

Orinda Community Church Re-Envisioning Next Steps Status Update - May, 2012

Following the adoption of the proposed OCC Vision/Mission Statement in 2011, the re-envisioning process has moved forward by establishing focused working groups to guide us through the next steps.

There were six groups and co-leaders were established with the following focus areas:

- Evangelism & Outreach - TBD
- Governance & Leadership – Roger Samuelsen & Susan Russell
- Justice & Mercy – Bill Peebles & Sue Boudreau
- Resources & Facilities – Dixon Grier & Anne Long
- Spiritual Formation - Mike Kersten & Kurt Sunderbruch
- Worship Practices - Sabine Hathaway & Bob Winbigler

Members of the congregation were asked to volunteer for the groups of their choice, and to the greatest extent possible, we balanced the volunteers against the opportunities. The teams were set a list of deliverables:

- Forming (who's in the group, when will they meet, etc.)
- Defining (each group had the task of defining its own scope)
- Start from a “clean sheet”
 - Without reference to OCC
 - What would a hypothetical church with a statement like ours be doing in each of the areas?
 - Reference Butler-Bass book, “Christianity for the Rest of Us” for ideas
- Start with high level ideas, then move to specifics Evaluation
 - Compare “clean sheet” plan to what

exists at OCC

- What is already “in place”, and where are there gaps?

- Prioritize both “clean sheet” and “in place” – what is most important in supporting our mission and vision, and come up with an ordinal rank

- Select & Recommend

- Based on the ordinal rank of the combined list of “clean sheet” and “in place” actions make recommendations based on two key additional criteria:

- The commitment of the committee members individually and as group to drive those actions to implementation
- The capacity within OCC in terms of funding, staffing, or any other necessary resources must be available to implement

- Based on those selection criteria, make recommendations to the church council regarding actions in each of the listed areas.

As of May of 2012, the committees are at various different points in this process. We expect to continue this process in concert with the incoming interim pastor.

Governance & Leadership

- Roger Samuelsen and Susan Russell, co-chairs

- Gail Mead

- Carl Walker

- Craig Taatjes

- Dave Hoppock

- Frank Baldwin, ex officio

The group, which has met four times, spent its initial meeting working out a process to arrive at a new proposed structure for OCC governance and leadership. We took inspiration from Anthony Robinson's two chapters on leadership, “Who Shall Lead Them?” and “Let's Get (Less) Organized.” As ways to develop a structure to support our purpose and mission statement. At our next meeting, we engaged

in a brainstorming session to envision what sort of structure could be possible, which led to imaginative images such as trees, circles, and amoebas (to express the idea of something that is always changing and adapting). Our third meeting was spent summarizing the important themes that our brainstorming session revealed, including flexibility, creativity, and the importance of tying back to our new mission and vision. At our fourth meeting, Roger shared the information he has been gathering from First Congregational Church of Berkeley and how they are led and organized. The group discussed the church's present structure and the need for an update of the bylaws.

Justice & Mercy

- Sue Boudreau & Bill Peebles, co-chairs
- Lee Cruise
- Joy Elkington-Walker
- Elizabeth Kersten

We have been meeting about every other week and have deliberately kept our meetings fairly open ended.

We envision a nimble and inspiring way for all congregants to participate and lead justice and mercy missions, including environmental justice and advocacy done in consultation with the UCC advisors and within our tax-exempt status.

We want to encourage participation by maximizing choice of issues and actions that enliven people, and by allowing for short as well as long term projects.

We do not want to dictate what issues will be supported, this should come from our members. We have not yet fully figured out how this new initiative blends with current, valuable work of the Mission and Outreach commission. Our main work will be around process – how to maximize the variety of seeds planted, then how to nurture those seeds to grow into small flowers and

perhaps tall trees. We'll provide the space, the fertilizer as needed, the full sun of encouragement and, as the seasons turn, some projects will end, allowing others to begin.

These are ideas we've generated for how to do that:

- Mission Moments for anyone to put forward a J and M issue of concern, to build affinity groups.
- A cadre of Mission Moment mentors with specific skills to offer ex. Knowledge of the non-profit world, legal experts, organizational experts etc.
- Workshops to help build skills for taking effective action including research, meeting facilitation skills, etc.
- Justice and Mercy –centered worship services every now and then. Say every 5 weeks.
- Regular opportunities to share what different affinity groups and the Outreach Commission are doing, plus invitations to get involved with a smorgasbord of opportunities – different issues, different actions, something to inspire everyone. Maybe as a kiosk and bulletin board with sign up poster after service, maybe a TED talk format or a 'market place' format after church. Maybe as included in the Neighbor.
- Online social networking as ways to get organized and to take action.
- Online ways of sharing ideas, progress and requests for help, perhaps with a web page on the OCC website, perhaps with Yahoo Groups, etc.

Resources & Facilities

- Anne Long & Dixon Grier, co-chairs
- David Santschi
- Andy Weber
- John Kaiser

The Facilities Resource group has met several times

to discuss the following items and how they fit with our Vision Statement:

1. Review 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 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. We may need to augment staff. The committee heard input from various churches and congregation members regarding creative ways to approach stewardship. Several exciting “outside the box” ideas were discussed and need a bit more research before presenting to anyone outside the committee.

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 & Grounds, Facilities, Children & Youth and Care & Fellowship.

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 perhaps 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.

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. Future part-time staffing requirements could use this model to determine funding and resource allocation parameters.

Spiritual Formation

- Mike Kersten & Kurt Sunderbruch, co-chairs
- Gwen McNeilus
- Robin Weber
- Gary Nye
- John Staten
- Anna Johnson
- Meg Nicholes
- Leslie O'Brien, ex-officio

The Spiritual Formation committee has met three times. Prior to meeting we asked committee members to read Henri Nouwen's “Spiritual Direction” and Diana Butler-Bass' “Christianity for the Rest of Us” as a way to prime our thinking about our task. Our first meeting concentrated on defining what is meant by spiritual formation though engaging in an is/is not exercise, which was followed by looking at the question of what we would like to see in spiritual formation at OCC. We have begun the process of mapping what we would like to see at OCC and comparing that to what already exists here, and where there are gaps. At our next meeting we intend to complete that mapping, then begin a prioritization discussion. The discussions

have been very rich, with many interesting insights shared.

Worship Practices

- Sabine Hathaway & Bob Winbigler, co-chairs
- Genia Simpson
- Karl Schonborn
- David Milnes
- Frank Baldwin, ex-officio

The Worship Practices working group has met three times. In a brief informal survey we asked some members of the congregation about their views of certain aspects of our Sunday service, and we have come to the conclusion that the current format speaks to most and does not require any significant overhaul. Still, we think participation of the congregation will remain key, so we are discussing ways to make our service more interactive and to enhance, enrich and enliven the time we spend with each other on Sunday mornings. We are currently gathering ideas and plan to visit some churches in the greater Bay Area to see what they're doing and whether or not it works. Some of the ideas we have collected so far: a Sunday service with a Jazz motto; incorporating elements such as poetry readings, extended time of silence, guided meditation; performing arts etc. We are encouraged and invigorated knowing that there are so many wonderful opportunities within our reach - the members of OCC have many talents and can offer a great deal and we look forward to exploring possibilities.

Evangelism & Outreach

- Joyce Crawford
- Dorothy McIntire
- Karen Norris
- Nick Nicholes
- Leslie O'Brien, ex officio

We are still looking for leadership for this group. Please contact members of the Re-Envisioning committee if you're interested in leading or co-leading Evangelism & Outreach.

Summary

We continue to move forward, and we look forward to working with the interim pastor, and to continue our conversation as a congregation.