

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

At LOPC, everyone in our congregation is a children's minister



Kids Rock

Wednesday afterschool program for kids 4-years-old through 4th grade

About

Kids Rock is designed to help kids engage spirituality, express creativity, experience physical activity and embrace community. By learning new skills, cultivating Christian virtues and making better friends, our kids learn to be alive in Christ and in the world.

Start

Program begins Wednesday, 10/ 19 (dinner included).

Orientation

for families is Wednesday, 10/12, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Register

For more information and to register, please go to LOPC.org

Questions

Email ryan@LOPC.org

October 2016

We Rise Together

by Peter Whitelock, Pastor - Head of Staff



“Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel...”

These words from Paul in his letter to the Philippians reminds us that Christian faith is always best exercised in community. We are created in Christ to care, learn, worship, serve and strive together in building the church as a credible expression of God’s love and justice. Simply put, we rise together!

	Page
Atfaluna School for the Deaf...	13
Deacon Emergency Fund.....	14
Family Faith Formation.....	9
Harvest Soup Supper.....	16
Healing Hearts.....	13
Journey of Faith.....	10
Live Just.ly.....	12
LOPC Foundation.....	15
LOPC Tote Bag.....	14
Men’s Breakfast.....	8
New Beginnings.....	9
New Members.....	8
November Quilt Display.....	11
Pastor’s Column.....	2
Presbyterian Women’s Tea.....	11
Quilts for Children.....	11
Science & Religion.....	8
Session Highlights.....	15
Special Needs Ministry.....	4
Spiritual Direction.....	12
Spiritual Practices.....	8
Staff Transitions.....	5
Stewardship Campaign.....	3
Third Grade Bible Class.....	11
Thursday Fellowship.....	6
Volunteer at LOPC.....	14
Warm Winter Nights.....	12
We Believe.....	9
Wheel Day.....	7
Youth Corner.....	6

The annual pledge drive at LOPC is an opportunity, more than anything else, for each of us to declare through our estimate of giving, that we are committed to the health, vitality and loving witness of our church community. All giving flows from gratitude for the people, resources and responsibilities that God has entrusted to each of us. When we truly grasp that LOPC is a God-given trust to every member and friend of the community, our giving moves beyond charity into the practice of being a good steward.

I believe that LOPC is at a critical juncture, as we have completed our renovation of church facilities, built up a great team of staff and lay leaders, and are now poised to dramatically expand our service and mission to others. “Rising together” points me to the reality that the presence of our vital, healthy ministry has never been more needed or important in our community. Our potential to change the world for good and for God is tremendous, and it all starts for each of us in filling out a simple card!

I am so very grateful for all the gifts you offer in time, talent and treasure, and know that as we move forward, my commitment is to ensure they are put to the very best use and ends.

Peter Whitelock



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

Please Join Us for Giving Sunday!

Giving Sunday this year is November 6th, and that is the day we encourage members and friends to bring their Estimate of Giving cards for the coming year to worship. If you can't be there, the card can always be mailed in or dropped by the church office. Once all commitments are gathered, we begin the good work of finalizing a budget for next year. If you want to change your pledge at any time, for any reason, it can be done simply and conveniently through the church office. You will be receiving a pledge packet in the mail the week of October 17, and you will also be able to access these materials online that same week at <http://www.lopc.org/give-back/pledge>.



As you estimate the gift you would like to make for the coming year, here are some things to consider:

- The church's ministry is not funded by a select few, but rather hundreds of individuals and families who prayerfully consider the gift that is right for them.
- Any estimate of giving you make for the year should be related to your estimated annual family income for the year; what we call "proportional giving." That way, we all give according to our means.
- Sometimes the best step is to simply get started. Don't worry about what others might think, but focus instead on what you think God might want you to give.
- Consider approaching your giving fresh each year, so that it can remain in relationship to your income.
- A good goal, and it may take time to get there, is to ultimately give 10% of family income away each year to serve the needs of others - both through LOPC and other organizations that are working to bring healing and hope. If you can, consider growing your giving to LOPC by 1% of family income in 2017!



Becoming a Special Needs Church

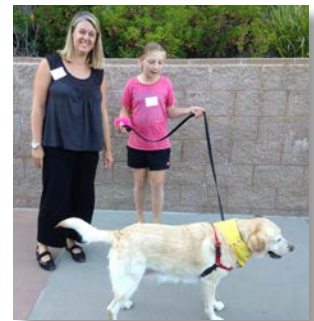
by Jaime Polson, Pastor-Family Ministries

“I think this is
the call of
our church...”

My first week as a pastor at LOPC was spent scheduling meetings with church members, who could give me insights into the needs of our community. An inspiring mom shared with me that for families with children and youth with special needs it is hard to find a home in a faith community. Because their behavior is often different than typically developing children/youth or they make noises which are seen as too loud for church spaces, it is hard for families to find a place to worship together. Over the past few years I have seen God direct more and more people with a heart, a willingness and a passion to serve in Special Needs Ministry at LOPC.

The Special Needs Ministry Committee program goals for the 2016-17 church year follow:

1. Raise awareness about what it is like to be part of a family who has children/youth with special needs. We want all of God's children, including our children and youth with special needs, to be a part of our faith community and learn about God through faith formation and have the opportunity to serve in the world. Dr. Jennifer Crossland and Beth Coffin, both professionals in the special needs field, and Rev. Jaime Polson will provide training on how we can support families and welcome them into our church community. All church members and attendees are welcome and encouraged to attend.
 - September 25, 2016 from 10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in the Oak Room
 - October 23, 2016 from 10:15 a.m. -11:30 a.m. in the Oak Room
2. Respite Nights - We will provide respite nights to give parents and caregivers an opportunity to rest and provide a night of fun and games for our children and youth with special needs. We held our first respite night on August 12, 2016 at LOPC, hosting eight families and their children thanks to twelve wonderful volunteers. Our partner churches, Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church and Hillside Covenant Church (Walnut Creek) will provide a total of eight respite nights for the community. This is a shared ministry between our churches. We are also working with Temple Isaiah and Young Life Capernaum (a youth group for youth with special needs) to see how we can partner together in this ministry.
 - We will provide another respite night at LOPC in April 2017.
3. Buddy Program - LOPC will provide a buddy for all children and youth with special needs who would like to attend Sunday School programs. We have a group of wonderful volunteers who have committed to serving each week. We are always looking for more volunteers! Questions? Email dave@LOPC.org.
 - This program began on September 18, 2016



LOPC's first Respite Night August 12, 2016

Our vision in Children's Ministry is that we are all children's ministers. Likewise as we formally begin the Special Needs Ministry at LOPC, I echo the hopeful words of Pastor Chuck Swindoll (Senior Pastor at Stonebriar Church), who says at his church, "we are a special needs church." I think this is the call of our church as well. We all have different roles and gifts in how we participate in the life of the church – some will be buddies for our children and youth with special needs and. We all have the call as part of the body of Christ, to provide a loving, inclusive and hospitable welcome to all of God's people in our sanctuary, on our campus and everywhere else God leads us in the community. Praise be to God for his wondrous works, who has created each one of us in his precious image. Thanks be to God!

Staff Transitions Ahead



Becki Reiger

Becki is Retiring?!

It seems odd to be writing about my retirement now since I won't actually be leaving staff until the spring of 2017. Some of you may already know that we had a full-time support staffer leave earlier this year. I have been filling in for that position with the help of other staff, primarily Janet and Colleen, while still holding my own position supporting Peter, Session, Personnel, Stewardship, and more. It has been a bit of a juggling act! I very much appreciate your patience and prayers while we've pieced together a plan to find a replacement for my position so I can move to supporting Gerald and Lauren full-time.

"It seems odd to be writing about my retirement"

Having recently found that replacement in Elizabeth Ball, who assumed my role on September 6th, we felt some explanation was needed. While I shift support positions, I will also train Elizabeth and create a better job outline for the person who will eventually be hired to completely satisfy our support staff needs. We'll begin searching for that person early next year and hopefully they'll be in place for training before I retire.

It is a bittersweet time for me right now. I very much love this community and staff, but I also love my husband, and there are some things we really want to do before we are no longer able. He has been semi-retired for some time now and has been waiting for me to do the same so we can travel more freely. While I will be gone for months at a time, I will still be around for special projects and to support LOPC in whatever ways I can.



Elizabeth Ball

Help Us Welcome Elizabeth

I am looking forward to working at LOPC as the new Executive Ministries Coordinator. I come to LOPC with a background in Human Resources, Executive Support, and Early Childhood Education.

After graduating from UC Davis in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development, I pursued a career in Human Resources working for SCORE! Educational Centers and The Bar Association of San Francisco. For the past four years I have worked part time as both a kindergarten assistant at Del Rey Elementary in Orinda and as a part time preschool teacher at St. John's Preschool in Orinda. In addition, for the last six years I have volunteered as a Girl Scout Troop Leader, Girl Scouts Diablo Day Camp counselor, and I have served on preschool and elementary school parent boards. For the past ten

years, I have lived in Orinda with my husband Jeff. We have two daughters, Alice in 6th grade at OIS, and Mary in 4th grade at Del Rey. We also have two old cats and an extremely energetic six-month old puppy.

My childhood in Southern California was centered around church. I spent much of my time singing in the choir, playing hand bells, attending church camp, and participating in youth group and outreach programs. It is because of these fond memories that I am enthusiastic about being part of the LOPC community.

"I am enthusiastic about being part of the LOPC community."

Youth Corner

Middle School Corn Maze Trip - 10/22



Enjoy some harvest-themed fun with your friends and leaders at the Dell'Osso Family Farm. Drop off at 1:30 p.m., pick up at 8:30 p.m. Drivers requested. Please bring spending money to purchase attraction tickets and dinner, or bring your own dinner. Register at <http://www.lopc.org/ministry/youth/by/10/17>.

High School Mission Trip Information Meeting - 10/23

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. in the Oak Room. Come learn more about the costs, dates and registration requirements of the trip to India! Contact keris@LOPC.org with questions.



Meet the *thursday*Fellowship Co-Coordinators

Thursday Fellowship Co-Coordinators: (925) 283-8722 x281
Julie Peterson, julie@LOPC.org & Clarita Wooldridge, clarita@LOPC.org



Julie
Peterson

I grew up in Lafayette and attended LOPC from its inception. My husband and I were married here, but within two years moved to Illinois where we lived until 2010. I moved back to the East Bay full-time several years ago and became involved in the Small Group Spiritual Formation Team, and also kept noticing the invitation in Connections inviting guests and volunteers to join Thursday Fellowship. I just couldn't ignore the "nudge" to check it out. First, I donated a salad.

Then I started attending Thursday Fellowship and the spiritual formation time prior to the program. There is always a great activity, followed by lunch and entertainment, but the special value to me is the sense of community and caring that is shared by the group. Attending Thursday Fellowship is a highlight for me each week. It is special to be a part of a group that comes together for spiritual fellowship combined with the opportunity to serve, support and care for one another. I am very excited to be working with Clarita this year coordinating and advising the Thursday Fellowship TEAMS. With such dedicated volunteers working on every facet of the program we know it will be a great year!

*“Attending
Thursday
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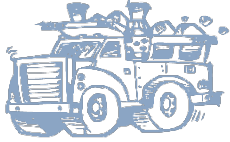


Clarita
Wooldridge

Through my careers as a nurse, managing my family's building development and design business and various church experiences, I realized God was calling me to ministry. I love working with seniors and our guests in Thursday Fellowship at LOPC. I am touched by their courage, their journey, the steps taken to make order out of confusion, to wrestle with very real challenges being faced, and for many, their calling upon their inner resources and beliefs, faith, trust, hope, love, and the divine reality that healing into the fullness of God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit, is happening, really happening, each moment of our life.

Our Thursday Fellowship guests draw our volunteers into a special place and time which reflects a growing community, where we suspend our outer world issues and life concerns, and turn inward with our guests. We listen, laugh, play, create, celebrate, and share a meal together, as we extend hospitality and our agape love, and caring, to one another. We invite new guests and volunteers to join us in Thursday Fellowship as we celebrate our lives together. I am inspired by serving as a Coordinator with Julie Peterson in this very special Spirit filled Thursday Fellowship Program.

*“I love working with
seniors and our guests in
Thursday Fellowship”*



Wheel Day is Right Around the Corner – 10/15

by Molly Maduck, Seedlings Communications Board Member

What comes to mind when you think of fall? Perhaps you are thinking of Halloween costumes filling the stores, football season ramping up, or the falling leaves and natural beauty we're surrounded by. One idea that naturally comes to mind for the Seedlings teachers and students is "back-to-school," and all of the exciting events that bring our community together during the beginning of the school year.

The biggest annual social event at Seedlings has always been Wheel Day. Traditionally held in the spring (for 22 years!), we decided to try something new this year and move the event to the fall. We feel that moving Wheel Day will balance the Seedlings social calendar, bring a much loved tradition to a time of the year well known for back-to-school festivals and fall celebrations, and will ultimately serve as a fun and memorable kick-off to the start of our school year.



"My kids LOVE
Wheel Day"

Wheel Day will take place on Saturday, October 15th, from 10am-12pm, and will be open to the entire local community. The Seedlings parking lot will become a gathering place for guests to come and enjoy food, friends, and a variety of vehicles. This year, there will be a fire truck, a school bus, police cars, a moving truck, construction equipment, motorcycles, a train, and much more. Not only will the children experience the joy of seeing their favorite "wheels," but they will also be able to climb, honk, steer, and explore inside of them. The Encore gymnastics truck will invite children inside to flip, swing, and bounce, and the ride-on cars will give them the opportunity to drive around some mini-wheels of their own.

Children are inherently eager and observant, and they soak in everything around them. For this reason, we love that they can contribute to the community outreach component of Wheel Day too. With the help of many volunteers and donations, Wheel Day will host both a book drive and bake sale. This year, the proceeds from these sales will go to the LOPC Youth Mission Team to support their trip to India next summer. The kids love that when they buy a book or a cookie, they are making a small contribution to a great cause.

"It's a dream
come true"

As one Seedlings mom said, "My kids LOVE Wheel Day. Seen through their eyes, it's a dream come true." The event offers hands-on fun and learning for our children in a very special way, so plan to bring your kids, grandkids, friends, and neighbors. We hope to see you on October 15th!

Vehicles include:

Garbage Truck	Schools Bus
Fire Truck	Construction Vehicles
Motorcycles	Moving Truck
Police Vehicles	The ARF Mobile



Science and Religion - 10/20

7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room



"Science and Religion: Of Two Minds??"

The scientific account and the religious story of the beginning of the universe often seem to be at odds. But are they?

- Science is the search for explanation.
- Religion is the search for meaning.

Both of these perspectives are essential to allow us to see the universe in its multi-dimensional depth. But our perspectives are impacted by differences in culture, in language, even in alphabets, and if the left or the right side of the brain is engaged. We are usually unconscious of these 'framing beliefs'. Karlene Paufler will present ideas based on the book *The Great Partnership: Science and Religion and the Search for Meaning* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. All are welcome.

Spiritual Practices 101 - 10/20

7:00 p.m. in the Chapel

An important aspect to Spiritual Formation is the practice of intentionally slowing down and paying attention to God in our lives and in the world. For hundreds of years Christians have sought traditions or practices that help them grow deeper in faith. Practices can help you explore faith in a new way; they help us to intentionally slow down, pay attention, and look or listen for God.



This is an introductory evening to experience and participate in several practices that have been offered at LOPC-----Taize---Centering Prayer---Walking the Labyrinth. There will be a brief explanation of these three practices and a short version of each, with candlelight and live music. If you have wondered what these Contemplative Spiritual Practices are about and how they can enhance your prayer life, come and experience them in community.

New Members Class - 10/21 - 10/23



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 10/21 (evening), with morning sessions on 10/22 & 10/23. Childcare available by reservation. Questions? Contact matt@LOPC.org.

Men's Breakfast - 10/26

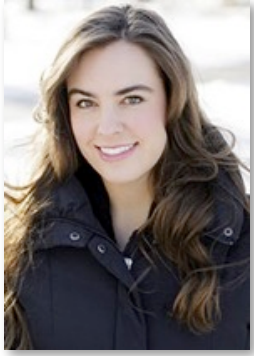
Where women are always welcome.
7:00 a.m. | Davies Room

\$5 donation at the door for breakfast
R.S.V.P. to janet@LOPC.org by noon on
10/25 or call (925) 283-8722 x223



Dr. Joe Whitehouse
LOPC Member

"Following His 24 day Cruise Trip from Iceland to Explore Greenland, Baffin & Ellesmere Islands.
"Preview his National Geographic Explorer cruise by visiting:
www.expeditions.com click on "artic"



Led by Lauren Gully

We Believe (!?) - 10/26, 11/2, & 11/9

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. | Rooms CLC 105

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 explore these different topics and navigate our way through faith and doubt with fellowship!

New Beginnings Workshop Offered - 10/29

9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Oak Room

Register online at LOPC.org



Preparing For And Coping With Significant Life Changes
Facilitated by Dr. Katherine Hart
Lunch will be a \$5 donation at the door

The underlying psychological processes of transition and coping are similar for everyone. Join us as we explore concepts related to moving, becoming a new parent, caring for others, a new marriage, and/or growing older. When we understand the process and all of its struggles, learnings, and new beginnings, it becomes much easier to support both ourselves and others through changes. If you missed the last class, please mark you calendar for a life-changing seminar. Even if you attended the last class, you will be in for a treat, as Dr. Katherine Hart will build off the last class and go more in depth.

Dr. Katherine Hart is a performance consultant and coach who works with companies in times of change and transition. She presents both nationally and internationally on the topics of change, leadership, and team performance. Kathy and her husband, Paul, are members of LOPC, participating in leadership and the Chancel choir. Questions? Email dave@LOPC.org.



Dr. Katherine Hart



Family Faith Formation Series - 10/30

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. in the Oak Room

As busy parents, it can be hard to find the space to reflect on your family's long-term values and goals while trying to survive the demands of daily life. Money and spending questions are particularly tough areas to tackle when just paying the bills

is often an accomplishment. What guidance does the Bible have for us when making financial decisions? What guidance and support can the church offer to support your financial goals? Gather with other families to discuss these challenges and the opportunities to increase the lasting impact of your financial resources. Develop a framework for distilling your family's core values and aligning your spending and giving goals accordingly. Discuss practical techniques for "investing" in your faith, family, community, and beyond. Questions? Contact dave@LOPC.org.

Led by: Kathleen Houssels, CFA and LOPC Member & Jaime Polson, Pastor-Family Ministries



Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

“I didn’t want to go to church”



Christopher Anderson

Chris Anderson says, “As a little kid, to be honest, I didn’t want to go to church but my parents made me go every Sunday and I didn’t like it. Finally, when I was a freshman in high school, they said I didn’t have to go anymore. On my own I decided I’d give the high school group a chance. It was my choice not my parents. I had so much fun, and enjoyed the fellowship and what we were learning. I’ve stayed with it ever since and it’s made a positive influence on my life for sure.”

Now Chris, a senior at Acalanes High School, is very involved at LOPC. He’s gone on mission trips, is part of the SPLASH leadership group (Students Providing Leadership and Serving Humbly), a leader in YOW (Youth on Wednesday), helps out with Kids Rock, and sometimes serves as a child care provider for young children. At school he’s on the Varsity Volley Ball Team. In becoming an Eagle Scout, he helped out at the Xenophon Therapeutic Riding School. Also, while there, Chris built a new compost area which he says took lots and lots of concrete.

Chris also went on the high school mission trip to Salinas, which he describes as a farming town. While there the group worked in Dorothy’s Kitchen where breakfast and lunch were served. They served food at the Salvation Army kitchen and helped with other tasks there. They also participated in a Vacation Bible Study at Iglesia Laurel Baptista Church and marked out a soccer field. “They beat us in the game we played,” Chris admits. “What was really eye opening was working in the field for only a couple of hours. It was so hard and we were really impressed with those men and women, children too, that toil there all day. What a difficult life they lead, especially the undocumented workers. One spoke to us and told how they were so poorly treated. Their bosses could do this because of their undocumented status made sure the workers wouldn’t complain because they needed the work to support their families.”

There were devotionals every morning. “Keris and Allison told stories and then we responded. They really listened to what we were thinking and asking,” Chris says. “All of it was related to what we were doing during the day with topics such as food, work, and giving back in service. It was a very meaningful time.” Chris credits his Christian walk as helping him to interact with people better, and to make better life decisions.

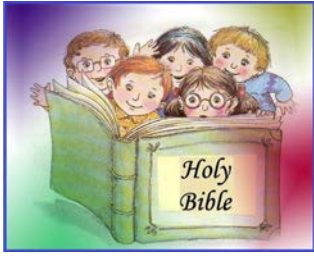
“Following Christ you learn to slow down and think about what you are doing. You want to become the best person you can be, living up to your full potential.” One thing he wishes is that he would become better acquainted with the scriptures.

“Keris and Allison have been positive influences on my life”

Right now he doesn’t have a favorite Bible verse. In closing Chris says he must mention the strong relationship he has to the senior class in the LOPC youth group and how important it is. Also he says Keris and Allison, the youth directors, have been powerful, positive influences on his life. We all can be thankful for LOPC’s strong youth program, its leadership, and the fine young people who attend.

“It was my choice not my parents”

Christopher is the epitome of 1 Timothy 4:12, “Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.”



Third Grade Bible Class – 10/9

10:15 am - 12:00 p.m. in the Oak room

We've moved the annual Third Grade Bible Class from the Winter to the Fall! All third graders and their parents are invited to come and prepare to participate in our Third Grade Bible Celebration, which will be on October 16th. Together, we'll learn all about the Bible: how it was formed, how it is structured, and how we can use it in our lives. RSVP to Ryan at ryan@LOPC.org.

Presbyterian Women Christmas Tea - 12/2

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

LOPC Presbyterian Women invite you to attend a Victorian Christmas tea. Enjoy an afternoon of lilting Christmas music, mouth-watering cookies with tea, and fellowship with friends, old and new. Bring your favorite teacup and a friend and join us in Fellowship Hall. Questions? Contact Charlotte at (925) 280-6038.



Quilts for Children



56 Quilts made by LOPCided Quilters in 2016

The LOPCided Quilters group was founded in 2001 and has been making quilts for children ever since. The group started out small, donating about 25 quilts per year. We have grown now to 30 dedicated members who make and donate over 140 quilts per year.

The quilts are donated to three local projects: Warm Winter Nights, where every child and teen who is a guest of LOPC gets to choose a quilt; STAND for Families Free of Violence where children entering their program get to choose a quilt; Layette Project, which provides clothes and blankets to the neediest babies in Contra Costa County. The Layette Project is in conjunction with Hillcrest Congregational Church in Pleasant Hill. Prior to being delivered some of the quilts will

be blessed during the Children's Message on Sunday, October 16. Each child will get to "wrap up" in a quilt during the message. It's wonderful to see this and imagine how the quilts will impact the children who actually receive them.

The LOPCided Quilters meet every Thursday, 1:00 – 4:00 pm in CLC Room 205 for fellowship, sewing and sharing. Anyone with basic sewing skills is welcome to join the group. Questions? Contact Louise Tanno, louisetanno@gmail.com.

November Quilt Display

This year is rolling right along, and it's time to think once again about the display of your quilts in the sanctuary during the month of November. More information is in the front office of the Ministry Center, or you can call Ann Loar at (925) 284-1164 or email her at annloar@icloud.com. If you have a quilt you would be willing to loan for display, we'd love to hear from you!



Live Just.ly - 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13

By Lauren Gully, Pastor - Mission and formation



As it says in the book Live Just.ly, "Justice isn't always about doing something new; it's about aligning what we already do with Kingdom values. We wake up every day and make about fifty decisions—we decide what clothes to wear, what food to eat, how to commute to work or school, how to treat our friends, family, and strangers, what to pray for, where to invest our money, and so on. Justice isn't simply an action once a year; it is a lifestyle. Our prayer is that our everyday actions will be infused with justice—not our definition of justice but God's revelation of justice in Scripture."

This month we are continuing our journey in exploring Biblical Justice through Live Just.ly, a three-week study led by Lauren Gully and Ryan Timpte. We will explore how we are called as Christians to educate ourselves about injustices against humanity and how to respond through prayer, action, and advocacy.

If you are interested in joining us for Live Just.ly please contact robin@LOPC.org. This will be the first part of a larger study of Biblical Justice that we will continue later in the program year.

Warm Winter Nights – 11/7- 11/21



This year, LOPC will host Warm Winter Nights. There are many opportunities to contribute to our guests' experience while they reside on campus for two weeks. Small groups, voyager ships and bible study groups are all encouraged to serve a meal together. There are opportunities to help serve dinner Monday through Friday or a hot breakfast, lunch or dinner on Saturday or Sunday. In addition, tutors are needed Mon- Thurs. and entertainment including crafts, games, therapy pets and sports activities are always welcome.

We look forward to the arrival of our guests to the LOPC campus and the opportunity to serve and build relationships with those who we often overlook in our own community. When we run across these neighbors in our community it is often hard to know how best to help; Warm Winter Nights is an opportunity to serve our neighbors as individuals, families, or faith groups, 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) For more information contact robin@LOPC.org.

Spiritual Direction

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

To find out more about Spiritual Direction, contact Diane Grant, LOPC Spiritual Direction Coordinator, (925) 825-8225. NOTE: All sessions are confidential. There is a modest fee on a sliding scale.

Spiritual
Direction
at LOPC





Helping Deaf Children in Gaza

For the 14th year, LOPC will sponsor a classroom, named in our honor, at the Atfaluna School for Deaf Children in Gaza City. Our support provides 20+ students with instruction from specially trained teachers with educational instruction, audiology testing and speech therapy, supplies, transportation, uniforms and hot lunches.

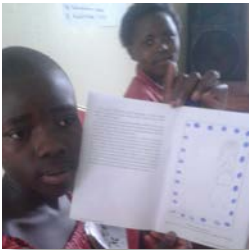
Atfaluna – Arabic for ‘our children’ – was established in 1992 as a NGO, offers academic educational services for hearing impaired and deaf children in kindergarten through middle school and support services for deaf persons of all ages. It also hosts a café which employs deaf students, and a vocational training center where deaf artisans produce and sell beautiful craft items and furniture in the shop located at the school and on-line. The school’s clients also include young parents who receive counseling on how to cope with either their own hearing disability while raising children or raising their deaf children.

Fundraising for this important mission partner began on September 17 with a presentation at both services and a table on the plaza with pictures and updated profiles of the students. We are on our way to reach the fundraising goal of \$25,000! If you wish to make a donation, checks can be made payable to LOPC with ‘Atfaluna’ noted in the memo line and can be brought or sent to the church. Further information about the school can be viewed at their website www.atfaluna.net.



Questions? Contact Melinda Darbee at mmdarbee@earthlink.net or Robin at robin@LOPC.org.

Healing Hearts Training in Congo Completed



LOPC sponsored Healing Hearts Trauma program to train 27 facilitators in eastern Congo. The training lasted about 10 days and finished on August 26th. Our 2016 Easter Offering brought numerous Protestant Congo denominations together in a collaborative effort to bring healing to the often overlooked, but traumatized, children of this region. Approximately 50 children participated the last week so the newly trained facilitators could practice under the supervision of the Master Facilitators from the American Bible Society. These facilitators will now return to their villages to offer the training.

Childrens’ Activities - “Letters to God” - Junior shows his letter to God expressing his laments. One morning Christi, our PC USA mission co-worker, came down for breakfast and found Junior reading the Healing Hearts booklet. Mama Josephine told Christi when she went to look for water at 5 am, Junior was already there.

Self Portraits - The first lesson “Am I Important to anyone?” included drawing self-portraits with the caption, “This is a picture of me. I am important and special to God.” One facilitator trainee related that a stigmatized child identified with the angry expression in an illustration in the booklet. The boy said he cannot feel joy. But by the end of the day he told the facilitator that he realizes God loves him. He left with a big smile.

Prayer and Sharing with Others - There is worship and Bible passages are used each day. The children are invited to share their burdens with another person. Often spontaneous prayer happened and one group prayed a prayer of thanksgiving that they had been chosen to come to the camp.



Deacon Emergency Fund



The Deacon Emergency Fund is used to ease someone's financial burden, even if only temporarily. Our assistance may not erase a long-term challenge, but for the recipient, it can bring emotional and physical respite. Your generous gifts to the Emergency Fund have helped single mothers, men and women who have lost their jobs, and other persons in challenging transitions. You may be surprised to know that on average, we have given out \$20,000 in assistance annually. The Emergency Fund is funded primarily by your financial gifts and we are reaching out to you now as the Fund is in need. Please consider making a financial donation to the Deacon Emergency fund. Checks can be written to LOPC with "Emergency Fund" in the memo line.

Also, we often receive requests from individuals in need of shelter or even long term housing. If you are able to provide temporary shelter, or perhaps have a cottage or room to rent, please contact Pastor Gerald at gerald@LOPC.org.

LOPC Tote Bag



Here's a GREAT way to help the Deacon Emergency Fund – pick up an LOPC grocery tote! All proceeds benefit the Deacon Emergency Fund.

There are two tote styles to choose from. The laminated tote made from recycled materials is available for a \$5.00 donation. The zippered, insulated tote is available for a \$10.00 donation.

Totes are available now until we run out. Pick one up anytime Monday-Friday from the Reception Desk in the Ministry Center office.



Can't make it Monday-Friday? Contact Janet Jourgensen, Receptionist, at janet@lopc.org or (925) 283-8722 x223.

Volunteer at LOPC

Volunteers

familyministry

Have you ever wanted to help out with one of the Children or Youth events but did not have the time to commit to an ongoing program? We could use your help! Family Ministry would like to develop a list of individuals who would be willing to lend a hand for a one-time event. For more details, or to add your name to our list, please email dave@LOPC.org.

Join the Worship Team



The Worship Team is in need of a few additional members who would like to join this group in a team leadership role. Responsibilities may include Sanctuary decoration, ushering, greeting and traffic control, just to name a few. If you are interested in learning more, please contact one of the Worship Elders: B. Dana Lindstrom (bdana.LOPC@gmail.com) or Jody Black (jody.black@libertymutual.com).

Connecting Ministry

The Connecting Ministry is in need of volunteers to help welcome visitors and new members to the church, and help organize and staff the Welcome Center. If you are interested in the various ministries of the church, enjoy meeting new people, and can serve monthly or bi-monthly, or just want to find out more, please contact Matt Bell at matt@LOPC.org or (925) 283-8722 x231. Thank you!

Traffic

- Traffic Directors needed - Training is provided and no experience is required!
 - To help with the traffic flow, please use your turn signal when entering the parking lot.
 - Any suggestions and ideas for traffic control are greatly appreciated and always welcome.
- Questions? Email traffic@LOPC.org.



LOPC Foundation: What Does "Legacy" Mean to You?

by Alan Kizor, Foundation Trustee



Alan Kizor

Have you ever thought about leaving a legacy? What does the term "legacy" mean to you? For some very wealthy and philanthropic individuals, the term might result in funding a new wing at a hospital or supporting construction of an athletic facility at one's alma mater. Here is a definition I like that combines the many facets of legacy: Legacy: What You Do to Show What Is Important to You.

Fortunately, you don't need to be wealthy to leave a legacy. But it is essential to take action to ensure that your will and trust are in place, are current and are aligned with your values. Many professionals argue that it is vitally important to communicate with your family as to what matters to you: why -- and how -- you intend to distribute your wealth at death. That way, there will be no surprises when wills are read.

When gifts or bequests are made to the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Foundation, donors can be assured their bequests (gifts) are added to an endowment which is prudently managed and invested in accordance with well-established fiduciary principles. Each request to the Foundation for project funding is initially reviewed and approved by the LOPC Session. Over the years, the causes that have received most financial support have included support for the following ministries: Mission, Children's, Fellowship, Communication and Outreach, and Christian Education. Theological seminary scholarships for staff have also been supported. And the Foundation has often been the source for funding facilities-related projects.

Occasionally, a large estate gift will be donated to the Foundation for fund management along with specific instructions for subsequent disbursement. If you would like to discuss the role that the Foundation might play in your estate planning, you are invited to contact me or any Foundation Trustee.



Session Highlights - August 2016

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

Spiritual Formation is always an integral part of our Session meetings. In August, we heard a particularly moving account of the Senior High Youth Mission trip to Los Angeles Shelter highlighting the juxtaposition of the wealth of this city with the poverty, homelessness and hunger that exist within its city limits. It was clear that the trip leaders as well as our Senior High Youth were inspired by the outreach that they were able to both witness and participate in.

As noted in earlier reports, Session has spent several months working with staff to craft a new more concise Mission/Vision/ Values (MVV) statement. It became clear that with the completion of the upgrades on our church buildings that many of the challenges reflected in our old statement were no longer relevant and that we needed a new document that would help guide us into what we believe is a new phase of the life of LOPC. After extensive review of previous documents, Peter used part of his Sabbatical to craft a new draft MVV statement. After revision based on input from Session, Deacons and staff, a final version was approved at Session. Stay tuned as this is rolled out to the congregation in future church services and other forums. It is our belief that this will be a valuable tool to inform where we put our talents and treasure in the future.

Session also accepted a report (which may be one of the last) on the Sanctuary Upgrade project. The new HVAC system proved to be noisier than anticipated and arrangements are being made to rectify this to be sure that it is compliance with city noise requirements. Plans are underway to upgrade the projector in the sanctuary to provide a better quality picture. Finishing touches are also being made to the new chancel furniture that should be ready sometime in the middle of September. Of note is the fact that much of the wood for the new furniture came from the pulpit that was retired as part of the sanctuary renovation. As these last pieces come together it is once again a reminder of how fortunate we are to share in such a generous community.



OCTOBER 2016

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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 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:

OCTOBER 1 for the **NOVEMBER** issue.
Email items to communications@LOPC.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

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



Please join us for our annual Harvest Soup Supper on Thanksgiving Eve! This LOPC tradition pairs hearty soups prepared by our Kitchen Team with a warm, peaceful time of fellowship as we begin our celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday. The supper is followed by a worship service at 7:00 p.m., as we gather together to give thanks for the many gifts in our lives. Tickets for the supper will be available on the Worship Plaza beginning Sunday, 10/30. Questions? Contact matt@LOPC.org.

Connect with us online!



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Sunday Worship Services

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family

LOPC: Where everyone is welcome, nobody's perfect and anything is possible with God.

Volume XXXV, No. 10