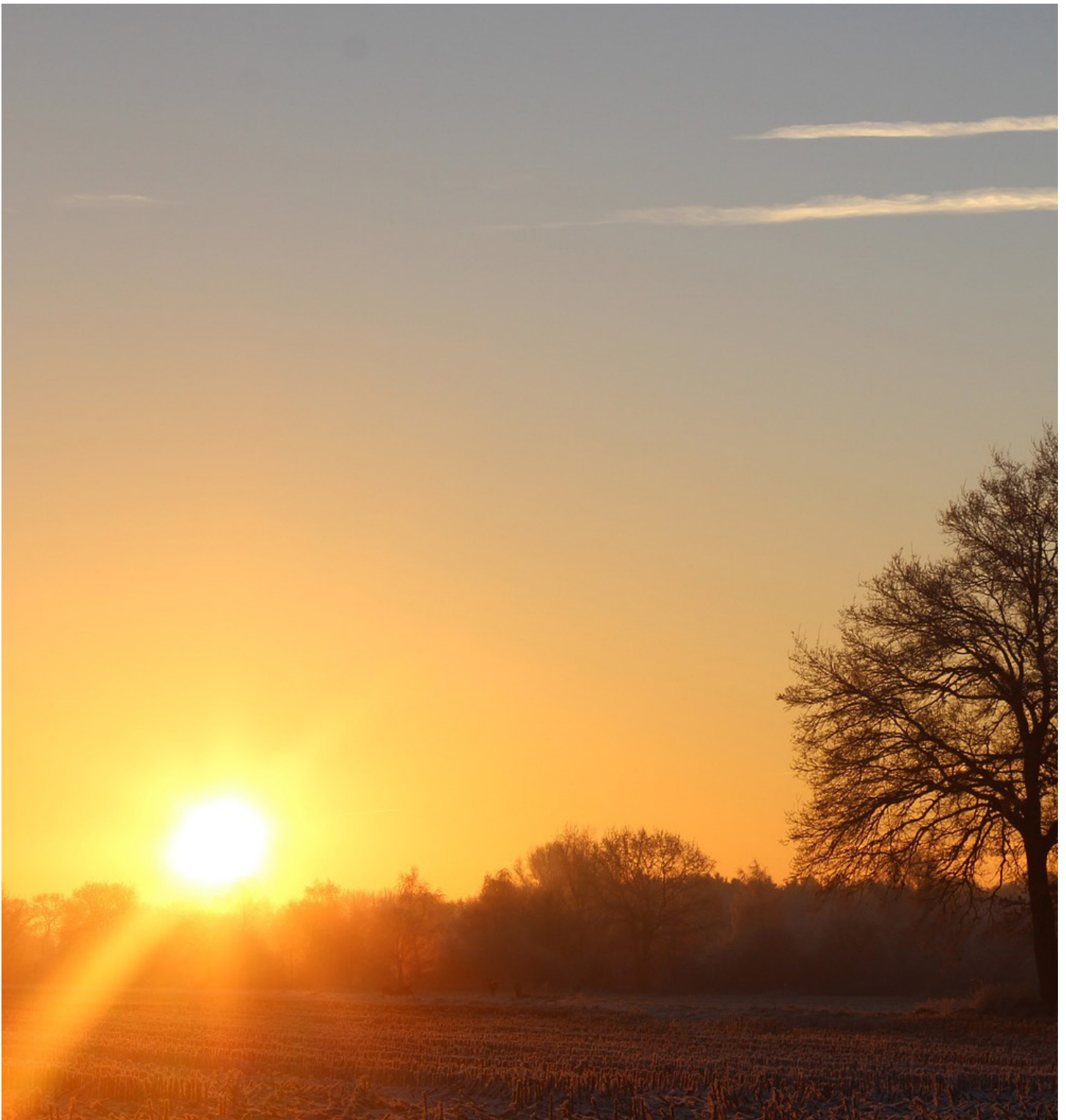


FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!
In Christ... in the World



January 2020

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2020

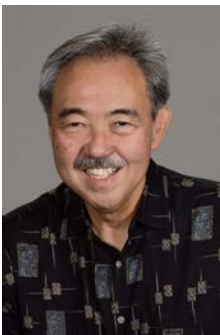
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a WORD to LIVE INTO

By Gerald Chinen, Pastor Congregational Care



Back in December 2000, friends invited me into an exercise, which I continue to do. At the beginning of each New Year, I choose a word to “live into.” It has become very much a spiritual practice that I carry on to grow as a person, and to nurture my Christian faith. In the year 2019, my word for the year was “engage.” I chose the word because of all the work that the Inclusion and Diversity Task Force did for a year and a half. While it hasn’t always been easy, I have tried to educate myself as well as to challenge myself to engage and confront the power of the sins of racism, exclusion, and bias in myself, and when I see it being played out in others.

“Practice what you preach” is something I hear a lot, and I’m sure you have too. In wedding ceremonies in which I am privileged to officiate, I will remind the couple that their vows, their words of love and commitment to one another, can be empty without action, without practical displays of love and affection. I will remind them that the best way to remember what they’ve promised to each other on their wedding day is to “practice” what they’ve said and follow through.

In the book of James, the writer tells us: “But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like.” Over the years, I have really found that, in order to be a “doer” of the word I’ve chosen for the year, it takes intentionality, or it all becomes an empty exercise. Putting into practice that which I have committed to is as important as being mindful of my intentions, and so my word for 2020 is “practice.” I want to find one or two significant ways of putting into practice my desire to engage against exclusion, racism, and bias.

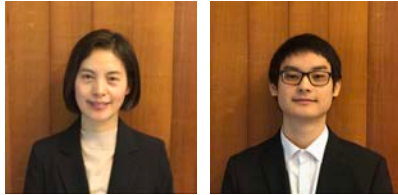
I encourage you to let God speak a word into your heart, and that you will find ways to live into and to practice the word this New Year.

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

new members

Jiyeon Bae & Isaac Kim

Originally from Seoul, South Korea, mother and son have lived in the U.S. for 10 years and currently reside in Walnut Creek. Jiyeon has ministry experience, having previously taught pastoral counseling in a graduate school in Seoul and ran a counseling center. She completed a chaplaincy residency program at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles in 2005. Jiyeon's son, Isaac, is 21 years-old, born in Minneapolis, MN, where they lived for nine years with family. He is a visual arts college student, and his dream is to reveal the love and goodness in the creation God has made. What attracted them to LOPC was the worship experiences and the beautiful unity at LOPC.



Pete & Melissa Billow

The Billows live in Danville and have attended LOPC over the years. Pete is a program manager at Oracle, and Melissa is a retired landscape designer. Melissa loves connecting with nature by gardening and says, "It's tough on the knees, but great for the soul!" Pete enjoys biking in his spare time. They were drawn to LOPC by the emphasis on independent thinking, acceptance of doubts, and the welcoming attitude of the congregation and staff.



Lisa Han

Originally from China, Lisa has lived in Berkeley for the past three years. She heard about LOPC from her sister, Bing Udinsky. She enjoys traveling, running, dancing, and singing in her free time. She was drawn to LOPC by the Sunday morning worship.



Paul & Valerie Hodgskiss

Paul and Valerie live in Concord, and are active members of the choir; their first date was attending the choir Christmas party at Linda Rosenthal's house in 2015. They were married at LOPC in 2018. Valerie is a marriage and family therapist, and Paul is a lab technician with the U.S. Forest Service. What attracted them to LOPC is the choir, the all-inclusive attitude, and the preaching.



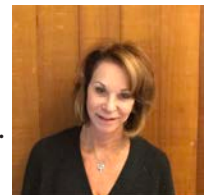
Eric & Sook Kim

Eric and Sook live in Rossmore and came to the U.S. from Korea for Eric's graduate school. They lived in Princeton, NJ, for a number of years before Eric retired as a physics/electrical engineering scientist. The Kims have one son who lives in San Francisco; they moved to Rossmore to be close to their son's family. They love classical music, especially chamber and choral music. They were drawn to LOPC by the pipe organ, and the sermons.



Lynne Lazzareschi

Lynne lives in Walnut Creek and is a VP of real estate investment with the Greater Bay Development Corp. She enjoys skiing, entertaining, and cooking. She currently serves as a volunteer for Thursday Fellowship and enjoys working with seniors and other guests. She was drawn to LOPC by the people!



new members

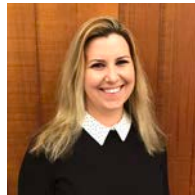
Dawn Mariano

Dawn and her 15-month-old daughter, Vayle, live in San Francisco. She is a commercial property manager with Kilroy Realty and has lived in the Bay Area her entire life. She enjoys traveling and cooking in her free time. She was drawn to LOPC by the sense of community and support. She has been a regular visitor for more than 15 years, but recent circumstances have brought her closer to religion and community.



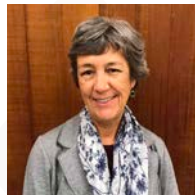
Janell Proctor

Janell comes from a strong Scottish Presbyterian heritage, but this is her first church membership. She grew up singing and dancing in choir at First Presbyterian, Boulder, CO, attended Community Church West Covina with her grandparents in college, and then Bel Air Presbyterian Church while starting a pharmaceutical career in Los Angeles. Her grandparents were especially instrumental in her spiritual formation with their missionary service to China, India, and Presbyterian churches throughout California, Iowa, and Wyoming. She was drawn to LOPC by the consistent preaching about Jesus Christ, and the traditional style service and organ music.



Rowena Slee

Rowena moved to Rossmoor three years ago from the Midwest. She is a retired nurse who enjoys tennis, hiking, yoga, and reading. She was attracted to LOPC by the location, beautiful sanctuary, and what she sees and hears, especially the pipe organ. Rowena says, "It's a lovely place to worship."



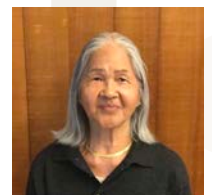
Cliff Smith & Paula Lair

Cliff and Paula currently live in Moraga with their two sons, Tim (14) and Peter (12). They have lived in the area for three months, and previously in Cincinnati, OH, and Maui, HI. They own Meridian 158, a renewable-energy and new-development ventures consultancy. Paula enjoys hiking, gardening, and cooking in her free time. Cliff enjoys hiking and reading. They were drawn to LOPC by the hopeful, intellectual, thought-provoking sermons and a grounded community for their children.



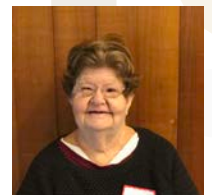
Julia Storer

Julia has lived in Orinda the past year. Previously she worshiped at Newton Presbyterian Church, Newton, MA, where she sang in the choir. Now actively involved in the LOPC choir, Julia is retired and enjoys walking, singing, and traveling.



Marilyn Ulch

A Walnut Creek resident, Marilyn has lived in the area for the past four years. She is retired and actively involved with Thursday Fellowship. Her daughter, Darla Tuning, is one of LOPC's Children's Choir Directors.



community

thursday Fellowship

A program of Senior Care Ministries

Every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
in Fellowship Hall



The month of December was packed full of activities and entertainment to please guests and volunteers alike. Our last gathering of 2019 featured a catered lunch and Mike Kistner leading us in singing our favorite carols. It was a wonderful way to end 2019 and prepare us for the Christmas holidays.

Thursday Fellowship starts the new year on January 9, 2020. We will enjoy our regular monthly entertainment along with the exciting addition of award-winning performer and guitarist, Marc Teicholz. Also, returning will be Syria T. Berry who entertained us last year to rave reviews. If you are looking for a new activity in the new year, come and join us. We look forward to seeing you in 2020!

- **January 9: Jim Pearson and Gillian Roebuck**
- **January 16: Marc Teicholz, guitarist and award-winning performer and professor**
- **January 23: Sing-a-long with Mike Kistner**
- **January 30: Syria T. Berry, prominent Bay Area musical artist and performer**

Come and experience our exciting and varied activities and programs and be a part of our very special caring community!

Contact Julie Peterson, julie@lopc.org or Clarita Wooldridge, clarita@lopc.org for more information.

Terry & Shirley Van Bibber

Terry and Shirley live in Alamo and have been in the Bay Area for more than 30 years. Terry is CEO and founder of the tech firm, Safedocs. Shirley is a mortgage broker at Stonecastle Mortgage. They have attended LOPC since 1982 and decided it was time to join. Terry previously worshipped at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church. In their free time, Shirley enjoys golfing, oil painting, and reading, while Terry enjoys golfing and basketball. They were drawn to LOPC by its reputation and pastors.



Frank & Christine Wheeler

Frank and Christine moved to Lafayette five years ago from Edina, MN. Frank grew up in Virginia and Christine in Chicago. They met at business school in Philadelphia. Married 25 years ago, they have lived in Cincinnati, OH; Chicago, Tokyo, Princeton, and Minnesota. They have four children: Hunter (21), Jackson (17), Charlie (15), and Grace (9). They were attracted to LOPC by the music and friendliness of the congregation.



community



Youth Chorus to Visit LOPC!
January 7, 7:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary

The Jerusalem Youth Chorus is a choral and dialogue program for Israeli and Palestinian high school students in Jerusalem. Their mission is to provide a space for these young people from East and West Jerusalem to grow together in song and dialogue. Through the co-creation of music and the sharing of stories, the chorus seeks to empower youth in Jerusalem to become leaders in their communities and inspire singers and listeners around the world to work for peace.



Respite Night

February 28, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

For parents who have children and youth with special needs, ages 2-22.

Dinner, games, therapy dogs, crafts, activities, and a movie! Children and youth will be divided by age, with age-appropriate movies. Sensory and quiet rooms are provided. Several professionals who work with children and youth with special needs will be on-site the entire evening. We will provide a staffing ratio to match your child's needs.

Register by February 17 by emailing Michelle at michelle@lopc.org. Space is limited. We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.



Moms' RETREAT

January 17, 2020
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

New this year: retreat attendees will participate in a service project for Stand! For Families Free of Violence. Our guest speaker is the Rev. Sandhya Jha, a highly respected and inspiring speaker, preacher, and workshop leader. She will share insights on how to teach our children about the things that matter most.

New this year is the option to join us for a Moms' Night Out in Lamorinda - as well as participate in a service project for STAND! For Families Free of Violence. STAND! is one of LOPC's local mission partners committed to building safe and strong families and providing shelter and resources for victims escaping violent homes. In preparation for this project, we are asking for your help! Please consider donating any **unused** travel-sized toiletries—such as shampoos, lotions and soaps—for our service project to our Family Ministry team. Please deliver unused toiletry items to the Ministry Center through January 16. Thank you for helping to be part of our service project.

Additional details about the Moms' Night Out and service projects are forthcoming. Contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org with any questions and to register. Space is limited. Childcare is available by RSVP to Michelle no later than Friday, January 10.

The Parenting Journey

Wednesdays, 5:45-6:45 p.m., starting January 15

LOPC invites parents of middle-school age children to join Valerie Hodgskiss for a six-week parent-support and community-building group. Possible topics include parent-child relationships, anxiety, and bullying. Valerie is a licensed marriage and family therapist, mother of four children, and LOPC choir member.

Please contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org with questions and to RSVP. Drop-ins are welcome but please RSVP in advance for headcount purposes.

Gender Identity: An Overview

January 19, 12:10 p.m.-1:30 p.m., Oak Room

Sponsored by Stephen Ministry

Join us for an informative talk by Valerie Hodgskiss, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, on issues surrounding transgender individuals. Valerie is a supporter of More Light Presbyterians, an organization that works to promote equality and welcome within the Presbyterian Church USA, for the LGBTQ community.

Visit lopc.org to register. Contact Renée Wigginton at renee@lopc.org for more information.



January 26, 10:00 a.m.

Parents with children (ages infant - 4th grade) will meet on the back playground and let the kids play while adults enjoy fellowship. Breakfast treats and coffee will be provided. Come out and connect with other families like yours! We meet on the last Sunday of the month between worship services at 10:00 a.m. from September-May.

4th Monday Book Group

2:00 p.m., Fireside Room

- **January 27**

Where the Crawdads Sing by Julia Owen. At once an ode to the natural world, it's also a coming-of-age story, and a tale of possible murder.

- **February 24**

The Library Book by Susan Orlean. Starting with the horrific fire in the L.A. Library, it probes the historic and current value of libraries.

- **March 23**

A Place for Us by Fatima Farheen Mirza, a story that follows an Indian Muslim family adjusting to life in the United States.

All are welcome to join us! For information about our group please email Jean Fiske at jdfiske@gmail.com or Bob Hoots at bob2tam@gmail.com.

LOPC Breakfast

Are You a Road Scholar?

January 22, 7:00 a.m., Davies Room

Join us on Wednesday, January 22 at 7 a.m. in the Davies Room for a presentation by Cynthia Cotton of Road Scholar about upcoming trips domestically and internationally. Road Scholar is a not-for-profit organization that provides educational-travel programs throughout the United States, Canada, and approximately 150 other countries.

Road Scholar was previously known as Elderhostel, but changed its name in 2010 in order to appeal to the next wave of older travelers, Baby Boomers seeking something more out of travel. Today, Road Scholar has more than 5,500 programs, dividing them into a variety of categories including theme-based, intergenerational, outdoor adventures, service learning, adventures afloat, and independent city discoveries.

community



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

January 3, 1:30 p.m. speaker in the Sanctuary, 1:00 p.m. refreshments in Fellowship Hall

With more than 1,000 aircraft flying in and out of San Francisco's Airport (SFO) daily how are the airways kept safe? First Friday Forum's (FFF) lecture by Mark Sherry, "About Air Traffic Control," can give us answers. Nancy Holtzapple, FFF team leader, says, "This is an exceptional opportunity to learn more about airport safety and the air traffic controllers who monitor the airways."

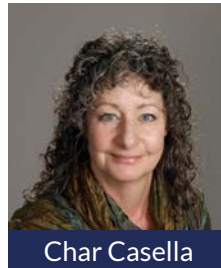
Mark Sherry worked in the SFO control tower for 32 years. Before that, he worked in the Oakland Airport tower. He also is a licensed pilot and was a flight instructor at the Concord Airport. A graduate of De La Salle High School and Cal State, Hayward, he has been a Diablo Valley resident for over 60 years. He has the Irish sense of humor, gift of gab, and good story telling.

"The focus of my talk will be how air traffic control ensures the safety of the system at SFO," Sherry says. "I will explain the different parts of the traffic-control system, how aircraft arrive and depart the Bay Area, the handling of delays, and why they occur at SFO in particular."

SFO has four asphalt runways arranged in two intersecting sets of parallel runways. On them, in 2018, the airport had more than 470,000 operations, an average of nearly 1,300 a day. It is the seventh busiest airport in North America, and one of the most challenging for air traffic controllers.

Sherry has also worked on a variety of airport projects, including implementing air traffic plans for major construction such as improvements for runway 28L, and the design and implementation of the new control tower. He also conducted research and analysis of numerous aviation incidents.

Char Casella to Retire



Char Casella

LOPC has been incredibly blessed to have Char Casella, church treasurer, serve as a volunteer, Finance Elder, and LOPC treasurer for more than 10 years. She has dedicated herself to serving LOPC, and now has decided to retire as treasurer on January 31. Char's mother has

experienced increasing care needs in the past few months, and Char has lovingly committed to be her mom's caregiver.

Using her finance talents and expertise, she initially supported a variety of LOPC ministries, and then became Finance Elder in January 2011. She served two terms as Elder. Upon Jim Fulford's retirement as treasurer in 2015, Char says, "I felt called to step in as Treasurer. I have never had more joy 'working' in my profession as I have at LOPC. It is with sadness that I say goodbye to this chapter of my life, but it is with a different type of joy and sadness that I step into a new season with my mom."

Char will remain in the Treasurer's position until the end of January, helping close out the 2019 results and finalize the 2020 results. "Our staff and congregation will miss the many wonderful gifts Char has brought to LOPC as our treasurer," says Peter Whitelock, Pastor and Head of Staff, "and we are grateful she has offered to help with the transition and will also continue to be involved with our ministry in other ways moving forward." Peter, Pastor Jaime Polson, Jim Nagle (Finance Elder), and the Finance Team are working together on an interim plan during the hiring process for this position. Please contact Jaime at jaime@lopc.org or (925) 283-8722 ext. 226 if you have any questions.

In the New Year, the church will be celebrating Char to thank her for her many contributions to LOPC. She is a member of LOPC, and, says Jaime, "we are glad and fortunate to continue to have her here in that capacity, and grateful to her and her family for their ministry."

mission

love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

The annual all-congregation service day is scheduled for February 23 and is a call to action for all members of LOPC to serve together!

Have you been looking for an easy way to serve our community? This past year, LOPC engaged in 10 projects to support our neighbors and share our love with the community. If you haven't found a chance yet to serve, or have never participated in our annual all-church service day, this is the year!



Each year we aim to have over 300 people working on campus and in the community to sort clothes, pack kits, assemble carts, deep clean kitchens, and so much more! Many of the organizations that LOPC partners with annually depend on our congregational day of service. Many struggle with projects that are larger than their staff can handle, or can't be funded by their already slim budgets.

Projects are varied, but all are important to the organizations we help. Though sorting and folding baby clothes may seem simple, it is crucial in providing low-income mothers with much needed baby clothes for their new infants. Creating toiletry kits with essential items helps homeless men and woman feel cared for. Transforming a transitional housing unit with paint and elbow grease can give an abused woman and her children a second chance.

love does on February 23 is an invitation to participate in the ordinary, and hopefully see a glimpse of the extraordinary things *love does* can do!



mission

2020 Monthly Food Donation List Benefiting the Monument Crisis Center

- JAN: Peanut Butter (plastic containers)
- FEB: Canned Soup
- MAR: Canned Tuna
- APR: Ready-to-Eat (snap top & pouch)
- MAY: Oatmeal
- JUN: Packaged Dry Rice
- JUL: Boxed Cereal
- AUG: Pasta
- SEP: Canned Vegetables
- OCT: Canned Fruit
- NOV: Canned Chilli
- DEC: Packaged Dry Beans



Place requested items in the Monument Crisis Center barrel on the plaza after both Sunday services, or during the week, in the Ministry Center Office.

Congo Team Says Thanks!

To the LOPC community, the LOPC Congo Team extends a heart-felt thank you for your continued help to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Attending special presentations (two in 2019), donations, purchases of necklaces, and simply asking questions about the Congo all provide critical help for a LOPC-PC(USA) major mission partner.

One of their three strategies is educating LOPC about PC(USA)'s work and providing general background on the DRC. The other two are financially supporting education and trauma healing, and being advocates for the Congolese. We greatly appreciate your support; it helps fuel the team's passion and work.

Our team meets the first Sunday of each month at 10:20 a.m. in the Ministry Center Library. We are always looking for new members. Drop by and learn what we are all about!

Thank you for your support! Please contact Herb Long at herblong7@gmail.com with questions.

seedlings

A Sneak Peak into a Pre-K Classroom



Ever wonder what happens inside the walls of a preschool classroom? Quite a bit of learning, lots of play, and a ton of fun! Daffodils teachers Carrie Tarbox and Susan Garcia, and Tulips teachers Dawn Thompson and Calah Skelton give us the inside scoop about what a pre-kindergarten classroom is all about.



A typical day starts with open-ended games, play, and art activities as the students arrive and adjust to the classroom. The class has a morning gathering time to practice mindfulness, sing songs, or practice gross motor skills. They participate in rotations focused on building, creative expression, sensory, science and pre-math activities. After that, it is language-arts time. Students learn about letters and sounds, sight words, and word building, as well as practicing handwriting and writing in creativity journals. From there, students go outside, where the class plays on the playground and socializes with friends as they eat lunch together. The children end their day with quiet-choice activities like books and puzzles, and a closing-group gathering before heading home.

When asked about her favorite part of being a pre-k teacher, Ms. Carrie responds, "The brain development from age zero to seven is fascinating! We feel we can have the biggest influence and impression upon each child's growth and development during those years. It's a lot of fun and rewarding!"

youth

Register for Confirmation



Faith milestones are how we honor and celebrate children and youth as they grow in faith by marking significant moments along the way. Confirmation is a milestone where LOPC staff and adult volunteers support students as they explore their faith, ask questions in a safe environment, and seek to take ownership over their faith journey. LOPC's Confirmation program is offered every spring, and youth from grades 8-12 may choose to participate any year they feel ready to consider taking this step of faith.

Youth who begin the program do not need to finish and be confirmed if they decide they are not ready. Students explore their faith, doubts, and questions in a safe and encouraging space. This series of memorable, experiential and theologically based discussions is focused on the basics of Christian belief and action. Students will have the opportunity to listen, learn, question, write a personal statement of faith, and publicly proclaim their Christian beliefs in front of their Church community.

Confirmation Session Dates: Mondays:

- February 17 - March 23; 5 - 7 p.m. (excluding March 16)w/ a special session on the morning of Sunday, March 15
- Confirmation Dessert: Thursday, April 16; 7 - 8:30 p.m.
- Confirmation: Sunday, April 19; 9 & 11 a.m. worship services

8th – 12th Grade: Registration for Confirmation opens January 6! Register at lopc.org/ministry/youth

Save the Date

Youth Summer Service-Learning Opportunities

Registration opens February 1

5th & 6th Grade Service Squad: June 1-5

Youth who complete 5th or 6th grades in May 2020 will serve for a couple of hours each day with a local mission partner in the East Bay, and return to debrief and reflect on their experience. Youth will become acquainted with the many ways in which we can share God's love within our own community! Our dream is that this experience will inspire youth for a life of serving and loving others. Service may include food sorting and packing, yardwork, visiting the elderly and home-bound, running programs for children living in a shelter, and more!



7th & 8th Grade San Francisco Trip: July 12-17

Youth who complete 7th or 8th grades in May 2020, will spend a week in San Francisco and the surrounding area serving with City Service Mission. Through this experience, youth will be introduced to the many ways we can serve people in our own Bay Area community. We'll discover a new side of this familiar city through immersive activities—serving with a variety of ministry partners and a daily debriefing of our experiences.



High School Yakima Trip: June 20-27

Youth who complete 9th-12th grade in May 2020 will travel to Yakima, Washington, to partner with an indigenous-led organization: S.L.A.M. (Students Learning About Missions). S.L.A.M. is based within the Yakima Nation and focuses on teaching outside groups how they follow 'The Jesus Way' through their native traditions. Youth service teams will witness various ceremonies, learn about the history and culture of the Yakima people, and provide basic housework service in tribe elders' homes. The trip will be mainly relational—aiming to deepen their understanding and connections to the body of Christ from a different perspective.



Go to lopc.org/ministry/youth to register!

journey of faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



Jessica Whitlach

Singing is her passion, and Jessica Whitlach has put her beautiful soprano voice to good use, singing in church choirs, as a soloist, and as a director of children's choirs, all to God's glory.

Her faith "began in a children's choir in Scottsdale, Arizona, when I was four years old," Jessica relates. "When I outgrew the children's choir I was the youngest singer in the adult choir at age 10. The group welcomed me with open arms and helped guide me in my earliest singing years." Later, she joined the church high school praise band, and, she says, made lifelong friends in the senior-high youth group. "These first choir experiences influenced me to become a music educator and children's choir director."

However, it was the high-school mission trips that Jessica says most influenced her faith journey. "I went on the trips every summer; Los Angeles, on outreach programs, and working with the homeless in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. How heart warming it was on our trips to Mexico to hand a family the keys to a home they otherwise wouldn't have. We worked hard for those families—and then went back to a church at night to have deep, thoughtful conversations about Jesus and our working through Him. These mission trips were life-changing for me. Truly, I think I received more than I gave. Getting outside of the bubble of affluent Scottsdale and into different communities with my church youth group opened my eyes to how many people needed to be helped by us as we worked here as Jesus' hands and feet."

Jessica says belonging to LOPC "has enhanced my faith journey: through many life changes, from getting married, to having my daughter—the church choir and whole community have been a source of support for me and my family. I started singing with LOPC at a time when I was unsure about my faith, but this church has strengthened and reinforced my earlier experiences with the church and my faith."

Her faith was tested, she says, during the birth of her daughter. "The delivery was difficult, and for a

few minutes, I felt I might not make it. While doctors and nurses worked to save me, my husband held our newborn, and my mother and mother-in-law prayed aloud for me. I prayed so strongly in that moment as well. Recovering in the ICU, I felt a calm sense that everything would be all right and that God was there for me, watching over me and my daughter. It was the scariest moment of my life. When I returned to LOPC a few weeks later, the resurrection sermon series began. I felt those sermons were for me, and I experienced my own resurrection story."

Now, as a mother, Jessica hopes to show her daughter, through her actions, what being a Christian means. "Also, I will continue leading worship through choir and voice with the chancel and children's choirs. My desire is to grow the program and give more children the chance to lead worship through song."

For a favorite Bible verse, Jessica chooses from First Corinthians 13:4-7. "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

care

Effective, Caring Visitation Workshop February 1, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., CLC Room 201

Have you wondered what to say or not to say when you're asked to visit with a friend or family member who is in the hospital or perhaps recovering at home? Ever wonder what is appropriate in visiting with someone who may be very ill?

This workshop, led by Gerald Chinen, Pastor of Congregational Care, is open to all who would like to learn the skills to be a caring visitor. If you have any mobility issues, an elevator is available in the building. Some light refreshments will be provided.

Visit lopc.org to register. Contact Renée Wigginton at renee@lopc.org for more information.

lopc foundation

A Different Kind of Social Influence

By Jim Beckemeyer, Foundation Trustee



Jim Beckemeyer

About a month ago, a friend, newly retired from a long career in one industry, joked with a group of close friends that he was going to take up a second career as a “social influencer.” Several people who heard this gave a knowing laugh. Others wondered aloud exactly what it meant, and how on earth could anyone earn a living doing such a thing!

A social influencer is someone who establishes credibility in a specific industry, develops and has access to a huge audience, and can persuade others to act on their recommendations. How large of an audience are we talking about? I recently saw a list titled “9 of the Biggest Social Media Influencers on Instagram.” Four of the nine each had over 100 million followers!

I don’t know about you, but I prefer (and value) influence on a different level. Recently, my wife learned that the mother of a high school classmate had passed away. It turns out the classmate’s father had proven pivotal for my wife. He had always been a calm, positive, encouraging influence—so much so that when the news of the woman’s death arrived, my wife was moved to reach out, offering condolences to someone she hadn’t seen in more than 30 years. What mattered was influence on the heart.

Not long ago, Peter preached a sermon about the influence each of us has—whether we realize it or not. The question we need to ask, he said, is what do we want to do with our power and influence to further God’s work on earth. We do not have to blog to millions of “followers” looking for advice or entertainment. Instead, we can find ways to make a difference on a heart-centered level.

The LOPC Foundation gives us that opportunity. Established to support LOPC missions and ministries, the Foundation’s resources touch the hearts of a wide audience in ways that live on for multiple generations. Might you consider making a legacy gift to the Foundation to help bring God’s message of hope, peace, joy, and love to the world—becoming a “social influencer,” so to speak?

If you would like to talk with someone about how you might further God’s love on Earth, contact me or the other trustees: Staci Johnston, Kristi Haigh, Phil Placier, Dara Youngdale, Jen Crocker, Jerry Ducey, Lois Boyd, and Mike Ross.

session highlights

November 2019

By Lois Boyd, Clerk of Session

‘Tis the season for Session to focus on the church’s financial plan. Ministry team leaders have been working with the Finance Team to prepare their budgets for 2020—a process that dovetails with the efforts of the Stewardship Team.

Finance Chair, Jim Nagle, forecast revenues and expenses essentially flat compared to the current year. As of this writing, next year’s pledge income is yet unknown; non-pledge income has been trending up. The Foundation has increased its contribution to the church operating budget.

Stewardship Chair, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, reported strong results to date. Its goals are to grow the number of pledges and the average level of giving.

Foundation Trustee, Dick James, reported on the Foundation’s September 30 fiscal year results. Legacy, estate and other gifts saw a significant uptick to \$273,000 from \$23,000 a year earlier. The Foundation added to its facilities reserve account, now totaling approximately \$500,000.

Jaime Polson has been working on developing metrics for the Session’s consideration and will report on those periodically. Jaime shared that the church does a great job of bringing on new elders and deacons each year that represent a diverse range of ages. Approximately 30-40% of each elder class is new to the role, and 40% of each deacon class is new, a sign of healthy church leadership development.

spiritual formation

Living Into Our Calling: A six-week study on the Book of Ephesians

Thursdays, Jan. 16, 23, 30; Feb. 5, 12, 20; Mornings, 10:00-11:30 a.m.; Evenings, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Oak Room

Join us for a study on the book of Ephesians! This six-week study, led by Pastor Gerald Chinen, takes place on Thursdays, January 16 through February 20. To accommodate many different schedules, we are offering both morning and evening sessions: 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus is a moving and encouraging picture of what the church can be, what the church should be. We'll find words of hope and challenge as we live into our calling to be the church.

All are welcome! No registration required.

Science & Religion

Why Christians Have the Old Testament

January 14, 7:15 p.m., Oak Room

Join us for this month's Science and Religion study group as we focus on some intriguing, age-old questions about religion. Our study will be led by Professor Zac Flanagan, Ph.D., Professor of Theology and Religious Studies, at St. Mary's College.



Many modern Christians struggle reading the Old Testament. How are its ancient stories and laws relevant to the Christian life? How does its ideas about God and faith relate to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ? Such questions are not new. Ancient Christians wrestled with many of the same questions. In this class, we will discover the spectrum of early Christian attitudes toward the Old Testament, giving special focus to the particular ways of reading that ultimately ensured its meaningful inclusion in the Christian Bible. A major goal is to offer insights about approaching the Old Testament in a meaningful way in the Christian faith journey.

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

10:10 meets each Sunday between services and always welcomes newcomers!

January 5

OAK ROOM

Can Jews and Palestinians Work Together for Peace?

Come hear the Jerusalem Youth Chorus talk about their experience as Israelis and Palestinians with the goal of creating music and promoting dialogue.

January 12

OAK ROOM

How My Faith Has Changed My Life

Come hear Don Colebourn's faith story and how he lives his faith despite hard setbacks.

January 19

OAK ROOM

How Can We Help with Homelessness?

Come hear CCIH's Executive Director, Deanne Pearn, share about how we can end homelessness in our community.

January 26

OAK ROOM

How Prayer Got Me Through

Come hear how prayer helped Isabel Bueso during her struggle with her medical-based immigration status.

worship

January/February 2020 Sermon Series

FAITH in action

Practical Things Christians Can Do
to Make the World
a Better Place

Jan 5

Walk Humbly

Feb 2

Love Mercy

Jan 12

Choose Virtue

Feb 9

Tame the Tongue

Jan 19

Seek Justice

Feb 16

Forgive Freely

Jan 26

Pray Diligently

Feb 23

Serve Boldly



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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

Jon Corry, Communications
Editors:
Dick James,
Lexi Morrissey,
& Renée Wigginton

Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

January 1 for the February issue.
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Every Monday by 5 p.m. for the following
Sunday's issue.

Submit items at:
lopc.org/submission-for-connections

Happy New Year

From the staff at LOPC!



Photo: Dick James

Sunday Worship Services
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family!

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