ORINDA Community Church

Seeking God, Loving Others, Caring for the World

In This Issue

Jim's Reflection

Homecoming Sunday

Thoughts from Elizabeth.

Youth News

Poverty and Homelessness Event

PLEASE VISIT:

OCC Home Page

OCC Calendar

Listen to recent Sermons

Car Donations to OCC

Stay Connected, visit us on

May Council Minutes - please click here

Chancel Handbell Choir

Now is the perfect time to join the handbell choir. There will be a no-obligation

The Neighbor

August 2019

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORINDA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Jim's Reflection

Dear Friends of Orinda Community Church,

August always feels a bit strange to me. The summer season is finally settling in, with its different pace and weather. The BBQ has been well used, and for many, things have slowed down a bit.

Yet, when looking at the calendar, the arrival of September looms. School will soon be starting back up, days will keep getting shorter, and the fall season will be underway.

The "now and not yet" is a consistent part of our lives. We are here, now, in the midst of what we know and what we are getting to become more familiar with. And yet, there is always something else, something more, out in front of us.

Life could be about starting a new job, bringing a child off to college, finishing a career, embarking on a new adventure, picking up a hobby, etc. And this new chapter has infinite possibilities as to what it will lead to down the road. There is a "now," and there is a "not yet."

The message of Jesus often circled around the belief that there was more yet to be discovered. The God of the now was also a God who was calling us to more. And as this applies to our own individual lives, it also applies to us as a church.

Toward the end of this month, Church Council, church ministry staff, and chairs of various ministries and committees, will gather for an afternoon of planning and dreaming. Our church is a place of many exciting "nows", and also has much yet ahead of us.

Possibilities of better ministry to one another, serving those struggling with poverty and lack of homes, work with the local high school to provide wellness resources and events for students, partnerships with other houses of worship, enhanced

Back to Basics Playshop on **Tuesday evening, August 6, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM.**

Being able to read music helps, but no handbell experience is necessary. All that is needed is a commitment to attend rehearsals, which are held every Tuesday evening from 6:15 - 8:15 PM (includes 15 minute set up and take down) starting September 10. To sign up for the playshop, please contact Nancy Thursby, director at: nlthursby@comcast.net

Support Group
Saturday, August 10, 10:00 a.m., Fireside Room
We offer confidential sharing and support Facilitated by Lee Cruise.

Women's Spirituality Group
Thursday, August 15, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., Library

Please join us for a time of reflection, prayer and connection Bring a snack/drink to share or just show up. Please RSVP to ldarwinobrien@yahoo.com by August 14.

Writers Group
Wed., August 21, 11:00 a.m., Fireside Room

Possible prompts for the August writers group~ All welcome, whether you use a prompt or not!
Just bring some of your writing to share.

worship, new topics for study and discussion, movement on housing initiatives for our upper hillside, and much more are in our "not yet". There is much to be energized by!

September will also mark the return of a full slate with our church programming. Much has been planned, and we look forward to the chances to learn, worship, listen, serve, and have fun together.

Glad to be a part of this journey with you,
Jim

Mark your calendar!
Sunday, Sept. 8, after worship
All-Church Picnic
@ Kennedy Grove/East Bay Regional Park, Hitching Post

(Parking fee is $5.
Please bring $5-$10 per person donation for the food.)

Thoughts from Elizabeth

World events have been a little overwhelming lately. Between tensions with Iran, racist comments toward our elected officials, and environmental degradation, it would be easy to feel defeated. I've been trying to reorient myself toward a faithful sense of hope, and two memories have helped me.

The first memory is of talking with a school administrator while I was in graduate school. This was a man who directed a small alternative high school for at-risk youth, and I was interested in working at the school. I was excited about the school's emphasis on the arts, its outreach to especially vulnerable kids, and its innovative pedagogy. Despite how dynamic the school was, the director was burnt out. He was frustrated with traditional schooling methods, bitter about the difficulties of funding the school, and angry that he was having so much trouble retaining teachers on his shoestring budget. I mentioned to him that I had been active with a project at the local Quaker meeting, and he articulated his thorough distrust of faith communities.

I think this encounter has stuck with me because I realized that this deeply dedicated man had no way to contextualize his limitations and no place to go to restore his energy. I'm not saying that I've never been burnt out (Oh, I have!), but it's been centrally restorative to me in those instances to trust that all our

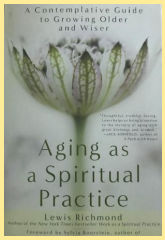
Two suggested prompts:.

1. Mix up your genres! If you are writing prose, try adding a segment of poetry into the prose
or, vice versa, if you are writing a poem, consider adding in a little prose section.

2. Add social and/or historical context to a personal reflection. What was happening in the larger world during a time that something significant was happening in your life? Movies? Political events? Natural phenomenon, disasters? Advertising jingles? Celebrity weddings? Adding such details can reveal
a lot to the reader about the world in which you were living and having your own experiences.

Contact Elizabeth for writing samples from Michael Ondaatje's
Running in the Family.

Book Group and Discussion for 2019-20
Aging as a Spiritual Practice



The inevitability of aging, and entering new phases of life, is something that every person faces. Over the course of the next year, Rev. Jim and Rev. Elizabeth will be leading conversations that come out of the book "Aging as a Spiritual Practice". These discussions will be held over the lunch hour (on aweekday once a month, starting in September), and also another time (TBD).

There are several copies of the book in the church library that you can buy,
or pick one up on your favorite device. And sessions will be designed so you can participate even if you haven't

human fallibility and limitation is nested in the larger reality of God's understanding and love. Seen that way, the little that I can do isn't too little: it is an effort that belongs in the good current of Divine creation. I'd love to tackle the systemic causes of homelessness, for example, but there are some days when all I have is a fresh bottle of water and a few minutes' conversation to offer a person living on the street. Nothing that we have to give is inconsequential, our prayers and our hope least of all. In the divine back and forth, we give and we receive. That reciprocity with God revives us when we have compassion fatigue or burnout.

The other memory is of a story my mentor told me my first year of seminary. She observed that it's tempting to try to tackle all the problems that we perceive in a desperate effort to save the world. "Pick one thing," she said. Pick one issue that you can really dedicate yourself to stick with it, learning and contributing over time. She talked about her father's lifelong commitment to pacifism and how scorned he'd been during World War II, and then how many people turned to him for help and organizing during the Vietnam War.

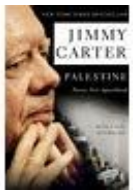
As many of you know by now, I have a commitment to helping unhoused people find housing. It's very possible that this is my "one thing." And I'm excited to look around me at this community and see that "one thing" played out in different ways by different people: fighting for justice in Palestine, bringing music to shut-ins, working to build interfaith dialogue, nurturing youth at the local high school, starting a Buddhist sangha, loving and sheltering a drug-addicted woman, working tirelessly to protect our environment, helping to establish the interfaith housing council- and I don't even know the half of it!

I began this message as a sort of pep talk to myself and it was very effective! Just looking around at this community and its riches is a sign that the Beloved Community is alive and well. Let's keep bolstering each other, playing and exploring and receiving new energy from the open hand of God as we go along. The world is a complicated and vexed place, no doubt, but I get glimmers of a vision in which everything and everyone are exactly as they are meant to be. In the days ahead, I very much hope to learn more and more about your lives as we work together.

God's grace is upon us every moment.
Elizabeth

read.

Next Book Group
Sunday, Oct. 6
Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid,
by Jimmy Carter



Lifelong Learning and Spiritual Formation will offer a couple sessions this upcoming fall that address issues facing the Middle East. We will begin with a discussion of Jimmy Carter's book, which is a good primer on the Israel and Palestine conflict. There are several copies of the book in the library and narthex.

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.

Forward to a Friend

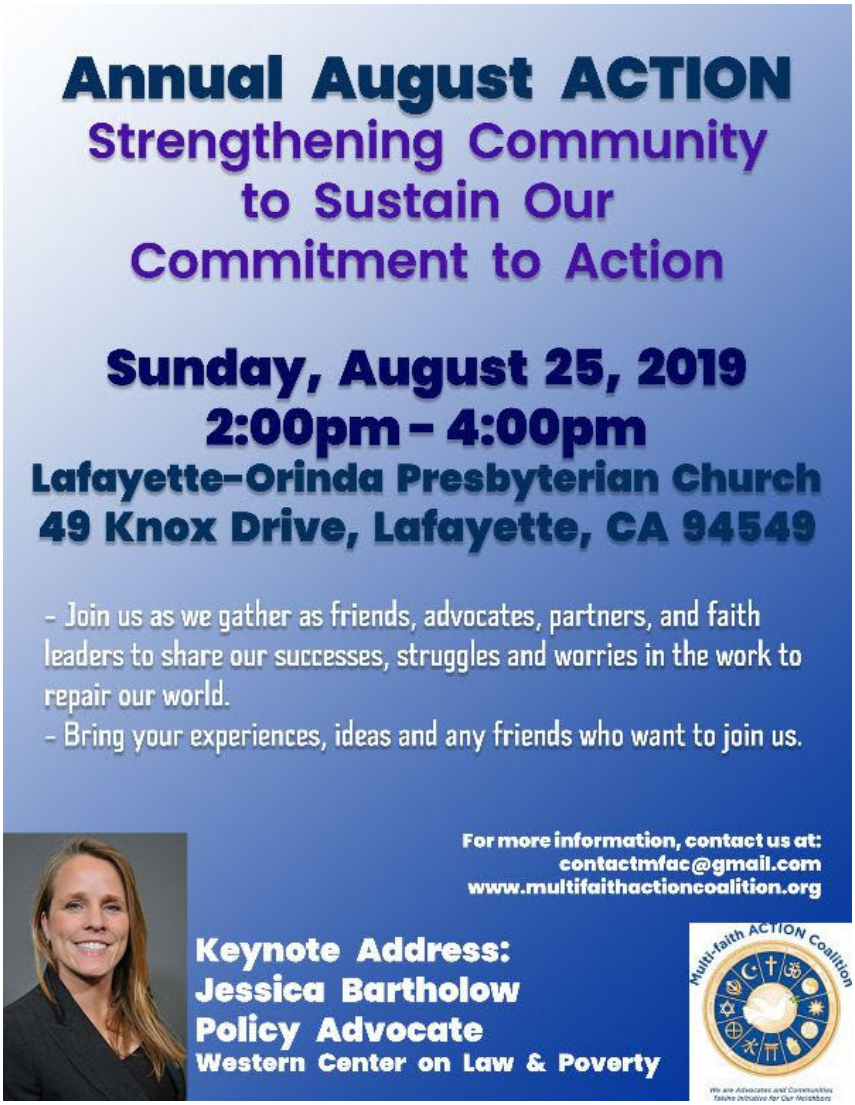
Join Our Mailing List!

Dear youth,
What a fun summer so far! We took a box of food to the Monument Crisis Center. To pay for this we baked cupcakes. (Thanks so much to the church members who bought them!!) We had a sleepover lock in featuring a scavenger hunt, a movie, chapel time really late at night, and a service project. We had a blast at the Long's house making s'mores and cards for church members. Thanks to Alexis, Jessica and Holly for hosting!
~ Leslie O'Brien

August 11 Youth gathering 5-6:30 Friendship and reflection and service project
August 18 Youth gathering at Skidgels right after church
September 22 Crepes and connections right after church. We'll help our friends learn how to use technology to better connect with their grandkids

Program to Address issues of Poverty and Homelessness
Sunday, August 25, 2-4 p.m.

Poverty and Homelessness are prominent issues here in the East Bay, and we as a church have opportunity to join other faith communities to do something. If you have interest in helping our congregation be an agent of change, as we work with the MultiFaith Action Coalition, please consider attending this upcoming event - and bringing ideas and possibilities back to our community. Talk to Rev. Jim or Rev. Elizabeth if interested.



Copyright © 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Orinda Community Church | | office@orindachurch.org http://orindacommunitychurch.org
10 Irwin Way
Orinda, CA 94563
925.254-4906