

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

January 2019

Telephone 415-776-5552

Website www.oldfirst.org

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MLK 2019 March and Commemoration, Monday, January 21

Old First friends and members are invited to march together on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 21, 2019. We will meet at the CalTrain Station at 4th and King Streets in San Francisco at 10:30 am. Look for other Old Firsters and for our signs. We will then join the march to Yerba Buena Plaza for the MLK 2019 Interfaith Commemoration. If you are planning to join us for the march, please contact Pastor Henderson.

MLK 2019: "We Are in This Together"

On April 16, 1963, a 34-year-old Martin Luther King, Jr. sat in a jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, following an April 12th arrest that came as part of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference's and the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth's Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights' non-violent, protest campaign to end the long era of racism there. On the same day he was arrested, eight Birmingham clergymen, representing the country's major religious faiths, accused King and the participants of extremism and anarchy, calling his campaign "unwise and untimely."¹ Concerned by this stance, King penned a letter in response, where, after a brief introductory review, he stated what to many seemed obvious:

I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial 'outside agitator' idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.²

Today we face another moment that calls for us to state the obvious: that we are all tied together; that what affects you affects me; and that how one treats another reflects on us all. Over the past year, we have experienced widening disparities and a continued assault on our fundamental democratic institutions from within and from without. And, deepening social and economic injustice and exclusion have strained the very fibers of our nation. This is why justice is such a vital principle for achieving a beloved community. For, true justice connotes a determined care and concern for the welfare of others, and it demands a searching honesty with our past and our present, so that we can achieve a more just future.

So, as we embark on 2019, let us all confront injustice and exclusion with a rigid determination that marks true justice and a beloved community. Because, we are in this together.

¹ Clayborne Carson ed., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York City: Grand Central Publishing, 1998), 188. To learn more about the 1963 Birmingham Campaign, see Carson, *Autobiography*, 170-217.

² Carson, *Autobiography*, 189.

Excerpted from the website of the Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Foundation: <http://sfmlkday.org/>, retrieved December 28, 2018.

Stars and Diapers on Epiphany, Sunday, January 6

The Epiphany falls on the first Sunday in January this year. Are there folks who would like to reflect upon their “star word” from 2018? Please contact Pastor Maggi: maggi@oldfirst.org

Also, in honor of Mary and those who first brought her and the Christ child gifts, would you please bring diapers and baby wipes as an offering on January 6? They will be given to a local women’s shelter.

Thank You for a Year of “Special Offerings”

The Presbyterian Church (USA) encourages congregations to participate in four special offerings during the year. Old First participates in all four, and they are the largest single way we join with churches across the country in a collective effort to create positive impact and share God’s grace and love.

Here are the four denominational special offerings we received during the past year--and the results:

The **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering supports our denomination’s Presbyterian Hunger Program (36%), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (32%) and Self-Development of People (32%). Old First receives this offering annually during the season of Lent. In 2018, our offering totaled \$2,710.

The **Pentecost Offering** enables us to invest in the faith formation of one of the Church’s greatest resources—our youth. The offering is devoted to ministries that support young people during their first third of life, from childhood through young adulthood. In 2018, our offering totaled \$960. Forty percent of the offering is retained by the local congregation for investment in local programs. Old First donated its 40% to Ecumenical House Campus Christian Center at SF State. The remaining 60% supports our denomination’s programs for Serving Communities (volunteer programs that bring young adults together in fellowship, worship, and service throughout the world; 25%), Guiding Youth (ministries that guide youth in their walk with Christ and inspire those called to accompany them; 25%), and Child Advocacy (advocacy that protects our children and youth and education that nurtures them; 10%). We receive this offering on Pentecost Sunday, generally in early June.

The **Peace and Global Witness Offering** invites us to support ministries of reconciliation and peace in cultures of violence, including our own. We receive this offering on World Communion Sunday in October. In 2018, Old First’s offering totaled \$1,282. Fifty percent of the offering supports peacemaking and reconciliation ministries of our denomination’s Presbyterian Mission Agency. Twenty five percent is invested in the local congregation’s peace and mission efforts. In 2018, Old First donated its 25% to (Gabby) Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that researches, crafts and defends laws, policies and programs to prevent gun violence and save lives, both locally and nationwide. The remaining 25% of the offering goes to the San Francisco Presbytery. The Presbytery has used its peacemaking funds recently to support the International Rescue Committee’s Vision Project, which empowers refugee girls in Oakland schools to envision their future as women in America, and Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church’s Peace Camp for youth in Richmond, one of the most violent cities in the Bay Area.

The **Christmas Joy Offering** helps needy current and retired church workers and their families and develops future leaders in Presbyterian-related racial-ethnic schools and colleges. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 23, we received \$1855.20 for this offering – an increase over 2017’s offering of \$1,025.00.

We are *church*, together with congregations throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA); and by acting together we can create positive impact in the world.

Thank You for Supporting the Larkin Street Christmas Gift Drive

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped brighten the holidays for homeless and at-risk young people served by Larkin Street Youth Services. Your donations included \$25 and \$50 gift cards, journals, planners, clothing, and everyday items such as toiletries and razors. All are most appreciated and will be well used.

Founded at Old First, Larkin Street is an internationally recognized leader in providing innovative, effective housing, education, employment and health services to homeless, runaway and at-risk youth. Three out of four young people who complete Larkin Street's comprehensive programs exit street life.

Thank You for the Christmas Eve Offering for the CCWP

The offering received at the Christmas Eve worship service totaled \$1,027.00. It will be given to the **California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP)**, a grassroots social justice organization, with members inside and outside prison, that challenges the institutional violence imposed on women, transgender people, and communities of color in and by the prison system.

CCWP sees the struggle for racial and gender justice as central to its mission. It prioritizes the leadership of the people, families, and communities most impacted, it engages in suicide prevention and advocacy, forms solidarity circles among prisoners, advocates for women who have serious health needs while in prison, and supports women as they come home. CCWP is nearly all volunteer run, with one full-time and one part-time staff member.

Nominating New Deacons and Elders for 2019

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 Nominating Committee members directly.

The Nominating Committee: Priscilla Yu (chair), Sidney Hollar,
Glen Potter, Mary Russell, Sally Spencer, and Betty Voris

Presbyterian Women: Disaster Recovery with PW in Puerto Rico

The Presbyterian Women group at Old First has chosen to make their annual gift to the Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Puerto Rico in response to this information from the Presbyterian Women website:

Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Puerto Rico are key leaders of recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. From the beginning, women have taken up the task of serving their communities and now they are part of the transition to long term recovery. Your Together-in-Service donation will support ongoing recovery efforts in three key areas: water supply, community building and home reconstruction. (www.presbyterianwomen.org)

Two years after Hurricane María, people in Puerto Rico are still struggling to recover. Our contribution will add to the outreach Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA, pda.pcusa.org) workers are still providing there. PDA responds whenever and wherever disasters strike, and continue to do so as long as needed – e.g., this year’s severe storms and floods, snowstorms, massive wildfires.

Presbyterian Women at Old First – Gabby Beck-Engeser, Lorraine Bellesi, Linda Reyder, Betty Voris, Priscilla Yu, and I – meet on the third Saturday of each month, 12noon-2pm. We eat lunch together, share conversation, and then have an hour of discussion using the Horizons Bible Study prepared each year by Presbyterian churchwomen. This year’s Study is entitled “God’s Promise: I Am with You”. We invite other women to please come see what we’re about! Mary Russell

Spiritual Practices: Varieties of Prayer

Prayer is the essential expression of our relationship with God. It is initiated by God. Our task in prayer is to attune ourselves to the conversation between God’s Spirit and our hearts. Prayer involves freely entering a relationship of communication and communion with God, for the sake of knowledge, growth, and mutual enjoyment.

Prayer is more than conversation, more than a monologue or talking at God. Prayer is communication with God, which involves two-way dialogue, listening as well as speaking.

Listening to God can take place in multiple ways. God speaks to us through scripture, through Creation or nature, through each other and through the circumstances of our lives, if we are open to asking What is God saying to me in this situation? God speaks to us through journal keeping, in which we record insights, feelings, and questions that arise from scriptural meditation, dreams or life issues, struggles, and decision-making processes. God speaks to us through deep intuition, conviction, or an inner sense of how things are meant to be. Listening involves not only hearing, but discernment and attentiveness.

Speaking to God involves speaking from the heart with unreserved honesty. One way we speak to God from the heart is through intercessory prayer for other persons, communities, nations, the earth, and our fellow creatures. Through intercessory prayer, we change God’s attitude and action, we change ourselves, we voice our feelings, but are ultimately dependent on God’s will and action. Prayers of intercession involve trusting in God’s grace and offering/surrendering our own desires and will to God’s will. Various approaches to intercessory prayer include: Imaging intercession, write your own psalm, paraphrase a psalm, write a conversation.

Prayer as communion with God transcends communication. Contemplation is the foremost expression of prayer as communion. Contemplation involves letting go of our effort to speak or listen, but simply becoming quiet before God, allowing ourselves to be loved by God. There are two basic forms of Christian contemplation: prayer of presence and prayer of the heart.

1. Prayer of Presence

- Find a posture in which you can be relaxed and alert. Breathe deeply several times
- Relax your mind.
- Turn your attention to God’s presence.
- Let God’s presence fill your consciousness, and simply rest in this presence.

- Close your prayer by thanking God for gifts received in this time.

2. Prayer of the Heart

Prayers of the heart involve short phrases, repeated first on the lips and then in the mind, until they take on a life of their own deep within us. When such prayers become embedded in our lives and daily activity, they have become “heart prayers”. Three types of prayers of the heart are: the “Jesus Prayer”, “Centering Prayer” and “Breath Prayer.”

Lori Yamauchi

Worship Committee: Communion Station Update

Beginning the first Sunday of February, you will notice the communion servers will work a bit differently. Three pairs of servers will serve during the call for communion. The pair with wine will form a communion station by the baptismal font. One of the other pairs will first move to serve those unable to come forward and then regroup at the front to serve as a second station on the floor. The rest of the communion service remains unchanged.

The Worship Committee has made this adjustment to reflect the number of volunteers available throughout the year. At times, a fourth station may be added.

Thank you, communion server volunteers! You are a vital part of the worship service.

Hsiaochien, Worship Committee Co-Chair

Report on Election Day, November 6, 2018: Precincts 7332 and 7334

On election days, Old First Presbyterian Church makes its fellowship hall available to the City and County of San Francisco as a polling place. On November 6, 2018, Old First hosted two voting precincts, Precinct 7332 and Precinct 7334.

Together these precincts served 554 San Francisco voters: 296 voters cast their ballots in person, 108 voters cast provisional ballots, and 150 voters dropped off their vote-by-mail ballots.

Though the city pays Old First a token amount for the use of the space, by making our space available for elections, Old First acts as a good neighbor and as a responsible corporate citizen.

The next dates our church will be used as a polling place are the mayoral election, November 5, 2019, and the presidential primary, March 3, 2020.

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Erwin Barron, for continuing recovery of strength.

Betsy Chiao, as she continues chemotherapy.

Bart Crosby in Acute Care.

Bob Herman's sister Pat in Atlanta, who is in intensive care.

Riley Kramar, for healing of his knee, improved mobility, and less pain.

Linda Reyder, as she recovers from an ankle injury.

Ring Out, Wild Bells by Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892)

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light: The year is dying in the night; Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.	Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kindlier hand; Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be.
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Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Dates to Remember

January 1	Tuesday	New Year's Day: Church Office Closed
January 6	Sunday	Epiphany Worship, 11:00 am
January 7	Monday	Mission Committee, 6:30 pm
January 13	Sunday	Baptism of Christ Board of Deacons, 12:30 pm
January 15	Tuesday	Worship Committee, 7:00 pm
January 19	Saturday	Presbyterian Women, 12:00 noon
January 20	Sunday	Deadline for February issue of <i>Shared Life</i>
January 22	Tuesday	Session, 7:00 pm
January 26	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm

OFPC Church Officers

Session

Class of 2019

Tom Culp, clerk of session
Robin Currier
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
AnnieScott Rogers
Mary Russell

Class of 2020

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

Class of 2021

Sarah Taber