

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

April 2019

Telephone 415-776-5552

Website [www.oldfirst.org](http://www.oldfirst.org)

Old First Concerts: [www.oldfirstconcerts.org](http://www.oldfirstconcerts.org)

## Maggi's Musings

During the weeks of Lent we have been exploring new spiritual practices that may open us up to deepening encounters with God not just in church but where we live daily our lives, outside of Old First. We have been using our Lenten devotionals, going to classes, reading Barbara Brown Taylor's book *Altars in The World: A Geography of Faith*, hearing about spiritual practices in worship, and trying them out in the Fellowship Hall. We have been challenged to take our new learnings and our longing out in the world.

Or... maybe we haven't been.

You may think that you are the only one who has not done a darn thing, has let all the challenges roll over you, and put things into your "will do that soon file" – the only one who has used our Lenten devotional as a coaster for the coffee cup, who has bought the book, put it down and found that it's still lying there.

However, you aren't the only one. So, if you have a bit of guilt or Lent-fatigue edging into to your heart rather than a longing for Easter, feel free to LET IT GO.

Let those feeling go and leave room to go deeper, to long for something more. That is a gift. Our God is always a God of new beginnings. Maybe just start the morning and end your days with a simple prayer like this, "Thank you, use me, and let your love be in the lives of..." Maybe as you walk or ride on the bus these days before Easter pray, "Open me to your love God. Open me to following in the steps of Jesus. Open me to the joy of Easter. Open me up. Amen." Too long? Try Anne Lamott's prayer "Help, Thanks, Wow."

Make a plan to participate in at least one of the Holy Week services. Just be there and see what the Spirit may do. A little anticipation, a little longing goes a long way and could be all the light you need right now.

When I get stuck, when I am in a place where new life seems to stall, I often turn to the poems of Ann Weems. So here is one of them, my prescription, an appetizer in anticipation of Easter.

### In Search of New Resurrections

*We in the church are in danger  
of becoming a tearless people,  
unable to rage even in a starless abyss.  
We have imitated a smiling society,  
glossing over the hurt, the oppression,  
the peacelessness on earth,  
Or we have become caustic  
and cynical and despairing,  
insisting on looking the other way  
as our church members crawled the altar,  
the scraps of their lives in their arms.  
We were created for covenant keeping  
and yet, we are in danger  
of becoming a blindhearted people,  
buying into the system,  
placing our hopes with kings and corporations.  
Have we not seen?*

*Have we not heard?  
We persistent clinging  
to the way things are,  
or eagerly placing our faith  
in the newest religious fad,  
the latest book on how-to Christianity  
(in ten easy steps),  
or the current slogans  
presented as though they were  
the Word of God.  
We are programming and papering ourselves  
into perpetuity,  
and rationalizing and excusing  
our immorality.  
The stirring wildness of God  
calls brittle bones to leaping  
and stone hearts to soaring.*

*Old women dance among the stars.*  
Peace, Maggi

by Ann Weems

### **Holy Week and Easter 2019**

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#### **Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday, April 14**

Worship with Installation of Deacons and Elders, 11:00 am

#### **Maundy Thursday, April 18**

Worship, 7:00 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1755 Clay Street at Van Ness Avenue

#### **Good Friday, April 19**

Worship, 8:00 pm

#### **The Great Vigil of Easter**

Worship, 9:00 pm at Grace Cathedral, Taylor at California Street

#### **Easter Sunday, April 21**

Pancake Breakfast, 9:00 am

Prelude with Organ and Choir, 10:30 am

Easter Worship, 11:00 am

### **Easter Morning by Phillips Brooks, 1835 – 1893**

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Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;  
Death is strong, but life is stronger;  
Stronger than the dark, the light;  
Stronger than the wrong, the right;  
Faith and hope triumphant say,  
    "Christ will rise on Easter Day!"

While the patient earth lies waking  
Till the morning shall be breaking,  
Shuddering 'neath the burden dread  
Of her Master, cold and dead,

#### **Easter Garden, Easter Music**

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Easter Day falls on April 21 this year and we have the opportunity to donate an azalea for our Easter Garden or to support the special Easter Music dedicated in honor or in remembrance of a loved one, or in thanksgiving for a blessing. The cost is just \$15 per dedication.

Simply fill out the form below, include \$15.00 for each dedication, and deliver it to the church office. You can also cut-and-paste the info into an E-mail to the church office: [brad@oldfirst.org](mailto:brad@oldfirst.org), but make sure when you send your payment that it is clearly labeled "Easter Garden" or "Easter Music." Submit your gift **by Monday, April 8**, for it to appear on the bulletin on Easter Day.

Hark! She hears the angels say,  
    "Christ will rise on Easter Day!"

And when sunrise smites the mountains,  
Pouring light from heavenly fountains,  
Then the earth blooms out to greet  
Once again the blessed feet;  
And her countless voices say:  
    "Christ has risen on Easter Day!"



My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**1<sup>st</sup> Dedication:** LILIES or MUSIC dedication (**circle one**):

In memory of or in honor of (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dedication:** LILIES or MUSIC dedication (**circle one**):

In memory of or in honor of (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_

**3<sup>rd</sup> Dedication:** LILIES or MUSIC dedication (**circle one**):

In memory of or in honor of (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \$15.00 x \_\_\_\_ Dedications = \$ \_\_\_\_ total

### **OGHS Offering, Easter, April 21**

On Easter Day, April 21, the One Great Hour of Sharing will be received and blessed. Bring your offering – including your “fish boxes” on Easter Day, April 21.



### **Open Doors, Open Hearts: One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Easter Sunday, April 21**

Old First will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing offering (OGHS) on Easter Sunday, April 21. A gift to this annual Presbyterian Church (USA) offering enables the Church to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world through ministries of justice, compassion and joy.

Jesus' ministry was among those who were most vulnerable. He preached good news to the poor and release to the captives. OGHS helps us share this same good news to those same vulnerable people in our world today: people who are suffering from disaster, who are hungry, and who face oppression and injustice.

Each gift to this offering will meet the needs of people in challenging situations through three programs:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation or natural or human-caused disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, tornados and floods.
- Presbyterian Hunger Program helps alleviate hunger and the systemic causes of poverty, so that all may be fed.
- Self-Development of People invests in communities responding to their experiences of racism, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these societal ills.

Thousands and thousands of lives have been changed by these important ministries. Visit the OGHS webpage ([www.presbyterianmission.org/oghs](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/oghs)) to find out more on how your gift helps people all over the world, and pray for the people and projects who receive this support. OGHS programs respond to the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors to the extent of our generosity. Please join Christians across the country on Easter Sunday in opening their hearts to witness tangibly to the abundant love of God through OGHS.

## **A Gaelic Prayer**

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As the hand is made for holding and the eye for seeing, thou hast fashioned me for joy. Share with me the vision that shall find it everywhere: in the wild violet's beauty; in the lark's melody; in the face of a steadfast man; in a child's smile; in a mother's love; in the purity of Jesus.

*Submitted by Linda Reyder*

## **Prayers for Healing and Wholeness**

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Leota Parker for improved stability and cognitive function.

Riley Kramar for knee healing and improved functional capacity.

Betsy Chiao for increased strength and keeping cancer on hold.

Don Pender for dental problems.

## **Logan Hollarsmith**

### **Misdemeanor Charges Dropped. Continues to Volunteer with No More Deaths**

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On July 19, 2017, No More Deaths, a faith-based humanitarian aid group, received a distress call from a woman reporting that two family members and a friend were without water in Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona, one of the deadliest sections of the U.S.-Mexico border. For hours, the volunteers' messages to the Border Patrol went unanswered. With summer in the Sonoran Desert being the deadliest time of year, Logan Hollarsmith and three others set off in a pickup truck, racing to the peak where the migrants were said to be.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service itself describes Cabeza Prieta as "big and wild" and "incredibly hostile to those that need water to survive," with a "56-mile border with Sonora, Mexico, [that] might well be the loneliest international boundary on the continent." According to the Office of the Medical Examiner in Pima County, thirty-three sets of human remains were found on the refuge last year alone, adding to the more than 8,000 sets of human remains found along the border since the U.S. government began funneling migrants into the desert over two decades ago.

After searching for several hours, Logan and his three friends were stopped and detained by U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and later by Border Patrol, beginning a process that would lead to federal charges.

Ultimately, two of the migrants reported missing were found by a pair of Border Patrol agents stationed in Ajo, Arizona, and a Yuma-based Customs and Border Protections helicopter crew that established communications with the No More Deaths volunteers. The third individual was never found.

In December 2017, Logan and the three other volunteers were charged with misdemeanors in the federal court in Tucson. Logan was charged with entering a national wildlife refuge without a permit.

The trial was postponed several times. Pastor Maggi Henderson worked closely with Logan's volunteer attorneys, and planned to testify on his behalf during the trial in federal court.

On March 4, 2019, the federal government formally dropped the charges against Logan and the others. They received a civil infraction and a fine of \$250.00.

Logan is living in Tucson, working as a carpenter, and continuing to volunteer with No More Deaths.

Meanwhile, Old First Presbyterian Church's Mission Committee has sent a donation of \$500 to No More Deaths, and several member and friends of Old First have sent Logan personal gifts totaling \$1,800. Logan has said that he will send an E-mail thanking everyone for their generous donations.

Special thanks go to Pastor Henderson for working with Logan's attorneys and for being willing to testify on his behalf.

A one-time member, and sweet friend, Johnni Olds, died at her home in Illinois in January. Our Old First Presbyterian Women group was truly blessed with her being part of it. And she loved all the Old First monthly visits to Central Gardens Nursing Home; she and Don Pender continued those visits on their own as well, bringing joy and music to the residents.

Her beloved sister, Mary-Nance, provided these loving memories:

*Johnni met the love of her life, Glen Crawford, after moving to San Francisco, and they married on November 22, 1975. She was such a gracious and kind-hearted individual who was always placing the needs of others before her own. She and Glen located to Charleston, IL, in 2009 and she soon became actively involved in the community. She became a member of the Charleston First Presbyterian Church family and volunteered with such organizations as the Charleston Lions Club and as a writer for the Past Forward Memoir Group. Johnni was also extremely committed to visiting residents at the local nursing homes. She blessed and impacted the lives of many through her goodness.*

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**Spiritual Practices – Self Examination: Conscience and Consciousness**

Lori Yamauchi

To engage in self-examination as a healthy spiritual discipline, we need to know two basic truths in an experiential way. First, God loves us. Second, we are weak and broken in relation to God. We can neither earn God's love nor achieve our own security and perfection. Transformation starts with "repentance", or facing God's love and away from our false self. Repentance involves confession of our sins. We name our sins through self-examination. Two forms of self-examination are "examination of conscience" and "examination of consciousness."

"Examination of conscience" is a practice to name and acknowledge our weaknesses. It begins with a "life review", by looking back through your life with a clear and impartial eye, objectively noting character traits, habits, attitudes, and tendencies across the years. By identifying those traits, attitudes and behaviors that interfere with our good and good of others, we discover where and why our lives and relationships are out of order. This process may take days or weeks to complete. It may be uncomfortable and you may not see all your character flaws right away. The life review gives us an opportunity to identify flaws of character, attitude, belief, and response that permeate our personal history. Becoming aware of these faults and their underlying causes puts us in a better position to observe ourselves through daily self-examination. Daily self-examination can involve keeping a list of specific instances of general character weaknesses each day and how you will make amends to those you may have hurt.

"Examination of consciousness" is a process of paying attention to both the good and the bad, noticing our state of mind and heart during various events and interactions each day. The purpose is to see where God's grace has been present in our day, and to see where we have or have not responded to that grace. We are aware of external things, such as places, people, events, sounds – and aware of mental and emotional things, such as thoughts, questions, beliefs, observations, feelings. Then, we notice what lies behind our feelings and reactions, such as our motives, and sources of them.

Two simple processes of self-examination include:

- Life-Centered Prayer – Gather the day by listing major events of your day. Review the day by reflecting upon each event. Give thanks for the day and each part of it, your life and God's presence. Confess your sin by acknowledging your faults. Seek the meaning of the events.
- Daily Journal Writing – Relax your mind and remind yourself of God's presence. Be open to what might rise from the day. Notice how you were present to God or others. After completing your observations, make note of your responses that seem significant.

## Session Meeting Report

Tom Culp, clerk

The session of Old First Presbyterian Church met on February 26, 2019. The following are highlights.

- The Presbytery Committee of Ministry completed their tri-annual review.
- There were reports on the Presbytery Meeting of February 12 in Richmond.
- At the direction of the Mission Committee, it was moved and passed Session approve a gift card drive similar to the one held last year to benefit young women refugees to take place after Easter.
- On behalf of the Operations Committee, it was moved that Session approve \$1500 expenditure from the building reserve fund to purchase a new freezer for the kitchen.
- A treadle sewing machine has been uncovered from the closet in the men's room underneath the staircase, this machine had been used in the past to mend choir robes and is in search of a new home. Anyone who knows someone or some organization who could use this should speak to the pastor.
- It was announced that a special Session meeting would be held on March 17 to meet and welcome new member Betsy Lutz, and a Finance Committee working group would meet for the second time March 3 after coffee hour.
- Reporting for the Worship Committee, Lent planning has started and that worship topics would be gathered from An Alter In the World by Barbara Brown Taylor, and that the committee had observed that communion was working out fine with only three stations.
- The Operations Committee distributed a written report. Some items include carpet repair, getting bids for organ repair, LED lighting upgrades, stain glass window repair/maintenance, and upcoming volunteer work days for the Munro Room and Room A.
- The session would meet next on March 26, 2019.

## Old 1<sup>st</sup> Concerts Special Event

### 10th Annual Ali Akbar Khan Birthday Tribute, Saturday, April 13

Ali Akbar Khan, who along with sitarist Ravi Shankar introduced the Western world to the splendors of North Indian classical music, played historic concerts at Old First Concerts many times in the 1970s and 1980s, often to sold-out houses. Khan made over seventy of his famous recordings at Old First Presbyterian Church. Now, ten years after his death, his namesake school, the Ali Akbar Khan Conservatory of Music (AACM), is presenting two concerts on Saturday April 13 in honor of his memory and celebrating his birthday.

**The afternoon session, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm,** will begin with a survey of Khan's works performed by a group comprised of both Classical Indian and Western musicians. This will be followed by the AACM Tabla Ensemble performing a composition by Director of Percussion Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri. The ensemble will be joined by two guest percussionists, Vidwan T.H. Subash Chandran and Ganesh Kumar. The session will conclude with a trio performance by Khan's youngest son Manik on sarod, Arjun Verma on sitar, and Raginder Singh Momi on violin. They will be "backed by a rhythm section" consisting of Chaudhuri's son Nilan on tabla and Rohan Krishnamurthy on mridangam.

**The evening session, from 7:00 pm to 10:30 pm,** will begin with a vocal performance by Shrinivas Joshi and his son Viraj. Instrumental accompaniment will be provided by Prashant Pandav on tabla and Avinash Dighe on harmonium. They will be followed by a duo performance featuring another of Khan's sons, Alam, playing sarod. Percussionist Chaudhuri will return to accompany him on tabla.

You can purchase tickets to either concert or an all-day pass at the Old First Concerts website: [www.oldfirstconcerts.org](http://www.oldfirstconcerts.org). Come experience a magical day of music making on Saturday, April 13!

**Dates to Remember**

April 5	Sunday	Fifth Sunday in Lent	
April 14	Sunday	Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday Board of Deacons, 12:30 pm	
April 18	Thursday	<b>Maundy Thursday</b> Worship at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 7:00 pm	
April 19	Friday	<b>Good Friday</b> Worship at Old First, 8:00 pm	
April 21	Sunday	<b>The Resurrection: Easter Day</b> Pancake Breakfast, 9:00 am Prelude with Organ and Choir, 10:30 am Worship, 11:00 am	<i>Deadline for May Issue of Shared Life</i>
April 22	Monday	Easter Monday, Church Office Closed	
April 23	Tuesday	Session, 7:00 pm	
April 27	Saturday	Old First Staffs Interfaith Food Pantry, 9:00 am Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm	
April 28	Sunday	Second Sunday of Easter Worship, 11:00 am	