others. The church, people of faith witness and presence may be needed more than ever before.

May God give us wisdom, joy, and an adventurous spirit for the living of these days.

Peace,

Maggi

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Peace & Global Witness Offering, October 7

On Sunday, October 7, Old First will receive the annual Peace & Global Witness Offering during worship.

Our gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Mark on your check or your envelope for cash "Peace & Global Witness." If you make your offering to Old First electronically, please indicate that it is for Peace & Global Witness when you enter your data.

Our Convicted Savior: Discussion of Mass Incarceration and Christianity, October 7

On Sunday, October 7, we will hold the final session on imprisonment and opportunities to engage with people and groups seeking justice and showing kindness within the criminal system. We will discuss political prisoners and write letters with Amnesty International's Write for Rights program. Eva DeLair, Old First's member and an attorney who works with prisoners' rights groups, is leading the session. Please plan to participate in the discussion, which will be held from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm in the Munro Room.

Rise Against Hunger, October 13

On behalf of the Mission Committee, here's an opportunity to serve the world. On Saturday, October 13, at 10:00 am we will package 10,000+ bags of nutritious dehydrated meals, which will be shipped overseas to help alleviate hunger. We will meet at St. John's Presbyterian Church, 25 Lake Street at Arguello, along with their volunteers and those from four other Presbyterian churches. At least 10 volunteers are needed from each congregation. Lunch will be provided.

Please sign up at coffee hour after worship or on the list on the bulletin board in the Sacramento Street lobby. It is a fun assembly-line process! For more information visit Rise Against Hunger's website: riseagainsthunger.org/get-involved/host-a-meal-packaging-event/

Join Our "Canoeing the Mountain" Team, October

"Challenging," "Learned a lot," "frustrating and complex," "energizing." These are some of the descriptions used to describe our meeting in which we threw out ideas and had a lively discussion about everything from "core values of our congregation" to "how we attract people in a post-Christian era" to "where should we put our resources and invest our talents." While it may sound a bit unfocused and diffuse, our conversation was anything but: we are thinking together, in a hard and very serious way, about how we as a Christian community move forward to grow in faith, discipleship, community, outreach, and service.

Join us! We meet twice a month, on Mondays from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. You can also join us via a video or audio link. Contact John Kramar (415-316-9004, jwkramar@msn.com) or Elaine Lyford-Nojima (510-710-9250, elaineln@pacbell.net).

Remembering Jim Emerson, October 19, 20

The Reverend Dr. James G. "Jim" Emerson died September 12. Public visitation will be held at Halsted N. Gray Morticians, 1123 Sutter Street, San Francisco, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, Friday, October 19. Halsted N. Gray's telephone is 415-673-3000.

A Celebration of Life for Jim Emerson will be held at Calvary Presbyterian Church, 2515 Fillmore Street, San Francisco, at 1:00 pm on Saturday, October 20. Calvary's telephone is 415-346-3832.

Prepare Ye The Way of The Lord! "How to Be a Better Liturgist," October 14 and 21

As I've been thinking about this *Shared Life* article, I keep singing that refrain from the 1973 *Godspell* production, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." In this production, a clear tenor voice sings out this refrain over the city, and people drop what they are doing and gather in a large park – that tenor voice has gotten their attention... I realize that I'm showing my age when I use that reference – but that's what a good liturgist can do – a good liturgist gets our attention, calls us together, inspires and moves us to worship, to reflection, to understanding.

So, join us for two classes on "How to Be a Better Liturgist." Whether you have been a liturgist for years or you are interested in learning how, these classes will give us time to think together about this role – indeed, a ministry – in creating our worship services to be meaningful and moving. We'll practice reading Scripture, think about how to transition from one part of the service to another, even think about the messages we send as we sit up front. We'll do some videotaping and lots of practice.

Dates: Sunday October 14 and Sunday October 21 from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm. Led by Elaine Lyford-Nojima.

New Deadline for *Shared Life*, October 21

After consideration by *Shared Life* editor, David Griffith, Pastor Henderson, staff and session, the deadline for submitting articles to *Shared Life* will be moved to the third Sunday of the month on a trial basis. Note therefore that the deadline for submissions for the November issue of *Shared Life* will be **Sunday, October 21**. Please submit your articles and announcements to David Griffith by that date.

Remembering All the Saints: Submission Deadline, October 22

On October 28, the Sunday before All Saints' Day, we will remember church members, friends and loved ones who have died since All Saint's Day last year. To include someone's name in the remembrance, please let our office admin, Brad Peterson, know the following:

- the name of the person,
- your relationship to the person (sister, brother, friend, etc.), and
- the date of death.

Notify Brad by E-mail (brad@oldfirst.org), by phone (415-776-5552), or by mail (1751 Sacramento St/SF CA 94109) no later than **Monday, October 22**.

San Francisco Ballot Proposition Review, October 28

On Sunday, October 28, Betty Packard Voris, Old First member and chairwoman of the Ballot Simplification Committee for the City and County of San Francisco, will lead a class to review the propositions on the San Francisco ballot in November. Please plan to join the class to learn about the propositions and what they mean, so you can be an informed voter. The class will take place on October 28 from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm.

Learn About Joining Old First's Small Groups: Small Group Fair, November 4

Do you want to get to know others at Old First through participation in a small group for fun, study and fellowship? If so, please consider signing up to try out a small group at Old First. Several small groups exist at Old First. Some meet in members' homes and others at the church. Small group representatives will be available in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, November 4, after worship to talk with you about their small group experience and take signups. You may even want to form your own small group with other friends and members.

Advent Series on Refugees and Strangers in our Midst, December 2, 9, and 16

During the first three Sundays of Advent, December 2, 9 and 16, there will be a series of discussions about "Refugees and the Strangers in our Midst." More details will be available in the December issue of *Shared Life*.

Old Firsters Visit Barbara Quigley, Glasgow, Scotland



During July and August, Old First office admin, Brad Peterson, and his husband John Kirk and, then in September, Old First members Stephen and Sarah Taber visited the Reverend Barbara Quigley, minister of St. Andrew's East Parish, in Glasgow, Scotland. Many of you may remember Barbara from 2015, when she and our Pastor Maggi exchanged pulpits. Both Brad and the Tabers brought warm Old First greetings to Barbara.

Barbara's husband, the Reverend David Firth, a minister in the Methodist Church of Great Britain, retired at the beginning of August and Barbara will follow him into retirement next year. Though they have bought a retirement home in Auchterarder, a town in Perth and Kinross, their daughter Eilidh and Eilidh's boyfriend Cameron Shanks, who live in the same part of Glasgow, will give them a continuing tie to the city.

Above is a photo the Tabers took of Barbara in front of the parish manse in the historic Dennistoun district of Glasgow.

Session Report from August Meeting

Session met on August 28. Below are highlights of the meeting:

- Commissioners to the upcoming presbytery meeting on September 11 were appointed.
- The role of elders to strengthen the life of the congregation and to nurture the spiritual lives of members was discussed and action plans developed.
- The Community Building Committee briefed elders on the onsite display screen planned initially for installation in the Narthex.
- The Worship Committee reported that an Advent Planning workshop would be held on September 15 from 10 to 12 noon.
- The Finance Committee distributed a budget report which was reviewed. There was some discussion of electronic giving, and it was suggested that ushers be given instructions so they could assist people using the online terminal in the Narthex.
- The Operations Committee reported on electrical equipment improvements in the garage and a newly installed lock on the women's restroom.
- All agreed that many thanks be extended to George Yu and Steve Taber for their continued work on the Middle Polk Community Business District.

Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

Room Set-Up Requests

If you need special set up of chairs and tables for a meeting or event at Old First and you need help getting the room ready on time, please let our office admin, Brad Peterson, know and he can have our Sunday sexton Javier Gonzalez arrange chairs and tables for you. If you realize you need special set-up for a Sunday, please tell Javier *before* worship, so he can prepare your room for an afternoon event.

God's Creation, Our Home: Our Compostables Policy at Old First

At Old First Presbyterian Church our policy for using only compostable dishes and flatware rather than single-use “disposable” plastics is part of our good stewardship of God’s creation, our home.

Old First has plenty of compostable plates, bowls, and cups as well as compostable flatware – knives, forks, and spoons – for all church events. They are all made out of compostable materials, such as paper or cornstarch. Thus they are not only easy on creation, but also make clean-up a breeze, because all compostable materials, including leftover food, can go right into the green compostable barrel.

Some of these dishes and flatware are on hand in the “supply cupboard” in the Sacramento Street Lobby. And you can find large supplies of them in the lower basement, off the Nursery, where we also keep cleaning supplies and household tools. (Use the door to the right of the fire place.)

On Sundays our Sunday sexton, Javier González, can unlock doors for access to these materials; during the week our office admin, Brad Peterson can.

For more information about the use and benefits of compostable products (or even our old-fashioned reusable ceramic and stainless steel in the kitchen cupboards by the door into the kitchen) and the environmental harm of plastics, contact Brad via E-mail: brad@oldfirst.org

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Pray for Erwin Barron, who continues to heal and gain facility in taking food orally.

Pray for Betsy Chiao as she undergoes chemotherapy and for her supportive husband, Ted.

Pray for Bart Crosby that he may have improved breathing and steady mobility.

Pray for Riley Kramar, who will have knee surgery.

Pray for Jack Rozzell, who has on-going health challenges.

Pray for James Uren, who has on-going health challenges.

Pray for Jian Wang, who is healing from a broken ankle.

Give Thanks for the Saints

Remember the Reverend Jim Emerson, who died September 12.

Remember former Old First member Betty Bobb, who died September 17.

Remember Lori Yamauchi’s father, Joe Yamauchi, who died September 19.

Remember former Old First member Emmy Clausen’s husband Don Clausen, who has died.

The Manuscripts of God by Henry W. Longfellow, 1807-1882

And nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying, “Here is a story book
My father hath writ for thee.

Come, wander with me,” she said,
“In regions yet untrod
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God.”

Dates to Remember

October 1	Monday	Mission Committee, 6:30 pm
October 7	Sunday	Peace & Global Witness Offering Our Convicted Savior: Christian Education, 12:30 pm
October 14	Sunday	Board of Deacons, 12:30 pm
October 19	Friday	Old First Retreat at Mt. Hermon, thru Sunday, October 21
October 21	Sunday	Deadline for November issue of <i>Shared Life</i>
October 22	Monday	Deadline for Submitting a Name for "Remembering the Saints"
October 23	Tuesday	Session, 7:00 pm
October 27	Saturday	Old First staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry, 9:00 am Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
October 28	Sunday	SF Ballot Proposition Review, 12:30 pm

Note: The deadline for Shared Life has been changed to the third Sunday of the previous month.

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
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AnnieScott Rogers
Mary Russell

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Courtney Blake
Cindy Burt, moderator
Glen Potter
Jian Wang

Class of 2021

Sarah Taber