

The Neighbor

Newsletter of
The Orinda Community Church
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ
August 2014

Jim's Reflection

I find it hard to believe that the end of summer already looms. Swim seasons are ending. Camps are wrapping up. Back-to-school shopping signs are up. And the new program year at Orinda Community Church is just around the corner.

On a personal note, I've never lived through a fall in California before, so I'm excited to see what the weather is like, if the leaves change, if I'll be able to switch allegiances to any of the local college or pro football teams, what the start of school will look like, and if rain will ever appear...

Here at church, plans are being made in anticipation of September and the fall and winter months. I am excited about what is in store. Worship is being planned. New programs will be started. Governance and Leadership lead us through our next steps. A new Youth Ministry Initiative is underway. We have O.C.C.'s 75th Birthday to celebrate in October. The choir will perform a special concert in November. A Men's Group will be forming. The Endowment Board will offer presentations on how you might be able to help ensure a strong and lasting future for our great church.

And the list goes on. Good things are happening at O.C.C....

We are working to make sure that we have experiences of the Divine through worship, by growing deeper in community, by caring for one another and our world, by learning, laughing, and being together.

Sunday worship is the central piece of our life as community. This is where we come together be renewed in our commitment to follow in the way of Jesus, have our priorities realigned, and support each other through joys and concerns. The hope is that through word, song, silence, prayer, and community, we are ready for the week ahead, and have a moment where God's presence is felt.

As Senior Minister, one of my main tasks is to work with the staff and the Worship and Music Commission to create services that make this happen. One thing we will try this next year is to move announcements to a later part of the service.

Our hope is that this helps the service flow seamlessly, from the time the Prelude starts until the Benediction is offered. If you have announcements that you would like to have made, please submit them to Dagmar (office@orindachurch.org) by Wednesday morning, so we can refer to the printed version in the Order of Worship.

Beyond Sunday worship, we are working to expand the way we can share life together, as we serve, learn, and live together.

Here are a couple of the many new initiatives that we're excited about...

Sermon Text Study

Tuesdays at 11 a.m., Church Library

This midweek study will be a chance to look at the texts for the upcoming Sunday, to learn a more of the theological and cultural context, and to engage in conversation about what the texts say to you

I am a strong believer that the sermons should be a reflection of the community – not just the thoughts of the minister, put together in isolation. So plan to learn, but also know that your input might just help shape the direction of the sermon.

Adult Sunday School

Sundays, 8:45-9:45 am, Fireside Room

I will facilitate the majority of these 4-6 week sessions. We will use DVD lectures, discussion, and supplemental materials to guide us through the classes, and hopefully produce lively discussion.

Our first session will start on **September 14**, and will be a 6-week series on “Embracing Emergence Christianity” with Phyllis Tickle. Questions raised are “What is next for the church, and people of faith?” “What will Christianity look like in the next generations?” Look for more info in the September Neighbor.

Further classes will include: “Jesus – A History of Early Christianity” (w/Dr. Bart Ehrman), an “Advent Reading Group”, “Embracing Spiritual Awakening” (w/Diana Butler Bass), and a “Christianity 101” Class in the spring.

Looking forward to being with you on Sunday, and throughout this next year,

Jim



Don't Forget...

We will be moving the announcement part of worship to a later part of the service, so please plan to be in the sanctuary at 10 a.m. This is a change for us, but will hopefully help with the flow and movement of our worship experience.

Thanks to everyone for your flexibility, and willingness to try something new!

From the Adjunct Pastor...

The hot summer days are scooting by. Worship has been very special... David's gifted piano playing while the organ is being renewed; the energy and excitement of the children's Jam Camp under the direction of Leslie and Robin has been exciting... the prayer flags flying over the altar calling us to peace...and the wonderful Dancers' Circle blessing of the holy meal of Communion. These are some of the worship highlights so far and we are blessed.

The days have been full...

I have covered the pastoral responsibilities during Jim's vacation. Women Helping Women had a lovely luncheon in June at Janet Schwartz' home. We look forward next to meeting in October with Amy Lynch of the Arm of Care agency, which provides recreation and art experiences for local girls rescued from the horrors of trafficking. And, with the blessing of the Church Council, I am serving as Volunteer Coordinator as we once again prepare to host our Winter Night Guests. Our guests will be living at our church from February 23-March 9. I will keep you informed as more details about Winter Nights develop.

Now I look forward to being cool and relaxed for a vacation at the shore.

Blessings and safe travels to all,

Lee Cruise

New Freezer Coming to O.C.C.

Thanks to a generous donation, and the electrical wizardry of Les Simmonds, we will soon have a new upright freezer at Orinda Community Church. The hope is to have quarterly "Chop and Chat" volunteer mornings, where we will gather, make casseroles and other frozen meals, and then keep them in the freezer to be delivered to members of our congregation and community when the need arises (volunteers might even get to bring one home for themselves!).

New “Coordinator of Youth Ministries” to start in late-August

Working with the Children and Youth Commission, Leslie O’Brien, Robin Weber, and the Endowment Board, a three-year Youth Ministries Initiative has been approved and funded. The desire is to enhance our ministries to 6th-12th grade youth and their families, building on the great work that has been done over the years.

We are so pleased to announce that Kelsey Peterson has accepted our offer to be the Coordinator of Youth Ministries here at O.C.C. A recent graduate of Saint Mary’s, Kelsey will start studies at Pacific School of Religion this fall, and will also be working on a Masters of Dance at Saint Mary’s. Many of you will know or recognize Kelsey, as she has been a regular attendee of O.C.C. during her undergraduate years.

Kelsey has worked as a camp counselor for the last six years, was a Resident Advisor for two years, and was an active leader and participant in the youth and children programs of her home church while in high school. Her passion for ministry, her love of students, and her organizational strengths will be a great addition to our church staff.

This new position is funded at 10-hours/week, and Kelsey’s main responsibilities will be to plan and lead two youth group events each month (for both Middle School and High School students), teach youth Sunday School, help coordinate intergenerational service opportunities for the entire church, and spend time with students outside of church.

We are lucky to have Kelsey as part of our team, and hope you will go out of your way to get to know her, and support her in this new ministry.

Save the Date!

Installation of Rev. Jim Brommers
Bergquist will be **September 21 at 3:00 pm**
in the Sanctuary of
Orinda Community Church

NEW :

We now have 4 devices to help people with hearing impairment. They can be picked up on Sunday mornings from the table in the narthex

Car Donations to OCC

OCC has negotiated for the services of Car Donation Services, locally owned and operated in Martinez, to receive and process donations of vehicles. There is a link on the OCC website or you can go to the CDS home page at www.cardonationservices.com, click on “Charities” at the top, then on “Religious” and scroll down to find Orinda Community Church. If you have an old, used vehicle, please consider donating it to your church today.

Dear Members of OCC,

This is an urgent request for funds to supply medical needs to the many badly injured Gaza civilians who are desperate for help - the hospitals have been bombed and at least thirteen ambulances bombed and destroyed – (not a facility that could be hiding rocket launchers.!) The borders are sealed and medical equipment and relief teams are not getting through the borders. Christy Reiners, Founder of “In His Steps” has contacted Zafar Nobani, Palestinian Humanitarian Assistance Director, whom we met with in Palestine in April. He has close connections with the Jordanian Hashemite Charitable Organization which can helicopter aid into Gaza. Other Aid Groups are having difficulty getting medical teams through the border. We do not know how long this cease-fire will hold and whether the civilians in Gaza will be able to get free of their imprisonment by the Zionist Government of Israel

This message came from a Jewish friend of Christy’s in desperation “Israel just bombed the largest hospital in Gaza, where most patients from this week’s massacres have been brought, and where families fled to find safety.. It is mass murder in total violation of International Laws of war and more importantly laws of Occupation.” These are messages from Jews in Israel whose voices are not being heard because of the control of the media.. The future lies in the hands of Inter-Faith Communities to bring peace to this devastated area. We stand now with our Jewish brothers and sisters and ask each of us to do what we can.

Please contribute to this humanitarian crisis by writing a check to In His Steps and sending directly to:

IHS Medical Relief Attn: Norma Sayler, P.O. Box 575, Lennox, SD 57039. OR

Thank you for responding to this urgent appeal.

In Christ's name,

Joy Elkinton-Walker and Carl Walker

August Calendar

Saturday, August 2

9:30am Women for Sobriety

Sunday, August 3

10:00am Worship

11:15am Fellowship Hour

Monday, August 4

10:00am Sewing Circle

Wednesday, August 5

2:30pm Staff Meeting

7:00pm AA Men Group

Thursday, August 7

10am Meditation

Saturday, August 9

9:30am Women for Sobriety

3:30pm Namaste Group

Sunday, August 10

10:00am Worship

11:15am Fellowship Hour

Monday, August 11

10:00am Sewing Circle

Wednesday, August 13

2:30pm Staff Meeting

7:00pm AA Men Group

Thursday, August 14

10:00am Meditation

Saturday, August 16

9:30am Women for Sobriety

Sunday, August 17

10:00am Worship

11:15am Fellowship Hour

Monday, August 18

10:00am Sewing Circle

Wednesday, August 20

2:30pm Staff Meeting

7:00pm AA Men Group

Saturday, August 23

9:30am Women for Sobriety

3:30pm Namaste

Sunday, August 24

10:00am Worship

11:15am Fellowship Hour

Monday, August 25

10:00am Sewing Circle

Wednesday, August 27

10:00am Parish Callers

All day Staff Retreat (off campus)

7:00pm AA Men Group

7:30pm Church Council

Saturday, August 30

9:30am Women for Sobriety

Sunday, August 31

10:00am Worship

11:15am Fellowship Hour

