

The Neighbor

The Orinda Community Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 2011

*The Spirit of Christmas is Peace,
The Gladness of Christmas is Hope,
And the Heart of Christmas is Love.*

*Wishing you the many Blessings of Christmas
now and throughout the Year.*

Your OCC Staff Team

*Frank Lee Leslie O. Dion Leslie M.
Dagmar David Liz*

Christmas Eve December 24

"Our Church Family Christmas Eve"

5:30 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary with the Chancel Choir and our soloists. Liz Armstrong preaches the Christmas Story. Become part of the Timeless Story yourself in OCC's famous reverent and spontaneous home-made Christmas pageant drawn from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Join in the inspiring candle-lit Circle of Light. All ages are welcome!

Christmas Day December 25

"A Story of Great Joy"

10 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary on this most special of mornings. Lots of wonderful carol singing and Frank Baldwin shares "A Storyteller's Christmas."

Our Christmas Offerings

The Christmas Story tells of us of the bringing of extraordinary gifts to one born poor and in great need. So too, we invite your gift to help support the vital mission of Contra Costa STAND! For Families Free of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse. Special envelopes will be available for our Christmas Offerings. The Food Bank of Contra Costa-Solano Counties also needs donations of unopened, un-expired, non-perishable food at this season. Bring these to place in the barrel located in the narthex.

New Year's Day January 1

"A Story for the Journey"

10 a.m. Begin the New Year around the Labyrinth in Fellowship Hall for Taizé music and the Sacrament of Communion. Leslie Moughty preaches on Matthew 2:1-15.

Walk the Labyrinth. Dec. 29-Jan. 1

Rest your soul, reflect on the year, and enjoy quiet meditation walking the Labyrinth in the peaceful winter twilight of Fellowship Hall. 1-4 p.m. Thurs.-Fri., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sat., as well as Sunday morning.

AN UPDATE TO THE CONGREGATION CONCERNING THE SENIOR HOUSING COMMUNITY PARKING PROPOSAL

Late in November, Orinda Community Church was notified that the City of Orinda has reached a decision not to pursue a diagonal street parking option for providing additional community parking once the new affordable senior housing is built on the former Orinda Library site. Both the City and Eden Housing, Inc. were initially intrigued with the diagonal parking idea and jointly commissioned an exploratory land survey and conceptual drawings, as well as financial, design and traffic studies. OCC representatives were asked for their opinions about the potential impact on the church and the Irwin Way community, and it may be reasonably assumed that the Fire Department, Citi Bank, Safeway, and City Council were also consulted.

Eden Housing Inc. and the City Attorney have now been directed to proceed with negotiations to build the new 10-space community parking area on the previously designated lower-hillside site to be leased from OCC. With the City's decision made, the path is clear for Finance and Operations Commission chair and Church Counsel Larry Shepp to begin a thorough review of proposed agreements with Eden and City once these are completed. Our church council and staff hope that everyone will now be ready to refocus on the hillside parking site, with the objective of making it a real asset to both the community and the congregation. Additional information about the parking proposal is available in the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) insert published in last month's *Neighbor*, still available from the church office and the website www.orindachurch.org.



CIRCLE OF LIFE

Congratulations to Choir Section Leader Nik Nackley and his spouse on the birth, December 1st, of a splendid baby girl, Josephine Estelle.

RE-VISITING RE-ENVISIONING AT OCC

Following the adoption in October of OCC's landmark Vision Statement, members and friends of the church were invited to sign up to participate in the next stage of our ongoing re-envisioning process as member of one of six small "working groups." Each working group is tasked with gathering new ideas and ways of thinking about some important aspect of our congregation's life and mission as highlighted in the Vision Statement. The six working groups are as follows: *Evangelism & Outreach, Governance & Leadership, Justice & Mercy, Resources & Facilities, Spiritual Formation, and Worship Practices*. Thus far, over 40 individuals have signed-up to take part, and at least one group is full and already meeting. More information about the 2011 Vision Statement may be found on-line at www.orindachurch.org. Anyone interested in being on a working group should turn in a sign-up form (available in the narthex and the church office) as quickly as possible.

ANNUAL MEETING REPORTS

OCC's 73rd Annual Meeting and luncheon will be Sunday, **January 22** after church. Officers and Commission Chairs please email your report to office@orindachurch.org **by January 8.** Thank you!

GOSH Gifts

Did you receive a GOSH gift for Christmas? A What?? A Gosh gift is ***“My GOSH, I never wear that color,” or “Gosh, what were they thinking?” “Good GOSH, that’s not my size!” “GOSH, what am I going to do with that? I already have three of these!”*** Bring your GOSH gifts to Fellowship Hour after church on January 8, unwrapped and put a price on them. We will try to sell them and all the proceeds will go to the church. Call Rudi with questions 254-5585.

Health Care Reform- Part II

It has been a little over a year since we had a forum on the [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#) which became law in March 2010. How is it going? Have there been any changes regarding accessibility, affordability, or quality of care that you have experienced or know about? Are there problems with the law that worry you? How do you feel about the challenge to the laws provisions pending in the US Supreme Court? We will have some of our previous panelists return and maybe some new ideas from other participants **after worship on Sunday, January 8th**. Hope you will come and enjoy the conversation. Your opinions and questions are welcome.

SENIOR CONNECTION

is now meeting in the Dining Room at Orinda Senior Village the first Wednesday of the month at 10am. The Dining Room is bright and spacious with comfortable chairs. It is reached by elevator one flight down to level 4. (There is a stairway as well, just off the lobby.) We gather near the piano and have fun singing with large print hymnals. We meet for an hour or so with Lee Cruise for fellowship, Bible study, story-telling and singing. In December we sang Christmas songs and carols from around the world. The sound of Senior voices is wonderful, wafting across the Dining Room and Lobby. Seniors...Join us! **Our next gathering will be Wednesday, January 4 at 10am in the OSV Dining Room.**

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Women Helping Women thank you for your generous support of the needy Ugandan business women by purchasing their lovely handmade jewelry. Proceeds from the 2 sales we have this year were over \$3500. These proceeds support the women’s businesses and contribute to costs for secondary school education for needy Ugandan girls. At the Workshop following this Sale, we discussed the importance of girls becoming educated beyond elementary school. In this troubled nation, education offers a main pathway of hope, especially for the girls, who are seriously deprived of these educational opportunities.



Women Helping Women are now preparing for **WEAR RED FOR WOMEN’S HEART HEALTH MONTH**. The month of February is designated by the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association as a time of awareness and action in behalf of women’s heart health. We will have a presentation following worship with information about heart health, and in particular as it pertains to women.

Please mark Sunday **FEBRUARY 5** following worship on your calendar. And, let’s all **WEAR RED** that day!

Lifelong Learning Opportunities at OCC

Tuesday Night Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 7 pm in the church library and is led by Frank Baldwin. All are welcome! Next meeting is **January 10**.

Senior Connection Monthly gathering for fellowship and Bible study, led by Lee Cruise. We are meeting in the Dining Room of Orinda Senior Village at 10am. All Seniors are invited to attend. Next meeting is **January 4**.

OCC Theology Book Club Our next meeting will **January 16** at 7 pm in the church library. We are reading *Steps to a compassionate Life* by Karen Armstrong

All Right Now

by Leslie O'Brien

A few years ago I was lucky enough to hear Doug Adams talk about Christo's art. The Gates project had just occurred in Manhattan and Doug showed stunning slides of the orange sheets wafting through the trees. He also shared pictures of the Christo's white sheets cutting through California's golden hills, umbrellas dotting the coast, and even a picnic with Christo and Doug and their wives. (How blessed we are to have had Doug Adams in our midst. How wonderful that we honor him with our art gallery.) While I loved seeing the slides, my main take away from Doug's enthusiastic talk was the idea that Christo did installation art -- art that could only be seen at a certain time and in a certain place. He brought to the forefront the idea that the only second we have is now. If you didn't make the EFFORT to see the Gates in Manhattan or the umbrellas in California, it was too bad, because that moment would never occur precisely that way again.

I feel that our church is at one of those seminal moments. We have an opportunity for leadership AGAIN. I am so proud to be affiliated with folks who set the standard so high -- who are not afraid of a challenge, or even controversy. Jesus wasn't afraid of controversy.

Many years ago, Orinda Community Church led the way with affordable senior housing: Orinda Senior Village. When the City Council asked the Interfaith Council to take on the temporary housing of homeless families, we led the way again -- with meetings in our sanctuary and the foundation of Winter Nights. Now we have another unique calling. Leslie Moughty has introduced our church to OWL, Our Whole Lives curriculum -- a sex ed course that focuses on self-worth, sexual health, responsibility, justice and inclusivity. It seems to be the next logical step to our Open and Affirming statement. This kind of course is not being offered in our community and OCC again has an opportunity to lead. I know that this is a challenging, uncomfortable topic, but our children face unprecedented health issues if we do not offer them some guidance. It is not the way it was when we were kids....but we have the

opportunity to give our community kids the best chance available for a healthy and happy life. Our church supports our kids with prayer, with extra aunts and uncles, with opportunities for service and with learning about Jesus. Is God calling you to jump in at this time in history to help?

Christo made the gates in New York's Central Park that one time in history. Christ offers us opportunities to serve. Right now.

Mark your calendars

- **December 23** Sandwiches to the homeless. Meet at church at 2:00. We'll head to People's Park after we make sandwiches.
- **Christmas Eve 5:30** Pageant and Candlelight Service. Invite your friends. All are welcome!
- **January 27-29** OWL Training at OCC
- **February 25-27** 34 Hours of Service -- teens to San Francisco to serve the homeless

Thank you to all who contributed to the UCC Mission1 Food Drive in November we were able to donate

279 pounds of food

to the Food Bank in Concord!

A barrel for your continuing donations is always located in the narthex



What do OWLs have to do with Sexuality?

In cultures worldwide, the owl is a symbol of wisdom, intuition, mystery, protection, messages and change.

You may have noticed the word “OWL” popping up in newsletters and around the church. A few hand-made paper owls have also started to appear around the OCC campus and like their tree-dwelling brothers and sisters they have arrived with a message. That message is about a new program coming to

Orinda Community Church called *Our Whole Lives* or “OWL.”

What is Our Whole Lives?

OWL is a comprehensive and progressive sexuality curriculum developed by the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association. The curriculum is based on the Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education produced by the National Guidelines Task Force, a group of leading health, education and sexuality professionals assembled by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. The curriculum itself is written in a completely non-religious manner. A faith component can be layered to each session if desired.

Our church is going to be teaching about Sex?

Yes! Starting in February, Our Whole Lives, helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their relationships, health and behavior in the context of their faith. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. It provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills and understand the social, emotional and spiritual aspects of sexuality.

This program sounds great! How can my teen participate?

The program being offered in the spring is for teens in 8th and 9th grades. It will run for 13 weeks starting February 8th and ending May 9th with a week off for spring break. Two day-long Saturday retreats are also planned with dates depending on participant availability. The teens are expected to attend all sessions out of respect for the cohesion of the group and each week is packed with activities and information they won't want to miss!

How can adults get involved?

If you are interested in becoming a certified OWL facilitator, a training weekend will be taking place Friday January 27-Sunday January 29. People from other congregations are also attending this training, coming from as far away as Utah for this unique opportunity! Contact the church office for more information.

We also need support in many different ways from the rest of the congregation. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Make a meal for the training weekend.
- Provide homestay lodging for an out-of town trainee.
- Contribute financially to help trainees who can't afford the registration fee (like starving seminary students!)
- Spread the word! Teens in the greater community are more than welcome to participate.

- Pray. The topic of sexuality can be a difficult one to teach and learn. We ask for your prayers of support.
- There are probably ways you can help that we haven't thought of yet. **Contact Leslie Moughty or Leslie O'Brien** if you want to support the program in a capacity not listed or if you want us to add you to our contact list when new possibilities arise.



The Our Whole Lives program has the potential to change lives. Pastor Frank, Leslie O'Brien, the Children and Youth Commission and the Endowment Board have all blessed and endorsed this program being offered at OCC. Since this program has not been offered here before, here are a few testimonials to give you some context of the impact this program can have...

"Don't ever stop offering Our Whole Lives at church. I took it when I was in junior high and I think it saved my life. Every kid should see themselves the way Our Whole Lives sees them."

- High School student

"OWL is quickly becoming the best youth ministry in our church. Our youth group has tripled in size - and some of their parents are now joining the church."

- Pastor

"If I had this information two years ago, I may not have made some of the choices I've already made."

-A fifteen-year old student

"To offer sexuality education in a congregation is to acknowledge that human sexuality is simply too important, too beautiful, and too potentially dangerous to be ignored in a religious community."

-Rev Lena Breen, Boston



Are you traveling through the Central Valley? Please consider a stop in Merced, CA to visit the new venture of Kurt Winbigler and his co-owner, Melissa

Eisner, Coffee Bandits. It is a coffee shop serving local grounds from Modesto, teas from Fresno, and sweets from a local Merced bakery, as well as handmade, fresh sandwiches. They host local groups needing meeting space as well as aspiring new, local musical groups. Located at 309 W. Main Street just off MLK Jr Way, it is easily found from 99 S taking Exit 187B. Website:

<http://coffeebanditscafe.com>

Please LIKE them on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/CoffeeBandits

Steve's Handyman Service

I have 30 years experience in all phases of construction. I have graduated from PSR, was ordained this summer, and finished my residency at the hospital. I am currently looking for work in the ministry, and also do repair projects. I do good, caring work at a good price. I do plumbing, electrical, framing, stucco and termite repair, drainage, roof repair, sheetrock, decks, fences, landscape, irrigation, doors and windows, tile, concrete, cabinet refurbishing, granite countertops, demo, and other things. We are friendly, kind guys who will give you great service. I can usually tell you ahead of time what your project will cost. Thank you. Steve Sanchez 510 685 0046 (References available)

OCC FINANCIAL SPOTLIGHT DECEMBER 15, 2011

January - November 2011 Income/Expenses

Near the end of November, the computer in the finance office reached the end of its useful life and needed to be replaced. This was promptly done with the delivery of a new computer and attendant software on December 1st. The cost of the computer, and software has been paid by OCC Endowment, and installation of the equipment will be shortly completed. Until then, the Income/Expense figures at the end of November are not available. At the end of October, income for the year exceeded expenses by \$17,000.

As a reminder, if you are paying your 2011 pledge in installments, please plan on completing installment payments in December.

Current 2012 stewardship status —

- The budget for 2012 is balanced at \$411,830 income and \$411,830 expense.
- Income, other than pledges, is \$93,000, slightly above 20%
- Pledge income and gifts goal is \$319,000, about 80%

As of December 11th we have received 86 pledges for \$239,190, which is 75% of the pledge goal. We anticipate that the income, other than pledges, is accurate, which means that we need an additional \$79,000 in pledges and gifts to balance the budget and avoid cuts in our programs and activities.

Last year OCC received about 105 pledges, and telephone calls are being made to those members and friends of OCC who have not submitted a 2012 pledge card to date.

"Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man".
~ Benjamin Franklin

January 2012

Every Sunday: Worship at 10. Fellowship Hour at 11

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7
9:15 Reflection Café open 10 Worship	Office Closed		7 Breakfast Group 7 Lifelong Learning			
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9:15 Reflection Café open 10 Worship 11:30 Forum: Health Care Reform II	10 Sewing Cir. 11 Staff meeting	7 PM Bible Study	7 Breakfast Group			
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
9:15 Reflection Café open 10 Worship	Office closed 10 Sewing Circle	7 PM Bible Study	7 Breakfast Group 7 Worship & Music			
22 <i>Neighbor Deadline</i>	23	24	25 Neighbor published	26	27	28
9:15 Reflection Café open 10 Worship 11:30 Annual Meeting	10 Sewing Circle 11 Staff meeting	7 PM Bible Study	7 Breakfast Group 7:30 pm Church Council	9:30 Parish Callers		10 Women helping Women
29	30	31				
9:15 Reflection Café open 10 Worship	10 Sewing Circle 11 Staff meeting	7 PM Bible Study				

Next Neighbor deadline: **January 22** (one week later) Please submit your articles to office@orindachurch.org
All submissions subject to editing.