

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!
In Christ... in the World



May 2021

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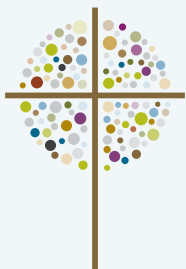
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zoom FATIGUE

By Gerald Chinen - Pastor, Care

Stanford University recently did a research study on the impact of Zoom, the digital communications program, on our lives. It focused on four major reasons that some suffer from “Zoom Fatigue,” and for each, they suggested ways to overcome it.

I don’t know about you, but I do at times feel “zoomed out.” I love that this new technology has given all of us opportunities to see and hear many with whom we haven’t had contact in a long time. For example, I’ve had two Zoom chats with several high-school classmates I hadn’t seen in a long while. Although I appreciate that this new platform has been very useful, I’m pretty ready for more human contact, actually being in the physical presence of friends and loved ones! How about you?

One reason we are Zoom fatigued, according to the researchers, is we really hate watching ourselves! But, the researchers write, “For most of us, a quick morning glimpse in the mirror is all we really need. After hours of self-gazing, we turn critical... it’s taxing on us. It’s stressful. There are negative emotional consequences to seeing yourself in a mirror.”

The study suggests you choose the program’s “hide self-view” option so you don’t see yourself so much! I’d also suggest two other things. First, give yourself permission not to be on Zoom as often. Prioritize! Secondly, the Apostle Paul in Philippians gives another solid piece of advice, “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.” Take a minute to reach out to someone who could use a word of encouragement. In fact, take more than a few minutes to reach out to others so the focus isn’t so much on you. I think you’ll appreciate the joy that gives you.

Pastors

Peter Whitelock

Head of Staff

Gerald Chinen

Care

Lauren Gully

Mission & Spiritual Formation

Jaime Polson

Families & Executive Leadership



youth

ACT JUSTLY • LOVE MERCY • WALK HUMBLLY

PROJECT SERVE

LOPC YOUTH • 2021

Join us for this amazing opportunity to learn more about God's love & justice in today's world!

June 2-5

Wednesday - Friday
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Saturday
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

For current 5th-12th
grade youth.

Find more information and to register:
lopc.org/projectserve

Service-learning activities may include:

- Packing baby clothes for Loved Twice
- Creating cards & to-go bags for Trinity Center
- Preparing produce for distribution at The Food Bank
- Distributing food boxes at Monument Crisis Center
- Stocking clothing donations for White Pony Express
- Socializing safely with Thursday Fellowship seniors
- Packing rice and beans for LOPC's Rice & Beans Project
- Building and painting playhouses for Habitat for Humanity

Current Covid safety recommendations will be applied. We will not be able to provide traditional mission trips this summer due to Covid guidelines for children and youth. Thank you for your patience and flexibility!

Participants are asked to commit to all four days except for academic calendar conflicts.

Registration closes May 10!

mission

Graduation for Congo Girls' English and Computer Skills Program



Congratulations to the 40 Congolese girls who have learned English and computer skills through a special after-school program supported by PC(USA) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This life-changing program allows girls to secure jobs to earn money for college tuition and help support their families. As part of LOPC's support for the Build Congo Schools effort, the LOPC Congo team has traditionally raised money for this Girls' program during the Christmas season by selling necklaces. While we have been unable to hold necklace sales during the pandemic, LOPC members still graciously contributed funds for this program last Christmas. Here is a photo of the recent graduation. The white powder on the heads and faces of girls is similar to a talcum powder, commonly sprinkled over the heads of those who pass their exams or graduate.

What a great investment – giving young women tools to help them lead better lives, whether in a good job after high school or a college degree. We extend a special thanks to PC(USA) mission co-worker Jeff Boyd for providing photos of the graduation.

Children of Faith Update

CHILDREN OF FAITH MISSIONS

Rosie and Anand Thandu, the founders and directors of Children of Faith, have been looking for ways to connect with supporters during the pandemic while travel to U.S. has not been possible. On April 11, they conducted the first in a series of ZOOM question-and-answer sessions. They provided an update on the return of the children, shared videos, and interviewed students and a teacher, then took questions from participants. The event was attended by nearly 60 supporters, many of whom were LOPC members. The event was recorded and is available on the website ChildrenOfFaithMissions.org. To summarize, the children are quickly catching up with the lost school time and have easily fallen back into the routine of their COF home. While a few children have not returned to the home yet, it is expected that eventually all will. A few college students remain with their families to avoid bringing the virus back to the Childrens' Home, but they are attending school with financial and academic support from COF. Another ZOOM event is planned for June. COF remains grateful to LOPC for the ongoing support, financially and through prayer.

To learn more visit ChildrenOfFaithMissions.org.

Easter Special Offering

This year's Easter special offering benefited two organizations: Healing Hearts that focuses on healing those who have experienced trauma as a result of war, and STAND! that focuses on those who have experienced trauma resulting from domestic violence.

The collection resulted in approximately \$15,000 that will be split equally between both organizations.

iCare Collection

Thank you to everyone who participated in the LOPC/iCare collaboration to collect diapers and wipes to benefit mothers who rely on the Monument Crisis Center for these much-needed resources.

The collection resulted in 2,652 diapers and 6,931 wipes that will be distributed.

An Anniversary Celebration!

By The Primera Team

This month we celebrate the first anniversary of the Primera Iglesia Food Bridge! LOPC has supported our sister church, Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana (Primera), located in Oakland, for several years by providing liaisons, volunteers, financial support, and now the Food Bridge.

Our Food Bridge is not one of concrete or steel, but of care and friendship, spanning two sister congregations. It's a metaphor, a symbol of the prayer, generosity, and concern for the Primera community shown by our LOPC staff, programs, and members. The Food Bridge has been blessed to receive financial support from the LOPC's mission team and the Deacon Emergency Fund, in addition to generous giving by LOPC members and friends.



We want to share some of the thank-you notes from Food Bridge recipients:

“Thank you for providing the bags of groceries that meant so much to us. Just know that your generosity is helping not just me, but other families struggling to get on their feet.”

“My name is Rosa; I am a divorced mother of two. I was fortunate that I had a job at one of the airlines. By mid-April, I was terminated. My savings lasted until July. And then I came down with COVID. I was fortunate that my symptoms were not too bad. Quarantined with two small children was hard. I was told that the Spanish-speaking church was giving away a bag of food every Saturday. That was really helpful. That bag of food became our source of stability. In the summer, they gave away cereal, milk, fruit, chicken, pasta, and rice. Your donations were a big help.”

“Hello, my name is Antonia. And then the pandemic! My family and I were going through difficult times. At some point a while back, we did get infected with Covid-19. This made times very difficult as to money.

When we went through this, the services Primera provided, for example the free food, helped us so much. We didn't have to worry so much about providing food to our two kids.”

“Primera gave us milk, rice, veggies, eggs, chicken, canned fish, and so much more. I really hope you guys can continue to provide to all the people in need and us with these blessings. Primera helped so many people in these difficult times with COVID. Donating these nourishments have been a huge help and a big blessing. I hope your organization considers continuing to donate these blessed foods. Thank you for everything and have a blessed day.”

These heartfelt notes describe some of the many challenges faced by so many in the Primera community during the pandemic.

At a cost of \$10 a week for each family, the Food Bridge has provided nutritious food to people in need near Primera. Over the past year, we have delivered thousands of pounds of beans, rice, lentils, pasta and oats, as well as crates of fresh produce and eggs, and hundreds of pounds of hamburger and chicken. Each Saturday, Primera volunteers break down the bulk food delivered by a restaurant wholesale supplier and apportion the food in bags to the 72 families we serve. A typical bag includes four apples, three oranges, a pound of zucchini, two onions, a pound of lentils, pasta, beans, or rice, and one package of hamburger or chicken.

Thank you to our members and friends who have prayed and financially supported the Food Bridge. Your gifts made it possible to provide food this first year. We have just learned that the Alameda Food Bank will begin partnering with Primera in June 2021. This is a new reason to celebrate!

If you have questions, please contact liaisons, Don and Mary Kay Atherton, at athertonco@comcast.net.

journey of faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Linda Fodrini-Johnson says her spiritual formation started as a child in Sunday School. “We were given small envelopes that had two sides. One was for mission and the other for our church, St. James Presbyterian in San Francisco. I put 5 cents of my 25-cent allowance in one pocket and 10 cents in the other. I loved the feeling that this generosity gave me as a small girl thinking I was making a difference in the lives of others. Looking back, I also think it made me mindful of the many blessings I had and that not everyone was as fortunate as I was. Also, we were given cards with Bible verses to memorize. When we mastered 24, we were given a Bible. I believe these practices gave me a strong foundation for my faith journey.”

Another key point for Linda’s growing faith occurred when she was 12 and went to the Valley of the Moon Presbyterian Summer Camp. “I can close my eyes today and visualize the night five of us skipped out of an activity and hiked to a cross on the top of a mountain. We sat looking at the stars and talking about how God was our power source. It was the immensity of all creation, the smallness of each of us, and that God actually knows us personally and would forever be our strength that I felt connected to God in a personal and palpable way.

“A mission trip to Northern California with a group from St. Andrews Church was the beginning of a passion for service that both my husband, Bruce, and I share. We called these trips ‘Vacations with a Purpose.’ We discovered the real impact of what you think you are doing comes in the midst of the work and not in the plan of what you thought you would be doing. God is most definitely in control and knows what the community needs. For instance, the Garberville experience was to help a small church with maintenance, but what we did was somewhat of a miracle. Yes, the 40 of us did the jobs necessary but we also cleaned up and fenced a yard known for drug dealing. Our work stopped that activity even though it was not our plan. After our visit and work, the entire city cleaned up the larger drug problem. We just planted the seeds.”



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, pictured left

Linda continues, “We then went to Tijuana for one week, helping build a church every summer for 10 years. We also did medical mission work and vacation bible school. Every year there was a ‘God event,’ not expected but very moving.

“At LOPC, Bruce has been on more mission trips than I because of his building skills, but we both went to Zimbabwe with six others, working on building a school in a rural area. The families there were very poor with no electricity or running water, but the schools had excellent teachers, giving them hope for their lives being better in the future. The kids were happy, very attentive to their teachers, and the love between these children and their families was something we rarely experience in our country. Who is poor?”

Linda says she has a passion for stewardship in all of its forms and it is where she feels most alive in her faith. Currently, as an elder, she chairs the Generosity Team, formerly called the Stewardship Team.

Her career has had lots of what she calls “spiritual junctures.” She did a counseling internship at Community Presbyterian in Danville. She led one of the first Alzheimer’s Respite programs in the East Bay at Grace Presbyterian Church and currently co-leads

continued next page →

session

March Session Highlights

By Phil Hunter, Clerk of Session

When I was a child, we would sometimes play at putting our hands together, interlocking our fingers inside our palms, but keeping our forefinger out, and recite this nursery rhyme:

***“Here is the Church, here is the steeple,
Open the doors and see all the people!”***

Then we would pull back our thumbs and wiggle our fingers, indicating the people. Perhaps you remember this also? I recalled this little saying while I was talking with one of our pastors and they were reflecting that the church is its people. It is easy to think of the wiggling fingers as being the congregation, but there are many that help pull it all together. The people who create the programs; the people who volunteer to help others; the people on the many committees who establish the priorities of the church.

March’s Session meeting again included reports from the many ministry areas. There are several that I would like to bring to your attention. One is Children’s Ministry’s Kids Rock. Since Kids Rock was all conducted virtually, due to COVID restrictions, the Children’s Ministry team created 15 minute episodes, 35 minutes each, which they designed, wrote, and produced. It takes many people to do that.

Our Mission in Society Ministry reported on the success of Love Does. Even with the restraints of Covid stay-at-home rules, our congregation responded, exceeding the Love Does organizers’ expectations. Blankets, hygiene kits, meals, breakfast bags, and shopping carts were created, assembled, delivered, and distributed. It takes many people to do that.

Additionally, we heard from LOPC’s Congregational Nominating Committee. This is the time of year when we need nominations for the lay leadership of the church. Please think about who would be a good fit for one of the ministry areas, including yourself. (Yes, you can nominate yourself.) It takes a lot of people to make this church what it is.



Linda & Bruce

a dementia caregiver support group at LOPC. Church service has always been a part of Linda’s life. She was ordained as an elder in her early 20s and has served as a deacon and an elder two more times. “I will say the laying on of hands during the first ordination was almost an out-of-body experience. I actually felt a warm flow of light starting by my head and slowly moving down to my toes when hands reached out to me as I knelt. Serving in leadership is an honor and privilege. Yes, there is work associated with your role, but it goes back to that first spiritual experience I had of doing for others and being the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

She shares a last experience. “A night when Bruce was away on a mission trip, I heard a very loud voice and woke to what I now say must have been the voice of God. The message was clear: ‘I have been everywhere that you have been.’ This came at a difficult time in my business life, and I felt very alone, devalued, and confused. I have never had those feelings since that event because I am confident that God is everywhere that I am. “Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord? Where will you send me?”

Linda chooses Psalm 23 as her favorite Bible passage. “It calms my fears, plus gives me courage and peace.”

community

Climate Change Examined in Upcoming FFF Lecture



David Seaborg

“We must solve the problem of climate change for many species to survive and for society to survive. Human survival depends on us solving the problem soon. Time is short,” says David Seaborg, lecturer for the next First Friday Forum (FFF) on May 7 at 10:00 a.m. via a webinar presentation. Registration is required.

Seaborg continues, “Not only are we causing the killing off of plants and animals, but seas are rising, and glaciers are melting, which means rivers will run dry, greatly decreasing food production which can lead to mass starvation. Also, droughts and floods will cause water shortages, thus causing forests to die and making fires larger and more frequent. The list of calamities goes on and on.”

As founder and president of the World Rain Forest Fund, and a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists, Seaborg has a great concern for climate change and the effects he foresees. He will discuss these as well as what we must do as citizens to alter the dire predictions.

Locally, he serves as director of the Seaborg Open Space Fund, named in honor of his father, Glenn Seaborg, Nobel Laureate in Physics. This fund raised \$20,000 in less than a year to successfully help save Acalanes Ridge in Lafayette. He was on the board of directors of the East Bay Chapter of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA/USA). He gave the keynote address at their last annual meeting and helped secure the passage of resolutions on biodiversity, global warming, and the Kyoto Protocol at the local, state, and national levels of the UNA/USA.

A graduate of UC Davis with a degree in Zoology, Seaborg also has a master’s degree in Zoology from UC Berkeley and is listed in *Who’s Who in America*. He is considered by his peers to be an evolutionary biologist, author, and leader in the environmental movement.

To register go to lopc.org/first-friday-forum and click on the registration link.

thursday Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program of Senior Care Ministries

Looking back...

April showers bring May flowers, and one of our favorite Thursday Fellowship morning activities is creating colorful individual floral arrangements. Everyone gets into the act, and the results are stunning. Each guest takes home their own floral arrangement. May is also the month when we enjoy a mariachi band to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. It is impossible not to move to the music, and we include the Seedlings children, who add a whole extra layer of joy and enthusiasm to the scene! These are just two examples of events at Thursday Fellowship not to be missed.

Looking forward...

Progress is being made, and all our volunteers are vaccinated. We are ready and willing, and we are anxiously awaiting the time when we can gather together again, BUT we have to be patient. Thursday Fellowship would not be Thursday Fellowship without greeting each other with a hug, laughing, sharing a meal, and enjoying entertainment that usually includes singing and music. Therefore, until we can safely gather without risk to our volunteers and guests, we wait! As the situation improves, we will keep our volunteers and guests informed of the possibility to meet, whenever that might be. Until then, happy spring!



care

How Do Deacons Serve LOPC?

The ministry of a deacon, as set forth in scripture, is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing the redeeming love of Jesus Christ. At LOPC, 10 deacons are elected each year to serve a term of three years, and two youth deacons are elected for a term of one year. This results in a total of 32 deacons serving concurrently. Deacon ministries include visitation, short-term provision of meals, memorials, sanctuary and home communion, and emergency- fund assistance. Although face-to-face ministries have been on hold during the pandemic, deacons have found ways to continue to serve, including visiting by phone and partnering with the Care and Senior Ministry teams on “Touch of Love” gift bags.

The deacons are currently experimenting with a program to deliver home-communion kits to those who would like to follow along and take communion with the Livestream worship service on the first Sunday of the month. The kits are prepackaged with two-part containers including both the juice and communion wafer. A gluten-free option is available. Deacons can deliver a communion kit to you! If you or anyone you

know would like one, please contact Deacon Eddie Reiter at eddie.reiter@gmail.com or by calling/texting 925-788-0307. Let us know if you are comfortable visiting (outdoors or indoors following all safety protocols) during a kit drop off. We’d love to hear from you!

Early this year, Care ministries prepared a list of those age 70+ to receive a second Touch of Love bag, similar to those delivered for Thanksgiving. Brightly colored spring bags with decorations include useful and fun gifts such as hand lotion, emery boards, puzzles, and interesting facts about Easter. In addition, the Hobie Cats wrote personalized cards to each recipient. The bags were assembled in the Oak Room on a Saturday in March by Care and Senior elders, Pastor Gerald Chinen, and 10 enthusiastic deacons. Bags were delivered by LOPC families as well as elders and deacons. Recipients were so pleased to be remembered and enjoyed the socially distanced visits very much. We continue to look for ways to keep in touch with our senior members.



seedlings

Seedlings Alumni:

Where Are They Now?

By Taylor Morrill, Seedlings Communications Board

A few months ago, we introduced you to our “Where Are They Now?” series in which we profile Seedlings alumni and discuss their time at Seedlings and what they are up to today. This month, we are excited to highlight the Tague family! We spoke to mom, Anna, to learn more about their times at Seedlings and what the children are doing today.

All four of the Tague children, Caroline, Tim, Bridget, and Nicole, attended Seedlings between 1997 and 2009. The Tague’s oldest daughter, Caroline, started at Seedlings in 1997 as an infant. “Our second, third, and fourth children all started in infant class as well. After I had the experience with my oldest, it was clear the whole family benefited from the kids having time with peers and my having break time,” said Anna. Additionally, she said her children learned important and valuable early-childhood skills like sharing and understanding how to follow a routine during their years at Seedlings.

Not only was the Tague’s time at Seedlings important to their children, but also, they were very meaningful to Anna and her husband, Skip, as well. Anna was very involved with the school, serving on the board while her children were in attendance. “I was on the board for a few years in the middle of my time as a Seedlings parent too. What a GREAT experience to watch the program grow and see the relationship and support between the church and preschool. The friendships I formed still are so incredibly important in my life - and some of my husband’s best friends are from the Seedling’s dad crew too.”

After Seedlings, the Tague children went on to attend elementary school at Sleepy Hollow, middle school at Orinda Intermediate School, and high school at Miramonte, all in Orinda. Caroline went on to attend Cornell University in New York and then moved to Boston. The Tague’s were lucky to have her back home for a short time during the pandemic, but now she is on to her next experience in New York City. Tim went on to attend Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri,

and will graduate this May. He will then head to work in Boston. Bridget is currently finishing her sophomore year at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. Nicole is currently in her junior year in the special education class at Miramonte High School.

A huge thank you to the Tague family for speaking to us and sharing these updates and memories! You were a valuable part of Seedlings for many years, and we are glad to hear your family is doing well!



L to R: Tim, Caroline, Bridget, & Nicole



L to R: Bridget, Caroline, Nicole, & Tim

new members

Janet Eidbo

Janet has lived in the Walnut Creek area for the past 17 years. She has three sons. Her oldest, Chad, lives in Brentwood with his wife and two children. Her middle son, Scott, lives in Everett, Wash., with his wife, son, and a baby on the way! Her youngest son lives in the San Francisco area.



Janet is a Registered Dental Assistant and has worked as the CEO for Oak Grove Dental since 2010. She has also been a Certified Pilates Instructor since 2014 and is the owner of Blueprint Pilates Studio in Walnut Creek. She has had a rewarding career in the dental profession for over 20 years, much of it speaking to her patients about alignment. With a smile she will tell you, "I'm still talking about alignment, but now it's from head to toe."

She was attracted to LOPC by all the positive and exciting news she was hearing from her community regarding all the different small groups within the church. Janet is eager to get to know her new church family and find the best way for her to serve.

Jennifer E. Jenny

Jennifer was born and raised in Northern California and has never lived anywhere else. She moved to Pleasant Hill in 2012 when she was married and started attending services at LOPC in 2015. Jennifer is happily retired from her career in retail management, and enjoys reading, gardening and baking. Jennifer says, "I'm thrilled to be a member of LOPC and look forward to learning about the ministry opportunities that LOPC offers."



Dave & Lynn Hiden

The Hidens have lived in Lafayette for over 50 years and have attended LOPC for a very long time. They have many friends who are also members of the congregation. The Hidens enjoy the worship services and look forward to participating in the community.

hold in PRAYER

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Prayers of comfort and peace go out to the family and friends of:

Jeff Pettegrew,
who passed Mar. 10

Howard "Skip" Hoyt,
who passed Mar. 11

Susan Keely,
who passed Mar. 13

Milly Smart,
who passed Mar. 15

Marjorie Kingland,
who passed Mar. 18

Astrid Munroe,
who passed Mar. 20

Jackie Yoshioka,
who passed Mar. 21

Barbara Hoots,
who passed Mar. 31





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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:

May 1 for the June/July 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.

In-Person Worship Beginning!

Approximately 125 people may attend Sunday services at 9:00 a.m., May 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30.

Registration is required. Please note that registration will close Fridays at noon for the following Sunday. Childcare will not be offered at this time due to COVID health and safety guidelines.

For questions regarding registration, please email Lexi Morrissey at lexi@lopc.org.

For questions regarding worship guidelines, please email Jaime Polson at jaime@lopc.org.



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

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