

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

New Beginnings

Renewed relationships
for the new year.

Renewal



**Renewed Relationships
for the New Year.
What can we do to build
healthy, vital
relationships in life?
Please join us for this
sermon series
beginning January 7th.**

JANUARY 2018

Happy New Year!

by Peter Whitelock, Pastor - Head of Staff



*I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and
rivers in the desert.
Isaiah 43:19*

As we head into a new year together, I was reminded of the many disparate dates that cultures have used in time and history to demarcate one year from another. Thanks to the ubiquity of the Gregorian calendar, the world generally views January 1st as the start of the year, but Israel, China, India and many other cultures celebrate the coming of a new year on different dates. At some level, the coming of a new year depends more than a little on one's perspective!

When it comes to God, new things tend to come at unexpected times, so they need to be perceived carefully. There is no predictability, such as the calendar affords our marking of a new year, but rather an openness required on our part to receive and enter into new times and seasons based on God's action in our midst and lives.

As the clock strikes 12:01 a.m. on January 1st, keep an open heart and mind regarding the promise of God's ability to bear new things into our lives. Oftentimes, right at the point of our deepest ennui as one phase of our lives has run its course, new life comes bursting forth in surprising ways. Perhaps this, at the heart of it, is what we mean when we wish one another a "Happy New Year." It's not that we know exactly when or where the gift of new life will come for us, but come it will!

Grace and peace,

Peter Whitelock

	Page
Pastor's Column.....	2

COMMUNITY LIFE

Saturday Evening Worship.....	3
Renewal Worship Series.....	3
Science & Religion.....	4
New Members Class.....	4
Disciples Bible Study.....	4
Mom's Retreat.....	4
Staff Profile.....	5
Lenten Study.....	5
PW Tea.....	6
Deacon Sunday.....	6
We Believe.....	6
First Friday Forum.....	7
LOPC Foundation.....	8
Session Highlights.....	8

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Journey of Faith.....	9
-----------------------	---

MISSION AT LOPC

Congo Update.....	10
Warm Winter Night Recap.....	10
ONE Sunday.....	11

FAMILY AT LOPC

Seedlings.....	12-13
theFANTASTICproject.....	14
Volunteering.....	15
Respite Night.....	15
Enough As She Is.....	15
Youth Events.....	16-17
2018 Leadership & Staff Roster.....	18
LOPC & Seedling Staff.....	19
Defusing Hatred.....	20

See more at LOPC.org



Community Life

We believe everyone thrives when we come together in a community of faith, whether as a congregation or in a smaller group setting. We have a variety of groups to suit the needs of everyone. Some groups focus on study or spiritual practice, others focus on service, and still others emphasize fellowship and common interests. But all groups provide a meaningful and fulfilling way to serve others, develop new friendships and deepen our faith together.

Join us on January 6 at 5:00 p.m.!

New!
**Saturday
Evening Worship**
A casual, contemporary
service for all ages.

Please join us in the LOPC Sanctuary January 6 at 5:00 p.m. for a new worship opportunity. All ages are welcome in this casual, contemporary service. In addition to music and communion, our time of teaching this month will focus on Commitment.

Children are always welcome in the Sanctuary and will have the option to leave mid-service to participate in a special children's message in the Chapel. They will rejoin worship in the Sanctuary after the sermon. Childcare will be available in the CLC for children 4 years old and younger.

Future service schedule: February 3rd, March 3rd, May 5th, June 2nd

Renewal

Renewed Relationships for the New Year
What can we do to build healthy, vital relationships in life?

1/7 - Love

Loving God, loving others, but what about loving ourselves?

1/14 - Advocacy

Standing up when the chips are down.
(MLK weekend)

1/21 - Curiosity

Making the choice to listen non-judgmentally.
(Eric Laws, guest preacher)

1/28 - Forgiveness

Divine lessons in the healing power of forgiving.

2/4 - Compassion

Developing a heart of empathy and understanding.

2/11 - Truthfulness

Integrity, honesty and telling the truth about ourselves.



Community Life

Science and Religion – 1/9

7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room



Modern world is marked by two extremes when it comes to the question of human reason. At one end of the spectrum, we

encounter those who declare that reason is capable, on its own, of knowing all that can be known: the explicit position of many Enlightenment philosophers and scientists, and still the stance of many important cultural voices. Its corollary is that other sources of knowledge—culture, emotion, and, most importantly, faith—should bend to the dominance of reason. At the other extreme, we encounter those who declare human reason is incapable of arriving at truth.

Whether we are looking at the turn to subjectivity and relativism in postmodern thought or encountering the denial of science and reason among fundamentalists of various stripes, many of our contemporaries have despaired of reason. The Catholic intellectual tradition represents a *via media*, in which reason is affirmed as a genuine source of knowledge both of the world and of God: “grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it” (Thomas Aquinas). At the same time, reason cannot fully comprehend the mysteries of God, the source of all Being: “the superluminous darkness of a silence teaching secretly in the utmost obscurity which is supermanifest” (Bonaventure).

Professor Zach Flanagin will be discussing this Catholic philosophy of faith and reason and its relevance to contemporary discussions about truth in our world, both Christian and beyond. All are invited.

New Members Class Feb. 9 – 11, 2018



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 meets the weekend of February 9 – 11, 2018. Childcare available by reservation. Questions? Contact chris@LOPC.org.

Disciple Bible Study

Begins Tuesday, January 9, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

led by Pastor Jaime Polson and LOPC Deacon, Jeff Patton.



BECOMING DISCIPLES
THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

We invite you to join us for a semester-long study of Scripture. This is a wonderful introduction to the Bible for people who are new

to learning about the Bible as well as those who have been studying the Bible for many years.

The study gives the Old and New Testaments equal time, emphasizing the wholeness of the Bible as a revelation of God. DISCIPLE draws upon the work of scholars, from personal Bible reading and study of the participants, and dynamic group discussion to aid understanding. Questions? Please email dave@LOPC.org.



Moms' Retreat

January 19, 2018 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Speaker: Rachel Macy Stafford, author of *Only Love Today*, *Hands Free Mama*, and several other bestsellers. She is a popular blogger and speaker who focuses on what really matters in life – love, faith, community and family.

Cost: \$15 Register online at LOPC.org/ministry/moms-retreat/



Childcare is available by RSVP to dave@lopc.org no later than 1/12/18
Questions? Contact Dave@LOPC.org

Editors note: This is the first of a series of profiles about the LOPC staff that will run in FOCUS from time to time.

Meet Susan Wentworth

by Dick James, Personnel Team member



A person meeting Susan Wentworth is quickly struck by several things – a broad, warm smile, a hearty, infectious laugh, and a strong hand shake that suggests abundant energy. And one more item -- her bright orange and black San Francisco Giants sweatshirt. More about that later.

Susan has worked in childcare at LOPC for six years. The welcoming smile and energy are key in her job. For she is in charge of all church attendees ages three months to five years. Let's repeat that, in case you skipped over it: -- ALL church attendees three months to five years old. And the other operative words are "in charge of."

If you're a mother, father, or perhaps grandmother, grandfather, you probably have some idea of the huge amount of energy and insistent demands for attention wrapped in that population cohort. It's Susan's job to satisfy them. That happens most intensively during Sunday school, plus some other times during the week, for a total of 25 hours. Officially, the job description is Associate Director of Preschool Ministry, which really doesn't describe anything for an outsider. Not until she begins to unpack that title does one understand why she says she goes home at noon on Sundays and takes a nap.

She comes to the job well prepared. It started when she graduated from Cal State Hayward with a degree in elementary education, followed by a year of seminary study toward a master's degree in religious education, followed by extensive training and experience in the children's program at First Covenant Church in Oakland. She "grew up" at First Covenant, she says, and put herself through college, working in its children's program, and later joining its staff. "It has a great youth program; it was my church from junior high on."

In 2012, she came to LOPC to work Sundays. "I knew instantly it was my church," she says. "The warmth, kindness, the welcoming community – I knew I wanted to be on staff here one day. I had no idea a year later that a position (staff job in Preschool Ministry) would open. I just love what you do here, how you share the gospel. How you love the community is something special, and I felt at home right away. Even to the point where I asked my family if we could join the Kurth Memorial Garden."

Drawing on her strong background and experience in children's education, Susan has worked with Ryan Timpte, Director of Children's Ministry, to expand the Preschool program beyond day care to include Christian spiritual and Biblical themes. For example: "First, I tried just Bible stories, but those can be kind of scary for children – you know, the flood, everyone gets washed away. So we changed to a virtue-based program. This month the virtue is generosity. Another month will be patience. A lot of it comes down to being kind – teaching a two-year-old how to be kind. How did God show us how to be patient. How did Jesus show us how to be helpful and generous."

Aside from the 25 hours weekly at LOPC, Susan has two other important aspects in her life. For one, she is a partner in a commercial lighting business. She learned long ago "you couldn't live on a teacher's salary," she says. How wonderful that in both jobs she lights up the world!

And what about that ever-present black and orange SF Giants sweatshirt? "I'm a huge sports fan and baseball fanatic," she explains. She played softball and basketball in high school. Once an A's fan, she switched allegiances across the Bay when she tired of seeing her favorite A's players continually traded away. Her obvious black-and-orange loyalty prompts friendly razzing from some LOPC staffers and members, which she gladly tolerates.

Lenten Studies

Lenten studies will soon be announced! Studies will be taking place from February 14, 2018 (Ash Wednesday) to March 25th, 2018 (Holy Week).

Save the dates and stay tuned for more information!

Community Life

Tea Is For More Than Drinking

By Catherine Gallinger, LOPC Member



“What on earth do women do at a tea? They can’t possibly drink tea and eat cookies and little sandwiches for three hours,” queried a friend of ours – male, I might add. Well, you are right! There is lots more to a tea than sipping Oolong and enjoying a cucumber sandwich.

There is entertainment, often musical, a message of hope, and an offering to help others. In fact, at the Presbyterian Women’s tea, Angels Watching Over Us, 121 women enjoyed the Saint Mary’s College Chamber Singers present a program that filled our hearts and souls as well as our ears with lovely musical tones, even two by our old friend Greg Murai. And we got to sing along at the end.

An interpretive dance by the Dancers Circle with our own Jan Browne presented a moving number set to the music of Amy Grant. And our PW Elder Bettie Graves opened our minds and hearts to the work of God’s messengers, the angels, with her creative writing and poetry. Our offering of \$2,000 will go to help the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance as they assist those harmed this past year by our many disasters.

So, friends, that is what is done at an PW tea, all capably chaired by Event Coordinator Charlotte Britton. So, next year, plan to join us as we worship together, sing together, and give together as we sip our tea.

Deacon Sunday

The Deacons will be on the plaza every second and fourth Sunday of the month. The Deacon Emergency Fund is one of the many ministries they provide. If you are experiencing a difficult financial situation, the Deacons can assist you with a one-time, confidential gift. You may contact the Duty Deacon line through the church phone number and dial extension 274 to let the Deacons know of your need.

Also, the Emergency Fund is sourced through member’s financial donations. So, if you would like to contribute to the Emergency Fund, you may use one of the brown envelopes in the pews or simply send a check to the office written to LOPC with “Emergency” in the memo line. Thank you for your contribution!

We Believe (?!?) – Beginning in February 2018

Sundays, 10:15 a.m.



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 for every person.

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.

- 2/11, The good, bad, and the ugly - How to pray.
- 3/11, Inclusion in the bible.

Please stay tuned for the details about the last two sessions!



2018 Speaker Series

JANUARY 5

Dr. Stephen Mende
"Spirits of the Polar Night"

Dr. Stephen Mende, who titles his lecture, "Spirits of the Polar Night." Working at UC Berkeley's Space Sciences Laboratory, he specializes in the aurora and has excellent pictures to feature in his presentation.



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

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(925) 283-8722

An unusual treat awaits attendees of First Friday Forum on January 5. Dr. Stephen Mende, who has specialized in studying the aurora since 1965, titles his talk, "Spirits of the Polar Night." He says there will be "movies, pictures, illustrations- you name it," in his Power Point presentation.

Mende says, "Auroras are often called the spirits of the polar night, as in the dark winter skies, in the polar regions, fascinating light shows take place almost every night. People have attributed fearsome properties to these dancing luminosities in the sky, but now, after several hundred years of scientific research we think we understand most aspects of the aurora.

"You might say it's nature's gigantic television display. Beams of electrons streaming down from space collide with the atmosphere, which acts as nature's phosphor screen on which the multi-colored light show takes place. I'll talk about why the aurora is colored the way it is and why it only occurs in the polar regions. I'll also explain why auroras occur preferentially in a circular

region around the magnetic poles of the Earth. We know the aurora is part of a huge global electric current circuit, but how and where is the power generated? If we knew this, could we use this gigantic power station to satisfy our energy needs?"

With a B.Sc. and Ph.D. from the University of London, Mende began his career at Rice University in 1965. It was then he developed the first camera for observing the aurora from a small satellite and in 1973-76 he developed a new type camera now in wide use by almost all ground-based auroral and airglow observers. During the years of 1976-1993 he was lead scientist for the experiment called "Atmospheric Emission Photometric Imager" that flew on the NASA Space Shuttle twice. In subsequent years, he and his team found the answer for astronauts who noted that the shuttle glowed at night on its forward-facing surfaces. The team recognized that the glow was created from the natural reaction of atmospheric atomic nitrogen and oxygen.

Mende began his career at UC Berkeley as a Senior Research Fellow in the Space Science Lab in 1996. During the years up to 2005 he and his team built and flew the far ultraviolet imager experiment on the NASA IMAGE mission. The IMAGE satellite went far enough from the Earth to look back and see the entire planet with its auroral belts.

Later, he was lead investigator for ground-based observatories for the NASA THEMIS mission where he and his team are operating a network of 21 auroral cameras strategically scattered around the northern arctic regions. Mende is deputy director for the NASA Explorer project known as the Ionospheric Connection Explorer, a satellite to be launched in 2018 which will study the Earth's Ionosphere, the inner edge of space, the home of all satellite communications which, he says, is so important to our technological society. He has more than 300 referred articles in journals and books, and three patents under his name.

"You won't want to miss the presentation with its spectacular pictures and information about the mysterious auroras." says Dr. Joe Whitehouse, member of the First Friday Forum Team. "The program is free and open to all."

For further information, call (925) 283-8722

Community Life

Looking backward and forward

by Staci Johnston, Foundation Trustee



Staci Johnston

During the two years I've served on the LOPC Foundation board what has most impressed me is the impact and importance of what we call legacy giving. Let me elaborate.

Early members of the church gave significant faith-based gifts to the Foundation which continue to bless LOPC to this day with funding, in part, for projects the donors never could have anticipated. I'm thinking of things like the sanctuary earthquake retrofit, or the Livestream of worship services over the internet, or, most recently, the new sanctuary projector and screen.

Believing that Jesus has shown us how to live and where to place our treasure, what better way to witness to the good news of the gospel, than to return some of our gifts from God to the faith community that has nurtured us.

Providing for the Foundation is an opportunity to make a faith statement to family and friends as to what is important.

Combining gifts, large and small, and prudently investing them, we can grow the Foundation to sustain LOPC into a challenging future and broaden its witness to the love of Christ.

Using the Foundation resources to meet both LOPC's planned maintenance and to respond to unexpected needs, means we can augment and smooth out the demands on the annual budget.

Joining with believers who have come before and will come after, giving through the Foundation sustains vitality and relevance as the church reaches out to the broader community both near and far.

All are invited to remember LOPC by providing a gift to the Foundation in their will or trust. Please contact one of the Foundation Trustees to learn more about how to become a Friend of the Foundation and help the Foundation's ongoing mission be achieved now and in the future at LOPC.

Contact: Dick James, President; Kristi Haigh, Vice President; Phil Placier, Treasurer; Dara Youngdale, Secretary; Jim Beckemeyer; Jerry Ducey and Staci Johnston.

In 2017, the Trustees worked together to capture the "essence of Faith Based Legacy Giving." Below is the distillation of our thinking in answer to the question: Why give a Legacy Gift to the LOPC Foundation? I have underlined key words.



Session Highlights – November 2017

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

Our November Session meeting was a chance to remember all that we have to be thankful for. In our spiritual formation, we continue to explore ways that we might respond to the challenges facing organized religion using the book by Tom Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, as a resource. The book uses the Lewis and Clark expedition as an example of a journey where success depended on adapting when the initial assumptions at the start of their journey proved wrong. Much that we have presumed and assumed about the Church is now being challenged. While LOPC is blessed to be one of the more stable churches, the trends for churches in general are sobering, and we want to be preparing for the future.

Session received reports from the Finance Team and the Stewardship Team. Financially we are tracking to

expectations. However there are some assumptions in those expectations that assume we will have additional giving at the end of this year and more pledges coming in for next year. We are confident that the congregation will respond.

Session was also pleased to approve the creation of a Diversity Task Force that will begin work this year and continue into the spring. Session has established diversity as one of four priority areas for the church. This task force is convened to assess current climate of diversity and inclusiveness, evaluate current ministries and programs which encourage inclusiveness and diversity, and develop a plan to better reflect the diversity in our community. The task force will report its findings and proposals back to Session. Members include co-chairs Gerald Chinen and Kathy Timpte plus Julie Atkinson, Jonathan Lee, Chad Runyon, Hiroko Shibuya, Yuji Shibuya and Alan Young. We look forward to the work product of this group.

Spiritual Formation

Spiritual Formation emphasizes our openness and receptivity to God. The heart of Spiritual Formation is about deepening your connection to God. Spiritual Formation can be described in different ways because we experience our connection to God differently. Our diverse offerings range from the contemplative to the active, from the traditional to the current, and the spirituality discovered in nature.

Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



Rich Lewis

Rich Lewis says helping others has been a way of life for him since he was five and lived on a farm in Western Pennsylvania. "My mother instilled in us to help our neighbors. If someone was sick or could not get their crops in or it looked like a big rainstorm was approaching, we would jump in to help them."

It also contributed to his spiritual life. "I could really feel Jesus and God around me as I would lie in a pasture and look around me and at the sky to see the marvels of what God has wrought. I believe that is why the 23 Psalm is my favorite Bible Passage. 'He makes me lie down in green pastures.'"

The Lewis family attended the Old Mahoning Baptist Church, founded in 1830. The church is alive and vibrant today. Rich remembers being in Christmas plays, Sunday School, youth meetings, and revival meetings with his special friend, Jim Griffith, with whom he still maintains a friendship. In their teens, they helped the older men dig out for a basement under the church, again a glimpse of what Rich would continue to do throughout his life.

Rich was baptized at age 13 and in his church it meant full immersion. He recalls the boiler wasn't working well and the water was very cold. In 1956, Rich was appointed Sunday School Superintendent with many responsibilities including opening the Sunday School by choosing Bible readings, songs and finding someone to lead the opening prayer.

There were times in Rich's young life when he felt God's presence—and didn't. One time when he says he was probably driving his '56 Chevy convertible too fast it hit an ice patch. The car kept sliding and going around in circles. "I swear I felt someone else's hand on the steering wheel. There is no other explanations as to why it did not flip over. I guess someone, Jesus?, had other plans for me." But when his father died of a massive heart attack at age 49 Rich was very angry with God for taking such a good man, the salt of the earth, who still had a 16-year-old daughter at home. "I kept thinking of all the drunks, criminals and low-lives that were still alive. For a time it was very hard for me to attend church and let God in my life."

Rich attended Penn State and was drafted into the army in 1961. "A fellow GI and I became good friends, as we are to this day. He had an aunt and uncle living in San Jose and he said he was going there after he was discharged in January 1963 and I decided to join him. We arrived in California the middle of February, 1963. A few months later I met this cute, vivacious co-ed from San Jose State. The story is too long to relate here, but I finally got her to go out with me. We were married at the Orinda Community Church in 1964 and moved to Orinda in 1972. Marty and Rich began attending LOPC around 1977, led there by neighbor, Ginny Murphy. It took a while for them to join, but they were pledging before they joined in 1987. Rich says it was primarily because of LOPC's mission work.

He has been on 13 mission trips. The first one was in 1989 when a week was spent at the Hoopa Indian Reservation in Northern California working on the Presbyterian Church. The next year he helped build a pre-school on the reservation. Although he never thought of himself as a leader of mission trips, Rich says Janet Russell and John Weems put him in that role and he led the second mission trip after Hurricane Katrina, and has continued to plan trips to areas devastated by hurricanes, tornadoes, or fires up to the one last year in Weed, CA. "It's a pleasure to have spent so much time with those from LOPC who are willing to help those who have far less than we have. Also, there are fond memories of those whom we have helped build or rebuild their homes—and their lives or rebuild their homes. Hopefully I still have a few trips left in me.

"When I retired my plan was to put together a work crew to meet one day a week to do projects at LOPC. I retired December 31, 2005, and on January 1, 2006, the Thursday Work Crew was born. I picked Thursday, as Wednesday is dinner and date night for Marty, and me and I didn't want to be exhausted and fall asleep at the movie. I started with six men and four are still involved. My favorite project is the Howard Robbins Storage Room. Whenever I look at it I think of Howard, who was part of our crews and did so much for LOPC.

"I've been told by staff, Seedlings workers, and many in the congregation that we've accomplished a lot in the past 12 years and I believe we have. I truly enjoy doing things for others to this day."

Mission at LOPC

LOPC's Mission ministry looks to Christ as an example of how to serve others and meet people wherever they are. We look for opportunities for participants to make a meaningful connection with those we serve with the hope of transformation and understanding as a result of that connection. LOPC uses its resources to respond to needs locally and globally with the goal of making a sustainable impact on those we serve.

Congo's Devastation Continues

The Congo Mission team heard recently that the violence in the Kasai Region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has lessened considerably. The Kasai region, the area in which the Presbyterian Church (USA) operates, has suffered significant violence over the past year due to fighting between rebels and government forces. While the lessened fighting is good news, the aftermath of the violence has left the region with people dislocated, facing poverty and hunger.

The UN has expressed increasing concern about the humanitarian crisis developing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The UN says that there are now 4.1 million internally displaced people in the DRC. As we enter 2018, more than 13 million people require humanitarian assistance and protection, about double from the beginning of 2017.

Unfortunately, funding to address this crisis is limited. PC(USA)' has provided a link so people can easily send an email to Secretary of State Tillerson and our Senators and House representative asking them to provide leadership in the international community and to press for the global community to fully fund the special UN humanitarian appeal for the Kasai region. The link is <http://www.capwiz.com/pcusa/issues/alert/?alertid=79174626&type=ML>

The link is easy to follow. You do not need to enter any email. The system is set up to do that automatically for you. Simply read the message, cut and paste if you wish, and sign your name and provide your contact information.

The Congo team requests that members of LOPC respond to this request to voice our concerns. If you have any questions, you can contact Sue Gibbons (clearspeech@suegibbons.com) or Herb Long (herblong7@gmail.com).

Warm Winter Nights Follow-Up



LOPC welcomed the Warm Winter Nights shelter to campus for two weeks in November. The Winter Nights Rotating Family Shelter is a project of the Interfaith Council of Contra

Costa County and runs from October to May annually, with over 40 churches and synagogues participating. The challenges of minimum wage employment, rising housing costs and a scarcity of housing have contributed to making affordable housing almost impossible to find. Clients who have lost jobs, fallen ill or been evicted have looked to Warm Winter Nights to get them through these challenging times. This shelter meets key needs as families struggle to transition back into permanent housing. LOPC hosted the shelter with the leadership of Jim Reiter and Rick Silvani and the help of over 350 volunteers.

This year we provided shelter for seven families comprised of eight Adults (six single mothers and one couple) and 12 children with eight children under the age of five. The congregation embraced our guests with hospitality, love and compassion. Many small groups, including the Sowers, Men's Bible Study and various Voyagers ships as well as individuals worked together to provide amazing meals and activities for our guests. Some of the highlights included a fashion show featuring handmade hats knitted by LOPC knitters and beautiful quilts which were given to each family from LOPC quilting group. In addition, our guests had a visit from a group of therapy animals that brightened their day.

Not only did we make an impact on the clients, but many volunteers commented on what a powerful experience serving this community was for them. Preconceived notions of what homeless looks like were dissolved and replaced with an insight into the path that can lead people to homelessness. The realization that Warm Winter Nights provides a safety net for those struggling and brings stability back to their lives was evident to all that served.

Mission at LOPC



2-25

A Day of Service

Community is important at LOPC not only on campus, but in Lamorinda and beyond. One of the most demonstrable examples of this is ONE Sunday, a day of service for the greater community. ONE Sunday allows LOPC to partner with local non-profits to offer them help accomplishing projects they need done, but simply lack the resources to do so. LOPC mission partners as well as other non-profits in the community are invited to participate. There are activities for all ages, from three on up.

ONE Sunday makes a huge impact not only on the community, but on those who participate. We are called to serve one another and ONE Sunday offers an opportunity to make a tangible difference in other's lives and while demonstrating the love of Christ.

Join Us!

Register at LOPC.org Today!

One Community Serving Together



Family at LOPC

At LOPC, everyone is welcome and celebrated for the love and care they put into their families. Our definition of what it means to be a family is broad and inclusive. We invite you to be a part of something bigger, a church that strives to show all of us God's love and provides programs that teach families how to walk with Christ.

Faith Formation At Seedlings: Wonder Time

by Molly Maduck & Bridgette Thomas, Seedlings Communications Board Members



We recently asked a group of young children what they think the word “wonder” means. Responses were both meaningful – “It means to imagine, it’s dreaming, it’s to be curious” – and adorable – “It’s when you look for things, like I wonder where my Spider-Man shirt is?”

Regardless of how it is defined, wonder is inherent in young children. They are naturally astonished and amazed by the world around them. Because of this, a goal at Seedlings has always been to nurture the spirituality and natural curiosity in our children. In alignment with this purpose, “Wonder Time,” our Faith Formation program, was created.

Wonder Time is Seedlings’ spiritual component that we offer our preschool aged children during the school day. It is a special program designed specifically for our three, four, and five-year-olds. Wonder Time gives our

children a special time each week to pause, learn, reflect, and share their wonderings together.

The first week of each month a school-wide assembly called “Big Wonder Time” is held in the beautiful LOPC Sanctuary. Big Wonder Time is led by Seedlings’ Director of Outreach & Enrichment, Bobbi Cassettari; together with Children’s Ministry Director, Ryan Timpte; Associate Director, Lori Robinson; and Director of LOPC’s Preschool Ministry, Susan Wentworth. The team leads the kids and their families in fun songs, a Bible story to illustrate that month’s virtue, and some simple mindfulness activities. Seedlings’ monthly virtues coincide with those presented each month through LOPC’s Children’s Ministry.



Family at LOPC

In the following weeks after Big Wonder Time, the children meet in small Wonder Time groups by their class (3s, 4s, and 5s) in the LOPC little chapel. Each class is led by our amazing Wonder Time Leader, Bobbi Cassettari, and offers various experiences such as music and movement, stories, sharing joys and concerns, and even mission and outreach projects as a group, all focusing on that month's virtue. This spiritual formation time is age and developmentally appropriate for all children and very respectful of each family's religious background.

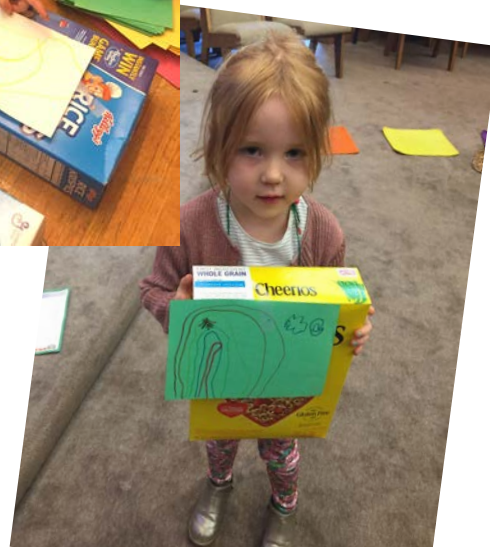
Seedlings recently held a cereal drive. The children in Wonder Time talked about all the ways (big and small) that we can help other people and why helping others is so important. They talked about people in our community who are hungry and in need of food. Each student chose a box of breakfast cereal to bring to Big Wonder Time. The drive was a big success! Together, students collected 75 boxes of cereal to donate to Monument Crisis Center's Food Bank, in Concord.

In Children's Ministry at LOPC, the children learn that a virtue is something that God does in us to change the world around us. We hope that our young Seedlings students will learn to be more aware of the incredible virtues in them, and in those around them. December's virtue was generosity: "Making someone's day by giving something away!" Our kids heard the story of the Magi who wanted to honor baby Jesus with special and valuable gifts. These gifts could have been used for wealthy gain for each of these important leaders, but instead, they travelled long and far to give away their prized gold, frankincense, and myrrh to this little baby King!

Children at Seedlings are learning that each of us has room in our hearts to give something away to someone else. Whether it's helping a friend who needs a hand, bringing a box of cereal to give to a family who is hungry, or giving someone a gift or a smile to show that you care about them...this is what love is, it's how we take care of each other, it's how we serve God, and it's what makes the world a better place!

John 13:34-35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."



Family at LOPC

theFANTASTICproject

by Ryan Timpte, Director of Children's Ministry

We believe that the world can be a better place. We believe that our kids will lead the way. We want to center the virtues of kindness, justice, and mercy in their lives, so that they can be the ones to change the world. That's why we started "theFANTASTICproject." This series of weekly videos, uploaded every Thursday, is designed to help kids navigate a broken world by discussing tough issues like inequality, racism, and other systemic injustices in a kid-friendly way.

The videos of theFANTASTICproject center kindness, justice, and mercy through five different lenses (video names are in parentheses):

- Inclusion: a community is made stronger when different voices are elevated (Jellybeans, Balloons)
- Storytelling: we learn more about each other and ourselves when we learn to tell and listen to stories (Stay Curious)
- Sabbath: taking care of each other means taking care of ourselves, too (Rest, Centering)
- Hospitality: welcoming others makes us stronger (Spam Musubi, Pizza & Popcorn)
- Peacemaking: it's up to us to bring peace to a broken world (Light in the Forest, Helpers)



Family at LOPC

Start the New Year by Becoming Like a Child

by Ryan Timpte, Director of Children's Ministry

When we make resolutions for the new year, we're choosing to make a change. We're buying into the hope that starting something new in our lives will spark renewal within us so that we might find new ways to make our world a better place.

That's part of what Jesus is talking about in Mark 10, when he calls us to become like children in order to enter the kingdom of God. Becoming like a child is a choice to make a change, an act of spiritual renewal - and there are few places better to learn how to become like a child than in Children's Ministry.

Our team is looking for new volunteers who want to make a difference in the world by making a difference in the lives of our kids. We need voices speaking spiritual truths, sharing personal stories, and helping kids understand how much God loves us. We need adults who can see a future where these children begin to heal our broken world. We need you.

Serving in Children's Ministry is about more than just filling a role; it's about fulfilling a call: Christ's call to become like a child. As we center the virtues of kindness, justice, and mercy in the lives of our kids, we invite you to explore how those virtues intersect with your own life and how they might call you into a season of new service opportunities.

As you start fresh this year, consider committing some of your time to Children's Ministry. We need help on Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons from people of all ages and skill sets. Our team would love to talk with you about the best place for you to serve alongside some of the best volunteers in the church.

We want the world to be a better place, and that starts by influencing the next generation of caretakers and leaders. It starts by learning from - and becoming like - the children in our community. It starts with you.

For more information about volunteering in Children's Ministry this year, please contact Associate Director of Children's Ministry Lori Robinson at Lori@LOPC.org or (925) 283-8722 ext 251.



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. All staff and volunteers have had background checks and have had basic training in working with children and youth with special needs. 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.

Register

Contact dave@LOPC.org, (925) 283-8722 x280
Deadline for registration is Friday, January 19, 2018.
We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.

Enough As She Is – 3/22

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.



Join us for an evening with the Cofounder of Girls Leadership and New York Times best-selling author, Rachel Simmons as she discusses her latest book - *Enough As She Is: How to Help Girls Move Beyond Impossible Standards of Success to Live Healthy, Happy, and Fulfilling Lives.*

For many girls today, the drive to achieve is fueled by brutal self-criticism and an acute fear of failure. Though young women have never been more "successful" - outpacing boys in GPAs and college enrollment - they have also never struggled more. On the surface, girls may seem exceptional, but in reality, they are anxious and overwhelmed, feeling that, no matter how hard they try, they will never be enough. Her talk will focus on how to teach girls self-compassion as an alternative to self-criticism, how to manage overthinking and resist the constant urge to compare themselves to peers, how to take healthy risks and navigate toxic elements of social media. As an educator, Rachel teaches girls and women skills to build their resilience, amplify their voices, and own their courage so that they - and their relationships - live with integrity and health. *Enough As She Is* argues that young women can do more than survive adolescence; they can thrive.

Family at LOPC

What Are Faith Milestones?

by Keris Dahlkamp, Director of Youth Ministry and by Allison Kunz, Associate Director of Youth Ministry

We honor and celebrate children and youth as they grow in faith by marking significant moments along their journey.

Gifts & Affirmations - 6th Grade

What's the purpose of Gifts & Affirmations?

At this stage, youth are asking, "Who am I?" We will recognize each unique student and celebrate them for who God made them to be.

Parents and other members of the youth's support cloud gather to affirm the individual gifts, passions and perspectives this unique young person holds. We also remind the youth and of his/her important place in this caring community of believers.

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
Psalm 139:14

Parents will meet on Sunday, January 14 at 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. in the Davies Room to learn about this milestone. Affirmations will take place on Sunday, January 28 and will be recognized during worship services on February 11.

Email allison@LOPC.org for more information.



Confirmation - 8th Grade and Up

What's the purpose of Confirmation?

At this stage, youth are asking, "What do I really believe?" We will walk beside each student as they explore their faith and seek to take ownership over their faith journey.

What makes us Christians and how are we to interact with the world? Students explore their faith, doubts and questions in a safe and encouraging space. This series of interactive theological discussions is focused on the basics of Christian belief and action. Students will have the opportunity to listen, learn, question, write a personal statement of faith, and publicly proclaim their Christian faith in front of their church community.

"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven."
Matthew 10:32

Parents and youth will attend an informational meeting on Sunday, January 14, at 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., in the Davies room. Classes will run each Sunday from February 4 through March 25. Confirmation will take place during worship services on Sunday, April 15.

Email keris@LOPC.org for more information.



Family at LOPC

Save the Date for Summer Youth Mission Experiences!

All our mission experiences are life-changing opportunities for youth to learn to serve others while discovering God at work in the lives of those we meet. Save the date for these summer opportunities.

- June 11-15 Service Squad: Local Mission Daycamp(Completed 5th-6th Graders)
- June 24-30 Middle School Mission Trip: SanFrancisco Bay Area (Completed 7th-8th Graders)
- July 7-15 High School Mission Trip: Houston, TX(Completed 9th-12th Graders)

Registration opens at LOPC.org on February 1. Email keris@LOPC.org for more information.



2018 Elders

Alex Aruliah
 Jody Black
 Conrad Breece
 Matt Crossland
 Michael Kim
 Laura Lowell
 Lori MacLeod
 Wayne Young
 Brandt Andersson
 Sharon Bartlett
 Lois Boyd
 Don Colebourn
 Peter Darbee
 Julie Fulford
 Jim Nagle
 Alex Paras
 Cameron Adkison

Robert Johnson
 Paul Koenig
 Marjorie Nicolaisen
 Gerda Snapper
 Fred Toth
 Mary Welte
 Jenna Yott

2017 Foundation Trustees

Dick James, President
 Kristi Haigh, Vice President
 Phil Placier, Treasurer
 Dara Youngdale, Secretary
 Jim Beckemeyer
 Jerry Ducey
 Staci Johnston

2018 Deacons

Rebecca Bassak
 Sebastien Dubois
 Margaret Kaluzny
 Gale Lana
 Heather Logan
 Richard Miles
 Sue Nagle
 Alan Saxton
 Rob Schock
 Suganthi Aruliah
 Carson Beckemeyer
 Barbara Duff
 Leslie Finertie
 Rebecca Kunzman
 Fran Mathews
 Sandy Peter

Todd Severson
 Graham Wiseman
 Carolyn Bauer
 Nancy Boren
 John Carpenter
 Jim Davis
 Sue Fernstrom
 Ginny Gifford
 Jeff Hutson
 Ruwani Jayasingha
 Linda Kinrade
 Patty Koepke
 Cheryl Miller
 Ann Loar
 Nolan Carpenter
 Jackie Patton

LOPC Staff

Allison Kunz
 Ashlee Rountree
 Ashley Jackson
 Brett Strader
 Char Casella
 Chris Baldwin
 Chuck Fry
 Colleen Whitelock
 Dave Engelbrekton
 Devin Crane
 Elizabeth Ball
 Gerald Chinen
 Harry Jayasingha
 Hiroko Shibuya
 Jaime Polson
 Janet Jourgensen
 Jennifer Shaul
 Keris Dahlkamp
 Lauren Gully
 Lidia Jesionek
 Lori Robinson
 Peter Whitelock
 Robin Freeberg
 Ryan Timpte
 Stewart Sarch
 Susan Wentworth
 Terry Conte
 Tess Houston
 Tony Domenick

Ministry Area and/or Title

Associate Director - Youth Ministry
 Admin. Care & Spiritual Formation
 Communications Director
 Director of Worship and Music
 Treasurer
 Director of Community Engagement
 Director of Operations
 Facilities / Database Manager
 Admin. Asst. - Operations / Family Ministries
 Audio / Video Technician / General Admin.
 Executive Ministries Coordinator
 Pastor - Congregational Care
 Chaplain
 Worship and Music Coordinator
 Pastor - Family Ministries
 Receptionist
 Admin. Asst. - Communications
 Director of Youth Ministry
 Pastor - Mission & Spiritual Formation
 Accountant
 Associate Director - Children's Ministry
 Pastor - Head of Staff
 Associate Director - Mission
 Director of Children's Ministry
 Organist
 Associate Director - Preschool Ministry
 Kitchen Ministry Administrator
 Bell Choir Director
 Assistant Music Director

Extension

241
 228
 240
 224
 253
 110
 230
 260
 280
 221
 227
 264
 226
 223
 249
 233
 225
 229
 251
 255
 250
 234
 243
 237
 245
 235

Email

allison@lopc.org
 ashlee@lopc.org
 ashley@lopc.org
 brett@lopc.org
 char@lopc.org
 chris@lopc.org
 chuck@lopc.org
 colleen@lopc.org
 dave@lopc.org
 devin@lopc.org
 elizabeth@lopc.org
 gerald@lopc.org
 harryjayasingha@comcast.net
 hiroko@lopc.org
 jaime@lopc.org
 janet@lopc.org
 jennifer@lopc.org
 keris@lopc.org
 lauren@lopc.org
 lidia@lopc.org
 lori@lopc.org
 peter@lopc.org
 robin@lopc.org
 ryan@lopc.org
 stewart@lopc.org
 susan@lopc.org
 terry@lopc.org
 tessique.houston@gmail.com
 tony@lopc.org

Seedlings

Bobbi Cassettari
 Coleen Moulton

Ministry Area and/or Title

Assoc. Director - Seedlings
 Director - Seedlings

Extension

238
 238

Email

bobbi@lopc.org
 coleen@lopc.org

Thursday Fellowship

Julie Peterson
 Clarita Wooldridge

Ministry Area and/or Title

Thursday Fellowship Co-Coordinator
 Thursday Fellowship Co-Coordinator

Extension

281
 281

Email

thursdayfellowship@lopc.org
 thursdayfellowship@lopc.org

Happy New Year From The LOPC & Seedlings Staff! May You Continue To Live Alive! In Christ in 2018



Front row (l-r): Tony Domenick, Lidia Jesionek, Dave Engelbrektsen, Char Casella, Jaime Polson, Devin Crane, Allison Kunz, Hiroko Shibuya. Middle row (l-r): Chuck Fry, Gerald Chinen, Ashlee Rountree, Lauren Gully, Lori Robinson, Ryan Timpfe, Ashley Jackson. Back row (l-r): Brett Strader, Stewart Sarch, Keris Dahlkamp, Chris Baldwin, Janet Jourgensen, Elizabeth Ball, Robin Freeberg, Peter Whitelock. Not pictured: Julie Peterson, Clarita Wooldridge, Harry Jayasingha, Colleen Whitelock, Susan Wentworth, Jennifer Shaul, and Terry Conte.



Top row (l-r): Bobbi Cassettari, Cheryl Salvato, Lisa Burrows, Jennifer Paschall, Amy Van Buren, Traci Weldon, Christine Poppa, Coleen Moulton, Max Cordes, Kathy LaPlante. Bottom row (l-r): Kellie Harper, Emily Cottone, Paige Moulton, Robyn Spaulding, Kim Brooks, Noelle Isenberg, Dawn Thompson, Carrie Tarbox, Maddy Malvini, Mari Gerry, and Lasondra Wilson.



JANUARY 2018

49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549

IMPORTANT:
Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
Before 1/1/18
Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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 Scharch, Organist

TREASURER

Char Casella

MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement
Keris Dahkamp, Youth
Chuck Fry, Operations
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool
Ryan Timpte, 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 Jourgensen.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

JANUARY 1 for the FEBRUARY issue.
Email items to communications@LOPC.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Monday by 5:00 p.m.
Email communications@LOPC.org.



Interfaith – Defusing Hatred Program – 1/13

4:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Join us to learn skills for responding to uneasy situations and hate speech in these times of heightened tension. Developed by the Interfaith Council and sponsored by Neighbor to Neighbor,

this program is designed to build communities of care for the vulnerable and involves role-playing to illustrate how best to be present for the oppressed. For more information, contact Terry Clark terence.clark08@gmail.com.

Connect with us online!



Livestream.Com/LOPC



Facebook.com/lopchurch



Google.com/LOPC



Vimeo.com/lopchurch



@lop_church



@lopchurch

Tag us in your posts using #LOPC

Sunday Worship Services

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family