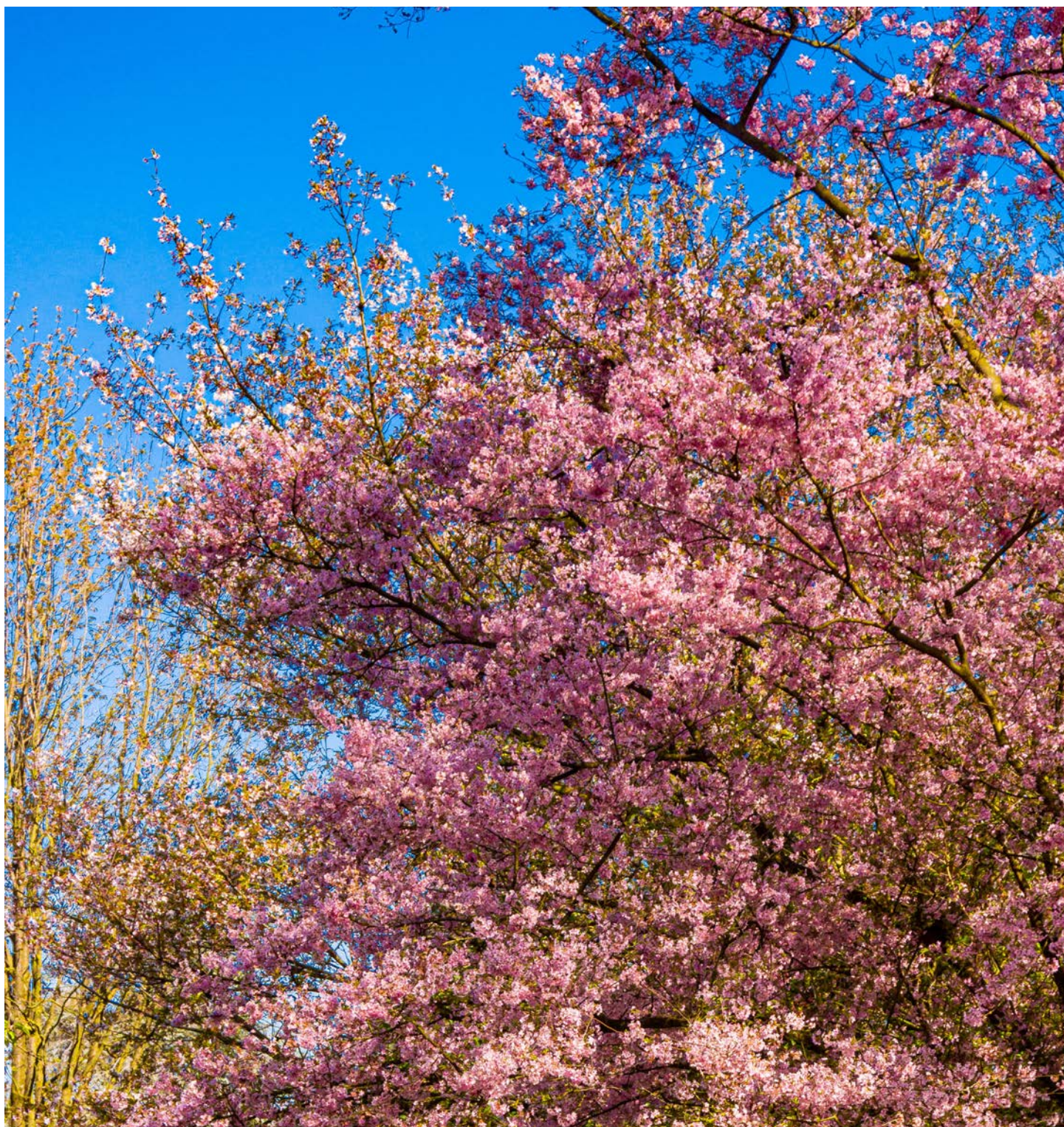


FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!
In Christ... in the World



March 2021

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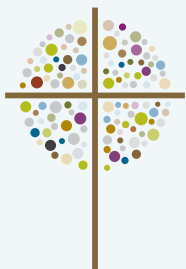
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Pastors

Peter Whitelock

Head of Staff

Gerald Chinen

Care

Lauren Gully

Mission & Spiritual Formation

Jaime Polson

Families & Executive Leadership



lenten GIVING

By Peter Whitelock - Pastor, Head of Staff

The season of Lent is spiritually significant in the life of the church. It is a period of 40 days, exclusive of Sundays, before we gather to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter. The general sense of Lent is that we need to take time and enter into a season of preparation for the events of Holy Week: the trial, crucifixion and death of Jesus. Starting with Ash Wednesday, Lent is a set period to reflect on the direction of our lives, the significance of Christ’s sacrifice, and how we will respond to this unprecedented outpouring of love.

Many Christians give up something pleasurable or enjoyable for Lent in order to sharpen the spiritual focus, and perhaps you have done that at some point on your journey of faith. It’s a little different this year, of course, because, due to the pandemic, perhaps we’re feeling like we’ve already given up many good and pleasurable things, and we don’t want to add to the list! The thought occurred to me that since this pandemic is easing but so many are still suffering under the weight of its ill effects, a good Lenten discipline this year might be for each of us to find simple ways to bring joy into the lives of people who are struggling. Who can you think of that would benefit from some Lenten giving on your part this year?



love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Separate But Together

This year was a *love does* year like no other! After shifting our program to be socially-distanced and safe, we were still able to demonstrate to the underserved in our community that they are loved. Though we worked separately, we demonstrated care and compassion collectively.

Participants responded with the same enthusiasm and generosity as in the past. Partners such as STAND were grateful for the additional help they received preparing for the return of their clients to the shelter. Several housing units were deep-cleaned and furnished, as well as stocked with various household items that were purchased via an Amazon wish list.

There is a real sense of gratitude for our first responders, and *love does* offered an opportunity to let them know how much they are loved. Participants wrote a handwritten note of acknowledgment for all they do.

On campus, a small, socially-distanced group with masks worked assembling carts to be delivered to the Monument Crisis Center (MCC). The demand for shopping carts has become increasingly important for people who depend on MCC for food. Many clients do not have a means for transportation, so the carts play a vital role in their ability to access food. Forty-five were assembled and delivered.

Off campus, in many participant's homes, breakfast bags and hygiene kits were assembled to benefit the clients of Trinity Center and Operation Dignity who are experiencing homelessness. In addition, polar-fleece blankets were assembled to be distributed to those experiencing trauma at STAND and Calico, as well as several other organizations in Contra Costa County.



Fifteen participants worked at the Food Bank warehouse in Concord. They sorted various food items and prepared them for distribution, while remaining socially distanced.

Shelter Inc. Special Offering—Shelter Inc. continues to support their clients and community in the wake of COVID-19. In addition to providing social wrap-around services and shelter, the organization helps people who have had difficulty paying rent and other essential bills after being affected by COVID-19. Our special offering for *love does* went to support the programs of Shelter Inc. as they continue to help those disproportionately affected by housing instability and poverty in our area.

All of these projects combined to create another wonderful experience and show the impact of *love does*.

Thanks to all of you who participated in *love does*!

mission

Safe Passages/Super Stars Literacy Reports Success

By Marjorie Nicolaisen, LOPC Member

In a letter to the community, Josefina Alvarado-Mena, CEO of Safe Passages, noted that the last quarter of 2020 had been especially busy. Through financial contributions, product donations, and in-kind service contributions, the organization was able to deliver food to over 2,000 families, provide over 11,000 children with gift cards for toys and books, and provide access to COVID-19 safety information and protective equipment, as well as increase access to education, mental health services and family support services.

Their Super Stars Literacy program (SSL), which LOPC supported this fall with a donation of over 3,000 books, coordinated a fun-filled event at Anna Yates, a K-8th-grade public school, with holiday music playing and a snow-machine blowing, as over 200 families strolled through different resource tables. Families were able to pick up reading tips for engaging their young children in reading activities, a bag of groceries, toys, and books at this holiday event.

“The SSL program is an academic intervention program for elementary schools in Alameda County where less than 25% of 3rd through 5th grade students currently exceed language arts and math testing scores. SSL provides students with additional support in literacy intervention while incorporating social emotional learning standards.”

LOPC looks forward to working with this organization again in the future to help address disparities inherent in our education system.



STAND! Thank You

By Steve Crocker, LOPC Member

I really, really don't like my garage a mess, and recently it has been rendered virtually useless due to the fact that so many boxes have been stored there. But I never thought I would be SO EXCITED for this to happen!

On January 28, we reached out to our membership regarding a request from one of our local mission partners, STAND!. They needed several basic household items as they were refurbishing their housing units at their confidential shelter site in anticipation for the return of their clients - all who are victims of abuse.

By February 7, in just 10 days, all 40 items that they needed were purchased, and I welcomed every box with a huge smile into my garage in preparation for delivery to STAND!

On behalf of STAND! and your mission team, THANK YOU for being so awesome! We continue to be blown away by your generosity and huge hearts. You are living proof that mission is alive at LOPC, even (and especially) during some of the most challenging times for many in our community.



easter special offering

STAND! Ending the Cycle of Violence

As one of LOPC's local mission partners, STAND! is taking bold steps doing innovative work to end the cycle of violence in our community, as well as providing shelter and counseling for victims of abuse. The current pandemic has significantly added to the stress in many people's lives, which unfortunately has led to increased abuse in all forms. A particular challenge for STAND! has been a need to revise traditional ways of supporting victims due to social-distancing requirements in order to protect both victims as well as STAND!'s staff.

Despite these challenges, STAND! has never stopped serving survivors, their children, and their community during the pandemic. Their 24/7 Crisis & Support Line and emergency-shelter services have continued uninterrupted, welcoming those at highest risk for domestic violence or homicide. The children's therapy program, transitional housing, groups, and supportive services to adults remain readily available via video or phone appointment.

All this has substantially raised costs of resources to STAND! Due to the pandemic, they have had to temporarily close their confidential Emergency Shelter and instead, house clients in secure hotels at an average cost of \$200 per day for a family of three for eight to 12 weeks. In addition, each family in emergency lodging spends an average of \$250 per week in groceries.

Our Easter special offering will go towards providing much needed financial help to STAND!, and to the Healing Hearts program that has been so effective at helping children who have been traumatized by violence and abuse in the Congo.

Look for upcoming details on how to donate to the special offering in the weekly email and Connections.

Thank you for your continued support to those in our community and in the world who are the most vulnerable and in the greatest need.

Pain-filled Hearts Are Healed in the Congo

Annie's story is an example of the many tragedies that children who experienced violence and loss in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) endure. Annie was nine years old when local militia attacked her family, killing her parents and one sister. Annie escaped with two younger siblings.



Relatives took in the three children, but memories of the horrific event stayed with Annie. She cried frequently and would hide and not let anyone near her. Then her grandmother enrolled Annie into a HealingHearts program, a children's camp that is part of the training for Healing-Hearts facilitators. Once trained, the facilitators work with local communities to start a trauma-healing ministry for children. As Christi Boyd, a Presbyterian Mission co-worker, describes, "Healing Hearts helped Annie go from 'the village of hopelessness to the village of new beginnings' as she learned to overcome the pain of loss and fear."

The Presbyterian Church in Congo has embraced the Healing Hearts program, along with other faith communities. Through its work in the Congo, the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) is one of LOPC's Mission partners. In 2016, LOPC sponsored the first training of 28 Healing Hearts facilitators in East Congo, and in 2018-2019 another 36 facilitators were trained in West Kasai. (The Kasai region has close to 900 Presbyterian schools).

LOPC's Easter special offering will go to helping children traumatized by violence and abuse. Half of the offering will go to Healing Hearts and half to STAND!, an East Bay organization that provides comprehensive prevention, intervention, and treatment services to end the cycle of domestic violence and child abuse.

Please keep Annie and others like her in your prayers. Contact Herb Long at herblong7@gmail.com with questions.

journey of faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Bill DeWolf says, “If there was a problem with my upbringing, it was that my faith was a lot about family and friends, but short on a deeper spiritual life. When I came back to the church as an adult and joined LOPC I found it was a place for spiritual exploration.”

It was Bill’s parents, Carol and Bob, who introduced him to LOPC. “I started coming Easter and Christmas in order to join them. I realized through the experience that something was missing in my life. I enjoyed the wonderful music and message of LOPC, but I also realized that while I thought I knew something about faith and religion, I had a lot to learn. A turning point came during a sermon on the meaning of grace. Until then, what I thought of first was that grace was what one said before meals. But with the words spoken I felt for the first time the meaning of God’s grace to us. That it is given freely without the need to earn it, and that we should apply the same concept of grace in our treatment of others. I decided then to explore joining the church. I struggled because I felt joining the church required a more solid grounding of faith than I felt. What helped me was the reassurance that faith could be seen as a journey rather than a destination. That resonated with me then and still does.”

But to back-track, one would think, looking at Bill’s childhood, he would know all about spirituality. He says, “As the son of a Presbyterian pastor, I grew up with the church as a centering part of my life. Every Sunday had the same pattern: Sunday school, followed by the church service, followed by a special dinner. The ritual of church and the predictability of it provided an embracing upbringing. It was a wonderful way to grow up.”

He continues, “Every meal started with grace. We learned Bible verses. I remember memorizing the 23rd Psalm and the Ten Commandments prior to getting my third-grade Bible. At one point my parents decided we would read the entire Bible - out loud. We would take turns reading. We had a system in which the reader could read as long as he wanted, but if someone noted



Bill DeWolf

a mistake, he could take over the reading. We were four very competitive boys, so this kept us paying attention, even if it did not promote more charitable Christian values.”

As with many others, when Bill went away to college the church didn’t seem very important to him, and he drifted away from it. But when he found his way back to the church, as a physician, he says, he became much better tuned to ways in which faith plays a role in promoting health. “Science is all about

trying to understand the universe so we can make predictions about it. It’s based on observation and testing of hypotheses that, if correct, allow us to make predictions on how nature will behave.

“But faith is something different. It’s illustrated in the story of Thomas, which asks us to believe without ‘seeing’. Yes, I want to make accurate diagnoses and treatment recommendations based on science. But our lives are filled with other needs that are based on feelings like love, trust, fear, empathy. As much as we like to think we determine our lives and decisions on objective facts, many of us make our decisions based on feelings and intuition. So just like physicists can see light as both a wave and a particle, I think we need to incorporate the need for the spiritual with the usefulness of sciences. I have seen so many times that what gets patients through their medical challenges, that could otherwise lead to a sense of hopelessness and despair, is their faith.”

Though busily involved in his medical practice, Bill has found ways to serve at LOPC. Singing in the choir is very special to him. He also has served as a deacon and elder, clerk of session, as part the personnel team, and has traveled on mission trips to Gaza, Zimbabwe, and Guatemala. He and his wife, Kathy, have three children, three grandsons, and a granddaughter on the way.

Bill chooses as his guiding verse, Micah 6:8. “And what does the Lord require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

seedlings



Meet the Daffodils Class!

By Taylor Morrill, Seedlings Communications Board

For many Seedlings families, their child’s last year is spent in the Daffodils classroom, which consists of 4-and 5-year-old students. This year, this wonderful class of 4-and 5-year-old students is being led by Miss Cheryl, Miss Susan, and Miss Lisa. These amazing teachers prepare these students academically and socially to become big kindergarteners the next year! Says Miss Cheryl: “I loved my years in the Sweet Peas Class (infants), and I am now loving my time working with the oldest class at Seedlings! Having had half of the Daffodils in the Sweet Peas class with me, it is a joy to come full circle with them. The conversations are amazing, and helping them guide their way to kindergarten is an honor I take seriously.” Per Miss Susan, “The children are inquisitive, very verbal, and beginning to test limits. But most satisfying is seeing them develop their sense of responsibility.” Although this year’s class is spending extra time washing hands and learning how to enjoy friends and classroom activities at a safe distance from one another, they are still learning, having tons of fun, and playing a lot!!



A typical day begins with students signing in by tracing their names and then heading over to their designated “sit spot” on the carpet. Here students review the date and time and then work on letters and sounds and sight words. From there, they might read a book, practice mindful breathing, stretch, or share stories. The remainder of the day includes playing outdoors, doing activities that build fine-motor skills, and focusing on

special subjects. In January, for example, the students learned all about various arctic animals, including polar bears, penguins, and walruses. The students were excited to have many art projects and discussions about these fun and interesting animals! When asked what types of activities engage this age group most, the teachers said, “The children enjoy storytelling, talking about their families and pets, favorite things to do, and current events. Incorporating any of these into our curriculum helps to keep them interested.” Additionally, the teachers stated that “as the children mature, we see more interest in organized games like Alphabet Bingo, Uno, memory matching games, rhyming songs, and also writing simple words.”

As a Daffodils parent, I couldn’t be more pleased with the progress I have seen with my son this year, both academically and socially. Not only does he come home excited to talk about the week’s “Alphafriend,” but he also tells us about all ways they are learning to be kind and polite with each other. Miss Susan stated, “We encourage respect towards each other emotionally, physically, and spatially. We practice this by using manners, raising hands, and encouraging everyone to share their ideas.”

Although we are sad that this is his last year at Seedlings, we couldn’t have asked for a better class for him to end preschool in!

community



Returns Wednesday, March 17, at 11:00 a.m.

Anthony Lucero, born and raised in Oakland, is a writer and director. Join us for a live interview with him on Wednesday, March 17, at 11:00.



Anthony Lucero

His directorial debut film, *East Side Sushi*, has garnered 14 film festival awards nationwide, been listed as one of the “top 10 films of 2015” by *SF Weekly*, and touted as one “the most overlooked films of 2015” by the *Los Angeles Times*. Anthony has been an editor and director of photography in commercials and documentaries and has directed three award-winning short films. He has spent over a decade as a visual effects editor at George Lucas’ Industrial Light & Magic, working on such films as *Star Wars: Episodes I and II*, *Iron Man*, *Harry Potter* and *the Prisoner of Azkaban*, and others.

Register online at lopc.org.

Stay tuned for more information on our second Talking Story interview on Wednesday, May 12, with the Rev. Dr. Ken Fong.



Science and Religion Program Takes a 'Sabbatical'

The LOPC Science and Religions Study Group (S&R), which presents topical lectures and videos to attendees on a near-monthly basis, has decided to suspend program offerings until later this year, the Group’s Steering Committee said.



The Committee will meet in June to discuss the S&R Group’s next steps. “Hopefully this is only a temporary halt,” the Committee said. “Our leadership has experienced a thinning of its ranks from retirements, deaths, and burnout from the effects of the pandemic. We will be working to recruit new program ideas and leaders. Anyone interested in joining the Steering Committee, which guides the program, should contact it through Lexi Morrissey in the church office at Lexi@lopc.org.” Ideas and suggestions for future programs also are invited.

The S&R Group has operated for the past 25 years, providing a platform for films, lectures, and discussions by scientists, philosophers, and theologians on a topic that has faced the church ever since the Book of Genesis was written. It continues to be a topic of animated discussion among churches, their congregations, college campuses, and seminaries.

Presbyterian Women

No Christmas tea! However, Presbyterian Women had a Christmas offering, all accomplished online.

We raised \$565 and have distributed these funds to one foreign project: the Presbyterian Disaster Fund; and one local project: a local Food for the Hungry project. A big thank you to all who contributed.

We also extend a warm invitation to visit and join one of our Bible study circles. At least one circle meets on Zoom and others are waiting for the pandemic to end to start meeting in person again. Watch for future announcements!



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

What You Need to Know About COVID-19

March 5 at 10:00 a.m.

COVID-19 came into our vocabulary a year ago, and is still very much with us. There are new things to learn almost daily. To bring us up to date, eminent-vaccine specialist Dr. Margaret Liu will speak at the March First Friday Forum (FFF) in a webinar presentation. Her presentation is titled COVID-19: What you Need to Know and Do in March 2021.



Dr. Margaret Liu

Dr. Liu will be ready to answer any and all questions about COVID-19 and the vaccine. She suggests subjects to cover can include:

- Addressing concerns that are raised about the safety of the vaccines as they were developed so quickly;
- Which vaccine should one take if there is a choice;
- Worries about the new strain(s) of virus that are spreading.

“We are all tired of COVID-19, but because of new developments for vaccines and treatments, and for the virus itself, we need to stay up-to-date on recent findings,” Dr. Liu says. “How different are the vaccines that are next in line? How worried should we be about the new mutant viruses? If you have been vaccinated already, can you spend time with people face-to-face? This presentation will address the science behind these issues and provide information so you can know

how best to keep you and your friends and family healthy.”

Dr. Liu is a world-renowned expert in the fields of vaccines, immunotherapy, gene therapy, and global health. She has pioneered two important new technologies for vaccines to treat cancer for which she has received numerous awards internationally and two honorary doctorates. One is from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, where she had been invited to lecture by the Nobel committee.

She is known as “The Mother of DNA Vaccines” and is the scientific lead for the World Health Organization drafting group writing guidelines for mRNA vaccines. Dr. Liu is CEO of PAX Therapeutic, which is developing gene-based therapy for tendon and ligament repair. She also has worked with Dr. Anthony Fauci numerous times. Dr. Liu obtained her M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School and completed her clinical and research training at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is a resident of Lafayette.

Registration is required. To register for this event, go to lopc.org/first-friday-forum.

community

thursday Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program of Senior Care Ministries

Looking Back... and Forward

These pictures were taken on our last Thursday Fellowship gathering in March 2020.

The flowers decorated our luncheon tables in Fellowship hall. Tap dancers performed and everyone felt the urge to tap their toes and move to the music. Guests and volunteers gathered around tables at craft time to create and socialize. Not shown is the delicious lunch and dessert served up by the kitchen team nor the joyful animated way people greeted each other as they arrived – what fond memories!



It's hard to fathom that 365 days have passed since then. We never dreamed our hiatus would extend into 2021. Since our demographic is a senior population and because we serve food, laugh, and talk, and greet each other with hugs, we know we have to wait a bit longer. In the meantime, we are carrying on with the knowledge that we will gather again once it is safe to do so, and each month the team meets via zoom. It provides us with a vehicle to help us remain engaged and to plan ways to show our guests that we care and are thinking about them. For now though, we rely on phone calls, birthday cards, and Valentine greeting cards to communicate our devotion to each other. Our enthusiasm and commitment to the Thursday Fellowship program has not wavered.

The outlook is promising and as more and more people get vaccinated our plans to gather again safely will become a reality, and we can't wait! In the meantime, stay safe!

care

Prayer Team

The LOPC Prayer Team was initiated by Pastor Janet Russell around 1996. When Pastor Gerald arrived in 2007, they were meeting in the Chapel. There have been cycles when the prayer team membership was low, but right now it is the largest and most consistent number of participants with 12 regular attendees. Zoom has made it easier to attend!

Two long-time members share what it means to be a part of the prayer team: "Prayer Team is a blessing for those who need prayer as well as those of us who are privileged to help meet that need. There is a particularly dynamic sense of Presence when offering intercessory prayer with a group of like-minded believers, even when done via Zoom. We pray over each request from a place of full faith and confidence that our requests are heard and acted on by our loving God, trusting that what we ask for, or something better, is already in process in the Will of God."

"What I have learned is this is like a learning experience, as I follow the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Word; I witness what he's leading us to do. I feel there's a council of the Holy Spirit that comes through."

To make a prayer request, go to lopc.org and click on the Prayer Request tab. There is also a link available during the Sunday Livestream service. Please know your requests are kept in confidence.

In March, Care will offer Yoga classes on Tuesdays and continue the Faith and Fun on Fridays program, with presentations by Jane McKenzie and Creative Writing by Nancy Henderson. In April, speakers from Well Connected and Home Match will join us. See lopc.org and Staying Connected for more details and registration.

spiritual formation

Lenten Study 2021

By Lauren Gully, Pastor, Mission & Spiritual Formation

This year, let us begin again the journey of Holy Week – the story of Jesus’ Passion – with author Dr. Amy Jill Levine’s book, *Entering the Passion of Jesus*. We will walk through a deeper understanding of this biblical story with Prof. Levine, who is professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Prof. Levine brings her Jewish background, historical expertise, and vast knowledge of the New Testament and Hebrew Scriptures into this six-class study, looking at six different moments in the last week of Jesus’ life, while connecting Jewish traditions and the events of the Passion. Let us again prepare our hearts and minds to look at the events of Holy Week with new eyes.

For a complete schedule of classes and to register please go to lopc.org/lent2021.

As a result of online programming this year, we ask that participants order the book themselves. If you need assistance with ordering please email LOPC Receptionist Ciara Bird at ciara@lopc.org.

session highlights

January 2021

By Phil Hunter, Clerk of Session

Session began its first meeting of the new year with the wonderful news that LOPC finished 2020 in a strong financial position (please see Finance Elder Jim Nagle’s report elsewhere in this issue).

Elders took action on several motions:

- Approved \$52,000 to be distributed among 15 mission partners for their immediate needs, bringing LOPC’s total giving to mission partners in the past 12 months to a level \$100,000 above budget in response to the Covid crisis.
- Approved acceptance of a designated gift from a church member specifically to support four local mission partners.
- Adopted the church budget for the year 2021 of more than \$3.4 million.

Spiritual Journaling Class

Tuesdays: March 16, and April 13 from 2-3:00 p.m.

“Releasing the Old, Embracing the New” is a three-session ZOOM class on Spiritual Journaling with Bob Finertie. Learn how writing can help you heal.

“It’s not the wound that keeps you stuck, it’s what you tell yourself about it.” - MM

“Writing has helped me heal. Writing has changed my life. Writing has saved my life.” - Louise De Salvo

“Your life is not a problem to be solved, but a gift to be opened.” - Wayne Muller

Please visit lopc.org/registrations to register. Questions? Email Lexi Morrissey at lexi@lopc.org

- Approved \$45,000 from the Session’s Emerging Needs Fund to fund staff salary increases or bonuses, as approved by the Personnel Team.

Pastor Peter Whitelock shared an update to the Anti-bias/Anti-racism Group that has been meeting throughout the fall to determine LOPC’s next steps. The working group, made up of our four clergy and six elders, has decided LOPC needs to research churches and organizations focused on racial justice and equity in the Oakland area. The goal is to select a partner with which LOPC could engage directly in joint-service work and/or advocacy and education projects. To that end, LOPC is pulling together a team to conduct this important research.

foundation

A Vital Partnership

by Kristi Haigh, LOPC Foundation Trustee



Kristi Haigh

Resilience: We've been hearing this word a lot lately in different places, including in our own worship here at LOPC. The recent sermon series *Worship Changes Everything* included a title "How the Practice of Praising God Builds Resilience."

Besides praying for patience to continue to practice safe distancing to overcome the pandemic, we pray for our country and our world to have the resiliency to restore a better, more just society as we control the spread of this disease.

Webster defines resilience as "the act of leaping or springing back; a rebounding; the ability to recover strength, spirits, good humor quickly; buoyancy." Another source calls it "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulty...elasticity." Does this sound like any place you know?

LOPC has been incredibly resilient: changing plans when the rules required; welcoming opportunities to help our mission partners as needs increased; trusting the members and the community to follow when all-new ways of doing things were tried. Small groups meet; classes are offered; new officers are elected; new members join, including our high-school confirmands. Love Does expands to a whole month. Pastoral care is always available. The list of service and fellowship goes on.

What does all this have to do with the LOPC Foundation? The Foundation cannot take credit for the innovative work being done these last months. The staff, lay leaders, and volunteers who carry on get all the credit there—along with members and friends who have steadfastly kept up their financial support.

The LOPC Foundation's role is to ensure the underlying financial resilience "to be a permanent, reliable source of significant funding," as the Foundation's vision statement says. The Foundation's ability to meet LOPC's requests to augment the annual budget guarantees that LOPC can carry out its many

ministries, maintain the campus, support the staff, and build a reserve for unforeseen future needs.

Friends of the Foundation who provide gifts to the Foundation either now or by a legacy gift in their estate planning ensure that LOPC will continue to meet the challenges of the future with resiliency. If you would like to learn more about becoming a Friend of the Foundation, please contact any of the trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Lois Boyd, Jen Crocker, Jerry Ducey, Kristi Haigh, Staci Johnston, Mike Ross, Phil Placier, or Dara Youngdale.

staff update

During the past year LOPC, like most organizations, has faced many challenges and, as a result, has had to make some difficult decisions about programming and staff to meet new needs. A recent decision was made to eliminate the part time Worship & Music Assistant position which was held by Michael Morales. Worship & Music programming looks very different than it did when Michael was hired almost three years ago, and plans for future programming will continue to look different despite in-person worship resuming later this year.

We want to take this time to thank Michael for the wonderful gifts he has shared with the congregation over the past three years. He has been a joy to work with and we are so appreciative of the care and thoughtful ways he approached his responsibilities while serving LOPC.

finance

2020 Finance Annual Report

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

We are truly fortunate and thankful for everyone who has given of their time, talent, and treasure to LOPC in 2020. LOPC is in a very strong position financially after a very difficult year - a true blessing. The Finance Team had a challenging time during 2020, but also a very rewarding one. The LOPC staff has done a great job pivoting to remote programming and reallocating re-sources to meet the needs of the congregation and mission partners. In July 2020, we adopt-ed a revised budget to reflect the impact of Covid-19.

Overall, Net Income came in strong with a \$178,461 surplus. This afforded us the ability to do a few things:

1. give our mission partners an additional \$52,000. (\$48,000 in mission partner giving was previously approved by Session in 2020, enabling LOPC to deploy a total of \$100,000 in Mission giving above our 2020 budget.)
2. allocate \$68,400 to the Session Emerging Needs Fund, which will help pay off the Sanctuary Project;
3. and use the remaining amount during 2021 to ensure we can meet our expenses and commitments in this continued difficult time.

As a result of robust year-end giving, we were able to support both the church and our Mission partners. Total Income came in very strong at \$3,571,785,

January to December 2020		Actuals	Revised Budget
Pledge Income	\$	2,280,397	\$ 2,213,530
Non Pledge Gifts, Loose Offerings		433,611	397,482
Faith Component		185,167	200,000
Mission, Special Gifts, & Other Income		226,951	189,325
Foundation Support		310,117	310,117
Seedlings		(111,534)	(115,744)
Employee Retention Credit		247,076	223,555
Session Emerging Needs		0	6,000
Total Income		3,571,785	3,424,265
Total Expense		3,393,324	3,314,186
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$	178,461	\$ 110,079

which is \$147,520 better than the revised budget. This was a result of solid giving in both Pledge Income and Non-Pledge Income, \$66,867 and \$54,098 respectively. Additionally, we received \$23,521 of unanticipated Employee Retention Credit, the government program for Covid-19. The congregation really came through at year-end and helped LOPC finish in a very solid position to start 2021 and allow us to do more in all areas of our ministries.

The LOPC staff did a great a job managing expenses during this arduous year. Expenses totaled \$3,393,324, which was \$79,138 over budget due to year-end staff bonuses, higher COVID-19 costs, and additional special gifts spending for Mission of \$32,452.

Thanks again everyone for all you do for LOPC.

What is Per Capita?

Per Capita is a Latin phrase that means “for each head”. We use it to refer to an annual fee that our congregation pays to higher levels of the Presbyterian Church based upon the number of active members in LOPC. For 2021, the Per Capita amount is \$38.00, or \$76.00 per couple. We encourage members to make an extra contribution to help defray this expense in addition to their other gifts. To facilitate this, you will find a blue Per Capita envelope in your box of giving envelopes. You can also give a check to the church with “Per Capita” noted on the memo line. We have budgeted \$68,210 this year for our Per Capita obligation. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a significant portion of this could be covered by your extra contribution enabling us to add additional support to LOPC ministries?

elders, deacons, & foundation trustees

2021 Elders

Julie Atkinson
Family

Stephanie Bontemps
Mission in Society

Rick Burris
Mission in Society

Judy Clark
Worship & Music

Terry Clark
Spiritual Formation

Catherine Coleman
Senior Adults

Jim Davis
Communications

Bill DeWolf
Personnel

Ryan Feaver
Membership

Leslie Finertie
Congregational Care

Linda Fodrini-Johnson
Generosity

Jerry Hook
Fellowship

Phil Hunter
Clerk of Session

Ruwani Jayasingha
Worship & Music

David MacKenzie
CNC

Jim Nagle
Finance

Lee O'Haver
Youth

Brianne Riley
Fellowship

Tom Scovel
Youth

Jeanette Shearer
Connecting

Peter Shumaker
Children

Ellen Stuart
Seedlings Preschool

Lynne Terril
Congregational Care

Kara Yu
Spiritual Formation

2021 Deacons

Debbie Andrews

Jane Balg

Sandy Barnett

Jim Boyd

Lassie Colebourn

Tory Courtney

Dick Curry

Lyle Deck

Bonnie Doughty

Stephanie Eukel

Michele Faxel

Kay Goodyear

Bettie Graves

Kathy Hallock

Marcia Hendricks

Jane Hewitt

Andrea Hilsabeck

Valerie Hodgskiss

Carol King

Partha Malvadkar

Laurie Miles

Edie Reiter

Sally Roberts

Ginny Ross

Carolyn Sconza

Yuji Shibuya

Lisa Summerlin

Charyl Tibbals

Sue West

2021 Youth Deacons

Grace Liu

Addison Owensby

Foundation Trustees

Jim Beckemeyer

Lois Boyd

Jen Crocker

Jerry Ducey

Kristi Haigh

Staci Johnston

Mike Ross

Phil Placier

Dara Youngdale

Contact information for elders and deacons may be found in the LOPC directory.
Please contact info@lopc.org if you need assistance.

cnc

Seeking New Church Leaders for terms beginning January 1, 2022!

Officer Nominations needed by April 30.

One of the cornerstones of our Presbyterian heritage is the annual election by the congregation of church officers to provide leadership for the church. 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:

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.

Nominations can be submitted by filling out the form below and mailing it to the church or going to:

lopc.org/2021cnc

For more information, contact a CNC member: David MacKenzie (Chair), Phil Hunter (Clerk of Session), Jeff Patton, Heidi Johnson, Richard Courtney, Marsha McDonagh, Carol King (Deacon Representative), Peter Whitelock, and Gerald Chinen. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

We are looking forward to hearing from each of you.

2021 Officer Nomination Form

For terms beginning January 1, 2022. Please give as many details as possible. If you feel God has called you to service, please nominate yourself.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Nominated for (please circle): Elder Deacon CNC Foundation

Please tell us why you are nominating this person and be as specific as possible:

Your Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____



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

IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 3/1/21

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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

MARCH 2021

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 Sarch, Organist

TREASURER

Staci Johnston

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
Thank you to all who contribute to each issue!

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

March 1 for the April issue.
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Every Monday by 5 p.m.
for the following Sunday's issue.
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Outdoor Sunday Communion Service

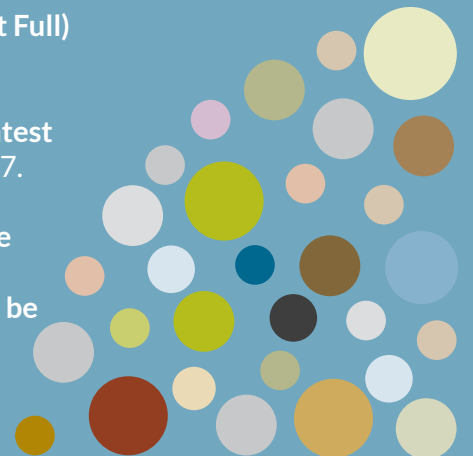
Please join us for a casual and informal service open to all ages. Childcare will not be offered at this time due to COVID health and safety guidelines. Registration is required.

- March 7, at 11:00 a.m. (Event Full)
- March 21, at 11:00 a.m.

To register, visit lopc.org/thelatest
Deadline to register is March 17.

Approximately 50 to 60 people
may register to attend. More
Communion Service dates will be
added soon.

Questions? info@lopc.org



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

Invite Friends & Family!

Connect with us online!



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/LOPC



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and at lopc.org

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- Ask for prayer.
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to the number 77977
to download it today.

