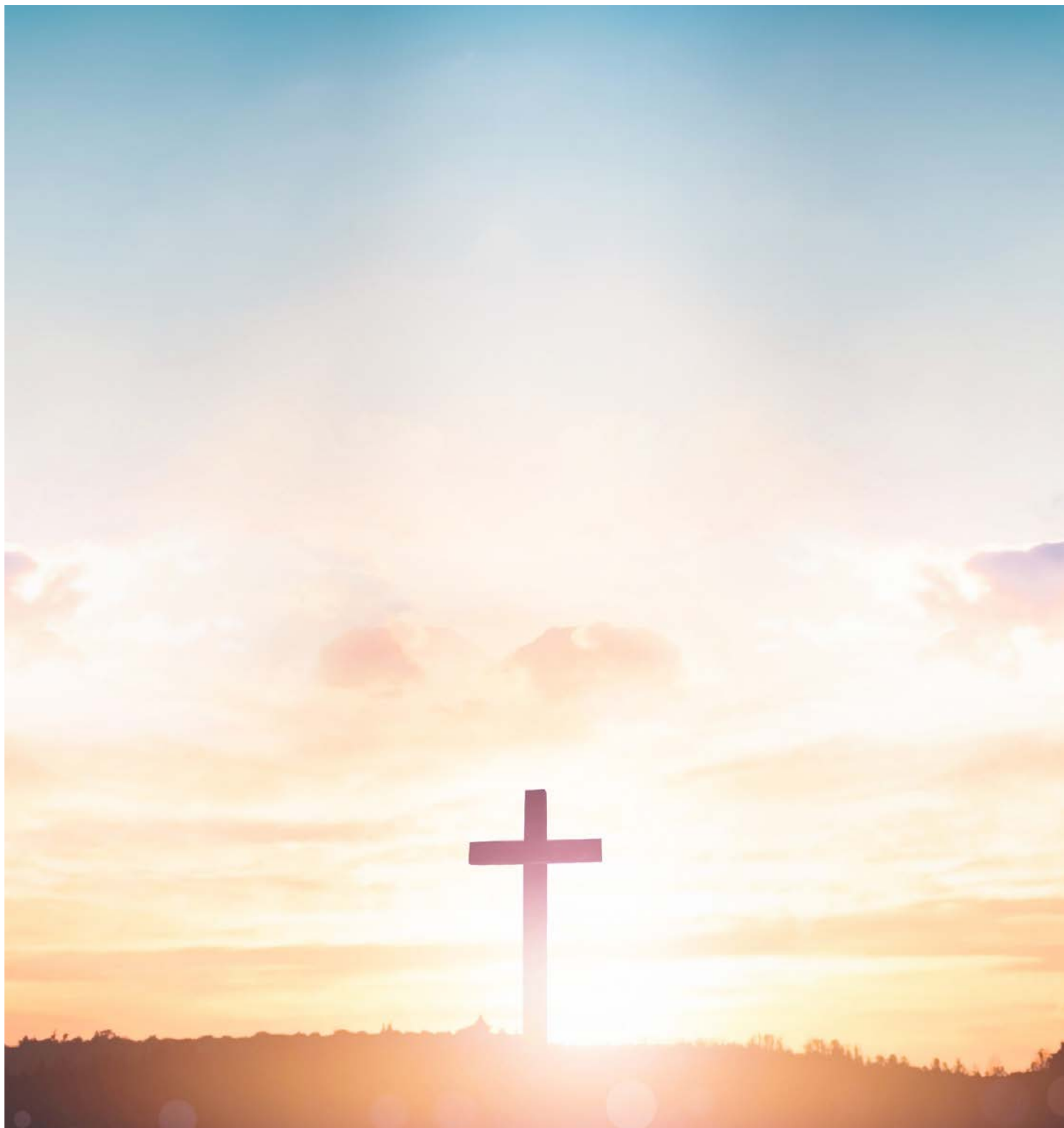


FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!
In Christ... in the World



April 2020



Contents

Easter 3
Livestream Info 4
Mission 5
Youth 7
Children 8
Journey of Faith 9
Spiritual Formation 10
Community 11
Foundation 12
Session 12
New Members 13
Interfaith 17
CNC 18

Event dates listed in this edition of Focus may have changed after the edition went to print.

We highly recommend reaching out for verification using the contact information provided, or by contacting the Ministry Center at 925-283-8722.



the lord is the
**EVERLASTING
GOD**

By Jaime Polson, - Pastor, Families & Executive Leadership

Our lives have changed so quickly with the tragic Covid-19/ Coronavirus outbreak and we have all seen our daily living change in ways we could not have even imagined just a few weeks ago. At this same time, we are in the midst of Lent in the church season where we take more time to reflect upon God, to pray more for others and give sacrificially of our time, treasure, and talents. These are things that are always central to our faith and during Lent. We fix our eyes on the cross, knowing that Jesus came to be among us so that we may know God’s love for us, in the midst of joy and great sorrows. We remember that Jesus sacrificed himself for us and overcame the power of death, that we may have life and have it abundantly.

If I am being honest, living in this new normal has been a great challenge and filled with so many thoughts and emotion, fluctuating between gratitude and powerlessness, sadness and hope, and a deep trust that God is in the midst of it all. So, I thought maybe it would be helpful to share a little of my Lenten journey as I have experienced it this year.

Over the past month, my heart has been filled with gratitude for the dedication and courage I have

seen as our healthcare workers, around the world, have tirelessly cared for the most vulnerable and put themselves and their families at risk to sacrifice for us. I have been astonished as I have seen firsthand teachers and administrators innovate completely new learning programs so our children and youth can continue to learn and thrive. I have been thankful for the hard work of so many to keep supplies and food on the shelves at our grocery stores and deliver them for people who cannot leave their homes.

I have been inspired by the acts of kindness and love I have seen as strangers reach out to help one another in this time of need. I have been moved by our LOPC staff and church community at how everyone has come together to see how we can keep being God’s love and presence in our community and world during this unprecedented time.

I have thanked God for virtual ways like Zoom (a face-to-face online meeting platform) and Google Hangouts that have continued to help us build community and safe spaces for our church community. I have found that yes indeed, you can have meaningful pastoral visits on Zoom. And yes, you can have



youth group on Zoom where people can connect, share their worries and joys, pray together, see each other's pets, and get used to this new normal together. And yes, the LOPC Foundation can continue their good work for the church on Zoom too. It's certainly been a time of growth for me.

I have also slept less and worried and prayed more for you and our most vulnerable. I have cried out to God to be with those who are already living in poverty, isolation, and loneliness. I pray for those who already carry heavy burdens because of loss of a loved one or an illness with the worries of all these other things on top of what is already happening in their lives. I pray for the children who may not have the opportunity to learn now or miss meals because they were dependent upon their schools for these crucial needs. And I pray that people, including me, step in and act so they are cared for too. I have worried about so many who are no longer receiving paychecks and have lost their livelihoods. I have been deeply heartbroken to see some of the racism and cruelty that has grown out of this outbreak and wonder how I am called to help during this time. I have prayed like I have never prayed before for God's presence, comfort, and love

to be with all of us. For God to keep showing up through the ways we choose to serve and love. I have also turned to Scripture again and again to give me courage, strength and deepen my dependence upon God. I have learned how to be more present and take it one day at a time.

One of our teen youth advisors shared this Bible verse with our middle school youth on a virtual youth group meeting last week. It is a Scripture from the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah where God comforts his people.

It reminds me that God's heart is focused on loving each and every one of us, and God's call remains constant, to love each other as God loves us. God is here to comfort us and give us strength, to remind us that we are the Easter people, a people who believe that God can resurrect beautiful things from the ashes. That God can create anew.

*Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of
the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.*

*Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall
renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like
eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:28-31

We are in midst of Lent, a time where we as people of faith, commit to deepen our faith.

In this time of struggle, uncertainty and wondering what is next, I pray you will experience the love and compassion of God. I pray you will continue to find ways to connect in community. I pray you will know you are loved by God.

We invite you to join us virtually to connect in small groups, listen to our daily devotions on Facebook and other media platforms, serve others through prayer, and if you are healthy and able, serve in the community through food delivery or at food banks.

I pray, too, you will take time to care for yourself and your family. God is here for all of us and so is your church community. And finally, remember, we are the Easter people. We are called to be a people of faith, hope, and love! May it be so.

APR 12 Easter Sunday

I Have Seen the Lord! • John 20:1-18

APR 19 Peace Be with You
John 20:19-31

APR 26 What Shall I Return to the Lord?
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

MAY 3 A Good Shepherd
Psalm 23, John 10:1-10

MAY 10 Believe You Me
John 14:1-14

MAY 17 For You, O God, Have Tested Us
Psalm 66:8-20

MAY 24 Can I Get A Witness?
Acts 1:6-14



Sundays • 9:00 a.m.
livestream.com/lopc

IMAGES of EASTER

livestream

Each week we'll produce a relevant and uplifting program of worship that includes a new sermon, prayers and readings, some newly-recorded musical offerings, and a compilation of some of our favorite worship moments from our vast video archive of worship services. The pre-produced worship service will be streamed "live" Sundays at 9 a.m., and one of our ministry staff will virtually host this service in the Livestream chat and will also be available to comment on our Facebook page.

We hope this will be a source of comfort and joy for you in this difficult time.

There are several ways to access our livestream:

- Visit lopc.org where the Livestream will be embedded on our main page at 9 a.m.
- Visit livestream.com/LOPC where you can view the Livestream as well as our archive of previous services.
- Visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/lopchurch where the service will stream live at 9 a.m.
- Download the Livestream app to your smartphone, tablet, or streaming device (ROKU or AppleTV) and search for LOPC.

Issues with livestream quality and/or functionality?

We understand how frustrating it can be when technology doesn't work as expected.

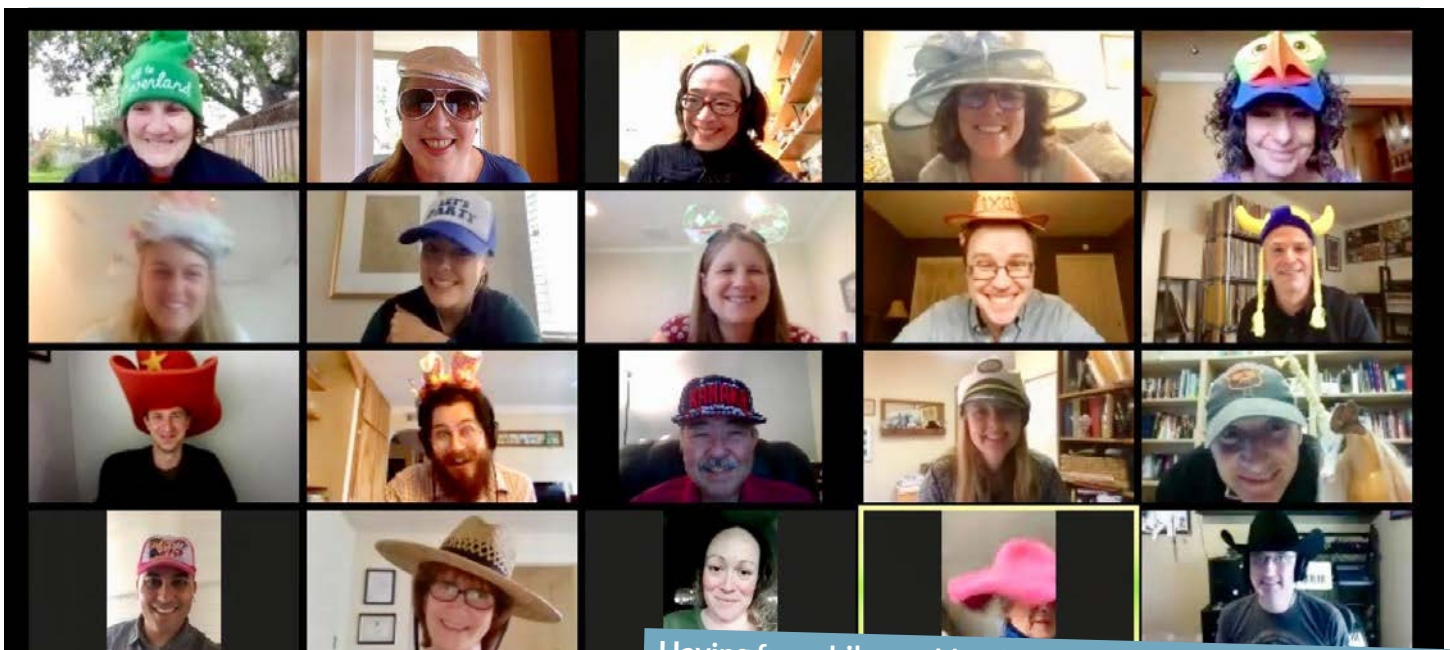
During our live broadcast we constantly monitor the quality of our outgoing stream and if there is a problem on our end we will notify our live viewers through the chat room.

We have no control over the quality of service that Livestream.com or Facebook provides at any given moment. Broadband issues on the user end can also affect quality, so if you are experiencing slow speeds or poor quality, this is the likely culprit. Additionally, some older technology may or may not work with contemporary services such as livestream.

Sound issues?

Each computer, smartphone, or tablet has a different speaker system and maximum volume level. It is important to keep in mind that the audio from a worship service that includes both spoken word and music will never be comparable to what you're used to hearing on the radio, TV, or a CD, so you may need to turn up your volume or add a stronger set of speakers to your system.

Thanks for using our Livestream service!



mission

love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

We kicked-off our *love does* season on 2/23! This annual kick-off is a meaningful way for our congregation to affirm our commitment to service every year. Participants got to see their hard work effect change and learned more about the needs in our community. Some participants even plan on continuing to support and volunteer at the organization they worked with at the kick-off! It takes over 250 people to accomplish all of our projects at our kick-off, and we are grateful for our volunteers and leaders. So, this year at the *love does* kick-off what did our love do?



Items delivered...

- 350 toiletry kits were delivered to the Bay Area Rescue Mission for homeless women and men to receive when they arrive at the shelter.
- 65 boxes of baby clothing were assembled for delivery to agencies that support low-income mothers.
- 1,350 pounds of beans and rice were packaged and delivered to Monument Crisis Center for those experiencing food insecurity.
- 40 grocery carts were assembled for seniors and people who do not have transportation.
- Over 50 gifts were assembled to be given as bingo prizes for seniors.

Experiences Had...

- A group of 12 made bag lunches and delivered them to a Tuff Shed community in Oakland where people experiencing homelessness reside.
- Over 300 sheets were painted and will result in 1,200 stationary cards to be sold to support children.
- 65 polar fleece blankets were created to comfort sexually abused children.
- Participants helped clean and display repurposed items to be sold to benefit Habitat for Humanity.

Environments Transformed...

- A group transformed the garden space at Garden Park Apartments with fresh bark and lots of hard work.
- At Creekside in Concord, participants painted the ceiling and walls transforming the community center into a brighter place for children to congregate after school.
- At Mt. View Home, participants deep cleaned all the areas where clients congregate daily and helped with garden maintenance.
- Participants deep-cleaned the community kitchen, dining and living rooms, as well as organized a pantry and clothing closet. In addition, a reading library was created for children.
- Participants deep-cleaned a food-redistribution center and learned about more programs that support the homeless at White Pony Express.

Please join us for more love does events in 2020! We will be announcing details about upcoming opportunities in the weekly e-mail and Connections.

Go to lopc.org/lovedoes

HOPE SOLUTIONS

1997
OUR MISSION:
15 Faith Communities came together to address poverty and homelessness.

2002
OUR FIRST STEPS
Garden Park Apartments was purchased and renovated.

2004
27 FAMILIES
Found home. Support. A positive path forward and *Hope.*

2007
ADDED VITAL SUPPORT SERVICES
An academic specialist and mental health provider joined the team. Homework Club was established.

2012
HIV/AIDS HOUSING ADVOCACY
began supporting 140+ households.

2016
LAUNCHED HOUSING NAVIGATION
as part of county-wide system transformation. Supported 300+ new households.

2019
OUR 5 YEAR PLAN:
Launched new programs to serve more families, and support homeless youth.
New name and brand identity were created to better communicate who we are and what we do.

2020
OUR GOALS:
TRIPLE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WE SERVE.
SERVE NEW POPULATIONS.
DEVELOP NEW HOUSING SITES.
RAISE \$15 MILLION.

WITH INFINITE HOPE, WE CAN END HOMELESSNESS.

Exciting News from CCIH!

Nearly 20 years ago, LOPC joined with dozens of other faith-community partners to help Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) address homelessness in our community. Since that time, we have partnered with CCIH to create Garden Park Apartments and many other effective solutions to ending homelessness for our most vulnerable neighbors. Many of our community members have been integral in growing the impact of this organization in our community.

The Heart of Housing and Services

In 2019, in partnership with our congregation and many others, CCIH, (now known as Hope Solutions) created a five-year strategic plan. In the first year, they have:

- Increased the number of households housed and served from 127 to 418.
- Added a new program model to house an additional 125 homeless families and launch a program for 40 homeless transition age youth.
- Grown revenue from \$4.4M to \$7.2M comprised of a 78% increase in public funding, and a 20% increase in private funding.
- Added 11 program staff positions to ensure quality support of clients.

- Increased the Resident Empowerment Program (REP) Leaders involvement in program oversight and governance.
- Selected a new name that better conveys their mission and values and supports growth goals.

To start 2020, CCIH had some exciting news. As part of the five-year strategic plan, CCIH will now have a new name and identity. The new name, Hope Solutions, reflects the essence of how the organization supports its residents and how it will grow its impact in the future. For six months, the rebranding team had rich conversations about the organization's values, identity, and future goals. Hundreds of possible names were considered, and this name reflected the hope that we all hold for their clients until they can hold it for themselves.

Hope Solutions continually invites their clients to dare to hope while offering concrete solutions and support to heal and thrive. This new name carries the organization into the future and reinforces its position as a heart-centered organization focused on providing quality housing, ongoing support, and the courage to hope.

Hope Solutions always welcomes your help. To get involved please visit hopesolutions.org.

youth

We are posting special announcements, as well as activities and spiritual practices that youth can try out on their own at home on our Instagram stories!



 @lopc_youth

Follow our Instagram to see our suggestions & give something a try! You can also share pictures of you trying out our ideas or coming up with your own ideas of activities to do at home!

Note: Confirmation Sunday, YOW Messy Games, and BTW Senior Night are postponed.

Details to come.



Save the Date

Planned Youth Summer Service-Learning Opportunities

Summer service learning event updates will be sent to families by Keris Dahlkamp in the coming weeks and months.

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp at keris@lopc.org.



children

Children's Ministry Resources

As we journey together through this very weird time, the Children's Ministry at LOPC is more committed than ever to partnering with you. We're hard at work creating resources for you to share with your kids at home, not just to continue to invest in them spiritually, but to give them outlets to talk about how they're feeling and opportunities to find God in the midst of all of this.

Check out the Children's Ministry Blog:

lopc.org/category/childrens-ministry

for the latest resources we're creating for your kids, including a weekly Sunday school lesson from Ryan, simple spiritual practices to do at home from Lori, and Adventures with Susan. We'll also be reposting videos from The Fantastic Project, a series for kids on the values of Kindness, Justice, and Mercy.

We want to be here for you during this time! Please email Director of Children's Ministry Ryan Timpte at ryan@LOPC.org for more resources, pastoral care, and FaceTime chats with your kids.



Vacation Bible Camp Registration Postponed

We have postponed registration for Vacation Bible Camp from April 1st until later in the season, as we assess the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on our ongoing ministry. As soon as we have updates on the status of Vacation Bible Camp for this year, we will update the Vacation Bible Camp page on [LOPC.org](https://lopc.org).

For more information and if you have questions, please email Director of Children's Ministry Ryan Timpte at ryan@LOPC.org.

journey of FAITH

By *Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC member*



Don Colebourn

Don Colebourn says there have been many ups and downs in his life, including a time of having doubts about God. “It was then that God spoke to me through scriptures that have formed how I have lived my life over the past 20 years. My favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:6-7

‘Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.’ No matter how bad things got, I can honestly say the ‘peace that surpasses all understanding’ was with me through every ordeal.”

This was not always the case in Don’s life. He says that while growing up, his parents didn’t go to church. “I had a curiosity about God and church, so I would attend different churches with friends. I believed there was a God, but it didn’t interest me enough to follow up and continue to attend. When I was 16, my cousin convinced me to become a Catholic, as was his family. I did and enjoyed it for a year or so, but then lost interest.

“Later, I married Lassie, we had children, and I sensed something was missing in my life, but I just continued to ignore it and didn’t sense God’s calling. When I was 40, a good friend asked me to be the godfather for his child. The baptism was at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, and during the sermon I had a powerful sense of God’s presence. As we left the church I said to Lassie, ‘that’s what is missing from our lives.’”

This “ah-ha” moment led to their joining the church, and Don was blessed when a man his age offered to disciple him. “How important it is to have fellow Christians offer to go alongside a new member, perhaps a new

Christian. For eight years, every Friday morning, we read the Bible and talked about what it meant in our lives. He also encouraged me to join a men’s devotion group, and we joined a couples’ group. So, I was very fortunate to be discipled in such a way that gave me a good base for understanding what it meant to be a Christian.”

Don continues, “During that time, life was very good. I had a fine business, a great marriage, great kids, and a great faith. Then the first of a number of serious medical and financial crises turned my world upside down. It was during that time that God became very real in my life. When everything was going well it was easy to love God and love one another, but when the rug is pulled out from under you, it’s easy to start to doubt God.

“The firm foundation I had received carried me through, and I always knew God was with me. Another verse which helped me is 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. ‘Praise be to the God and Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.’ This has helped me to have a ministry of being able to witness what God has done in my life during my most difficult times and to be a comfort for those going through hard times now.”

The Colebourns transferred to LOPC several years ago, and both have become active participants in the life of the church. Most recently, Don was the elder for Connecting ministries and has reached out to help people find their place at LOPC. “I love the fact the LOPC is committed to be a missional Church. To that end, I am encouraged by the sermons and conversations with others to spend more time with people as they are going through difficult times, by witnessing to God’s faithfulness in my life as an encouragement to them.”

spiritual formation

Paul's Amazing Letter
to the Philippians:

Finding **j**oy

When Life is Hard.



April 16, 23, 30 & May 7
7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Oak Room

Join Pastor Peter Whitelock for a four-week journey through the four chapters of Philippians (one per week) that have much to say about how we can weather the challenging seasons of life. This class will be practical, interactive, and, most importantly, applicable to your life.

Note: If this group is unable to meet onsite, virtual gatherings will be set up. To RSVP, contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x248.

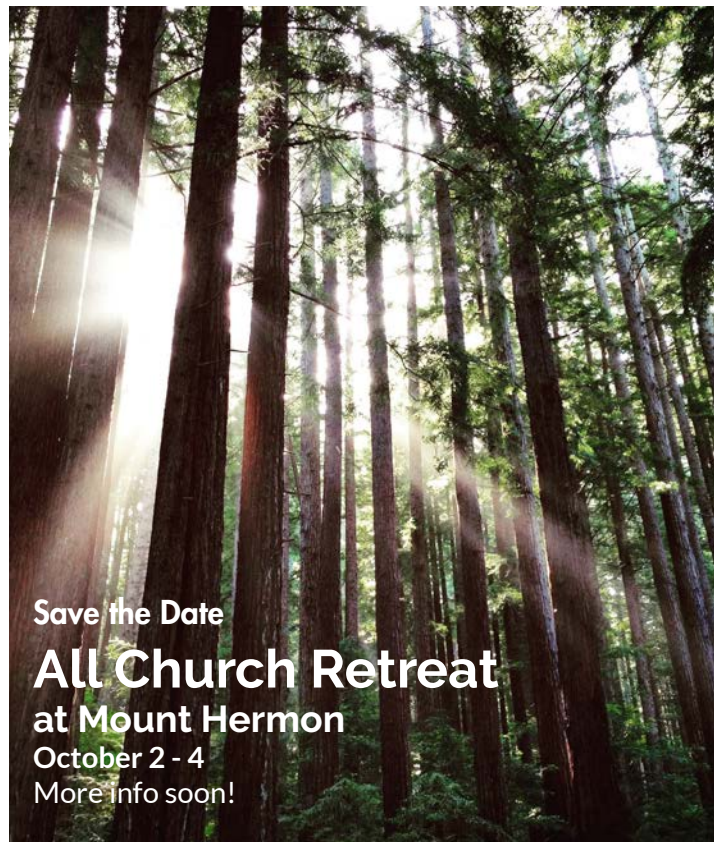
Spiritual Direction at LOPC



Spiritual Direction is part of the Spiritual Formation Ministry at LOPC. It is a reflective process in which a trained spiritual companion walks with individual participants to help them pay attention to God's work in their lives and their 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, participants are invited to explore their experiences, seek awareness of God, and discover authentic questions and desires. A participant is accompanied on this journey by a trained and grace-filled companion, a personal Spiritual Director.

To find out more about Spiritual Direction, contact Diane Grant, LOPC Spiritual Direction Coordinator, at 925-825-8225 or dianebeegee@yahoo.com.

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



Save the Date

All Church Retreat
at Mount Hermon

October 2 - 4

More info soon!

community

Voyagers Begin a New Year

Voyagers, founded at LOPC in 1960, is a welcoming and open collection of small groups, known as ships, that offer opportunities to make friends and share fun, food, fellowship, faith, and service to LOPC. The ships provide a special opportunity for continuing and new members and friends to become more involved in LOPC. They seek to:

- Encourage Christian faith and fellowship for each member.
- Provide a sense of community and fellowship within LOPC.
- Reach out to others in faith.
- Facilitate the integration of new members into the life of LOPC.
- Support LOPC and its missions.

Each Sunday, Voyagers serve coffee after the worship services. In addition, Voyagers are involved in many of LOPC's Mission Projects at home and abroad!

If you are interested in more information about becoming involved in one of the 12 ships, please call the church office, 925-238-8722, or Bev Fellows at 925-949-7628 or beverlyfellows@comcast.net.

Respite Night

May 1, 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 April 20 by emailing Michelle at michelle@lopc.org. Space is limited. We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.

thursday Fellowship

A program of Senior Care Ministries

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

NOTE: POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



Though February felt like Spring, we finally welcomed it officially in March after some much needed rain. We were able to meet the first week in March and had fun making Mandalas and hearing "The Three Amigos", Stan Morner, Bill Bowman, and Jim Pearson who led us on a musical journey.

With the shelter in place order, volunteers and guests will keep in touch during our hiatus via phone calls, cards, and emails. Join Well Connected, an online Senior Center, with a vast variety of interest groups to suit every taste. Visit: covia.org/services/well-connected. Guests and volunteers will be informed via email and personal calls if we are able to resume.

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



April 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.

lopc foundation

Why We became Friends of the Foundation

By Kristi Haigh, Foundation Trustee



Kristi Haigh

Recently, Pastor Jaime shared with Foundation Trustees the idea of reclaiming the practice of testimony. These days, “testimony” is a word loaded with all kinds of connotations. I am urging us to use it in the simplicity of Webster’s definition: the act of bearing witness.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to bear witness to the gift God gave us and to share it with all the earth. Testimony is affirmation of our living out the good news of the gospel.

When my husband and I decided to include the Foundation in our estate plans, we were bearing witness how God led us to LOPC and how important we feel that the church not only be able to survive but also thrive into the future, doing God’s work. What is true for us, and may also be true for you, is that the Foundation is not the only organization we are affirming in our plans, but the only faith-based organization, which sets it apart.

Over the many years we’ve been members, we always come back to the recognition that LOPC is a “good

place”—welcoming the stranger, comforting the troubled and lonely, providing food, clothing, and shelter to those in need, both near and far. It seeks to be responsive to the open wounds in our society. Both long-time church goers and brand-new seekers are welcome from diverse backgrounds and different theological understandings. This is why we want to help LOPC stay strong into the future. The Foundation’s vision is to be a permanent, reliable source of significant funding for LOPC’s ministries.

We encourage you to become Friends of the Foundation, joining others who have included the Foundation in their estate plan. The act of bearing witness by supporting the Foundation can remain private, if you wish. However, if you decide to include the Foundation in your plans, we would welcome the chance to thank you. Together, we can assure the church’s mission will continue well into the future.

If you would like to learn more, please contact any one of the Trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Lois Boyd, Jen Crocker, Jerry Ducey, Kristi Haigh, Staci Johnston, Phil Placier, Mike Ross, or Dara Youngdale.

session highlights

February 2020

By Paul Koenig, Clerk of Session

At the February Session meeting, Session received reports as to several church leadership and staff activities. Session was updated on the continuing and significant work of the Volunteer Task Force.

Session reviewed the Leadership Retreat that took place in January, including the key principles presented by Pastor Jake Medcalf of Hayward Presbyterian Church. The input expressed by attendees was very positive. Session will also be considering future retreats and where to hold them after evaluation of relevant factors, including wishes of the attendees, costs, and benefits of location.

Feedback was requested from the teams regarding the book, *The New Breed*, that is being read, with the intent that a report can be provided to Session in the next few months.

Lynn Trowbridge provided a report about Kurth Memorial Garden. The Kurth Garden, and its availability for past, current, and future members, is significant and is valued by our church and its members.

Session approved various session policies, including a few that have been updated, and authorized church Operations to proceed with certain campus maintenance projects.

new MEMBERS

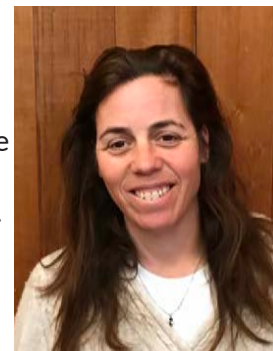
Doug & Ursula Aalders

Born and raised in Alton, Iowa, Doug has lived in the East Bay since 1970. He retired 20 years ago as a National Bank Examiner-Trust. Ursula was born and raised in Wurzburg, Bavaria. She came to the U.S. in 1964. The Aalders have been married for 56 years and both enjoy traveling the world together, reading, gardening, and walking. What attracted the Aalders to LOPC was the worship services, music/organ, staff, and sermons.



Sarah Bowers

Sarah is a French & Spanish teacher and the freshman volleyball coach at San Ramon Valley High School in Danville. She takes students to France every other year as part of her teaching. Sarah loves traveling. In her spare time, she enjoys going to Tahoe with her husband (Byron) and friends and having dance parties with the kids! After a season of living in Iowa, Sarah began “church shopping,” hoping to connect with a group of fellow believers who focused on Jesus and where the style of worship was both traditional and contemporary. “I liked LOPC the day I came.”



Chloe Amarilla

Chloe just moved to the area from Southern California after graduating from Claremont McKenna College. She was a college athlete playing softball and loves all sports. She currently works at the California State Capitol for a member of assembly. She will be attending law school in the Fall 2020. What attracted her to LOPC was the community. She writes, “I’m excited for all the ways to get involved and feel like there is support from the church for all stages of life.”



Anthony & Kathryn Fassero

The Fasseros live in Alamo and met at Berkeley. They have two young children. Anthony works for a video game developer and is interested in getting involved in Scouts! He loves the outdoors. Kathryn is a nurse practitioner and loves travel and theater. She has participated in medical mission trips in Guatemala and Jamaica. What attracted the Fasseros to LOPC was that it was a Presbyterian church near their home along with inspired and interesting sermons. They also mention that they have appreciated the genuinely friendly and kind people, music, and architecture that enhances the message of LOPC.



Jennifer Jenny

Jennifer grew up in Orinda and currently lives in Lafayette with twins, Grace & Teddy. Grace & Teddy attended the Seedlings Preschool and now attend St. Perpetua's Transitional Kindergarten. Jennifer is looking forward to them growing up with the church community. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, movies, yoga, dining, and wine tasting with family & friends. She is also a member of Lafayette Juniors, a charity organization focused on family and children charities...and she loves their junior's rummage sale at LOPC with all proceeds benefiting those charities. What attracted Jennifer to LOPC was the welcoming community, and relevant sermons which are timely to current lifestyles and world events. Jennifer says, "I enjoy the sermons and always leave feeling touched and connected."

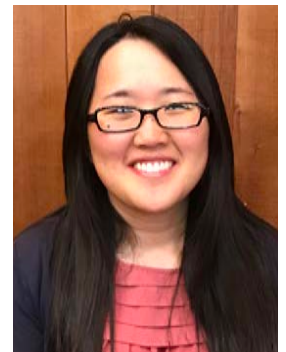


Stephen & Janet Kiyoi

Janet and Stephen currently live in Walnut Creek with their two children, Henry (4) and Hope (1). They have lived in the area for seven years and previously lived in Los Angeles. Originally from Michigan, Janet is a landscape architect currently working in San Francisco. Stephen grew up in the East Bay area and works as a library administrator at UC Davis. He enjoys long- distance running. They were attracted to LOPC by the thoughtful sermons, intentional service to the community, and alignment of values.

Eun Lee

Eun grew up in the South Bay and moved to the Lamorinda area about a year and a half ago. She works in the city as a data analyst and enjoys jogging and gardening on the weekends. Eun has been a regular visitor at LOPC since she moved to the area from Santa Clara in 2018. From her very first time worshipping here she knew LOPC was going to be her home church. With the birth of her son a few months ago, she decided to become a member so she can raise him in the church community.



Vito & Linda LoGrasso

The LoGrassos live in Pleasant Hill and have both lived in the Bay Area for many years. Vito is a lifelong resident of Contra Costa County having attended De La Salle High School, Antioch High School, and a graduate from St. Mary's College. Linda is a loan officer and Vito is a realtor with Berkshire Hathaway Drysdale Properties. Vito serves on many boards including Contra Costa Association of Realtors Grievances Committee, St. Mary's College Reunion Committee, Volunteer Senior Van Driver – City of Pleasant Hill, and Ambassador – Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce. Vito enjoys walks on the beach, bike rides, and wine tasting in Napa. Linda loves the outdoors, meeting new people, and learning new things. What attracted them to LOPC were the relevant sermons, music ministry (blend of traditional and contemporary), being a community that is Christ- and love-focused, and the warm environment of the community.



Peggy Lucchesi

Peggy has lived in the area for a year and a half and is a licensed mental health counselor. She previously was a regular visitor at Menlo Church and heard about LOPC from friends. In her spare time, she enjoys golf, theater, and spending time with family.



Christine Nalty

Christine and her husband Jeff have lived in the area for two years, and they have two sons Liam (3) and James (9 months). They heard about LOPC from the Seedlings Preschool. Christine is an executive search consultant at Russell Reynolds Associates and enjoys rowing, parenting, and matchmaking. What attracted her to LOPC was the Seedlings Preschool and her mother who attends the church. She hopes to have both sons baptized.



Jonathan & Jennifer Nolen

After living three years in Austin, TX, the Nolens returned to the Bay Area for a new job in 2018. They live in Orinda and have two daughters: Ada (8) and Hadley (4). Ada attends Glorietta Elementary and Hadley is in the Tulips class at Seedlings. Ada and Hadley swim with Meadow Swim Club where Jenn is on the tennis team. Jonathan works at a growing tech startup in downtown Oakland and Jenn is currently a stay-at-home mom, but was previously a special education teacher in San Francisco. Their family enjoys traveling and they plan to visit Costa Rica this summer! They have really enjoyed attending LOPC and are excited to plug into this new community as official church members. What attracted the Nolens to LOPC was seeing the multi-generational community with a caring preschool and lots of opportunities for their kids to build strong bonds with a family of faith.



C.J. Novogradac

C.J. graduated from Claremont McKenna College in May 2019 with a Bachelors in Economics and a Master degree in Finance. He played baseball for 4 years and now loves to watch and support Bay Area sports. He has lived in the Bay Area his entire life except for college and is happy to return home. What attracted him to LOPC was the community is his home. C.J. writes, "The church is welcoming and inviting, especially for someone who is new and exploring their faith."



Brian & Michelle Turner

Brian and Michelle Turner live in Pleasant Hill and have three daughters and three dogs that bring them a great deal of joy. Michelle has lived in this area her whole life with St. Mary's College in Moraga being the farthest she has lived from home. Brian grew up in Bakersfield and has lived in the Bay Area since 1993. After a brief baseball career at Fresno State, Brian finished at Cal State East Bay majoring in Human Factors Psychology. He works in the tech business while Michelle has been a teacher in the Pittsburg unified school district for 23 years. She is currently a transitional kindergarten teacher. Brian volunteers as a board member and umpire in the local baseball league nearly year around. He likes to ride his motorcycle as the weather and wife allows. He also plays softball a couple times a week. Michelle loves to travel when she can. The Turners have been looking for a new church for a long time and found LOPC to be the perfect blend of traditional and contemporary.



Leanne Zimmerman

Leanne and her husband, Skip, have lived in Lafayette for 15 years. They have two children Claire (13) and Harry (11) who attend the YOW programs weekly. In her free time, Leanne enjoys hiking, cooking, and traveling. What attracted her to LOPC were the programs, openness to all people, and the positive community.



interfaith



Our Constitution, Politics, & Religion

By Terry Clark, Chair, LOPC Interfaith Group

Did you know that our nation was founded on the express basis that all faiths would have the right to freely practice their religion, and that no faith would be allowed the power of government to rule the country? These issues were explored recently in a two-hour Interfaith program at LOPC. The summary below is based on the major points that were covered.

The Founding Documents upon which the United States was established mandated that ours was to be a government of law, not ideologies, and free of the tensions and tyranny of forcing religions to compete against each other for domination or subjugation of others. The Founders wrote frequently about their intention that Jews, Muslims, and people of all faiths were welcome, and that the nation would be enriched by learning from each other, consistent with the national motto E Pluribus Unum (Out of Many, One) adopted in 1776.

The detailed Freedom of Religion provisions, embodied in the First Amendment and adopted as the “separation of church and state” doctrine, have been recognized by our Supreme Court and lower courts for more than two centuries as the authoritative declaration of national religious freedom and have banned any compelled support for any particular religion, while protecting the right to worship as everyone sees fit.

All faiths in this country, as well as those unaffiliated with a religion, share the values upon which we were

founded. But there has developed a political discourse that the U.S. was intended to be a “Christian nation.” This narrative was actually created in the 1930s to fund and support conservative clergy, who were enlisted to oppose Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation. While unsuccessful then, the narrative continued quietly in a positive way until it was reinvigorated in the 1970s under increasingly conservative exclusionary movements.

In today’s politics, the “Christian-nation” narrative is being used as a discriminatory tool of government precisely in the way that the Founders had rejected. We tested these current government actions against not just the Freedom of Religion provisions, but also the actions and teachings of Jesus Christ, which illustrate that unless you practice the faith and act in service to others as Jesus modeled, you are claiming only the authority of the religious name to wield government power.

Detailed studies show that Christians are no longer in the U.S. majority and are shrinking in numbers; and those unaffiliated with a religion are now larger than any faith group and growing – while the most-targeted groups are Muslims (1%) and Jews (2%). We must refocus our dialogue with politicians on these realities as well as our religious freedom principles, engaging our differences and developing relationships toward positive common interests.



Seeking New Church Leaders! Officer Nominations Needed by April 26.

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 terms beginning January 2021. It is a privilege and responsibility to nominate members to serve 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 annually to serve three-year terms.

Deacons, as set forth in Scripture, are leaders who serve as the caring, compassionate arm of the church. They provide 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 annually to serve a three-year term and two deacons of high-school age to serve a one-year term.

The Congregation Nominating Committee (CNC) members receive and renew nominations for church officers. They select candidates to present to the congregation. They are elected for a one-year term.

Foundation Trustees serve on the LOPC Foundation. This nine-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 may be submitted online at lopc.org/news/cnc-nominations-needed-for-2020/ Or send them via email to cnc@lopc.org. We need your nominations, so please fill out and submit at least one nomination form.

For more information, contact a CNC member: David MacKenzie (Chair), Paul Koenig (Clerk of Session), Jeff Patton, Ann Loar, Richard Courtney, Marsha McDonagh, Linda Kinrade (Deacon Representative), Peter Whitelock, and Gerald Chinen. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

We are looking forward to hearing from each of you.



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APRIL 2020

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Stewart Scharch, Organist

TREASURER

Char Casella

MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Ministries Associate for
Community Life
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:

April 1 for the May 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

*Embodied
Prayer
a Yoga/Labyrinth Retreat*

**POSTPONED - A new date will be
chosen once LOPC can reopen.
Questions? Contact Renée Wigginton
at renee@lopc.org**

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

Invite Friends & Family!

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