**Orinda Community Church**

**Minutes of Church Council  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024**

**Council Attendance:** Bill Abriel, Amy Parlette, Lani Shepp, Mike Kersten, Bob Winbigler

**Not Present:** Gail Mead, Robin Holmes

**Clergy Attending:** Elizabeth Robinson

**Attendees:** Anne Barr

**The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.**

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the previous Council meeting were approved by email on February **23, 2024.**

**Pastor’s Report:** Reverend Elizabeth Robinson updated the Council. OCC has set up a location in the narthex for raising awareness and remembrance of children lost in Gaza and war zones throughout the world. The hope is that people will pause before and after service to commemorate their lives. Elizabeth also noted that Rev. Barry Cramer will address OCC on the elements of becoming a Black Wealth Builder Congregation. He will speak March 3 after service. One baptism occurred in February. OCC will encourage administrator Anna Gregory to take vacation prior to May 1, before Elizabeth’s sabbatical.

**Treasurer Report:** Lani Shepp clarified an accounting question regarding the Scout use of OCC facilities. They do not pay a rental fee but do contribute annually to the “loose offerings” account of OCC. The Scouts are not asked to pay rent to OCC. They have always donated annually. The donations before Covid were $1000 - $1500. In 2022 the donation was $4000; in 2023 it was $3000.

**Vista Verde Update:** Anne Barr updated the council on the progress of the Vista Verde project which is hoping to break ground in Spring of 2024. The developer has asked for a construction easement which affects the TOPS outdoor play area, and Anne is working with TOPS to mitigate the effect. This may include granting TOPS access to outdoor areas in the upper lawn space which will require safety fencing, and possibly the access to ½ of the Agape building which may need to be partitioned. TOPS is requesting procedures during construction to attend to the safety and calm of the attending children. TOPS is also requesting that the resulting outdoor playground be appropriately integrated architecturally with the Vista Verde project. The Council appreciates that the Vista Verde project will affect OCC congregants during construction, and that a process of updating the congregation will be important – especially prior to and during startup.

**Sabbatical Planning for Church Operations:** Elizabeth Robinson’s sabbatical is scheduled for May 1-July 31, 2024. To find a suitable candidate as temporary pastor during her absence, a small core team (Anne Barr, Bill Abriel, Chris Mead, and Craig Taatjes) have written the job description, determined interview questions, sought candidates, and interviewed. Several qualified candidates have been vetted and the biggest issue seems to be time commitment. One candidate does appear to be qualified, available and dedicated to full-time service. Council approved for the search team to make progress toward a contract.

Council also needs to coordinate with the ministry leaders about operating in Elizabeth’s absence. Everyone will need to understand what is written into the Lily Grant and how to operate independently without Elizabeth while interacting with the interim pastor.

**Building and Grounds (B&G) Update:** Holden has requested permission to recognize several OCC congregants (Betty Karplus, John Creech and Peter Hartdegen) with plaques in honor of their contributions to Holden’ success. The Council is pleased to agree. Lani Shepp reported that Holden has a series of facility repairs they have made and has asked OCC to participate in funding them. The Council will take them into consideration and will appoint a B&G representative to work with Holden on addressing their facility upgrade needs going forward. B&G points out that one item yet to be addressed for Holden is the exit doors that need to be up to fire code. Replacement will be expensive as they are not standard size. Other items noted for B&G are to fix the pulpit light, and to clean out the planters at the memorial wall. Also noted regarding B&G is that they (B&G) suggest coordinating with the OCC congregation on having a church-wide repair and cleanup day – perhaps in April.

**Other Business:** Council will contact Worship and Music to see what can be done to improve the virtual broadcast experience of the Sunday services.

**ACTIONS:**

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 27, 2024; 7:00 pm (with Moderator Bill Abriel)

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Draft minutes prepared by Bill Abriel, finalized with input from Council by Robin Holmes