

Shared Life

The Monthly Newsletter of Old First Presbyterian Church

September 2017

Church Website: www.oldfirst.org

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Maggi's musings

The weekend of August 26, I felt led to write something in response to the fear, racism and hate that seemed to spill into San Francisco. I wanted to put something on our doors that said we are about peace, hope, justice and love. I wanted to write about the kind of peace that is hard work, that listens to pain, that admits our own complicity in hurt and hate, but that doesn't give up.

The statement is below. It is nothing new, but it was a challenge to say what I believed, what I hoped, how I wanted to lead as your pastor, in just a few words. My answer to that challenge is what follows in the box below.

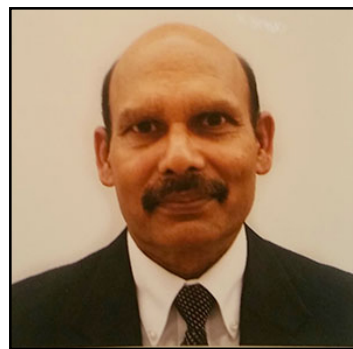
I am thankful that, as a person of faith, and as a Presbyterian, in particular, I have many reminders and challenges that keep me involved as a peacemaker. One of them is the yearly Peace and Global Witness Offering on World Communion Sunday, October 1. On that day we will have the amazing privilege to have an International peacemaker the Reverend Samuel Akhtar from Pakistan among us. (See photo right.)

Mr. Akhtar is the son of a Presbyterian minister who was the first Pakistani "home missionary" installed by the United Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. He grew up as the only Christian student attending a public school. Today he serves as the organizing pastor of an ethnic congregation in the Presbytery of Chicago

Mr. Akhtar will preach and meet with us after worship. And for the coming month, I will be adding peace prayers to the Old First Face Book page to lead us in praying and working for peace.

Peace,

Pastor Maggi



**We at Old First Presbyterian Church believe
that all are made in the image of God.**

We seek to follow the ways of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

So we pray for peace and work for justice.

May our words and our actions follow the model of St. Francis who said,

"Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words."

Or in other words, *be peace, be love, be justice, be hope.*

Old First Presbyterian Church: All-Church Retreat, October 20-22, 2017

Summer may be over, but the happy news is that the October All-Church Retreat is coming! No doubt you have marked your calendar for the dates: The retreat starts Friday evening, October 20 and continues through lunch on Sunday, October 22. Once again, we will team with Calvary Presbyterian Church in San Francisco and First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame for an exciting and meaningful time away from the urban Bay Area to a restful forested venue.

Why Attend the Retreat?

- A chance to become better acquainted with other members of Old First
- A chance to meet with other Presbyterians from Calvary and First Pres' Burlingame
- In-depth sessions about Christian responses to every day issues
- Small group sessions to have an opportunity to discuss the large group sessions topics with members of our own congregations
- Lots of music both group singing and presentations
- Fun and games! Yes – there is free time to explore the beautiful woods and for an additional cost, activities such as a climbing wall, zip lines, bike tours (see brochure for details). And, the traditional Old First Saturday Evening full of charades, jigsaw puzzles, card games – singular and group activities.
- Worship services including an early Saturday morning Meditation led by Old First Members based on a Taizé service.

The Nitty-Gritty

The accommodations at Mt Hermon are quite pleasant. There are three levels available:

- Deluxe Double Occupancy, \$320.00 per person
- Standard Double Occupancy: \$276.00 per person
- Single Occupancy: \$570.00

These prices include two nights of lodging and six meals: Friday evening, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, and Sunday breakfast and lunch.

Limited scholarships will be available for standard double occupancy rooms. Please consider making a donation toward the scholarship fund, if you can.

Ride sharing is encouraged.

There will be infant care and programs for teens.

Reserve your spaces with Jeanne Kirkwood. Registration forms are available in the narthex and the church office.

Payment is encouraged at the time of reservations, but must be made by the end of September. Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame.

New in Worship: Prayer Table at Coffee Hour

The Presbyterian Planning Calendar includes a Day of Prayer for the Creation in September. It's an ecumenical day also recognized and promoted by Pope Francis. So we are inviting you to share your prayers for peace throughout God's creation during the month of September.

The Worship Committee will have a prayer table at coffee hour each Sunday of September. There you'll find post-it notes and pens to write out your prayers for peace at home, in our nation, and around the world – whether one prayer or several. Afterwards Worship Committee members will gather the prayers and provide them to the leader of the Prayers of the People for the following

Sunday, so your prayers will be included in the those of the whole congregation. Additionally, one of our artists is thinking of a way to display the notes upstairs, where they may be read by church and concert goers as well. Everyone is invited to participate in this sharing in our worship life!

Presbytery of San Francisco:

Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training, September 9

We live in a time in which events in places like Ferguson, Charleston, Charlottesville and Berkeley are calling us again to recognize and attend to the power that racism still holds over our communities. Many Presbyterians are asking: What can be done? What should be done?

The Mission and Vision Leadership team of the Presbytery of San Francisco, together with the Presbytery Meetings Working Group, invites you and your worshipping community to take that first step toward dismantling racism: On Saturday, September 9, at our regular presbytery meeting (First Presbyterian Church of Newark), we will spend several hours together under the guidance of *Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training*. Organizer Jessica Vásquez-Torres will lead us in a series of exercises to help us begin to examine our own hearts as we consider how to integrate anti-racism work in our congregations and in our communities.

You are welcome to bring a larger contingent from your congregation. There will be ninety-plus minutes of business starting at 9:30 am, and then the workshops will begin shortly after 11:00 am. We will close with worship at 3:00 pm. Lunch will be available for \$10.00.

For more information please visit the Facing Racism page of our denomination's website:

<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/facing-racism-vision-community/>

You can also visit the website of our training partners, Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training:

<http://crossroadsantiracism.org/>

Advent Planning Workshop, New Date: September 16

Everyone is invited to gather in the sanctuary on Saturday, September 16, to help plan worship for Advent and the Christmas season. We will meet from 10:00 am to noon.

Linda Reyder. Worship Committee Co-Chair

Autumn Spiritual Recharge, Calvary Presbyterian Church, September 16

Overwhelmed? Out of sorts? Can't face the fall busy-ness? Calvary Presbyterian's deacons invite you to get your autumn spiritual recharge, September 16, 9:30 am to noon. At this "spiritual but not quite so religious" morning of roaming Calvary and contemplating "The Infinite Yes" at five prayer stations. Free childcare available. Sign up at: calvarypresbyterian.org/event/community-spiritual-retreat-5/



July/August Session Report

The session has been quietly busy this summer. We did not meet in June, but had a breakout meeting at the Leadership Retreat in July, met in special session on August 6, and will hold our regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 29.

At the retreat we had a chance to start a review of our committee structure with the possibility that our documentation will be updated to better reflect current activities. This review will continue into the fall.

On August 6 we met before worship to get to know and to approve the new membership in our congregation of Levi Knippel, who joins us via transfer from Manitowoc Presbyterian Church in Wisconsin.
Tom Culp, Clerk of Session

Follow-Up on “Death and Dying Discussion,” a Panel Discussion Held at Old First

Death and dying were the subjects of a panel discussion at Old First Presbyterian Church on Sunday, July 30. The panel included Dr. George Fitzgerald (retired chaplain and Presbyterian pastor), Dr. George Becker (Old First member, psychiatrist and orthopedic surgeon), and Dr. Bill Feister (Old First member and clinical psychologist). The spiritual, psychological and medical aspects of death, dying and were addressed.

The following poem was shared by Dr. Becker during the discussion.

The Junk Man by Carl Sandburg

*I am glad God saw Death
And gave Death a job taking care of all who are tired
of living:
When all the wheels in a clock are worn and slow and
the connections loose
And the clock goes on ticking and telling the wrong time
From hour to hour
And people around the house joke about what a bum
clock it is,
How glad the clock is when the big Junk Man drives
his wagon
Up to the house and puts his arms around the clock and
says:
“You don’t belong here,
You gotta come
Along with me,”
How glad the clock is then, when it feels the arms of the
Junk Man close around it and carry it away.*

Lori Yamauchi wrote the following reflection after participating in the discussion.

Reflections on Death and Dying by Lori Yamauchi

You may be thinking, “How morbid to be talking about death and dying!” But, having lost my mother last year and after the loss of so many beloved Old First members and friends, I wanted to provide a forum at Old First where we could explore this topic as a faith community, as all of us have been touched in some way by death. So, a discussion was held on Death and Dying, on July 16 and 30, in which we talked about the spiritual, medical and psychological aspects of death, dying and grief.

George Fitzgerald, retired Director of Spiritual Care at Stanford Medical Center and Presbyterian pastor; George Becker, psychiatrist and orthopedic surgeon and member of Old First; and Bill Feister, clinical psychologist and member of Old First shared their insights and experiences. The

goals of the discussion were to reflect on how we think of our own death, how to be with someone who is in the process of dying, and how to deal with grief after the death of another.

Our feelings about death depend, in part, on where we are in our lives. Through adolescence, we are still developing into our own identity, and then in adulthood, we share ourselves with others, establish careers and families, and contemplate our own accomplishments through a sense of integrity. In our older years, ideally, we acquire wisdom, which enables us to look back on life with a sense of closure and completeness, and to accept death without fear.

Death is a natural part of life, although we may not be able to choose when and how we die. We discussed the practical ways to prepare for our death, such as completing an advance health care directive, in which we direct our health care provider and loved ones about how far we want them to go to keep us alive if we are facing the end of life and what we want after death. We talked about how physicians may help patients fight their illness in order to maintain their lives as long as possible, or let nature take its course, or find safe passage to the end of life (by deciding when to die and how to die), or advance their death through physician assistance, or die by euthanasia. Not all physicians are prepared to help their patients in these ways, which is important for you and your loved ones to know.

Old First also has a funeral planning form, which contains information about our background and personal accomplishments, our memorial service and funeral arrangements. Pastor Maggi strongly encourages all of us to complete the form and submit it to the church for future use.

When facing the end of our lives, we may experience a range of emotions toward God: fear, anger, helplessness, regret, resignation, acceptance.¹ We may also deal with feelings toward family and loved ones, in which we may experience gratitude, forgiveness, and peace.

When we are with someone who is in the process of dying, especially if they are dying from a terminal illness, it may be useful to think about the stages that they may go through as a framework for understanding their experience: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance. “People with serious illness have priorities besides simply prolonging their lives, (such as) avoiding suffering, strengthening relationships with family and friends, being mentally aware, not being a burden on others, and achieving a sense that their life is complete.”² We can work with health care providers to help the dying person by being with them, listening actively, and asking questions such as: 1) their understanding of their condition and prognosis, 2) their concerns about what lies ahead, 3) the kinds of trade-offs they are willing to make, 4) how they want to spend their time if their health worsens, 5) who they want to make decisions if they can’t make the decisions themselves.³ We can also help them articulate what they did which gave them satisfaction, and express our own thankfulness to them, and pray with them for strength and faith. It is important to recognize and/or respect different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions which may involve certain rituals and actions that enable the dying person to find solace, comfort and closure.

Finally, we talked about grief after losing someone to death. The same stages that a dying person goes through may also apply to those who grieve over the death of another. The grieving process can take a long time, especially when there is no warning of another’s death. Psychotherapy and professional counseling can help someone deal with their grief, including facing crises of faith and finding hope.

Footnotes

¹Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. *On Death & Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy & Their Own Families*. (Scribner, 1969.)

²Atul Gawande. *Being Mortal*. (Henry Holt and Company, 2014.)

³Ibid.

Live Generously: Stewardship Season 2017 at Old First

God loves cheerful givers and blesses them unceasingly so by their generous giving they will be rewarded abundantly. "One can say we are the only bank account that God has. God needs our feet, our hands, our trust and our money." (See *Giving: God's Economic Delivery System*, p. 7.) The "official" stewardship season won't begin at Old First Presbyterian Church until November, but it is never too early to prepare your heart and mind (and pocket book) to be generous.

Loving Our Neighbor: Opportunities to Help Immigrants at Risk of Deportation

If you would like to learn about opportunities to help "dreamers" and other undocumented immigrants who may be at risk of deportation, please contact Mission Committee chair Bill Campbell williamfcampbell@comcast.net. Ways of helping range from contacting legislators about pending bills to accompanying immigrants to immigration hearings.

Know More to Care Better: San Francisco Homeless Resources

Low Cost Laundry

- Bayview Hunters Point Multi-Service Center, 2111 Jennings Street at Van Dyke, 415 -671-1100: Open every day 5:00 pm to 9 pm.
- Mission Neighborhood Resource Center, 165 Capp Street near 17th Street, 415- 869-7977: Open Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 11:30 a.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday from 2:00 pm to 6:30 pm.

Free Showers

- Lava Mae Mobile Showers
 - Monday 8:30 am to 1:30 pm: St. Anthony's, 99 Golden Gate near Jones Street.
 - Tuesday 8:30 am to 1:30 pm: SFPL Main Library, Fulton Street near Hyde Street.
 - Tuesday 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm: First Friendship, Oak Street at Steiner Street: Families Only.
 - Wednesday 3:00 pm to 6 pm: Most Holy Redeemer Church, 100 Diamond at 18th Street.
 - Thursday 8:30 am to 1:30 pm: API Wellness, 730 Polk Street.
 - Friday 8:00 am to 1:30 pm: Glide, 357 Ellis St. between Taylor and Jones and near Martin De Porres, 2200 Alameda Street at Utah.
 - Saturday 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. MNRC, 165 Capp St. at 16th St.
- Bayview Hunters Point Multi-Service Center: Every day 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm.
- Martin De Porres, 225 Potrero Avenue at 15th Street (415-552-0240), Tuesday and Thursday, line starts at 8:30 am.
- Mission Neighborhood Resource Center, Monday to Friday morning, 7:00 am to 11:30 am, Tuesday and Wednesday, 2:00 pm to 6:30 pm.
- MSC South, 525 Fifth St. near Bryant, 415-597-7960, open 24/7.
- A Woman's Place, 1049 Howard St. near 6th Street (415-487-2140): Women Only. Daily from 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm.

Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Glen Potter following knee replacement.

Jim Lewallen recovering from a fall.

Bart Crosby recovering from shoulder injury.

Dates to Remember

September 4	Monday	Labor Day: Church Office and DK Senior Center Closed
September 9	Saturday	OFPC staffs the Interfaith Food Pantry. Presbytery of San Francisco meets at First Presbyterian Church, Newark.
September 10	Sunday	Deadline for October Issue of <i>Shared Life</i> Board of Deacons, Munro Room, 12:30 pm
September 16	Saturday	Advent Planning Workshop, Sanctuary, 10:00 am Presbyterian Women, Library, 12:00 noon
September 26	Tuesday	Session, Munro Room, 7:00 pm
September 30	Saturday	Saturday Community Dinner, 5:30 pm

OFPC Officers

Session

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Kristi Hoerauf

Dana Nojima

Class of 2019

Tom Culp, clerk of session

Robin Currier

John Kramar

Lori Yamauchi

Priscilla Yu

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Hsiaochien Chuang

Linda Reyder

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