

The Neighbor

The Orinda Community Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

November 2, 2009

How do you measure a year?

Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes,
Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred moments so dear,
Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes,
How do you measure, measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets, in midnights, in cups of coffee...in inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife...525,600 minutes, how do you measure a year in the life?

How about love.....

A few weeks ago Eli reminded me of this song ("Seasons of Love") from Jonathan Larson's 1996 Tony award winning musical "Rent." I can't help thinking about it in terms of my relationships here at our church, as it was just half a year ago that Frank asked me to become Director of Community life. I'd like to share with you how I measure these past few months.

In numbers of times Lexi and Katie danced in the aisles
In numbers of oranges delivered to the homeless by our children
In numbers of backpacks filled for the Garden Park apartments for at-risk kids
In numbers of collective gasps after Judy's cello solos
In numbers of times that I felt that I had the intellect of a flea compared to the others in the room, especially at Sue's Global Climate Change forum
In numbers of double takes I did when I saw Helen in the pew in October -- she was always poised and beautiful, but, my gosh, now she is a lady home from college
In numbers of roses on the altar recognizing a new baby in our church family

In numbers of times I thought that Amy was an angel on earth.

As we measure these minutes of our year, we're blessed that our congregation shares such a rich history to build on -- both recent history and history from a few years back. (I love it that Joy's name is connected with our bell and that Frank went to Cazadero as a child and helped build some of the cabins when he grew up!) I wonder which projects our children will take ownership of. Will it be, as John Kaiser suggested at our congregational meeting, that taking care of the earth will be our calling as Christians in this new millennium, just as Civil Rights advocacy grew from churches during the 60s. Time will tell.

Today I was struck by Jeff's comment at the congregational meeting: What does it mean to have reached our "maturity" and to grow, not necessarily in terms of numbers?

Here's the growth I'd like to see in the next six months:

More multigenerational interaction, especially in working together on ecotheological (GREEN!) and other outreach projects. (The kids are ripe --so to speak -- to help and I know all of you are as well.)

More pews being warmed up on Sundays. I'd also like to see a recommitment to try to get to church on Sunday. There is always something wonderful here. I recently heard a story on NPR about how kids are more stressed than ever because of pressure. (I cannot imagine the pressure of some of our previous generations who suffered through The Depression and wars, and yet, they coped) One NPR caller noted that part of the reason that today's kids children are totally overwhelmed is because there is little observation of a Sabbath, a day of rest. I invite you to claim a Sabbath for your family, to rest and play together with little structure, to have some down time and time for meditation and fellowship here at OCC. It would certainly be a good use of 60 minutes of those 525,600.

~ Leslie

A Physician's View of Health Care Reform

Dr. Morris Johnson will present "A Physician's View of Health Care Reform" on November 4th at the Wednesday morning Breakfast Group. All are invited to join us for breakfast at 7:00 AM, presentation begins at 7:30 AM. Those who do not attend regularly, please RSVP to 254-8754 so we can prepare enough food.

Climate Change Group



Come and share what you've been doing to change the social, political, economic or physical climate. This is the follow up to the three forums on climate change. We'll take turns sharing what we are doing or working on, the joys and the problems. The group will open and close with a prayer. Afterwards, seek out the people who are doing something you are interested in, or whom you can help or encourage. In this way, we'll support and motivate each other to step outside our comfort zones and get moving in all kinds of ways to meet the challenges of our changing world. Meet in the Fireside Room from 11:30-12 on the second Sunday of the month, starting November 8.



New Directory

Please call or email Dagmar in the church office, 925.254-4906, office@orindachurch.org with any additions or changes of your address, phone number or e-mail address. An updated directory will be available Nov.15.

Recent Sermons



by Frank Baldwin and Jeff Crews have been posted on our website www.orindachurch.org Hardcopies are also available in the Harland Hogue Library.

Forum "Forks in the Road"

At a forum following the worship service on November 22, Roger Samuelsen will reflect on a career spanning over 30 years with the University of California -- one that included his taking leading roles in the development of the University's Natural Reserve System and in the siting and early development of UC Merced.

What were the forks he took along the way to pursue a University career rather than the ministry, law, or even politics? What are some obstacles or challenges he had to overcome?

What are some of the lessons he learned? His presentation will be the second of what is envisioned as a series of reflections on careers.

Gary Nye inaugurated the series last Spring in sharing his journey as a psychiatrist.

Holden High Sunday

Sunday Nov. 15 will be OCC's annual Holden High Sunday. Holden faculty, students, parents and alumni will be our special guests in worship.

Our after-church fellowship time will be held downstairs in the Holden High Blue Room with refreshments provided by the Sewing Circle (which also meets in the lower hallway area.)

The always fascinating Holden High forum will be offered nearby in the school's new "blackbox" theater space.

Garden Park Apartments



Garden Park Apartments is the 28 unit Contra Costa Interfaith Housing facility for formerly

homeless families in Pleasant Hill.

Each month the tenants of Garden Park have a planning meeting and different faith communities provide dinner for approximately 35 residents who attend this community building meeting. Our congregation has volunteered to provide dinner for the Garden Park Apartment's Tenant's Meeting on Thursday, November 12th. If you can help with providing food for this meeting, please contact Liz Simmonds at 284-1314.

**Thank you,
Orinda Community Church!**

We recently donated 112 pounds of food, collected by members and friends of OCC, to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. With the holidays approaching, please keep your donations coming! A barrel for your nonperishable donations is located in the narthex.

The Food Bank specifically asks for

Canned Meat, Fish & Soups

Canned Ready to Eat Meals

Canned Vegetables & Tomato Products

Peanut Butter (plastic container)

Iron Rich Cereal (45% or more of daily value)

100% Fruit Juice (48 oz. or less plastic bottles)

Canned Fruit (in juice)

Dry Beans (any type)

Enriched Rice or Pasta

Powdered Milk

**eScrip Automatically
Support OCC When You Shop**



Sixty-one members of our church community currently participate, and raising \$1,685 during 2008 and \$614 in the first half of this year. About 85% of these funds come from Safeway purchases. In these tight budgetary times, eScrip is a great way to support OCC.

If you are not yet participating, please join the program. Signing up is easy. Contact Anne McCarten-Gibbs, at 388-0366 or anne@mccarten-gibbs.com with any questions.

If you are currently participating – thank you!

**Ongoing Lifelong Learning
Opportunities at OCC**

Monday Night Bible Study

meets from 7:00 to 8:00 pm each week in the Library and is led by Frank Baldwin..

Thursday Morning Bible Study

meets Thursdays at 10:30 am in the 6th floor conference room of Orinda Senior Village. The class is facilitated by Rev. Lee Cruise and is open to members and friends of our church and of Orinda Senior Village.

Theology Book Group

meets in the church library from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. Next meeting November 17. New book “A New Climate for Theology” by Sallie McFague.

Women’s Spirituality Group

This group meets the first and the third Saturday of every month at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room for fellowship and spiritual sharing.

Breakfast Group

The breakfast group meets every Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. in the Board Room for breakfast and discussion.

OCC's Sharing Circle

This informal fellowship group will meet Sundays at 9 a.m. We will share joys and concerns for the purposes of prayer and have a brief discussion of a topic of common interest. We know that our church is built on strong relationships. The objective of this group is simply for us to get to know each other better.



Vision Team 2010

Would you like to join the next OCC-based Vision Team scheduled to travel to Guatemala next April (April 6 – 15, 2010) under the auspices of Common Hope? During a Vision Team experience, you encounter a variety of work and earning activities designed to enhance your understanding of Guatemala and Common Hope's work. Possible activities include visiting families with a social worker, meeting with children you may be sponsoring, attending informal talks and discussions with staff members, sorting supplies in the warehouse, shelving books in the library, helping in a medical or dental clinic, building a house or wood-burning stove, and experiencing the culture and beauty of Guatemala first hand. The cost is \$1200/person plus airfare. Modest accommodations and most meals are provided at Common Hope's sites in Antigua and on the outskirts of Guatemala City. Generally, participants must be high school age or older. Non-OCC participants are most welcomed. More information may be found at: <http://www.commonhope.org/>. If are interested in participating or have any questions, contact either Roger Samuelsen (RogSam58@aol.com or 925/283-6071) or Lani Shepp (llshepp@comcast.net or 925/376-2835).

*"Integrity is doing the right thing,
even when no one is looking."*

Winter Nights Program



The Winter Nights Program started two weeks ago. It currently has 28 guests, (12 adults, 16 children.)

They need 7 car seats for the van which takes the children and their mothers to the Oasis Center for the day time program. If you have a car seat (any size) that is not being used, please call Betty Karplus 254-4970.



Wood for a fireplace or wood stove is available for picking up at Betty Karplus' residence. Pine and oak unsorted but cut in different sizes. Please call 254-4970

"Christmas Treasures and Traditions"

is the theme of the art display on the Doug Adams Gallery in our sanctuary beginning on November 21. We need to have members reflect on the important elements of their family Christmas celebrations. There will be space for manuscripts, music, poetry, photos or paintings and also a new opportunity for the display of three dimensional objects in shadow boxes which are 16" x 20" and 2 plus inches deep. Please contact Sue Boudreau, Joy Elkinton-Walker or Dorothy Davis to let us know the nature and size of items to be shared so that arrangements can be made for their display. Items need to be brought to the church by Nov. 15 for them to be mounted on Nov. 21.

→ **Children & Youth Corner** ←

YOUTH!!

**Rock Climbing on November 15 right after church!!!!
Don't miss this great event.**

Upcoming Events

**Don't forget our Advent Fair and carol sing!!! December 6
from 4-7. Please, call a neighbor and invite him/her to this
very sweet, meaningful event.**

**"Heartbeat of God: Making Whole Body
and Soul" with Rev. Kimberly Elliot
UCC/Disciples Women Joint
Winter Weekend Retreat
Whole Body and Soul" with Rev.
Kimberly Elliot**

Jan. 29-31, 2010 at Mercy Center in
Burlingame, CA

Great workshop opportunities; Wonderful
fellowship

For more information and registration form
go to www.ccncn.org

Discount Registration deadline is
NOVEMBER 2!

**FINAL REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 21, 2009!**

THE DANCERS CIRCLE

Performing

**Sunday, November 15, 2009 4:00 pm
@ Our Savior's Lutheran Church
in Lafayette www.oslc.net**

The program is part of a day-long celebration
of international mission and will include
dances to music from Hungarian, Amazonian
and Icelandic composers as well as spirituals,
the music of Bobby McFerrin, and
Riverdance.

The opening pieces will be from Benjamin
Britten's Ceremony of Carols - new on the
program will be several spirituals with
singer John Thomas and a heartrending
piece called *Prayer of the Children*.

**University Gospel Chorus, directed by D. Mark
Wilson Sunday, November 22 | 7 p.m. Hertz
Concert Hall**

Those Singin'Sistahs:

**A Thanksgiving Tribute to Women in Gospel
Music featuring**

Bay Area Gospel women artists

**Tickets required: \$15 general admission, \$10
UCB faculty/staff; non-UCB students; seniors;
groups 10+, \$5 UCB student**

**Diablo Women's Chorale Holiday Concert
Sunday, December 13, 3 PM
Trinity Lutheran Church
2317 Buena Vista Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA
Cost: \$12 adults; \$10 students**



Who Are We?

Jeff Crews, Pastoral Intern
(and New Member!)

Recently, I participated as a member of the Financial Status Study Group. In the process of sifting bleary-eyed through many dozens of pages of financial and demographic data, I came to see who Orinda Community Church is, at least from the perspective of data and numbers. Some of the data we uncovered was surprising, even to long-time church members. Who we *are* differs from who we *think* we are. Why?

I have been a member of three different UCC churches. Each church had a distinct identity or self-understanding of who it was and who it is. In each case, the self-identification was powerfully influenced by the congregation's past. Each congregation lived within a dominant cultural memory of its past identity and purpose. In each case, the congregation was much larger back in the 1970's. In each case, the church had been prominent in larger social and cultural leadership. In each case, the reality of today is very different from the reality of the past. However, each church still viewed itself culturally and systemically much as it had been forty years (and quadruple the membership) ago.

The cultural memory of our church has a powerful formative influence on our church today. This is wonderfully helpful because our cultural memory gives our church a sense of history, meaning, tradition and larger spiritual purpose. However, our cultural memories can also introduce unhelpful issues.

Maybe the successful way that “we have always done it,” (which worked well when we had 1000 members and hundreds in Sunday School), is not an appropriate way of dealing with our current membership of 266, 100 pledging families, and worship attendance of 100-125. Things change. Acknowledging who we are is an ongoing balance between who we remember ourselves to be spiritually and who we actually are today.

Acknowledging who we are does not limit our future, but places our future imagining within our real and honest context.

Will OCC be a church of 1000 members again? That is a good question, don't you think? As our re-envisioning process begins, so will our conversations about OCC's future. Who are we now? We are far more likely to fulfill our dreams if we stand on truthful and realistic ground today.

OCC FINANCIAL SPOTLIGHT, SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

2009 Pledges Received Through January 15, 2009	\$298,920.00
Additional Pledges Received Through August 15, 2009	\$33,490.00
TOTAL	\$332,410.00
Additional Pledges Needed to Balance 2009 Budget	\$1,486.00
2009 Pledges Budgeted	\$333,896.00

January - August Income/Expense

Income	\$284,433
Expense	\$246,113

At the Annual Meeting in January, the congregation approved an unbalanced budget. You can see from the information above, that in order to balance the 2009 Budget we will all need to consider what additional pledge commitment can be made for this year. Additional pledges of \$2,100 have been received during the past month for which we are grateful.

The mid-year report on Fundraising and Miscellaneous:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Received</u>
Fundraising	\$15,000	\$2,797
E-Script/Matching Funds	6,000	554
Miscellaneous	2,350	1,000

Please note that it is particularly important in this difficult financial year for installment pledge payments to be made during the year. This will help our cash position and enable expenses to be paid on a timely basis.

If you are able to increase your pledge, please deliver to Betty Karplus or Dagmar Slovak the pledge card included with the letter accompanying your mid-year financial statement to indicate the amount of your special 2009 pledge increase.

Reminder: For those of you interested in the escript program, please note that you have to sign up each year (with Safeway, etc.) to participate in the program. The sign up period is generally September-December.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daytime Savings Time ends	2	3 Election Day	4	5	6	7
11:30 Oktoberfest Silent Auction 	10 Sewing Circle 1:30 Staff meeting 7 Bible Study		7 Breakfast Group 11:45 Lifelong Learning 4 Worship & Music	10:30 Bible Study OSV		
8	9	10	11 Veterans Day <u>Office Closed</u>	12	13	14
11:30 Climate Change Group	10 Sewing Circle 1:30 Staff Meeting 7 Bible Study	9:30 Children & Youth Commission	7 Breakfast Group	10:30 Bible Study OSV		10:00 Women's Spirituality Group celebrates Kay James
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Holden High Sunday 11:30 Rock Climbing Adventure for Youth	10 Sewing Circle 1:30 Staff Meeting 7 Bible Study	7 Theology Book Club	7 Breakfast Group	10:30 Bible Study OSV		
22 Neighbor Deadline	23	24	25 Neighbor published	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28
11:30 Forum "Forks in the Road"	10 Sewing Circle 1:30 Staff Meeting 7 Bible Study		7 Breakfast Group 7:30 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at OCC	Thanksgiving 		
29 1. Advent	30					
	10 Sewing Circle 1:30 Staff Meeting 7 Bible Study					

Next Neighbor deadline: November 22
e-mail submissions to office@orindachurch.org, fax 925.254-1348