

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

July/August 2013

Church Website: oldfirst.org

Church Photostream: www.flickr.com/photos/oldfirst

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

Summer Reading

The summer months seem to draw us into slowing down and savoring chances to read – be it on a plane, a beach or an easy chair right at home. This summer's read at Old First Presbyterian Church will be *God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine* by Victoria Sweet. *God's Hotel* is about our very own Laguna Honda. One of our members brought the book to my attention, and said she had loved it. I was intrigued and I have now begun to read it myself. For an on-line New York Times review of the book, visit this web address: www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/health/29zuger.html?emc=eta1&r=0

Reading and Discussing *God's Hotel*

Here's the plan for reading Sweet's book. We will read the book during the month of July and meet to discuss it in August. Because of the generous gift to the church of adult education, copies of the books will be available for \$5.00. The only requirement is that you actually do read it! Alternatively, you can download a copy of your own to a Kindle or Nook.

In August we will offer a variety of book discussions. I myself will lead one or two on a Sunday, but I hope to have people offer their homes to meet or to arrange a meeting in a coffee shop to discuss the book. It would be a great small group read. So watch our Facebook page for comments during July on my own musings on the book, and add your own thoughts, too: a quote you liked, an idea you are playing with, or a question or comment. I wonder if there is someone who might know the author Victoria Sweet to see if she might come and talk with us? A pastor can dream, can't she?

Further Reading

I also wonder what you are reading this summer? Check out our church library for spiritual and religious readings. Or take a visit to the Children's library and re-encounter your own "inner child of God." Why not read a book of the Bible? Luke or Galatians are currently in the lectionary. And you can always find great reading in the poetry of the psalms! Not quite sure where to start? Read the weekly lectionary suggestions found on the last page of *Shared Life*. Let's use our church's Facebook page or the old-fashioned bulletin board near the Munro Room to share what we're reading.

Peace and "Happy Reading!"
Maggi

BOOK REVIEW

Victoria Sweet's

God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine

Excerpted from the Review by Abigal Zuger, MD, New York Times, May 29, 2013

It is probably pointless to suggest that all the individuals presently shaping our health care future spend a quiet weekend with God's Hotel, Dr. Victoria Sweet's transcendent testament to health care past...

* * *

Dr. Sweet writes about the 20 years she spent practicing medicine at San Francisco's old Laguna Honda Hospital, a giant chronic care facility for the city's destitute and ill. At one point, almost every county in the nation had a place like it, where patients could live for months, years, as long as it took. These medical back-wards, like their psychiatric counterparts, have now evaporated in the name of community-based services: The old Laguna Honda was called the last almshouse in America.

On the days she was not at the hospital, Dr. Sweet was earning a Ph.D. in the history of medicine, focusing on the life and work of the remarkable 12th-century German nun Hildegard of Bingen. Cloistered from age 12 until her death at 81, Hildegard became not only a prominent theologian and a composer of Gregorian chants, but also a health care guru, devising medical regimens for her own community and leaving behind several influential manuscripts.

Dr. Sweet surrounds the stories of her patients with detailed excursions into Hildegard's medical practice and its occasional unexpected utility for modern problems. And while these two layers would make for a perfectly fine memoir, what turns God's Hotel into a tour de force is its third: a biting skeptical eyewitness account of Laguna Honda's transformation from anachronism into efficient, computerized 21st-century rehabilitation center.

* * *

Caring for those who care little for themselves entails immense frustration and wasted time, but time was one thing the doctors had — time and the medieval medical interventions of regular meals, clean linens, cheerful surroundings and the opportunity for careful observation. Occasionally a remarkable transformation would result from very little more than those simple things, the miserably self-destructive becoming well and whole.

* * *

Dr. Sweet reviews the byzantine politics behind this expensive rebirth with careful documentation but no pretense at impartiality. Presumably there is another side to her story — the old hospital may well have provided worse care than Dr. Sweet allows, and the new one may bring better things than she foresees. But the loss of all that time — now, that's a clear-cut disaster.

* * *

[Dr. Sweet writes] "It took a long time... But we were in no hurry..." Health care in no hurry. Can you even imagine such a luxury? Will it ever return?

Keep Up with Old First on Facebook

With a reported one billion active users per month, Facebook is by far the largest social media network in the world. Our Community Building Committee wants to take advantage of its ubiquity both to keep Old First-ers connected to one another and to reach out to people who should know about our community. So, we have just re-launched our church's Facebook page. If you use Facebook, I hope you'll find our page and "like" it. (Note: there are several Old First Presbyterians – be sure you choose the one in SF!) You'll then get occasional updates and can also post your own comments to the page.

Here are ways you can help keep our page lively – and benefit both our members and potential visitors:

- Take digital photos of church activities and e-mail them to me for use on our Facebook page and/or website.
- Suggest content for posts (events or other items you think we should feature).
- Write a brief "Recommendation" on the OFC page.
- Post to your own FB page and say you've been (worshiping/celebrating/ singing/serving – whatever) at Old First. There is a "Place" button right above the "Status" update box (in case, like me, you are still learning about FB), which will automatically create a link that can take your friends to our page.

When you "like" us, or comment about Old First on your own page, it lets your friends know about your church family and potentially discover it for themselves. Low-key but potentially very important evangelism! And, if you check in from time to time, you'll stay more up-to-date with Old First activities – we'll update our FB page more often than the website (which is updated once or twice a month).

If you want to be more involved, you can also be a volunteer "Administrator" and help maintain the page. Just let Pam Byers know of your interest: pambyers.sf@gmail.com

Finally, now that you have logged into Facebook and "liked" Old First Presbyterian Church, you can "check in" and rate our church from your smart phone when you get to church. It's easy, just log onto Facebook from your smart phone and click "check in" which is located at the top right part of the screen. Once you have checked in, you will have an opportunity to rate Old First by clicking anywhere from one to five stars. Old First has moved into the era of social media and this is a great way to let your friends know where you attend church and to let your family (mother) know you are going to church.

Director of Music, Richard Benefield, Announces Summer Break for Choir

I know that you all want to join me in thanking our terrific choir at Old First Presbyterian Church for their work over the past year. We had a wonderful Advent Season when they were getting used to a new director and a lot of new music. The season of Lent found that choir and director had adjusted to one another, and some very moving and memorable performances came out of that collaborative commitment. Easter Sunday was a rousing and stirring celebration of the resurrection in anthems and hymns, and the choir has continued to lead worship with a redoubled effort to encourage all worshippers to join in hearty hymn singing.

Now it's time for the choir to take a much needed break. They will take time off officially in July and the first half of August, and we will hear solos and duets from some of our very fine singers. Choir rehearsal will begin again on Thursday, August 15, and I encourage anyone who has thought about joining the choir to mark that date on your calendar and come join us in lifting our voices in praise and adoration.

Do You Use Yelp? More Ways to Reach Out and Invite People In

In a big city, with people from everywhere and every kind of experience, Old First needs to be present in as many different milieus and media as possible. Different people experience San Francisco, and reach out for information, in different ways.

Old First has in recent years redesigned and built up its website (www.oldfirst.org), and has just launched a new Facebook page (see related story). Both research and our own experience show that many people moving to a new location use one or both of these means to find a potential church home.

Many people also use Yelp! – not only to find a good drycleaner or pizza place, but even a church. *Are you a Yelper?* If so, please post a review – preferably favorable! – about Old First. What drew you to Old First? Why do you keep coming back? What would you say to someone you were telling about the church and why they should come? (If you do this, please tell Pam Byers at pambyers.sf@gmail.com.)

Of course, every study ever done says that the single best way to get people to come to church is to invite them. *You are our best outreach tool* – when you tell your neighbor, colleague, or co-worker what you love about Old First, and invite them to come.

Nancy Holve Ordained and Called to Richfield, Utah

The newly-ordained Reverend Nancy Holve has been called as pastor of Valley Community Presbyterian Church in Richfield, Utah. Nancy was ordained June 23 at Livermore Presbyterian Church. She left the next day driving to Utah. Nancy was a seminary intern and staff member for Christian education and nurture of Old First Presbyterian Church. Nancy will be Valley Community Presbyterian Church's designated pastor on a half-time basis. Richfield, Utah, is a small rural town about three hours south of Salt Lake City. The population of Richfield is only 7,000, but it is the county seat. There is a community college in Richfield. The geography is high desert, at 5,200 feet altitude. It is a ranching area.

This is a very small congregation with church members coming from the surrounding area. Some drive from 30 to 75 miles to church, but they also may drive 30 to 75 miles to go anywhere. In Richfield, there are also Catholic, Baptist, and Bible churches among the larger Mormon population. The church has a manse next door, built in 1936, which is now being renovated for Nancy's benefit.

The former pastor of Valley Community Presbyterian Church was a woman who has retired, so a woman pastor is familiar to them. Nancy feels this is a familiar atmosphere, in a new location. Nancy grew up in a rural, farming area with a small population. Please pray for Nancy and the congregation as they begin to worship and work together. You can drop Nancy a note at the following address:

The Reverend Nancy Holve
Valley Community Presbyterian Church
34 East 200 South
Richfield UT 84701

JEANNE CHOY TATE'S NEW BOOK IS *SOMETHING GREATER*

Something Greater: Culture, Family, and Community as Living Story
Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013, 274 pages

Jeanne wants the Old First community to know that her book, *Something Greater: Culture, Family, and Community as Living Story*, is now available for purchase at Wipf and Stock Publishers. Visit wipfandstock.com and also "like" her new book's Facebook like-page and share it with your friends. Jeanne is working with the Christian Education committee to teach a series of classes in the fall.

At age nineteen, Jeanne crossed the American continent to “find [her] identity” as a live-in volunteer at Cameron House in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Later, as a bilingual/bicultural early childhood educator, she was surprised to discover that the interdependent values of Chinese culture are, in many ways, closer to the values of early biblical communities than modern individualism. This experience inspired an M.A. with Robert Bellah and a Ph.D. at the Graduate Theological Union.

Something Greater contrasts the intergenerational relationships valued in biblical and Chinese communities with the individualism of American childrearing. A heritage of shared meaning and values, passed from generation to generation, lies at the heart of human development. Though America’s children may have wings to soar into the future, they lack the roots of heritage to connect them with something greater than the individual self.

Something Greater explores how living stories of culture and faith, dynamic and filled with diversity, create healthy families, bind a society together and speak to the deep hunger of Americans who long for meaning in something greater than the individual self. Building on her experiences as a Presbyterian lay pastor, partner in a biracial marriage, and parent of a bicultural child, Jeanne writes of life lived on the borders, in the tension between individual and community, between the longing to belong and being one’s self.

For more information or to order the book, visit Wipf and Stock’s webpage for the book:
wipfandstock.com/store/Something_Greater_Culture_Family_and_Community_as_Living_Story

BOOK EXCERPT

Excerpted from Jeanne Choy Tate’s

Something Greater: Culture, Family, and Community as Living Story

I came of age in San Francisco, a continent away from my family by choice, in a community unlike any I knew growing up. Infected with restlessness and a disdain for my segregated military environment, a source of constant arguments with my Navy-commander father, I dropped out after two years at my southern woman’s college. My cousin had just bilged out of the Naval Academy. Together we drove across the country in his top-down, red TR. I wanted to live as far away from my parents as I could get and still be in the U.S.

The year was 1964, one year after Kennedy’s assassination and Martin Luther King’s “I have a Dream” speech. Bob Dylan had also released his “The times they are a-changing,” though this song had failed to penetrate the cocoon of my colonial hometown. I came to live and work as a church volunteer in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Chinatown in the 1960s was still pretty much a bounded and isolated enclave of Cantonese-speaking immigrants with a burgeoning population of second generation youth. Its own small town within a larger city, Chinatown was just starting to spill beyond its bounds into the streets of North Beach. It was now crossing over Broadway—that previously rigid dividing line where Italian and Chinese youth would line up on either side to hurl taunts across the thoroughfare.

I crossed the continent to “find my identity,” in throes of an adolescent identity crisis typical of my middleclass peers. I found my Chinese American peers secure in their Chinese identity and respectful of their heritage. My Chinatown peers however were struggling to discover what it meant to put this identity together with being Chinese American. What was so grounding about their identity while I so flagrantly rebelled against my own? Was a bicultural identity possible? If so, would that bicultural identity be respected by the broader American culture?

Here, in the small bounded community that was Chinatown then, everyone was connected, or in some way related to everyone else. Here, too, was the proverbial Main Street so central to my sense of place though, the living pulse of the Chinatown community centered more around Stockton Street than the immortalized Grant Avenue of Broadway fame. Here, I felt embraced by a sense of community I had never experienced before. Even as a barbarian I had a place and an accepted identity. Here, among a community marginalized from the mainstream, this long blond-haired "baak qwai"—"white ghost" or "white devil"—fit in.

This move marked what would become a life-long involvement with Chinese culture and the Chinese American experience. I was not aware how much I craved a sense of heritage and community until I found myself there. If I cling closely to the Chinese-American community it is because, oddly enough, this is where I most feel a sense of belonging. That experience, the connections that continue till today, are my grounding.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Interfaith Community Blood Drive, July 6

The SF Interfaith Council will sponsor a blood drive on Saturday, July 6, from 10 am to 4 pm at St Mary's RC Cathedral, 1111 Gough Street at Geary Boulevard. Appointments are necessary: Visit www.redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment. Use sponsor code "interfaith community."

Salad and Sandwich Potluck Lunch, July 7

July signals summer time and summer time means picnic time. Reserve the afternoon of July 7 for a salad and sandwich potluck. We supply the buns, bread and trimmings, and you bring the sandwich filling or salad to share. As usual, instead of bringing a potluck dish, you may simply donate \$5 in order to partake of our Old First Summer Indoor Picnic.

Interment of Helen Myrhee Kennedy's Ashes, July 7

The ashes of the late Helen Myrhee Kennedy will be interred in the columbarium at Old First Presbyterian Church in a brief service after lunch on Sunday, July 7.

Interfaith Food Pantry, July 20 and August 24

Old First is responsible for staffing the Interfaith Food Pantry on Saturday, July 20 and Saturday, August 24. Several volunteers are needed for both dates. Please contact Joy Crosser if you can help either or both of these days.

AIDS Walk, Sunday, July 21

Again this year, members and friends of Old First Presbyterian Church can join with other Bay Area Presbyterians on Team #1057 – "Presbyterians Fighting AIDS." The AIDS Walk takes place in Golden Gate Park. Check out the registration and donation information at this website: www.aidswalk.net/sanfran/

The AIDS Walk also welcomes sponsors for walkers. Cash and check donations may be in any amount (only credit cards have minimums). It's recommended that donors sponsor specific walkers instead of a general team donation. There will also be sign-up and sponsor information at coffee hours until the date.

Admin Out of Office, August 12-21

Our office administrator, Brad Peterson, will be out of the office from Monday, August 12 through Wednesday, August 21. He returns to the office on Thursday, August 22.

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN JULY AND AUGUST, 2013

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel
07/07/13	Ordinary 14	2 Kings 5:1-14	30	Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16	Luke 10:1-11, 16-20
07/14/13	Ordinary 15	Amos 7:7-17	82	Colossians 1:1-14	Luke 10:25-37
07/21/13	Ordinary 16	Amos 8:1-12	52	Colossians 1:15-28	Luke 10:38-42
07/28/13	Ordinary 17	Hosea 1:2-10	85	Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)	Luke 11:1-13
08/04/13	Ordinary 18	Hosea 11:1-11	107:1-9, 43	Colossians 3:1-11	Luke 12:13-21
08/11/13	Ordinary 19	Isaiah 1:1, 10-20	50:1-8, 22-23	Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16	Luke 12:32-40
08/18/13	Ordinary 20	Isaiah 5:1-7	80:1-2, 8-19	Hebrew 11:29-12:2	Luke 12:49-56
08/01/13	Ordinary 21	Jeremiah 1:4-10	71:1-6	Hebrews 12:18-29	Luke 13:10-17

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Thursday	07/04/13	Independence Day – Church Office closed, no choir rehearsal
Sunday	07/07/13	Summer Sandwich Lunch, 12:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Sunday	07/14/13	Deacons' Meeting, Munro Room1, 12:30 pm
Saturday	07/20/13	Interfaith Food Pantry staffed by Old First
Saturday	07/20/13	Presbyterian Women, Library, Noon
Thursday	08/15/13	Choir Rehearsals Resume, 7:00 pm
Saturday	08/24/13	Interfaith Food Pantry staffed by Old First
Tuesday	08/27/13	Session Meeting, Munro Room, 7:00 pm

The Officers of Old First Presbyterian Church**Session**

George Becker, personnel; Chris Burt, worship; Pam Byers, community-building; Barry Clagett; finance, Bill Feister; Christian education, Gregory Free; treasurer, Jeanne Kirkwood; clerk of session, Jean Olson, Mary Russell; mission and giving, Randy Smith, Sally Spencer, Steve Taber; operations, Betty Voris; community-building; Priscilla Yu

Board of Deacons

Nina Berg, Carol Carter, Samuel Cheng, Joy Crosser, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Dana Nojima, Leota Parker, Glen Potter, AnnieScott Rogers, Sarah Taber, Horngsheng Tu