

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

See inside for opportunities
to serve during
Warm Winter Nights.

WARM WINTER NIGHTS

NOVEMBER 7 – NOVEMBER 21



Winter
Nights
Shelter

November 2016

A Spiritual Journey of a Life Time

by Gerald Chinen, Pastor - Care



As you read this, I will be in the middle of my sabbatical. Initially, it was scheduled for the summer of 2015, but was postponed until now. As luck would have it, the timing could not have been better! My family and I will be able to attend the International Festival, which is only hosted every five years for Okinawan decedents from all over the world.

Part of my sabbatical was to get in touch with my roots in Okinawa, where my maternal grandparents are from. They hail from the Uruma City in Okinawa and immigrated to Hawaii in the early 1900s. I've also had an interest in seeing the Christian faith from the Okinawan as well as the Japanese perspective. Christianity is believed to have been introduced to Japan in the 16th century, but just recently in Okinawa, Roman coins with the likeness of Roman Emperor Constantine were discovered in the ruins of Katsuren Castle, which existed from the 12th to 15th centuries. So, it may be possible that the Christian faith was introduced to Okinawa even before it made its way to Japan. You may recall from your history books, that Constantine's mother was a Christian and so her son followed suit!

I also plan to attend a Conference for Christians at a church near where we will be staying. The pastor of this church has invited me not only to attend the conference but also to preach at the church on Sunday morning. What a privilege this is. I will also be speaking at a church in Tokyo.

While in Okinawa, if time allows, my aunt and I will head to the City Hall of Uruma City to see if we might be able to find some history of my grandfather's family. My aunt has already done some research on my grandmother and has quite a lot of information about her descendants, but we have next to nothing on my grandfather. It has been intriguing speaking with my mother and aunt about our family history, and I have certainly been surprised at some of the things I've learned! Wouldn't it be amazing if we were to learn more about our relatives on his side?

Coming to faith at 12 years old, I began attending a Congregational Church in Honolulu. Of course, I didn't know it at the time, but much of my development in faith was very western and very European. There's nothing wrong with that mind you because I love our traditions and our worship. But I have often wondered how my own ethnicity and my cultural background could influence how I read the Scriptures or how I worship God. It will be interesting to participate in the church services in Okinawa and Tokyo. I wouldn't be surprised if things were very similar, but I also wouldn't be surprised if I learn something very new about our God through their songs, their testimonies and their worship.

	Page
Advent Family Project.....	14
Biblical Justice.....	18
Building Healthy Families.....	10
Chicks with Sticks.....	20
Christmas Concert.....	17
Christmas Eve Service.....	12
Christmas Opportunities.....	9
Girls Leadership.....	11
Harvest Soup Supper.....	3
Interfaith Women.....	11
Journey of Faith.....	16
Kayaking Trip.....	14
LOPC Foundation.....	13, 19
LOPC.org.....	5
Men's Breakfast.....	10
Mom's Retreat.....	13
Mt Hermon Recap.....	6-7
Night in Bethlehem.....	9
Pastor's Column.....	2
Poinsettias Donations.....	15
Presbyterian Women's Tea.....	5
Science & Religion.....	12
Seedlings.....	8
Session Highlights.....	19
Staff Spotlight.....	12
Stewardship Campaign.....	4
Mult-faith Celebration.....	15
Volunteer at LOPC.....	18
Warm Winter Nights.....	10
We Believe.....	14
Youth Corner.....	15

See more at LOPC.org

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HARVEST SOUP SUPPER

WEDNESDAY

November 23

6:00 P.M.



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. Invite your friends and neighbors to this festive, and tasty, community event!

Questions? Contact matt@LOPC.org.

Why Do You Give to LOPC?

by Peter Whitelock, Pastor- Head of Staff



We asked that question at the Ministry Faire this year, and received some great responses! Here are a few:

"To show my love for God through all its ministries"

"I give because LOPC has given so much to me!"

"To share our blessings"

"Because I believe in LOPC – the manner in which they help others, especially in different countries, by example and actions, rather than conversion or proselytizing"

"I am called to steward my many God-given blessings"

"When I have been blessed by a ministry, I feel led to give back so others may also be blessed"

"To support those in need"

"Relation – I connect with the culture, progress, values, people of the LOPC"

"Because it was given to me"

"To keep an outstanding staff"

"To support God's work"

"Because God has given me everything I have"

"Out of gratitude for all I have been given"

"I have given of my time and talents a long time LOPC member since 1975"

"To support programs and staff"

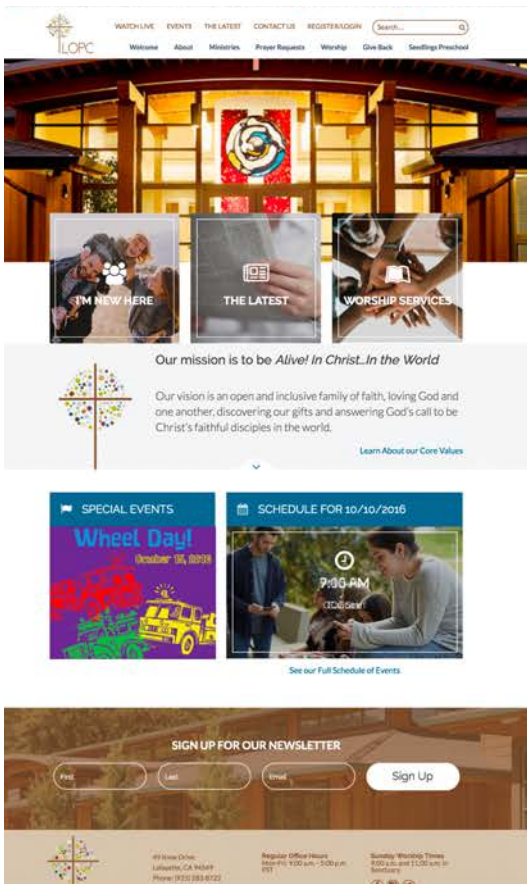
"To say thanks God"

"I love the sense of giving back"

On November 6, Giving Sunday, we will launch our annual pledge campaign in support of the ministry we share here at the church, which changes lives, cares for others, and provides for those truly in need. Your pledge is critical to our success! If you have already turned in your Estimate of Giving for the coming year, thank you for your support! The LOPC Session is committed to shepherding these gifts well and transparently.

If you are still considering your gift, please make every effort to turn it in to the church office by the end of this month. We are in the process of building our budget for the coming year, and your Estimate of Giving will help us do that prudently and wisely. It also keeps us from having to raise funds to support the ministry all year long! If you did not receive, or have lost track of, your Pledge Packet materials, please contact Janet at the church office for a copy, or you can go online at www.LOPC.org/give-back/pledge/ to get everything you need.

Together, we rise to new heights of love, service and ministry. Now, more than ever, LOPC has a vital place and presence in bringing hope and encouragement to our community and world!



Have You Checked out the New LOPC.org

The new LOPC.org is here! The new site provides the ultimate user-friendly experience with rich content, improved navigation and functionality throughout, and the option to share information across major social networking sites, as well as an exciting new feature we know you'll appreciate: online submission of *Focus* and *Connections* articles.

If you want to submit an article for *Focus*, the deadline is the first of the month for the following month's issue. For example December 1 is the deadline for the January issue. Simply visit www.lopc.org/submission-for-focus/ and complete the form to submit your content. Voila! You'll receive a confirmation of your submission and Ashley will be in touch if she needs more information.

If you want to submit an article for *Connections*, the deadline is every Monday at 5:00 p.m. Simply visit www.lopc.org/submission-for-connections/ and complete the form. You'll receive a confirmation of your submission and Ashley will be in touch if she needs more information.

Please note if you miss the deadline for *Focus* or *Connections*, your information will not appear until the following issue. We appreciate your support!



An Invitation To A Victorian Tea

December 2, 2016
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Presbyterian Women of Lafayette–Orinda Presbyterian Church cordially invite all women to a Victorian Tea to be held in Fellowship Hall on December 2 from One until Three O'clock.

Picture fine china, dainty tea sandwiches, flaky cookies and soul-warming tea! Add to this musical entertainment and the telling of the story of God's gift to man. It is the prescription for a joyful way to start the Advent Season. Bring your own favorite teacup and saucer to add to the holiday glow. Free tickets will be available on November 13, 20 and 27 on the Worship Plaza.

Deadline to RSVP for Child care is 11/18.

Questions? Contact Charlotte at (925) 280-6038.

Presbyterian 
Women
Living for Jesus

2016 Mount Hermon All-Church Retreat

Mount Hermon

by Jaime Polson, Pastor-Family Ministries

Three-hundred members of LOPC, ranging in age from six months to 96, came together at LOPC's All Church Retreat at Mount Hermon to enjoy a weekend of relaxation, restoration and fellowship in early October. We worshiped together each day and then adults, children and youth attended their sessions, which aimed to help us grow deeper in our relationships with God and each other.

Our featured speaker was The Dr. Reverend Lillian Daniel, Senior Pastor of First Congregational Church in Dubuque, Iowa. Lillian, a well respected preacher, teacher and pastor, spoke about her latest book, *Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To: Spirituality Without Stereotypes, Religion Without Ranting*. In this book, Lillian explored the changing religious landscape, including the rising number of people who list "none" as their religious preference. Her encouragement in her book and during our sessions was to be a church that is rigorous, relevant and real. What does that mean? We, as a church, are called by Jesus to provide a place for rigorous study of the Bible and our traditions, while teaching why these traditions and our faith is relevant in today's world. Or in other words – how does the work and teachings of Jesus matter in this current world? And how can practicing our faith through service lead to a more just world, inclusive of all of God's people? What does it mean to be a real



church? It means we actually talk about what is happening in the world and our own lives – both the joy and the painful struggles, everything from poverty to addiction to politics and the every day real stuff that makes up our lives. If you want to hear more, please contact the church office for a recording of her sessions at Mount Hermon or read her book.

Many of the events at Mount Hermon were intergenerational and provided much opportunity for our members to enjoy time together. These times included Saturday afternoon outside where children and adults alike enjoyed barbeque, participated in ropes course, hiked and played games. Saturday evening highlights included the campfire where the staff skit taught us how the letter "P" in LOPC stands for Pokémon. There is a video that gives some insight to the staff skit – let the church office know if you want to see this one. We also delighted in a special dance – one featuring Pastor Gerald Chinen, and songs, jokes and dances from our church members during the campfire. Our weekend ended with a beautiful time of worship, outdoors, praising our Creator God. We welcome you to join us on this wonderful adventure next year!



Photo Credit: Hiroko Shibuya, Chris Baldwin, Matt Bell & Joe Whitehouse

Wonder Time

by Molly Maduck, Seedlings Communications Board Member



I 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 so curious”— and adorable— “It’s when you look for your 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 gives our children a special time each week to pause, learn, reflect, and share their wonderings together.

In recent years, Wonder Time groups (children ages 3-5, divided by class) have had a scheduled time each week in the Chapel. During this time, they join our amazing Seedlings Wonder Time Leader, Bobbi Cassettari, to sing songs, listen to stories, learn about virtues and mission, and to pray and wonder together.

New this school year, we will also have a monthly school

“I wonder where my Spider-Man shirt is?”

assembly called “BIG Wonder Time.” On the first Tuesday and Wednesday mornings of each month, teachers will bring their classes to the beautiful LOPC Sanctuary. There they will meet the Wonder Time Team: Bobbi, Children's Ministry Director, Ryan Timpte, Associate Director Lori Robinson, and Director of LOPC's Preschool Ministry Susan Wentworth. As Bobbi has shared, “The team will be there ready to lead our kids in fun songs, a Bible story to illustrate that month's virtue, and some simple mindfulness activities.”


In Children's Ministry at LOPC, the children learn that a virtue is something that God gives us in order 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. The virtue introduced at each month's BIG Wonder Time assembly will always be discussed in small group gatherings during the remaining weeks of each month. It is always a joy to hear the children's ponderings, both big and small. November's virtue is Honor: letting others know that you see how valuable they really are. It is certainly a fitting virtue for the Wonder Time experience at Seedlings. Our students learn to honor the wonderful teaching staff and community around them, and within this community, they also learn how valued they are.



Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church presents

Night in Bethlehem

12.7.16



Night in Bethlehem is LOPC's annual outreach event for families, from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., during which kids and their families explore what a marketplace in Bethlehem might have looked like the night of the birth of Jesus. This interactive, intergenerational gathering is meant to simulate the intensity and chaos of a nighttime festival. There is no set schedule; rather, families are welcome to come and go as they please. While at Night in Bethlehem, they will encounter shopkeepers, Roman soldiers, and beggars, all of whom have gathered in Bethlehem in accordance with the Roman census – and maybe, just maybe, these families will catch a glimpse of the holy family whose journey to Bethlehem gives our own journey to this city all the meaning in the world.

Your help is invaluable in bringing the marketplace in Bethlehem to life for our families. Whether you're a shopkeeper running a booth, a census taker helping families sign in, or a helper who sets up and takes down the city, you are an integral part of our community. Through you, families in the Lamorinda area will experience a piece of the Christmas story in a real and tangible way.

For more information and to volunteer to help, contact Ryan Timpote at ryan@LOPC.org or (925) 283-8722, x234.



Opportunities to GIVE

The holidays are a time to celebrate with family and friends. For most of us it is a chance to spend time together, enjoy home-cooked meals, good conversation and relax. For those struggling with making ends meet, the holidays are a time of increased stress. It is difficult to think of buying gifts while struggling to pay rent, fill a car with gas and put food on the table. As a community, LOPC has always been generous during this time of year. This year there will be three opportunities to GIVE.

The Alternative Gift Market will return with opportunities to support people all over the world as well as opportunities to help some of LOPC's partners fund specific projects. Look for the gift market in the Chapel Narthex on Dec. 4 and 11.

Monument Crisis Center Food Boxes is in its fourth year at LOPC. What was once an Adopt-A-Child program has transformed into a food program due to the ever increasing demand for food in the Monument Corridor. The food boxes allow families in the Monument Corridor to celebrate the holidays. Pick-up a flyer listing the items required and a box on the plaza Nov. 27 and Dec. 4 return all filled boxes on Dec. 11 and place in the truck parked in front of the Oak Room. The list will be on the LOPC website as well.

Harbor House Adopt-A-Child supports low income children that reside in the San Antonio district of Oakland. The gift collection program provides Harbor House with gifts for their on-site store which provides parents the joy of choosing a gift for their own children during the holidays. Look for a table on the plaza Nov. 27, Dec. 4 and 11. Return your unwrapped gift to LOPC by Dec. 11.

Building Healthy Families Series 11/16

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the Oak Room



Where Spirituality and Addiction
Intersect featuring
Ray Campton, MFT

This workshop will focus both on substances that are traditionally linked to addiction—alcohol, recreational drugs, prescription medications—as well as addictive compulsive behaviors that are so much a part of our culture—overeating, pornography, work, shopping, gambling, sex and love, and more. How do addictions form? What are the underlying dynamics that drive all addictions? How does our society often encourage addictive behavior? How can addiction be the path for a true spiritual awakening? Please join us as we explore these questions and more, beginning what may become an ongoing discussion. Questions? Contact dave@LOPC.org.

Men's Breakfast – 11/23

Where women are always welcome.

7:00 a.m. | Davies Room



Linus Eukel, LOPC Member &
Director of John Muir Land
Trust

"Saving Contra Costa -A
Campaign To Protect Our
Endangered Lands"
visit: www.jmlt.org

\$5 donation at the door for breakfast
R.S.V.P. to janet@LOPC.org or
call (925) 283-8722 x223 before noon on 11/22



Winter Nights Shelter

WARM WINTER NIGHTS IS BACK! Due to last year's Sanctuary retrofit, LOPC was unable to host Warm Winter Nights on campus. This year, LOPC is excited to again host the two-week on-site homeless shelter this fall from November 7 – 21. Warm Winter Nights allows all of us the opportunity to work together to create a welcoming environment for our guests. There will be opportunities to prepare a warm meal, tutor or read to a child, act as an overnight host, or provide a fun activity for our guests to enjoy. We encourage participants to view this opportunity as a mini-mission trip and discover opportunities to be transformed through service. Participating in Warm Winter Nights allows everyone a small glimpse into the challenges the homeless face in their daily lives. It provides participants the opportunity to see the real face of homelessness in our community: those who have lost a job or a home, have been a victim of domestic violence, and even those who have lost everything. Our guests all have their own story of how they arrived where they are. It is our obligation as Christians not to merely look the other way but act as Jesus calls us to do in Matthew 25:35: For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Please look for an opportunity to help make LOPC an example of biblical hospitality by signing up to help at Warm Winter Nights online at LOPC.org/ministry/mission.
Contact robin@LOPC.org for more info.

Parent-Daughter Workshops with Girls Leadership

Coming in 2017



Girls Leadership offers a series of courses for girls and their parents to build emotional intelligence. In the upcoming workshops, parent-daughter pairs will learn about identifying healthy relationships, finding their voices, and communicating more effectively.

Girls also develop resilient responses to conflict, challenges, and mistakes. The program is interactive, fun, and enlightening, and it's also a great opportunity to gain insight and spend time with your daughter in a new and different way.

Questions? Please email
jaime@LOPC.org.



Interfaith Women

by Kaaren Rose, LOPC Member

"We ourselves feel what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean...but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." - Mother Teresa

Meeting monthly with my Interfaith Women's Group has been one of the most significant parts of my spiritual journey during the last few years. As I have learned the basic tenets of my Jewish, Muslim and even Christian sisters' religions and listened openly to their personal spiritual journey stories, I have been able to go deeper into my own Christian faith and deepen my conversation and walk with God.

In July, our group discussed how our faith has blessed and brought light to our lives during hard times which then led to possible ways we could brighten the lives of other women needing a lift. We resolved to put a simple idea into action, and the result was exponentially greater than we imagined. Our resolve was to assemble 12 purses filled with toiletries, scarves, socks, make-up, and nutrition bars. and hand them out to 12 women without homes. A few of us asked others to donate supplies at the workplace or church, and we posted on just one "Next Door" neighborhood website. At our August meeting, we found ourselves surrounded by the generosity of coworkers and neighbors, as we assembled almost 100 purses with supplies left over to donate to shelters.

A wonderful "God Happening" began when we started to discuss how to distribute our assembled treasures. An especially enthusiastic member of our group determined that she wanted to give them to the women she passed by on her way to work, and she filled her car trunk with purses. The next day she was surprised and touched by the positive responses of the women she encountered who seemed grateful just to be acknowledged. Soon others in her office wanted to participate as well. Next, she was planning to ride along with a police officer to hand out more bags. The rest of us were inspired... realizing the personal connection can be as important or more than the gift itself, so we began to deliver the purses directly to individuals as well.

We are still basking in the glow of the generosity of others who helped us. We have also been blessed by interacting with "the other" and feeling the presence of God in the personal connection. We are energized beyond measure.

In November, we will extend this project both to further provide service/donations to our local homeless community and to offer opportunities for members of our churches, mosques and synagogues to join an interfaith activity that builds on our shared beliefs of supporting charity, repairing the world, and giving to those in need.

— SATURDAY DECEMBER 24 —

ISLAND STYLE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



FAMILY SERVICES
3:00 P.M. & 4:30 P.M.

TRADITIONAL SERVICES
7:00 P.M. & 8:30 P.M.

HOMECOMING COMMUNION SERVICE
11:00 P.M.

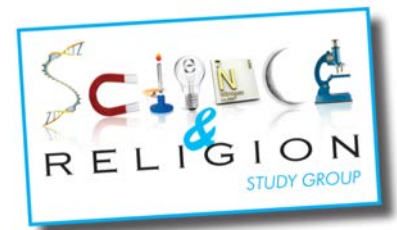
Our 11:00 pm Island Style Christmas Eve Celebration will feature the Na 'Okina Hawaiian band and dancers! Like our summer Aloha Sunday services there will be Hawaiian music, and, of course, we will sing some of our favorite Christmas songs and share in communion. We'd love to have you join us for this special service and you can also participate beforehand by sending us your most recent or favorite photo of yourself and/or of your family in island or tropical attire.

Please send your photo to Hiroko@lopc.org.

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Science and Religion - 11/21

7:00 p.m. in the Oak Room



"Becoming Seekers of Awe"

William James said, "My experience is what I agree to attend to." How often do you attend to things that elicit awe? In your religious/spiritual life? In your everyday life? Recent research at UC Berkeley suggests we can benefit in many ways by seeking out frequent experiences of awe.

Join the Science and Religion study group on November 21 for a presentation by Tom Durff, J.D., PhD, at 7:00 p.m. in the Oak Room.

Staff Spotlight



Janet Jourgensen, our fabulous receptionist, does a great job to make sure all of our members and visitors feel welcomed.

Foundation Fills Board Vacancy



The LOPC Foundation has selected Dara Youngdale to fill a vacancy on its seven-member board of trustees, Dick James, president, said. "Dara will make an outstanding addition to the board, and brings a wide variety of church-work experience." The selection was unanimous.

Dara has two daughters, Claudia and Grace, along with a much-loved extended family, and her husband Steve Lovell to whom she has been married coming up on 28 years. Dara is an architect, likes to read, sew, garden, cook, spend time with her family and entertain with her husband.

She has been an LOPC member for about five years. She has been a One Sunday team leader for Juvenile Hall as well as teaching a Life Skills class there, participated in Spiritual Formation classes, Mission work, Lenten study, Sanctuary Study and Worship Task Force, adopted a senior citizen and been on the Master Planning Team.

Her term of office begins November 1, 2016, and extends for just slightly more than three years. The board vacancy resulted from the resignation earlier this year of Brad Hilsabeck for professional reasons.

2017 Mom's Retreat

CONNECTING

Your Heart and Spirit

Your path as a Mom and Woman

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

Questions? Email dave@LOPC.org



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

Find out more about Paige at
paigenolan.com

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

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

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

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

Join us—participant numbers are limited!

For more information contact Steve Harrington at Harrington@fpcl.us

We Believe (!!?) 11/2 & 11/9



6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
CLC Room 105

Led by Lauren, Peter & Jaime

In an ever-changing world and in an area where much of what religion has to offer is misunderstood or seems 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 dried 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!

Advent Family Project



Advent, the four Sundays before Christmas, begins on November 27. As we celebrate this season of anticipating Christ's birth, we invite our LOPC families to join us in that celebration in their homes. Advent wreath kits will be given to all interested families on November 13, 20 and 27 on the patio, and during children's activities the week before Thanksgiving. After Nov. 27, kits will be available at the reception desk in the office.

Questions? Contact Sharon Bartlett at bartlett004@aol.com.

Youth Corner

Confirmation 2017!

For youth 8th grade through 12th grade

Confirmation is a time of learning, asking questions and exploring into one's faith as a Christian. It is an opportunity to personally and publicly commit to following Christ and discussing what that means in today's world.



The class meets Sundays from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted below. Due to the fact we have limited sessions it is important students do their best to attend every class. Make-ups are available with the youth directors upon request.

Subjects include; What is the Church & Bible?; Worship, Mission, Sacraments, Trinity, Resurrection, Statements of Faith, Interfaith Relations.

Dates:

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

Thanksgiving Multi-faith Celebration & Service- 11/20

4:00 p.m. at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Rd, Lafayette



Gather in Community

Join Rev. Lauren Gully and other Faith Leaders from across the county

With a Multi-Faith Choir

Led by Joyce Pricco,
St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church

This event brings together neighbors of diverse faiths united in giving thanks for our many blessings. As we give thanks, we gather to celebrate cooperation and shared service for the entire community. A special offering will give neighbors an opportunity to give together for the financial support of the newly formed Housing Security Fund.

Food Drive

Help feed the hungry by bringing non-perishable food items to the service as an offering.



For more information, contact the Multi-faith ACTION Coalition at contactmfac@gmail.com



Poinsettias Donations

Christmas Poinsettias Donation forms are coming soon!

Help decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas Worship Services by purchasing poinsettias. A list of names "In Memory of" and "In Honor of" will appear in the Christmas Eve worship bulletins.

After the Worship Services, the poinsettias will be delivered to the home-bound.

Questions? Contact Kaaren Rose at khrose@sbcglobal.net.

Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



Lori Robinson is the new Associate Director of Children's Ministries. Here is the story of her Faith Journey. "I grew up in the rural town of Seymour, Indiana," she said. My grandparents were the founding members of the small All Saints Episcopal Church which was my spiritual home. In our small church, everyone had to pitch in to get things done. I spent

many Saturdays with my family at church mowing the lawn, cleaning bathrooms, mopping floors, polishing silver and washing linens. We worked, worshiped and enjoyed countless potluck dinners at church. When there were baptisms, weddings and funerals everyone was there. When someone was sick or in trouble all the members rallied around them. So, my faith journey was shaped and formed by observing and participating in the communal care of one another and in worshipping together."

When she was 13 Lori had a life-changing experience when she took a trip with an Episcopal youth group to Haiti. "This was in the 1970s during a time of political unrest in Haiti. I experienced for the first time what oppression and poverty looked like. Also, I met people who didn't look like me, learned about a culture very different from mine and observed soldiers with weapons on the street corners. What was truly amazing to me was the joyful spirit of so many of the people I met. People who had literally nothing found great strength and joy in their faith. I thought this was incredible and the whole experience opened my eyes to a much larger world of need which I had never realized existed."

There were the later teen years when she questioned her faith, "as only a teenager can. In my 20s I drifted from family, church, and community. I remember a telephone conversation with my dad after I moved to California when he asked me if I'd found a church community. I mumbled some excuse about being busy; the truth was I wasn't that interested in finding a church home.

close to God. After I met and married my husband, Ty Robinson, suddenly it seemed like the most natural thing in the world to find a church to attend together. I'm sure my parents were relieved. Somehow, my reflexive response to getting married was to reconnect with my faith. But, in hindsight, that's the way God has worked in my life, always present, very patient, waiting for me to catch up."

In her late 30s, Lori began to feel something was missing in her life. "As I began to explore what this was about, I prayed a lot. My prayer was really simple. 'Please God, show me who you would have me be.' As I continued to pray I also began to take steps into an unknown future. I went back to school and finished my B.A. I left a very secure and well-paying job to become a children's minister.

After ten years as the family minister at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Danville, Lori has joined the staff at LOPC where she felt God had called her to be. "I put a lot of thought in the decision to come here and it feels very right for me. I hope to make a contribution to the excellent Children's Ministry program here and love working with Ryan Timpte and Susan Wentworth.

"In every transition my prayer has been the same, 'Please, God, show me who you would have me be'. Along the way I've learned that God invites me to be who I am in new, exciting, and sometimes scary ways. Although I prefer the comfort zone, the very best things that have happened in my life, including being here at LOPC, have occurred when I trusted God and stepped out in faith."

About her family, Lori says, that her husband, Ty, grew up in Pleasant Hill. They are the parents of a son, David, who is 23 and two adult daughters, Charlene and Christine. They also have three grandchildren, Sienna, seven, Ethan, four, and Sofia, two.

Lori chooses as her favorite Bible verse, "But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel. Do not fear for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you for I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Isaiah 43:1-3



JOIN US FOR A FREE



Christmas Concert



FEATURING

Daniel Pinkham's Christmas Cantata
Ralph Vaughan William's Fantasia on Christmas Carols
Other works by Manz, Willan, Rutter, Bradford, and Forrest



SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST

Singer/songwriter Debbie Shaeffer
joined by the Festival Choir and Orchestra
singing her beautiful and heartfelt original Christmas songs



WHEN

Saturday, December 10 at 4 p.m.
(Childcare available upon request. Deadline: Sunday, December 4)

Sunday, December 11 at 2 p.m.
(Childcare available upon request. Deadline: Sunday, December 4)

Sunday, December 11 at 5 p.m.
(No Childcare)



TICKETS

Reservation of Free Ticket will become available: Monday, November 7
(Max 6 tickets per reservation)
Free will donation will be received at the concert (Suggested donation: \$20/person)

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
49 Knox Dr Lafayette, CA • (925)283-8872 • LOPC.org



The Biblical Justice Luncheon

The Biblical Justice Luncheon held at LOPC on 9/28 featured Jocelyn White, Director of Mobilization for International Justice Mission, a global organization that protects the poor from violence in the developing world. The luncheon was well attended and provided an excellent introduction to the work that International Justice Mission is doing to fight modern day slavery and human trafficking around the globe.

Over 60 people attended the luncheon and were inspired to reflect on how the bible calls all of us to seek justice for those who can't. Thirty people committed to become Freedom partners to support and defend children and families seeking justice against those that have exploited them.

Go to IJM.org to learn more or contact robin@LOPC.org.



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 or leaving the parking lot.
- Any suggestions and ideas for traffic control are greatly appreciated and always welcome.

Questions? Email traffic@LOPC.org.





Staci Johnston

LOPC Foundation Work Is Spread Far and Wide

by Staci Johnston, Foundation Trustee

As a trustee, I'm often asked "What programs does the Foundation support at LOPC?" The answer is easy. Over the past 23 years, working closely with Session, it has funded a diverse range of large and small projects for the annual operating budget, as well as for unexpected needs, touching nearly every ministry area.

For example, this year the Foundation will fund the 2016 portion of its \$800,000 Sanctuary Renewal pledge. Session also has asked the Foundation for grants related to facilities for general operations, personnel and unexpected projects.

Additionally, in 2016, the Foundation is contributing support to all of these ministry areas:

- Mission: Monument Crisis Center, International Justice Mission, J.F. Kapnek Trust-Zimbabwe.
- Deacons: Deacon Emergency Fund.
- Care: Care Conference, Caregiver Support Group.
- Seniors: Thursday Fellowship, Care, First Friday Forum Speakers, Senior Classes, Noteables.
- Spiritual Formation: Companions, Stephen Ministries, Interfaith and Science & Religion Speakers.
- Children: Volunteer and Leadership Training.
- Family: Mt. Hermon Retreat.
- Youth: B.T.W. Worship Leadership, Summer Intern.
- Worship: Livestream on the Internet
- Fellowship: Quilters

It is easy to get excited by the extensive and vibrant, ongoing and new ministries, mission work and by the LOPC building and campus maintenance supported by the visionary and generous giving made possible by the Friends of the LOPC Foundation. I look forward to what 2017 offers.

Ask any Trustee how you can become a Friend of the LOPC Foundation and help the Foundation achieve its mission of benefitting current and future generations.

Dick James, President

Lynn Trowbridge, Vice President and Secretary

Phil Placier, Treasurer • Alan Kizor • Kristi Haigh • Staci Johnston • Dara Youngdale



Session Highlights – September 2016

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

Session was pleased to hear a presentation on the Team Goals for next year. We are in for an exciting year at LOPC as we move forward to achieve these goals. Also, we engaged in a candid discussion on ways that we might help bridge the divides that exist between various communities in our nation. Although still in the formative stages, we believe that LOPC can play a role in bringing people together to narrow these divides.

We received a final report on the successful completion of the Sanctuary Project which culminated in plaudits for the organ concert which so beautifully demonstrated the improvements that have been accomplished.



49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549

NOVEMBER 2016

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Gerald Chinen - Pastor, Congregational Care
Lauren Gully - Pastor, Mission & Spiritual Formation
Jaime Polson - Pastor, Family Ministry

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Brett Strader, Director
Stewart Scharch, Organist

TREASURER

Char Casella

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

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

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

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

Chicks with Sticks



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

Sunday Worship Services

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family

Connect with us online!



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