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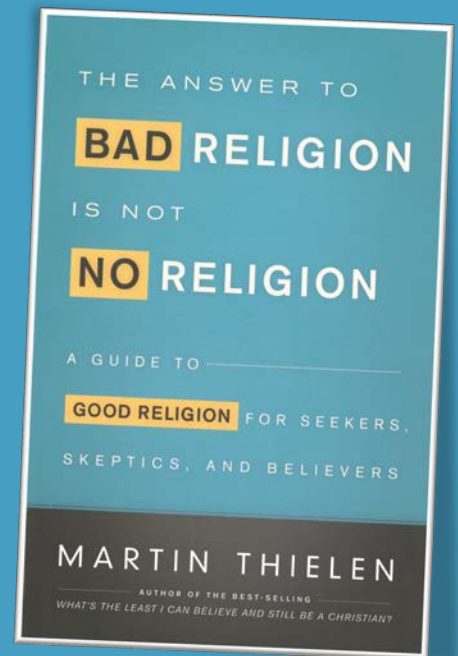
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Join us as we study
and celebrate the best
of our religion!

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

LENTEN STUDY GROUPS

Join with others this
Lenten series to study
and celebrate the best
of our religion, and
what it has to offer our
community, the
country, and the world!



QUESTIONS? CONTACT BECKI@LOPC.ORG

MARCH 2017

Welcoming the Stranger

by Gerald Chinen, Pastor - Congregational Care



I was shocked and surprised to learn that in the 1930s, over a million Mexicans and Mexican Americans were “repatriated” to Mexico, for their “own good.” Our federal government along with state and local government agencies and major companies such as U.S. Steel, Ford Motor Company, and Southern Railroad convinced their Mexican residents and workers that they would be better off in Mexico with their “own people.” It was a veiled attempt to blame the most recent immigrants to our country, for the lack of jobs for “real” Americans. Sixty percent of those were American citizens, some of whom had never lived in Mexico.

In 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Presidential Executive Order 9066 which authorized the Secretary of War to incarcerate Japanese Americans, German Americans, and Italian Americans living in areas that were noted as Military zones. Most of those incarcerated were here on the West Coast, among them 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans who were imprisoned in 10 different “relocation” camps in California, Idaho, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and as far east as Arkansas. Unbeknownst to many, there were also camps in Hawaii. February 19, 2017, marked the 75th anniversary of the signing of this Executive Order.

Whether it is Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, Muslims, or refugees, one of the rationales has always been that it is a humane thing to do to protect them. But we’ve learned that there is always something deeper at the core. And while the recent Presidential Executive Order wasn’t explicitly sending people away, the implicit message was “you aren’t welcome here.” The Executive Order, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” though admirable in principle, like Executive Order 9066 and the “Repatriation” of Mexican Americans, in tone is insensitive to the rich diversity of our nation and personally offensive.

In Okinawa on my Sabbatical, I visited the Okinawa Peace Memorial Park. Large granite walls weave through the beautiful landscape. On the walls, as is to be expected, are the names of all the Japanese soldiers who died during the three month long Battle of Okinawa. What is unique about the wall is that there are also the names of all the Okinawan residents who died, as well as the names of all the allied soldiers who died. In a very real way, the spirit of Okinawa is in those walls, for the Okinawan people are welcoming and hospitable.

In Matthew 25, Jesus reveals one of the very sacred tenets of our faith that we are to always welcome the stranger, not turn them away, but to be hospitable. Hospitality in ancient times began as a form of mutual aid. Before hotels and restaurants, strangers were dependent on the kindness of others. Strangers in a very real sense were very vulnerable. We as a nation cannot lose our grasp on hospitality and welcome, or we may see history repeat itself.

If there is one place where we have to be gracious hosts, it is here, in the church. And in fact, one of the core values that our Session has adopted is diversity in our church. It goes beyond race: a larger question is about anyone who is different in any, one who feels like a stranger, how do we as the body of Christ welcome others? I have two additional questions to ask on which we may ponder. When, in your time here at LOPC, have you felt like a stranger? How do we become a more welcoming community?

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See more at LOPC.org



The Answer to Bad Religion is Not No Religion!

by Lauren Gully, Pastor – Mission & Spiritual Formation

This Lent we will be using the book by Martin Thielen to reflect on how “toxic religion dismays...and how to get into the clear about what good religion is and can be.” Thielen reminds us that Christians need not be sexist, anti-Semitic, literalistic, anti-evolution, or judgmental; they do, however, need to believe in and embrace Jesus and his message.

This Lenten series will remind us how “good religion keeps an open mind” and will **begin with the sermon on Ash Wednesday**. You are invited as we kick off our study, to hear Ash Wednesday’s sermon and dive into our Lenten Book. Use the schedule below to follow along in your small groups or our sermon series.

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

LENTEN READING SCHEDULE 2017

1. **The Answer to Bad Religion is Not No Religion, but Good Religion.**

Read Introduction to parts 1, 2, and 3 – Chapters 6 and 7

2. **The Answer to Judgment is Love**

Read Chapters 1, 9 and 10

3. **The Answer to Negativity is Hope**

Read Chapters 2, 11, 13 and 16

4. **The Answer to Arrogance is Openness**

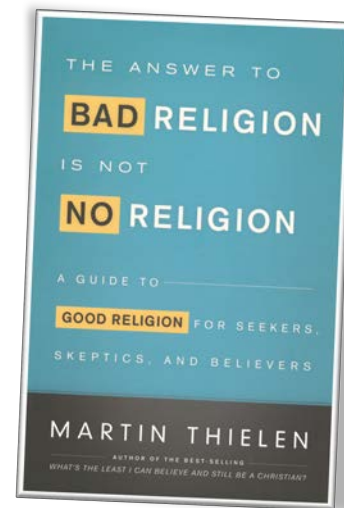
Read Chapters 3 and 14

5. **The Answer to Division is Community**

Read Chapters 4, 12 and 15

6. **The Answer to Passivity is Passion**

Read Chapters 5, 8 and 17



QUESTIONS? CONTACT BECKI@LOPC.ORG

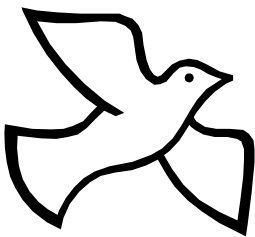
Pastor Peter is Blogging



Check out Pastor Peter's new blog! Each week, Pastor Peter publishes a blog entry that offers wisdom and support from his more than 35 years in ministry. His weekly thoughts will cover a wide range of issues to help you in your role as a disciple of Christ.

www.LOPC.org/category/pastor-peters-blog

Widows and Widowers Grief Recovery



Have you or someone you know experienced the death of a spouse recently or within the last few years? Sharing our experiences during

this 10-week class is extremely helpful to our healing process. Find hope, support and successful ways to process this significant life event. The course is open to all Widows and Widowers.

Enrollments are now being accepted for the group to start March 14-May 16, 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. at LOPC. Pre-Registration required. The workbook is \$15. If you want to register or have more information, contact Bev Fellows, 925-949-7628 or beverlyfellows@comcast.net.

Mom's Retreat: Connecting Your Heart & Spirit



How often do you have the opportunity to pause, reflect, and think deeply about your own life? A roomful of women, both Seedlings moms and LOPC church members, were able to do just this at the 2017 Moms' Retreat on January 20. The retreat was led by Paige Nolan, a mom, writer, speaker

and life coach who is passionate about having meaningful conversations on living life with intention. She has worked as a college guidance counselor, preschool teacher, and creative writing and reading instructor. Now, through retreats, and both individual and group workshops, she does the important work of inspiring others to embrace the purpose and possibility of life.

Paige began the workshop by having us breathe deeply and center ourselves, helping us all become present. Next, she told us about her life and the journey of pursuing her passions. She was candid and sincere, and so incredibly funny, which helped us all open up. Then, she led us in an honest conversation about how we live OUR lives. Paige was so honest herself, that it created a space for all the women there to be the same way. Through written exercises, sharing our own thoughts, and listening intently to each other, we were able to connect and think genuinely about how we wish to live. By the end of the retreat, we had gained both inspiration and practical steps to make real changes in our lives. What a completely special and rare gift.

After the retreat, Paige shared some advice for women/moms about how to live their most authentic lives: "The two most powerful words in your entire vocabulary are yes and no. You build your whole life using these words. For women, and especially mothers, we have a deep fear of being selfish. Too often, we mistake what could be deemed a self-honoring choice as a selfish one. To live an authentic life, one must find yes and find no in the heart. We must grow still enough to LISTEN. It often arrives in a whisper. And you must be consciously breathing to hear it. And then, with all sorts of COURAGE, and support from the people who love you, you must LIVE those words with each ordinary, everyday choice you make."

With compassion, humor, and encouragement, Paige led us in a truly memorable retreat. She reminded us growth really does happen in connection. If you would like to read more beautiful, down-to-earth wisdom such as this, visit Paige's website at paigenolan.com.

Voyagers Embarking Soon



It's that time of year to sign up for one of the Voyager social groups. These groups are known as ships and presently include: Ark, Explorers, Friendship, Hobie Cats, Lasers, Schooners, and Windjammers. Voyager social groups are part of LOPC history. Through the years, being a member of a ship has been a great way to form friendships and meaningful connections within our large congregation. Being in a Voyager ship is an opportunity for couples or singles to gather in small groups, and come together monthly with others in the ship for food, fun, fellowship or service. There are dinners out or in homes, theater or musical events, outdoor activities like bocce, picnics and sailing on the San Francisco Bay.

Upcoming events for the various ships include "A Night in Paris," "March Madness Voyager Style," helping at the Food Bank, visiting the Ruth Bancroft Succulent Garden, and making chocolate with a chocolatier. If you ever stop on the worship Plaza after church for a cup of coffee or cookie, you are likely being served by members of a Voyager ship, as twice a year each ship serves coffee following worship. It's a great way to meet others.

Now is the time to get signed up as Voyager ships are embarking on a new year of fun and fellowship. If you are a couple or a single – Voyagers are typically aged 50 and up, but all are welcome – and want to sign-up, visit a ship, or even just help us serve coffee on occasion, contact Bev Fellows at beverlyfellows@comcast.net.

The Aging Brain



Stephen Ministry invites you to join its **March 19** continuing education class at **10:15 a.m. in the Oak Room** for a look at the many kinds of dementia, how to recognize it, and how we (as family members, friends, neighbors, and care givers) can best respond with benevolence and understanding.



Dr. Eric J. Freitag
Executive Director
Mt. Diablo
Memory Center

Dr. Freitag is a licensed clinical psychologist, board certified neuropsychologist, and Qualified Medical Examiner. His clinical expertise includes assessment and treatment of dementia, traumatic brain injury, and sport concussion. He is the founder of the Mt. Diablo Memory Center in Walnut Creek where he works extensively with traumatic brain injury patients and older adults with memory disorders.

Parent's Night Out - 3/25



We're having a taco party! Join LOPC parents for a fun evening of food and fellowship. Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 25, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Look for RSVP details in Connections, or contact Julie at julie.l.atkinson@gmail.com or Matt at matt@LOPC.org with any questions. Childcare available by reservation through March 19 at childcare@LOPC.org.

Financial Results For 2016

by Doug Bontemps, Outgoing Finance Elder



Little known to most at LOPC, while others joyously rang in the New Year with a little Champagne, there was a small group of people huddled in a dark office at the back of the church. Your LOPC Finance Team nervously awaited the financial results of 2016. Well, the results are in and the Finance Team is having a little Champagne of their own! 2016 was another successful year.

Jim Nagle, the new incoming Finance Elder, summed it up this way: "LOPC is very fortunate to be in such a strong financial position closing out 2016 and moving into 2017. We are truly blessed to have a faithful giving community and a church community that is able to carefully put these resources to work in our community. In summary we received higher Mission and Special Gift donations that were able to be deployed to our great mission partners. This combined with Pledges and other income, along with our ministry teams maintaining expense control, has allowed us to meet our goal. We continue to support growth in Mission, and Children, Youth, Family and Seniors ministries. In 2016, the Foundation increased funding available to be used across all ministries of LOPC.

"In total, income for 2016 was slightly higher than the budget: total income reached \$3.35 million, \$119,000 more than budget. This was largely due to generous mission and special gifts that will also show as higher expenses as we deploy them to our mission partners. Without this unexpected income we would have been under our income budget by about \$14,000 which was due to slightly lower combined Pledge and Faith income. Pledges and the Faith component totaled \$2.33 million, only \$24,000 lower than budget. This portion of the church's income has remained relatively stable from 2015, and shows the giving strength of the community as we finish out the Sanctuary campaign. In contrast to LOPC, other church communities continue to see lower giving each year.

"On the expense side, we were higher to budget, but mainly due to the above-discussed higher mission gifts that we paid out. Expenses totaled \$3.365 million, \$132,000 higher than planned. It is notable that almost every ministry team finished the year just slightly under budget. Great team effort! Overall, the net result is a shortfall of \$13,000 that will be covered by the Session Emerging Needs Fund. In the relative scheme of our budget this is only a slight variance and shows financial strength."

Thanks, Jim. And before I consider a second glass of Champagne I have quick shout-out: a huge thank you for all involved in LOPC's Foundation, both the Trustees and the donors. Foundation grants play such a vital role in all parts of the church! Finally, for those of you who would rather read numbers than words, a copy of the church's 2016 financial statements are available in the office. Now on to 2017!

Family Faith Formation - Talking with Your Children about Communion - 3/12

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. in the Davies Room



How do I talk with my children about Communion? If you have ever asked this question, you are not alone. It is one of the most frequently asked questions Family Ministry receives from parents and grandparents. Please join us as we lead a discussion and class to talk about Communion and what it means in our life of faith. There will be a time for families to engage in small group discussion. Led by Rev. Jaime Polson, Ryan Timpte and Lori Robinson.

Parents, grandparents and caregivers of children are invited to attend with their children. Childcare will be provided as well. Please R.S.V.P. to Dave Engelbrektson at dave@LOPC.org.

New Members Class - 3/3 – 3/5



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 on the weekend of March 3-5, 2017. Childcare available by reservation. Questions? Contact matt@LOPC.org.

Parent-Daughter Workshop 3/23, 3/30, 4/13 & 4/20



Join us for a parent-daughter workshop for 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls called, "Be Who You Are, Say What You Mean." The workshop will be held Thursdays, March 23, 30, April 13, and 20 from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC). As girls become young adults, the ability to be resilient in the face of challenges, to own mistakes, and to set a strong internal compass for healthy friendships and relationships is critical. In this workshop, parent-daughter pairs will practice skills to build and strengthen their authentic voice. Girls and parents will have the opportunity to bond and have fun in a safe environment, and develop a common language to face challenges together.

Program Summary:

- Week One: Dealing with Difficult Friends
- Week Two: Emotional Intelligence
- Week Three: Making Mistakes & Not-So-Funny Jokes
- Week Four: Four Steps for Healthy Conflict

Registration is available online directly with the Girls Leadership organization at www.girlsleadership.org/programs/lopc678

Men's Breakfast ^{3/29}

Where women are always welcome.
7:00 a.m. | Davies Room



Mike Conklin, Chairman & CEO
Sentinels of Freedom

The mission of Sentinels of Freedom (SOF) is to assist veterans severely wounded and injured, post 9/11 Veterans as they transition back into civilian life.

\$5 donation at the door for breakfast
R.S.V.P. to janet@LOPC.org or call
(925) 283-8722 x223 before noon on 3/28

What is Per Capita?



Per Capita is a Latin phrase that means "for each head." We use it to refer to an annual fee that our congregation pays to higher levels of the Presbyterian Church

based upon the number of active members in LOPC. For 2017, the Per Capita amount is \$36.00, or \$72.00 per couple. We encourage members to make an extra contribution to help defray this expense in addition to their other gifts. To facilitate this, you will find a blue Per Capita envelope in your box of giving envelopes. You can also give a check to the church with "Per Capita" noted on the memo line. We have budgeted \$66,564 this year for our Per Capita obligation. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a significant portion of this could be covered by your extra contribution enabling us to add additional support to ministries of LOPC?

Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



Nan Reuther

Nan Reuther serves as an usher three times a month. "It gives me the opportunity to greet people to this special place and make them feel welcomed," she shared.

All of this connection with the church comes naturally to Nan. "I cannot remember a time when I didn't go to church so my spiritual journey has been a long one," she recalls. "My

grandfather was the janitor at the Presbyterian Church, my grandmother always prepared the communion elements - to perfection I might add -and our family was in attendance every Sunday."

Born in Jersey City, NJ, the family soon moved to Clinton, a town of 1,100 people. "When I walked to school, I could tell you the names of everyone who lived in the houses I passed. Going away to Middlebury College in Vermont was a challenge, although it was also a small school of 700. An even bigger change came after graduation when she, with two classmates, moved to New York City where she was a business administrator for Hanover Bank.

Nan met her future husband at a wedding where she was a bridesmaid and he was an usher. Though it was a long-distance romance, their first date was October 7, they became engaged on December 17, and married April 7. They decided to live in Swarthmore and immediately joined the Presbyterian Church. She said, "That was important to both of us. After we adopted David in 1961 and Deborah in 1963 having a church presence in their lives was a must. Along with other activities, I became a Sunday School teacher, and also superintendent."

The Reuthers moved to Moraga in 1976 and very soon were members of Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church where they both had an active presence. Tragedy struck when when he was in college and died in an automobile accident, where he wasn't the driver. I don't know how people get through something like this without God in their lives. He is always with you, three in one, God, Jesus, and I was especially comforted by feeling the Holy

Spirit was always within me. The church, family and friends helped Dick and me in many ways, but one friend in particular stands out. She lived across the street, and Dick was usually gone on work assignments Monday through Friday. So, for weeks, she gave me dinners and came to talk and listen. What a gift that was, and I want everyone to know how important it is to reach out to others when they have such problems in their lives. It taught me that you have the choice; keep on living and turn to God, or give up. I took a week off and prayed to God what my life should be like. It became crystal clear - help other people, at my church and in my community."

By this time, the Reuthers were members of LOPC and Nan entered life here with a new vigor. Besides ushering and Thursday Fellowship, she is in a weekly Bible study, the Spiritual Formation class where she handles food assignments, the Necklace Crochet team, Explorers, a choir angel, helps with women's retreats, serves coffee, and makes herself available when other help is needed. "I know I need to pace myself, and at times say, 'no', but that's hard to do."

Nan chose two things, as special in her spiritual life—the 23rd Psalm, and the Prayer of St. Francis which begins, 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.' She also likes the motto at the bottom of the last page of FOCUS: "LOPC, Where everyone is welcome, nobody's perfect and anything is possible with God."

GIRL SCOUT SUNDAY MARCH 12, 2017

Girl Scouts, Brownies and Daisies are invited to wear their uniforms to church on Sunday, March 12, in honor of Girl Scout Sunday.

On this day in 1912 in Savannah, Georgia, Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first members. Every year, the week in which March 12 falls is celebrated as Girl Scout Week.

If you would like to serve as a greeter for either the 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. church service, contact Stephanie O'Haver at sfohaver@yahoo.com.



2016 Speaker Series

MARCH 3

DR. ROBERT JOHNSON

“Will Gene Therapy and Gene Editing Change Your Life?”



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

“Will Gene Therapy and Gene Editing Change Your Life?” is the question posed by Dr. Robert Johnson, the speaker at First Friday Forum which will take place March 3, at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

His work currently focuses on oncology (cancer) projects. “It’s a very exciting time in oncology as basic science efforts have identified many new targets for drug therapies,” he says. “Cell and Gene therapies are at the center of many of the newest and most novel approaches, some of which are directed at the hardest to treat cancers.”

To help the public understand something of the process, Dr. Johnson explains, “Gene therapy is the introduction of genes into existing cells to prevent, inhibit or cure a wide range of diseases.

“This technique has made important medical advances in less than two decades, moving now into the clinical development stage. There are now over 800 gene therapy clinical trials ongoing, two-thirds of them dealing with cancer. There are going to be a plethora of gene therapy approvals over the next ten years effecting cures in many genetic diseases and offering hope in inhibiting or delaying progression in other acquired diseases like cancer and cardiovascular disease.”

Dr. Johnson is a M.D./Ph.D (Biochemistry and Biophysics) graduate of the University of Pennsylvania

First Friday Forum

by Bobbie Dodson, LOPC Member

School of Medicine, receiving his clinical training at Massachusetts General Hospital. Upon completing his fellowship, he joined the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as an Associate Investigator and was appointed a faculty member at Harvard Medical School. He worked for several companies in the scientific field including Merck and Co., Chiron, and Kosan Biosciences where he was the vice president in charge of pre-clinical, clinical and corporate development. Currently he is a consultant for the biopharmaceutical industry with a particular interest in oncology. Also, he is interim Chief Scientific Officer and Chief Medical Officer and Scientific Advisory Board member of Epeius Biotechnologies, a gene therapy company.

A member of LOPC along with his wife, Margaret Liu, who is also an M.D., Johnson is proud of his two children, Matthew, who is working on his Ph.D in moral philosophy at the University of Cambridge in England, and Ariana, who will graduate from Stanford this year to embark on a career in theater directing addressing social injustice and cultural understanding.

Dr. Johnson says he and Margaret have worked in the same departments in academia and at two companies. He adds, “We embarked on two quite interesting projects several decades ago which were a form of gene transfer. They required a series of many steps to proceed correctly, and there were some anxieties and uncertainties, but ultimately, by God’s grace, our scientific union was quite a success. Both Dr. Liu and Dr. Johnson’s work schedules require they travel the world extensively and sometimes they meet up at an airport when one is arriving and the other departing.

“While cures are still rare, many patients are living long lives with their cancers under control,” Dr. Johnson says. “Epeuis is focused on developing a gene delivery system (GDS) to deliver genes to patients. Research is devoted to selective targeting of the GDS system to specific tissues to treat different kinds of cancer. Currently, we are in clinical trials.”

While the lecture begins at 1:30 p.m., refreshments are served in Fellowship Hall beginning at 1:00 p.m. For further information call 925-283-8722. This series is sponsored by Senior Ministries.

Mission Visit to JF Kapnek Trust in Zimbabwe



JF Kapnek led by Lamorinda pediatrician Dan Robbins was one of the recipients of the Christmas special offering in 2016. In addition to the work that the Kapnek Trust has done to reduce the incident of HIV/AIDS

transmission, the organization has been instrumental in ensuring that 20,00 children, 3-5 years old, receive a rich education, hot meal and regular health checkups at the Kapnek supported pre-school they attend. LOPC sent our high school youth and their advisors to Zimbabwe in 2010 to help build several Kapnek preschools. This September, a small group will be visiting Zimbabwe in an effort to help repair and perform simple maintenance on a few of these preschools.

The trip will entail working at JF Kapnek preschools for approximately a week followed by several days of exploring the beauty of Africa. Space is limited to eight people. The trip is especially in need of skilled labor but all skill levels are welcome. If you want to learn more or express an interest, please come to an information meeting led by Phil Hunter in the Ministry Center Library on Sunday, March 19, at 10:00 a.m. For more information please contact Pastor Lauren Gully at lauren@LOPC.org or Phil Hunter at hunter.p@mac.com.



Congo Mission Team Help the Congolese



In 2016, the Congo Mission Team with the invaluable help of many members of the LOPC family continued its work to assist the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Regarding financial aid to the Congo:

- \$26,000 was raised at the Special Offering at Easter to fund the training of facilitators to implement a trauma healing curriculum for children in the violence-ravaged eastern part of the Congo.
- With necklace sales and other donations, \$12,000 was raised for Build Congo Schools and Computer/English program for girls, both programs sponsored by PC(USA).
- Some funds were donated to Presbyterian mission co-workers to help them with their work in the Congo.

A significant amount of effort went into being advocates for the Congolese people by taking training on being effective advocates and then encouraging government and church representatives to take specific actions. Building relationships with the Congolese community is another goal. We will continue to use our voices to help the Congolese.

As we look to 2017 we are especially excited that LOPC will be host on September 22-23 to the annual meeting of the Congo Mission Network. This event will bring together Presbyterians from the Congo and in the U.S. who are devoted to helping the people of the Congo.

SAVE THE Date! You will hear more later.

2017 Pledge Campaign

by Conrad Breece, Stewardship Elder



The Stewardship Team is pleased to report that through week 14 of the 2017 Pledge Campaign - "We Rise Together" - pledges totaling \$2,129,231 have been received from 527 giving units, against the goal of \$2,375,000 from 600 giving units. We would like to have a strong

finish over the next month. If you have not yet turned in your pledge for 2017 or pledged online at the LOPC website - LOPC.org, and are able to do so, there is still time. Our thanks to the congregation for this good result.

Family Ministry Blogs

At LOPC, we want to do all we can to support parents and kids navigate the challenges of life. God calls us into relationships with one another, and we want to honor the relationships that we have with you. That's why we've created a place at LOPC.org we hope will be an ongoing resource for you: Ministry Blogs.

Ever wondered if there were a way to jumpstart your prayer life? Have you ever been in a situation where you've had to confront the unknown? What does it look like to really help your neighbor? Over the last few months, our staff have been tackling these and other topics on our brand new ministry blogs. The new LOPC.org website gives us the capability of writing about a myriad of subjects, and we're updating our blogs weekly to respond to our changing world.

The Children's Ministry Blog focuses primarily on issues relating to young kids, while the Youth Ministry Blog

contains content both for youth and for parents of youth. The Family Ministry Blog is particularly for the challenges that adults and parents face daily.

There's already a ton of great content up there, including Chris Baldwin's post on finding community when life gets hard, Lori Robinson's thoughts on diversity training and education, Rev. Jaime Polson's post on giving thanks, and Allison Kunz's recap of the youth's Sleep Out experience. Two of our blog posts are featured in this month's issue of FOCUS on pages 14 & 15. To get notifications in your email when we update, you can subscribe to any of the blogs using the "Newsletter Signup" box on the right side of the page.

We'll be adding to the blogs every week, so if you have ideas on topics you'd like to see us write about, let us know at dave@LOPC.org.

Communicating Love in the Face of Hatred and Arrogance

March 19 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. with Lunch (\$10) in the Fellowship Hall



Rev. Nadim Nassar, Director of the Awareness Foundation, will be here on March 19 to speak to us about how to communicate love, even when we are faced with ever increasing intolerance.

In a global world where we get news in an instant it can be difficult to live in a time and space where we are aware of how connected we are to other cultures, and the amount of unrest and even violence that can result from our differences. Father Nadim Nassar is an Episcopal priest originally from Syria.

He established the Awareness Foundation in 2003 with Bishop Michael Marshall in response to the growing need to study the Christian faith in the context of the 21st century. He has a unique perspective on the Mideast, interfaith dialogue, and continues to believe that peace is possible.

Please plan to join us for lunch and conversation with Father Nassar as he shares his perspective about how our faith calls us to act in the midst of hatred and arrogance.

Contact becki@LOPC.org for more details.

Nadim Nassar's vision is

"To empower Christians everywhere to be a counter-force of love and peace to the intolerance and aggression that now prevail in so many of our communities, and to build understanding between the faiths."

Register Now for Summer Mission Experiences!



5th-6th Grade Service Squad Daycamp

Date: June 12-16

Location: LOPC & East Bay

Register at www.lopcc.org/ministry/youth

Deadline: 4/12

An intermediate service-learning experience for youth to serve others locally with Christ's love in a variety of ways. Camp will run concurrently with LOPC's elementary VB Camp program (M-Th at 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m., F at 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.). Parent participation expected, with many ways and times to contribute, including serving alongside youth. For students who will have completed 5th-6th grade as of Summer 2017.



6th-8th Grade Mission Trip

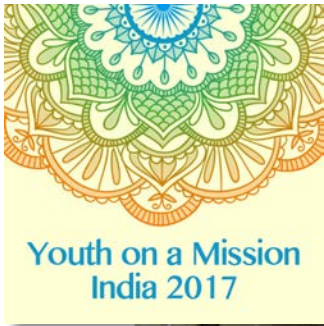
Date: June 17-23

Location: Austin, Texas

Register at www.lopcc.org/ministry/youth

Deadline: 4/17

A Group Mission Trip Week of Hope. We'll discover God at work in the Austin community, develop empathy for the hurting, and serve through relational mission experiences with open hands and hearts. For students who will have completed 6th-8th grade as of Summer 2017.



Youth on a Mission!

The high school youth are embarking on an International trip to Visakhapatnam India this summer July 15-31, 2017!

The group will be participating in missional service at the Children of Faith, (COF) orphanage and school. Students and advisors will assist local contractors on construction and beautification projects, help tutor the children in English, and worship alongside the COF students and staff in their church. There will be an LOPC-led vacation Bible school in the afternoons, along with plenty of time to simply play and fellowship with the children and staff residents there. They are excited about the mission they are about to embark on but need the support of the congregation and the greater community!

Please see below how you can support the youth on their mission to broaden their vision of the world and experience a transformation in their faith as they act as Christ's light in the world. Let us all join together in this incredibly transformative experience for us all.

Ways to Get Involved:

- Join the youth trip kick-off on the plaza on March 12, 19 & 26.
- Donate to their trip (\$23,000 fundraising goal and options on the plaza).
- Donate a child's book, iPads, laptops, suitcases.
- Include the LOPC youth & the COF youth in your prayers.

Contact Keris with questions keris@LOPC.org.



Sleep Out

by Allison Kunz, Associate Director – Youth Ministry

One rainy weekend in January, a group of high school students and leaders stayed over at LOPC to learn about homelessness and what we can do to support those experiencing homelessness.

Bill Shaw, Program Manager of Warm Winter Nights, visited the group and shared stories from individual clients to help youth begin to understand the many ways a family may become homeless and what it may be like for a family to live in a shelter. Afterward, youth set up sleeping tents in Fellowship Hall to mimic the living situation of families sheltered by Warm Winter Nights.

Unlike families at Warm Winter Nights who adhere to a careful sleeping schedule to support families' work and school schedules, we didn't get much sleep. We were up at 6:15 a.m. to take down our shelters and drove to Shelter Inc. in Martinez where we cooked a hot breakfast for 50 residents and engaged in crafts and games with the children.

Olivia, 16, reflected on her experience saying, "I didn't know exactly what to expect. I sat with three girls who were all sisters and they did the craft which included writing what they were thankful for. These girls didn't have much but they still thought of a ton of ideas for things they were grateful for. Just those three hours of sitting with the girls made me reflect on my own life and realize all the blessings that God has given to me."

Sleep Out was a fantastic experience for youth. Students gave their valuable weekend hours in order to brighten someone's day while fostering compassion and experiencing a small piece of what it is like to live in a shelter. It is our hope that, through this experience, youth continue to diminish the fear of encountering someone with whom we do not easily identify and discover instead that each person we meet is our very own brother and sister.



Editor's Note:

Watch the videos below as a family, online at <https://www.lopc.org/childrens-ministry/why-should-i-help-my-neighbor>.

Make sure you talk about the questions they pose, and then decide how your family might help your neighbor this month.

Why Should I Help My Neighbor?

by Ryan Timpte, Director – Children's Ministry

Last summer, the kids at Vacation Bible Camp were asked during their Mission rotation the question, "Why should you help your neighbor?" This question guided them through the week as we learned what a neighbor is and the fears that might keep us from reaching out to help them. We heard from Pastor Lauren Gully about the special situation of refugees in the world, and we partnered with Blythe Rafael at the East Bay Refugee Forum to put together over 300 toiletry kits for refugees arriving right here in the Bay Area.

There are many answers to the question, "Why should you help your neighbor?" You might know them personally. You might have shared interests, or a shared faith. Your kids might play together, or you might work together, or you might not even know them at all. What we learned at Vacation Bible Camp is that the one thing that connects us all, no matter what, is that we are all created in the image of God.

The virtue of the month in January was Knowledge – learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do. We wanted to share with you the videos we used during Vacation Bible Camp to teach our kids about the importance of helping our neighbor. When we learn more about others, we learn more about the character of God – and we encounter God in the connection, too.

Day 1: Why should I help my neighbor?



Day 2: How do I help if I'm afraid?



Day 3: What's a refugee?



Day 4: What do refugees need?



Day 5: How can I help this summer?



4th Grade Sneak Peek at YOW!

Wednesday, March 15th at 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.



Fourth graders are invited to check out what's in store for them at YOW (Youth on Wednesdays), our 5th-8th grade midweek youth group program, when they officially transition to Youth Ministry in the Fall. We hope that this event will provide an exciting bridge to the next stage of students' faith journeys as they transition into Youth Ministry. We here in Youth Ministry are so excited to get to know this incoming class!

5:30 p.m. Dinner for Youth & Parents in Oak Room:

Parents are invited to join their 4th graders for dinner in the Oak Room. Kids Rock participants will be brought to the Oak Room from their activities, non-Kids Rock 4th graders will arrive with you. Our Youth Directors Keris Dahlkamp and Allison Kunz will share about Youth Ministry opportunities and answer your questions. You'll also meet our YOW volunteer leaders and hear from some current YOW participants!

6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Youth Sneak Peak at YOW:

We'll then bring 4th grade youth to the Upper Youth Room where they'll participate in YOW activities alongside 5th-8th grade youth along with some familiar faces including Children's Ministry Directors Ryan Timpke and Lori Robinson. You can pick up your students at the Labyrinth Plaza at 7:30 p.m. at the conclusion of the program.

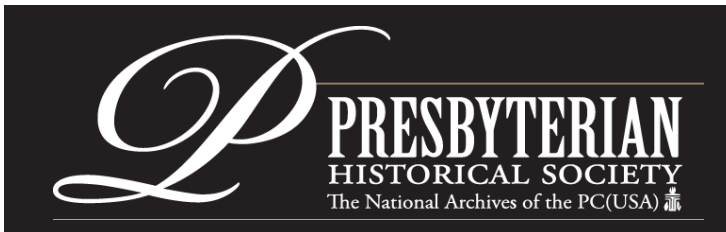
Please RSVP to Ryan at ryan@LOPC.org by Sunday March 12.



Want To Know More About Presbyterian History? Check Out The Presbyterian Historical Society

The Presbyterian Historical Society, the National Archives of the PC(USA), is the place to go for in depth resources in the areas of Presbyterian history, genealogy, records, traveling exhibits, workshops, and more.

Sign up for the Presbyterian Historical Society's monthly e-newsletter:
www.history.pcusa.org/enews



Rossmoor LOPC Parishes Present Old-fashioned Ice Cream Social & Hymn Sing

April 30 from 3:00 p.m. To 5:00 p.m.
THAT'S THE DATE!

Dollar Clubhouse at Rossmoor
THAT'S THE PLACE!

Ice Cream Social and Hymn Sing.
THAT'S THE EVENT!

What more is needed?
YOUR PRESENCE!



Choose your favorite hymn; choose your favorite ice cream; bring your favorite friend; bring a brand new friend. Enjoy singing old beloved hymns and savoring delicious ice cream served from an old-fashioned cart. All this for only Ten Dollars per person—a bargain at any price.

We look forward to seeing all Rossmoor LOPC friends on April 30!

LOPC PALM SUNDAY EGG HUNT & POTLUCK BRUNCH

This Palm Sunday, April 9, LOPC will once again host an egg hunt and potluck brunch! Our talented kitchen staff will provide an egg dish and attendees are asked to bring a side item to share.

Brunch will be served at 12:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Immediately following brunch, children through grade 5 and their families are invited to participate in an egg hunt! Bring your kids, grandkids, and your neighbor's kids!

All who enjoy fun and celebration are welcome to attend! Brunch tickets will be available on the Worship Plaza beginning March 19.

SEE YOU ON PALM SUNDAY!

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
49 Knox Drive, Lafayette CA • (925) 283-8722 • LOPC.org



Officer Nominations Needed By 5/1



One of the cornerstones of our Presbyterian heritage is election by the congregation of church officers to provide leadership for the church, as well as loving support for those in the church community. Each year we elect officers to serve for the following year, drawn from nominations from the congregation.

We are now in the process of selecting new officers and leaders for LOPC for terms beginning January 2018. It is a great privilege and responsibility to nominate members who will serve LOPC as elected lay leaders. It is also necessary for us to participate in the essential process that will influence our church in the near future.

The primary qualifications for nominees are:

- Strong commitment to Jesus Christ and the church's Mission Statement
- Active participation in worship and in other ministries at LOPC
- Stewardship commitment of time, talent and financial resources
- Leadership ability and organizational skills
- Compassion in human relationships
- An open-minded approach to ideas and problems
- Spiritual depth and maturity
- Ability to equip people for ministry and work in a team-based leadership role

Elders, together with the pastors, lead and direct the ministry of the church. They are persons of faith, dedication and good judgment. Elders serve on Session, the governing body of the church. They also chair various church teams through which all ministries are conducted. Eight elders are ordained to serve three-year terms.

Deacons, as set forth in Scripture, are leaders who serve as the caring, compassionate arm of the church, providing loving support to all those in need within the church community. The primary area of Deacon service is care of members. Ten deacons are ordained to serve a three-year term and two deacons of high school-age serve a one-year term.

The Congregation Nominating Committee (CNC) members are elected for a one-year term. Their duties include receiving and reviewing nominations for church officers and selecting candidates to present to the congregation.

Foundation Trustees serve on the LOPC Foundation. This seven-member foundation receives gifts in various forms and designations, manages investments and provides funding for LOPC needs that cannot be accommodated in the church's annual operating budget. Trustees serve an initial term of four years and are eligible to be re-elected for one three-year term. Members who have served in the past can be nominated for a two-year term.

Nomination forms will be available from March 5 through May 7 in the Ministry Center, the Sanctuary pew racks or send an e-mail nomination to cnc@LOPC.org. We need your nominations, so please fill out and submit at least one nomination form. Any questions? Contact a CNC member: Michael Kim (Chair), Bill DeWolf (Clerk of Session), Bob Hoots, Randi Long, Katie Owensby, Carey Starn, Bud Lake (Deacon Representative), Peter Whitelock and Gerald Chinen.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration. We are looking forward to hearing from each of you.

The Foundation's 2016 Fiscal Year

by Lynn Trowbridge, Foundation Trustee



Lynn Trowbridge



The Foundation's 2016 fiscal year, which ended September 30, was one of the strongest ever. The final piece of the \$5.2 million bequest from Craig and Jean Gregerson was received. As the result of this, plus a significant gift from the Carl Mehlhop estate, and a strong stock market performance, the market value of the Foundation's assets grew to \$9.5 million. These assets are invested in two portfolios: one supports the general ministry of the church and the other supports all facilities-related items. A majority of this money is limited by the wishes of donors and is invested to insure growth over time.

While we are grateful for the growth of the Foundation, we know that for a church of our size and vision the Foundation needs to be considerably larger to provide the base of support that joined with the giving of LOPC members sustains the buildings and grounds on Knox Drive and underpins the programs, spiritual growth of our members, and outreach into the world to which we are called.

The Foundation's support of LOPC programs is both broad and deep. There is hardly any part of the church's operation to which we don't provide some assistance. For example, money was supplied to the Monument Crisis Center to help many who are less fortunate. In addition, half the cost of the property insurance and the property taxes for the church campus came from the Foundation, as did much of the cost of routine campus landscape maintenance. The LiveStream Internet broadcast of Sunday services, and repair of the hearing aid hardware in the sanctuary were beneficiaries, as was the Stephen Ministry program.

Some other areas that were touched are: The Deacon Emergency Fund; the International Justice Ministry; Mt. Hermon All Church Retreat; speakers for the Science and Religion Study Group and First Friday Forum. The Foundation was there to help when the gas line behind the Sanctuary needed repair. Also the Foundation has already paid \$100,000 in our Fiscal Year 2017 toward the Sanctuary updating project, which is one-third of its three-year pledge.

Thank you to all the members and friends of the church who have made gifts or bequests that have helped the Foundation grow. If you would like to make an immediate gift or arrange a bequest for the future and become a member of the Friends of the LOPC Foundation, please contact one of the current trustees: Dick James, president; Lynn Trowbridge, vice president and secretary; Phil Placier, treasurer; Alan Kizor; Staci Johnston; Kristi Haigh; or Dara Youngdale.

Session Highlights – January 2017

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

The January Session meeting is often concerned with establishing the year's budget and this meeting was no exception. Our Finance Team presented their recommendations after weeks of conferring with our ministry teams and evaluating the response to our stewardship campaign. It was gratifying to be reminded of the fact that we are blessed to have such a generous congregation that supports the multiple ministries of LOPC.

We were also apprised of the challenges that we face. These include the fact that this year's budget is basically flat and reflects last year's actual expenditures. Session recognizes that a static budget over time is risky with respect to our ability to retain our excellent staff and to support innovation in our programs. In the spirit of being fiscally responsible, Session approved the recommendations of the Finance Team. However we will be communicating these challenges to the congregation as the year proceeds to be sure that we provide ways for our members to respond. More to come!



LOPC
LAFAYETTE-ORINDA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549

MARCH 2017

IMPORTANT:
Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
Before 2/28/17
Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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PERMIT NO. 835

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
Matt Bell, Community Life
Keris Dahlkamp, 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:

MARCH 1 for the APRIL issue.

Email items to communications@LOPC.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Monday by 5:00 p.m.

Email communications@LOPC.org.

A Man After God's Own Heart

2017 Men's Retreat

"A Man After God's Own Heart"

Location: Zephyr Point Conference Center

Facilitator: Ray Campton, M.F.T.

Dates: May 5-7, 2017

Registration Opens Online (www.LOPC.org):



The men of our community will gather at beautiful Zephyr Point Conference Center on Lake Tahoe. During that time, we will explore cultural and faith-based differences. We will focus on the particular needs, challenges and gifts of men as young adults, middle age, and older. We will discuss why it is important and necessary to have a mid-life crisis (and healthy ways to experience that). We will examine how

men can experience a vibrant faith that energizes life, rather than a faith that can be best described as "boring obligation." We will look at how men can deal with loss and grief creatively. Attention will be given to how to mitigate the pressure many men feel to provide and produce, while at the same time being asked to be an intimate partner and involved father.

Connect with us online!



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Tag us in
your posts
using
#LOPC

Sunday Worship Services

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family

LOPC: Where everyone is welcome, nobody's perfect and anything is possible with God.

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