

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Schedule your photo  
appointment today!

## We Want You!

## To be a part of the 2017 LOPC Church Directory

*LifeTouch®*



See  
Page 4



## JANUARY 2017

	Page
Chicks With Sticks.....	14
Church Directory.....	4
Congo Update.....	12
First Friday Forum.....	16
Freebirds Fellowship Group.....	16
Girls Leadership.....	11
Journey of Faith.....	17
Kayaking Trip.....	14
Lenten Study.....	4
LOPC Foundation.....	18
Men's Breakfast.....	6
Men's Quarterly Gathering.....	11
Men's Retreat.....	20
MLK Event.....	13
New Members Class.....	16
ONE Sunday.....	3
Pastor's Column.....	2
Raising Resilient Boys.....	12
Sanc-tu-ary.....	10 & 11
Science & Religion.....	14
Seedlings.....	8
Special Needs Ministry.....	11
Staff Photo.....	19
Stephen Ministry.....	5
Warm Winter Nights.....	7
We Believe?!?.....	5
Youth Corner.....	15



## The One Thing for The New Year

by Peter Whitelock, Pastor - Head of Staff



*"For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." - 1 John 3:11*

It's hard to believe, but the calendar has turned again, and we're heading into a new year together. Just this past week a treasure trove of LOPC historical documents were handed over to me, and what a joy it has been to look back on over six decades of life and ministry in this great church. I am humbled by the

great work and effort that has gone into building up this congregation over many years. The faithfulness of those who have gone before us continues to unfold and helps us face the challenges and opportunities of each new year. I'm sure this year will be no different!

Even though much has changed over the years, our mandate remains constant. As founding pastor Carl Thomas stated from the outset, "Our goal was not merely the organization of a church, but the formation of a believing Christian fellowship with Jesus Christ the center...to share the good news of his redemption in the community and the whole world." The core message of God's redeeming love proclaimed through the gospel is our guiding light, and more than ever calls us to be instruments of love and grace in our broken and hurting world. Beyond all else, may this coming year see us grow in that mandate and call!

Grace and peace,

Peter Whitelock

ALL AGES ARE  
WELCOMED



2/26



This year marks the tenth year anniversary of ONE Sunday at LOPC! ONE Sunday has become an LOPC tradition that invites the congregation to work together to help LOPC partners as well as other non-profits in the greater community.

ONE Sunday allows agencies to accomplish projects that otherwise would not be accomplished due to budgetary and labor constraints. In addition, it encourages individuals of all ages in the LOPC community to be examples of Christ's love and grace.

Please join the congregation this year as we collectively work together to make a huge difference together. See below for what LOPC has accomplished over the past nine years.

Look what one congregation can accomplish over nine years!

Over 2,700 toiletry kits produced, 33,300 pounds of food sorted, 2,600 paintings created and made into stationery, 675 pillowcases sewn for foster children, over 20 walls painted, 600 boxes of baby clothing sorted and over 500 shopping carts assembled .....and much more!

**REGISTER ONLINE at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)**



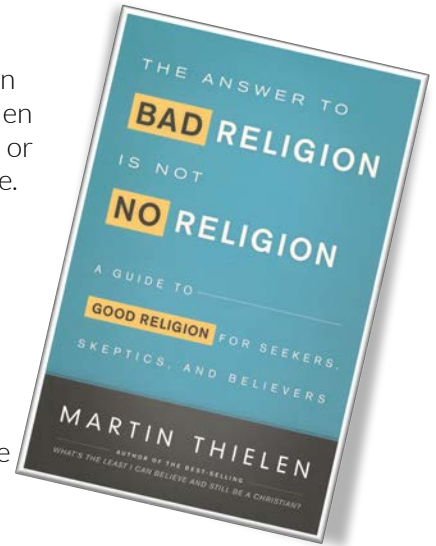
## The Answer to Bad Religion is Not No Religion!

This Lent we will be using the book by Martin Thielen to reflect on how “toxic religion dismays...and how to get into the clear about what good religion is and can be.” Thielen reminds us that Christians need not be sexist, anti-Semitic, literalistic, antievolution, or judgmental; they do, however, need to believe in and embrace Jesus and his message.

What examples of bad religion have you seen lately? Do you ever define yourself, or your faith, by what it is not, or what it is against?

This Lenten series will remind us how “good religion keeps an open mind” and will begin on Ash Wednesday. Join us as we study and celebrate the best of our religion, and what it has to offer our community, the country, and the world!

More information on how to sign up for a study and purchase a book will be available soon. Questions? Contact [Becki@lopc.org](mailto:Becki@lopc.org)



# 2017 LOPC Church Directory

We are currently scheduling photography appointments for our new church directory. In addition to receiving a copy of the new directory, all families who participate in a photography session will receive a complimentary 8 x 10 photograph.



Photography will be on campus intermittent dates beginning January 19th through early or mid-March. Additional dates will be added as necessary.

Where: Room 201, CLC Building.

To schedule your appointment, please log onto our website, [www.LOPC.org/directory](http://www.LOPC.org/directory) and click the link to the scheduling center at Lifetouch. Pick your date and time, and complete the registration. The process takes about two minutes.

Alternatively, stop by the table on the plaza on starting 1/8 for scheduling assistance or contact Janet Jourgensen, Receptionist, weekdays at [janet@lopc.org](mailto:janet@lopc.org) or 925-283-8722 x 223.

Please Note: Directories will be distributed only to those families who are included in the directory.

## Volunteers!

We need volunteers to greet families and register them for their appointment. Please contact Janet to volunteer. Thank you!

Contact Janet at [janet@lopc.org](mailto:janet@lopc.org) or (925) 283-8722 x 223 for any questions, comments, suggestions, registration assistance or to volunteer.



## Stephen Ministry Continuing Education – Balancing on the Slippery Slope of Boundaries

January 22 at 10:15 a.m. in the Davies Room



Providing spiritual care can be a blessing to all involved. The training received as Stephen Ministers, Deacons, Ministers, and other spiritual care givers is very clear that we need to maintain boundaries – spiritually, professionally and personally. Sounds black and white. However,

sometimes providing spiritual care can become a bit of a slippery slope – more gray than black or white, as spiritual issues often are also emotional and psychological issues. How do we maintain confidentiality boundaries? What is it in our own lives and experiences that gets triggered by our encounters? How do we know when to refer Care Receivers to other resources/professionals? How much do we share of ourselves personally? Are there spiritual boundaries? Please join us as we explore this sometimes-messy topic of boundaries and share with and learn from one another our struggles and our successes.

Although this program is sponsored by Stephen Minister continuing education, it is open to all. Please join us January 22 at 10:15 a.m. in the Davies Room.

Our facilitator, Sharon Campton, is a member of LOPC, a Stephen Minister, an ordained Commissioned Lay Pastor in the San Francisco Presbytery, an ordained Interfaith Minister, and currently serves as a Hospice Chaplain.

## We Believe (!?) – 1/22, 1/29, 2/5 & 2/12



9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. in the Oak Room  
Led by Lauren, Peter, Gerald and Jaime

In an ever-changing world and in an area where much of what religion has to offer is misunderstood or sensed as out-of-date, it can be difficult to navigate our own belief! Contrary to what some might believe, faith is not the absence of doubt! Christian faith isn't cut and

dry, and elements of faith look different with each and every person. Christian faith is centered on the Bible, Jesus and the Church.

Bring your questions as we continue our exploration of various topics and navigate our way through faith and doubt with fellowship! There are four dates and each will be led by a different pastor.

## Stephen Ministry By the Numbers

**1:1** - Stephen Ministers provide one-on-one care to people going through a crisis or difficult time. They meet with that person on an ongoing basis, offering distinctively Christian care and support.

**12,000** - More than 12,000 congregations world-wide are enrolled in the Stephen Series. Hundreds more begin Stephen Ministry every year. Our ministry began serving LOPC in 2002.

**65,000** - More than 65,000 pastors, church staff, and lay leaders have attended a Leader's Training Course, where Stephen Leaders are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to lead Stephen Ministry back home. At LOPC a team of six leaders plus our Care Pastor Gerald Chinen administer our ministry.

**600,000** - Stephen Leaders have trained more than 600,000 Stephen Ministers in their local congregations since the ministry began in 1975 – and that number continues to grow every year. Our congregation is served by approximately thirty active Stephen Ministers and well over 100 have been trained over the years.

**Millions** - Millions of hurting people – congregation members and people who have no church home – have been blessed by the care and support of a Stephen Minister. Over 200 people have received care from the Stephen Ministers at LOPC over our 14 years of service to this congregation.

For more information about Stephen Ministry at LOPC please contact Pastor Gerald Chinen at [gerald@LOPC.org](mailto:gerald@LOPC.org).

# 2017 Mom's Retreat

## CONNECTING

Your Heart and Spirit

*Your path as a Mom and Woman*

9:00 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	Host
Breakfast & Social Time Oak Room	Program featuring Paige Nolan	Jaime Polson and the Family Ministry Team

Register online at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org).



Guest Speaker: Paige Nolan is a writer, speaker, and coach whose mission is honoring the truth of women's lives

Find out more about Paige at [paigenolan.com](http://paigenolan.com)

Your Path as a Mom and Woman! Guest speaker, Paige Nolan is a speaker and coach whose mission is honoring the truth of women's lives. Find out more about Paige at [paigenolan.com](http://paigenolan.com). Start the new year by taking a little time for yourself, connect with other moms and learn some strategies for making life more enjoyable and less busy in the year ahead. Learn new ways to bring joy and meaningfulness into your life and into the lives of your family.

Register on-line at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org) Questions? [dave@LOPC.org](mailto:dave@LOPC.org)

Free childcare is available by reservation only, no later than January 13, 2017.



Bring friends & family

7:00 a.m. | Davies Room

Suggested \$5 donation at the door for breakfast  
R.S.V.P. to [janet@LOPC.org](mailto:janet@LOPC.org) or call (925) 283-8722 x223  
before noon on the Tuesday before each breakfast

LAFAYETTE ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
49 Knox Drive | Lafayette, CA 94549 | [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)

January 25



**Dana Dornsife**  
LOPC Member  
Founder of LazareX

**TOPIC:**

Lazarex Cancer  
Foundation:  
Giving Life a Chance

## Warm Winter Nights Warming the Hearts of Many

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Tents occupy one half of Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall. The other half serves as the dining room. The entire building is used as the Fireside Room is where tutoring takes place while they can play games or just relax in the Davies Room.

"We want this to be as near a home-like place as possible," says Teri Lundvall, on-site supervisor. "Each family having a tent to call their own is a great step up from when there just used to be sheets hung to partition spaces. The guests do form a community, even though they move from place to place, and that's important. I feel it's my responsibility for our families to build relationships, with me, and with each other. Also, I want them to know I'm here for them 100%. I was in the program in 2004-2005. I think this gives me a real perspective on what these families are going through now. I believe most all our clients are intent on bettering their lives. If we give them a hand up now, they can master the tools to lift themselves out of homelessness."

Resident, Ursela R., works part-time at St. Vincent de Paul and is in a training program which teaches her work skills, how to write a resume, and will help her find a full-time job. Her husband is now working for a friend on a remodel job but has applied for a carpenter's apprenticeship and says, "I want to move up in the world."

Though they have housing and food, it's not an easy life style. The families get up at 5:30 a.m. weekday mornings, eat breakfast, pick up the lunches they prepared the night before, and at 7:00 a.m. they all head out in the program's van - the parents to job sites or classes, while all the children are taken to the schools they regularly attend. Returning sometime after 5 p.m., children do homework with volunteer tutors. At 6:30 p.m. dinner is served by church members, who cooked the food, and then they eat with the guests. Lights out at 8:30 p.m. A volunteer from LOPC sleeps there during the night in case there are any problems which need handling.

Warm Winter Nights is a project of the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. They can provide services for 30 people. These

include, a warm, safe place to sleep; tasty meals; friendly volunteers; daytime service center; showers; laundry; case management; budgeting and parenting classes; tutoring for students; and van services to schools, bus and BART. Bedding is provided and a professional staff sees that the shelter is supervised 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The program runs from October to May. Faith communities from throughout the area serve as hosts.

"We don't just look at those families as homeless but as those with aspirations," says Bill Shaw, program manager. "We're trying to lay a foundation so when they leave here they have a better sense of purpose of what they can do to move forward and stay out of this rut."

Robin Freeberg, who oversees the program at LOPC says, "Each year we look forward to the arrival of our guests on the LOPC campus and the opportunity to serve and build relationships with those whom we often overlook in our community. When we do run across these neighbors it is often hard to know how best to help. Warm Winter Nights gives us an opportunity to serve them in a positive way, using our gifts to 'love God with all of our heart, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.' Matthew 22:37-39." If you would like to volunteer call Warm Winter Nights Shelter, Walnut Creek, at 925-933-6030 for current volunteer opportunities.





## NAEYC Conference

by Molly Maduck, Seedlings Communications Board Member



Sometimes in life, opportunities arise that have the ability to enrich both your life, and the lives of those around you. Recently, the Seedlings staff experienced such an opportunity, as they traveled to the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference in Los Angeles. NAEYC is a professional membership organization that works to promote quality early childhood education. Seedlings director Coleen Moulton has described the NAEYC as, “the largest and most influential organization working on behalf of our nation's youngest learners.”

This annual conference is an exciting event where professionals and specialists come together to focus on how young children develop and learn. Here they share ideas for best practices, network with professors, discuss current issues, and learn about the most cutting edge approaches in the field of early child development. At this year's conference, the Seedlings team joined over 10,000 other educators from across the country. This group of dedicated teachers was able to learn from the many notable presenters and workshops that were available to them. At the conference, there were over 500 sessions for our teachers to choose from. With 20 Seedlings teachers present, they were able to attend 100 sessions! Some of the Seedlings staff's favorite sessions were: “Using Loose Parts with Infants and Toddlers to Promote STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) Concepts,” “My brain is full of ideas! Unleashing young children's creative thinking in an exciting learning environment,” and “Promoting Kindness & Empathy by Developing Skills that Benefit All Children.” It was a truly informative and collaborative environment, where our teachers learned so much, and were also able to share their invaluable ideas and experiences with their fellow colleagues.

As Coleen Moulton, Director of Seedlings Preschool, has shared with our Seedlings community, “Studies have shown that educators who stay up-to-date on the latest research in child development are best equipped to make a difference in the lives of the children they serve and their families.” The Seedlings staff makes a difference in the lives of our children each and every day. This experience was a chance for them to enhance their own professional lives, while they continue to foster our children's optimal learning and development in their amazing classrooms. Many staff members have said that their experience in Los Angeles was all that they hoped it would be, and so much more. Sunflowers teacher Noelle Isenberg told us, “The entire experience was electric and with every session and speaker, there was something unique which spoke to my heart. It's a powerful energy when you get so many like-minded individuals who care so deeply about what they do together. You leave with the power to change the world, one classroom at a time.” At Seedlings we are so fortunate to have a staff devoted to enriching the lives of our children, one classroom at a time.





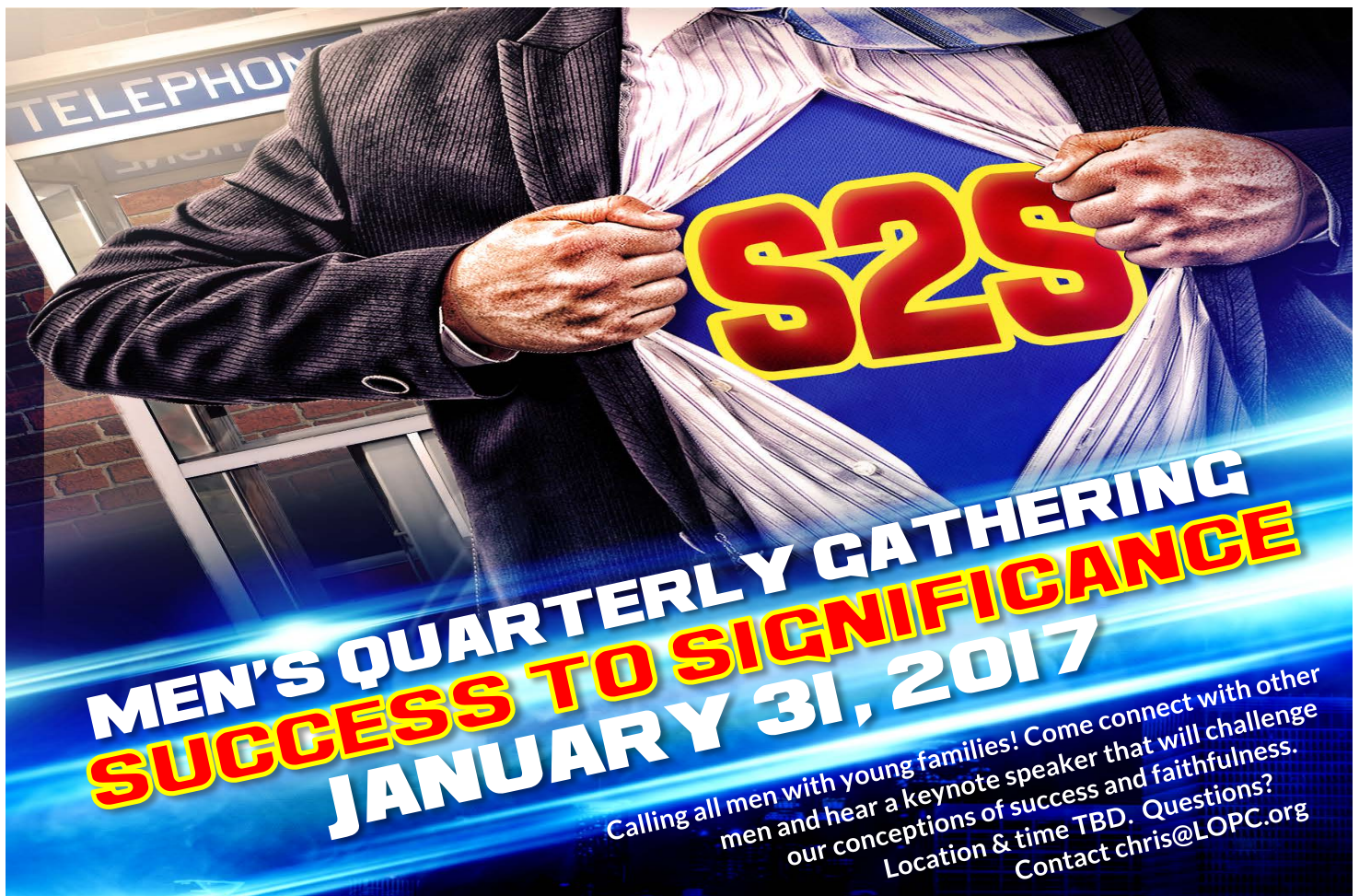
## Parent-Daughter Workshops with Girls Leadership

Beginning January 19, 2017



Girls Leadership offers a series of courses for girls and their parents to build emotional intelligence. In the upcoming workshops, parent-daughter pairs will learn about identifying healthy relationships, finding their voices, and communicating more effectively. Girls also develop resilient responses to conflict, challenges, and mistakes. The program is interactive, fun, and enlightening, and it's also a great opportunity to gain insight and spend time with your daughter in a new and different way.

Register online at [girlsleadership.org](http://girlsleadership.org). Questions? Please email [jaime@LOPC.org](mailto:jaime@LOPC.org).



## Atfaluna School for Deaf Children Early Intervention Program Year 2 for Sanctuary Funds



One of the beneficiaries of the three-year Sanctuary Funds program is the Atfaluna School for Deaf Children in Gaza because it provides sanctuary to those in need. In 2016, your generosity enabled LOPC to send \$10,000 in support of the

school's "Early Intervention Program", as a sanctuary related project.

Specifically, in the Gaza Strip, disabled persons, including the deaf and hearing impaired, belong to the poorest of the community. Due to the present political conditions, local government is only able to provide very limited social welfare services such as education, psycho-social and health care for young deaf children ages 0-5 years.

In response to the lack of services for deaf young children, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) has developed and implemented a comprehensive Early Intervention Program throughout Gaza. It includes deployment of specialists to conduct home visits once a week for each deaf child for one year to provide emotional and social support. The goal is to help the children develop language and communication skills,

assist parents to deal with their deaf children in the home environment and to help parents, especially mothers, to understand their child's hearing loss so that they are better equipped to raise, support and communicate with their deaf young children.

Children between the ages of 3 and 5 receive in-home education sessions focused on cognitive, creative, social and communications activities. The program also provides sign language and finger spelling training for parents.

Finally, the program includes a social work intervention component, including home visits and family counseling. This addresses the importance of a positive, enabling family environment, and to combat stigmatization and the lack of acceptance within the family and broader community.

The school recently reported that "within weeks following the commencement of the program, improvement was reported in both the deaf children and their mothers:

- Over-active children began to concentrate for longer periods during the sessions.
- The children began to use some signs to express their needs and their feelings.
- Mothers were taught how to handle their deaf children and how to better communicate with them.
- Mothers were completing home activities with their children as requested by the early intervention social workers.
- Better understanding between mothers and their children were noticed.

This year we will again be supporting ASDC and their Early Intervention Program. Thank you for your continued support! Should you have any questions, please contact Robin ([robin@LOPC.org](mailto:robin@LOPC.org)) or Melinda Darbee ([mmdarbee@earthlink.net](mailto:mmdarbee@earthlink.net)).





## Sanctuary Fund Update - Children of Faith Missions



Five percent of the total contributed to the Sanctuary Renewal project was earmarked to create "Sanctuary" for several of LOPC's mission partners. As a result of the generosity of the congregation during the Sanctuary capital

Program of 2015, LOPC donated \$40,000 to Children of Faith Missions. Fulfilling the intent of the funds to provide Sanctuary, the money will be used to build a much needed third level to the previously LOPC funded boy's dormitory.

The third floor will provide sleeping space for 20 of the oldest boys at Children of Faith as well as a common room for recreation and devotional time. In addition, the third floor will offer additional bathroom space complete with tile flooring, and ceiling fans and windows for ventilation. The dorm currently houses 60 boys in a space designed for 40.

The addition of the third floor will not only ease crowding, but free space on the second floor for a "computer" room and study space where the boys can use computers for research, and work collaboratively on school work. The roof of the addition will be accessible to the boys, providing additional outdoor space for them for study and leisure. The roof also serves as a "utility platform" for the fresh-water tank.

The work has begun and photos have been sent documenting the progress. The third floor will not only help the daily challenges of space for 60 boys but will provide living space for LOPC high school students who will be serving the orphanage in 2017. The international high school trip is scheduled for July 15-31, 2017. Sixty-five students and advisors will visit Children of Faith Missions and continue to deepen the relationships that have developed as a result of the last trip in 2014.



## Special Needs Ministry



Youth Program for Special Needs Youth (ages 14-22) Comes to LOPC on January 23, 2017!

We are so excited to bring Young Life Capernaum to LOPC on Monday nights, beginning January 23, 2017 in partnership with Diablo Valley Young Life.

Capernaum gives young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the chance to experience fun and adventure, to develop fulfilling friendships and to challenge their limits while building self-esteem through club, camp and other exciting activities.



Young Life staff and volunteers model Christ's unconditional love and acceptance as they walk alongside these young adults — filling their lives with love and support.

Our goal is for our youth to feel INVITED, CELEBRATED and LOVED! For more information on Capernaum please go to [younglife.org/foreverykid/capernaum](http://younglife.org/foreverykid/capernaum).

If you are interested in being a volunteer leader, please contact Rev. Jaime Polson at [jaime@LOPC.org](mailto:jaime@LOPC.org).



For additional questions about Young Life Capernaum, please contact Adam Powers, Diablo Valley Young Life Area Director at [dvyl@icloud.com](mailto:dvyl@icloud.com) or (925) 876-9420.





## Trauma Healing in the Congo Showing Results

At Easter time, the LOPC congregation generously donated funds to initiate the training of facilitators to implement a trauma-healing curriculum for children devastated by the violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The training took place in August, and since then, 28 facilitators have been working with groups of children throughout eastern Congo.

The facilitators are required to send in reports on their progress. The LOPC Congo team recently received some of the reports. We have been impressed with the commitment of these people, the detail of the reports and the progress that has been made to help heal the children. As part of the training, the children are encouraged to write their feelings. Below are some examples from the reports.

One child writes, "I am an orphan that has been left behind by my father and mother. I am very sad to see that I have no father and mother. And I pray for healing of my heart and that God may continue to bless these teachers who continue to help us and to heal the wounds of our hearts."

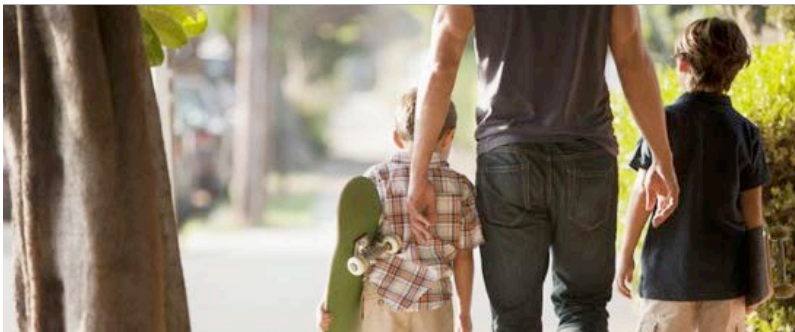
A girl of 12 years old, Emerance Kanyere, has lived through a sad moment when houses in her village were burnt down by rebels in an ethnic conflict. Because of the fact that she saw this happening with her own eyes, the images often come back, wherever she is and at any time. This is affecting her intellectually and psychologically, and her school results have since been poor. It was in lesson three, during the demonstration of what happens when we keep our feelings inside, that Emerance involved herself. She took one of the facilitators aside and only then shared about the events mentioned above. From that moment on, she started to regain herself again. Once arrived at lesson 9, Emerance decided to forgive the rebels."



familyministry and Boys Leadership present:

## RAISING RESILIENT BOYS

with guest speaker, Dr. Meg Meeker



**Thursday, January 26, 2017**

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. • Sanctuary

Register online at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org) • Registration is \$10

Questions? Contact [Dave@LOPC.org](mailto:Dave@LOPC.org)

Please join us for a special Family Ministry Speaker Event, Raising Resilient Boys, with Guest Speaker, Dr. Meg Meeker. Meg is the country's leading authority on parenting, teens, and children's health. Her work with countless families over the years served as the inspiration behind her best-selling books: *Boys Should be Boys*; *7 Secrets to Raising Healthy Sons*; and *Strong Mothers, Strong Sons*; *Lessons Mothers Need to Raise Extraordinary Men*.

Dr. Meg's popularity as a speaker on key issues confronting American families has created a strong following across the nation and around the world.



## **LOPC Martin Luther King, Jr. event**

Pastors Forum hosted by  
Rev. Peter Whitelock  
Sunday, January 15, 2017

### **MARTIN LUTHER KING: THE LIVING LEGACY OF A RELEVANT VOICE**

Guest Preacher Rev. Floyd Thompkins  
Director of the Center for Innovation in Ministry at the  
San Francisco Theological Seminary



Services

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Luncheon

### **Building Bridges of Racial Reconciliation**

12:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Please register for this event at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)

Questions? Email [elizabeth@LOPC.org](mailto:elizabeth@LOPC.org)

Family and friends are welcome!

We will be accepting \$5 donations for the meal at the door.

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## SEA KAYAK & CAMPING IN THE BAHAMAS FEBRUARY 19-26, 2017

Sea kayaking in the Bahamas and camping on its remote and uninhabited beaches: the weather is cool but the water stays warm; the sand is pure and white and the ocean more blue than your dreams; the islands are secluded and the kayak camping is classic.

Join us for a paddle through Paradise as we slip between the islands of the Greater Exumas and camp on pristine beaches where we are the only visitors to be seen. You'll learn kayaking and camping skills, enjoy a supportive and fun community all in a setting that couldn't be more beautiful.

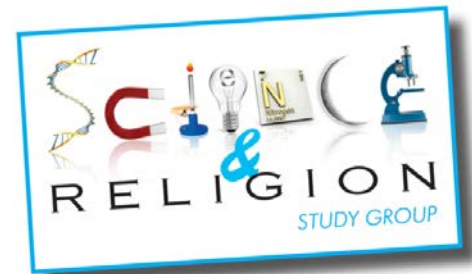
Trip cost is \$950 (airfare and pre-trip lodging not included). The trip is for novices who have never done this before and should be considered moderately strenuous. The trip is led by Steve Harrington, a certified Open Water Sea Kayak Instructor by the American Canoe Association who has guided in this area before for Higher Rock Wilderness Adventures and as an instructor for both Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School.

Join us—participant numbers are limited!

For more information contact [lauren@LOPC.org](mailto:lauren@LOPC.org).

### Science and Religion - 1/10

7:00 p.m. in the Oak Room



VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality), and AI (Artificial Intelligence) will accelerate our evolution as a species. Developed and used properly, these technologies will accentuate the best human and spiritual parts of ourselves. Misguided or misused, they could terminate our growth and extinguish our future.

Informed discussion and considerations for advancement of these technologies is critical, and must involve perspectives representing business, political, cultural, social, emotional, and spiritual interests, among others.

Join us for an evening of exploration and dialogue for a future that guides and properly embraces VR, AR, and AI!

*Note: the day has changed to Tuesday*

### Chicks with Sticks



Donate new or gently used baby clothes to "Chicks with Sticks" by contacting Ellena Bloedorn, [enbloee@comcast.net](mailto:enbloee@comcast.net) or Dianne Schneider, [dianneschneider@hotmail.com](mailto:dianneschneider@hotmail.com) (sizes 0-18 mos. only). Donations of yarn of all colors also gratefully accepted.





## Confirmation 2017!

*For youth 8th grade through 12th grade*

Confirmation is a time of learning, asking questions and exploring one's faith as a Christian. It is an opportunity to personally and publicly

commit to following Christ and discussing what that means in today's world. The class meets Sundays from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. With a limited number of sessions it is important students do their best to attend every class. Make-up sessions are available with the youth directors upon request. Subjects include: What is the Church and Bible?; Worship; Mission; Sacraments; Trinity; Resurrection; Statements of Faith; Interfaith Relations.

### Dates:

- Jan. 8 Confirmation Info Meeting; 12:00 p.m.
- Jan. 22 Registration Due (no fee)
- Jan. 29 Session 1
- Feb. 5 Session 2
- Feb. 12 Session 3
- Feb. 19 Session 4
- Feb. 26 Session 5
- Mar. 5 Session 6
- Mar. 19 Confirmation Sunday in Sanctuary  
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Questions? Contact [keris@LOPC.org](mailto:keris@LOPC.org).

### Middle School Summer Mission Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Oak Room.

Parents and youth are invited to come learn about our two summer mission experiences:

#### 5th-6th Grade Mission Daycamp at LOPC - June 12-16, 2017.

A service-learning experience for youth to serve others locally with Christ's love in a variety of ways. Camp to run concurrently with LOPC's elementary VB Camp program.

#### 6th-8th Grade Mission Trip in Austin, TX - June 19-23, 2017.

A Group Mission Trip, Week of Hope. We'll discover God at work in the Austin community, develop empathy for the hurting, and serve through relational mission experiences with open hands and hearts.

### High School India Mission Trip

Registration & Paperwork is due on Sunday, January 15. Drop by the Oak Room between 10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

We will be serving at the Children of Faith (COF) orphanage under the direction of Rosie and Anand Thandu. This will be the second youth mission trip to COF, having been there in 2014. For students who will have completed 9th-12th grades as of Summer 2017.

Contact Allison Kunz at [allison@lopc.org](mailto:allison@lopc.org) (for Middle School), or Keris Dahlkamp at [keris@lopc.org](mailto:keris@lopc.org) (for High School).



### Sleep Out Sunday

9th-12th Grade Overnight

Sunday, January 22, at 9:00 p.m. to

Monday, January 23, at 10:00 a.m.

Cost: \$20. Please RSVP to Keris by 1/16

Experience a night without a home to better understand homelessness and how you can help. We'll gather after BTW youth group for games, broomball, food, sleep outside on campus, and share breakfast together.

## New Members Class

3/3 – 3/5



The LOPC Membership Class is an opportunity to meet the pastoral staff, have your questions answered, learn about the programs and ministries of the church, and make new friends. The class also serves to clarify what LOPC believes God has called this church to be, so visitors can make an informed decision about formalizing their commitment to this faith community. Ask questions and find out more about LOPC. All are welcome! The next LOPC Membership Class takes place on the weekend of March 3-5, 2017. Childcare available by reservation.

Questions? Contact [matt@LOPC.org](mailto:matt@LOPC.org).

## Freebirds Fellowship Group – 1/28



Are You a Freebird? Are you an empty nester, newly free of kids' school and sports schedules, eager to put some events on your social calendar which revolve around your interests and needs? Or are you just eager and free to make connections at LOPC with adults whose schedules don't revolve around kids?

Freebirds is a new fellowship group being launched at LOPC for adults who are interested in making a connection with other adults through shared activities such as meals, activities, and service work. It will kick off on Saturday, January 28th, with an Appetizer & Dessert Potluck at the home of Liz & Brian O'Shea. In February, the group will work together on a project through LOPC's One Sunday. We want your ideas for the other months – Monterey kayaking? Wine mixing in Napa? – bring your ideas to the January potluck! Please email [matt@lopc.org](mailto:matt@lopc.org) to be put on the mailing list or with any questions. Hope you are free to join us!



## 2017 Speaker Series

**JANUARY 6**

**PROF. DAVID PERITZ**

"Social Justice In The Age of Trump"

**FEBRUARY 3**

**PROF. DEAN HENRY BRADY**

"Public Policy and Politics Going Forward"

**MARCH 3**

**DR. ROBERT JOHNSON**

"Will Gene Therapy and Gene Editing Change Your Life?"

**APRIL 7**

**DR. DAVID VASQUEZ-LEVY**

"A World on the Move"

**MAY 5**

**DR. STEPHEN MENDE**

"Spirits of the Polar Night"

**JUNE 2**

**JUDGE PEGGY HORA**

"Justice In Our Courts"

1:00 p.m. Refreshments

All Are Welcome

1:30 p.m. Speaker – Free

A very popular series of outstanding speakers on topics of current interest

See more at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
(925) 283-8722



Lori MacLeod & family

Lori MacLeod says having moved numerous times, which can make life difficult, she found the best way to make friends and to feel a part of her new community has been to join a church.

Raised a Presbyterian, that's the place she headed. She said, "I've found each church community to be welcoming and a help to me in my

continuing faith journey. They are 'rocks' which have nurtured me. My mother taught me to get involved and contribute and that's good advice." When Lori and her husband, Tommy, moved back to Lafayette, where Lori was born, they set out to find a church home. She explains, "My mom said, 'I think there's a church that has Mother's Day Out.' There was, LOPC, but by that time it had grown into the Seedlings program. We attended LOPC and from the moment we set foot there we felt at home."

After being on the wait list for a while in the fall of 2008, Anna was admitted to Seedlings Preschool and Lori has been involved ever since. Lori explains, "It's a place that has a remarkable administration and staff. There are state of the art classrooms. Twenty of the 23 teachers attended a conference of the National Association for Education of Young Children, which is the premier organization for this age group. They learned the latest techniques to apply at Seedlings, yet still manage to keep the feel of a small, loving community."

A Seedlings program of which Lori is very proud is Wonder Time. Begun about three years ago, headed by Bobbi Cassettari, it is the faith component of Seedlings and is focused primarily on the 3, 4 and 5-year-old students. Meeting weekly, it's different each time. The first Tuesday is called "Big Wonder Time" as all three groups gather in the (big) Sanctuary to sing songs and learn about a specific virtue for the month, such as honor or respect. The following weeks of the month, in smaller groups, they continue to talk about the virtue of the month, but also discuss feelings, joys and concerns, and ways to participate in mission and outreach projects. Lori now serves as an Elder, representing Seedlings.

## Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

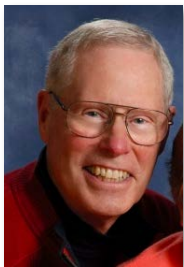
"It's difficult to know when my faith journey began as my family always went to church. I received many perfect attendance pins while in Sunday School," Lori remembers. Her great grandmother laid the cornerstone of their Presbyterian church Plum Creek in Pittsburgh, PA. When it was rebuilt, her grandmother laid that cornerstone too. Her grandmother became one of the first women elders.

Lori remembers, "My mom, Margaret Ann Fowler, taught Sunday School so she has had a lot to do with teaching me about God, Christ, and their love for me. So, it seems like I've always been on this journey. I think attending a Young Life Camp in North Carolina was a special time when we talked about a personal relationship with God. I guess I'd never really thought about it before, but I realized He was someone who was beside me all the time and knew everything about me, and no matter what, He loved me. I'm still in touch with the man who was the leader there as he was a big influence in my life."

A graduate of Vanderbilt University, Lori moved to San Francisco where she was a member of Calvary Presbyterian. "I remember asking for a meeting with my pastor to talk about my relationship with Christ because it didn't seem as strong as it once was," she said, adding, "He explained it was a dynamic relationship, ever changing and I should look for new ways to grow. I've found this good advice and have certainly discovered many ways to grow through programs at LOPC, and my association with the church community. It's also been a remarkable place for my children, Anna, 10, twins, Jon and Oliver, 8, and Teddy 5. Anna is in the choir and the middle school program, FUSE. The boys attend Kids' Rock and Vacation Bible School is important to them. They love the church. Sometimes I think almost too much as they are comfortable here and run around like it is their home." Lori looks forward to going on mission trips when her children are older.

Concluding, Lori says, "For me the best way is to learn about Jesus, the life he lived, and try to follow Him." Bible verses that are important to Lori are: Philippians 4:5, "Let all men know your forbearance, and Philippians 4:9, "The Lord is at hand. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you."





Dick James

## Another Kind of Harvest – Part Two

by Dick James, Foundation Trustee

These are exciting times for the LOPC Foundation. As Trustee Kristi Haigh wrote in the December issue of “Another Kind of Harvest,” with a fiscal year that ended September 30, now is when we learn how our investments fared during the prior 12 months. And that determines the size of our financial “harvest” to help support LOPC’s operations. Kristi went on to explain how the whole harvesting process works during the fall months. If you didn’t have a chance to read her piece, I commend it to you.

What she couldn’t include in the article, because of the Focus deadline, was the actual size of the “harvest.” Now the results are in, and the amount is \$205,000! That’s approximately 10 percent higher than the prior year, a bountiful product, by any measure. (In addition, unspent amounts from the prior year will swell the total Foundation 2017 contribution to an estimated \$269,000.) Since Kristi wrote, the Foundation Trustees have had the opportunity to meet with the staff and Session to hear about their ministry hopes and plans for 2017. Those meetings produced an exciting list of more than 40 different opportunities where Foundation assets can be put to use this year (2017).

During the next few weeks the Trustees will be sitting together, going over that list, praying, choosing, and hopefully discerning, where the Holy Spirit wants to lead LOPC in the months ahead. You’ll be learning about the results in future Focus articles. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of the LOPC Foundation to participate in its work, please contact any trustee:



Dick James	Phil Placier	Kristi Haigh
Lynn Trowbridge	Staci Johnston	Dara Youngdale.
	Alan Kizor	

---

## Session Highlights – November 2016

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

Our November Session meeting proved to be a reminder of how alive and in the world LOPC strives to be. We heard an inspiring update from Lauren Gully on her recent trip to Guatemala to confer with our mission partners in that country. Our outreach there provides hope for families who live and work in the Guatemala City dump, clean water for families that live at Lake Atitlan (Amigos del Lago) and vocational skills for kids who learn about photography through FotoKids. She shared with us the great work that International Justice Ministry (IJM) does to rescue girls and young women from abuse. This work got launched in Guatemala with a substantial donation from our church several years ago.

These examples of just some of the many ways LOPC strives to reach out and serve the community provided a good segue for updates from our Stewardship Finance Teams. Our Stewardship campaign is off to a very promising start. The Finance Team reported very productive meetings with our LOPC working teams as they continue to develop next year’s budget. This will be presented at our December meeting with a goal to finalizing it at our first meeting in January. Although budgeting is always challenging, the response to our Stewardship campaign holds promise that Finance will be able to produce a budget that can continue the high commitment to outreach that LOPC has traditionally set for itself.

Peter reported about the ongoing efforts that he and other members of the staff are pursuing to build bridges to connect our church community with other faiths and ethnicities. Given the divisiveness of the months of the presidential campaign there was a consensus that pursuing these opportunities was very important. We look forward to hearing more as these opportunities unfold.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!



### MAY YOU CONTINUE TO LIVE ALIVE! IN CHRIST IN 2017

**Front row (l-r):** Lidia Jesionek, Ryan Timplte, Ashley Jackson, Julie Peterson, Char Casella, Jaime Polson, Hiroko Shibuya, Tony Domenick.

**Middle row (l-r):** Gerald Chinen, Lori Robinson, Clarita Wooldridge, Lauren Gully, Allison Kunz, Chris Baldwin, Becki Rieger, Harry Jayasingha, Chuck Fry.

**Back row (l-r):** Robin Freeberg, Brett Strader, Dave Engelbrektson, Keris Dahlkamp, Matt Bell, Janet Jourgensen, Colleen Whitelock, Elizabeth Ball, Peter Whitelock.

Not pictured: Devin Crane, Stewart Scharch, Susan Wentworth, Jennifer Shaul, Bobbi Cassettari, Coleen Moulton, and Terry Conte.

Photo by Dick James



**IMPORTANT:**  
Dated Material  
PLEASE DELIVER  
Before 12/31/16  
**Thank you!**

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
CONCORD, CA  
PERMIT NO. 835

#### PASTORAL STAFF

Peter Whitelock - Pastor / Head of Staff  
Gerald Chinen - Pastor, Congregational Care  
Lauren Gully - Pastor, Mission & Spiritual Formation  
Jaime Polson - Pastor, Family Ministry

#### WORSHIP & MUSIC

Brett Strader, Director  
Stewart Sarch, Organist

#### TREASURER

Char Casella

#### MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement  
Matt Bell, Community Life  
Keris Dahlkamp, Youth  
Chuck Fry, Operations  
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool  
Ryan Timpote, Children

#### FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Ashley Jackson, Communications Director  
Jennifer Shaul, Digital & Print Admin  
Chuck Fry / Dick James

Thank you to all who contribute to each issue, and to proofreaders Bev Fellows and Janet Jorgensen.

#### Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

**JANUARY 1** for the **FEBRUARY** issue.  
Email items to [communications@LOPC.org](mailto:communications@LOPC.org).

#### Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

**Monday by 5:00 p.m.**  
Email [communications@LOPC.org](mailto:communications@LOPC.org).

### Men's Retreat

**5/5 - 5/7**



Location: Zephyr Point Conference Center (Lake Tahoe)

Zephyr Cove Conference Grounds along the beautiful lake front of South Lake Tahoe will be the site of our second annual LOPC Men's retreat. This retreat is open to all the men of the church. Our featured speaker for the weekend will be Ray Campton.  
Questions? Contact [chris@LOPC.org](mailto:chris@LOPC.org).

### Sunday Worship Services

**9:00 a.m.**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Invite Friends & Family**

### Connect with us online!



[Livestream.Com/LOPC](http://Livestream.Com/LOPC)



[Facebook.com/lopchurch](https://Facebook.com/lopchurch)



[Google.com/LOPC](https://Google.com/LOPC)



[Vimeo.com/lopchurch](https://Vimeo.com/lopchurch)



[@lop\\_church](https://@lop_church)



[@lopchurch](https://@lopchurch)

**Tag us in  
your posts  
using  
#LOPC**