

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!  
In Christ... in the World

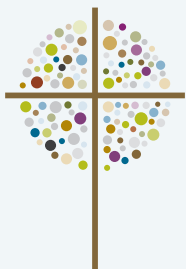




## December 2020

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### Pastors

**Peter Whitelock**

Head of Staff

**Gerald Chinen**

Care

**Lauren Gully**

Mission & Spiritual Formation

**Jaime Polson**

Families & Executive Leadership

## Advent



By Jaime Polson, - Pastor, Families & Executive Leadership

*"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." -Ephesians 5:1-2*

Advent is a time of waiting, of expectation, of silence, of patience as we wait for the blessing of our Lord to be born.

Perhaps the past eight months have prepared us to wait more patiently for the coming of our Savior more than in seasons past. We have been waiting for a return to normalcy – to seeing friends and family whenever we would like, to travel to places near and far without restrictions, to gather together in worship, to be able to hug one another and be nearer to each other. There is so much we patiently wait for in our day-to-day lives. But what about Advent? What do we do as we wait for the arrival of the Christ child?

During Advent, Dorothy Day, a Christian activist and writer, shared that she “reflects on the role of silence during the liturgical season of Advent as necessary for hearing the Word in our souls.” She says it is a time to examine one’s conscience and a time to see only what is loveable.

How I interpret this spiritual practice is to ask the question, how have I lived this year, reflecting on both the ways I have loved well, and looking at the ways where I need to love more deeply as I move through Advent into the next year. How can I imitate God’s love more? What parts of my life need to change and grow that I might be more loving, more just, more compassionate, and more self-sacrificing in order that my life may better reflect God’s love, light, and new creation as we await the Christ child? How, in this next year, might we be imitators of Christ in new ways? What can we do personally to allow God to transform our hearts, our minds, and our ways to become more Christ-like?

During this Advent season, I wish you time to reflect quietly on God’s Word, including the hope, love, joy, and peace Christ is bringing into the world. And as we wait, may we use this time to reflect on God’s goodness and experience God’s love for us more fully.

# We Are *Waiting*

Advent • Christmas 2020

## *Advent*

11/29 Waiting for Glory: Mark 13:24–37  
12/6 Waiting for Transformation: Mark 1:1–8  
12/13 Waiting for Joy: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24  
12/20 Waiting for Peace: Luke 1:26–38

## *Christmas Eve*

Family Service: 3:00 p.m. • Traditional Service: 7:00 p.m.

The Waiting is Over: Luke 2:1–14

Join us on Livestream!

Live & On-Demand



# special offering

## Make a Difference in a Child's Life this Christmas!

In the spirit of Christmas, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church will be lifting up two Mission partners that work toward bettering the lives of children. This year's Christmas offering will benefit the children of Fotokids in Guatemala and Children of Faith Missions in India. Fotokids teaches employable skills to children in the poorest barrios of Guatemala to help them rise-up out of poverty. Children of Faith provides shelter, nourishment, healthcare, education, and clothing to more than 100 boys and girls.

Originally called Out of the Dump, from its humble beginnings, Fotokids has served more than 1,000 at-risk children affected by poverty and violence. Your donation gives them a chance to dream of a better life, by learning photography, graphic design, media technology, and vocational-training experience as tools for self-expression, creativity, leadership, and future employment. The ability to secure employment assures they will not have to migrate in order to survive.

Children of Faith Missions provides a safe home and education for more than 100 of the poorest children of Visakhapatnam, India. It's not just an ordinary Children's Home meeting the needs of vulnerable children. With your help, we provide them with opportunities for a quality education, spiritual growth, and success that allows them to thrive.

### How to help:

- Write a check to LOPC with "Christmas Special Offering" in the memo and place in the black mailbox outside the Ministry Center Office.
- Go to [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org) >GIVE BACK>ONLINE GIVING, click "Give one time." and then click "Christmas Special Offering" in the dropdown menu.
- Use the LOPC APP > press "Give button" > Click "Christmas Special Offering."

## Two Mission Partners and their Responses to COVID-19 in their Communities:

### Children of Faith Missions

The Covid-19 pandemic is hitting everyone hard worldwide. In India, the government ordered all orphanages and children homes to send their children back to relatives in their villages last spring. This measure was to avoid "super-spreading" of the virus in the dormitories. In good times, the families in these villages struggled to feed the children, which is why they had turned to Children of Faith (COF). Now that many have lost whatever work they had and food prices are soaring, these families need help more than ever to feed and care for the children.



Children of Faith is working to financially support all the children and their families in their villages while the children continue to live off-campus until the government allows them to return. Children of Faith staff are in constant touch with these families. Financial support and food distribution by COF has been a huge help for them and their families during these tough times. With no return date in sight for the children, the need for additional resources to support the families will continue for months ahead.

The villages where COF Children reside are remote

continued next page →



and lack internet access or in many cases electricity, so children are unable to continue their schoolwork. In addition, the government is asking organizations such as COF to distribute food to people in their local community. COF is using its own scarce food resources to accomplish this. COF provides 10 pounds of rice, two pounds of lentils, and cooking oil to each household, which is enough to feed four people for a week. So far, COF has been able to help over 500 families. The need in India continues to be great, so please consider helping its effort by keeping Children of Faith in your prayers and contributing to LOPC's Christmas offering.

### Fotokids

As with everyone in the world, due to COVID-19, it has been a year of challenge and improvisation for Fotokids! They immediately had to determine their students' needs – and it came down to food.

Founder Nancy McGirr says most adults in their families have lost their jobs and are more worried about putting food on the table than about catching COVID-19. Entire families stand on the highways with white flags as an indication that they have no food. As a result, in Santiago Atitlán, where hunger is the most acute, Fotokids immediately started buying wholesale grains and assembling food baskets which mothers could pick up, socially distanced, in the Fotokids' garden. Rural Guatemala was particularly hard hit. Price gouging continues to be rampant. Santiago Atitlán closed its town borders, and little food has been available. Fotokids has 75 families that they work with in Santiago and serve approximately 350 people. To date, Fotokids has distributed more than 350 food baskets and currently sends out 35 relief baskets a week in that area.

"In Guatemala City, the challenges are different. Initially Fotokids was not able to distribute their food baskets since the government suspended all public transport – no buses – which meant students throughout the city were unable to receive their food baskets. The transportation has re-opened, and food distribution is somewhat smoother, except that prices have gone up due to corruption and market scarcity. Baskets, which they assemble by purchasing wholesale corn, beans and rice, cooking oil, 30 eggs, vitamin drink, pasta, and cereal, was initially \$45. Now they cost \$60.

In Guatemala City, Fotokids has 60 families and are producing 35 food-relief baskets a week.

"Fotokids has not been able to teach online because only five of the 135 children have smartphones, and no one has internet. The students were literally begging to get back to their photography classes. All the younger children in Santiago, Atitlán, had been given cameras. Following up on an idea from a board member, teachers now use the camera's SD cards to record a video lesson and they give students a written sheet with a weekly photo assignment. The students watch the video lesson on their camera's screen, turn in their assignments, and get a new lesson when their mothers pick up their food baskets.

"Fotokids takes their responsibility to their students and families very seriously. They are very grateful for the support that you and LOPC have provided. We hope you will keep them in your prayers and will consider donating to LOPC's Christmas offering. Muchas gracias!"



## mission

### "Smile" Upon LOPC Mission Partners this Holiday Season

Before you begin shopping this holiday season, please consider supporting one of LOPC's mission partners. Many of them are certified AmazonSmile partners. Choose one of LOPC's partners below as your designated AmazonSmile charity. The organization of your choice will receive 0.5 % donation of your eligible purchases.

#### LOPC Mission Partners on AmazonSmile:

- Children of Faith Missions
- Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano County
- Hope Solutions
- Monument Crisis Center
- Operation Dignity
- Shelter Inc.

#### How to Get Started

1. Go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and sign in with your Amazon account. Note if you do not have an account you will need to create one.
2. Click "Get Started" and search for the charity to donate to.
3. Click "Select" on the charity of your choice.
4. Please note that for the organization to benefit from all your future purchases you must always start at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) for every purchase.
5. Start shopping and benefit one of LOPC's mission partners today!

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

#### Empower Girls in the Congo

The Congo team traditionally has raised money during the Christmas Season by selling necklaces on the plaza; proceeds go toward supporting the education of girls learning computer skills and English. Due to the pandemic, the sale of Congo necklaces will not take place this year. If you wish to support this important work being done in the Congo to provide educational equity, please donate by using the link below:

[presbyterianmission.org/donate/e051843/](https://presbyterianmission.org/donate/e051843/)

### Harbor House Virtual Toy & Gift Card Collection

Harbor House has worked diligently to be able to continue to support its families during these challenging times and wants to make sure that every child receives a gift this holiday season. As a result, their annual toy collection has gone virtual this year. To participate go to the Amazon Wish List link below and choose an item you wish to donate to. Please only purchase items from this list. Once the item is in your cart, select the Gift Registry Address (c/o Sarah Roberts). Note that gifts are being shipped to a volunteer's home in Moraga (not Harbor House).

*Gifts must be purchased by December 4, so they will receive them in time.*

Sign-up to purchase a gift for a child or teen at Harbor House from our Amazon Wish List:

<https://a.co/16H15hU>

Harbor House is also collecting gift cards to help families celebrate the holidays. Sign-up to donate \$25 Target or Walmart Gift Cards to Harbor House families:

[signupgenius.com/go/508044BAEAB29A7F49-christmas](https://signupgenius.com/go/508044BAEAB29A7F49-christmas)

### Hope Solutions Spirit of Giving Program

Hope Solutions has over 40 families in need of sponsors this year as part of their Spirit of Giving program. Each year they gather holiday wish lists from their clients and ask for people to sponsor them. Below is a link to the individuals that LOPC has been given to sponsor this year. Please consider helping bring cheer to people in need this year.

To sign up, please visit:  
[signupgenius.com/go/10C0E44A9A723A1F58-hope](https://signupgenius.com/go/10C0E44A9A723A1F58-hope)

## spiritual formation

# 10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

### Safe Passages/Super Stars Literacy Book Drive Results

Many thanks to all the families and individuals who made our Book Drive for Safe Passages/SuperStars Literacy a success. A joint effort by Mission in Service, Family Ministries, Seedlings, and Youth Ministry netted approximately 3,000 books! The crew at Safe Passages/Super Stars Literacy were very excited when three cars, each packed to the roof with books, arrived at their offices. The books will be distributed during Safe Passages' holiday drive. Katie Brym, the Early Literacy Program Manager said, "We're so excited to be able to offer these books for the holidays, especially when so many families are struggling financially."

In a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, it was found that "overall, students who cannot read proficiently by third-grade are at least four times more likely to drop out of high school than students who are proficient readers by that time." The three risk factors that most impact the ability to read are: 1) poverty, 2) third-grade reading scores, and 3) minority status (largely hailing from African American and Hispanic families). Most of the Super Star Literacy students fit all three risk categories, and sadly 32% of them will fail to graduate.

The mission of Super Stars Literacy/Safe Passages is to "disrupt the cycle of poverty by engaging youth and families to build and drive a continuum of services that support student success and community development."



This year will have an Advent season like no other! Advent is the season of waiting - waiting for Christmas and waiting for Jesus. And in 2020, we have already experienced a lot of waiting and unknowing.

This year we will continue with our tradition of having an Advent group after worship at the 10:10 on Nov. 29, Dec. 6, and 13.

Please join Pastor Lauren Gully and Bob Finertie as we experience this season of waiting through teaching, discussion, and journaling-reflection time about the things we are waiting for.

Register at [lopc.org/spiritual-formation-classes](https://lopc.org/spiritual-formation-classes) for the zoom link.

### Daily Devotion Videos

A new devotion is posted online each day!

Visit [lopc.org](https://lopc.org), Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter to watch. Email [communications@lopc.org](mailto:communications@lopc.org) to subscribe to Daily Devotion emails.





# lopc welcomes new MEMBERS

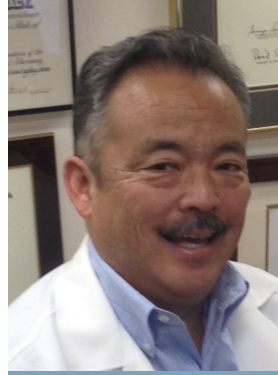


Jacqueline Green

## Jacqueline Green

Jacqueline lives in Lafayette with her husband, Dave, and their 10-month-old son, Levi. Jacqueline works for Workday Inc. where she leads their workforce development programs and social justice efforts. Jacqueline enjoys time with her family - especially their Saturday morning hikes and Sesame Street dance

parties. Jacqueline was drawn to membership as she grew up attending LOPC, and since moving back to Lafayette in 2018, has enjoyed attending service with her grandfather, Benjamin Hemphill.



Martin Iyoya

## Dr. Martin Iyoya

Martin resides in Clayton where he and his wife, Pam, have lived for the past 21 years. They have two children, Janelle and Kenny, both of whom are 4th generation Cal grads - Go Bears! Martin is John Muir Health System's Director of Pharmacy Services. He has been a scout leader for over 20 years, and in his spare time he

is an avid Giants, Niners, and Golden Bear football fan. Martin's hobbies include flyfishing, golf, running, and gardening. Martin's father and grandfather were both Protestant ministers. Martin says that what attracted him to LOPC was the warmth and welcoming spirit of the congregation, coupled with the meaningful and timely weekly messages of its pastors.



Jason & Eileen Knox

## Jason & Eileen Knox

Jason and Eileen live in Moraga and have been married for 14 years. They have two children, Elizabeth (9) and Eleanor (7). Jason works at VMware as a regional sales director. Eileen is a RN, BSN, and business owner of Intuitrack, where she currently offers her services in clinical research for a rare disease diagnosis start-up. In

their spare time, they like to play outdoors as a family, camp, and cheer on the girls in soccer and gymnastics. What attracted them to LOPC were the opportunities to raise their children in faith and service, worship services, and to grow spiritually. Oh, and that the Church is on Knox drive!



Dominique Thomas

## Dominique Thomas

Dominique lives in Pleasant Hill with her three children, Gabriel (8), Larkyn (5), and Lyla (5). She homeschools her children and works as an attorney at a national law firm. When not working, Dominique likes to hike, teach fitness classes, and serve as the leader of her daughters' Girl Scouts Troop. She looks forward to serving in a ministry at LOPC.





Pat Stevens

### Pat Stevens

Pat has been attending LOPC for two years. She immediately found it to be a warm, welcoming community, and was attracted to its spiritual formation and social justice ministries. Pat worked as an administrator at UC Berkeley and retired in 2014. Since then, she has done adult tutoring through Project Second

Chance, a county literacy program. She has also tutored in reading with public school second graders. Pat lives in Rossmoor and enjoys taking walks, reading, and exploring contemplative spirituality. She looks forward to getting more involved with the LOPC community in the days ahead.



Heather Ramamurthy

### Heather Ramamurthy

Heather and her husband, Vik, have lived with their son, Ash, in Martinez since 2010. They met in Washington, D.C., where they attended National Presbyterian Church led by Craig Barnes. He gave them an hour of premarital counseling they'll always remember fondly. They were married in Frankenmuth, Michigan, in

1997, after which they immediately drove to California in two old cars and \$800 in student-loan debt to start new lives in the heyday of the early Tech Boom. Today, they are much more settled than in the younger years and look back on lives full of travel, wonder, and adventure. They like LOPC for the stimulating conversations with fellow members, the concern for social justice, and the interfaith outreach. Heather participates in Torah and Hebrew studies at Temple Isaiah and is glad to have a faith community that shares that connection with her.



Gloria Reid

### Gloria Reid

Gloria lives in Rossmoor and spends summers in Tahoe City. She is professor emerita from Ohlone College where she taught an assortment of English classes including World Mythology and the Bible as Literature. After "retiring," she taught at universities in Istanbul and in Suzhou, China. Currently she volunteers as

a healing touch practitioner and tutor. She enjoys hiking, cycling, and kayaking as well as travel, museums, and reading. She was attracted to LOPC because of the worship services and extensive outreach and opportunities to serve.

# journey of faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC member



Julie Atkinson

Julie Atkinson says she came to LOPC looking for a church that would serve the needs of her children. Trey is now 10 and Jasmine is 8, but when they were in preschool Susan Wentworth made us feel so welcome. She was wonderful. The kids were a bit shy, so I stayed in the classroom and then began volunteering. I thought, 'If the rest of the

church is like this, it's where I want to be.' It was, and now seven years later, I've joined and am serving as an elder for Family Ministry. Yes, this is one way LOPC has enhanced my faith journey.

"Teaching children has made me think more about how I can articulate my faith to others. In so doing, I've had to reflect on what my faith actually means to me. It seems that service to others stands out as paramount. I also have grown through the opportunities offered such as the Love Does program. The book discussions with the mom's groups and having the opportunity to work with children are particularly meaningful."

She continues, "Speaking up tends to be out of my comfort zone, but I try to do it when I feel like Jesus is calling me to speak for someone who doesn't have a voice. For instance, when I worked as a lawyer, I represented a woman seeking a divorce from an abusive husband. The amount of spousal support the judge ordered seemed inadequate. Just before he entered the order I stood up and asked for more money. It was probably out of order, but I was fairly new to the job, the judge was forgiving, and the amount was increased by \$100. I believe Jesus wanted me to do all I could to help this woman who was in a vulnerable position. My faith led me to speak up."

About five years ago, Julie changed career paths. She volunteers as executive director for Center of Hope Haiti, a nonprofit that supports a school in Haiti. It was her parents who initiated this project after they took a mission trip with their church to this impoverished country. It took seven years to raise the money, but now 130 students who otherwise couldn't afford to

attend school can, with all their expenses paid first through ninth grade. The first class has just graduated.

"Local high schools admit their students, and we pay for that also. These kids are smart, diligent, and can accomplish so much if only given the opportunity. Again, it has been intimidating to do fundraising, but it also feels so rewarding to enable these children, who are not visible to the world, to attend school."

Knowing what her parents were led to do with founding a school, one might suppose they were the guiding lights in Julie's faith journey, and so they were. She says, "My faith journey has probably been going on since I was born. When I was little our family attended church in a large, predominantly African-American Southern Baptist congregation in San Jose. I was baptized there. We moved to Connecticut when I was 12 and began attending a small, mostly white, Southern Baptist Church. It offered several mission trip opportunities. I enjoyed working with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve homes. The idea of living out my faith through service really took root at this time.

"After college I lived in New York City for two years. The church I attend focused on reaching out and being relevant to the diverse, artistic community in my East Village neighborhood. I began to see faith much more broadly. Similarly, when I lived in Hong Kong (where she married her husband, Jay), I attended a church with members from all over the world and from different faith backgrounds. I think seeing faith and the tenets of Christianity interpreted and applied in so many contexts influenced me a lot. It's helped me appreciate how broad God's message is for us -- how many different people from so many walks of life can be brought together to live out our mission to 'love your neighbor.' We can each have our individual journeys and yet come together and work for this common purpose."

For now, Julie says she hopes to continue to find ways to work toward justice and equity in the world. "I recently helped organize a racial-justice workshop with a local nonprofit, Mindful Littles. I painted portraits of

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George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. The children made flowers to place around them as a memorial. We talked with them about compassion, what justice means, and why there is a focus on Black Lives Matter now. I feel like this was Jesus showing me how I can use my passion and talent for art to help children understand racial justice. I plan to do a similar project in our church school."

Julie also serves on the anti-bias/anti-racism team at LOPC. It was established by session to coordinate the church's multifaceted work of combating racism and bias and advocating for justice and equity in the larger world. It is comprised of elders and clergy. "I'm happy to add my voice to this group as we search for ways our congregation can study and become educated in how God's word leads us to become a more compassionate people."

Julie chooses as her favorite Bible verse, Isaiah 41:13. "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not be afraid, I will help you.'"

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## session highlights

*By Paul Koenig, Clerk of Session*

**Session met on October 20, 2020, which was again held via Zoom video conferencing.**

Session passed the following motions: 1) Staci Johnston's nomination was approved to go before the congregation at the annual meeting in February 2021 so that she may serve a second term for three years as a trustee on the LOPC Foundation beginning in 2021; 2) approved a \$5,000 donation from the Session Emerging Needs Fund to be provided to Mt. Hermon to help support them during this time of financial hardship; 3) approved a request for \$32,000 from the San Francisco Presbytery to be given to the Monument Crisis Center; and 4) approved an offering on Christmas Eve to benefit Children of Faith and Fotokids.

Pastor Peter Whitelock updated session regarding the Designated Pastor Nominating Committee which has commenced and is proceeding. Joan Breece will be the chair and Alex Paras the vice-chair.

Peter further advised session as to a number of further matters, including the installing and ordination of officers for LOPC on November 8; the work of the Session Planning Council (SPC) in reviewing and assessing gaps in the anti-bias/anti-racism work at LOPC, and what can further be done; and further

in-person worship plans. There was further discussion as to how to do the leadership retreat, usually held in January.

Pastor Jaime Polson provided updates on several matters, including working with other groups, discussions as to plans for online Christmas Eve services, and Seedlings.

Jim Nagle, elder for Finance, provided further update as to LOPC's finances, including as to amounts received this year from pledges and donations, contributions to Mission partners, the continuing reviews, and the plans for developing budgets for the different church teams and areas.

Tom Scovel, elder for Youth, gave a brief report on the youth, including the youth who will be joining the church and their participation in the ministries.

Again, we are all grateful for all the Pastors, staff, and teams at LOPC, who continue to provide their blessed talents, and their great and important work in this COVID-19 situation. We continue to thank them, and blessings to all.

## care



*Christ caring for people through people*

# STEPHEN MINISTRY

### A Caring Support Ministry

**S**tephen Ministry has been a part of LOPC's Congregational Care Ministry Team since 2003. Named for Stephen, the first lay minister of the early Christian church (Acts 6:3-5,8), Stephen Ministers today receive 50 hours of training before being paired with Care Receivers in confidential relationships. Names and identifying information are not divulged to anyone.

From the beginning, LOPC's Stephen Ministry has been an outreach to our local community. When we have a Care Receiver who doesn't attend church, we welcome that person. Over the years, several non-member Care Receivers have become LOPC members.

Stephen Ministers are available to provide one-to-one care and to meet regularly with those who are going through difficult times. Sometimes they are called the "After People." They often are requested after the funeral, after the pink slip comes with the last paycheck, after the doctor says that nothing more can be done, after home schooling is not working, after you move away from family and friends, after resenting the isolation and sheltering-in-place, and after a relationship fails.

If your family member or loved one needs care, suggest Stephen Ministry and ask their permission to provide their contact information to the Ministry. It will offer care only when requested.

Currently there are more than 30 LOPC Stephen Ministers available to meet Care Receivers. "Usually, we meet in person each week for about an hour" says Pastor Gerald Chinen. "However, during the pandemic, we can meet via telephone or FaceTime. In-person visits must be held outdoors and require masks and social distancing."

"If you are experiencing a difficult time in your life, try Stephen Ministry" Gerald says. "If your family or friend has heard your story too many times, a Stephen Minister is available to encourage, listen, walk with, and pray with you. As you walk with God in your daily life, we will support you along the way."

**For more information, please contact Pastor Gerald Chinen at (925) 283-8722 x227 or Jean Lee at (925) 943-2237.**



# community



## FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

### Important, interesting, timely subjects & speakers!

**G**ood news! First Friday Forum will resume in January via our best way of staying in touch, a Zoom webinar. Please note, because the first Friday falls on New Year's Day, our series will begin January 8. It will be necessary to register for each program. Look for the procedure to register in the January Focus and the LOPC weekly emails.

We are excited to kick-off the year with speaker Larry Lamborn who will discuss "The Enrichment of Asia." Lamborn's 40-year national defense career includes 26 years with the Central Intelligence Agency, where he worked on a variety of analytical and operational assignments. As a trained operative, he served in several countries around the globe.

### Future topics and speakers are:

- February 5 - Deanne Pearne, Director of Hope Solutions, on Homelessness
- March 5 - Dr. Margret Liu, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at UCSF, on COVID-19
- April 2 - Raphael Danziger, Doctor of Middle Eastern Studies, with a "Middle East Update"
- May 7 - David Seaborg, Environment Movement Leader, on "Climate Change: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions"
- June 4 - Irene Bloemraad, Professor of Sociology at UCB, with "Immigration Facts and Myths: What Everyone Needs to Know"



### A NEW Young Families Connect Fellowship Opportunity!

**D**o you have kids who are elementary school-age or younger? Whether or not you are already part of our Young Families Connect ministry, we hope your family will consider joining us to spread holiday cheer in our church community this year.

- Sign up to receive information about another young family that is part of the LOPC community.
- Do something joyous (and COVID-safe) for that family over the course of the holiday season. It can be anything from delivering a treat or dinner, to sending a handmade ornaments or Christmas cards from your kids. The point of this is to add joy to the season, not spending a lot of time or money during an already stressful time.
- Receive an act of holiday cheer from another young family.

Deadline to register for the fun is Friday, December 4, by 4:00 p.m. Register at [lopc.org/registrations](http://lopc.org/registrations).

### Presbyterian Women Traditional Christmas Tea Offering

This year no cookies need to be baked, no tea needs to be poured, and no outfits need to be purchased. Instead, we want to continue our tradition of collecting money to benefit one local and one global mission project. This year's local recipient will be Covia, a local food program for low income seniors, and the global mission support will be directed to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance fund.

Please mail your donations to LOPC PW, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette CA 94549 before the end of the year.

# finance

## Financial Update

By: Jim Nagle, Finance Elder, and the Finance Team

Firstly, thank you for contributing your time, talent, and treasures to LOPC at this difficult time. As the Bay Area settles into fall, LOPC's financials as of September 30, 2020, continue tracking to the revised budget. The Finance Team is working closely with the LOPC staff to allocate the resources needed to continue our great ministries.

Please note that the third-quarter financials compare actual results as of September 30, 2020, to the revised 2020 budget, which was approved by Session in July. Year-to-date September results were \$85,321 better than budget. Some of the improvement was related to early payments of pledge gifts, which is a great place to be starting the fourth quarter.

Congregational giving of \$2,120,105 was 71% of the 2020 budget, with 75% of the 2020 year completed. Year-to-date income as of September 30 totaled \$2,382,450, which was \$121,302 better than budget, largely due to overpaid pledges plus an additional \$25,200 from the Session Emerging Needs Fund, approved by Session, to be distributed to mission partners.

Year-to-date LOPC pledge receipts are \$161,000 higher than a year earlier. Over-paid pledges totaled \$80,000, which puts us in a great position to receive full pledged amounts for the year.

Year-to-date September expenses totaled \$2,553,903, which was \$35,982 higher than budget. The increase resulted from a variety of factors, including set-up costs for remote ministry, and an increase in distributions to mission partners.

The Finance Team will keep you updated as LOPC moves through the remainder of the year to see if these favorable trends continue. The fourth-quarter 2020 forecast includes the budgeted Faith Component of \$200,000 and positive giving levels so LOPC can meet or exceed its ministry-team and mission-partner needs for 2020.

Thank you for your continued support as LOPC ends 2020 in a strong position.

### January to September 2020

	Actual	Revised Budget
<b>Congregational Giving:</b>		
Pledge Income	1,680,896	1,601,073
Non-Pledge, Loose Offerings, & Other Giving	309,147	312,764
Mission & Other Special Gifts	125,242	101,978
Faith Component	4,820	4,818
Total Congregational Giving	2,120,105	2,020,633
<b>Other Sources</b>		
Foundation Support	193,357	193,357
Seedlings Offset & Employee Retention Credit	36,604	39,974
Session Emerging Needs	31,200	6,000
User Fees	1,184	1,183
Total Income	2,382,450	2,261,147
Expenses	2,553,903	2,517,921
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(\$171,453)	(\$256,774)

## December Finance Tax Notification

LOPC must receive your mailed gift (postmarked 12/31) or in-person by 5:00 p.m. on 12/31/2020. There will be no exceptions.

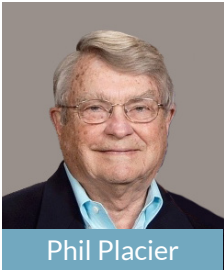
If you are making a stock gift, please notify Lidia (x229 or lidia@lopc.org) with the type of stock it is, and how it should be applied. It must be in LOPC's brokerage account by 12/31. Please do not file your 2020 tax return until you receive your year-end statements, with written acknowledgment of your gifts to LOPC, which will be made in January 2021.

## 2021 PLEDGE ENVELOPES

If you pledged for 2021 and requested a box of envelopes, they will be available to pick up in front of the main LOPC office December 9 - December 18 (not Saturday 12/12 or Sunday 12/13), **10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.** If you have questions please email LOPC Accountant, Lidia Jesionek, at lidia@lopc.org.



# foundation



## LOPC Foundation Finances - Annual Report

By Phil Placier, Foundation Trustee,  
Treasurer

**L**OPC Foundation closed its September 30, 2020, fiscal year with \$10.7 million of invested net assets (equity), after deducting \$227,000 of remaining commitments to LOPC. Legacy estate and other gifts in the amount of \$188,000 were received. The comparable year-earlier amount was \$275,000.

A 6% investment rate of return for the fiscal year was earned on the Foundation investments, made up of 23 diversified mutual funds and exchange traded funds. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) focused funds are 55% of the investments.

Foundation trustees appropriated \$321,000 for church ministries and \$103,000 for facilities reserve-study project expenses.

Net asset values of the Foundation's 11 funds and Facilities Reserve Account at September 30, after additions and disbursements to the church:

### Unrestricted

General Ministry Fund	\$2,991,000
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### Restricted\*

Cranmer Christian Leadership Fund	236,000
Deacons Endowments Fund	230,000
Dornsife Youth Endowment Fund	345,000
Facilities Endowments Fund	5,620,000
Facilities Reserve Account**	678,000
Holman Mission Endowment Fund	100,000
Newcomer Women's Endowment Fund	2,000
Steuber Landscape Maintenance Endowment Fund	119,000
Thursday Fellowship Endowment Fund	236,000

\*Restricted funds and account are available for grants for limited or restricted uses designated by donors or Foundation trustees.

\*\*The Facilities Reserve Account provides funds for planned and unexpected facilities and capital equipment projects. In fiscal 2020, \$235,000 was set aside in the account, an increase from \$180,000 a year earlier.

Learn more about donor opportunities for legacy estate gifts and other gifts to stabilize Foundation support of church ministries in the future at the LOPC website and from Foundation trustees: Jim Beckemeyer (925-324-9655), Lois Boyd (925-787-2388), Jen Crocker (925-765-4222), Jerry Ducey (925-997-8839), Kristi Haigh (925-890-0265), Staci Johnston (925-588-9992), Phil Placier (925-254-7769), Mike Ross (925-254-6621), Dara Youngdale (510-388-4000).

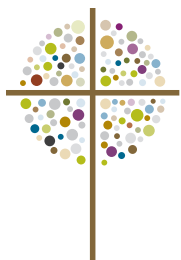
# stewardship



## Curbside-Giving Sunday Was a Success!

**O**n Sunday November 1, the LOPC Pastors, Stewardship Team, and church community enjoyed a special time to connect with one another at the curbside pledge card drop off. Thank you to everyone who participated!





LAFAYETTE-ORINDA  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
49 Knox Drive  
Lafayette, CA 94549

IMPORTANT

Dated Material  
PLEASE DELIVER  
BEFORE 12/1/20

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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

## DECEMBER 2020

### 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

Staci Johnston

### MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Ministries Associate for  
Community Life  
Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz, Youth  
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool  
Ryan Timppe, Children

### FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Jon Corry, Communications  
Editors: Dick James & Lexi Morrissey  
*Thank you to all who contribute to each issue!*

### Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

**December 1 for the January issue.**  
Email items to [communications@lopc.org](mailto:communications@lopc.org).

### Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

**Every Monday by 5 p.m.**  
for the following Sunday's issue.  
Email items to [communications@lopc.org](mailto:communications@lopc.org).

We Are  
*Waiting*

*Christmas Eve*  
Family Service: 3:00 p.m.  
Traditional Service: 7:00 p.m.

Join us on Livestream!  
*Live & On-Demand*

**ONLINE Sunday  
Worship Service**  
**9:00 a.m.**

Invite Friends & Family!

### Connect with us online!



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[@atlopc\\_church](https://www.instagram.com/atlopc_church)



[@lopcchurch](https://twitter.com/atlopcchurch)



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and at [lopc.org](https://lopc.org)

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- Ask for prayer.
- Get the latest news.

All on the LOPC app.  
Text "LOPC app"  
to the number 77977  
to download it today.

