

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

December 2019

Telephone 415-776-5552

Website www.oldfirst.org

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Maggi's Musings

This year I found myself longing for Advent. Okay, I admit it didn't happen till the last week in November. I had a slight case of things-are-moving-too-fast, a bit of denial that fall was over – all mixed in with a touch of pastor anxiety about all that has to be done by the beginning of Advent.

But somehow the *anxiety* about Advent switched to a longing for Advent. I found myself longing for the re-set that Advent brings.

You probably know, that a church's calendar begins anew on the first Sunday of Advent – the fourth Sunday before Christmas, this year, December 1. Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world, and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. Really, I am not in charge of Advent, it is already done. It is this set time, an opportunity to seek Jesus anew. And this year friends, I am longing for some hope, some peace that only the Jesus born in the manger can offer. Advent is a re-set from grumpy to joyful, from sad to hopeful, from wandering to following, from being stuck to moving, from lost to found. This longing is an active process which I pray will lead to an opening up to God's presence in our lives. It takes commitment, an intention on my and your part which is met by the love and welcome home of Jesus.

This longing may be felt and expressed through the music, art, and actions in worship unique to Advent. If you are away from church go to the website www.oldfirst.org, click on worship and look for the sermon index.

Or, you may choose to read and pray with focus this year using a devotional help to engage this longing. If you are “old school,” we offer an Advent devotional booklet called *God Bless Us, Every One* based on Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. You can pick up a copy from the ushers at worship or call the church office to be sent a copy through the mail. If you are “21st Century,” you can download the D356 daily devotional to your phone. (Even I could do it – okay, it took two attempts.) The D365 has a five point flow: pause, listen, think, pray, go.

Or, you may decide to read and pray over the scripture we will be reading this Advent. Our Advent theme is precisely this “Longing for Advent.” I would value your insights as I put together my sermons. Here are the readings.

Advent 1 **Longing for Light:** Isaiah 2:1-5, John 1:1-9

Advent 2 **Longing for Growth:** Isaiah 11:1-10, Romans 15:7-17

Advent 3 **Longing for the Way:** Isaiah 35:1-10, 40:3-4 Matthew 3:1-3, 14:6-7

Advent 4 **Longing for Christ:** Isaiah 9:2-7, Matthew 1:18-25

May God awake a new thing in all of us this Advent.

Peace,
Pastor Maggi

The Old Year is Ending: Complete Your Pledge for 2019

Don't be late! Please pay your 2019 pledge now. Many people wait till the end of the year to pay their pledges, but the bills at Old First don't wait to be paid. Thank you for your care of Old First!

What's Your Story? Stewardship 2020

More often than not, our lives are documented by way of stories – accounts that recount events and document lessons learned and revelations received. Each person's life can be expressed in multiple stories. A community, such as Old First, can be understood through the merging of many stories into a collective story about a community seeking God through Jesus Christ.

This year's stewardship campaign celebrates the multiple stories that make up Old First. We acknowledge the story of Old First, itself – a community of faith that has existed since 1849, as a witness for Jesus Christ in a diverse, growing and dynamic city. Within this larger story are the multitude of stories of its members, clergy and friends.

We tell the story of the arrival of our original founders by ship in 1849, the destruction of our building in the 1906 earthquake and its rebuilding, our efforts to achieve justice for our LBGTQ members, and our contribution to San Francisco's cultural heritage through Old First Concerts. Each of our members has his or her own story, how we came to accept Jesus Christ as lord and savior, and how our faith has supported and comforted us in times of trial. Our collective story tells of our various contributions of time, talent and money to make Old First what it is today and to proclaim the Gospel and to evidence Christ's saving grace in a world in turmoil.


All of these stories merge into the church that we love and support. As we near the end of the year, the Stewardship Committee urges each of Old First's members and friends to think of your own story, as a child of God. We urge you to consider your pledge for the coming year in light of the continuation of Old First's story and the future stories of the manifestation of God's love, mercy and justice in San Francisco.

The Old First Stewardship Committee

Please Return Your 2020 Pledge Card

In the busy-ness of the month please take a moment to fulfill your 2020 card and drop it in the offering plate.

OLD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	
In gratitude to God and for the support of Old First Presbyterian Church, after reflecting on God's goodness to me, I will give to the church:	
\$ _____ [Weekly] [Monthly] [Annually] (circle one)	
Name _____	Address _____
City _____	
State _____ Zip _____	Telephone _____ (H)
(W), e-mail _____	
Signature(s) _____ I / We	
understand that this pledge amount may be increased or decreased because of changing circumstances.	



Advent Begins December 1: Christians Look Forward



Happy New Year! As many of you know the churches calendar begins anew on the first Sunday of Advent – December 1, this year. Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world, and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the birth of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.

To follow the days of Advent there are two opportunities for you easily at hand: The Worship Committee of Old First has made an Advent devotional booklet – *God Bless Us, Every One* based on Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* – available at Old First. You can pick up your copy from the ushers at worship.

Alternatively, you can check out the on-line devotional *D365* produced by Passport, Inc. You can find it in the App Store on your smartphone or visit the *D365* website: <https://d365.org/>

Old First Mission Fair, Sunday, December 1

Don’t miss the Old First Mission Fair during the coffee hour after the worship service on Sunday, December 1. This will be a superb opportunity to learn more about our church’s own mission initiatives, as well as great nonprofits, both local and around the world, that we support through our benevolence program and volunteer efforts.

2019 World AIDS Day National Observance, December 1

The 26th annual World AIDS Day National Observance will be held at the National AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park on Sunday, December 1, beginning at 12:00 noon sharp. The keynote speaker is **Rick Welts, President and Chief Operating Officer for the Golden State Warriors**. There will be a light lunch after the observance. The suggested arrival time for the limited seating is 11:30 am. For more information, visit: <https://aidsmemorial.org/2019-world-aids-day-national-observance/>

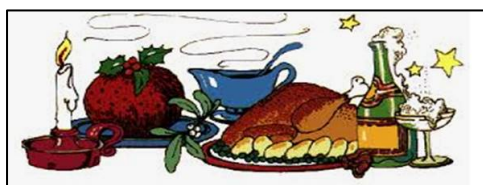
Old First Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry, December 7

All Faiths’ Day at the Interfaith Food Pantry, December 14

Please mark your calendar and let Dana Nojima know that you can lend a hand at the Interfaith Food Pantry on Saturday, December 7 and/or . Send Dana an E-mail: nojidt@gmail.com. We need helpers anytime from 7:30 am to 10:45 am to unload the truck, to distribute food, and to clean up.

Please mark your calendar and let Dana Nojima know that you can lend a hand at the Interfaith Food Pantry on Saturday, December 14. On this Saturday, members of all the participating communities will staff the Food Pantry. Send Dana an E-mail: nojidt@gmail.com. We need helpers anytime from 7:30 am to 10:45 am to unload the truck, to distribute food, and to clean up.

Holiday OFPC Potluck Party, December 14



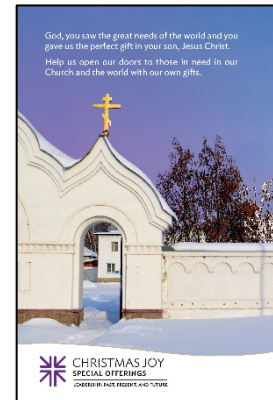
John and Riley Kramar will host a holiday potluck party on Sunday, December 14, at 5:00 pm at their home in North Beach. For location and to RSVP, call (415) 926-5314.

Inquirers/New Members Classes, December 8 and 15

If you are interested in learning more about the church or a deeper commitment to God and this community, you are invited to join us on December 8 after worship and on December 15 at 10:00 am to explore just that. Just speak to Pastor Maggi if you're interested.

Christmas Joy Offering at Old First, December 22

Bring your Christmas Joy Offering to worship on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Sunday, December 22, at 11:00 am. The Christmas Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



Sharing Beauty in the Sanctuary: Poinsettias for Advent and Christmas

Each gift of Fifteen Dollars (\$15) toward greens and poinsettias will be acknowledged by a dedication in the bulletin on Christmas Eve.

Please return the information requested below with your payment by placing them in the offering plate no later than **Sunday, December 16**, or by delivering them to the church office by Wednesday, December 19.

- Your name,
- The total dollar amount of your gift, and
- **One dedication for each Fifteen Dollar (\$15) gift** you make. Please state each dedication as “in memory of [someone deceased]” or “in honor of [someone living]” or “in gratitude for [some blessing].”
- Write “Poinsettias” on the memo line of your check or envelope.

Christmas Eve Party, December 24

Steve and Sarah Taber will host their annual Christmas Party on Christmas Eve, December 24, before Old First's Christmas Eve worship service. The party will start at 5:30 pm at their home. The Tabers will furnish ham, turkey, scalloped potatoes, Steve's famous persimmon pudding and cider. Guests are welcome to contribute other dishes. For location and to RSVP, call (415) 771-3358.

Christmas Eve Worship, December 24, 8:00 pm

Old First will celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 8:00 pm. Our worship service will include the music of the season and candlelight. Join us to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.

Our offering on Christmas Eve will be divided between two agencies caring for families:

- **Homeless Prenatal Program, <http://www.homelessprenatal.org/>**
We are in partnership with our families to break the cycle of childhood poverty. By seizing the motivational opportunity created by pregnancy and parenthood, HPP joins with families to help them recognize their strengths and trust in their capacity to transform their lives. Every mother wants to deliver a healthy baby and become a good parent. We are committed to providing a non-judgmental, motivating and empowering environment that builds trust and strengthens the family. We are committed to providing a culturally sensitive environment and services to all

families. We believe in the importance of building a sense of community among families who have no other source of support and we are committed to fight against racism, poverty, sexism and homophobia and all forms of oppression.

- **Catholic Charities Center for Immigration Legal and Support Services,**
www.catholiccharitiessf.org/what-we-do/immigration/

Though associated with the San Francisco Archdiocese, Catholic Charities operates as an independent organization and does not directly contribute funds to the church. The Center's key mission is to assist clients in achieving legal status and economic self-sufficiency, as well as becoming fully active participants in the social and civic life of our communities. The Center is recognized by the Department of Justice and our staff are accredited or licensed to provide immigration counseling and representation. Through our work, we help immigrants understand the law and to know their rights. Our program is designed to advise and guide clients through the immigration process in an efficient, effective, and professionally caring manner. We provide legal immigration consultations to determine the eligibility of potential applicants. Catholic Charities of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin offers free or reduced-cost immigration consultations and legal advice to those who qualify.

Saturday Community Dinner, December 28

Come and help prepare, serve and eat the Saturday Community Dinner on the fourth Saturday of every month: Volunteers are welcome at 4:30 pm (or earlier), and the dinner is served at 5:30 pm. Volunteers who can stay to clean up are very welcome. Contact saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org to volunteer your time.

Nominating New Deacons and Elders for 2020

Greetings, it is time to think whom to nominate for elders and deacons next year. The deacons and elders form the structure and heartbeat of the church.

Deacons and elders are chosen by the people. The Book of Order states 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." As for deacons "The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one 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."

Please pray and reflect who might be called to be a deacon and or an elder. The Nominating Committee needs your suggestions. You may speak to the person you're considering and ask if they're willing to be nominated. Another way is you can also contact the Committee through E-mail to nomcom@oldfirst.org or by contacting committee members directly.

The Nominating Committee: Stephen Taber, chair

Session Meeting Report for October 22, 2019

Session met on Tuesday, October 22. Following are some highlights:

- It was announced that Strategy and Planning activities had continued and that meetings would be held in November to gather input from the congregation on vision ideas.
- There was a report from the Stewardship Committee announcing this year's theme, "Our Stories" and the formal end-date of the drive, November 24.
- It was moved by the Personnel Committee to approve a ten hour per week pastoral resident at Old First from November 2019 through May 2020, and after some discussion the motion passed unanimously. [The pastoral resident, Sam Lundquist, will spend two Sundays and ten hours each month at both Old First and St John's Presbyterian Church.]
- There was a report from the Community Building Committee that the church website will roll out at the beginning of the year, and that Halloween "Trick or Treat" volunteer signups were still available for afternoon or evening shifts.

- The Mission Committee mentioned several items including the PC(USA) International Peacemaker the Rev. Arlington Trotman's visit, Concept for application for a grant from the PSF West Region \$1m fund to serve immigrants/refugees, announcing the Old First Mission Fair, Sunday, December 1, and the Larkin Street Youth Services, holiday gift drive, Sunday, December 1 (requesting \$25 gift cards).

Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

Prayers of Mourning

Jim Billings, Leota Parker's son, as he and Leota's family and friends mourn her death.

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Lorraine Bellesi for continuing health issues.

Betsy Chiao for increased strength and keeping cancer on hold.

Mary Culp for improved stability and cognitive function.

Jeanne Kirkwood for healing of a pulmonary embolism and for courage as she begins a series of chemotherapy treatments.

Glen Potter for continuing recovery of strength and mobility.

Those hurt, harmed and frightened by wildfire, particularly the Cave Fire near Santa Barbara; pray for residents and first-responders.

Childhood by John Erskine 1879 – 1951

To be Himself a star most bright

To bring the wise men to His sight,

To be Himself a voice most sweet

To call the shepherds to His feet,

To be a child – it was His will,

That folk like us might find Him still.

Dates to Remember

December 1	Sunday	Mission Fair, 12:30 pm
December 2	Monday	Mission Committee, 6:30 pm
December 7	Saturday	Old First Staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry: 9:00 am
December 8	Sunday	Board of Deacons, 12:30 pm Inquirers/New Members Classes, 12:30 pm
December 14	Saturday	"All Faiths" Staff the Interfaith Food Pantry: 9:00 am
December 15	Sunday	Deadline for Submissions to the December Issue of <i>Shared Life</i> Inquirers/New Members Meet with Session, 10:00 am Vision and Strategic Planning, 12:30 pm
December 17	Tuesday	Session, 7:00 pm
December 21	Saturday	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon, off-site
December 24	Tuesday	Christmas Eve Worship, 8:00 pm
December 25	Wednesday	Christmas Day: Church Office Closed
December 28	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall, 5:30 pm
December 31	Tuesday	New Year's Eve: Church Office closes at 1:00 pm.
January 1	Wednesday	New Year's Day: Church Office Closed