**Orinda Community Church**

**Minutes of Church Council  
Wednesday, August 5, 2020**

**Council Attendance:** Kurt Sunderbruch, Anne Barr, Lani Shepp, Kathleen Wiegand, Bob Winbigler, Karen Sanford

**Ministry Chair:** Craig Taatjes

**Clergy Attending:** Elizabeth Robinson

**Covid-19 Direction Plan:** Elizabeth’s former Colorado church formed a Covid-19 taskforce that produced a plan on how to slowly bring its people back together when safe to do so. Elizabeth will send us a copy to review. We can use it to write our own plan on what direction to follow, acknowledging our people’s needs and how we can address them. Bob W. will join others selected by Elizabeth to work on this.

**Budget Review:** We reviewed the budget to see where we are tracking high or low; will the overage/underage persist; and can we adjust the budget item up or down by moving money to/from another line. We discussed our policy on approving overages. Do we have a method of deciding whether or not this gets done and how? We currently have a financial group of volunteers (Lani, Gail, and Kathi) who bring overages to our attention for Council discussion when needed. But we’ve never completed a policy manual that would provide a clear direction for who has authority to do this.

**Expense Line Item Review:**

E01 Payroll and Benefits (Staffing): For staffing, we know how we’ve made changes and we’ve narrowed the gap. $45,000 drops out next year. There are line items that will fall out from pastor entries and this year we’ll be spending more on the Associate Pastor. Endowment funded $16,000 of Leslie’s salary and the sabbatical costs.

E03 Office Expense: Paper supplies are running low and will stay low. We changed telephone services and paid for Jim’s cell phone. Internet services will continue to run high. When we upgrade our wifi we won’t have to pay for separate Internet to the caretaker cottage and that will lower monthly costs somewhat. We’re over on custodial supplies and Dion knows not to spend more.

E04 Operations Expense: Stewardship is postage and printing and we’ll still have these costs. We’ve cancelled all advertising. Banners are included in publicity. Property Insurance is running less—we raised our deductible and lowered our premium. We carry the TOPS structure and they carry some liability insurance. We pay Worker Compensation Insurance a year in arrears. We have a credit right now but shouldn’t shift money out of here right now—too risky.

E05 Facilities: B&G Maintenance includes half of the gas leak costs. We are under on landscaping because Lani is paying this personally. It should be shown as a church expense so we know this cost. Per Lani, regarding electric, we’ll have a true up in November and are hoping to come out about even. Garbage is expensive at $576 a month. We pay a business rate. TOPS uses our dumpster. If TOPS doesn’t start up in August we can see if we can suspend service for a couple of months and then start it up again. Gas should be low for the rest of year. Water is low for this year. Solar lease is on track—goes up annually.

E06 LL&S: We left some money here to cover Covid-friendly book-oriented activities and Zoom lecturers.

E07 Worship and Music: Our music is so powerful and might help our outreach efforts. We should build on this. The recorded weekly service music has been stunning. We paid the 4 vocalists through May and since then we just pay the two who sing each week. There is $7500 for the rest of the year for the soloists but we need to fund “other musicians” to cover when Nik backfills for David. We should get David back to his regular salary.

E08 J&M: Financial Assistance is at Elizabeth’s discretion to help those in need. We may need more in this line item since needs are increasing with Covid-19. Annual Planned Giving of $10,000 goes out every year to Hope Solutions, Holden, and OSV. Can free up $5000 from OCWM-UCC Fair Share. Can use $500 of the $2000 in Discretionary Giving for Christmas for gifts for families in need. Could hold some for next year’s Common Hope costs of $1800. Could move $500 to Financial Assistance. Lani advised we can wait to decide on this until the end of the year.

E09 C&F: While we won’t be spending more on group fellowship for the rest of the year we could use this money for special treats like gift baskets.

E12 Children, Y & F: Leslie wants to do something for the graduates so General Supplies money may go for these gifts. It would be nice to do another Youth Sunday before the end of the year since the congregation loved it. We paid for childcare services through June but can no longer pay for work not done. Elizabeth has explained to our childcare person we are in a financial crisis. Elizabeth has a capped amount for a final payment to her with the hopes that she’ll return when we again have work for her.

**Summary:**

We now have some ideas of money that can be moved around. Lani will redo the spreadsheet and put in the $44,500 and the Endowment ($50,000). Per Anne we have an additional $4,000-5,000 we just identified and we have a $100,000-115,000 budget gap. Endowment can loan the church $100,000. We can avoid going into our major reserves by exercising the Endowment loan and doing a fundraiser. First, we need to get the congregation on aboard by outlining the situation for them. Ask if they can pay their full pledges by September 15 so we know how much income is really going to come in. If they can’t pay right away, can they commit to pay for the year? Encourage those who don’t pledge to join in the effort and give generously. The church has needs in these extraordinary times. Also, let them know we are planning a fundraiser (October) to help cover our income gap. Lani will draft a letter/email with this information and send it to Kurt, Craig, and Elizabeth for review. Elizabeth can add personal notes, if needed, to the letters/emails. Perhaps Dagmar can help with the fundraiser mechanics. Hopefully Gail will continue as a spokesperson for it. Karen suggested including project pledges tied to what needs fixing at the church (e.g. Olive Grove benches). People who donate money for a project might receive a small gift (set of mugs, cake, pie, etc.) for their donation. Bob has talked with David about fundraising by putting music performances on YouTube accessed via a paid subscription. Anne suggested collaborating with Ann Moss and her husband who have the equipment to live stream concerts. These are all possibilities for our fundraiser.

We need to meet with TOPS on their rental fees (but after the gas trenches are filled). We’ve got fixed costs and need some amount of rent from them even if they can’t open in August. Lani will identify the fixed costs that TOPS benefits from (e.g., garbage, property taxes, landscaping, parking lot, etc.). Lani and Anne will talk to TOPS.

In connection with the OSV property up the hill it was suggested we build into the lease that the OSV maintenance people also provide maintenance services for the church. This arrangement, which would happen several years in the future, would be more professional and sustainable.

**ACTIONS:**

Elizabeth—send Council the Colorado church Covid-19 plan and pull together folks for an OCC taskforce to draft our own guide

Lani—redo the spreadsheet

Lani—draft a letter/email advising the congregation of the need for pledge income and a fundraiser. Send to Kurt, Craig, and Elizabeth to review

Lani—identify the fixed costs that TOPS benefits from and set up a meeting with you, Anne, and TOPS to discuss its rental payments

Kathleen Wiegand, Clerk