

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

LOPC is here to support you  
on your journey of faith.

## Christmas Eve

at Lafayette-Orinda  
Presbyterian Church

**Family Service**  
3 & 4:30 p.m.

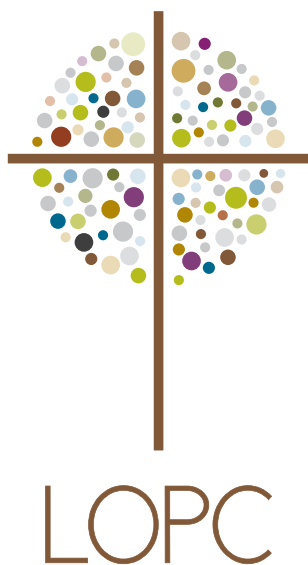
**Traditional Service**  
7 & 8:30 p.m.

**Carols, Candlelight,  
and Communion**  
11 p.m.

## DECEMBER 2018

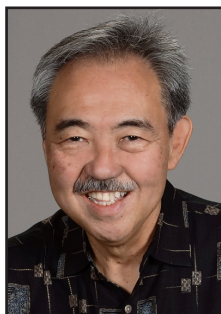
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## The Gift of Peace

by Gerald Chinen - Pastor, Care



*The peace of Christ is a gift we have been given.*

The staff Christmas luncheon in 2013 was one of the few public events I attended during the months of treatment and recovery for cancer. Walking into the Oak Room, my eyes were drawn to the table where the food was. The aroma of cookies lingered in the air! Although I was not able to eat anything (I had a feeding tube at the time), it gave me incentive to get better so that I could taste it all again someday! The best part of the luncheon, though, was being with my friends and colleagues again. I didn't realize until I was there celebrating the season and each other, just how much I had missed being with them, and working and serving alongside of them. My purpose in the fall of 2013 was to get well, but I knew that I also had a greater purpose beyond that: to love God and to serve Christ.

I have gained a greater appreciation in these particularly contentious times of the purpose of Christ's birth into our world. In Luke 2, the angel appears to the shepherds and we read:

**Then the angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."**

Peace. That was and is one of reasons for Christ's incarnation. And as Christ's church, that is our purpose, too. I think I am more terrified about the way we human beings have been treating each other and our world, than I am of the possibility of seeing an angel of God appearing in the sky. In fact, I'd be thrilled if an angel of God appeared to guide us toward peace! But in truth, Christ is already our guide, and, oh, how we need the power of Christ to bring peace and unity in our lives, in our relationships, and in our world.

Somehow, I always manage to find the means to buy Christmas gifts for family and friends, even if there were unexpected expenses in the year. Friends, remember the peace of Christ is a gift we have been given, and it is the gift that we can offer one another, to our community, and to the world around us.

## Christmas Poinsettias

This Christmas, we will continue our well-loved tradition of adorning the sanctuary with poinsettias. You may donate a poinsettia for \$15 at the booth that will be on the plaza December 2, 9, and 16 between services (10 a.m. – 11 a.m.). Order forms are available in the Ministry Center office or you can mail in the form on this page to the Ministry Center. Mailed requests must be received by Monday, December 17. A list of poinsettia dedications will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Those who have donated a poinsettia may bring their plant home after the final Christmas Eve service at 11 p.m.



## Poinsettias \$15

Yes, I / we would like to donate a poinsettia to adorn the Sanctuary  
for Christmas Eve Worship Services.

☐ In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

OR

☐ In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

*Example: birth, wedding, anniversary, appreciation, etc.*

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to LOPC. Thank you.  
Fill out this form and return to the Ministry Center office at LOPC.



## On Christmas Night!

### Christmas Concert

**Saturday**  
**December 8**  
**4 p.m.**

**Sunday**  
**December 9**  
**2 p.m. & 5 p.m.**

To request tickets, email [tickets@lopc.org](mailto:tickets@lopc.org).  
If the concerts are sold out, we can add you to the wait list.

## Tax Deadline Approaching

The end of the year is rapidly approaching. Anyone who plans to make tax-deductible donations to LOPC in 2018 is reminded that the church must either receive your gift by 5 p.m. on December 31, or receive your mailed gift postmarked December 31 or earlier. Sorry, we can make no exceptions to these IRS rules. For those giving stock, please note that these gifts must be in LOPC's brokerage account no later than December 31. Please notify Lidia Jesionek (x229 or [lidia@lopc.org](mailto:lidia@lopc.org)) or Char Casella (x253 or [char@lopc.org](mailto:char@lopc.org)) if you are making a stock gift, what stock(s) you're donating, and how it should be applied. That way, we'll be on the alert for this gift and will know who it's coming from.

Year-end statements will be mailed in January. To insure the deductibility of your gifts, do not file your 2018 tax return until you receive this statement. Some of your gifts may not be tax-deductible if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgement of your gifts to LOPC.



# youth

## Sunday Mornings



### Youth Alive

5th-8th Grade Youth  
Sundays during 9 a.m.  
worship services

Engage in a weekly Bible story with activities that help reveal how the story is relevant to our modern lives. Get to know your peers and leaders as we grow in faith together! Youth who attend the 11 a.m. worship service are encouraged to enjoy the worship service with family and friends.



## Lighthouse

Lighthouse is designed to connect the youth from LOPC, Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church (STPT), and K-8th grade children from Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) in a way that develops authentic relationships and deepens faith. LOPC high school youth will lead fun activities with children at CCIH while also developing relationships with youth from STPC.

For more information, contact Keris at [Keris@lopc.org](mailto:Keris@lopc.org).

December 9, 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., CCIH Lakeside

January 19, 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., STPC

January 27, 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., CCIH Lakeside

March 24, 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., CCIH Lakeside

All dates start and end at LOPC.



## Youth on Wednesdays 5th – 8th Grade

Every Wednesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

December 19: Mediocre Talent Night

Show off your not-so-great talents or come to cheer on your friends.



## BTW 9th – 12th Grade

Every Sunday, 7 – 9 p.m.

December 16: Progressive Brinner

A time of fellowship and fun with your classmates where we have breakfast for dinner at three different homes! Meet at the LOPC parking lot.

## Annual BTW Alumni Dinner

December 21, 6 – 9 p.m.

This event is for BTW advisors, current high school seniors, and BTW alumni. It is a time of fellowship, worship and fun!



# seedlings



## Introducing Seedlings' New Teachers!

*By Tina Clendenin, Seedlings Communications Board Member*

While many of the Seedlings Preschool staff have been part of the team for years, there are some new faces around campus! We are proud to introduce you to three wonderful new teachers!

### Meet Ms. Megan!



Megan Maher joined the Seedlings staff this school year, starting in August and is currently co-teaching the Snapdragons class

with her partner, Ms. Emily. Megan lives in Benicia where she was born and raised. She enjoys spending time with friends and family and loves running, especially outdoors. She got a Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Development at California State University, at Chico. While completing her undergraduate work, Megan volunteered in three different preschool placements, which gave her plenty of hands-on experience. When asked why she became a preschool teacher, Megan says, "It's so rewarding! I love working with little kids. I enjoy getting to know the children and building strong relationships with each individual child." Megan's favorite part of Seedlings is the staff. "They are so supportive and welcoming. They made me feel comfortable and included since day one. And of course the cute kids!" We are proud to welcome Megan to the Seedlings community!

### Meet Ms. Gabby!



Gabby Soqui also joined the Seedlings staff this school year and is co-teaching with Ms. Mari in the Poppies class. Gabby grew up

in Southern California and now lives in El Sobrante. In her past, she experimented in broadcast journalism and LOVES sports, especially baseball. Gabby decided she wanted to work with young children because it's one of the few jobs that gives you the opportunity to help create life-long learners this early in childhood development. This will be Gabby's fourth year of being a preschool teacher. When she was living in Southern California working at a preschool, she helped start a two-year-old program for her site. While living in San Francisco, she helped start a preschool, once again working as the "2's teacher." Gabby commented that she, "loves the two-year-olds! They develop so much from the start of the year to the end. They are at an age where they are beginning to be independent, but they still need you too." When asked about the best part of Seedlings Gabby smiled. "The classes, the teachers, the students and their families- everyone makes you feel welcome."

### Meet Ms. Jenny!



Jenny Helbig has been co-teaching the Daisies classroom with Ms. Jen since January 2018. She currently lives in Concord, but

was raised in Alameda. Jenny has a young daughter, Marnie, and enjoys taking day trip adventures to places like Monterey, Carmel and the Wine Country with her family. She has been teaching young children for about 10 years and has worked with all age groups from infants and toddlers to 4 and 5 year olds. Jenny has worked in many different preschool settings such as Bright Horizons, a Montessori school, and a small private preschool in San Ramon before coming to Seedlings. Jenny became a preschool teacher because she truly loves working with children. "It is such an honor being able to be part of my students' educational journey. I love watching their interests develop and grow as they become their very own unique individual person." Her favorite part about Seedlings is "the people I work with—I felt very welcome upon entering Seedlings as a new teacher. I am also so lucky my daughter Marnie gets to attend school there."

## Disciple Bible Study

Wednesdays starting January 9  
8:30 – 10 a.m., CLC 201

### DISCIPLE

BECOMING DISCIPLES  
THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

We invite you to join us for a 14-week study of Scripture led by Pastor Jaime. This study, *Disciple: Remember Who You Are*, aims at transformation,

not just information. We will use the Bible and the study manual to complete daily reading assignments, generally about 30 minutes of reading per day, and meet weekly for discussion, video and prayers.

In Part 2, The Prophets, we will read the major and minor Old Testament prophets, with the exception of Daniel. Several themes weave their way through the study – the call to remember; the call of repentance; the need for renewed vision; and the place of community. The Prophets are continually calling hearers and readers back to their God and to a sense of who they are as a people “set apart.”

There is a \$15 fee for the study manual. If you have any questions or would like to register for this event, please contact Michelle at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org).

## special needs

familyministry & Special Needs Ministry present

### 🧩 **Respite Night** 🧩

**Friday, January 18, 6 – 9 p.m.**

**For parents who have children and youth with special needs, ages 2 – 22**

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

**Please register by Monday, January 7, to Michelle at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org).**

**Space is limited.**

**We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.**

## parents

### Mom's Bible Study

First Wednesday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.  
CLC 201

Please join us for a monthly Bible and book study and discussion led by Pastor Jaime Polson. Studies for the year will be centered on inspirational women, such as Maya Angelou, Julian of Norwich, and women from the Bible, and how they have been called to live a faith-filled life. All mothers are welcome.

For additional information and to RSVP, please contact Michelle at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org).



Please join us for our Annual Mom's Retreat. We have invited Ann Killion, an American sports journalist, author, and sought-after speaker. She will share insights on how to find balance and to live a happier, more fulfilled life while raising a family.

Ann Killion has covered Bay Area sports for more than two decades and is a veteran of 11 Olympics, several World Cups, and the Tour de France. She has written for *Sports Illustrated*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Comcast Sportsnet*, *San Jose Mercury News*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. She is a New York Times best-selling author, having co-written *Solo: A Memoir of Hope* with soccer star Hope Solo; *Throw Like A Girl* with softball player Jennie Finch; and two middle-grade books on soccer, *Champions of Women's Soccer* and *Champions of Men's Soccer*. She was named California Sportswriter of the Year in both 2014 and 2017. She has two children and lives in Mill Valley.

For additional information and to register, please email Michelle at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org).

Space is limited. Childcare is provided.



## mission



For those struggling with making ends meet, the holidays are a time of increased stress. It is difficult to think about buying gifts when someone is struggling to pay

rent, fill the car with gas, and put food on the table. As a community, LOPC has always been generous during this time of year. This year there will be three opportunities to give:

### MONUMENT CRISIS CENTER FOOD BOX COLLECTION

Through December 2



What was once an Adopt-a-Child program has transformed into a food program due to ever-

increasing demand. These food boxes allow families in the Monument Corridor to celebrate the holidays. During the week, pick up a food list and box in the Ministry Center Office. On the Sundays of 11/18, 11/25, and 12/2, pick up a box on the plaza. ALL BOXES MUST BE RETURNED ONLY ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9 by 12:30 p.m. to the truck parked in front of the Oak Room.

The food list is at [lopc.org](http://lopc.org). Click on "The Latest."

### HARBOR HOUSE TOY COLLECTION

Through December 2



This toy collection supports low income children who reside in the San Antonio

district of Oakland. The program provides Harbor House with gifts for their on-site store which allows parents to choose a gift for their children during the holidays. All gifts (unwrapped, please) should be returned to the Ministry Center office no later than 12/9.

The toy list is at [lopc.org](http://lopc.org). Click on "The Latest."

## love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

**love does.** Love does many things, but most importantly it can transform lives. LOPC, as a mission-focused church, is committed to working with those that are most vulnerable and in greatest need, in an effort to help transform their lives.

Not so long ago our congregation was given the opportunity to take part in a survey in an effort to provide our church leaders a better understanding of what our congregation cares most about. Our leadership heard loud and clear that our *ONE Sunday* event was a fantastic and greatly appreciated mission opportunity. Overwhelmingly though, we also heard that while *ONE Sunday* was a great start, our congregation wants to be active in mission opportunities throughout the year. Our church leadership couldn't agree with you more!

In an effort to satisfy your request, Steve Crocker and Rick Burris are leading a team which includes Jim Olufson, Katie Owensby and Chris Johnson. The **love does** team is designing a process for creating mission opportunities for you throughout the year. The new branding for this program is **love does**.

We are transitioning the *ONE Sunday* name over to **love does** in an effort to keep a consistent brand, and will be using our first **love does** event (formerly *ONE Sunday*) on 2.24.19 as the kickoff for our ongoing **love does** mission opportunities. And, we'll have new **love does** t-shirts! Yeah!

Though many opportunities to help others exist in our community and beyond, **love does** is unique as it is founded in our call as Christians to demonstrate God's love for the world and our community. **love does** affirms that our faith is active and that we can accomplish great things together. It matters that we are out in our community doing things that make an impact on other's lives and reminds them they are loved.

We are very excited about this new opportunity for our members and community, and as always, look forward to serving with you!

## Adult Mission Trip to Zimbabwe

by Phil Hunter



*The team preparing to distribute blankets and books to children at a clinic for disabled children.*

Upon our arrival in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, we were greeted with the headline that the price of bread went from \$1 to \$4 over a matter of weeks. Rapid inflation is gripping the country again, leading to dramatic price increases and shortages throughout the country.

Many gas stations sold no gas, since suppliers couldn't price their costs with confidence. So driving out to the school where we worked was a concern. Basic food items were scarce for the same reasons. We didn't know for sure if a restaurant would be open. And even when we found one open, some menu items were no longer available. When we did eat out and the bill was presented, the waiter in a hushed tone would offer that if we paid in US dollars, there would be a discount. One time that discount was 65%!

In spite of hardships, the citizens of Zimbabwe were very friendly and welcomed us, representatives of LOPC, with open arms. Our hosts, the employees of Kapnek Trust (KT), went out of their way to make sure we were safe and catered to our needs. We attended a church service with some KT employees, and Pastor Lauren thanked them for their inclusive love toward us.

On the first day they took us to the Children's Rehabilitation Clinic for those with physical handicaps. There, we handed out more than 70 blankets made by LOPC members. In response, the mothers broke into song in their native language, praising God and Jesus.

The next day, we traveled three hours (the last five miles on unpaved roads) to the school where Kapnek is building two new classrooms for the children in Early Childhood Development (ECD or Kindergarten). They are now teaching the kids under a thatched roof open-air structure with logs for benches. There are so many ECD children at this school that a second structure three miles away is needed just for the overflow. The two rooms under construction will consolidate all ECD children at one location.

With the poverty in this rural setting, the school supplies—donated by many LOPC members and Seedlings—were a huge hit with the children and teachers. Our visit overlapped with the School District's ECD Supervisor who helped distribute the supplies, and offered many suggestions on how they could be utilized.

We helped construct one of the two new classrooms, occasionally baffling the school staff and visiting parents who wondered why these older people were working so hard when we should be relaxing, retired. And really baffling the men when our women shoveled gravel, pushed a loaded wheelbarrow, or moved bricks.



*A mother with her son who has cerebral palsy at the Children's Rehabilitation Clinic.*





The JF Kapnek School outside Harare.

One day we observed the once-a-term health screening with which KT assists. They transport the District Nurse to the site, as the government has no funds for transportation. Of course, that uses precious gas. Each child is examined for health issues including malnutrition.

Every day we were at the school, we helped serve the fortified porridge the Kapnek Trust provides for about three cents per child. Currently, they feed over 18,000 children daily throughout Zimbabwe. For many children, this might be their only meal that day. And due to inflation, costs are rising. At the school we visited, the growth of ECD attendance strains the porridge supply, some days running out before all the children are fed.

We came away with a new appreciation of KT's effort to help the children of Zimbabwe. We met many of the staff at the Children's Rehab Clinic, the school district administrator, the school principal and parents, all of whom sang the Trust's praise in helping them. In many cases, it is the Trust who holds the rural schools together in these challenging times.

In spite of the hardships, the people of Zimbabwe were warm, hopeful and grateful; at times bringing tears to many of our eyes. From mothers cradling severely disabled children at the rehab clinic who burst into song in gratitude for a blanket, to the smiles on the faces of children getting porridge, or the deep appreciation of the school staff as we labored to improve their facilities, our presence provided the message that they are not forgotten, they are in our prayers, we are one in a community even if LOPC is on the other side of the world.

Alive in Christ...In the World!

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

This year's Christmas offering will benefit the children of two LOPC Mission partners, Fotokids and JF Kapnek Trust. Fotokids teaches employable skills to children in the poorest barrios of Guatemala to help them rise up out of poverty. JF Kapnek works to improve the lives of children in Zimbabwe through sustainable programs that focus on Early Childhood Development, Pediatric Aids, Maternal & Child Nutrition, and Disabled Children.

**Starting Christmas Eve through December 31:**

**Go to [lopc.org](http://lopc.org), click on "Give Back" and go to Online Giving. Click on "Special Offering" in the dropdown menu.**

**Use the LOPC App. Click on the "Give" button and select "Special Offering" in the dropdown menu.**

**Fotokids**  
to capture dreams



## Congo Necklaces

**December 16 after both services  
On the plaza**

Just in time for Christmas gifts with a heart, the Congo Necklace Team will be displaying their wares. Along with our usual offering we'll have

Christmas Santas, Snowmen, and Trees, plus the new, very popular scarf necklace. If you need a gift before then please contact [bobbiedodson@comcast.net](mailto:bobbiedodson@comcast.net).

This year all proceeds will fund the Computer and English skills class for girls in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

"I am thankful to the Presbyterian Church because after my father's death I didn't know what to do for a living," class graduate Ngulala Tshibuabua said. "My English and computer skills received in the after-school program really saved my life. I work as a secretary in a legal office where I handle documents in English and French. I help my widowed mother with the salary I get from that work."

Choose a gift that will make a difference in a girl's life this Christmas!

# spiritual formation

## Advent season is coming... Are you ready?

We have many exciting opportunities to put you in the spirit of Advent this season.

### Advent Devotional

This month, we will be offering a daily Advent devotional. These daily reflections include a short prayer, a Bible reading from the liturgical readings for the week, as well as a brief meditation on the Bible passage. These brief devotionals are meant to take 5-10 minutes, and center your day.

### The 10:10

The 10:10 will feature a three-week Advent series in December on the Gospel of Luke. See the description on this page.



## Spiritual Direction at LOPC

Spiritual Direction is part of the ministry of Formation at LOPC. It is a reflective process in which a trained spiritual companion walks with you to help you pay attention to God's work in your life and your most important questions. It is the art of discovering that everyday events are often the means by which God comes to meet us. In Spiritual Direction, you are invited to explore your experiences, seek awareness of God, and discover your authentic questions and desires. You are accompanied on this journey by a trained and grace-filled companion, your personal Spiritual Director.

To find out more about Spiritual Direction, contact Diane Grant, LOPC Spiritual Direction Coordinator at 925-825-8225.

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

## Advent at

# 10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

Every Sunday, 10:10 – 10:50 a.m.

Kathy Timpfe, LOPC's Scholar in Residence, will teach a three-week Advent series in December on the Gospel of Luke. As always, enjoy the 9 a.m. service, grab a cup of coffee, and head over to the Oak Room at 10:10\* for a 40-minute session on the radical nature of Luke's Christmas story: a story of miracles, hope, and inclusion. Join us for reflection, meditation, and musical and artistic renditions of these key moments which begin Luke's story of Jesus, the Savior. We will walk through the Spirit-filled Gospel in three parts:

### December 2:

Luke begins his Gospel not with the announcement of Jesus' birth, but rather the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist. As the story narrates the reactions of both his parents to this pregnancy, some of the social norms of the day are upended, previewing Luke's radical message of inclusion.

### December 9:

Next, we will examine Gabriel's announcement to Mary, and her song of humility and triumph. Immortalized in both song and art, we will explore various portrayals of this vivid scene through a multi-sensory experience, again focusing on marginalized voices being lifted up.

### December 16:

We will finish the series with Jesus' humble birth, being born on the margins, and the shepherds who are the recipients of the angelic birth announcement. Unlike Matthew's account of Jesus' birth, which has Magi bringing royal gifts for Jesus, Luke has some of the lowest of society gather around Jesus' stable to worship him.

*\*Alternatively, if you want to sleep in, come to campus at 10 a.m., and head to the 11 a.m. service after you've been spiritually fed at 10:10!*

# community

## Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson



Ann Loar

"Mine is not the typical story you read in this column," Ann Loar explained. "It seems to me that most people featured, though they have a variety of backgrounds, almost always have a strong 'churchy' background. Their parents were ministers, missionaries, or ardent churchgoers, so they developed a strong faith very early on.

"Not my family, not me," she continued. "Yes, I did go to Sunday School, but was dropped off Sunday mornings. I dutifully memorized the order of the Old Testament's books and was warned of the evils of sin. Then I was picked up, never giving it another thought."

It was after college, marrying, having the first two of her three children, and moving to Lafayette in the early '70s that Ann heard of LOPC and started attending sporadically. But it was not until later, when a variety of personal upheavals happened that she began to question things, search for answers, and ask for help from a God she knew next to nothing about.

"I turned to LOPC, and between Chuck Shields and Jim Little—their kindness, their gentleness, and their belief in me—that I came to know and then trust our God. I was hooked!"

When Ann joined LOPC, she was asked to join the Worship Team. She joined the choir, meeting some truly wonderful, faithful people.

"I was asked to be a deacon and learned more—more about sharing, caring—and then I realized there are literally hundreds of people in our community and our church who give quietly, without fanfare, and often without much recognition," she said. "I came to see, and then sincerely believe, that God's hand is in all of this. That each of us do make a difference, sometimes with just a smile and a kind word, or sometimes in much bigger ways."

Ann still serves on the Worship team and has been part of the Facilities and Sanctuary Renewal Teams. She is an usher and chair of the November Quilt display.

"Each activity has brought me a deeper faith in humanity in general," she shared. "And it has been a privilege to be a witness to so many acts of warmheartedness, courage, and generosity, plus the humility of so, so many people."

A passion of Ann's is quilt making. It has become a personal mission. "I've made quilts to give to parents of LOPC's newborn babies, and then moved on to donating quilts to several homeless shelters through our wonderful LOPCiders Thursday group."

More recently Ann has been sending quilts with the LOPC Mission team to give to the people they work with. "There is something about the peacefulness of creating something that might bring some comfort to someone that feeds my soul," she says. "My belief in God and the inherent goodness that resides in everyone makes me believe each of us has something worthwhile to contribute. Mine is quilting and I might ask of each of our members, 'What is yours. I know there is some talent you can share.'"

Ann continued, "I am endlessly grateful to this welcoming church. I try hard to listen and often ask myself, 'What would Jesus do?' I continue to feel closer to God in so many ways, and attempt to do at least one thing each day that I think would make God smile. I truly believe it can be a small thing, or a large one, but if each one of us, as children of God, will try to glorify Him by our actions, when magnified by all the people in the world, it would indeed bring peace to all souls."

### Fourth Monday Book Group

Every fourth Monday, 2 - 3:30 p.m., Fireside Room  
The November meeting was moved to December 3.



Every week, one person volunteers to facilitate discussion about the selected book. Selections include both fiction and nonfiction. We start each meeting with refreshments and a bit of poetry. Visitors and new members are welcome!

Questions? Contact Bob Hoots at 925-944-0575 or Catherine Coleman at [awaitingword@gmail.com](mailto:awaitingword@gmail.com).



## Welcoming Our Newest Members!

*From our New Members Class in October.*

### Maris Abolins



Maris was baptized Lutheran by his pastor/missionary grandfather Olaf "Louis" Hofstad in Laporte, MN, in 1968. He grew up in Long Island, NY. While a child, he attended church sporadically, but it was when he moved to Southern California in 1988 that he devoted his life to God. While in Southern California, he met his wife Meighan. They married

and moved back to Meighan's hometown (Lafayette), bought a house, and had two sons (Hayden & Shane). The boys grew up attending the Seedlings Preschool. Maris' mother-in-law is longtime LOPC member Donna Maclaughlin-Endress who invited him to attend the worship services. In 2016, Maris began attending the Men with Young Families group on Monday evenings. Then in January 2017, he began attending the worship services regularly and has now decided it's time to join LOPC.

### Angel & Aileen Alvira



The Alviras have been living in the area for about 6 years and previously worshipped at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley. They have their own business and enjoy music, traveling, and Aileen enjoys sewing. Two of their three children have been through the Confirmation program at LOPC and

they decided it was time to officially join LOPC, too. They're excited to be new members.

### Susan Cliff & John Minney



Susan is a born-and-raised Californian and loves her three children and six grandchildren. She enjoys reading and spending time traveling with family and friends. What attracted her to LOPC was the community of spiritual togetherness and love. John likes to hike, travel, read, and

enjoys part-time work as a retired judge in criminal cases. He lived in Moraga until 2012 and now lives in Danville. What attracted John to LOPC was the warmth of the congregation community and outreach. Susan and John already have many friends at LOPC.

### Irene Huang

Irene has lived in the area for the past four years. She met her late husband in New York City in 1969 when he was working on his doctorate at Columbia University and she was working at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center as a registered nurse. In 1993, her husband was sent by his employer, General Electric, to Taiwan on a nuclear power plant contract and they lived there for 13 years. She admits to having the most pleasant memorable experiences in Taiwan: trained and volunteered as docent at National Palace Museum in Taiwan (1995-2002), Hospitality Chairwoman of Taipei International Women's Club (1995), member of Welcome to Taipei International Club, attending year 2000 International Women's meeting in Ankara, Turkey. She loves to travel and has been to Southeast Asia, Europe, and Egypt for a cruise on the Nile River. She enjoys the community and worship at LOPC.

### Brian & Taylor Kent

The Taylors moved to Lafayette from Alameda about six months ago. Taylor is a dentist and Brian is in sales. They heard about LOPC from their neighbors, and their son attends the Seedlings Preschool. They're excited to be joining LOPC.

### Devin O'Brien

Devin has lived in the area for 25 years and previously attended Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church. He's an attorney and enjoys sports and yard work. What attracted Devin to LOPC was the warm community and he enjoys the worship.

### Chris & Kelly Ream



The Reams are both Philadelphia natives and have now been in the Bay Area for six years. They have lived in Lafayette for two years and are expecting their first child this Thanksgiving! Both are in sales professionally: Chris in tech sales and Kelly in oncology sales. In their free time they enjoy traveling

and fitness. What attracted them to LOPC was the sense of community. They believe LOPC is a place that challenges the community to grow spiritually and they want to raise their family here.

## Jeanne Ryan



Jeanne has lived in the area for 55 years and has been an art docent at the Oakland Museum of California for 31 years and a natural science docent at OMCA for 10 years. She enjoys participating in three gardening clubs and dabbles in photography. What attracted her to LOPC was the kindness of the members. She appreciates the focus

LOPC has on caring for others. She enjoys what the church is doing with teens to teach them how to love and care for others who are different than them.

## Jeanine Swift



Jeanine has lived in the area for two years and previously lived in Southern California and Houston, Texas. She heard about LOPC from longtime LOPC member, Bud Lake. Jeanine is a retired teacher and counselor. She also was a television producer for nine years. She is excited to join the church as a member.

## Corey & Laura Wilson



The Wilsons moved to the California from Texas simply because they love the area. They left behind their family and friends, found jobs, and moved! They have two daughters, Gabby and Charlotte, and the entire family are avid skiers at South Lake Tahoe (almost every weekend in the winter). Laura

spends most of her time chasing after their daughters, acting as chauffer between soccer, dance, and Brownies. Corey is a hospital administrator and also plays the trumpet and dabbles in woodworking. What attracted the Wilsons to LOPC was the active children's ministry and the girls have loved coming to the programs. Laura and Corey love the sermons and are looking forward to being active members.

## Science and Religion

December 10, 6 p.m., Davies Room



A splash of Christmas spirit, a dash of friendship! Join the Science and Religion study group to share a warm meal, good conversations, and comradeship around

the table. We will meet and anticipate a wonderful evening of fellowship.

## Roberta Wilson



Roberta has lived in Concord for 50 years and is a retired registered nurse. She enjoys spending time with family – five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren with a third on the way! Roberta enjoys traveling and some of her favorite trips have been African safaris. She likes volunteering with the Assistance League of Diablo

Valley, belongs to two book clubs, and does a lot of cross-word puzzles. Having attended LOPC already, she's active in the Explorers Voyager Ship and has helped with ONE Sunday and Warm Winter Nights. What initially attracted her to LOPC were the summer movie-themed worship services with friends. She likes the preaching and music programs.

## thursdayFellowship

Every Thursday, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall

Thursday Fellowship is celebrating its 39th year of providing seniors with lunch and entertainment, and welcoming them into a very special caring community. Join us as a volunteer, guest, or visitor.

Come join us and experience our exciting activities and caring community. You are never too old or too young to participate!

### Typical Thursday Schedule:

**11 a.m.:** "Meet and Greet" with snacks and beverages.

**11:15 a.m.:** Craft activities and/or light exercise.

**Noon:** Lunch. Please bring a half sandwich and we will provide the salad, beverage, and dessert.

**12:45 p.m.:** Entertainment.

### Questions? Contact coordinators:

Julie Peterson  
julie@lopc.org

Clarita Wooldridge  
clarita@lopc.org

Both Julie and Clarita can be reached at  
925-283-8722 x281.

# LOPC

## Breakfast Group

(formerly Men's Breakfast)



**Larry Sly**  
Executive Director  
Contra Costa Food Program  
December 19, 7 a.m.

Join us as Larry talks about the work of the Food Program, and we enjoy Christmas festivities together!

\$5 donation for breakfast at the door.

RSVP by noon on December 18 to Chris at [chris@lopc.org](mailto:chris@lopc.org) or 925-283-8722 x110



## FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

**First Fridays of the month starting in January 1:30 p.m.**

A stellar lineup for First Friday Forum in 2019 is in place. The lectures will be presented from January through June on the first Friday of the month at 1:30 in the sanctuary with refreshments in Fellowship Hall at 1 p.m.

**January 4:** Tom Rundall, Ph.D., will speak on the "Future of Hospitals."

**Upcoming topics:** "Mental Illness and Families: The Next Frontier" and "The Supreme Court." Mark your calendars now so you won't miss any of the First Friday Forum speakers.

## session

### October Session Highlights

*By Jody Black, Clerk of Session*

Brett Strader, Worship and Music director, led elders in a wonderful spiritual formation time and presented the first of a planned monthly series of "State of the Union" reports for session, looking at LOPC's various ministries. He addressed the "state of Worship," discussing where LOPC is, what it faces, and where it is going. Worship attendance in 2018 is comparable to 2017, but down approximately 10 percent from 2015 and 2016, he said. We learned that LiveStream is a successful offering, drawing about 100 "hits" per Sunday from those worshipping remotely. And finally, he said, many new members, particularly families, often connect to LOPC through events and mission programs before worship.

All mainstream churches have faced decreasing worship attendance during the past decade or so. A primary factor appears to be busier schedules and activities that compete with traditional worship. Sunday morning may be the only unstructured time that some families have together. And even though

spiritual interest remains strong, pursuing spiritual growth is not always something people look for in a faith community.

So, where do we go from here? LOPC believes corporate worship is still essential to a healthy and growing Christian community, and we will continue to draw in talented staff and deploy resources to carry it out with excellence. We are also approaching each worship service as an engaging, unique, stand-alone event, recognizing the trend toward less frequent attendance. LOPC is working to involve more people intergenerationally in leadership, adding special Sundays with a unique focus, and building more moments of delight and joy. Finally, we believe that to grow worship attendance we must support and encourage individuals to get involved with the community outside of worship. People involved in programs, service projects, leadership, or volunteering are likely to attend worship more regularly than others.



# lopc foundation

## LOPC Foundation Finances Update

By Phil Placier, Foundation Trustee



The year 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of the beginning of the LOPC Foundation. On September 30, it closed its 2018 fiscal year with \$10.3 million of invested net assets (also called equity), after deducting \$367,000 of commitments to LOPC.

Net assets increased \$383,000, after disbursements and commitments to the church, due primarily to a 7.1% investment rate of return for the fiscal year on the two Foundation investment portfolios of 23 diversified mutual funds and exchange traded funds.

Foundation trustees appropriated \$268,000 for church ministries, \$100,000 for the second installment of a three-year pledge to the Sanctuary Campaign, \$80,000 for facilities reserve study project expenses, \$30,000 for the Sanctuary projector project.

After additions and disbursements, net asset values of the Foundation's 10 funds and Facilities Reserve Account at September 30:

**General Ministry Fund (Unrestricted) – \$2,557,000**

**Holman Mission Endowment Fund (Restricted\*) – \$101,000**

**Holman Music Endowment Fund (Restricted\*) – \$108,000**

**Newcomer Women's Endowment Fund (Restricted\*) – \$3,800**

**Deacons Endowments Fund – (Restricted\*) – \$229,000**

**Dornsife Youth Endowment Fund – \$346,000**

**Thursday Fellowship Endowment Fund – \$237,000**

**Cranmer Christian Leadership Fund (Restricted\*) – \$237,000**

**Steuber Landscape Maintenance Endowment Fund (Restricted\*) – \$119,000**

**Facilities Endowments Fund (Restricted\*) – \$5,884,000**

**Facilities Reserve Account (Restricted\*) – \$463,000**

*\*Restricted funds and accounts are available for grants for limited or restricted uses only, as designated by donors or Foundation trustees.*

The Facilities Reserve Account purpose is to provide funds for planned and unexpected facilities and capital equipment projects. An additional \$165,000 was set aside in the Account in fiscal year 2018.

You will hear more in 2019 about donor opportunities for legacy estate gifts and other gifts that will increase Foundation support of church ministries in the future.

**Learn more about the Foundation at the LOPC website and from Foundation trustees:**

**Dick James (President, 925-323-9046)**

**Kristi Haigh (Vice President, 925-254-6023)**

**Dara Youngdale (Secretary, 925-284-1816)**

**Phil Placier (Treasurer, 925-254-7769)**

**Staci Johnston (925-934-0493)**

**Jim Beckemeyer (925-324-9655)**

**Jerry Ducey (925-997-8839)**

**Jen Crocker (925-765-4222)**

**Mike Ross (925-254-6621)**



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#### 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

Char Casella

#### MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement  
Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz, Youth  
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool  
Ryan Timpfe, Children

#### FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Sara Warfield, Communications  
Dick James, Editing

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.  
Submit items at:  
[www.lopc.org/submission-for-connections](http://www.lopc.org/submission-for-connections)



**Save the Date!**

**Twinkle, Twinkle,  
Little Star**

**Presbyterian Women's  
Christmas Tea**

**December 7 • 1 to 3 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall**

Enjoy the music of *Encore at Christmas* as they sing Christmas tunes dressed in Dickens clothing while you sip your cup of tea and nibble on homemade cookies and tea sandwiches.

Free tickets will be available on the church patio on November 18 and 25, and on December 2. All women of LOPC are invited and encouraged to bring a friend. We will be looking for you.

## Connect with us!

**Sunday Worship Services**

9 a.m.

11 a.m.

*Invite Friends & Family*



The new LOPC app  
is now available!

To download,  
text "LOPC APP" to 77977.

