

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

LOPC is here to support you  
on your journey of faith.

## Warm Winter Nights

November 5 – 19



**You or your group can volunteer to:**

- Tutor a child
- Prepare a meal
- Host a movie night or other fun activity
- Be a morning host

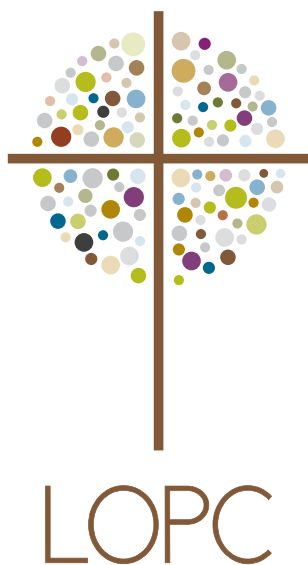
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## NOVEMBER 2018

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## The Good Steward

by Jaime Polson - Pastor



*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.  
Psalm 119: 105*

When I was growing up, my Grandma Polson could often be found sitting in her favorite chair in the living room reading the Bible. As a teenager, I was just beginning to attend church and think about my faith. I had a lot of questions, and I asked my grandma what reading the Bible meant to her.

She shared Psalm 119:105 with me: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” My grandma said that the Bible helped her make decisions about how to live her life, how to love and treat all of God’s children, and it helped her connect with God in all sorts of ways throughout her lifetime.

My grandmother modeled a few very valuable lessons for me about building a relationship with God through studying the Bible:

1. My grandma dedicated herself to reading the Bible almost every day, and when it got confusing, frustrating, or maddening, she would study the Bible in community or meet with her pastor for guidance about reading the meanings of those texts.
2. She accepted that there were stories or messages in the Bible that she might not ever understand or like, but still held it as inspired. If you have studied the Bible, you know there are some strange and mysterious things you may never understand or very possibly stories of mistreatment that make you cringe. She made her peace with that reality and didn’t give up on reading it, even when it was difficult.
3. My grandma read the Bible through the lens of a person who embodied St. Augustine of Hippo’s idea of faith seeking understanding. She genuinely sought to learn and understand the Bible and what it could teach her in her daily life.
4. She loved the Bible and, over a lifetime of study and prayer, held it as a way to know God and to be known by God.

When I was sixteen, I saw my grandma for the last time, sitting in that same chair, smiling as she read the Bible. I will never forget that memory of her. After a short four month battle with brain cancer, she still kept the Bible and God close to her heart. I know the Bible was a lamp to her feet and a light to her path throughout life. I am thankful for all the lessons she taught me about how to stay close to God, even during the hardest times. I have found God’s word to be my light, too.

As you look through FOCUS and various small group offerings at LOPC, you will find many different opportunities to join a group and study the Bible in a community of faith. If you study the Bible, I am most certain it will bless your relationship with God and others.

Blessings,  
Pastor Jaime

2019 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

# Overflow

## Giving Sunday is November 4

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

### When considering your gift:

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

*We are a community of faith that believes in the call, whatever our individual circumstances, to "overflow in a wealth of generosity." Your giving keeps this church moving forward in service to many, and an annual pledge that honors God from your substance allows us to plan and direct our ministry to the greatest and most efficient good.*

**Pledge materials are available at the front desk in the Ministry Center or at [www.lopc.org/give-back/pledge](http://www.lopc.org/give-back/pledge)**



# youth

## Sunday Mornings



### Youth Alive

5th-8th Grade Youth  
Sundays during 9 a.m.  
worship services

Engage in a weekly Bible story with activities that help reveal how the story is relevant to our modern lives. Get to know your peers and leaders as we grow in faith together! Youth who attend the 11 a.m. worship service are encouraged to enjoy the worship service with family and friends.

#### November 11: Packing Christmas Gifts

We will pack shoeboxes of Christmas gifts and necessities for children in need around the world. This effort supports Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse.



### TBH (To Be Honest)

9th-12th Grade Youth  
Sundays during 11 a.m. worship,  
through November 4

We'll choose a faith-based book, then read a chapter together each week (no take-home reading, it's not school) and discuss the themes. Grow deeper in faith as we learn from one another! Youth who attend the 9 a.m. worship service are encouraged to enjoy the worship service with family and friends.



**BTW**  
9th – 12th Grade

Every Sunday, 7 – 9 p.m.

#### November 11: Warm Winter Nights

Sign up to prepare and serve dinner or lead children's activities at our on-campus family shelter.

#### November 18 & 25: No BTW (Thanksgiving Break)

Stay tuned for info on small group Home Group gatherings which will take place during these weeks

## SAVE THE DATE

### Annual BTW Alumni Dinner

December 21, 6 – 9 p.m.

This event is for BTW advisors, current high school seniors, and BTW alumni. It is a time of fellowship, worship and fun!



**Youth on  
Wednesdays**  
5th – 8th Grade

Every Wednesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

#### November 7: Youth Homes

Youth will serve our local community with a hands-on service project to benefit foster teenagers through Youth Homes Inc.

#### November 21: No YOW (Thanksgiving Break)



## Seedlings Outreach Programs

By Tina Clendenin, Seedlings Communications Board Member



You may have heard that Seedlings Preschool is a wonderful place for toddlers to develop and learn. You may also have heard that their students gain social experiences and confidence through play and exploration. But did you know that Seedlings offers their

students a wonderful outreach program as well?

In addition to social and academic development, Seedlings teachers and staff have made it a priority to expose their young learners to outreach opportunities. In September, Seedlings and LOPC teamed up to host a blanket drive for local homeless shelters. They collected fifteen blankets and made even more after church services on September 9th.

In October, Seedlings students were each asked to bring a new or gently used book to school. During their Wonder Time session, a special monthly meeting where students explore their spirituality and faith, the children learned about LOPC's mission trip to renovate a preschool in Zimbabwe. Students were able to add a personal touch by each making a card to place inside their books. The children look forward to seeing photographs of their new friends from across the world when the mission work is through.

Coming up from November 18 through December 10, Seedlings and LOPC will host a toy drive and have a "giving tree" set up in the foyer of the preschool building. Families are given the opportunity to choose an ornament from the tree that has a child's age and wish listed. All collections are then taken to Harbor House in Oakland, a place where families in need go for support and resources.

In February, Seedlings will host a diaper drive. A collection box will be in the preschool foyer, and donations will be packaged by children and volunteers for LOPC's Love Does event. The diaper packages will then be distributed to Monument Crisis Center in Concord.

In March, Seedlings families will be able to participate in Grateful Gatherings, an outreach program that provides housing supplies to those in need. Volunteers can help by donating housing goods and furniture, or be there to set up the new home for the family.

Seedlings is proud to offer their students many opportunities to give back, both locally and abroad.

If you have any questions or are interested in learning more, please contact Bobbi Cassettari, Seedlings Director of Outreach and Enrichment at [bobbi@lopc.org](mailto:bobbi@lopc.org).





## parents

# MOUNT HERMON 2018

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 5 – 7. 250 attendees enjoyed a great time of fellowship by playing games like tug-a-rope, gunny sack races, and other games on the field as well as other activities like rope courses, competitive board games, and hikes and quiet meditative walks. Adults and children alike shared their incredible talents at the Saturday Night Campfire and, of course, the LOPC staff skit about the NFL drafting of LOPC staff was a hit!

During our time of study and reflection throughout the weekend, Dr. Zach Flanagan encouraged us to begin thinking about how the Bible is relevant in our daily lives. He spoke about how we can read and interpret the Bible using our hearts and minds. At the speak-back session on Saturday afternoon, we enjoyed lively conversation about ways we can read the Bible together in community. It was a meaningful and encouraging weekend to think about God in new ways and participate in the study of Scripture in our small groups at Mount Hermon.

The weekend was a perfect blend of tranquility and peace with God and entertaining fellowship with our church community. The beauty of God's creation surrounded us as we enjoyed the weekend together.

SAVE THE DATE

## Mom's Retreat

JANUARY 18, 2019

9:00AM - 12:00PM

Please join us for our Annual Mom's Retreat on January 18, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. We have invited Ann Killion, an American sports journalist, author, and sought-after speaker. She will share insights on how to find balance and to live a happier, more fulfilled life while raising a family.

Ann Killion has covered Bay Area sports for more than two decades and is a veteran of 11 Olympics, several World Cups, and the Tour de France. She has written for Sports Illustrated, San Francisco Chronicle, Comcast Sportsnet, San Jose Mercury News, and The Los Angeles Times. She is a New York Times best-selling author, having co-written "Solo: A Memoir of Hope" with soccer star Hope Solo; "Throw Like A Girl" with softball player Jennie Finch; and two middle-grade books on soccer, "Champions of Women's Soccer" and "Champions of Men's Soccer." She was named California Sports-writer of the Year in both 2014 and 2017. She has two children and lives in Mill Valley.

For additional information and to register, please email Michelle at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org). Space is limited. Childcare is provided.



# special needs

## Sunday School Buddy Program



LOPC's Sunday School Buddy Program is for children and youth with special needs on Sunday mornings.

Our Sunday School Buddies are trained to work with children and youth with all types of special needs.

Most of our Sunday School Buddies have been in the special education field for more than 15 years. The role of the Buddy is to be in Sunday School with children or youth with special needs and provide a safe and loving partnership, giving them the opportunity to grow in faith alongside their peers. If a child needs to take a break from the classroom setting, play outside, or use particular sensory toys, this is what the Buddy will do.

To arrange a Buddy for your child or youth on any Sunday, please email [susan@lopc.org](mailto:susan@lopc.org). We provide Buddies by assignment in order to make sure your child is paired with the Buddy that fits best with their needs.

Please fill out an intake form ahead of your child's first visit. We invite families who are dropping off their children for the 9 a.m. Sunday School programs to check in at the kiosk on the plaza

(in front of the Sanctuary). Our greeters will direct you to the check-in location where your child or youth will meet their Buddy for Sunday School. Our staff and volunteers will

read the intake form and ask you any questions they may have before your arrival for Sunday School. We appreciate anything you can share to help us prepare to welcome your child or youth in the best and most loving way possible.

After your child visits, we encourage you to reach out to Jaime Polson, Pastor for Family Ministry, or Susan Wentworth, Preschool Ministry Director and Special Needs Coordinator, and let us know how the morning went with our ministry team.

### Questions?

Please contact Michelle at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org).

*Our Sunday School Buddies are trained to work with children and youth with all types of special needs.*

**FAITH**

**MEETS LIFE**

**SERMON SERIES**

SEPTEMBER 9 — NOVEMBER 18

QUESTIONS WE ASK AS PEOPLE OF FAITH

**OCTOBER 28: A WEALTH OF GENEROSITY**  
WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING, HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

**NOVEMBER 4: DEALING DECISIVELY WITH DEATH**  
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

**NOVEMBER 11: PERSEVERING IN PRAYER**  
HOW CAN I PRAY WHEN LIFE IS HARD?

**NOVEMBER 18: LIVING FAITH**  
GUEST PREACHER: SHANE BERG



## mission

# love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

**It's not just ONE Sunday anymore!**

New! LOPC Mission is excited to announce a change in how we serve the broader community. The one day a year that we collectively go out into the community has aptly been named "ONE Sunday." This one day of service has had a tremendous impact, but the results of the LOPC Mission Survey tell us that the congregation has decided it's not enough!

So we're launching Love Does! The new Love Does will accomplish what ONE Sunday started, but it will take it a step further by providing mission opportunities to serve throughout the rest of the year. Love Does expands on the strong foundation of service that ONE Sunday created in the congregation and the greater community.

**Kick-off day will be February 24, 2019.**  
**More details to come!**

## Fuego Volcano Update

On June 17, LOPC took a Disaster Relief Collection for victims of the Fuego Volcano that erupted on June 3 in Guatemala.

Fotokids, our longtime mission partner in Guatemala, has connections with many of the communities that were in the path of the eruption. The people of LOPC contributed over \$3,000. These are where some of your contributions were distributed so far:

- **Vamos Adelante (\$500)** – Deployed first responders after the eruption.
- **Help Victims of Volcano Fuego (\$330)** – Provides care to children who were burned.
- **La Lucerna (\$1,135)** – Provided 48 families in a remote village with basic foodstuffs.
- **Constu Casa (\$550)** – To construct new homes for four families.

Many thanks again to the LOPC community who compassionately reached out to help the many victims of the eruption that left more than 1,700 people without homes and 319 people dead.

## Warm Winter Nights



**November 5 – 19**

LOPC will host Warm Winter Nights, providing shelter on campus to families experiencing homelessness.

**We need your help!**

**You or your group can volunteer to:**

- Tutor a child
- Prepare a meal with your family, friends, or small group
- Provide a fun activity or craft or host a movie night
- Be a morning host (5:15 – 7 a.m.) - New position!

**To sign up, go to [lopc.org](http://lopc.org) and click on "The Latest."**

**For more information, contact Robin at [robin@lopc.org](mailto:robin@lopc.org).**



*LOPC helped to provide basic foodstuffs to 48 families in a remote village.*



# Celebrate the Congo

November 4  
12 – 2 p.m.



Join the LOPC Congo Mission team as we celebrate with Congolese food, music, dance, and fashion.

**Speakers:**

**Mboyo Therese Okitukunda**, Educator  
**Byb Chanel Bibene**, Dance Instructor & Choreographer  
**Esther Nkunku**, Fashion Designer

**\$7 donation for lunch.**

**Tickets available on the plaza in October or you can contact Jim Fulford at 925-254-5419.**

Presbyterian work on education and trauma healing for children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a principal mission focus for LOPC.

**Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church  
49 Knox Dr., Lafayette – Fellowship Hall**



For those struggling with making ends meet, the holidays are a time of increased stress. It is difficult to think about buying gifts when someone is

struggling to pay rent, fill the car with gas, and put food on the table. As a community, LOPC has always been generous during this time of year. This year there will be three opportunities to give:

## **MCC FOOD BOX COLLECTION**

**November 18 – December 2**

What was once an Adopt-a-Child program has transformed into a food program due to ever-increasing demand. These food boxes allow families in the Monument Corridor to celebrate the holidays. During the week, pick up a food list and box in the Ministry Center Office. On the Sundays of 11/18, 11/25, and 12/2, pick up a box on the plaza. **ALL BOXES MUST BE RETURNED ON 12/9 ONLY** to the truck parked in front of the Oak Room.

**The food list is at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)>THE LATEST.**

## **HARBOR HOUSE TOY COLLECTION**

**November 18 – December 2**

This toy collection supports low income children who reside in the San Antonio district of Oakland. The program provides Harbor House with gifts for their on-site store which allows parents to choose a gift for their children during the holidays. All gifts (unwrapped, please) should be returned to the Ministry Center office no later than 12/9.

**The toy list is at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)>THE LATEST.**

## **ONE WORLD FAIR TRADE - NEW!**

**December 2 & 9**

Beautiful handcrafted jewelry, art, textiles, accessories, and clothing from around the globe including Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the United States will be on display in the Chapel Narthex. These items make meaningful holiday gifts and contribute to the livelihood of disadvantaged artisans, helping them to provide food, education, health-care, and housing for themselves and their families.

**Contact [robin@lopc.org](mailto:robin@lopc.org) with questions.**

# spiritual formation

# 10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

**Every Sunday, 10:10 – 10:50 a.m.**

Please join us at the 10:10, a new program that will serve as a place to grow empowered to live in faith. The theme for our November meetings is “The Spirituality of Inclusion.”

**November 4**

**Lori Robinson and Pastor Jaime Polson**

Jesus calls us to create communities of faith where everyone is welcome and all people have the opportunity to belong. Join us as we discuss and explore how we can practice this in our lives and the church.

**November 11**

**Dr. Jessica Coblentz, Professor at St. Mary's College**

Dr. Coblentz will be speaking about “The Spirituality of the Whole Person.” This presentation is an introduction to Christian theological reflection on human disabilities. From the “invisible” disabilities of mental-health challenges and intellectual differences to the broad range of physical limitations that shape our lives, human disabilities have challenged Christian theologians to rethink the church’s long-standing assumptions about God, Jesus Christ, the human person, and the Christian community.

**November 18**

**Pastor Jaime Polson and Members of the Diversity Task Force at LOPC**

LOPC’s Diversity Task Force will discuss the journey of this task force and the results of the survey which will help us continue to fulfill the vision of being an inclusive and diverse congregation. We will also explore different Biblical passages to learn how people of faith have used creative and prophetic ways to ensure all God’s people are invited into the life of the church.

**Coming in December:** A three-week Advent series, taught by Dr. Kathy Timpfe, on the radical nature of the Christmas story in Luke’s Gospel: a story of miracles, hope, and inclusion.

## Advent season is coming... Are you ready?

We have many exciting opportunities to put you in the spirit of Advent this season.

### Advent Devotional

These daily reflections include a short prayer, a Bible reading from the liturgical readings for the week, as well as a brief meditation on the Bible passage. These brief devotionals are meant to take 5-10 minutes, and center your day.

### The 10:10

The 10:10 will feature a three-week Advent series in December on the Gospel of Luke, led by Dr. Kathy Timpfe. Stay tuned for more information!



## Spiritual Direction at LOPC

Spiritual Direction is part of the ministry of Formation at LOPC. It is a reflective process in which a trained spiritual companion walks with you to help you pay attention to God’s work in your life and your most important questions. It is the art of discovering that everyday events are often the means by which God comes to meet us. In Spiritual Direction, you are invited to explore your experiences, seek awareness of God, and discover your authentic questions and desires. You are accompanied on this journey by a trained and grace-filled companion, your personal Spiritual Director.

**To find out more about Spiritual Direction, contact Diane Grant, LOPC Spiritual Direction Coordinator at 925-825-8225.**

*NOTE: All sessions are confidential. There is a modest fee on a sliding scale.*



## community

### The Common Ground Between Science and Religion



November 19, 7:15 p.m.  
Oak Room

"Do we have to choose between the scientific and religious views of the world, or are they complementary

understandings that give us a fuller picture than either on their own would provide?" In his book *Quarks, Chaos, and Christianity*, Templeton Award winner, theoretical physicist, and Anglican priest John Polkinghorne explores the gap between science and religion as he shows the ways that both science and religion point to something greater than ourselves. In writing about science and religion as "intellectual cousins under the skin" with a common interest in understanding, Polkinghorne notes the first tries to comprehend physical reality and the second focuses upon divine reality.

Our Science and Religion group is fortunate to have science enthusiast and Pastor John Turpin share an exploration of this book which addresses and bridges the seemingly impassable divide between rational inquiry and faith.

### Fourth Monday Book Group

Every fourth Monday, 2 – 3:30 p.m.  
Fireside Room



Every week, one person volunteers to facilitate discussion about the selected book. Selections include both fiction and nonfiction. We start the meeting with light refreshments and a bit of poetry. Visitors and new members are welcome!

For more information, contact Bob Hoots at 925-944-0575 or Catherine Coleman at [awaitingword@gmail.com](mailto:awaitingword@gmail.com).



Save the Date!

### Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Presbyterian Women's  
Christmas Tea

December 7 • 1 to 3 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall

Come enjoy musical entertainment, a cup of tea, delicious homemade cookies, and dainty tea sandwiches as you chat with friends, both old and new. Our annual Christmas Joy Offering will be taken. These monies will go to mission projects—one local and one overseas.

Free tickets will be available on the church patio on November 18 and 25, and on December 2. All women of LOPC are invited and encouraged to bring a friend. We will be looking for you.

### LOPC Breakfast Group

(formerly Men's Breakfast)



**Chuck Kohler**  
November 28, 7 a.m.

### Pearl Harbor Survivor

Come hear Chuck describe his experience of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

\$5 donation for breakfast at the door.

RSVP by noon on November 27 to Chris at [chris@lopc.org](mailto:chris@lopc.org) or 925-283-8722 x110



Marcus Thompson II,  
author of  
*Golden: The Miraculous  
Rise of Steph Curry*

## Men's Summit A Life of Significance

Saturday, November 3, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Calling all men! LOPC is hosting a breakfast for outreach, fellowship, and encouragement. We have invited speaker Marcus Thompson II, best-selling biographer of *Golden: The Miraculous Rise of Steph Curry* and lead columnist of *The Athletic*. Marcus is a faithful man of God and a prominent voice in the Bay Area sports scene, having worked for 18 years with the Bay Area News Group and 10 seasons covering the back-to-back NBA Champion Golden State Warriors. This is a FREE event which also includes a continental breakfast, coffee, and juice. Invite your buddies and come on out!

To register, go to [lopc.org](http://lopc.org) and click on "The Latest."  
For more information, contact Gerald at 925-283-8722 x227 or [gerald@lopc.org](mailto:gerald@lopc.org).

## Men with Young Families & Professionals Group

Mondays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Men, ages 20-somethings to 50-somethings, this is your group! This year we've organized hang outs (on and off-site), opportunities to pray and study (relevant books and the Bible), along with service opportunities to give back to the community. This is a come-as-you-are group, which means come for what makes sense for your schedule. Attend one or all of the sessions—whatever works for you. We're a place for you to belong.

Session II: November 5 – December 10

Group Leader: Chris Baldwin

If you have questions or inquiries, contact Chris Baldwin for more information at [chris@lopc.org](mailto:chris@lopc.org).

## thursdayFellowship

Every Thursday, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall

Thursday Fellowship is celebrating its 39th year of providing seniors with lunch and entertainment, and welcoming them into a very special caring community. Join us as a volunteer, guest, or visitor.

Come join us and experience our exciting activities and caring community. You are never too old or too young to participate!

### Typical Thursday Schedule:

**11 a.m.:** "Meet and Greet" with snacks and beverages.

**11:15 a.m.:** Craft activities and/or light exercise.

**Noon:** Lunch. Please bring a half sandwich and we will provide the salad, beverage, and dessert.

**12:45 p.m.:** Entertainment.

### November Calendar:

**November 1:**

Jim Pearson and Gillian Roebuck singalong

**November 8:**

"Roebuck Duo" Joseph and Julian Roebuck

**November 15:** Mike Kistner on guitar

**November 22:** Thanksgiving – No meeting!

**November 29:**

Stan Morner combines poetry and music

### Volunteer opportunities include:

- Providing a salad or baked cookies.
- Providing a ride for a senior who no longer drives. This is an ongoing need and can be a weekly or a monthly commitment. Substitute drivers are needed, as well.

### Questions? Contact coordinators:

Julie Peterson  
[julie@lopc.org](mailto:julie@lopc.org)

Clarita Wooldridge  
[clarita@lopc.org](mailto:clarita@lopc.org)

Both Julie and Clarita can be reached at 925-283-8722 x281.



## Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson



Alex Paras was born in the Philippines, the youngest of four siblings. He grew up in a Catholic family and started elementary school in an all-boys Catholic school in the Philippines. Believing in God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit was a given for him, as was the premise that all good things were from

the grace of God. It was as certain as the sunrise. He was also taught that science was a witness of God's creation. His parents encouraged him to see the beauty in the world around him. It was all God's creation, they told him. As a child, they would go on family road trips, and he was awed by the grandeur of the mountains or lakes.

His family moved to the United States in the early 1980s when Alex was six.

"Attending a public elementary school instead of a Catholic School, I didn't know that it was inappropriate to talk about God," he recalled. "When a teacher would ask, 'Where did the fish come from or how were the mountains or seas formed?', I felt like a star student when I said it was all attributable to God."

Alex says of his faith journey, "Through various life events and people, God had a way of inviting me closer. During childhood, my parents encouraged me to reconcile questions I would have about faith by reading the Bible. The Bible we had was difficult to read. A friend introduced me to an NIV Study Bible, and it felt like a whole new world was opened up to me.

"During college, I stopped regularly attending Sunday services. A few years after starting my career, I received a wake-up call. I had a car accident that I should not have survived. The message was loud and clear. It was time for me to get back with Christ, and I did."

Alex remembers being inspired by Paul's message to the Colossians in chapter three: "We clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Alex reflected that it takes a conscious effort in daily interaction with family, friends, or strangers, to follow this guidance.

"It seems to me," Alex continues, "Jesus is most real when I encounter a stranger. I may not know where the person has been, what they believe, or where they are in life. What I do know is that in front of me is a beloved child of God, a person in His own image that we should treat with grace, love, and humility."

Alex also gives thanks for how God challenges him. "Jesus also taught us the importance of fellowship—being in contact with others. As an introvert, it was a step outside of my comfort zone to approach new visitors in the plaza between services, or to organize large church events so that we could be in fellowship with each other. Joining a small group and allowing me to be 'out there' didn't come naturally. However, it has been rewarding to meet new people, learn about them, and learn something new about myself and my faith."

Alex met his wife, Ida, in college. They married and moved to Lafayette to start a family.

"Conceiving was much more arduous than either of us imagined," he recalled. "We were both very prayerful during the journey and decided at one point to take a break from 'trying.' Chloe was conceived within a couple of months. We learned that God's plan and blessings are always perfectly timed and purposeful."

Alex has learned and grown in the roles he has taken on at LOPC.

"When Pastor Gerald asked me to become a deacon, without full knowledge of what it meant, I prayed and trusted I would be able to fulfill the duties," he said. "Serving communion at church services was special. It was an honor to serve shut-ins when we were invited into their homes in their twilight years. In some cases, their last communion.

"As an Elder," he continued, "I learned to be more prayerful about what God calls us to do in ministry. It has helped me focus on the fellowship needs of the church. I'm involved in a small group of men at a similar stage in life. We've built relationships where we sharpen each other through study and discussions. Having diverse perspectives allowed me to wrestle, challenge, and renew what I know about my faith."

# lopc foundation

## Where the Past Meets the Present

By Dick James, Foundation Trustee



As I write this, it's early October, and as you read this, it will be November. We are deep into fall, and in the life of the church that means Stewardship time. From the Foundation's standpoint, I like to think of it also as a time when the past meets the present – with the Foundation as the place where the present and past are working in partnership.

We, as the present LOPC members and friends, are being asked to pray and decide about making a pledge – sometimes referred to as an estimate of giving – to support next year's operating budget – the facilities, the variety of ministry programs through which we witness God's love in action.

At the same time, like you, the Foundation is being asked to make a pledge for the same purpose. The resources from which its pledge will be fulfilled come from the past – past LOPC members and friends who have made a gift to the Foundation to support the present-day work of the church. Money from those gifts has been invested, and each year a percentage of the investment is withdrawn and put to work in the present.

In more than one instance the ministry programs—and in some cases, the church facilities—being supported by the Foundation's pledge were nonexistent during the lifetimes of the friends and members who provided the resources. The past meets the present—I think that's pretty cool!

If you're interested in making a down-payment on the future through a gift to the LOPC Foundation, contact any of the trustees:

Kristi Haigh  
Phil Placier  
Dara Youngdale  
Staci Johnston  
Jim Beckemeyer

Jerry Ducey  
Jen Crocker  
Mike Ross  
Dick James

# session

## September Session Highlights

By Jody Black, Clerk of Session

Our September meeting focused on recent San Francisco Presbytery activities, and upcoming changes in our own Session meetings.

The Presbytery meeting, held at St. John's in San Francisco, voted to set aside \$1 million to address the homeless needs in the East Bay Area. This commitment will support the communities throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The plight of our homeless in the Bay Area is staggering and now, more than ever, we need to help those in need.

The Presbytery also shared the actions taken by the 223rd General Assembly of the PC(USA). They ranged from calls for prayer for our fellow believers in South Sudan and Nicaragua, to encouragement for honest patriotism, reducing gun violence, and addressing the opioid epidemic. While churches across our denomination do not always share the same perspective, they do come together at General Assembly to dialogue over important matters occurring in our world today.

Beginning next month, our Session will launch a "state-of-the-union" presentation program. Each month, a different LOPC ministry will give a 10-minute review of its activities, needs, and opportunities. We look forward to this fresh, inspirational approach for Session meetings.

## Staff Transition

We want to let you know that Janet Jourgensen, our beloved receptionist, has stepped down from her position at LOPC. For four years, Janet blessed our community in many ways through her love, care, and compassion for our every person who walked through the front door.

If you would like to express your gratitude to Janet, please bring a card to the LOPC front desk. We will collect them and make sure she receives them.

The good news is that Janet and her husband, David, are members at LOPC. We will continue to see them on Sundays after a few weeks of vacation.

**What's Next?** Janet trained a dedicated group of LOPC volunteers to cover the reception desk when needed. They will serve over the next few weeks as we search for a new receptionist. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Jaime Polson (jaime@lopc.org). Thank you!





# On Christmas Night!

## Christmas Concert

**Saturday**  
**December 8**  
**4 p.m.**

**Sunday**  
**December 9**  
**2 p.m. & 5 p.m.**

We will start accepting ticket requests at 9 a.m. on November 5.

Tickets can be requested by email only at [tickets@lopc.org](mailto:tickets@lopc.org).

Maximum six tickets per family. Tickets will be reserved based on the order that requests are received.

They will be available for pick-up in the office starting Monday, November 19.

**Childcare will be available for the 2 p.m. concert on December 9 only.**

For children six months to ten years old. Childcare is by reservation only.

Reserve childcare before November 21 at [susan@lopc.org](mailto:susan@lopc.org).

*A free will offering will be taken. Suggested donation is \$20.*





IMPORTANT  
Dated Material  
PLEASE DELIVER  
BEFORE 11/1/18  
Thank you!

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LAFAYETTE, CA  
PERMIT NO. 12

#### PASTORAL STAFF

Peter Whitelock, Head of Staff  
Gerald Chinen, Congregational Care  
Lauren Gully, Mission & Spiritual Formation  
Jaime Polson, Families & Executive Leadership

#### WORSHIP & MUSIC

Brett Strader, Director  
Stewart Scharch, Organist

#### TREASURER

Char Casella

#### MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement  
Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz, Youth  
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool  
Ryan Timpte, Children

#### FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Sara Warfield, Communications  
Dick James, Editing

Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

#### Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

November 1 for the December issue.  
Email items to [communications@lop.org](mailto:communications@lop.org).

#### Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Every Monday by 5 p.m. for the  
following Sunday's issue.  
Submit items at:  
[www.lop.org/submission-for-connections](http://www.lop.org/submission-for-connections)

#### 2019 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

# Overflow



## Giving Sunday is November 4.

See page 3.

### Connect with us!

#### Sunday Worship Services

9 a.m.

11 a.m.

*Invite Friends & Family*



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