

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

January 2017

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MAGGI'S MUSINGS



*God of new beginnings,
help me make a difference in
myself,
so that with your help
I may make a difference in the
world.*

*A real difference:
in the world and in me,
at your pace,
in your peace,
God of new beginnings.*

—Brian Woodcock

In this Season of new beginnings, Old First Presbyterian Church, or **Bold First**, as some of us like to refer to the church, is truly blessed by its active members. We are the body of Christ and each of our members has a part to play as we follow the ways of Jesus. That means that you have role here. As the New Year arrives, it time again for us to nominate elders and deacons. The role of deacons and elders role is the supporting skeleton and pulse of the body.

Deacons and elders are chosen by the people. The *Book of Order* says 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.*” It furthers says that the office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is a ministry 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.*”

Would you please pray and think about who might be called to be a deacon and or an elder? The committee needs your nominations. Please speak to the person you’re considering... and ask if they are willing to be nominated. Or you might speak to a member of the church and ask them to reflect on the one you think might be called to serve. You can also contact the committee by sending an E-mail to nomcom@oldfirst.org or by speaking to Nominating Committee co-chairs John Sebastian or John Kramar.

Peace,
Maggi

LGBT DINNER GROUP, JANUARY 15

Old First is a unique and interesting place and one member thought it was about time to start dinner party group to know each other a bit deeper-from a secret passion of ironing, to our pastimes and passions. The first meeting was in April. Susan Ashton has offered her home for the next meeting: 401 Belvedere Street. The meal will be from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. It will be an old-fashioned potluck with a San Francisco twist! Please RSVP to Susan Ashton (ashtonsf@gmail.com).

MLK JR DAY MARCH, JANUARY 16



San Francisco Interfaith Council
Celebrating our diverse faiths & spiritual traditions • Bringing people together to build understanding • Serving our community

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The San Francisco Interfaith Council invites faith leaders and their congregation members to join in the 2016 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration, and Old First is going to march! We will meet at the **CalTrain Station at 4th and King Streets** in San Francisco at **10:30 am on**



Monday, January 16. Look for other Old Firsters and our sign. If you are planning to join us for the march, please contact Pastor Henderson.

After the march, the celebration will continue at San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens. Once the March/Parade has arrived at Yerba Buena Gardens, the Annual Interfaith Commemoration Ceremony will commence. A host of other activities and programs that will take place to mark the occasion may be found on the San Francisco Interfaith Council's partner organization's website: norcalmlkfoundation.org.

Inquirers/New Members Class, January 22 and 29

The pastor will lead a class for inquirers and new members on Sunday, January 22 from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm in the Munro Room, and on Sunday, January 29 at 9:30 am in the Library. On Sunday, January 22 lunch will be included. Please let pastor Maggi (maggi@oldfirst.org) or Chris Burt know if you are interested or if we need to find alternative dates.

Saturday Community Dinner, January 28

The next Saturday Community Dinner will take place on Saturday, January 28. Volunteer helpers are welcome at 4:30 pm. We serve the meal at 5:30 pm. Folks are also needed to help with clean up after the meal.

All-Church Read: Waking Up White... by Debby Irving

Please join Pastor Maggi Henderson reading this attention-getting new work of non-fiction. Copies of the book will be available on Sundays in the Children's Library for \$20. Start reading now, as we will gather for discussions of the book in February.

Why It Matters that We as Christians Learn

about Islam and our Muslim Sisters and Brothers?

Part 2

–Lori Yamauchi

Last month, I asked you to think about this question and how to answer it for yourself.

In October, a group of Old Firsters heard Sumbul Ali-Karamali speak about Islam and Muslims.

As an American-born Muslim from southern California, Ali-Karamali spoke about the "real Islam".

In November's Shared Life, I listed some key takeaways from her talk.

Here are additional takeaways for your thoughtful consideration. You may be surprised by some of this, given how Muslims are depicted in Western culture.

- In the world, about 1.6 billion people consider themselves to be Muslims, which represents about 20-25% of the world population, compared to about 2 billion Christians.
- The major groups within the Islam faith are the Sunnis and the Shias. About 85-90% of Muslims are Sunni and 10-15% of them are Shia. When Muhammad died in AD 632, one group, the Sunni, advocated for consensus leadership, while another group, the Shia, advocated for Muhammad's family to be successors. There are no theological differences between Sunni and Shia; they differ in their views about who should be in authority.
- Almost every Muslim-dominated country has favorable views of the United States.
- Historically, people have converted to Islam, not because they were compelled to do so, but because of intermarriage or out of a desire for a higher position in society. Within 150 years, Islamic rule spread from Saudi Arabia to Spain. In other cases, it took hundreds of years for a country to become Muslim.
- Caliph means successor. A caliphate is a state with a caliph as leader, or a leader which came out of a dynasty. ISIS asserts that it is a Caliphate.
- Some Islamic groups think that their government should be Muslim. One in 15,000, or only a small proportion, is Islamist, who believe that their governments should be Muslim. By contrast, in the Middle East, civil law is based on the French legal system.
- Muslims consider Christians to people of an earlier revelation. For example, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is revered, but Jesus is considered a prophet, not divine. The Qur'an is the only authentic word of God, while the Bible is not considered the word of God.
- The Muslim American community is fairly new. The Muslim American community is the most ethnically diverse, with 1/3 being African, 1/3 Asian, and 1/3 other. Before 1965, it was very difficult to enter the US from Asia. Only recently, Muslim Americans are getting involved in politics; in the past, immigrant Muslims wanted to blend in. Muslim American women and men have the most income parity, relative to other religious American groups.
- The burkah, or head covering, worn by some Islamic women, is not Islamic; it predates Islam. It comes from a time when both men and women covered their faces in order to keep the sand out. Now, less than 9% of Muslim women wear the burkah.

Old First Helps Bring Christmas to Homeless Young People

A huge thank you to all Old First members, friends and staff who generously contributed Christmas gifts to help Larkin Street Youth Services brighten the holidays for over 450 young people who stay in Larkin Street's emergency shelters and transitional living facilities or participate in Larkin Street's engagement centers and programs.

Gifts included an array of clothing, pocket calendars, journals, day planners, kitchen items, makeup kits, cosmetics, toothbrushes, toiletries of all kinds, razors, cash and ever-popular gift cards. Thank you to everyone who supported the gift drive!

Begin at Old First, Larkin Street offers innovative and comprehensive services that give homeless and at-risk young people ages 12-24 all the tools they need to reclaim their lives and become self-sufficient adults. Three out of four youth who complete Larkin Street's comprehensive program exit the street.

Christmas Eve Generosity

Thank you for your generosity on Christmas Eve. We received over \$1,000 toward the offering benefitting the Sojourn Chaplaincy at Zuckerberg SF General Hospital and Syrian refugee relief through the PC(USA)'s partner church, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.



Worship Committee Report for Epiphany

As we enter the New Year we remember the Christmas miracle is not over for us. We have Epiphany in January, the visit of the Magi. This year in worship we are keeping our star up to help us focus on our "star words". These are the words we were given last year to ponder on in our hearts; courage, inspiration and many more. One word we hope to carry into the New Year is "Hope", the gift of the first week in Advent, according to our Advent devotional. As we put away the Christmas ornaments let's remember and live into our star words.

–The Worship Committee: Linda Reyder, Hsiaochien Chuang,
Chris Burt, Cindy Burt, AnnieScott Rogers, Lori Yamauchi

November Session Meeting Highlights

The session of Old First Presbyterian Church met on November 22 and carried out the following:

- Session approved a drive coordinated by Temple Emanu-El supporting a teddy bear drive for refugees by a crowdfunding campaign giving our members the opportunity to participate after the first of the year.
- The Doris Krauss Senior Center made almost \$3000 at the October "FunRaiser" event and it was announced that the next event of this kind would be scheduled for February 2018. Session approved the Senior Center conducting raffles and sales at church potlucks starting December 4 and continuing through 2017.
- There was a Presbytery remembrance for Forrest Cummings at the last meeting.
- Work is still being done on the electronic giving front.
- The lease with Old First Parking Corporation has been completed and next steps would be finalizing our agreement with the parking vendor.
- The Nominating Committee is forming and would start work in January.

–Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

Musical Notes from Larry Marietta

“**The Shepherds Farewell**”, to be sung by the Choir in observance of Epiphany, is sometimes titled “Thou Must Leave Thy Lowly Dwelling.” It is a strophic (i.e. verses in a hymn) and tender chorus from the dramatic three-part epic choral masterpiece, *L’enfance du Christ*, Op. 25, written between 1850-1854 by the often-controversial French composer Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), who steadfastly refused to call *L’enfance* an “oratorio”.

The first part of this composition deals with Herod’s tormented soul that is at the mercy of his soothsayers. The scene then switches to Mary, Joseph and Jesus, who are warned by the three Kings to flee for their lives. Part two deals with Christ’s flight into Egypt, where he finds rest for his weary soul. The third and final part shows the welcome of the holy family by the Ishmaelites.

Berlioz, a prolific and profound writer who did not hesitate to show his disdain of a contemporary colleague’s work, was widely misunderstood during his era. Contrary to the musical tenets of the early to mid 19th C., he whole-heartedly believed that the personality of a composer must be woven tightly into his music, which then becomes an integral part of a composer’s spirituality and emotions (as demonstrated in *L’enfance*.) While his own compositions included five intensely dramatic operas, many large and small choral pieces and numerous arias for voice and orchestra, it is his five symphonies and Requiem for which he is most remembered today.



–Larry Marietta, Music Director

Teddy Bear Drive for Syrian Refugee Children

We have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of traumatized Syrian refugee children who have lost everything. Refugee camps in Jordan hold thousands of Syrian children who have fled their homes, weathered dangerous travel conditions and endured unimaginable turmoil and suffering. Still, research has shown that cuddly, stuffed animals reduce anxiety and provide solace to children coping with loss.

Old First, Congregation Emanu-El and other Interfaith Welcome congregations have joined together to raise funds to buy teddy bears for refugee children who desperately need love. Our gift of love carries the message that someone cares.

The congregations’ goal is to deliver 5,000 teddy bears to Syrian refugee children in Jordan through Caring for Children (www.caringforchildren.org). Caring for Children is an international nonprofit organization located in San Francisco that has organized teddy bear lifts to over 200,000 children in war-torn areas around the world. Common Bond Institute (www.cbiworld.org) will provide the logistics on the ground in Jordan to distribute the teddy bears in conjunction with other therapeutic interventions.

Each \$4 gift gives a child a sense of support and comfort. For \$40, you can help ten traumatized children, and for \$80 you can help twenty. Please join with us to reach as many children as possible. With your help and the help of your friends and family, we can reach our goal to deliver 5,000 teddy bears to Syrian refugee children living in Jordan.

100% of all donations will go to the delivery of teddy bears to children and is tax deductible.

If you are unable to donate online, you may send a check to:

Caring for Children, 375 Euclid Street, Suite 317, San Francisco, CA 94118

Please mark your check “Teddy Bears.”

Sanctuary Movement Gains Post-Election Momentum

Presbyterian News Service December 15, 2016 by Gregg Brekke | Presbyterian News Service

Rosa Robles Loreto, pictured here with her family spent 461 days living in sanctuary at Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona.

LOUISVILLE – As immigration rights activists prepare for what is next in a post-election atmosphere of anti-immigrant sentiment, those that previously offered sanctuary to deportees aren't waiting for the new administration to be installed. Pre-election promises of mass deportations by President-Elect Donald Trump and a wave of race-based crimes since the election have activated faith groups and communities promising to provide sanctuary to immigrants.

A first step in this effort was made today during a webinar hosted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Synod of the Northeast, the National Sanctuary Movement and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship titled: How to Become a Sanctuary Community.

Moderated by Emily Brewer of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and AmyBeth Willis, organizer of the National Sanctuary Movement in Tucson, Arizona, the 80 minute conversation spanned topics including the history and Presbyterian leadership in the movement, legal issues for churches, and ways churches and other groups can provide support to the sanctuary movement.

"We wanted to take some of the energy—some of the fear—from after the election and turn it into something positive," said Brewer. "To move into action before the fear paralyzes people—to use that energy for something positive in the world."

Webinar moderators were joined by the Rev. John Fife, moderator of the 204th General Assembly (1992) of the PC(USA) and pastor emeritus of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona; the Rev. Alison J. Harrington, current pastor of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson; and the Rev. Jim Rigby, pastor of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas.

Fife's name is legendary within the sanctuary movement. In the 1980s he was at the forefront of efforts to protect deportees from being returned to El Salvador and Guatemala where they would have faced certain death as political enemies. In 1986, Fife was convicted of violating federal immigration law and served five years of probation.

Harrison continues Fife's legacy at Southside, leading the congregation as it reignited the sanctuary movement, providing sanctuary to Daniel Ruiz in early 2014 and to Rosa Robles Loreto for 461 days in 2014-15. Rigby's congregation provided sanctuary for eight months earlier this year to Hilda Ramirez and her son prior to Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials granting her a one-year reprieve in October.

Citing biblical precedent for the practice of sanctuary (Deuteronomy 10:19, Mark 12:31, Matthew 25:35, and others), Fife said, "The basic ways in which cultures and societies protected victims who were fleeing for their lives was to designate sacred sites as a place for sanctuary. With the rise of



nation-states that responsibility got transferred to the nation-state in the function of asylum... The need for [religious based] sanctuary arises because nation-states have failed in their responsibility to provide asylum."

The current call for churches to prepare to offer sanctuary, said Fife, is based on mass migration worldwide and a belief that "Churches and faith communities through Europe, and globally, now understand that in their

context the nation-state has failed, or we anticipate that the nation-state is going to fail.”

Willis provided a basic outline of what the process of offering sanctuary looks like for congregations. First, a congregation declares itself a sanctuary site and builds relationships with immigrant communities to know it is a safe space. Upon a final deportation order, individuals enter sanctuary and are given hospitality and protection by the congregation and community. Finally, the congregation and affiliated organizations work to provide a legal remedy to the deportation order.

“We have a stake in this too,” she said of churches’ efforts that resulted in 16 cases won since May 2014. “We need to figure out what kind of society we want to live in. Do we want to live in a society where people are constantly being separated from their families, and their communities, or honoring these people who are created in the image of God?”

“We still need congregations to be discerning if they will open walls of their church to those under threat of deportation or prosecution,” said Harrington of the current political climate. “We also have to expand those notions of sanctuary... We need to work alongside those who are most affected by the immoral policies and practices that are going to be emerging.”

Saying “infrastructures of protection” go beyond churches being willing to open their doors, Harrington urged faith communities to cooperate with and learn from organizations, already working with immigrant population, that provide know-your-rights training, legal support, parental rights information and other efforts to protect immigrant populations.

Rigby agreed, saying during the question and answer segment of the webinar, “Making connections to immigrant communities and local groups allied with the focus of the sanctuary movement,” is an important part of being a sanctuary-providing congregation.

Fife encouraged congregations to engage in discernment, considering personal legal implications of congregants such as security clearances and government employment status, should sanctuary be offered. He also expressed thanks for the support of the PC(USA) over the past 35 years, saying, “I was the envy of all my colleagues from different denominations during the 1980s because I was a Presbyterian. The Presbyterian Church has a whole history of policies [and] support for congregations that do sanctuary.”

“It’s important to point out that we as people of faith have a unique call to be leaders in this movement,” said Willis. “In some ways, I’m glad that this election has awakened so many people to the crisis that we’re seeing with immigration that’s been going on, and will continue and may get worse.

“The Gate of the Year” by Minnie Louise Haskins

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown!”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

So, I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me toward the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

So, heart, be still!

What need our little life,

Our human life, to know,

*If God hath comprehension?
In all the dizzy strife
Of things both high and low
God hideth His intention.* –Minnie Louise Haskins, 1875–1957

The first five lines are inscribed at the tomb of George VI, father of Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom, St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, England.

“Thank You!” from Pastor Henderson

Thanks are due David Griffith and Betsy Chiao, who give so many volunteer hours to make *Shared Life* happen! –Maggi

Old First Family and Friends

Prayers for Mourning and Comfort

We mourn the death of Steve Bacik who died December 14, 2016, and remember in prayer his husband Glen Potter, and his family. Old First will hold a memorial service for Steve on Saturday, January 14, at 2:00 pm.

Prayers for Comfort

We remember in prayer Riley Kramar at the death of his beloved grandmother, Julia Tassill.

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Pray for Lois Nason and for Mary Lou Wilson.

Dates to Remember

January 2	Monday	Church Office Closed No Doris Krauss Senior Center
January 8	Sunday	Worship: Brook Scott Preaching, 11:00 am Deacon's Meeting 12:30 pm Deadline for February Issue of Shared Life
January 14	Saturday	Memorial Service for Steve Bacik, 2:00 pm
January 15	Sunday	LGBT Dinner Group
January 16	Monday	MLK Jr Day: March, 4 th and King Streets, 10:30 am Church Office Closed No Doris Krauss Senior Center
January 24	Tuesday	Session Meeting, 7:00 pm
January 28	Saturday	Community Dinner, Fellowship Hall, 5:30 pm

Church Officers

Session

Bill Campbell, Hsiaochien Chuang, Robin Currier, Kristi Hoerauf, John Kramar, Dana Nojima, Linda Reyder, Betty Voris, Lori Yamauch, Tom Culp, clerk of session

Board of Deacons

Bryan Nichols, moderator, Nina Berg, Cindy Burt, Riley Kramar, Alfred Martin, Emily Olson, Mary Russell, Randy Smith, Sarah Taber, Jian Wang