

# The Neighbor

## The Orinda Community Church

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

November 2011

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Frankly Speaking...

Thanksgiving week is a time of turning for me. The great Protestant “heritage month” cycle that stretches from Reformation Sunday at the end of October to Pilgrim Sunday at the end of November has run its course. Christmas and the New Year are coming across the horizon at break-neck speed. Even this mellow autumn weather is slipping gradually away into what passes for “winter” in California. The heart notices these changes, and turns with them.

The worship cycles of spiritual communities also reflect the changes of season. Long before there was Christianity or even Judaism, the ancients invented rites to commemorate the celestial solstices and equinoxes, and developed symbol systems around the profound rhythms of light and darkness, warmth and coldness, birth-life-death, and rebirth again. So, in the traditional liturgical calendar of the Christian church, this coming Sunday, November 20 would be the end of the old year. It would be the final Sunday in the long season of Pentecost which began last June, designated as “Kingdomtide,” or the “Festival of Christ the King” in the older lectionaries. And, particularly appropriate to a time of inward and seasonal turning, the following Sunday, November 27 in our current calendar, would be the first Sunday in the season of Advent, the beginning of a new church year.

The mood of Advent is anticipation, and its purpose is preparation for the rebirth of the Christian spirit within our lives and the life of the world. These Sundays leading up to Christmas always make me glad to be part of a worshipping community, because I know I need to be among people who understand and share the sense of spiritual longing and expectation that I feel during these darkening weeks when it seems somehow most obvious just how urgently we need the Light. Be in touch with your own inward turning, and be in church to celebrate it in worship, music and preparation.

~Frank



### Upcoming Family Friendly Events

- Sunday, December 4** Advent Celebration -- crafts, caroling and cuisine. Join us for this annual traditions from 4-7.
- Sunday, December 11** Confirmation Sunday
- Sunday, December 18** at 1:00. Caroling at Orinda Convalescent Home on Altarinda Rd.
- Friday, December 23** Sandwiches to homeless. Meet at Orinda Community Church at 2:00
- Saturday, January 14** Watch Night Service at Grace Cathedral for issues of justice
- Sunday, January 15** Confirmation Sunday
- February 25 and 26** --34 hours of service. Teen overnight to serve the homeless in San Francisco

## BEADED JEWELRY SALE

**Women Helping Women** is sponsoring another **Handmade Beaded Jewelry Sale** on

**Sunday, November 27 following worship**



Just in time for Christmas shopping, this **Jewelry Sale** will provide an opportunity to support impoverished Ugandan women with their handmade, high-quality beaded jewelry.

The event will also feature a **Workshop on Empowerment of Girls Through Education**. A portion of the proceeds from the Bead Sale will be designated for the BeadforLife Girls' education program.

BeadforLife is a socially responsible global organization, working with women, all of whom were living on less than \$1 a day in extreme poverty. BeadforLife has partnered with industrious women in Uganda who make vivid beaded jewelry from recycled paper.

**Women Helping Women** held a similar Jewelry Sale last June, which was warmly received and supported by our congregation. Come! Bring your friends for this very special occasion.

The Women helping Women group will also be selling beads at OCC's Advent celebration on December 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-7

More information contact Melody Ferreira or Lee Cruise at the church office.

## Hello Everyone,

I want to say again how much I appreciate the hospitality that many of you have shown by opening your homes to me on Sunday nights. It has been such a joy to be with you in your "natural habitats"; to share a meal, meet friends and family and just to have this unique opportunity to connect with you in this way.

This semester has flown by, and Christmas approaches with exams, papers, and presentations due. Sundays at Orinda Community Church have become the highlight of my week. Your warm welcome and encouraging support for my emerging ministry continues to dispel any doubts I may have about God's call.

The most challenging part of this semester has been a rather discouraging job search. Being off this summer to take care of my husband has made "re-entry" into the nursing field difficult. I think if all else fails, I may use my experience and expertise in sleeping in various beds on Sunday nights, to apply for a job at "Sleep Train." I believe that I have become an expert in getting a good night's sleep almost anywhere!

Peace,

Liz Armstrong  
Pastoral Intern

**Updated 2011  
Directories  
are available  
at the church  
office!**

# Poinsettia Order Form

By returning this form to the church office with your donation of \$15.00 per plant by **Sunday, December 11** you will reserve a Poinsettia to be placed in the narthex for the Christmas Eve 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

## The Doug Adams Sanctuary Gallery at the Orinda Community Church presents "Peace on Earth" a solo mixed media exhibit by Karl Schonborn



Karl L. Schonborn and his wife Leslie have been members of the Orinda Community Church since 1993. Karl, a sociologist and professor is also an artist. Schonborn has studied with a number of artists, including Marshall Glasier of the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, Ivan Majdrakoff of the San Francisco Art Institute, and Howard Brodie of the Academy Art College.

The images (and statements) created by Karl Schonborn are clearly influenced by his being both a sociologist and artist. His drawings and paintings deal with social issues such as conflict, violence, and inequality, as well as sociological concepts such as alienation, charisma, and deviance. In venues across the U.S., Schonborn has had seven One-Man Shows and participated in five Group Shows. In the past he has been represented by Werbin Gallery in New York City.

The next show in The Doug Adams Sanctuary Gallery will be opening on December 4th with an artist's reception following church. Recently Karl met with Gwen McNeilus and gave these answers to her questions.

Q: How did you first get started and what fed your passion for artistic expression? A: **As a ploy to get me to speech therapy in the first grade, my mom arranged for me to take an art class immediately after each session. We kids wore smocks, and confronted seemingly giant easels with red, yellow and blue poster paint. My cleft palate meant I wasn't reliably oral or aural, and so I developed my visual skills. I guess I got reinforced enough in later sketching and painting classes that I got hooked.**

**Q:** Your previous exhibit was “Angels and Demons” and the majority of this show features images of Gandhi. What do you base most of your work around? **A:** **Much of my art career has paralleled my academic career ...with a focus on nonviolence and violence, including homicide, revolution, and war and efforts to ameliorate these.**

**Q:** This exhibit will display a trio of images including Gandhi, Jesus, and St. Francis. These are frequently viewed as a free standing triptych which allows the display of two additional images; Martin Luther King Jr. and A.J. Muste. What do these five men have in common? **A:** **The five men shared a commitment to nonviolence, which many people have had throughout history. However, what set these five apart was they also shared a commitment to change--to shaking up the status quo--but without resorting to violence in the process.**

**Q:** How have these radical nonviolent peacemakers influenced your position on social issues? **A:** **They’ve underscored the importance of keeping the ends in mind as we choose the means to advance social issues and social justice. We must not be hypocritical and indulge in violence, anti-democratic practices, etc. as we engage in peacemaking. Ditto for peacekeeping and peacebuilding.**

**Q:** Is the broader statement delivered in the exhibit one of peace? **A:** **Yes**

**Q:** “*Peace on Earth*” gets a lot of lip service during the holiday season. What is it going to take to move society as a whole closer to that vision? **A:** **Tough question and complicated, too. The short answer might be that the world won’t be peaceful as long as 1% (or even 20 to 40%) gets the lion’s share of the goodies in various societies. The Occupy movement is on to something. I just hope it can adhere to democracy and nonviolence.**

**Q:** What message do you want people viewing your work to walk away with? **A:** **I trust that everyone will come away with differing impressions and meanings. Good art should allow people to come to their own conclusions and interpretation.**

Opening on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> and running through Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
“*Peace on Earth*” will be open to the public by appointment. Please call Dagmar @ 925-254-4906 to make arrangements to access the gallery.  
**Thank you!**



### **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!

**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. Next Meeting: December 7. All Seniors are invited to attend.

**OCC Theology Book Club** Our next meeting will **November 21** at 7 pm in the church library. We are reading *The Heart of Democracy* by Parker Palmer.

## **UPDATED FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) about the proposed parking relating to the new Irwin Way Affordable Senior Housing**

### **1. Why does the Church Council think this is important for OCC?**

First, we seek to be instruments of God's justice and mercy in the world. The cause of affordable housing with dignity has been part of our mission, and the church is committed to direct engagement, welcoming the less-affluent as neighbors in our community. As part of OCC's commitment to inclusion and diversity we are pleased that our involvement in OSV and the new housing project provides an outreach to elders, and their families, from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and cultures, modeling God's love to many who would otherwise be excluded from the Orinda community. Facilitating affordable housing is in our calling.

Second, we wish to promote the use of Community Park and its facilities for rest and recreation, music, drama, and children's play. This engages the community in enjoyment of each other's company and enjoyment of God's creation.

Third, the parking utilizes an underused part of our campus, relatively far removed from the core of our church activities, to provide a visible and tangible benefit for the greater community. This strengthens our connections to our neighbors and our city.

Finally, through our cooperation with the City of Orinda and Eden Housing, LLC, we have negotiated additions to the design that benefit OCC, TOPS, Holden High School and OSV, and are able to gain needed site improvements whose costs would otherwise be borne by OCC.

The overarching consideration of the council has been to choose the action that best demonstrates God's love. OCC is not simply a benevolent society, or a cultural club that gathers to enjoy music in a beautiful building, but a community of God's people working to carry out God's will in the world.

### **2. How did OCC get involved in this at all?**

The proposed project began because the new Wilder development places the City of Orinda out of compliance with state and federal affordable housing guidelines required to continue receiving funding for local road repair and maintenance (currently valued at \$300,000 annually). As part of remediation for the Wilder project, the city envisioned a smaller companion facility to OSV that could be located on the vacated site of the old library. OCC was contacted as a representative of the neighbors of the new project, and Frank Baldwin served on the city committee that recommended Eden Housing as the senior housing developer. Frank, with support and consultation of the church council, advocated throughout the city planning process for the interests of OCC, our neighbors, and our tenants. The developments of the project have been regularly outlined in *The Neighbor* and discussed in public meetings at the church.

### **3. Why a parking lot?**

The senior housing facility must be large enough to be financially viable (i.e., 67 units). Even on this modest scale (OSV is 150 units) it will eliminate the old library parking lot used by visitors to Orinda Community Park. Consequently, the City has required Eden Housing to mitigate this loss by providing alternate parking. The council views this as a mission opportunity, to use OCC resources to facilitate affordable senior housing in our community.

#### **4. What would be involved with a lease agreement?**

If agreement is reached among the three parties, OCC will eventually have two agreements: one with Eden Housing and the other with the City. Under the first, Eden, entirely at its own cost, will construct the parking lot and make related site improvements in accordance with the requirements of the Orinda Municipal Code and the provisions negotiated with OCC. Under the second, OCC will lease the land to the City of Orinda and the City will maintain the parking lot for the duration of the lease.

#### **5. What would be the value of the lease to OCC?**

Due to City budget constraints and the fact that the new affordable senior housing will be revenue neutral, there will not be cash payments associated with this lease agreement. However, in addition to the community and mission values described above, OCC will receive a number of desirable in-kind benefits from the parking lot construction, including:

- A sidewalk will be constructed on the north side of Irwin Way connecting Orinda Way with the new parking area as well as the existing church lot used by Holden High School
- The difficult entrance to the Holden High School parking lot would be improved
- Several of the large aging Monterey Pines on the lower hillside will be removed
- The Holden parking lot will be resurfaced and re-stripped

Eden Housing estimates its *marginal* cost to implement these improvements, including the new community parking area itself, at \$150,000.

#### **6. Doesn't the City have millions of dollars from Wilder?**

No matter how much the City may wish otherwise, money that comes to them is often encumbered at its source. For example, the Wilder developers were required to pay Orinda a substantial amount that was earmarked for City improvements within the new development, as well as the two million dollars that must be spent for affordable housing. The reality is that none of this, however, is available to pay a cash lease to OCC.

#### **7. What matters remain to be negotiated?**

Larry Shepp, church counsel and chair of the Finance and Operations Commission, is our primary authorized representative in the on-going negotiations with Eden Housing and the City of Orinda. Recognized issues include the following:

- The City customarily enters into leases of long duration (50 years, for example). OCC wants a much shorter lease period, in order to preserve our flexibility with regard to any potential re-use of this land in the future.
- OCC is interested in ensuring that concepts of sustainability and low environmental impact are incorporated into this project as much as possible. Both Eden Housing and the City of Orinda profess to be committed to these standards as well.
- OCC wants to make sure that the church is fully indemnified against any loss associated with the parking lot, either during its construction or in operation under terms of the lease.
- Provision for the maintenance of utilities serving the parking lot will be negotiated. OCC expects the City to provide electricity to the site for low-impact lighting. OCC's existing irrigation system – re-routed and improved as necessary by Eden Housing – will continue to serve the lower hillside.

**UPDATE:** During the October 16 informational meeting, a proposal came from Joy Elkinton-Walker and Teeb Thomas that diagonal parking on Orinda Way be considered as an alternative. The City had seemed disinclined to pursue widening Orinda Way. After the meeting, Frank Baldwin outlined the street parking idea in a letter to the City Manager, Janet Keeter, and asked her to investigate the possibilities. He noted that the church leadership and the council did not advocate diagonal parking, and in his role as representative of our neighbors and tenants, he also described what he viewed as potential negative impacts to the Irwin Way community from such an alternative. At the same time, Carl Walker independently (without consultation or authorization from the council) lobbied other city administrators in favor of a street parking option.

The city is now considering a counterproposal to *narrow* Orinda Way by removing the center turn lane, making room for up to 12 diagonal parking spots on Orinda Way between Irwin Way and Camino Sobrante. This would probably not require use of OCC land; however, neither would it give OCC as direct an engagement in the affordable housing mission. There are potential negative impacts on the Irwin Way residents from the restriction in access that would result from losing the center turn lane at the same time that traffic into Irwin Way is increased by the new senior housing facility. There may be objections from other neighbors that the City will need to consider and mitigate. Finally, of course, it is possible that few, if any, of the negotiated benefits to OCC (see **5** above) will be part of the counterproposal.

The OCC negotiating team has worked to balance our mission and the various needs of our congregation, the Irwin Way neighbors, and the community. Now with the new counterproposal the City Council will decide which course it will pursue.

#### **8. Why didn't I hear about this before?**

The negotiations and the planning were publicized through the normal church channels (the *Neighbor*) and in public meetings held at the church, but the council had relatively little feedback from the congregation. As substantially more detailed plans have become available over the past summer, the council and church staff have advocated an aggressive effort to make these details widely known in the congregation and provide opportunities for questions, comments and suggestions.

#### **9. What happens if we don't let the parking lot be built?**

Plans for this additional affordable senior housing in Orinda have been underway for years. Millions of dollars of public money and the efforts of hundreds of people are involved. Eden Housing's permit from the City of Orinda to build the housing on the old library site includes parking mitigation on OCC property. OCC has a stake in this project, and we have agreed in good faith to on-going negotiations that we believe can be satisfactorily concluded to the benefit of all concerned.

Our withdrawal from the affordable senior housing project almost certainly would not stop construction of the new affordable senior housing as approved by the City. The housing would still be built, only without OCC's cooperation; possibly with the street parking option on Orinda Way, or possibly without alternate provision for community parking.

#### **10. How and when will a final decision be made about this lease?**

If the City decides to continue negotiations, and if satisfactory terms are reached, the council will have the responsibility to approve or reject the lease agreement, in consultation with the congregation. The Bylaws of Orinda Community Church place the responsibility for negotiating and approving leases on the Church Council, as advised by the Finance and Operations Commission. Through notices in *The Neighbor*, informational meetings and printed materials such as this we hope to give members many opportunities to learn about the proposed project, to raise questions and make suggestions. The council will continue to seek the wisdom of everyone in the congregation and aim to have all viewpoints publicly discussed and examined.

## OCC FINANCIAL SPOTLIGHT NOVEMBER 15, 2011

### January - October 2011 Income/Expenses

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| Income   | \$311,823 |
| Expenses | \$294,018 |

As a reminder, if you are paying your 2011 pledge in installments, please plan on continuing installment payments on a regular basis through the rest of the year.

OCC's stewardship season this year began on October 16<sup>th</sup>. We will dedicate our pledge gifts on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

By way of background –

- The 2011 budget is balanced – \$401,000 income, and \$401,000 expense
- 20% of income comes from sources other than pledges and gifts
- 80% of income comes from pledges and gifts

This year (2011):

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| Total pledges | \$301,000        |
| Gifts         | <u>17,000</u>    |
| TOTAL         | <u>\$318,000</u> |

We were fortunate this year to receive the \$17,000 comprised of two gifts to be applied to 2011 income.

- Expenses are managed as carefully as we can – some costs are reduced by volunteers – particularly in the area of buildings/grounds maintenance and landscaping. However, the largest factor in expense control has been the elimination of a full-time associate pastor. Leslie O'Brien, Lee Cruise, and our two interns – Liz Armstrong and Leslie Moughty – have admirably filled this gap.

Current stewardship status —

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

As of November 13th we have received pledges for \$153,140, which is 48% of the pledge goal. We anticipate that the income, other than pledges, is accurate, which means that we need an additional \$165,860 in pledges and gifts to balance the budget and avoid cuts in our programs and activities.


A follow-up stewardship letter will be sent before Thanksgiving. Follow up telephone calls will be made, as in past years, if necessary.



# December 2011

Orinda Community Church

Worship 10 am  
Fellowship 11:15 am

| Sun   | Mon   | Tue                  | Wed  | Thu                 | Fri       | Sat  |
|---|---|----------------------|--|---------------------|-----------|--|
|   |   |                      |  | 1                   | 2         | 3  |
|   |   |                      |  |                     |           | 10 Coping with Christmas   |
| <b>4</b> 2. Advent  | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b>             | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b>            | <b>9</b>  | <b>10</b>  |
| 9:15 Reflection<br>Café open<br>10 Worship<br><b>4 Advent Celebration</b> | 9:30 Children & Youth<br>10 Sewing Cir.<br>11 Staff meeting | 7 PM Bible Study     | 7 Breakfast Group<br>10 Senior Connection<br>7 Lifelong Learning |                     |           |  |
| <b>11</b> 3. Advent   | <b>12</b>   | <b>13</b>            | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b>           | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b>  |
| 9:15 Reflection<br>Café open<br>10 Worship                                | 10 Sewing Circle<br>11 Staff meeting                        | 7 PM Bible Study     | 7 Breakfast Group  |                     |           |  |
| <b>18</b> 4. Advent<br><i>Neighbor Deadline</i>                           | <b>19</b>   | <b>20</b>            | <b>21</b> Neighbor published                                     | <b>22</b>           | <b>23</b> | <b>24</b>  |
| 9:15 Green Day at Reflection Café<br>10 Worship                           | 10 Sewing Cir.<br>11 Staff meeting<br>7 Theology Book Club  | 7 PM Bible Study     | 7 Breakfast Group<br>7:30 PM Pastoral Relations                  | 9:30 Parish Callers |           | <br><b>5:30 Christmas Family Candlelight Service</b> |
| <b>25</b> Christmas   | <b>26</b>   | <b>27</b>            | <b>28</b>  | <b>29</b>           | <b>30</b> | <b>31</b>  |
| 9:15 Reflection<br>Café open<br>10 Worship                                | <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b><br>10 Sewing Cir.                      | <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> | 7 Breakfast Group<br>7:30 PM Church Council (off campus)         |                     |           |  |

Next Neighbor deadline: **December 18**. Please submit your articles to [office@orindachurch.org](mailto:office@orindachurch.org)  
All submissions subject to editing.