

# Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of  
Old First Presbyterian Church

November 2011

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

Church Photostream: [www.flickr.com/photos/oldfirst](http://www.flickr.com/photos/oldfirst)

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

## **Maggi's Musings**

This time of year I find myself thankful for so very much. I am thankful for I am thankful for the church members who are so enthusiastic and committed that they are going out to visit other members for our stewardship campaign. I am thankful for the members who have been willing to join in new forms of compassionate ministry this past year – such as the Interfaith Food Pantry. I am thankful for the creative group that has explored scripture and looked at the worship for the coming Advent Season; for they have sparked my own hope that Advent will not simply be a time leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, but a time leading to a longing for a resurrected Christ in my life – the one who still calls me, still call us, to seek his life-transforming presence in the world today, now, here.

Even as I look forward to a fine meal on Thanksgiving Day – when I will have much to say grace for – I know that we are not a *Thanksgiving's-just-one-day-a-year* kind of people. We are to praise God with our words and action every day. God is the source of our praise as it says in Psalm 9:1-2:

*I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;  
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.  
I will be glad and exult in you;  
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*

I invite you, I challenge you this month to recommit yourself to be a thankful person, not just for a day or a season, but each and every day.

Peace,  
Maggi

## **EVERY MEMBER VISITATION**

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### **Our Church and the Every Member Visitation Program**

So what is “Our Church?” Is it a 100-year-old building on the corner of Van Ness and Sacramento? Is it any building in which we meet for worship? Where was our church when we were enjoying the sun and fun at the October church picnic in Lafayette Park? Did the church decide to stay home?

Most of what we know about the early Christian church we learn from the apostle Paul who ministered in Ephesus, a city on the Aegean in what is today Turkey. In the early Christian life there were no church buildings and people met in private homes. The Greek word *ecclesia* meaning “assembly” or “gathering” and was used to describe these early meetings. It was not until much later that we begin to see permanent locations described as “Christian churches.” I guess, if you might be fed to the lions for your faith, having a public permanent location called a church is not high on your list of priorities.

Well, we are about to move our church all over the Bay Area this month as we begin our effort to visit every member of our congregation in homes, restaurants and coffee shops. The “Every Member Visitation” program gives us all a chance to meet each other, reaffirm our belief in Christ and renew our commitment to Old First.

These *ecclesiae* will take place between late October and mid-November and are intended to be fun and informative. We encourage our visitors to meet church members at home or at some other comfortable location. Most visitors are sitting elders and deacons, so you will enjoy the company of some familiar folks.

You will learn a bit about the finances of the church, our programs and aspirations for the future. Your visit will provide a great opportunity to ask questions and tell us what excites you about Old First. Full participation is not only allowed but also encouraged! We look forward to seeing you.

Here is the Church  
Here is the steeple  
Open the doors...  
The church is the people!

## **LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES**

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### **Help Larkin Street Brighten the Holidays for Homeless Youth**

Old First Presbyterian Church has a twenty seven-year Christmas tradition of helping Larkin Street Youth Services brighten the holidays for some of San Francisco’s most vulnerable youth. Larkin Street will host celebrations for over 450 homeless and at-risk young people, ages 12-24. Some are living in Larkin Street’s emergency shelters and transitional living programs. Some are on the street.

We can have a direct, positive impact on these young people by sponsoring a gift drive with friends or family or where we work or live. We can deliver *new, unwrapped* gifts or have gifts shipped directly to Larkin Street.

Some of the most requested items include backpacks, umbrellas, jackets, rain ponchos, hooded sweatshirts, knit caps, scarves, sneakers, pants, gloves, socks, underwear, BART passes, 2012 day planners and journals. Gift cards from retailers such as Ross, Old Navy, Gap, Payless Shoes, Safeway, Trader Joe's, Starbucks, Peet's, Amoeba, Macy's, Borders, and Walgreens are also extremely popular.

Other frequent requests include toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, shaving cream and hair dryers. Basic household needs include alarm clocks, dishes, pots, pans, utensils, towels and twin-sized sheets, blankets, small appliances, home electronics and school and art supplies.

To permit Larkin Street to distribute gifts on time, we can bring them to the coffee hour on any Sunday in November and on December 4 and 11. We can also take or ship gifts to the Larkin Street's administrative offices at 1138 Sutter Street (between Polk and Larkin), weekdays through Thursday, December 15, 9:30 and 4:30. For more information, please contact Jessie Backer via telephone (415-673-0911 x291) or via E-mail ([volunteer@larkinstreetyouth.org](mailto:volunteer@larkinstreetyouth.org)).

### **Board of Supervisors Approves Edward II Supportive Housing Project**

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors overwhelmingly approved the controversial Edward II supportive housing project on October 4, 2011. The project, a collaborative effort between Larkin Street Youth Services and Community Housing Partnership, will provide much needed housing for youth aging out of the foster care system and living on the edge of homelessness. By 9-1 and 10-0 votes, the board approved a requested special use district for the site and denied neighborhood associations' appeals from earlier Planning Commission decisions in favor of the project.

Larkin Street and Community Housing Partnership will now proceed with the project at the corner of Lombard and Scott Streets. When extensive renovations are completed, the former Edward II Hotel will provide housing for 24 young people. Larkin Street's world-class case management, job training and educational programs will give the youth an opportunity to build the skills they need to transition into self-sufficient adulthood.

The project helps fulfill city plans to create 400 units of transition-age youth housing throughout San Francisco, with the goal of getting our young people off the streets and poised for success. Praise God!

Old First Presbyterian Church was well represented in this achieving this goal through the efforts of Nina Berg, Pam and Jeff Byers, Marilyn and Bill Campbell, Diane Molberg, Pastor Maggi and Mary Russell. (Sincere apologies are extended to anyone overlooked).

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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**Standard Time Resumes, November 6**

On Saturday, November 5, night let your clocks “fall back” one hour as we resume Pacific Standard Time. You’ll have one hour less for sleep, but you’ll make it to church on time.

**14<sup>th</sup> Annual Interfaith Prayer Breakfast, November 22**

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual San Francisco Interfaith Prayer Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, November 22, from 7:00 am to 9:00 am at the Hotel Kabuki, 1625 Post Street at Laguna. Make reservation at [www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org](http://www.sfinterfaithcouncil.org).

**Thanksgiving Day Interfaith Service, November 24**

The annual Thanksgiving Day Interfaith Service will be held on Thursday, November 24, from 10:00 am to 11:00 am at the Konko Church, 1909 Bush Street at Laguna.

**New Church Year: First Sunday of Advent, November 27**

This year Advent begins November 27. We also start Year B in the three-year Common Lectionary. Free Advent devotionals will be available in the Narthex on that Sunday. Also, *God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer are available for \$5.00 in the church office or at the coffee hour following worship.

**Worlds AIDS Day Interfaith Service, November 30**

World AIDS Day (December 1) will be commemorated with an Interfaith Service the night before, Wednesday, November 30, 7:00 pm at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 1111 O’Farrell Street between Franklin and Gough.

**Holiday Greeting Card Board, December 4**

December 4, the Holiday Greeting card board will once again be available! It’s time to send your Holiday Greeting card to Old First Presbyterian Church for all to enjoy. The money saved on purchasing individual cards and postage will be given to the church. Please write on your check: “For Holiday Greetings” as we revive another Old First Tradition. Remember your Old First family with a Christmas card in 2011!

**CROP Hunger Walk, April 29, 2012**

The annual CROP Hunger Walk will not take place as usual in October this year, but instead has been rescheduled to April 29, 2012, again around Lake Merced. The Presbytery organizers hope the date change will help us avoid last year's torrential downpour, and the competition for space with the Nike Women's Marathon! We want to have ten walkers this year so mark your calendars.

**THANKSGIVING AND LANGUAGE**

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**Why do We Call it Grace?**

Grace is a word with many meanings and uses – a ballerina is graceful, someone who overlooks our faults is gracious, a waiter is happy for a good gratuity - but at its core is *gratiae* the word the ancient Latins used to express “thanks.” The word is still part of the Latin mass: *Gratias agimus tibi*. (We give you thanks.) We also hear it conversationally in modern Italian or Spanish: *Mille grazie! Muchas gracias!* So what better word is there for prayer at a meal than “grace?” Every meal deserves to be Thanksgiving.

## NEWS

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### **New Communion Cloths**

#### **Cindy Burt, Worship Committee**

The Worship Committee is always looking for ways to enliven the meaning of worship. One aspect of worship is the appearance of the sanctuary. This has been accomplished through various wall and ceiling installations, thematic artwork and reredos art.

Recently, we have fretted over the sorry appearance of our liturgical communion cloths. Old First emphasizes communion, observing the sacrament twice a month. Due to frequent use, our communion cloths have become old, worn and bear many spot marks. To replace liturgical communion cloths in the style and silk fabric we currently have is prohibitively expensive. The Worship Committee decided we should go in a different direction. Instead of having staid fabric and colors we decided to purchase cloth in interesting and colorful fabrics that could be changed more frequently.

An expedition to a fabric outlet in the Mission was planned to see what was available. We met on a recent Saturday afternoon and spent the next two hours poring over the many bolts of fabric, laying out various color combinations and seeing which ones "spoke" to us. For World Communion Sunday, October 2, our goal was to find a fabric that evoked an international feeling in some way. We chose a fabric that reminded us of an Indonesian pattern. To add to the international feeling, a complementary sheer was added to cover the table without occluding it entirely. We found another green cloth for Ordinary time which will make its appearance in the not too distant future.

Many bolts of fabric flew around the store as we considered cloth for other liturgical seasons. Despite exerting ourselves for two hours, we were only able to find fabric for Pentecost 2012 before hunger pangs called us to a local Mexican food cantina. There may be another outing in the future...

### **All-Church Picnic: Fair Skies and Fun**

On October 2, following World Wide Communion, over 50 members of the congregation adjourned to Lafayette Park with its beautiful views, spacious lawns, and picnic tables. The fine weather and setting were just perfect for lots of fun and fellowship over a plate of barbecue ribs and chicken and lots of good sides and desserts.

After plenty of time for visiting and catching up, the games came out. The parachute game was a big hit with kids of all ages intrigued with the billowing shape and colors. Bocce ball and croquet were also met with enthusiasm and lots of players. And the perennial hardboiled egg race was held.

The Deacons send thanks to everyone who took the time to come, who brought side dishes and happy smiles. On the Deacons roll, Dana Nojima and Dan Joraanstad the co-moderators would especially like to thank Sarah Taber, Tracy Clagett, Glen Potter, Nina Berg and Priscilla Yu for their efforts in making the occasion such fun. And thanks also go to those who are always deacons in their hearts and helping out in many ways including Erwin Barron, Bob Hermann and Marne Krozek.

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**CHOIR NEWS**

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**New Soloists**

For the first time in 22 years, apparently, the choir has a section leader/soloist in each section. Jordan Eldredge, baritone, joined us at the end of September. Jordan is a graduate of San Francisco State University and a freelance singer in the Bay Area. Elena Galvan and Daniel Bates, soprano and tenor respectively, joined us at the beginning of September. They are both obtaining their Master's Degrees in Voice Performance from the San Francisco Conservatory and moved here all the way from Ithaca, NY, where they were soloists at First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca and graduates of Ithaca College. These three talented musicians join Twila Ehmcke, our mezzo soprano who has been singing with us for over two years now. It is a great pleasure to have all of them in the midst of our faithful and dedicated volunteer members!

**Exciting Concert Opportunity for the Choir**

The choir will be performing a winter concert at the newly renovated Sunnyside Conservatory, Friday, December 9 at 8:00 pm. The Conservatory is on Monterey Blvd. between Baden and Congo Streets. This venue went through a 4 million dollar renovation and opened last year. If you haven't seen it, now is your opportunity. Our choir will present a seasonal concert of sacred and secular favorites in this magical space. No tickets are necessary, just a donation for the Friends of the Sunnyside Conservatory, and the choir will be selling their CD's before and after the program.

**Choir CD**

We are just now wrapping up our recording sessions for the first ever Christmastide CD by the Old First Choir. The CD contains many arrangements of familiar Christmas Carols, some with harp, some with trumpets and organ and others a cappella. Some of the selections include, "O Holy Night" with Kaileen Miller, "Angels We Have Heard on High," "Silent Night," "Joy to the World," "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and a new piece entitled "A Christmastide Blessing," written by Jay Pierson, especially for the CD. Look for sales after the service on November 28 in the Fellowship Hall. Buy several copies and give them as gifts during the Christmas season!

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**BOOK REVIEW**

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***Community of Faith: Old First Presbyterian Church 1849-1999* by Stephen Taber  
Reviewed by Betty Voris**

Our recent Cornerstone Celebration capped three weeks of Old First historical tidbits acted out by Erwin Barron, Daniel Pearch and myself before Sunday morning worship. The vignettes emphasized Old First's rich history as the first organized Protestant church, encompassing the founding of its six church buildings between 1849 and 1911 and the trials and tribulations involved with each, all performed with (more than) a touch of humor. Its intended purpose: to give members and visitors a sense of the determination and perseverance of our earliest spiritual pioneers who fought and overcame many odds to make Old First Presbyterian Church a reality – one that still exists 162 years later.

When tasked with the Celebration, I grabbed *Pioneer Community of Faith, Old First Presbyterian Church 1849-1999*, written by Stephen Taber. I had purchased the book when it

was published. But we were very new members of the church then. This time I read it as an involved member. I loved it!!

I would encourage anyone who has it on his or her shelf to read it again. The article by Mark Twain is hilarious. The work done by former committee members – often with much heated discussion – reminds us that our pioneers loved and cared about this church as much as we do. The pictures are magnificent and the history of our pastors is worthwhile.

Steve has done a marvelous job of presenting our history with wit and fact. The side stories themselves make the book highly entertaining! If you do not have a copy, there are still a few copies available for \$10. See Steve Taber or the church office. If you do not have the funds but still would like to read it, there is a copy in the library. For those who truly love this church, this book is a must read!

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### **THIS MONTH'S FEATURE**

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#### **American Grace and Old First: What does the Future Hold for Us?**

##### **Stephen Taber**

Last year, a very voluminous but important book was published that reveals quite a lot about the state of religion in America and where it might be headed. Called American Grace, its authors, Robert Putnam and David Campbell, draw on a series of surveys to paint a picture of America as a very religious, yet tolerant, nation, which is being increasingly polarized between conservative religious people and liberal secularists. Moderate to liberal people of faith are left in the lurch.

The authors report that by all measures, the United States is the most religious developed nation in the world. And we have not become significantly less religious over the years. However, we have been hit by some major social “shock waves” over the past 50 years that have changed the religious landscape, including the Vietnam War, racial issues, and liberalization of mores in the 1960’s, a reaction in the 1970’s and 1980’s with the rise of conservative Christianity, and the rise of a generation in the 2000’s who have tended to reject established religion (and a lot of other established institutions).

These findings pose challenges along with opportunities for churches like Old First. Often, we are confronted by paradox:

- Mainline Protestants and Jews have significant public “good will,” but the public tends to be increasingly skeptical of religious institution.
- Liberal churches actually tend to be more overtly political than conservative churches, yet the public tends to equate Christianity with conservatism.
- Americans have become more tolerant of other faiths while maintaining their own faith.

Old First faces challenges of being a Christian community in a liberal city in which Christian faith is not overtly central to the culture. This is a challenge that must be faced if Old First is to be an effective witness to Jesus Christ in this community.

Anyone who is interested in engaging in discussions regarding these issues is invited to contact me at [stephen@sstaber.com](mailto:stephen@sstaber.com), (415) 771-3358. If there is sufficient interest, I would like to arrange for opportunities to follow up on these and other related themes.

**WISDOM**

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**Thanksgiving Proclamation 1863**

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People.

I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.



By the President: Abraham Lincoln



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**DATES**

- November 6 All Saints' Sunday, Name Tag Sunday: Wear your own name tag and take a look at others'.  
Note: We resume Pacific Standard Time. Let your clocks "fall back" one hour.
- November 13 Deadline for December issue of Shared Life; E-mail articles to Diane Molberg: [molberg@earthlink.net](mailto:molberg@earthlink.net)

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**LECTIONARY**

- November 6 Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25; Psalm 78:1-7;  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13
- November 13 Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123:1-4;  
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30
- November 20 Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 Psalm 100:1-5;  
Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent: Year B of Three Year Lectionary Begins**
- November 27 First Reading Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

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**THE OFFICERS OF OLD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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**Board of Deacons**

**Nina Berg**, Communion Clean Up, Funding Requests, Flowers/Memorial Donations; **Carol Carter**, Funding Requests, Communion Cleanup; **Tracy Clagett**, Secretary; **Dan Joraanstad**, Co-Moderator; **Craig Kehne**, Coffee Hour, Communion Cleanup; **Diane Lewis**, Funding Requests, Cards; **Harriet MacClean**, Memorial Receptions and Meals; **Dana Nojima**, Co-Moderator, Merchandise Sales; **Glen Potter**, Transportation; **AnnieScott Rogers**, Deacons' Prayer Chain; **Oliver Spencer**, Special Events; **Sarah Taber**, Memorial Receptions and Meals; **Horngshen Tu**, Technology; **Priscilla Yu**, Funding Requests

**Elders on Session**

**George Becker**, Personnel; **Michael Berg**, Mission and Giving; **Chris Burt**, Worship; **Pam Byers**, Community Building; **Saskia de Vries**, Worship; **Gregory Free**, Finance; **Kristi Hoerauf**, Finance; **Sidney Hollar**, Christian Education; **Jeanne Kirkwood**, Clerk of Session; **Mary Russell**, Mission and Giving; **John Sebastian**, Planning; **Steve Taber**, Operations; **Betty Voris**, Community Building; **George Yu**, Christian Education