

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

October 2014

Church Website: oldfirst.org

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

Old First Concerts: www.oldfirstconcerts.org

MAGGI'S MUSINGS

As October comes around once again, so does the yearly Peacemaking Offering taken on the first Sunday of the month. As your pastor I did all the proper things to prepare for the offering: I made sure information about it got in *Shared Life* and the bulletins, I let the proper committees know what was coming up, so they could do their work related to the offering, I saw that special inserts and giving envelopes were placed the bulletin, and I reminded those that take up the offering to be on the look-out for incoming offerings.

I did all the right actions, except somehow I didn't let peace get into my heart, my mind, and my actions.

I confess that all the chaos in our lives and city, the talk of more troops in the Middle East, frightening wars and unrest erupting around the globe, and escalating illness and hunger in our world had kind of numbed me. It wasn't that I was hopeless, but rather I just had forgotten to be hopeful.

It isn't ultimately about collecting a peacemaking offering but about reviving our hope, our longing for peace, and about recommitting ourselves to follow the Prince of Peace. Thankful that I was shaken out of my numbness, I began to hear the whisperings of an invitation, a challenge to open myself to hope once again. I began to see things with different eyes: I remembered an E-mail from a group at the church urging me to write Governor Brown about upcoming bills to deter gun-violence... and I actually wrote him. I looked again at our church website (www.pcusa.org) and read about what we as Presbyterians are doing as peacemakers and was thankful and inspired by PC(USA) mission co-workers Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather. Here is an excerpt:

Many in the U.S. view South Sudan as a place of violence with little hope for change. That perception leads to one of the most common questions mission co-workers Revs. Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather get.

"They ask, 'Why should we be a part of what's happening there?'" Shelvis says. "It's a valid question, one that is rooted in our fear, but what distinguishes Christians from others is our unrelenting hope. We serve an Easter God who tells us over and over again that miracles happen. So my answer is 'How can we not go there?'"

South Sudan is not only the world's newest nation but is also one filled with people who have experienced the greatest suffering. The Smith-Mathers say the vast majority simply want to heal. "While it's important to acknowledge the violence, it's equally important to acknowledge those trying to work toward peace." Shelvis said. "It's a country that has suffered great loss, hurt, and oppression, but to see such faith in the midst of such pain is inspiring. One of the main phrases in the town we're in is 'God is present.' You can feel overwhelmed, but because God is here, there is hope. This is not the end of the story; there is a chance for change."

The Smith-Mathers serve alongside South Sudanese at RECONCILE International's Peace Institute, a program formed in 2009 to train leaders to become peace builders in their communities. "RECONCILE is an example of South Sudanese Christians who have seen the chaos, despair, and historical injustice," Shelvis says. "They've seen all this but want to be a part of making a difference with God's help." Calling the program "uniquely South

Sudanese, "he says it addresses issues in a spectrum of ways bringing together different regions that have been in conflict with each other, being a part of the healing

process in communities that experienced direct violence, and training chiefs and elders as well as elected leaders in reconciliation.

"How can we stand back and not be a part of trying to make a difference, not be a part of showing God's love and presence?" Shelvis says. "Sure there is uncertainty, but as Mother Teresa once reminded us, God is not calling us to be successful; God is calling us to be faithful."

May the God of Peace awaken hope in all of us and may we become peacemakers, peace sharers, peace givers– in our homes, in our church, in our city in and our world.

Peace, Maggi

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM, OCTOBER 5, 9:00 AM

Iftekhhar A. Hai will be our guest speaker Sunday, October 5, 2014 at 9:00 am. His topic will be "Understanding Islam." He will introduce us to Islam's Articles of Faith, the Five Pillars of Islam, the Last Sermon of the Prophet Mohammed, the attributes of God, the connection to Abraham, Sarah and Isaac through Hagar and Ismael, Sufism, what righteousness mean to Muslims, and also the demographics of Muslims in the US.

Iftekhhar A. Hai was born in a village in Southern India during the days of British rule. He earned his bachelor's degree from a Podar college, Matunga, suburb of Bombay. Facing religious discrimination he moved to Pakistan for better job opportunities in 1965. Because of the problems in Pakistan, he moved to the USA to fulfill his dreams and landed in San Francisco in 1969 for a master's program. After earning an MBA in 1973 he married his wife, Atiya. He served thirty years as a financial officer, which was his American dream.

Mr. Hai found Muslims facing bigotry, racism and hatred in the USA. He thus moved from finance to interfaith education. He became one of the founding Directors of United Muslims of America in 1982 and has been its full time honorary Director of Interfaith relations since 1990. In June 2004, he founded UMA Interfaith Alliance and became its president. The mission was to promote cooperation and understanding among world religions through interfaith dialogue, creating racial and religious harmony and encouraging American Muslims to get involved locally, nationally and globally for the common good of all people.

The 9/11 tragedy and the demonization of Muslims and Islam have created a crisis for American Muslims. Mr. Hai explains Islam and its practices to Americans in churches, synagogues, schools, colleges and universities. He has represented Islam in Conflict Resolution Conferences and interfaith seminars in USA, Canada, the UK, India, Pakistan, Africa, Afghanistan, Brazil, Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

PEACEMAKING OFFERING, OCTOBER 5

This month, congregations throughout the PC(USA) will receive the annual Peacemaking Offering. This offering is used both around the world and locally to transform cultures of violence into communities of peace.

The Peacemaking Offering funds the PC(USA) Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, which advocates for active, nonviolent solutions to conflict, supports international peacemakers, such as leaders from partner churches around the world who tell their stories, mission co-workers, such as Nancy and Shelvis Smith-

Mather in South Sudan (See Maggi's Musings), and international initiatives, such as the United Nations' Orange Day, a day of global solidarity opposing violence against women. The gun violence documentary *Trigger*, which our adult Christian Education class viewed and discussed, was produced with Peacemaking Program funds.

A portion of the Peacemaking Offering supports peacemaking efforts here in the Bay Area. One of these is the Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church Peace Camp, in the City of Richmond. The Peace Camp provides tools to enable children to find peace within themselves, their families and the community. Christian educators provide Richmond children resources such as prayer, mediation, art, storytelling, writing, teambuilding and knowledge of peacemakers through history.

A portion of all Peacemaking Offering gifts is kept by congregations. Last year, the offering enabled us to bring Tala Jajour to Old First to teach and preach about the humanitarian crisis in Syria, and we supported the peacemaking witness of Steve and Lucinda Gorman, mission co-workers in Egypt. Old First's 2014 Peacemaking Offering will be received on **World Communion Sunday, October 5**. We also have two other ways to give, by visiting presbyterianmission.org/give/peacemaking-offering or by texting PEACE to 20222 to give \$10.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Interfaith Food Pantry, October 11 and 25

Old First has two days in October to participate in the Interfaith Food Pantry. October 11 is All Faiths' day, when we join with volunteers from the other churches that distribute food. **However, on October 25 Old First is responsible for providing all the volunteers needed to distribute food.** If you are able to help unload the truck and/or distribute food either of these days, please E-mail: foodpantry@oldfirst.org

Ballot Workshop, October 19

Betty Voris will hold a Ballot Workshop on October 19 at 12:30 pm in the Munro Room. Bring your voter information pamphlet to the meeting. Betty will lead a discussion on the local measures we will be voting on November 4. Christian Education is sponsoring this event.

Night Ministry Celebration, November 16

Don't miss the 50th Anniversary Celebration for the San Francisco Night Ministry on Sunday, November 16, at 3:00 pm at Grace Cathedral. There will be a festive service of prayer and song, praise and thanksgiving. The celebrated author, Anne Lamott, will be the speaker and it will be a unique and special occasion. Following the service there will be a reception in Gresham Hall of Grace Cathedral. The day will conclude with a grand banquet at 7:00 pm in the events hall of the Delancey Street Restaurant (The Embarcadero at Brannan Street).

The service and reception at Grace Cathedral is open to all. Tickets for the banquet are \$150 for an individual and \$300 for an individual at the Bronze Sponsor level. Specially sponsored tables of ten for Gold Sponsors are available at \$5,000 and Silver Sponsors at \$3,000. Go to the Night Ministry web site for more information: www.sfnightministry.org

AED? AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR!

You've walked through the airport, the mall, even the gym; in other words, all manner of public places. You've started noticing boxes with clear covers prominently placed in the public areas. They are labeled AED and there is usually a lightning bolt logo too.

Mystery solved: this is an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and it is so visible because it truly is for the lay public to use in the case of an emergency.

And – Old First has an AED! It is located Fellowship Hall, right across from the Munro Room as you enter, hanging on the wall to the right. Now for even more good news – there will be a series of training sessions for anyone to learn how to use it.

Are you a bit squeamish? Nervous about doing it correctly? Have bad knees? You should still take the training. This is a “heart-saver” training specifically for non-medical folks. There are hand compressions involved but no mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The automatic part is truly that – the machine will clearly (and loudly) walk you through each piece. Since most people don’t faint or go down on nice level tables, there will be the need to get on the floor. Still, besides using the machine there are other tasks. Someone needs to go get the AED, another person needs to call 911, another person may be needed to comfort or assure a companion and someone should be ready to go to the church entrances to guide the paramedics to the scene. So there is something for everyone.

The trainings are scheduled for the third Sunday each month; October 19 and November 16 starting after worship, about 12:30 pm. Each session will be led by a Registered Nurse. We are fortunate to have three very capable volunteers: Cindy Burt, Heather Losee and Andrea Segura-Smith. The sessions will be small – no more than ten participants because everyone needs the chance to practice the hand compressions as well as hear and understand the directions.

The most sobering statistic about this device is this: With traditional manual CPR, the success rate is 15%. With the AED, it jumps to 80%. This is not just for Old First – you may need to step up in so many places. How wonderful to know you have had training.

Please reserve a space by emailing the leader:

October 19 with Andrea Segura-Smith: andrea.segurasmith@gmail.com

November 16 with Heather Losee: heatherlosee@hotmail.com

Additional training sessions will be scheduled according to interest.

OLD FIRST SERVES OUR NEIGHBORS: MONTHLY COMMUNITY DINNERS

Twenty years ago, after a period of study and discussion and a neighborhood meeting, Old First heard the call to serve the dozens of men and women who were living literally on our doorstep – on the sidewalks of Sacramento or Van Ness, next to the church. With the guidance of some of those very men and women – a few of whom went on to become Old First members, we founded what became our Homeless Ministry, later formally organized as the *Welcome Ministry*, and started Community Dinners, to offer from 150 to 200 of our homeless neighbors not only a good, home-cooked meal, but a safe place and time, where they could be greeted and welcomed as fellow children of God.

After a few years, we established a separate non-profit organization to run this ministry – just as we had a few years before for Larkin Street Youth Services. After several earlier directors, the Reverend Megan Rohrer led the Welcome Ministry for more than a decade based at Old First.



And as she celebrated her tenth anniversary in 2012, we all celebrated an amazing accomplishment: She and the Welcome Ministry had managed to get many of our regularly homeless neighbors “inside.”

When the Welcome Ministry decided late in 2013 that providing Community Dinners was no longer a core part of its mission, the Old First Session met and decided this was not a ministry we could let go. We continue offering this hospitality once a month to neighbors who – even if they are not literally living on the streets – are at best marginally housed, that is, in shelters or single room occupancy hotels (SRO’s). Our numbers now vary between 110 and 125. Along with the home-cooked, personally served food, most of our guests also value the chance to eat in comfort and safety, sharing conversation and community in an unhurried, respectful atmosphere.

This year we’re serving our Community Dinners on the **fourth Saturday of every month**. We expect that next month the Session will approve our proposal to continue the program at minimum through 2015.

Our neighbor churches, Trinity+St Peter Episcopal and St Paulus Lutheran, are working with us to take turns hosting; and several local Presbyterian congregations (so far including Calvary, St Andrews–Pacifica, and Chinatown) are also adding this to their mission programs. Many Old First members and friends have also cooked/hosted.

Besides the cooks, we use a couple of dozen volunteer servers each time to set tables, to carry food to our guests, to replenish plates, and, if there is enough food, as there often is, to sit down, eat and talk with the guests. We have a list of more than sixty regular volunteers. Two-thirds from Old First. Many volunteers find the experience so rewarding that they keep coming back. And, by the way, it’s a great evangelism opportunity – invite a friend and both of you come! Volunteers show up at 4:30 and are routinely finished by 7:30 – leaving most of your Saturday night free!

Former seminary intern David Altshuler serves as Program Coordination (being sure we have hosts lined up, and overseeing the dinner itself); we also ensure that a couple of our regular guests help with clean-up, so volunteers don’t end up carrying heavy bags late at night. Otherwise it’s all done by volunteers (that is, members and friends who see this as a vital part of our mission outreach). You can volunteer at saturdaymeals@oldfirst.org or by letting David know at david@oldfirst.org.

The Community Dinners are being overseen this year by a Session-created “Project Team” comprising Pam Byers, Gabriele Beck-Engeser, Michael Berg, Betsy Chiao, and Bill Feister. If you have questions or suggestions – or if you’d like to participate in any way – please speak with one of us.

“Lord, when did we see you hungry and gave you food?... And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’” (Matthew 25: 37-40).

Pam Byers, Chair
Community Dinners Project Team

LAKESIDE PRESBYTERIAN SEEKS BOOKKEEPER

Lakeside Presbyterian Church and Children’s Center is seeking a bookkeeper to work with their church staff, Children’s Center staff, church treasurer and chairs of the various committees of the church session. The bookkeeper’s primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Payroll, payroll records, human resources records;
- Oversight of bookkeeping, receipts and accounts payable, administration of bank accounts, petty cash fund and financial file;
- Monthly billings for student accounts;
- Prepare and distribute regular financial reports.

For further information contact Lakeside Presbyterian Church and Children’s Center, 201 Eucalyptus Dr., San Francisco, telephone: 415-564-5044

SENIORS EXPRESS THANKS FOR DORIS KRAUSS SENIOR CENTER

On September 21, Old First Presbyterian Church received a letter signed by many of the seniors who attend the Doris Krauss Senior Center on Mondays. Here is an excerpt:

Our new director, Gina, has been doing an excellent job at the center since she was hired.

One major task has been cooking and planning meals for us... [with] help from Sarah, and, recently, Robert... This has been a monumental job. She has also helped people find senior housing [and] those who have transportation problems.

Since she came to the center, she has brought her daughter Tracy, who comes every two weeks to teach us jewelry making, Leota Parker, who teaches watercolor painting, Rowena [Richie], our exercise teacher, our own singing group, and Sarah [Taber], who gives her wonderful back rubs. These activities have been very popular and make our day brighter. We are also very fortunate to have nurse Susan [Spencer] check on our health.

Under Gina's direction, [we're] sure the center will continue to thrive.

sincerely, We love you ALL
FOR TAKING CARE OF US,

May Fong	Rosemary Lee
Amy Lee	Dorine Chan
Carol Wong	Corinne Tang
Blair Fu	Kwai Cuiyang
Grace Wong	Filling
Margaret Chan	Berice Fung
Nancy Yee	Rose & Magalir
Dan, Mai	Lily Lane
Jack Cuiyang	LILY YEE SMITH
Maria Lopez	Dan Fu
Florence Louie	Rowena Richie
Karyn Peepre (volunteer)	Shirley Franconi
Sarah Zuber	VINCENT
	Lily Clements
	Lyna Je.
	Paul Warner
	Alice Wagner

out standing work

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY: REMEMBERING THE SAINTS OF OLD FIRST

On **All Saints' Sunday, November 2**, we will remember church members, friends and loved ones who have died since All Saints' Sunday last year. To include someone's name in the remembrance, you can fill out the insert in the Sunday bulletins and place it in the offering plate, or you may inform the church office by E-mail (brad@oldfirst.org), by phone (415-776-5552), or by mail (1751 Sacramento St/SF CA 94109) using the form below. Let the church office know the person's name, birth and death dates, and relationship to you - no later than **Thursday, October 23**.

Name to Remember: _____ Relationship to Me: _____
 Birth and Death Dates: _____ (examples: my father, my friend)
 My Name: _____

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY: THE SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER, 2014

Date	Day	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel Reading
October 5	Ordinary 17	Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20	19	Philippians 3:4b-14	Matthew 21:33-46
October 12	Ordinary 18	Exodus 32:1-14	106:1-6, 19-23	Philippians 4:1-9	Matthew 22:1-14
October 19	Ordinary 19	Exodus 33:12-23	99	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Matthew 22:15-22
October 26	Ordinary 20	Deuteronomy 34:1-12	90:1-6, 13-17	1 Thessalonians. 2:1-8	Matthew 22:34-46

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Sunday	October 5	“Understanding Islam” with Ifekhar A. Hai, 9:00am, Munro Room
Sunday	October 5	World Communion Sunday; potluck after worship, Fellowship Hall
Saturday	October 11	All Faiths' Day, Interfaith Food Pantry
Sunday	October 12	Deacons' Meeting, 12:30pm, Munro Roomy
Saturday	October 18	Presbyterian Women, noon, Library
Sunday	October 19	Ballot Workshop with Betty Voris, 12:30pm, Munro Room
Sunday	October 19	Defibrillator training, 12:30pm, Nursery
Saturday	October 25	Old First staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry
Tuesday	October 28	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm, Munro Room
Sunday	November 2	All Saints' Sunday

THE OFFICERS OF OLD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**Session**

George Becker, personnel; Michael Berg, mission and giving; Pam Byers, community-building; Bill Campbell, mission and giving; Hsiaochien Chuang, worship; Barry Clagett, finance; Gregory Free, treasurer; Harriet MacLean, planning; Jeanne Kirkwood, clerk of session; Jean Olson, mission and giving; Linda Reyder, worship; Randy Smith, planning; Sally Spencer; Steve Taber, operations; Betty Voris, community-building; Priscilla Yu, Christian education

Board of Deacons

Cindy Burt, Sam Cheng, Craig Kehne, Diane Lewis, Diane Molberg, Bryan Nichols, Leota Parker, Glen Potter, AnnieScott Rogers, and Jian Wang