

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEE HOW YOU CAN GET  
INVOLVED AND HELP OUT  
THIS YEAR AT  
WARM WINTER NIGHT

## WARM WINTER NIGHTS



*On Campus  
Homeless Shelter*  
NOVEMBER 6-20th

# NOVEMBER 2017

## Hope for the Future

by Gerald Chinen, Pastor - Congregational Care



I've had trouble sleeping recently, more so than usual. I must admit to feeling weary and anxious because I am having a difficult time believing what I am seeing and hearing. I can't say for certain that this is an unprecedented time but the last two months have been unnerving. There were deadly floods in South Asia, devastating earthquakes in Mexico and the Philippines and of course the shattering hurricanes in the Texas, Florida, in the Gulf Coast, and in the Caribbean. In early August in Charlottesville, Virginia, something I thought I would never see in my life time, unhooded white supremacists, marched and chanted "Jews will not replace us," and other racist slogans. More recently, what was to be a protest about racism and particularly the treatment of African American citizens in our country turned into a debate about patriotism. Then just recently, there was the horrific act of terror in Las Vegas. I can hardly believe all of this is happening and yet it is.

I know that we will learn to respond better to the next natural disaster, at least we here in the United States have the means and the infrastructure to do so. Even then, there are no guarantees that lives will not be lost. We also have the resources to assist other countries and we will rise up to do so. But it's the other stuff that alarms me. What will happen with gun control laws? Will this be the tipping point? And how do we meaningfully face the truth about our racist history? Honestly, I have more questions than answers.

I signed a petition this morning. I won't tell you what it was for. But I wanted to voice my concern as well as take advantage of my right and privilege to do so. Though it's a small investment, I want to somehow register my concern which I hope will make a difference. I have no idea that it will, but I don't want to do nothing.

I worry about the future for my son, and for all of his generation. And yet, I watch with pride and with humility at how so many of our young people are much more proactive in turning their concerns into action. Back in June, I attended a conference in Chicago on Justice. I may have been the oldest participant there! As I walked around the lobby of the church, as I attended the plenary and breakout sessions, I noticed the great number of young people in attendance. At one point during a general session, a speaker asked that anyone under the age of 25 to stand. It was quite inspiring to see so many of them standing and more importantly, to know they want to be involved and engaged in issues of justice and mercy.

More close to home, our youth have traveled to India to partner with the Children of Faith Orphanage and School. Some of our young people have been so impacted by it, they have returned to the Orphanage on their own. A few of our high school students have organized fund raisers at their respective schools to raise funds for Children of Faith. I know at least one our high school students, intends to return in the fall to volunteer her time as a teacher! How amazing is that?

I am so glad to have our young people walking in faith and living out their faith in such tremendous ways. They not only give me hope, but they give me an example to follow! Amen!

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See more at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)





Thank you for taking the time to carefully consider the My Pledge annual stewardship campaign. If you did not receive a pledge packet in the mail, please contact [elizabeth@LOPC.org](mailto:elizabeth@LOPC.org), or pick up a packet in the Ministry Center.

### GIVING SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 5TH

On November 5, we encourage members and friends to bring their pledge cards to worship. If you can't attend church that day, you can always mail your card or drop it by the church office.

### FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN GIVING

**REFLECT** on the gifts God has entrusted you with, and for which you are grateful. This is a powerful exercise to do with a spouse or family!

**IDENTIFY** the charitable causes that you plan on supporting this coming year, and rank them according to how important they are to you and your family.

**ESTIMATE** family income for the coming year and then write down the percentage of that amount you want to deploy to the church and other charities.

**PRAY** over it, asking, "God, is this what you want me (us) to give this coming year?"

**COMPLETE** the enclosed pledge card and know how much your gift is appreciated, and will be put to good use through LOPC!

### INTERESTED IN GROWING YOUR PLEDGE?

**With a 5% combined pledge increase, LOPC can make a real impact!**

Our total pledges last year were \$2,266,000. If we increase our combined pledges by 5% we would have a total of \$2,380,000. That would be an additional \$114,000!

With that we could do things like the following:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| \$34,000 | Meet inflationary costs for building maintenance.                 |
| \$53,000 | Cost of living salary adjustment for LOPC's 28 employees.         |
| \$13,000 | Fund a year of preschool health care in a Zimbabwean village.     |
| \$5,000  | Hire an intern to support our growing Family Ministries programs. |
| \$4,500  | Outfit a special needs classroom at LOPC.                         |

The Festival Choir and Chamber Orchestra proudly present

# *Gloria!*

## Christmas Concert

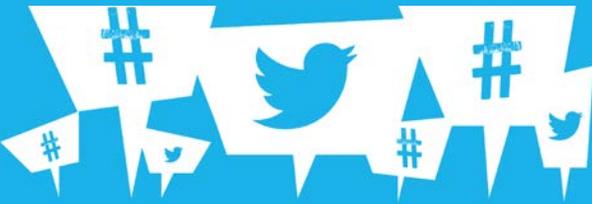
December 9, 4 p.m. · December 10, 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.

Childcare available for the December 10, 2 p.m. concert by reservation.  
RSVP to [childcare@lopc.org](mailto:childcare@lopc.org) by Friday, December 1.

Ticket Request Line opens Monday, November 6. Maximum 6 tickets per request.  
A free-will offering will be taken. Suggested donation \$20.

## Community Life

We believe everyone thrives when we come together in a community of faith, whether as a congregation or in a smaller group setting. We have a variety of groups to suit the needs of everyone. Some groups focus on study or spiritual practice, others focus on service, and still others emphasize fellowship and common interests. But all groups provide a meaningful and fulfilling way to serve others, develop new friendships and deepen our faith together.



### #TweetableJesus

Jesus gives us words to live by. In this sermon series, we will take a deeper look into inspirational words of Jesus that he gives to us in 140 characters or less.

**Sunday Worship Hours:**  
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

**11/5/17 – Proof Positive**  
*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*  
(John 13:35)

**11/12/17 – Peace on Earth?**  
*Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.*  
(Matthew 10:34)

**11/19/17 – When Weakness Means Strength**  
*My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

**11/26/17 – No More Fear**  
*Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever.*  
(Revelation 1:17–18)

## Join us on November 4 at 5:00 p.m.!

New!

# Saturday Evening Worship

A casual, contemporary service for all ages.

We are pleased to welcome you to a new monthly worship opportunity. All ages are welcome in this casual, contemporary service. In addition to music and communion, our time of teaching for the month of November will focus on Gratitude: letting others know you see how they've helped you.

Children are always welcome in the Sanctuary and will have the option to leave mid-service to participate in a special children's message in the Chapel. They will rejoin worship in the Sanctuary after the sermon. Childcare will be available in the CLC for children 4 years old and younger.

Future service schedule: December 2nd, January 6th, February 3rd, March 3rd, May 5th, and June 2nd

## Community Life

### Mount Hermon Recap

by Jaime Polson, Pastor-Family Ministries

Our church was blessed to head to the beautiful Mount Hermon Retreat Center near Santa Cruz for the LOPC All-Church retreat held from October 6-8th. 251 attendees enjoyed great weather, wonderful companionship, good food, fun activities, spectacular talents shared at the campfire, and a thought provoking message from keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Charlene Han Powell.

Rev. Dr. Charlene Han Powell challenged us to share our transformational stories as Christians and human beings, showing the love of God through Jesus Christ which calls us to love and serve others. She spoke about her belief that our shared stories from Scripture, stories that are compelling and authentic, have a message that transcends generational differences and have the power to further build our church community and lead us into a deeper faith. She encouraged us in our role as Christians to study Scripture, learn to understand these often difficult and baffling stories and books in the Bible that bring the message of God's love to a broken and hurting world. These stories form the heart of our Christian community and we had many opportunities during the retreat to talk about how to understand the Bible in our current realities as well as how these stories have transformed our lives and faith.

We enjoyed our weekend away blending both festive and lively activities at the campfire with plenty of opportunities for reflection, quiet and peace with God and our church community.



## Community Life



## Community Life

### Presbyterian Women's Christmas Tea



**December 1**  
**12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Please save the date for the 2017  
Presbyterian Women's Christmas Tea.

Join other ladies of LOPC for our annual  
Christmas tea. Our theme this year is  
Angels Watching Over Us.

We will enjoy a musical program by the Saint  
Mary's College Chamber Singers led by Julie  
Ford. The program will be followed by tea and  
goodies in Fellowship Hall where we will have  
time to greet old and new friends and admire the  
holiday decor.

Don't miss this special day, the introduction to  
the Advent Season. Get your tickets in  
November in between services.

Questions? Contact Catherine Gallinger at  
catherinegallinger@comcast.net.

### LOPC Fourth Monday Book Group

2:45 p.m. in the Fireside Room

In October, we read *MIDNIGHT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT*.

The author, Pamela Sakamoto describes the situation  
of a Japanese-Americans family caught in a no-man's  
land between extended family in Japan and their  
American born offspring.

Also, we selected books for several future months:

- December 1
  - *LAST DAYS OF NIGHT* By Graham Moore
- January 22, 2018
  - *NEWS OF THE WORLD* By Paulette Jiles
- February 26
  - *PEOPLE OF THE BOOK* By Geraldine Brooks
- March 26
  - *GENTLEMAN IN MOSCOW* By Amor Towles
- April 23
  - *THE ZOOKEEPERS WIFE* By Diane Ackerman

Join us on any or all of these dates.

### New Members Class - 2/9 – 2/11 2018

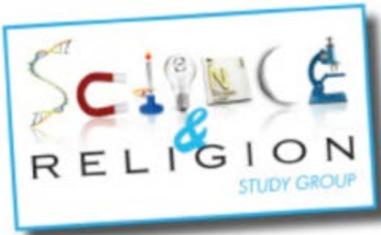


The LOPC Membership Class is an  
opportunity to meet the pastoral staff,  
have your questions answered, learn  
about the programs and ministries of  
the church, and make new friends. The  
class also serves to clarify what LOPC  
believes God has called this church to  
be, so visitors can make an informed  
decision about formalizing their commitment to this  
faith community. Ask questions and find out more about  
LOPC. All are welcome! The next LOPC Membership  
Class takes place the weekend of February 9 – 11, 2018.  
Childcare available by reservation.  
Questions? Contact [chris@LOPC.org](mailto:chris@LOPC.org).

Community Life

Science & Religion – 11/20

7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room



Rev John Turpin, scholar of relating the two worlds of religion and science, will lead a vital discussion of Ian Barbour's

contributions to the ongoing dialogue between Science & Religion: Comparison of methods of inquiry in science and religion, Models and Paradigms, Process Theology, Views of God.

Barbour explored the theological implications of the Big Bang theory, quantum physics, evolutionary biology and genetics from a Christian perspective. All are welcome to join us for the November meeting.

Mom's Retreat

Save the Date! January 19, 2018  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Speaker: Rachel Macy Stafford  
She is the author of Only Love Today, Hands Free Mama and several other bestsellers. She is a popular blogger and speaker who focuses on what really matters in life – love, faith, community and family.



Questions? Contact Dave@LOPC.org



2018 Speaker Series

First Friday Forum has an outstanding lineup of speakers for 2018. Mark these dates on your calendar.

JANUARY 5

Dr. Stephen Mende

Dr. Stephen Mende will speak on "Spirits of the Polar Night" in January with outstanding visuals.

FEBRUARY 2  
APRIL 13

MARCH 2  
MAY 4

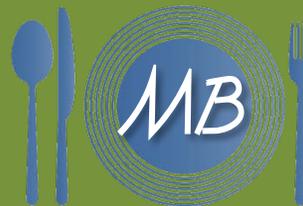
JUNE 1

1:00 p.m. Refreshments  
All Are Welcome  
1:30 p.m. Speaker – Free  
A very popular series of outstanding speakers on topics of current interest

See more at LOPC.org

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
(925) 283-8722

Men's Breakfast  
Where women are always welcome



Topic:

"The U.S. Electric Grid – Hacked or Hyped?"

November 22



Bernie Cowens  
VP Chief  
Security Officer of PG&E

Bring friends & family

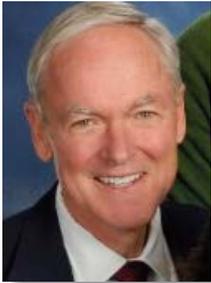
7:00 a.m.  
Davies Room  
\$5 donation at the door for breakfast

R.S.V.P. to  
janet@LOPC.org or  
call (925) 283-8722  
x223 before noon on  
the Tuesday before  
breakfast

## Community Life

### Giving Thanks

by Alan Kizor, Foundation Trustee



Alan Kizor



Many of us are looking forward to the upcoming Thanksgiving. It is the perfect holiday to enjoy with our families and friends for an extraordinary meal (followed by football).

We express thanks for many things including the ability to worship as we choose afforded us by pilgrims, and followed by generations of leaders and soldiers who fought for our freedoms and to remember our obligations, which include the responsibilities associated with being American citizens. And of course, we are very grateful to be members or friends of Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church!

These fundamental rights and choices, which many of us have come to accept without much thought, were not available to the original 45 pilgrims who courageously embarked from Holland, having fled religious persecution in England and set sail on the Mayflower in 1620.

Now, fast forward - about four centuries - to the present, and shift your geographic orientation to the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. In this setting we are grateful for numerous blessings which were made possible by far-sighted clergy, as well as many lay leaders who worked to create the LOPC Foundation. The Foundation enables members and friends of the church to earmark funds from their estate to help LOPC. Payment for some of the major projects and missions have been made possible by donors who have named the Foundation as a recipient of cash, stock or other assets in their will.

In addition, thanks to the judicious oversight of these funds as well as the disciplined investment management process over the years the total assets have continued to grow nicely over 25 years. This has allowed the Foundation to provide financial support for LOPC ministries, with a special interest in vibrant, ongoing and new ministries, expansion of mission outreach and maintenance of buildings and campus. The Foundation is grateful for the support of its many generous benefactors.

If you are interested in finding out more about the LOPC Foundation and how your commitment to the future of the church can be realized, please contact our current president Dick James or one of our other Trustees - Kristi Haigh, vice president; Phil Placier, treasurer; Dara Youngdale, secretary; Lynn Trowbridge; Staci Johnston; and myself.

Happy Thanksgiving!

### Session Highlights – September 2017

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

The September Session meeting coinciding with the change in seasons helped to prepare us for the new liturgical season. We celebrated the successful work of our Congregational Nominating Committee to put together a terrific slate of new elders, deacons and Foundation trustees to help lead LOPC next year. We also rejoiced at the delivery of a beautiful new pounded-copper baptismal font that in a way is a capstone to our Sanctuary Renewal Project. This beautiful bowl will serve our congregation for years to come.

Peter also reminded us, through a presentation of the status of churches and organized religion in our country, that many challenges lie ahead that will require new ways of thinking and new ways of reaching out if we want to remain a vibrant part of our local and

international community. Peter introduced to Session a book entitled *Canoeing the Mountains* that uses the metaphor of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to make the point that to survive, we must be willing to abandon our assumptions and beliefs when they prove to be wrong or inadequate and be open to new ideas and direction. Session will be using this book as a study reference to think about the church of the future.

Lastly Session is so mindful of the remarkable treasure of talent, wisdom and expertise that resides within our congregation. We have truly been blessed over the decades and are confident that we will continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit to fulfill Jesus command for the Church to go out into the world.

## Spiritual Formation

*Spiritual Formation emphasizes our openness and receptivity to God. The heart of Spiritual Formation is about deepening your connection to God. Spiritual Formation can be described in different ways because we experience our connection to God differently. Our diverse offerings range from the contemplative to the active, from the traditional to the current, and the spirituality discovered in nature.*



Dave Engelbrekton

“I was fortunate to have been raised in a loving Christian home. Some of my very earliest memories are of coming over the hill on Pleasant Hill Road to the Lafayette Covenant Church located on Moraga Road. One of my closest friends today, I first met in that church nursery. That church outgrew its location and built a new church facility on a

remote hill in Walnut Creek. We became Hillside Covenant Church; and that is where I grew up. Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation, a fabulous youth group, and choir all helped to develop who I am and where I am today.

I joke that it was during my rebellious college years, I became a Presbyterian. It was during those years that I met some of the most wonderful and caring people I have ever known. By their love and actions, they were my “super-hero” role models. They showed and demonstrated what a mature Christian really acts and looks like. It was also in church choir at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church where I met my fabulous wife, Cindy.

Faith is certainly a journey. It does not come without some hardships and plenty of surprises. A few years after my wife and I were married, we got a call from her sister, Linda. She had experienced a devastating stroke a few years earlier and her husband had recently passed away. She was capable of caring for herself, but asked us to take in and raise her 12-year old son, who needed more care than she could give. We prayed about it and quickly knew this was God asking us to step out in faith. Suddenly, one Labor Day weekend, we became parents of a pre-teen. I can’t say that it was not a challenge, he also had ADD, with a lot of hyper thrown in. What a joy though, to guide him through his faith journey. I am so proud of him today, as he has three children of his own and is a wonderful young father. Christ is a big part of his life.

A few years back I was teaching an adult education class and we were studying “Abraham, and the God that Calls.” It was while teaching that class I lost my job; you know, just a bad economy thing. It was quite devastating. I was hurt, especially since I was really good at what I was doing. Suddenly, like Abram, I felt I was being called but had no

## Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

clue as to direction. Can you imagine living as Abram, just packing up everything and your family to what may seem an aimless wandering to follow God’s call? I had plenty of self-pity and some long boring days, but I knew that by faith, God would provide.

It did take Him a while, almost two long years, but he led me to apply for a job here at LOPC as Admin. Assistant for Operations. Not only did I feel an absolute perfect fit for my skills and experience, but more, I felt God was calling. It is different when you are called by God for a task opposed to just doing a job. He gives me all the energy, wisdom and strength that is needed. Every day is a joy to come to work!

Many have asked, “What do you really do here?” I laugh, because I really don’t know what each day will bring! Officially, I am the Admin. Assistant for Operations and Family Ministry dividing my time between the two. For Family Ministry, I work with Pastor Jaime coordinating all the events and programs. That includes registration and organization of Mount Hermon All-Church Retreat; coordinating the Special Needs events; organizing snacks and meals for team meetings and volunteer groups; coordinating with outside speakers and community groups. For Operations team, I work with Chuck Fry by coordinating property improvements; scheduling and meeting with vendors and repair persons; meeting with inspectors; working with the custodians; and assisting with Kurth Garden.

I always want every person who comes on our campus, whether that be the garbage man, the gardener, or the health inspector to know that they have come to a special place. I make it a point to engage them in personal conversation, to get them to tell something about themselves. You find out all kinds of things like their mother is dying of cancer and they would really like someone to pray for them. To stop what you are doing and pray with them is what it means to be called by God. One of my favorite quotes is by Henri Nouwen, a Catholic priest and theologian. “I used to complain about all the interruptions to my work until I realized that these interruptions were my work.”

Faith can be pretty amazing when you let God handle the surprises.

## Spiritual Formation

### Christmas and the Incarnation: the Four Stories of Jesus' Beginnings.



Christmas trees, lights, presents, and of course a Nativity scene: all of these represent Christmas to American Christians. But how does each Gospel narrate Christ's birth? You might be surprised to know that only 2 of the 4 Gospels even include stories of Jesus as a baby.

Kathy Timpte, PhD student at Princeton Theological Seminary and adjunct professor at St.

Mary's College of California (as well as Ryan Timpte's wife) will be teaching a four week series on each Gospel writer's unique introduction to Jesus. Each Gospel is intent on conveying certain themes about who Jesus is: King, Servant, God, Social Revolutionary. And each of these themes are central to how they chose to begin each Gospel.

#### Sunday November 19 at 9:00 a.m. in CLC 203

The Gospel of John: In John, Jesus is described as the timeless "Word." John's use of symbolic dualism creates an image of Jesus as Divine, and uses rich metaphors to convey this.

#### Sunday November 26 at 9:00 a.m. in CLC 203

The Gospel of Mark: Mark's Gospel begins abruptly, and is often ignored. As the Gospel that was most likely the first written, his narration of Jesus as the voice calling the people back to God and breaking down social barriers is incredibly powerful even in its brevity.

#### Sunday December 3 at 9:00 a.m. in CLC 203

The Gospel of Matthew: In Matthew, Jesus is deeply tied to a Jewish lineage, tracing decent back to Abraham and through David. Jesus is represented as the King, and also narrated to show his status as a second Moses.

#### Sunday December 10 at 9:00 a.m. in CLC 203

The Gospel of Luke: Luke's Gospel contains most of the "Christmas Story" as told in Christmas pageants. Luke consistently focuses on God's promises being fulfilled through the Spirit. These promises are often given to unlikely and socially marginal people: women, and shepherds. Jesus is the great servant, born to help the outcasts.

For Questions, contact [ashlee@LOPC.org](mailto:ashlee@LOPC.org).

### Advent Celebration: What Is Waiting to be Born in You That Can Bring Light to a Darkened World? – 12/7

7:00- 8:30 p.m. in the Chapel



The gift of Advent is that all of us can symbolically relate to Mary. Although Advent is a Christian tradition, we will also look at it with the focus of all our faiths waiting for something new and miraculous to happen in our lives and the world in which we live, trusting that God will guide us as well as others to make a difference. Like Mary, we are nurturing a divine spark in ourselves, just as a mother nurtures the child that is growing in her. Something is at work in us, as we bond together to better know ourselves, each other and God, bringing forth whatever light of goodness we can to dispel the darkness created by hatred, ignorance, fear, oppression, greed and all non-loving in whatever form it takes in our world. Each of us experiences her own version of labor pains, but there is the promise that each of us will have the opportunity to bring change by being part of an accumulation of acts to create peace and justice to our community, nation and world.

Neighbor to Neighbor Interfaith Women's Groups and their friends invite you to meet with us in the LOPC Chapel for an Advent Service with messages and music representing many faith traditions. All Women Are Invited. Refreshments and Conversation afterwards



## Missions at LOPC

*LOPC's Mission ministry looks to Christ as an example of how to serve others and meet people wherever they are. We look for opportunities for participants to make a meaningful connection with those we serve with the hope of transformation and understanding as a result of that connection. LOPC uses its resources to respond to needs locally and globally with the goal of making a sustainable impact on those we serve.*

### Congo Schools

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



*Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, Mareth Ellis and Diane Steuber man the Congo Team necklace table*

Over \$34,000 has been raised by the Congo Necklace team in three and a half years with all proceeds going to Build Congo Schools. That's a lot of necklaces as they sell for \$12 or two for \$20. We are grateful for the support of our LOPC

community for they are the ones who have helped us the most achieve this sum. Here is the story of why we do this.

Imagine going to a school with mud walls and a thatched roof in a country with a long rainy season. Many days some schools have to close because of rain pouring in. Imagine teaching a class with no books, no pencils or paper –only a blackboard and chalk to present lesson. Imagine leading a class when the only teaching materials you have are the notes you took when in a special high school meant to prepare you for that career.

These are the conditions which Jan Sullivan, and her husband, Tom, of Evanston, IL, saw when they took a mission-inspired trip to Congo. She was led to found Build Congo Schools (BCS) with Congolese partners. "We wanted to be sure to involve the Congolese and be cognizant of what they wanted," Jan says. Build Congo Schools is a nonprofit organization, which supports the 980 Presbyterian Schools in Congo—the main school system in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The government lags far behind in focusing on education. When BCS began only 18% of the Presbyterian Schools were made of durable materials. The goal is to have the all transformed into brick and mortar schools. So, they began building, one school at a time.

students in the afternoon. It was the first high school in the region. The Congolese felt the need was greatest for schools in remote areas so that has been the way work has proceeded. Also, three classrooms and three latrines were added to Mpata Mualabala, the school to which LOPC contributed half of the funding. Most schools have cost about \$60,000. Building doesn't begin until the project is fully funded. All school have been built within budget and on time. They are now looking for funding for the Diboko Primary and Secondary School. Thus far \$24,000 has been raised; \$98,00 is needed for this larger school. When asked about the importance of their new school, Mpata Mualabala, a community member said "It's taken away our shame. Students no longer have to sit on dirt floors because the floors are concrete and there are new wooden decks. Teachers no longer had to put their notes on the floor because they have tables and chairs." Hard to imagine because we take all these things for granted in our prosperous nation.

We feel blessed that the team has been able to accomplish all this and want the congregation to know what can happen from small beginnings. Melissa Creasey presented the idea to the Congo team and Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen said she would try to start a group. Presbyterian Women gave \$50 to purchase supplies. Then she searched for someone to teach the women how to crochet! Linda Downing stepped up and Bobbie and Diane Steuber learned. They taught others, never dreaming their efforts would result in the amount of money raised thus far. There is now a team of about ten who get together to crochet, and also do the work at home. Bobbie says, "God has given us a passion for the Congolese and the importance of the children getting a good education. We want to continue using those crochet hooks to raise funds for Build Congo Schools as they build one school at a time. There's a long, long way to go." If you would like to join the Congo Necklace team contact [bobbiedodson@comcast.net](mailto:bobbiedodson@comcast.net).

You may donate to Build Congo Schools by writing checks to LOPC with Build Congo Schools in the memo line.

## Family at LOPC

*At LOPC, everyone is welcome and celebrated for the love and care they put into their families. Our definition of what it means to be a family is broad and inclusive. We invite you to be a part of something bigger, a church that strives to show all of us God's love and provides programs that teach families how to walk with Christ.*

### Learning Through Play at Seedlings Preschool

by Bridgette Thomas, Seedlings Communications Board Member



The belief that children learn as they play, both alone and with other children (and their teachers), is the basis of emergent curriculum. Emergent curriculum is a play-based philosophy of teaching, and way of developing lesson plans, that is responsive to children's interests. The goal

is to create meaningful learning experiences. It can be effective at any grade level, and is practiced at our preschool, Seedlings.

Let's examine the concept of emergent curriculum first by breaking down the two words... In context, emergent means coming from the experiences and daily lives of young children. This definition highlights that spontaneity is front and center in settings where young children play and learn. The curriculum (tools, ideas, materials) that teachers bring to children helps them to scaffold their learning. That is, they are able to build one concept upon another, upon another, with each block of the building process teaching them a little more each time.

Earlier this year, the Seedlings staff joined 10,000+ fellow educators from across the country at the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] Conference in Los Angeles. (NAEYC is the largest professional membership organization that works to promote high quality early childhood education.) With 20 Seedlings teachers present, our staff was able to attend 100 educational sessions on how young children develop, play and learn, and how to deliver emergent curriculum.

"When we talk about our teachers bringing curriculum to students, we think of it not as a linear process, but rather more of a coordination of the environment, materials and tools for the children to access," said Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Director. "Our teachers set the scene, with opportunities in the classroom for students to see, touch, listen, tinker, talk about and role play the many aspects of a concept the children are excited about. At the end of the day, we really want the kids to be excited about learning."

At Seedlings, we emphasize the process rather than the product. Emergent curriculum is a good fit for our preschool because it is a child-centered, flexible and open-ended approach to teaching that evolves as children and teachers live and work it. It gives Seedlings teachers – God bless them – the unique opportunity to explore and bring real meaning to our children's many, many questions.

#### Sidebar Article

In an emergent curriculum school, ideas for lesson-planning take shape when children have the freedom to create their own discussions while playing. It is then the role of the teachers to thoughtfully listen as the children play, determine the shared interests of the group, and offer them a curriculum, to help them choose the next direction their learning will take. In the article "One Teacher, 20 Preschoolers, and a Goldfish: Environmental Awareness, Emergent Curriculum and Documentation" by Ann Lewin-Benham (NAEYC Beyond the Journal, March 2006), the author describes how by placing a single goldfish in a bowl in a preschool classroom and by listening to the children's questions and ideas, the teacher was able to guide their learning. By the end of the year, the children's evolving interests led to questions about what's in water and how evaporation works; reading fish food labels, which prompted a big project on food sources; carefully watching the ceaseless swimming of the fish, which led to a project on energy; discussing how pollutants get into the air and water we breath; and studying the labels on cleansers, which resulted in a search for environmentally-friendly cleaning product for the classroom.



*A Seedlings' Daisy nails golf tees into a pumpkin with a real hammer! Our students are artistically inspired putting their fine-motor skills to work, with unconventional materials.*

## Online Family Resources

by Ryan Timpte, Director of Children's Ministry

As we all navigate these turbulent times together, we want to give our LOPC community the resources you need to talk to kids about the events in the world and to help them grow up to make the world a better place. That's why we created two new online resources for you to use and share with your friends.

The Family Faith at Home Series - Updated every Sunday, this weekly devotional blog invites your family to focus on the virtue of the month and to reflect on various aspects of what it means for your lives. We encourage you to find a time this week to gather as a family, say a prayer, listen to a prompt, respond as a family to what you have heard and then act on the suggestion for the week. You can find the weekly devotional on LOPC's children's ministry blog at: [LOPC.org/category/childrens-ministry/](http://LOPC.org/category/childrens-ministry/).

The Fantastic Project - We believe that the world can be a better place. We believe that our kids will lead the way. We want to center the virtues of kindness, justice, and mercy in their lives, so that they can be the ones to change the world. That's why we started the FANTASTIC project. This series of weekly videos, uploaded every Thursday, is designed to help kids navigate a broken world by discussing tough issues like inequality, racism, and other systemic injustices in a kid-friendly way. You can find the weekly FANTASTIC project videos at: [LOPC.org/ministry/children/the-fantastic-project](http://LOPC.org/ministry/children/the-fantastic-project).

We are committed to being here for kids and families at LOPC and in the Lamorinda community. Please use and share these resources with anyone who might be interested. We're on this journey together, and by the grace of God, our world will be a better place at the end of the path.



## Family at LOPC

### Opportunities to GIVE



The holidays are a time to celebrate with family and friends. For most of us it is a chance to spend time together and enjoy home cooked meals, good conversation and relax. For those struggling with making ends meet, the holidays are a time of increased stress. It is difficult to think of buying gifts while struggling to pay rent, fill a car with gas and put food on the table. As a community LOPC has always been generous during this time of year.

**The Alternative Gift Market** will return with opportunities to support people all over the world as well as opportunities to help some of LOPC's partners fund specific projects. Look for the gift market in the Chapel Narthex on Dec. 3th and 10th

**MCC Food Boxes** - What was once an Adopt- A- Child program has transformed into a food program due to the ever increasing demand for food in the Monument Corridor. The food boxes allow families in the Monument Corridor to celebrate the holidays. Pick-up a flyer listing the items required and a box on the plaza Nov. 26th & Dec. 3th return all filled boxes on Dec. 10 and place in truck parked in front of the Oak room. The list will be on the LOPC website as well.

**Harbor House Adopt-A- Child** supports low income children that reside in the San Antonio district of Oakland. The gift collection program provides Harbor House with gifts for their on-site store which provides parents the joy of choosing a gift for their own children during the holidays. Look for a table on the plaza on Dec. 3th or 10th. Return your UNWRAPPED gift to LOPC by Dec. 10th.

**Congo Necklace Sales 12/7** - Purchase a handcrafted necklace for someone special while supporting Build Congo Schools at the same time.

Questions? Email [robin@LOPC.org](mailto:robin@LOPC.org).



49 Knox Drive  
Lafayette, CA 94549

NOVEMBER 2017

**IMPORTANT:**  
Dated Material  
PLEASE DELIVER  
Before 11/1/17  
Thank you!

Return Service Requested

**PASTORAL STAFF**

Peter Whitelock - Pastor / Head of Staff  
Gerald Chinen - Pastor, Congregational Care  
Lauren Gully - Pastor, Mission & Spiritual Formation  
Jaime Polson - Pastor, Family Ministry

**WORSHIP & MUSIC**

Brett Strader, Director  
Stewart Scharch, Organist

**TREASURER**

Char Casella

**MINISTRY DIRECTORS**

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement  
Keris Dahkamp, Youth  
Chuck Fry, Operations  
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool  
Ryan Timpte, Children

**FOCUS NEWSLETTER**

Ashley Jackson, Communications Director  
Jennifer Shaul, Digital & Print Admin  
Chuck Fry / Dick James

Thank you to all who contribute to each issue, and to proofreaders Bev Fellows and Janet Jourgensen.

**Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:**

**NOVEMBER 1** for the **DECEMBER** issue.  
Email items to [communications@LOPC.org](mailto:communications@LOPC.org).

**Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:**

**Monday by 5:00 p.m.**  
Email [communications@LOPC.org](mailto:communications@LOPC.org).

**2018 Sanctuary Flower Calendar**



If you would like to celebrate an occasion or to honor your loved ones in memory on a Sunday, please sign up on the Flower Calendar located in front of the Welcome Center every Sunday morning. For Sundays in 2018, the suggested donation will be \$150. Questions? Contact [worship@LOPC.org](mailto:worship@LOPC.org).

**Connect with us online!**



[Livestream.Com/LOPC](http://Livestream.Com/LOPC)



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[@lopchurch](https://Twitter.com/@lopchurch)

**Tag us in your posts using #LOPC**

**Sunday Worship Services**

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

**Invite Friends & Family**