

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

May 2019

Telephone 415-776-5552

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

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

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## Maggi's Musings

When the pastor is in a musing mood, I often go to my friends and former co-moderator Jan Edmiston's blog, *achurchforstarvingartists* (<https://achurchforstarvingartists.blog>).

Let's ask the hard question, "what are people looking for? What am I looking for? in church.: Read, reflect, talk, ponder, learn and repeat. I would treasure hearing your responses as we seek to be Easter People.

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## What Are "They" Looking For?

Jan Edmiston April 24, 2019

Probably not this:



*Image of an anonymous Protestant church in the Midwest U.S. on Easter Sunday.*

By "this" I'm talking about a sanctuary full of people who look like themselves – only older. I'm talking about a choir and pews and a pulpit.

By "they" I'm talking about "the young people." Millennials. Gen Xers. Gen Zers. Even those Boomers who used to be with us. "They" are the Nones, the Dones, and even the "Wons" (those we convinced to join but we rarely see them). I'm often asked "*where is everybody?*" "*Why don't people come to church anymore?*" (It's a complicated answer.)

Please do not misunderstand me. I love the look and feel of church in terms of choirs, pews, and a pulpit. I'm a fan of pipe organs along with drums and harps and trumpets and pianos and whatever other musical instruments people know how to play. I like screens. I like no screens. I really like candles and banners and fresh flowers. I love beautiful liturgy.

But this is not what most people are looking for. Church is not about the trappings of an institution. Real Church is what people are looking for – but not the way we – or even they – think of “Church.”

*“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”*

Lots of preachers preached on that text last weekend, and yet increasing numbers of our neighbors have stopped expecting much life from their local churches. Here's my take on what human beings are looking for in these days:

- Honesty. *Are people pretending to be something they aren't?*
- Community. *Do we learn from each other and care for each other?*
- Refuge. *Are we safe here?*
- Hope. *Will I find meaning and encouragement?*
- Support. *Will they love me when they realize I'm a hot mess?*
- Something holy and eternal. *Is this about supporting an institution or something bigger?*

It's important to remember that those of us who are privileged and prosperous underestimate the numbers of people out there looking for food, affordable housing, gainful employment, medical treatment, and safe neighborhoods – first and foremost. When I asked a wise pastor recently what was going on in her rural congregation regarding dismantling racism, she said that “*people are mostly concerned about having enough food to eat. Considering other issues is a luxury.*”

I believe with all my heart that the Church of Jesus Christ will thrive when we offer what human beings really need to be the people God calls us to be – whether we believe in God or not. In spite of the bright words of The Resurrection, many people would not think to look for resurrection in a church. Why is that?

### **Yom HaShoah, Wednesday, May 1**

Pastor Maggi Henderson, a member of the San Francisco Interfaith Council, invites Old First members to join her for following event:

#### **YOM HASHOAH: HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**“EVERYONE HAS A NAME”**

**Wednesday, May 1, 6:00 pm**

This is a community event presented by the Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center in partnership with Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, Lehrhaus Judaica, and the Jewish Community Relations Council; and in cooperation with San Francisco synagogues and schools: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 6:00–7:15 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 3200 California Street at Presidio Street in San Francisco.

Join us for a special community event commemorating Yom HaShoah.

- 4:30 pm Reading of the Names\* on a continuous cycle
- 6:00 pm Memorial Commemoration and Program Reception will follow the keynote speaker, the Reverend Patrick Desbois.

Father Desbois is a Catholic priest and internationally-renowned human rights activist who has devoted his life to researching the Holocaust, fighting antisemitism, and furthering relations between Catholics and Jews. He has discovered the unmarked graves of over 1.5 million Jews who died in the Shoah, and works to reveal their identities to ensure that nobody's name is forgotten.

To register, visit [www.yom-hashohah.eventbrite.com](http://www.yom-hashohah.eventbrite.com) Alternatively, you can call the JFCS Holocaust Center at 415-449-3717.

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### **Interfaith Refugee Welcome Benefit Concert, Saturday, May 3**

This Friday at 7:30 pm, Interfaith Refugee Welcome will host a benefit concert at Zion Lutheran Church, 495 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, to help refugees on the island of Lesbos in Greece.

Hear Soo Yeon Lyuh, a master of the haegeum, a classical two-stringed Korean bowed instrument, and Ensemble Ari – Korean-American musicians who bridge Korean and other musics. 100% of all donations will help refugees living in desperate conditions on the Island of Lesbos.

The requested donation is \$15/person, \$40/family. A free reception follows the concert. More details are in flyers outside the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.

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### **The Film *Chinatown Rising*, Castro Theater, Thursday, May 9**

The Center for Asian American Media will be showing *Chinatown Rising*, a film by the Reverend Harry Chuck and Josh Chuck. Harry Chuck was the Executive Director for Cameron House in Chinatown and is a noted community and city leader. He was also a film student at San Francisco State University in the 1960's through early 1980's. *Chinatown Rising* is a documentary film about the Asian-American Movement from the perspective of the young residents on the front lines of their historic neighborhood in transition. Through publicly challenging the conservative views of their elders, their demonstrations and protests of the 1960s-1980s rattled the once quiet streets during the community's shift in power. Tickets can be purchased online through the *Chinatown Rising* website, <https://www.chinatownrising.com>.

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### **Saturday Community Dinner, Saturday, May 25**

Come and help prepare, serve and eat the Saturday Community Dinner: 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.

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### **Session Meeting Report for March 26, 2019**

- Newly nominated deacons and elders were interviewed and shared their faith statements. George Becker, Tom Culp, Eva DeLair, Bob Fleming, Lori Yamauchi as Elders, and Maryam, David Griffith, Karyn Payne and Mary Russell as Deacons were voted into position unanimously.
- The Personnel Committee moved to remove the last page of the Personnel Handbook as the detail is no longer relevant, and the motion passed.
- A new strategic plan draft was presented.
- It was announced that Old First Information Binders (Red Books) are in the process of review.
- The Community Building Committee distributed a report regarding Old First digital presence.

- The Mission Committee announced that Old First would participate in One Great Hour of Sharing on Easter Sunday supporting disaster assistance, hunger and development programs.
- The Worship Committee mentioned that Good Friday services would be new.
- The Operations Committee was thanked for work providing the new freezer in the kitchen.



Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

### 2018 Christmas Joy Offering

Last December, Old First collected \$1,855.20 for the Christmas Joy Offering. Fifty percent of undesig-nated receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide critical financial support to retired and active church workers and their families.

The other fifty percent supports education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and leadership development opportunities for people of color through the Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Thank you for your generosity.

### 2019 Eco-Palms in Partnership

Did you know Old First helps procure palms for eight more churches on Palm Sunday in San Francisco? It started years ago when we first ordered Eco-Palms (see article below) as a way to make a difference in caring for the world and in a way that sustained communities with life giving wages where the palms are harvest. We asked our neighbors if they wanted to join in. Now we order palms for eight different churches – Presbyterian, Episcopal and Lutheran. The churches' memberships range from twenty to over a thousand. Last year in 2018 over a thousand Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations ordered Eco-Palms. Joining with congregations from other denominations, churches across the United States waved almost a million Eco-Palms this past Palm Sunday. Working together, we do make a difference!

#### Eco-Palms

By choosing Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday *you can promote environmental and social justice through your congregation's palm purchasing decisions!*

##### *Promote Social Justice*

- *Harvesting palms is an important source of income but gatherers receive a low price*
- *Gatherers will receive a higher price for their "fair trade" palms improving their income.*

##### *Promote Environmental Stewardship*

- *Palms protect valuable natural forests because they provide income to forest communities.*
- *Palms will be "sustainably" harvested and managed protecting the palms and the forests they need for shade.*

##### *Why a "Fair Trade" Palm?*

- *To improve income and living conditions for the communities gathering the palm.*
- *To protect the palms and the important forests from which they are gathered through sustainable harvest programs.*

### *Did You Know?*

- *Approximately 308 million palm fronds were consumed in the United States in 1998.*
- *Palm purchases for Palm Sunday may be worth up to 4.5 million dollars/year.*
- *Palm gathering actually protects valuable natural forests.*
- *At least half of the farmers in the Central Peten of Guatemala earn additional income from harvesting fronds and, more than a quarter of household heads support themselves exclusively by collecting fronds.*
- *Each palm plant produces 2 to 5 harvestable leaves over a 2 to 4 month period*

### **Spiritual Practices – Spiritual Direction**

Lori Yamauchi

Spiritual direction is the relationship of a teacher and learner in the area of practicing the spiritual life. A spiritual director offers guidance to help another see and name our own experience of God. Spiritual directors can teach, admonish, or confront us firmly in love to hold us accountable for our attitudes and behaviors. They act as companions, encouraging and supporting, praying, listening and sharing learnings.

Spiritual directors typically: listens, helps to notice things, helps to respond to God with greater freedom, points to practical disciplines of spiritual growth, and loves and prays for you.

If you think you would benefit from a spiritual companion, clarify why you want such a relationship and what you hope to gain. Then ask yourself what kind of person you would be most comfortable working with. Consider the following criteria for potential spiritual directors:

- 1) Look for Christians with a certain maturity of faith.
- 2) Look for people who know they are not perfect.
- 3) Seek out people who are patient and attentive listeners.
- 4) Look for people who invite trust.
- 5) Look for mentors who place their trust in the grace of God.

Then, ask God to show you the right person for you to work with. Start thinking about the people you know. Bring the person you choose to God in prayer and be prepared for the unexpected. Ask the person to be your spiritual director. If they are willing, arrange for an initial meeting. Discuss hopes and expectations. Set a limited number of meetings, to get fully acquainted and signs of confirmation from God.

Questions and issues you can explore in a spiritual guidance relationship include: What do I actually believe about God? How does God work in my life? How does God relate to my family, my work, my life? How can I be more aware of God's presence and activity in my life? How am I called to respond? Spiritual guidance is not the same as psychological counseling. Spiritual direction always focuses on your relationship with God.

### **Prayers for Healing and Wholeness**

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.

### **Prayers of Mourning**

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For Josephine Yee at the death of her husband, Herbert.

For Pamela Sebastian at the recent death of her mother.

For Courtney Blake at the death of her stepfather.

For Margaret Englehart Way at the death of her husband, George.

### **Prayers for Any Day**

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The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces. Let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.

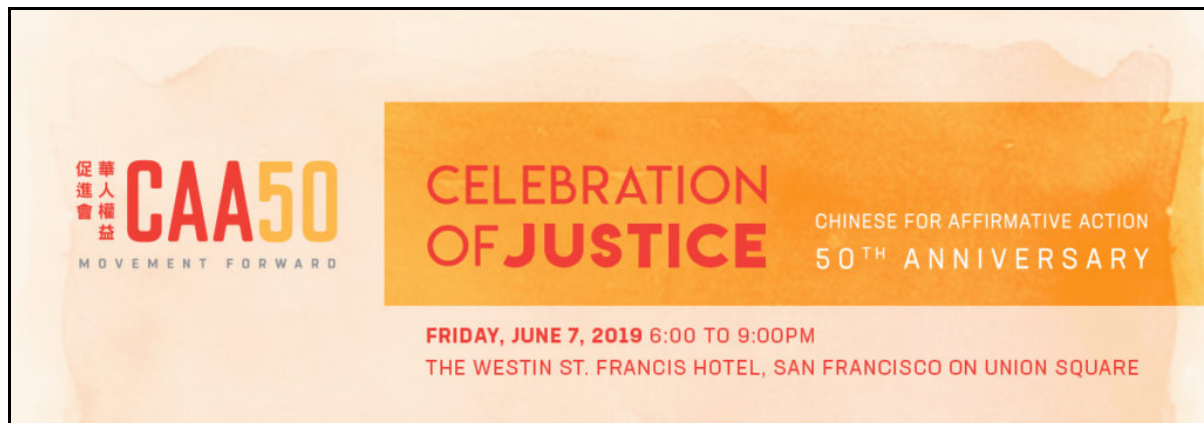
Robert Louis Stevenson

### **Congratulations to OFPC member Buddy Tate Choy on this outstanding achievement!**

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Dear Friends and Family, we wanted to let you know how pleased we are that Buddy will be honored this year as one of the founders of Chinese for Affirmative Action for their 50th Anniversary celebration. We do not expect that you will be able to attend, but just wanted to let you know of this honor.

Jeannie Choy Tate



The Celebration of Justice is CAA's largest annual fundraiser and brings together over 500 community leaders, activists, corporate supporters, elected officials and organizational partners for a night of celebration and renewal of our commitment to social justice.

Our fiftieth year is a very special milestone. For five decades CAA has led civil rights advocacy, provided much-needed community services, and organized multi-racial coalitions that today are more important than ever. In the current climate of xenophobia and racism, all of our communities are under attack and CAA is being called upon to bring the movement forward.



For their vision in founding the CAA, leadership in many of CAA's civil rights battles, and far-reaching impact in many diverse communities, we honor: Alice Barkley, Buddy Tate Choy, Lillian Sing, Ling-Chi Wang, and Germaine Q. Wong

**“Not in Vain” by Emily Dickinson, 1830–1886**

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If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain:  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Unto his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.

### Dates to Remember

May 3	Friday	O1C: Mellon International Chamber Players: Stephanie Zyzak, violin; Eunghee Cho, cello; Roger Xia, piano, 8:00 pm
May 5	Sunday	Financial Work Group, Library, 12:30 pm O1C: Ives Collective, string sextet, 4:00 pm
May 6	Monday	Mission Committee, Munro Room, 6:30 pm
May 10	Friday	O1C: Jon Jangtet: “A Chinaman’s Chance, A Choy’s Chance” for piano, tenor sax, trombone, bass, percussion and poet, 8:00 pm
May 17	Friday	O1C: Sarah Cahill & Regina Myers, pianos
May 18	Saturday	Memorial Service for Herbert Yee, 1:00 pm
May 19	Sunday	Deadline for June issue of Shared Life O1C: Jason Stoll, piano
May 25	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm
May 27	Monday	Memorial Day: Church Office Closed
May 28	Tuesday	Session, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
May 30	Thursday	The Ascension of Christ
May 31	Friday	O1C: Audrey Vardanega, piano

### Treasure or Clutter?

Many people want to share their abundance, a book, household item or such, with folks at church. A great idea, but it takes a bit of follow-through in order for it not to end up in the Lost and Found (which is in the church office.) If you bring an item to give away at coffee hour, put a sign by it that says *free* or *take me home*. You can also make an announcement – that always helps. If no one desires the object take it home with or walk it to **Out of the Closet** on the corner of California and Polk Streets and donate it there.