

# The Neighbor

## The Orinda Community Church

*An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

November 25, 2009

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### Frankly Speaking...

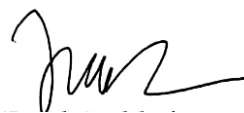
In some Christian traditions, the final 13 or 14 Sundays of the Church Year are designated as “Kingdomtide.” The “kingdom” referred to here is the kingdom of Heaven, the reign of God. The climax of Kingdomtide – the final Sunday of the Church Year – is called “Christ the King,” or “Reign of Christ.” After Reign of Christ Sunday the calendar resets itself, and the Church Year begins all over again with the First Sunday of Advent. By this historic formula, we here at Orinda Community Church have been living in Kingdomtide since the end of August; and last Sunday was Reign of Christ, the “New Year’s Eve” of the Church Year.

Sure enough, there are signs of the kingdom of Heaven wending its way into our life together at OCC. Our worship has been vital, our music has been flourishing, our ministry of education has been lively, our fellowship has been rich and spontaneous, and our opportunities for lifelong learning and service to others have been significant. The Spirit moves among us, in ways both obvious and mysterious. It has been a wonderful and productive season in our church, and I feel even more ready than usual for Thanksgiving this week! Allow me to comment on a few (of many) developments: Through the special fundraising efforts of the Dancers Circle (concert), our talented musicians (Candlelight Cabaret), John and Katrina Staten (Wine-Blending), and Sabine Hathaway’s Care & Fellowship Commission (Oktoberfest), augmented by several new and increased pledges, OCC could actually finish this recession year with a balanced budget. This would be an amazing accomplishment! Our 2010 Stewardship goal is now over the half-way mark, and again the signs are again both promising and hopeful.

Both Chrissy Shultz and Jeff Crews have been received “in care” of OCC as they continue their

journey of discernment and learning toward ordination. The Confirmation Class has also been on a journey of spiritual formation which will conclude on December 13. For others interested in becoming members of this family of faith, orientation meetings have been scheduled for late November and early December (see elsewhere in this *Neighbor*). We had a thoughtful and important Congregational Meeting last month about OCC’s long-range financial status and demographic trends. A Re-envisioning Steering Committee has been empowered to plan a multi-year church-wide process of congregational re-focusing and restructuring. Sue Boudreau led us through an insightful and moving series of seminars on Global Climate Change, and an OCC Climate Change Group is now meeting the second Sunday of each month. A new affordable senior housing development is going to be built on the old library site across Irwin Way from our lower campus, and OCC has been asked to play a minor but important role in the project. Eden Housing (builder/operator of the new facility) would like to lease a small portion of relatively level hillside to become a small parking area for users of Orinda Community Park and the Farmer’s Market. Our Church Council has engaged a Traffic Engineer to study and advise on this and related circulation issues along and adjacent to Irwin Way.

And though “Kingdomtide” is now over for another year, the kingdom of Heaven in all its grace and hopefulness is still coming in our midst. Let us rejoice!



## Stewardship Update

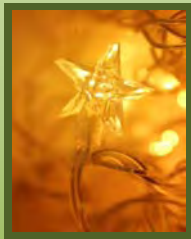
**For those of you who have already pledged, we are so very thankful.**

This last week you should have received the 2010 OCC Narrative Budget in the mail—we hope that it answered some questions, and maybe evoked some questions (contact the church office if you have not received it). For those of you who are still praying and pondering your pledge, we invite you to contact our Moderator Don Hitzl, Vice Moderator Nancy Peterson, Finance & Operations Chair Larry Shepp, Treasurer Dick Long, or Stewardship Chair Jeff Crews.

We are well on our way to making our goal, but now more than ever, *your* gift is essential!

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21.*

## OCC's annual Advent Celebration



**Please join us for a time of Christmas crafts, cuisine and caroling at OCC's annual Advent Celebration, Sunday, December 6 from 4-7.**

**This is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. Please invite your friends and neighbors. It's a potluck, so bring a dish to serve 10-12 people.**

**Suggested donation is \$5 per person with a maximum of \$20 per family. We look forward to seeing YOU at this very special annual tradition.**



## Steering Committee Begins Its Work on Re-envisioning Process for OCC

This committee, tasked by Church Council on October 28 to engage the congregation in a multi-year process to “re-envision, re-focus, and restructure Orinda Community Church,” held its first meeting on November 8.

The two-hour meeting centered on defining the task given to the group, gathering resources, and setting up a structure for the work. The committee agreed to meet once a month.

Ex-officio member Frank Baldwin shared highlights of a presentation given by Diana Butler Bass, an expert on church revitalization. Committee members are now reading her book, *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church Is Transforming the Faith*. Interested members of the congregation are encouraged to join us in reading this book.

Kurt Sunderbruch, chair of the committee, reported on a recent seminar given by Fred C. Plummer, president of the Center of Progressive Christianity, on the topic of growing a progressive church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He has shared the presentation slides with the rest of the committee.

Committee members, in addition to Frank and Kurt, include Jeff Crews, Sabine Hathaway, Anne Long, David Milnes, Susan Russell, Roger Samuelson, and Bob Winbigler. Susan Russell volunteered report regularly to the congregation on behalf of the committee (beginning with this report).



## Ongoing Lifelong Learning Opportunities at OCC

### Monday Night Bible Study

usually meets from 7:00 to 8:00 pm each week in the Library but will be taking a winter break from Nov. 30 through the month of December. The class is led by Frank Baldwin.

### Thursday Morning Bible Study

meets Thursdays at 10:30 am in the 6<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of Orinda Senior Village and is facilitated by Rev. Lee Cruise and is open to members and friends of our church and of Orinda Senior Village. The class will be on break from Dec. 17 to 31.

### Theology Book Group

meets in the church library from 7:00-8:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. Next meeting December 15. New book "A New Climate for Theology" by Sallie McFague.

### 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.

### Climate Change Group

This group meets every second Sunday of the month in the Fireside Room. 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. All are welcome!



## Poinsettia Order Form

By returning this form to the church office with your donation of \$15.00 per plant by Sunday, December 20, you will reserve a 6" poinsettia to be placed along the east side of the sanctuary under the stained glass windows or in the narthex on December 24, for the evening worship service. Please make check payable to "OCC" with the notation "FLOWER FUND".

In celebration of

In honor of

In memory of

Your Name

Number of plants ordered

Please pick up poinsettias after Dec. 24th service

## Directory Corrections

Mollie Blue  
mollie.blue@comcast.net

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Jane Bolin  
Aegis of Moraga  
950 Country Club Drive  
Moraga, CA 95616

## New Directory



Updated directories are available in the narthex and church office.

## FLU SEASON AT OCC

Due to concerns about the possible spread of H1N1 and seasonal flu, some may wish to refrain from shaking hands and exchanging hugs this winter. A simple word to that effect should be sufficient. Alternately, one may consider greeting OCC friends with a nod, a wink, a shoulder-bump, or the traditional Sanskrit blessing "Namaste" (a slight bow with the hands together as in prayer). Please feel free to frequently utilize the bottles of waterless hand sanitizer available throughout the church, and do stay home and get well if you feel sick!



Are you ready to claim your spiritual community? OCC gladly welcomes new members, and also encourages questions about what it means to belong to an inclusive and progressive Christian church. Pastor Frank Baldwin invites you to join a one and a half hour membership orientation group on Monday, November 30 at 7:00 p.m., repeating on Saturday, December 5 at 11:00 a.m. Both gatherings will be in the church office conference room. Childcare is available on request. Want more information? Talk to Frank: 925-254-4906 or [frank@orindachurch.org](mailto:frank@orindachurch.org). No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

**"Happiness always looks small while you hold it in your hands, but let it go, and you learn at once how big and precious it is."**

Maxim Gorky



**KAY AND DALTON JAMES**  
**December 13**



## → Children & Youth Corner ←



### **Kids Rock!!!!**

Thanks to Sue Boudreau for belaying the youth at Diablo Rocks in Concord last Sunday. It was a great outing for the youth and some kids tried climbing for the very first time.

Way to go Sara, Megan, Daniel, Charlie, Annie, Eli and Matthew! Peter was the rock, and you all are the boulders!!!!

Thanks also to Andy Weber for chaperoning.

### ***Calling all children and youth!***

Please join us in sharing the gift of music with the congregation and take part in the Children and Youth Christmas Choir.

We'll be singing in church on Sun., Dec. 20 and on Christmas Eve at the 5:30 service.

Practices are Nov. 29, Dec. and Dec. right after church and Dec. 20 at 9:15. a.m

We'd love to have your voice. Please let

Leslie now if you'd like to participate.



### **Tot Drop for the Holidays**

The Children and Youth Commission is sponsoring a parents' morning out on **Monday, December 21 from 10-12.**

Folks may drop of their child/ren for Christmas crafts and games while they finish last minute Christmas shopping. The youth will even provide a "Wrapping room" where you may wrap gifts in secret!!!Cost is \$10 per child with a \$20 maximum per family.

RSVP to Leslie O'Brien at

[ldarwinobrien@yahoo.com](mailto:ldarwinobrien@yahoo.com)

**Dec. 20**

**Warm socks for the Homeless**

**along with oranges and candy canes, will be delivered by our intergenerational carolers departing from the church at 11:30.**

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OCC FINANCIAL SPOTLIGHT, NOVEMBER 15, 2009

2009 Pledges Received Through November 15, 2009 \$332,410.00

The 2009 Pledge goal was \$333,896, and we came within \$1,496 of achieving that goal.

Fundraisers held this year contributed about \$16,000 to the budget.

January - October Income/Expense

Income	\$332,323
Expense	\$315,396

Through October, prorated income receipts are behind schedule, but prorated expenses are also under budget. If income receipts during the remainder of the year meet the budget amounts and expenses remain under budget, we may finish the year with a balanced budget.

The congregation has received two recent mailings pertaining to financial matters at OCC - the Financial Study Committee Report and the Narrative Income Budget for 2010. We hope that these items provide a clear picture of the current financial status of OCC, and our financial needs for 2010.

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 runs through December.

## **PICASSO AND PEOPLE OF FAITH**

Steve Sanchez, Minister-in-Training

I recently visited the Picasso art exhibition at SFMOMA. I am a person of faith (a seminary student) and I would like, in this article, to answer the question, 'Why is it important for people of faith to see the Picasso exhibition?'

In considering the above question I am drawn to the psychological effect of Picasso's paintings. Prof. Doug Adams said often that the painting do not necessarily have one meaning and thus encouraged us to look for our interpretation. I experience most of Picasso's paintings to be dream-like; they are disconcerting to me. I often wondered why he paints in such an unrealistic way. I realized that perhaps the abstract style allowed him to encompass multiple dimensions of a theme and thereby tell a bigger story. Taking in such a multidimensional, unrealistic image requires our subconscious mind to come into play. For example, two paintings that struck me the most at the show were *The shadow*, and *Minotaur Moving*. In *The Shadow*, a black, featureless figure is standing in front of a female nude that seems to be framed in a picture. The shadow affects the shape of the forms around it in a way that it couldn't realistically. Not only that, but as the audio guide explained, it appears to be looking at the picture of the nude in front of it. The theme and effect of this painting seems to me to be reflection. The dream-like quality along with the image of the shadow watching causes the viewer to use their subconscious and conscious mind to interpret what they are looking at. It also stimulated me to reflect on my own shadow self. This pinpoints the very reason why I believe people of faith should see Picasso. We are stimulated to integrate, confront, and process our humanity in a way that we normally wouldn't.

The *Minotaur Moving* had a similar effect on me. In this painting a Minotaur is pulling an old cart filled with objects, such as a large beautiful painting, a horse giving birth, a rope, a ladder and other items. The style of the painting is more aesthetically pleasing to me than most at the show, and it is also unrealistic, multidimensional and dreamlike.

The audio guide revealed that the *Minotaur Moving*, which is half man and half beast, represented Picasso. The genitals of the Minotaur were visibly hanging down. The audio guide also mentioned that the horse giving birth might have represented that Picasso's lover at the time was soon to give birth. The Minotaur seems happy with himself, having no shame of his animal nature and virility. He seems happy with the humble lot of his life he is laboring to move. After viewing these painting and others I found myself very reflective and even a little depressed. The picture stimulated me to confront my own unconscious body image and my 'lot' in life.

Art is a yoga in itself to execute and to experience. When I was writing my book, *Spiritual Perversion*, about my life in a cult, I had to delve deep into memory and relive experiences in order to present the whole sinister picture. The process was like mining a rich vein of gold; I was compelled to follow the veins of mind control, to fully expose it and thereby take charge of it. I didn't know it at the time, but in hindsight I could see that God was with me guiding the process the whole time. From this I realized that thought is rooted in feeling and affection, because as I felt and explored my feelings about a particular situation, a rush of ideas and memories came to me. I remembered all kinds of dialogue and important detail. Revealing the depth of the story and forming it into art was essential to healing trauma and making myself whole. This process I am describing, which I am sure goes further than I have described, points to the great value an artist like Picasso can have for religion and people of faith. His images bring to the surface themes in the psyche that we might not otherwise confront in our regular lives and religious lives.



WAVE

Women's Antique Vocal Ensemble

## *O, Holy Night*

WAVE is joined by the Schola Cantorum of  
St. Albert Priory in a concert of music for the  
Christmas season.

*The concert will include works from  
Libre vermell, MS Roll, Cancionero de Uppsala,  
Gregorian chant, music by Perotin, Morley, Morales,  
Billings, Adam, Rutter, Holst, and traditional Christmas carols.*

**Friday, December 18, 2009 at 8:00 p.m.**  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley  
General \$15 / Students & Seniors \$5

FOR MORE INFO: [www.wavewomen.org](http://www.wavewomen.org) / [women@nctzcro.net](mailto:women@nctzcro.net) / 510-233-1479

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

# December 2009

Worship Sundays at 10 a.m.  
Fellowship Hour 11:15 a.m. BOLD times indicate p.m.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b> <i>World Aids Day</i> 	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> <i>Confirmation group overnight</i>
		9:30 Children & Youth Commission	7 Breakfast Group 11:45 Lifelong Learning	10:30 Bible Study OSV		10:30 Membership orientation
<b>6</b> <b>2. Advent</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4</b> <i>Annual Advent Celebration</i> 	10 Sewing Circle <b>12:30</b> Staff Meeting		7 Breakfast Group <b>7:30</b> Pastoral Relations	10:30 Bible Study OSV		
<b>13</b> <b>3. Advent</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
11:30 Climate Change Group 11:30 Farewell to Kay & Dalton James	10 Sewing Circle <b>12:30</b> Staff Meeting	<b>7</b> Theology Book Club	7 Breakfast Group <b>7:30</b> Church Council	9:30 Parish Callers		
<b>20</b> <b>4. Advent</b> <i>Neighbor Deadline</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <i>Neighbor published</i>	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve	<b>25</b> Office Closed	<b>26</b>
	<b>10-2 TOT DROP ~ Parents Morning out</b> 10 Sewing Circle <b>12:30</b> Staff Meeting		7 Breakfast Group	<b>5:30</b> Candlelight Service	 <i>Merry Christmas</i>	
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Office closed	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	New Year's Day Office closed <b>1</b>	
			7 Breakfast Group			

Next Deadline for next *Neighbor* submissions: January 24  
email: [office@orindachurch.org](mailto:office@orindachurch.org) or fax 925/254-1348