



ORINDA Community Church

Seeking God, Loving Others,
Caring for the World

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**Save the Date
All-Church Meeting
Sunday, March 18, After
Worship**

**We will discuss the
ongoing senior housing
proposal, and possibilities
through our partnership
with Orinda Senior Village.**

**Women Helping Women
Spirituality Through Service
March 3, 10 a.m.
Fireside Room**



Women Helping Women offers the women of OCC a chance to

March 2018

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORINDA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Jim's Reflection

We are now three weeks past Ash Wednesday, and just four weeks away from Holy Week. Hence, we are smack dab in the middle of Lent. And it seems to me that this is often what life feels like. We might not be in the midst of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust", but the glow of Easter resurrection is dimmer than we would like.

Yet this might be good news. My experience has been that I most often feel like I'm in the midst of God's presence when I am real, open, and a bit raw. When I let myself be seen as I really am, or when I step into those spaces of discomfort and authenticity, something bigger than me seems to be at work.

I think this is why people come back from service trips with such fervor, and a sense that the trip was worth all the effort. (I've been on over 40 service and mission trips, and I've almost never heard a complaint) It's why groups like AA are so effective and helpful.

These were the types of places and spaces where Jesus chose to hang out. He liked being with the people who were aware of their flaws and imperfections, who were open to the idea that he had something more to offer. It was the ones who brought their brokenness and fears who found healing and hope.

We can only find out what this faith life is all about if we are willing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to discover what God has to offer us. And this journey often means giving up our own wants and needs, and instead stepping into a new way of being.

As we move through Lent, might we consider giving up some patterns that are part of our lives, and instead seek to live in a new way - hopeful that the light of resurrection

get involved in helping women in need both locally and internationally. Our mission is to learn, educate and act. We learn by researching and studying topics of interest. We educate by providing speakers and forums. And we act by assisting in whatever way is most beneficial to the women who need our help.

We are currently working on organizing a fundraiser tea to benefit *A Friendly Place* in Oakland that provides respite for homeless women.

We invite all of the women of OCC to join us. We welcome your ideas and suggestions and hope you will join us as we explore our options for the future.

Women's Spirituality Group



Please join us for fellowship, reflection, prayer and lectio divina at

Women's Spirituality Group on **Thursday, March 8 from 6:30-8:00 in the Fireside Room.** Questions, call Leslie Darwin O'Brien at 925-285-0996 or lesliedarwino@gmail.com



Support Group Saturday March 10, 10 am in the Narthex

During our confidential time together we listen to and share our stories, and offer supportive suggestions. Our common Christian heritage is central for guidance and prayers.

The gathering (usually about 2 hours) reminds us that we are not alone. Sipping tea or coffee, we support each other with gentle love. All adults are welcome to join, as often as you wish.

For more information, contact Lee Cruise, lgcruise@gmail.com or 707. 373-3962.

will keep growing brighter and brighter.

Wishing you God's Peace,
Jim

Do You Want to Fast this Lent?

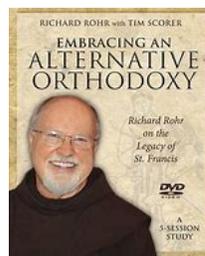
- * Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- * Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- * Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- * Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- * Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- * Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- * Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- * Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- * Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- * Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- * Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

(attributed to Pope Francis)

Lenten "Busy Person's Retreats" Weds. March 7 and 21, 11 am, Fireside Room



During this season of Lent, we will offer times to gather, walk the labyrinth, pray, and discuss readings from the UCC Lenten Devotional "Lovers and Fools". Gatherings will start in the Fellowship Hall, and then move to the Fireside Room.



"Embracing an Alternative Orthodoxy" Sundays, March 4 through March 25, 11:30 a.m., Fireside Room

Moralism. Fr. Richard

Rohr is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher with a focus on Christian Mysticism. Some of his books include *Falling Upward* and *The Divine Dance*.

Join us for a time of video and discussion with Fr. Richard Rohr. We will watch a video of his presentation, then discuss as a group. Topics include Eco-Spirituality, The Cosmic Christ, Orthodoxy vs. Orthopraxy, and Mysticism over

New Member Inquirer's Class Sunday, March 25, 8:30 a.m., Fireside Room

Interested in learning more about the Orinda Community Church? Do you





God of Films
Mar. 15, 12:30 pm
Fireside Room
 Popcorn & drinks
 provided

Seniors Luncheon

Monday, March 16, noon

This month's topic is "The last Week". We will look at the meaning of Holy Week, using Marcus Borg's The last Week as our springboard.

Please bring \$5 for the lunch. RSVP to jim@orindachurch.org



Book Group
Sunday, March 18, 4 pm,
Fireside Room
 For our March gathering, we will be reading Flannery

O'Connor's first novel Wise Blood. There are a few copies in the church narthex. Wine and cheese will be provided.

"This classic of twentieth-century literature is the story of Hazel Motes, a twenty-two-year-old caught in an unending struggle against his inborn, desperate fate. He falls under the spell of a "blind" street preacher named Asa Hawks and his degenerate fifteen-year-old daughter, Sabbath Lily. In an ironic, malicious gesture of his own non-faith, and to prove himself a greater cynic than Hawks, Motes founds the Church Without Christ, but is still thwarted in his efforts to lose God. He meets Enoch Emery, a young man with "wise blood," who leads him to a mummified holy child and whose crazy maneuvers are a manifestation of Motes's existential struggles. This tale of redemption, retribution, false prophets, blindness, blindings, and wisdom gives us one of the most riveting characters in American fiction."

wonder what it means to be a member of the church? Come for conversation and light breakfast, and get all your questions answered. Contact Rev. Jim Brommers Bergquist (jim@orindachurch.org) with questions, or to RSVP.



MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL
MARCH YOUTH EVENTS

Sun. , March 4

Youth Group to Starbucks during Sunday School/After Church.

Back around 12:30 p.m. (6th - 12th)

Sun., March 11

Sunday School/After church

- come decorate the youth spaces in Agape. Snacks provided.

Sun., March 18

Youth Group Service Event

- details TBA

Sat, March 24, 6:30 -8:30 p.m.

Middle School Game Night - Fellowship Hall

Holy Week and Easter

Maundy Thursday - Light Supper and Service
Thursday, March 29, 6:30pm., Fellowship Hall

Join us for Communion and music as we commemorate Jesus' last meal with the disciples.

Easter Sunday, April 1

Easter Sunrise Service, 7:30 am, in the Olive Grove.
Easter Celebration Worship, 10 am, in the Sanctuary.





**Men's Group
"Lenten Conversations"
Thur. March 22, 6:30 p.m.
Matteson Residence**

Questions to be discussed:

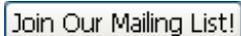
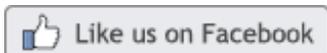
- What are the parts of life that keep you feeling like you're heavy hearted, where the phrase "ashes to ashes and dust to dust" seems to resonate?
- Where and how do we find new life and hope in the midst of these times?
- What does the Psalmist, and others, tell us about those times in the "shadow of death"?

Be sure to let Jim know if you can make it - and what you'd like to bring to share - appetizer, fruit, salad, wine, dessert, beer. We'll make sure to have enough to round out the menu.

AMAZON SMILE

When you shop 'with a Smile', Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Orinda Community Church. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-1322187> and support us every time you shop.

Stay Connected



Environmental Justice and Spirituality Events



As we move toward Earth Day on April 22, there are a couple events that we hope you will attend.

**Sunday, March 4, 11:30 a.m., Fireside Room
Eco-Spirituality**

We watch a video with Fr. Richard Rohr, and then discuss the ways our spirituality is to be in sync with the environment

**Sunday, April 22, 11:30 a.m., Library
Environmental Justice**

How green is Orinda Community Church? This event will include conversation, and a walk around the church campus to see how we're doing.

Women of Spirit



Sixty women joined together in OCC's board room on Friday, February 23 for the inaugural luncheon of Women of Spirit, a monthly gathering of inclusive, curious women seeking connection, shared learning and growth with other women of diverse faith traditions.

Women of Spirit grew from a conversation that Stacy Crinks had with our minister, Jim Brommers Bergquist and the similar desire of Leslie Darwin O'Brien, CarrieLyn Guymon, Betsy Shandalov, and Julia Shepard Stenzel to create a space in Lamorinda that would support the spiritual journeys of all women. A light lunch featured homemade soups and salads, as well as the most important food group: chocolate!

Stacy offered a snippet of her faith journey, from running after a priest in England and begging him to baptise her, to visiting Bali and Africa and learning about their diverse spiritual practices, to deepening her faith through her discipline of yoga. Stacy provided warmth and vulnerability and set the stage for deep sharing in the group. Julia Shepard Stenzel then led an interactive program called "A Valentine to Myself" which focused on self-compassion, and included self-reflection and facilitated discussion at table groups. Leslie Darwin O'Brien led the group in a rendition of The Gift of Love and Betsy Shandalov, who is active with Temple Isaiah, used sound healing and guided meditation to set a calm, reflective tone. CarrieLyn Guymon, member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was also

involved in the event's planning, and greeted each attendee with a warm welcome.

The multigenerational group closed by singing We are Fifty Voices Singing, We are Not Alone and together saying "Salaam, Shalom, Peace." It was a powerful first gathering, and we look forward to our next events: **Fridays, March 23 and April 27 from noon-2pm at OCC, and Monday, May 14 from 7-9pm (location TBD).**

Women of Spirit is not affiliated with any religious institution, and is open to all. Please invite friends!

Un-Birthday Party for Winter Nights Kids



Cupcake decorating, sack races, balloon games! Sounds like a party! Children and youth recently hosted an Un-Birthday Party for the Winter Nights guests. The idea was, "If it is not your birthday, we're having a party for you." Kids seemed to especially enjoy the pinata which was hung in the tree in the Olive Grove. (Of course, most kids enjoy showers of candy!) Thanks to the adults who assisted and thanks to the youth of our church for spreading God's love in the world.

Leslie O'.



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