

**Orinda Community Church
Minutes of Church Council
Wednesday, August 26, 2020**

Council Attendance: Kurt Sunderbruch, Anne Barr, Lani Shepp, Kathleen Wiegand, Bob Winbigler, Gail Mead

Clergy Attending: Elizabeth Robinson

Guests Attending: Bill Abriel, Chris Mead, Craig Taatjes

Minutes: The 7/22/20 minutes were approved unanimously by email on 7/30/20

Treasurer's Update: The church received over \$15,000 in additional pledges/donations based on our recent letter. Hoping to hear from everyone. We made payroll in Aug and hope to do so in Sept without going into our savings account. Lani will provide info to the Council on how to donate via stock. Elizabeth will thank everyone for their generosity via Sunday's recorded service. The UCC Conf. is struggling, like everyone, with their income flow. They're asking each congregation to contribute a small percentage of their budget to the Conference. They've hired 5 staff and are trying to revamp Camp Cazadero. We have benefited from their support and guidance and would like to help. Lani just sent \$3,000 to them and planned to send another \$2,000 by year's end. They are asking for ongoing pledges starting with 2020. The Council moved and approved to pledge them \$5,000 for 2020. We can't commit more due to our own deficit. We'll discuss our 2021 pledge later.

Winter Nights Planning: Per Lani, the stays in January-March 2021 are limited to 4 families for four weeks (instead of two) in each church. The people will remain 24/7 at each space and not leave during the day due to Covid. Churches may need to finance portable showers. Food will be brought in; churches may help bring in food. No church volunteers onsite—staff will handle it all. Will sanitize when arrive and leave. We'd like to participate but have several concerns: how to manage daily Covid cleaning protocols inside the Fellowship Hall; managing Covid protocols for these families while outdoors with TOPS people, construction people, other renters; Dagmar possibly needing to work from home during this time; and safe access for church staff to bathrooms, office, finance office during this time. Lani will raise these concerns to the Winter Nights staff. We also need to get buy-in with TOPS staff. We have at least \$1000 in our Winter Nights fund. M&J meets next week and we'll run it by them.

Karen Sanford Appreciation/Replacement on Council: We miss having Karen on the Council and appreciate her contributions to OCC. We will acknowledge this in the next *Neighbor*. Elizabeth will recognize Karen in the next Sunday service recorded

service and ask if people are interested in being more engaged with the ministries. Kurt will seek a replacement for Karen on the Council.

Planning for OSHF Fellowship Hour: We've made plans for Victoria Smith, President of the OSV/OSHF Board, to join the 8/30 Zoom Fellowship Hour. It's time to hear from the Board again on the status of the upper hillside project. This will be the 14th contact with the congregation on this topic. We hope to distribute a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that the Council has reviewed before the 8/30 meeting. Elizabeth will send out an announcement on the FAQ and the 8/30 Zoom meeting (that will be recorded and posted on our website). Chris Mead mentioned we don't know the rental income yet since it depends on lots of variables. The Council will need to negotiate this with the Board at some time. The church will need to approve this hillside option, probably by this fall. The Board will then need to bring a concrete proposal for the congregation to vote on by year's end.

Auction Update: Gail Mead has been in touch with our auction staff and has found a great online auction called Auctria. It will help us prepare a website and a catalog, do proxy bidding, and show a thermometer with incoming money amounts. We can do the auction for a week instead of a day. Gail found a payment processing software called Stripe to use that only charges per transaction, with no monthly fee. We need to start thinking now on ideas for offerings given Covid, e.g., outdoor concerts; porch concerts; wine deliveries with Zoom tastings, pay for a hymn, pay for a song, delivered pies, buy a poem. People can just donate, too. The money needs to go into the general budget to support staff salaries and shouldn't be earmarked for special projects. Be creative about how to hype it with Zoom, videos, etc. Elizabeth will talk to Nik tomorrow to see how Gail can provide a message hyping the auction for the recorded Sunday service. Gail, Lani, and Elizabeth will put together messaging that the auction is coming (last full week of October) and figure out obstacles and solutions. Lani received mail from a company that advises churches on fundraising now that Covid has altered church practices. Congregations don't always know how hard it is for pastors/staff to continue through Covid times. Churches next year will look a lot different—more of a blended situation like schools. Churches need different ways to communicate (blog posts) and manage. She'll investigate this further.

Topics for Congregational Meeting: It would be beneficial in late Sept to bring the congregation up to date on what's going on including the following 4 topics:

Creation Justice: Elizabeth reported that Nancy Thursby has carefully followed the guidelines to have OCC become a creation justice church and Elizabeth has encouraged her to proceed during Covid with seeking a vote. We'll work on this. The

Council moved and approved bringing this forward at the next opportunity for a congregation meeting. Elizabeth will advise Nancy.

Finances and Stewardship: We discussed our approach to stewardship; Craig mentioned the auction is a good way to lead into it. With the funds we raise we have hope of supporting our community. Get people thinking about the church's budget needs. Bill suggested investigating a blended church of the future with online and in-person activities. Support our ministry with webinars/chats. Kurt, Gail, and Lani will do a first draft of the 2021 budget, identifying obstacles to address.

Congregational Needs Survey: We need to identify topics for the survey, e.g., what's working well, what do we need, how do we see the next year playing out? Per Gail, it would cost \$20/month to re-establish the Constant Contact Survey Module used in the past. She'll talk to Dagmar on how to pay for this.

Ministerial Staffing: Budgetwise, we need to talk about ministerial staffing; are open to talking about doing a search for a minister. Council appoints the search committee for congregational approval. We need congregational input to decide what direction we want the church to go. Financially speaking, how many pastors do we want? So there are two stages. First, a survey on what we need, what's realistic. Second, deciding what to do regarding pastors.

Executive Session: The Council moved and approved going into a closed executive session to discuss a matter that would violate the privacy of an individual if discussed in an open meeting.

Actions:

Lani—advise Council on how to pledge/donate via stock

Lani—discuss our concerns with Winter Nights staff and M&J; get TOPS' buy-in

Kurt—acknowledge Karen Sanford's contributions to OCC in next *Neighbor*

Kurt—check on a replacement for Karen on the Council

Gail—send an auction message to Nik for the recorded service

Gail, Lani, Elizabeth—work on auction messages, obstacles, solutions

Kurt, Lani, Gail—work on first draft of 2021 budget

Gail—talk to Dagmar on paying to re-establish the Constant Contact Survey Module

Lani—investigate fund raising ideas from company advising churches

Next Meeting: Wednesday, Sept 23, 2020

Kathleen Wiegand, Clerk