

Orinda Community Church Re-Envisioning Committee Final Report to the Congregation

May 19, 2013

Introduction

In 2010, the Church Council chartered a “re-envisioning committee” to engage the congregation in a multi-year process to re-envision, re-focus, and restructure the Orinda Community Church. Members included Kurt Sunderbruch, chair; Sabine Hathaway, Anne Long, David Milnes, Susan Russell, Roger Samuelsen, and Bob Winbigler; with Frank Baldwin and Jeff Crews (during Frank’s sabbatical) *ex officio*.

Possible outcomes of the process were identified at the outset as:

- ~ a clear grasp of our calling as a congregation;
- ~ an effective new outreach appealing to the wider community;
- ~ a renewal and refocus of our core strengths, programs, and ministries;
- ~ spiritual, financial, and human resources that sustain our vision and our calling;
- and
- ~ a new organizational structure providing opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth.

The committee chose as its guide a book by Anthony Robinson, a UCC minister and consultant, entitled *Changing the Conversation: A Third Way for Congregations* (2008). The committee followed Robinson’s 10 “conversations” in a series of after-church sessions from May 2010 to May 2011.

The conversations included:

1. “It’s Not About You” (May 23, 2010)
2. “And Yet, It *Is* About You” (July 25, 2010)
3. “A New Heart” (September 19, 2010)
4. “Why Are We Here?” *and*
5. “Write the Vision” (October 15-16, 2010)
6. “Who Shall Lead Them?” *and*
7. “Let’s Get (Less) Organized” (February 6, 2011)
8. “The Church and the Public Square (March 27, 2011)
9. “Death and Resurrection (April 17, 2011)
10. “Where Do We Go From Here?” (May 22, 2011)

Each session began with a review of Robinson’s chapter, followed by break-out groups for discussion, led by members of the committee. The sessions were well-attended, with 30-40 members typically participating. The twin goals of the sessions were to involve as many church members as possible in thinking through the future of OCC in an organized way, while educating everyone (including the committee members) about the larger forces at work in mainline Protestant churches in the early 21st century.

In addition to the Robinson text, the committee also read and employed the invaluable Diana Butler Bass book, *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church Is Transforming the Faith* (2007).

Mission and Vision

The committee considered the development of a new mission and vision statement to be one of its key tasks. As a result, a special workshop was held October 15-16, 2010 to focus on solely on this topic. Participants were invited to contribute any ideas or concepts they felt should be included in the statement. The committee then gathered the contributions, organized them by broad concepts, and began to socialize the ideas throughout the broader congregation for further input.

After several more discussion sessions, a final version of the statement was unanimously adopted by the congregation in September 2011, as follows:

Who We Are

We are moved by the grace of God to walk together on life's journey, caring deeply for one another.

We offer stirring, thought-provoking worship in an atmosphere of diversity, spontaneity and gratitude.

We are enriched by music and the arts.

We work to become active instruments of mercy and justice in the world.

We are unafraid of change, challenge and controversy.

We cherish our children, and we know them each by name.

We are creative, resourceful and open-minded. We honor the beauty and integrity of God's creation. We have fun.

Our Vision

We aspire to a Christian faith that is authentic, adventurous and inclusive of all.

We envision a path of spiritual formation illuminated by faith, knowledge and practice.

We are called in these difficult and uncertain times to be people of peace and dauntless hope, relying on the spirit of Jesus in our midst.

We seek connection with others who are looking for a spiritual home. We reach out to doubters, explorers and people in crisis, respecting those of other faiths or no faith.

We are committed to love.

Working Groups

Following the adoption of the vision statement, six working groups, based on the foundation of the mission, were then formed to consider ways to expand upon and implement the new vision. The groups include: justice and mercy, resources and facilities, spiritual formation, worship practices, evangelism and outreach, and governance and leadership.

Five of the six groups met several times from late 2011 through early 2013. (The evangelism and outreach committee was unable to identify a leader and did not meet.) The process was boosted by an all-church workshop held in October 2012 designed to generate more ideas centered around the vision statement.

Representatives of the working groups then came together in January 2013 to report to each other and share ideas. The re-envisioning committee reviewed the reports, made suggestions, and asked each committee to identify three or four key initiatives they thought were top priorities for OCC in each area. Those reports – including one eventually submitted on the topic of evangelism and outreach – are included here.

Next Steps

In this time of transition for OCC, the re-envisioning committee is glad to see that passion for OCC's vision remains strong. While we consider our work largely complete, our goal for the next 6 to 12 months is to be, along with the congregation, keepers of that vision. The governance and leadership group plans to continue its work to help find the best governance structure to make this possible. It is our hope that the priorities of the working groups can be implemented as well; in fact, these priorities will help us determine which governance structure will best serve.

It has been an honor to work with the OCC community in defining a vision for the future of the church. We have all learned how much our world has changed. We feel confident that OCC will find a place for love and service for many years to come in this new world.

Justice and Mercy: Report of the Working Group

This working group consisted of Joy Elkinton-Walker, Elisabeth Kersten, Lee Cruise, Sue Boudreau, and Bill Peebles.

Foundations

- We are called by scripture, theological understanding, and tradition to be a people who are God's instruments of mercy and justice.
- We are able to respond to calls for mercy and justice with our money and with our "sweat equity".
- We understand a "mercy" response to be primarily one of hands on and/or monetary action designed to provide relief from the suffering and hurt of the world in a particular place and time.
- We understand a "justice" response to be primarily a systemic action that changes the reason why there is a particular suffering or hurt.
- We saw two tasks within our instructions: to review current and on-going witness within the scope of mercy and justice and to recommend any new actions that could enhance the witness of OCC to mercy and justice.

Current Programs

We focused on the existing "Mission and Outreach Commission" as the place we saw mercy and justice primarily being lived out at OCC currently.

We are excited and affirming of all the existing programs that are represented by the action of individuals and groups at OCC. As long as there is motivation as evidenced by the willingness of members to keep these ministries going we encourage the M&O Commission to be supportive. We also commend and encourage the Commission to continue its long-standing responsibility of recommending to Council the distribution of the budgeted giving to mission causes.

Recommendations Regarding Current Programs

We are concerned that the Commission's current meeting schedule of quarterly gatherings may not be sufficient to adequately inform the congregation of the work we are doing as a people of God. We suggest that the Commission become much more proactive in providing the congregation with stories that may inspire others to become involved. We acknowledge the information that the Commission already provides but strongly suggest that more is needed.

We recommend that the Commission explore actively bringing OCC into all five of the denominations offering opportunities: Our Church's Wider Mission, The One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbor's In Need, and the Christmas Offering. OCC currently participates in OCHM, OGHS, and NIN but we do not participate in Strengthen the Church or the Christmas Offering. We do take an offering at Christmas but our recent history has been to designate that offering to local projects and not participate in the national UCC program. We make this recommendation to broaden the information of the work of our denomination that our members receive in

the hopes of growing our connection to the wider church mission and encouraging individuals to become involved beyond OCC.

In short, tell us more and varied stories of what our church is doing and do it more often.

New Ideas

We envision a structure that will invite individuals who feel called to a particular ministry or mission of mercy and/or justice put out a call to others in the OCC community and beyond to join them in the individual's vision. We want to make it possible for a particular new mission to come into being and go out of being as the need changes. The structure would be a "Mission Action Consultation Team" (a working title) trained to assist those called to a particular mission how to put their dream into action.

Recommendations

- Develop a time, most likely during worship, for individuals to "ring the mission bell", briefly explain their dream, and ask if there are others who wish to join them.
- Train a group of people who will consult with the dreamers on how to put the dream into action and provide necessary on-going support.
- Provide a way of the congregation and community surrounding OCC to know what others are doing, provide on-going ways to bring in new participants, and support each of the new mission teams as needed.

Governance and Leadership: Report of the Working Group

The Governance and Leadership Working Group consists of David Hoppock, Gail Mead, Susan Russell, Roger Samuelson, Craig Taatjes, Carl Walker, and a member of the pastoral staff (Frank Baldwin and then Jackie Brown).

At the onset of the re-envisioning process, one of the possible outcomes was “a new organizational structure providing opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth”.

Beginning with a review of Anthony B. Robinson’s chapters “Who Shall Lead Them” and “Let’s Get Less Organized” and continuing with visits and research into other churches (including Fresno, San Mateo, and Berkeley), our group has brainstormed potential governance approaches and structures over the course of a number of meetings. Dan Hotchkiss’s book *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* has also been a source of inspiration as our ideas have become more concrete. The conversations have resulted in a set of governance guidelines, three alternative governance structures, and several initiatives that have been adopted or are now under discussion.

Governance Guidelines

These are the guidelines that have evolved with the concurrence of the Church Council.

Strategy

- Relate leadership structure, goals, and programs to the OCC Vision Statement.
- Assume shared-ministry with pastors, staff and others in the congregation.
- Seek openness, transparency, and inclusiveness.
- Create strong communications effort to assure work of the governing body and others is known to all.
- Accommodate balance between (1) creativity and continuity, (2) flexibility and stability (3) short-term and long-term goals and projects.

Tactics

- Focus responsibilities and operations of governing body on long-term goals and projects rather than day-to-day operations.
- Provide leadership training and mentoring for those assuming leadership roles.
- Encourage short-term, project-oriented initiatives and task forces so long as initiatives adhere to vision statement.
- Consider fewer members on governing body and shorter terms of office – with provision for renewals – in response to current-day time constraints and obligations.

Touchstone

- Bring joy and fellowship into all deliberations.

Governance Structures

Three alternative governance structures have been identified to date and we look forward to sharing these with the congregation. Any formal restructuring may well draw from aspects of all three alternatives. The goal is to be responsive to the Governance Guidelines and the recommendations of the other working groups. We also want to take into consideration the views and experience of the new Senior Pastor. One or more forums will be scheduled to discuss the alternatives and solicit feedback.

Initiatives

In the meantime, we have encouraged the Church Council to take several initiatives in the interest of enhancing communication, efficiency and accountability. These are:

- Provide opportunities to members of the congregation to meet with Council representatives during coffee hours in advance of meetings.
- Post minutes of Council meetings in the *Neighbor* and on the OCC website.
- Commit to a Leadership Covenant.
- Adopt a “consent calendar” for routine action items.
- Schedule annual reviews of roles, activities, and future plans/goals from commissions, committees, and “partners”, e.g. TOPS, Holden School.
- Begin development of an OCC Policy Manual.
- Organize a leadership and mentoring training program.

Evangelism and Outreach: Report of the Working Group

(Based upon input at the all-church workshop held in October 2012 and comments offered by interested members of the congregation since that time)

The OCC Vision Statement adopted by the congregation in 2011 includes the following provisions:

We seek connection with others who are looking for a spiritual home. We reach out to doubters, explorers and people in crisis respecting those of other faiths or no faith.

We are committed to love.

Evangelism

In his insightful book entitled *Transforming Congregational Culture*, Anthony B. Robinson writes:

Another way to put this is to say that the primary agent of evangelism is the congregation itself. By “evangelism” I mean sharing the good news of the gospel, the good news about God, and what God has done and is doing in Christ. For some, the evangelist is a particular person, a preacher; for others, the evangelist is a specific kind of ministry, one of bringing new people to faith. Both of these models have their place and legitimacy. But here is another option or model: the congregation itself is the evangelist. It is the congregation that embodies the good news. It is the congregation that forms people in this new life. It is the congregation that sustains people on the journey of Christian life, and it is the congregation that is the instrument through which God works transformation.

Among suggestions that have been made to advance both the vision statement and Robinson’s insight are (1) provide opportunities from time to time for parishioners to share their own spiritual journeys during worship services, (2) schedule “newcomer Sundays” and invite guests on a monthly or quarterly basis, (3) make the community more aware we are “open”, “support equality”, “have kids”, “care for animals”, and “are environmentally sensitive”, (4) schedule and publicize public forums on political and social issues, (5) put more photos of people and activities on OCC website, (6) offer mid-week family worship opportunities for those who are unable to attend Sunday worship services (due to soccer games, ski trips, etc.), (7) expand the use of email and social media to provide reminders and/or updates on scheduled church events, (8) reach out to partners using OCC facilities, e.g. The Orinda Preschool (TOPS) and Boy Scout Troop 237, and (9) reach out to future tenants of the Eden Housing project.

Outreach

OCC has had a long and enviable history of outreach under the auspices of the Mission and Outreach Commission. Generous support has been provided in annual budgets and by earmarked donations from members of the congregation.

In its most recent report, the Commission noted that, in addition of our monetary giving, OCC provides free or reduced-fee space to nonprofit groups. In 2012, it reviewed its criteria for mission giving, and determined that one key factor is supporting organizations where there is strong OCC-member involvement with first-hand knowledge and accountability so there can be assurance funds allocated are well-spent.

Among suggestions that have been made to advance the vision statement and extent outreach efforts even further are (1) provide opportunities to study Islam and other faiths, (2) continue involvement with Women Helping Women, (3) explore feasibility of sister church relationship with Oakland Congregational Church to provide mutual support in ministry, music, and community involvement, (4) provide opportunities for more involvement on social action issues, (5) encourage joint religious services and joint musical concerts with those of different faiths, (6) develop even stronger ties with Pacific School of Religion, and (7) re-visit the sponsorship of mission trips for youth and/or a combination of youth and adults.

Beyond “outreach” to others is a call for more “outreach” to our own, thereby complementing and extending the work of the Parish Callers over the years. Providing transportation for seniors who can no longer drive is but one example.

Worship Practices: Report of the Working Group

This group consisted of Bob Winbigler, chair, Sabine Hathaway, David Milnes, Genia Simpson, and Karl Schonborn.

Our subcommittee was charged with exploring and envisioning the areas of worship and music practices for the future of our church.

Worship

In the area of worship, we looked at examples explored in the Robinson book, as well as approaches taken by other churches. Some of our members visited churches and reported their findings to our subcommittee. Dozens of church members were canvassed by committee members. We had considerable discussion about possibilities that have been tried elsewhere, including (among others) the all-jazz service; the very informal service; the "Spirituality" service; the extensive use of praise music; and alternative styles of worship on different days of the week.

Our conclusion is that OCC has the opportunity in the future to present a form of worship that is vibrant and unique, and which will give the possibility (with the right outreach) of attracting and nourishing many new members from our surrounding community, which is highly educated and motivated by excellence.

Our current church members are proud of OCC's long tradition of open-minded, sophisticated worship in a non-liturgical setting. Each worship service is designed to offer a shared and deep spiritual experience, through prayer, music and other arts, scripture, intellectually based sermons and fellowship.

Worship practices at the church have evolved slowly and steadily over recent years, and the committee is eager to see further evolution, while maintaining OCC's proud tradition and identity. The committee heartily endorses the notion of variety in worship, to keep things fresh and inspired. Future directions might include dramatic representations, poetry recitations, story telling, meditation services and so on, all adding to the rich repository of worship practices that are presently in place.

One important area of tradition has been to utilize the talents of church members in whatever way they are presented, and allowing worship practices to evolve accordingly. For example, in previous decades there were significant forays into religious folk music and bell-ringing, based on the interests of people in the church at that time. More recently, liturgical dance, Renaissance polyphony, jazz music, amateur singing groups (such as the Crossroads Gospel Quartet), Taize singing, visual art and photography, and labyrinth-walking have all been incorporated into worship, thanks to stimulation from newer members.

Rather than mandating a set of styles and requirements and then trying to find people to fulfill them, OCC has looked to capitalize on its members' talents for many of its spiritual practices; this has given our worship a deeply personal cast, and has brought to us many new and gifted congregants who are attracted to this approach.

Music

Sophisticated music has been a central feature of worship at OCC. Photographs over the last 70 years show that a large and vibrant Chancel Choir has been present at all moments in the church's history. The choir has changed its style over the years; early on it was clothed in church-choir-polyester robes; at one point 20 and 30 years ago it was known as the church for San Francisco Opera choristers; later there was a significant early-music cast to it; and more recently there has been an eclectic membership, with a number of younger artists, jazz musicians, string players, and singers whose professional expertise encompasses many styles of music. Congregational participation has consistently been an important feature of music-making at the church; indeed, the high musical literacy of the congregation continues to amaze professional clergy who have visited over the years. Congregants frequently gravitate slowly towards one or another of the many areas of music in the church.

Classical music continues to be at the center of the music program. Seven professional classical musicians are employed by the church, with several others in our midst. The program explores music from the rich tradition of sacred music stretching back 700 years. The committee concludes that our classical orientation, augmented with frequent, diverse samplings of other styles, can be a significant key to the future growth of the church. Over and over we hear from new members that they are attracted to the music, in a setting of open-minded spirituality and relaxed liturgy. Such a blend appeals to the well-educated demographic of our geographic area, and is very difficult to find in surrounding churches.

The Worship Practices Committee is firm in its belief that sophisticated, uplifting and serious music of many different types is crucial to the identity and spiritual health of the Orinda Community Church. The church has been generous in its financial commitment to excellent music, and has been fortunate to have had significant, supportive pastoral leadership and involvement in the music program over many years. The committee believes that continued investment in compelling music-making as well as in other artistic practices will play a key part in the recruitment of a new generation of members, and it looks forward to the installation of a new pastor who will be able to collaborate passionately in this vision.

Spiritual Formation: Report of the Working Group

This group consisted of Mike Kersten, chair, Anna Johnson, Gwen McNeilus, Meg Nicholes, Gary Nye, Leslie O'Brien, and John Staten.

The OCC Vision Statement adopted by the congregation in 2011 includes the following provision:

We envision a path of spiritual formation illuminated by faith, knowledge and practice.

The group undertook to “illuminate” the path of spiritual formation at OCC by attempting to define loosely the scope and direction of this path for the individual and suggesting steps that the church could take to enhance the environment and the resources to assist the individual on his or her spiritual journey. In preparation for this task, group members read three books: *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith* by Diana Butler Bass, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* by Henri Nouwen, and *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* by Marcus T. Borg. The congregation had previously read *Changing the Conversation: a Third Way for Congregations* by Anthony B. Robinson.

For purposes of our task, we defined spiritual formation as the growth and development of the whole person by an intentional focus on one's (1) spiritual/interior life, (2) being in community and sharing with others, including “seekers,” and (3) spiritual practices, such as prayer and meditation.

Interior Life

The first focus is on one's interior life: developing a personal relationship with God based on love, trust, and encounters with the Holy Spirit. Using the metaphor central to the New Testament (John 3), some of us describe the formation of this personal relationship as being born again – “dying to an old way of being and being born to a new way of being, dying to an old identity and being born to a new identity – a way of being and an identity centered in the sacred, in Spirit, in Christ, in God” (Borg, p. 107). Others prefer the term conversion or transformation. Being born again can be a very gradual process or as abrupt as Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. But for the formation of this relationship to take place, we must hear, read, and experience the Word of God disclosed in the Bible. We have learned that “the Word of God is a dynamic interaction of the Holy Spirit and the words of the biblical text in the vessel of the believing community” (Robinson, p. 72).

Presently, most of the OCC congregation is regularly involved in the Bible only through the reading of scripture during worship services and the discussion of that scripture in the message presented after the reading. This exposure to the Bible tends to cursory and tangential in nature and, in the group's opinion, has been insufficient alone to promote significant spiritual growth. To further increase knowledge of the Bible and enhance the formation and growth of personal relationships with God, the group recommends a Sunday morning Bible study before the worship service (e.g., 9 to 9:45 a.m.) and, in

addition or alternatively, weekly small group Bible studies meeting in homes or wherever else the group wants to meet. In addition, to the study of scripture and secondary sources, the Bible study should include an exploration of church liturgy and traditions as well as denomination history, to foster a stronger sense of community identity.

Community and Sharing

The second focus of spiritual formation is being in community and sharing with others. To strengthen this community experience, the working group believes that recent initiatives focusing on corporate prayer and meditation should be continued and expanded (e.g., Wisdom Wednesdays, Women's Spirituality). In particular, healing prayer sessions should be held on a quarterly basis. Other sessions could focus on other forms of prayer and mediation (e.g., discernment, intercessory, contemplative).

In addition, the group recommends that more opportunities be scheduled during worship services and other appropriate church events for individuals to give testimonies of their spiritual journeys. "We cannot know ourselves apart from our stories—stories in which we are both author and actor" (Butler Bass, p. 138). These testimonies need not take a single, rehearsed form. They are likely to be "individual stories of being surprised by God's love and transformed in unanticipated ways" (Id., p. 14). By incorporating prayer, meditation, and testimony into our worship services, worship will become more like an experience of God, rather than a reflection about God.

Our group also endorses church policies of generous hospitality extended to TOPS, Holden High, the Boy Scouts, Winter Nights, and other groups visiting our church and supports further outreach through acts of justice and compassion in the larger metropolitan community.

Spiritual Practices

The third focus of spiritual formation is spiritual practices. Spiritual practices can create "thin" places—"places where the veil momentarily lifts, and we behold God, experience the one in whom we live, all around us and within us" (Borg, p. 156). We have already recommended expanded emphasis on prayer and meditation. Other spiritual practices that promote spiritual formation are the visual arts, music, dance, drama, poetry/writing, use of the labyrinth, and Taize services. We have many gifted members of our congregation to lead us in these practices and we should continue to encourage and support them on a regular basis. Also, we should encourage others with other spiritual gifts to lead and assist us in providing services to others.

Recommendations

1. Begin a Sunday morning Bible study before the worship service, and/or weekly small group Bible studies.
2. Continue and expand corporate prayer and meditation opportunities (e.g., healing prayer sessions).

3. Schedule individual testimonies of spiritual journeys during worship services and other appropriate church events.
4. Continue on a regular basis the spiritual practices of the visual arts, music, dance, drama, poetry/writing, and the use of the labyrinth.

Resources and Facilities: Report of the Working Group

The Facilities Resource group included Leslie Schonborn, Anne Long, John Kaiser, David Santschi, Andy Webber and Dixon Grier.

The committee met several times to discuss the following items and how they fit with our vision statement:

1. Facilities usage
2. Stewardship
3. Volunteers
4. Physical plant
5. Endowment Board
6. Creative staffing

We reviewed the vision statement to see how that would influence our recommendations. In addition, we carefully reviewed different ideas presented by the congregation in the "OCC Who Can U B" congregational meeting.

Facilities Usage

In regard to the facilities usage, our committee made several calls to local churches and have found that the fees that OCC charges for use of their facilities are low. We need to put in place a mechanism for charging competitive rates for the use of our facilities. In addition, as the use of our facilities grow, we need to determine how best to fulfill staffing needs related to outside use. Depending upon usage, we may need to augment staff. John Kaiser is working on developing a spreadsheet that will track the usage and revenue generated by the various OCC facilities. Our goal is to better understand who uses what, when and at what price. We believe such a document would allow us to analyze the balance between "commercial" and "outreach" usage, capture the updating needs identified by Buildings and Grounds, prioritize updating both physical needs and ADA compliance, and develop a plan for promoting higher facility usage with the dual goals of boosting revenue and/or attracting new OCC members via facility usage by non-OCC members. Andy Webber has agreed to walk the physical plant with an eye towards determining the square footage available for rental and the updating or ADA requirements to make the space more attractive to future outside usage.

Stewardship

The committee heard input from various churches and congregation members regarding creative ways to approach stewardship. We believe stewardship will be something that happens all year, not just something that happens for six weeks in the fall. To help that happen, we could envision the following (primarily researched by David Santschi):

- Engage the congregation more deeply and regularly in the meaning of stewardship, which is how one's faith influences how one spends time and money.
- Contributions of money and time follow vision. If stewardship is discussed throughout the year and stewardship is tied to the life of the church, obtaining financial and time commitments is easier. People give readily to causes in which they already believe.

- Explore stewardship throughout the year through periodic sermons in worship, periodic stewardship updates in worship, adult education programs, and articles in the *Neighbor*.
- Stewardship updates in worship could occur every other month for a few minutes before the offering. They might include “did you know” presentations about things the church does to help people that may not be widely known, testimonies from people outside the church about how the church helps them, explanations of what particular amounts of money can do for people and ministries, “money autobiographies” from members, or year-to-date progress reports on pledges or the budget.
- Articles in the *Neighbor* might be similar to the stewardship updates in worship but in written form (we’re already doing this to a certain extent with the budget).
- Members could be encouraged to tithe during Lent or give up something during Lent and then donate the money they would have spent on it to the church.

Several exciting “outside the box” ideas were discussed and need a bit more research before presenting to anyone outside the committee.

In addition, make stewardship about time and talent, not just money. Conduct a campaign in the fall focused on money and campaign in the winter or spring focused on time and talent. Some of the ideas discussed included:

- Campaign for pledges in the fall:
 1. A formal campaign to gather pledges is necessary because the church needs to project its income for the following year.
 2. Choose the church’s own theme rather than rely on the denomination’s theme. What the denomination chooses may not be particularly relevant to the church.
 3. Traditional approach: Continue to provide a letter from the stewardship team and a pledge envelope for each member household. Members are accustomed to receiving these materials and know what to do with them. Encourage members to pick up these materials after worship to reduce mailing costs and then mail the remaining materials to the rest of the congregation. Make these materials available as well on a stewardship page on the church’s web site.
 4. “Pony express” approach: Divide member households that are mobile and not geographically isolated into routes of ten households each based on their addresses. Prepare a saddlebag with materials about the church – a letter from the stewardship team, pledge envelopes for each household, a narrative budget, the annual report, and other material about the church – for each route. Designate a trail boss to oversee the progress of the saddlebag on each route over a three-week period. Ask each household to review the materials and put their sealed pledge envelope into the saddlebag before delivering it to the next household. Ask the last household on the route to return the saddlebag to the trail boss.
 5. Along with the letter from the stewardship team and a pledge envelope, include a one- or two-page narrative budget that explains the church’s

ministries and emphasizes that the extent to which the church helps people depends significantly on how much money people contribute. Members care much more about the church's story than they do about the church's budget.

6. Encourage people to slightly increase the amount of money they give to the church each year. Create a table that shows amounts of pledges at various income levels and pledge percentages and include it with the letter from the stewardship team or in the *Neighbor*.
 7. Ask the pastor to preach at least occasionally about money, giving, or stewardship during the pledge campaign. When the congregation hears from the pastor about these topics, it heightens the importance of the stewardship campaign.
 8. Apart from sermons, do not spend a great deal of time on stewardship in worship during the stewardship campaign. Occasionally present brief testimonies before the offering from people in the church about what the church means to them or people outside the church about how the church helps them. Skits and presentations about what the church needs or wants tend to be less effective. Detailed updates on the progress of the stewardship campaign are better suited for the bulletin or the *Neighbor*.
 9. Dispatch the stewardship team to meet with members in the groups they regularly attend – Bible study, breakfast fellowship, choir, sewing circle – to review stewardship materials and solicit feedback about the church. People will be more open in smaller groups around people they know. For people who are not part of a group that has been visited, hold a couple of brief meetings in the front of the sanctuary immediately after worship.
 10. Allow people to make pledges with bank accounts and credit cards either on a stewardship page on the church web site or by writing information on their pledge envelope.
 11. Follow up with people who do not make pledges by the campaign end date initially by letter and then by phone. A letter is a more gentle reminder than a phone call.
 12. Update the amounts of money and the number of pledges – both in total and by age group – in the bulletin or on the stewardship page each week so people are aware of progress.
 13. Invite people who have pledged to come to the front of the church in worship on dedication Sunday to show their solidarity with others in support of the church.
 14. Assign members of the stewardship team to call members who have pledged to thank them, ask them why they give, ask them if they have any feedback about the church, and ask them if they would consider increasing their pledge by 5% or 10% per year for the next three years.
- Campaign about time and talent in the winter or spring:
 15. Encourage people to commit to being involved in the life of the church in particular ways beyond just donating money – participating in a group, helping with an activity, or donating food or materials for events. While

some people have limited financial resources and may not be able to donate a significant amount of money – even if they tithe – they may have a lot of time and strong interest in participating in the church’s ministries.

16. Provide a pledge form to every household. Encourage members to pick them up after worship to reduce mailing costs and then mail the remaining materials to the rest of the congregation. Follow up by phone with people who do not make pledges by the deadline.
 17. Publicize the campaign much like the pledge campaign in the fall but with somewhat less intensity.
- Make it easier for people to donate to the church.
 18. Create a page on the church Web site for stewardship. It could include information about pledging, donations of money, donations of time and talent, the E-scrip program with Safeway, and transfers of appreciated securities.
 19. Promote the E-scrip program with Safeway more aggressively through a calling campaign, quarterly announcements in the *Neighbor*, and information on the stewardship web page.
 20. Encourage members to give appreciated securities to the church on pledge campaign materials, quarterly announcements in the *Neighbor*, and information on the stewardship web page.

Volunteers

OCC has a remarkable team of volunteers and our committee representative interviewed many of them to get a better feel for what works and what doesn’t work. Interviews were held with representatives of Buildings and Grounds, Facilities, Children and Youth, and Care and Fellowship. The committee received a report prepared by John Kaiser that summarizes the interviews he had with various volunteers and their input into the current volunteering as well as ideas for the future. (John’s report is available to interested members of the congregation.)

One of the suggestions put forward by the committee would be to set up an access-controlled (OCC members and approved designates only), multi-administrator online system which would serve as a dynamic way to communicate volunteer needs and secure signups. John has looked into one particular software program (www.wildapricot.com) to determine how such an online system could be set up and maintained.

Physical Plant

Regarding the physical plant, we have discussed funds available through Turn Up The Heat (TUTH) and how those can be used for future facilities needs and other uses of the church. Perhaps a review of the bylaws would be useful in determining how certain earmarked items included in the TUTH budget (for example, a new roof was budgeted for \$100,000 but everyone agrees that a new roof will not be needed in the foreseeable future) can be released and used for other physical plant needs. As discussed earlier, we need to capture the updating needs identified by Buildings and Grounds and prioritize updating both physical needs and ADA compliance.

Endowment Board and Creative Staffing

The Endowment Board was approached to determine whether they could be used as a resource for funding certain vision projects. They were receptive and would look at each request with an eye towards helping the implementation of our vision plan. We are impressed with the creative staffing utilized by such staff members as Leslie O'Brien and Dion Maskaleris. Future part-time staffing requirements could use this model to determine funding and resource allocation parameters.