

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

PREPARE OUR HEARTS TO
CELEBRATE THE COMING OF
THE ULTIMATE GIFT,
JESUS CHRIST.

THE GIFTS OF Christmas

A detailed illustration of a nativity scene. In the center, the Virgin Mary is kneeling and holding the infant Jesus. Joseph stands nearby. To the left, two shepherds with their flock of sheep are gathered. To the right, three wise men on camels are approaching. The scene is set in a dark, starry night sky with a bright, glowing light emanating from the manger, casting long, colorful rays of light across the landscape. The overall tone is serene and majestic.

✦ HOPE

✦ LOVE

✦ JOY

✦ PEACE

DECEMBER 2017

Christmas Prayer

by Lauren Gully, Pastor – Mission & Spiritual Formation



I can't imagine what it is like to be God, I'm not even near cool enough to imagine what it's like to be Morgan Freeman. But I can imagine what it is like to love something with all that is in you, desperately want to save it, even at the cost of pain and suffering to yourself. I think that is as far as we can get as humans to imagine what it must have been like for God to make a new covenant with us in sending God's son at Christmas. Jesus is God's prayer for us, our world, in the flesh.

I pray for the world all the time, especially now. I talk to God about what I hope this world will be like in my lifetime and for those who will come after me. Sometimes I can even see it and feel the Kingdom of God that Jesus was sent to build. Some people around this time of year call these things "Christmas Miracles:" like when a family that doesn't know if it will be able to the pay rent gets an anonymous check in the mail; or when an elderly man is alone on Christmas and his nephew telephones him; or when a girl at Children of Faith smiles as she gets a brand-new dress at Christmas, the first time she has ever gotten a new piece of clothing.

Christmas for me, reminds me of imagining what God wants for our world.

Hope. Love. Joy. Peace.

These are the topics for each week in Advent in our devotional and in our sermon series. As we prepare for the one who came to save us, let me share my Christmas prayer with you:

This Christmas, may Hope embolden us to do what is right in the promise of what could be and will be. May we be generous with Love and remember that it is the key to our flourishing and the flourishing of our earth and our neighbors. May we learn to cultivate Joy and may it surprise us when we think it is most elusive. And may we strive until the day is done in bringing true Peace and right relationships to our world...all in the name of the Prince of Peace who hoped greater things for us than we could ever imagine and who loved us greatly. Amen.

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See more at LOPC.org





This Advent we will be looking at the Gifts of Christmas in our sermon series and in a daily devotional.

This Christmas, share in the magic as we unwrap the most important gifts we could ever receive. During the season of Advent, the four weeks leading up to Christmas, we will dive into the meaning of hope, love, joy and peace. And we will prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of the ultimate gift, Jesus Christ.

Advent devotionals are available in the ministry center!

Please email ashlee@LOPC.org.



Christmas Poinsettias

This Christmas we will continue our well-loved tradition of adorning the sanctuary with poinsettias. You may donate a poinsettia for \$15 at the booth on the plaza December 3rd, 10th or 17th in between services (10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.). Order forms are also available in the Ministry Center Office weekdays or you can mail in the order form on this page to the Ministry Center office, attention Janet Jourgensen. Mailed requests must be received by Monday, December 18th. A list of poinsettia dedications will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Those who have donated a poinsettia may either bring their plant home after the final Christmas Eve 11:00 pm service, or donate it for LOPC Deacon delivery to a local senior care facility.



Poinsettias \$15

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

☐ In memory of _____

OR

☐ In honor of _____

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

Given by _____

Phone # _____ Amount \$ _____

Deadline: 12/17

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

Gloria!

Christmas Concert

**SOLD
OUT**

~~December 9 at 4:00 p.m.~~

~~December 10 at 2:00 p.m.~~

~~December 10 at 5:00 p.m.~~

**Accepting
waitlists for all
three concerts**

Email tickets@LOPC.org to be
added to the waitlist.

Childcare available at the
December 10, 2:00 p.m., concert only.
RSVP to childcare@lopc.org by
Friday, December 1st.

Thursday, December 7, is the last day to
pick up reserved tickets in the Ministry
Center Office (9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.).
Unclaimed tickets will be distributed to
any remaining waitlist requests.

Christmas Eve New Year's Eve Services

Christmas Eve

Sunday morning service:
10:00 a.m.

Family Services:
3:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Traditional Services:
7:00 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.

Candlelight Communion Service (New!):

11:00 p.m.

Join us for a late evening service
of elegance and beauty as we
usher in Christmas morning
with carols, communion, and
candlelight. Music will be lead by a
chamber choir accompanied by a
string quartet, harp, and piano.
Pastor Gerald will share the good
news of Christmas.

New Year's Eve

Sunday morning services:
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.



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.

LOPC's Fire Response

The deadly wildfires that ravaged Northern California left parts of Napa and Sonoma with scorched earth where homes and vineyards once stood. Many in the LOPC community know of someone that lost their home, job or even lost a loved one.

Our community responded to the devastation raising \$8,449 which will be deployed to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to assist victims of the fire. In addition, Lauren and Robin delivered over 150 donated toiletry kits to Santa Rosa to be disbursed as needed to those that are suddenly without a home. We also visited Church of the Roses Presbyterian Church and were able to talk to their staff and hear their stories. They reiterated that financial contributions and housing opportunities are most needed and helpful as people rebuild their lives.

A prayer wall was erected with heartfelt prayers for recovery, strength and hope. The wall acted as a visible symbol of concern and love for the victims of the fires, first responders and those grieving the loss of a loved one.

- "I pray for the ones who have lost everything and are struggling to start over."
- "Prayers for those have lost family, friends, pets, homes, jobs in the fire."
- "Prayers for the first responders, dispatchers and support personnel"

As the days and months go by those who were affected by this experience will continue to need our help. There is currently a Presbyterian wide regional effort to find semi-permanent housing for those who have lost their homes. If you are interested in providing this type of assistance please contact robin@LOPC.org or lauren@LOPC.org.



Join us on December 2 at 5:00 p.m.!

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

Please join us in the LOPC Sanctuary December 2 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 Generosity. Pastor Peter Whitelock will deliver a special message on living fully into the holiday season.

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: January 6th, February 3rd, March 3rd, May 5th, June 2nd

Community Life

New Members – December 2017

by Chris Baldwin, *Director of Community Engagement*

Margaret Ann Fowler



Margaret Ann is a former member of LOPC and has returned to Lafayette after 40 years! She is a retired part-time program manager at Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. She's a huge college

basketball fan and loves to travel. She has a bucket list trip coming up to India!

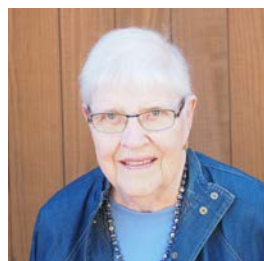
Barbara Gertz



Barbara has lived in Orinda for seven years, and in the Bay Area for 17 years. She has spent her career working in financial services and currently manages WellsTrade, Wells Fargo Advisors' retail online brokerage trading service. She loves

spending time with her husband (of 20 years this year!), Joe, and their three daughters Ellie, Kate and AJ. She is the happiest outdoors -- especially hiking -- and loves music. Barbara grew up singing in choirs and is slowly learning to play the guitar. Music is what initially drew her to LOPC, but she also missed her faith and wanted her kids to experience a church community. What she loves most about LOPC is the "come as you are" willingness to meet people wherever they may be on their faith journeys. She also loves LOPC's "can do" and yet thoughtful approach to ministry. She looks forward to continuing to serve in children's ministry and in other yet to-be-determined ways.

Nan Hornberger



This past March, Nan moved to Lafayette from Modesto where she used to worship at Trinity United Presbyterian Church and served as a deacon and a Stephen Minister. She is a retired sociology instructor. She no longer travels, but has

enjoyed traveling to many countries, especially focusing on nature trips. She has a love for sailing and reading.

Pat Riegg



Pat has lived in the East Bay for most of her life and was a career counselor for 17 years at Cal Berkeley serving undergraduate students of the business and economics school. This past May her husband, Bob, of 58 years passed

away. Bob was an amazing man with incredible accomplishments in hospital administration at John Muir Hospital, Rossmoor Clinic, and also established the first alcohol rehab clinic in Northern California. Pat has been particularly drawn to LOPC because she grew up in the Presbyterian church and she chose the wonderful Kurth Memorial Garden as a final resting place for Bob. Pat loves traveling, book clubs, anything educational, and especially getting to know her grandchildren.

Melissa McIlwain



Melissa and her husband, John, moved to Lafayette 10 years ago. They have two children, Juliet (10) and Charlie (8), and two cats. She is currently a home maker, who has been on temporary hiatus from practicing corporate and securities law.

In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with family, reading, playing tennis, golf and skiing. She appreciates how LOPC is committed to the community, and the interesting, instructive and uplifting worship services.

Community Life

Darla Tuning



Darla is the music teacher at MNO Grant Elementary School in Antioch. She's been married to her husband, Mark, for 32 years and together they have three daughters – Abbie 22 years, Sarah 21 years, and Maddie 19

years. She was a stay-at-home mom for many years and homeschooled her children. She enjoys gardening, reading, exploring the area, painting, and sewing. She hopes one day to own a small farm. What attracted Darla to LOPC was the offer to be the new Children's Choir Director for the Lightshine. She said, "I feel like I've truly found a church home."

Mary Webb



Mary moved to the area two years ago from Bend, OR, as her daughter and her family live here. She also has a son in the Phoenix, AZ, area. She is a retired nurse and loves being with her family. For fun, she attends her grandchildren's athletic events, and enjoys

traveling, cooking, entertaining, hiking, kayaking, and picnicking. Mary graduated from Ohio State University. Someone from Bend recommended LOPC to Mary when they learned she was moving here. She has enjoyed the sermons, music and was delighted to find out LOPC has a Stephen Ministry program as she is a Stephen Minister. "It is very important to me that we honor and respect all religions," she says.

Kale & Lauren Turner



The Turners have lived in Lafayette for three years after moving from San Francisco. They have two sons, ages four and two, and are expecting a third (a girl!) this month. As a family, they love sports, especially football, and try to visit the beach as much as possible since they have family in Southern California and Hawaii. They were attracted to LOPC by the sermons, music, and wonderful children's programs. They're excited about becoming more involved and having a positive, supportive church for their children to grow up in.

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.

2018 Sanctuary Flower Calendar



If you would like to celebrate an occasion or honor your loved ones' memory on a Sunday, please sign up on the Flower Calendar located in front of the Welcome Center every Sunday morning. For Sundays in 2018, the suggested donation will be \$150. Questions? Contact worship@LOPC.org.

Science and Religion - 12/11

6:00 p.m. in the Davies Room



A splash of Christmas spirit – a dash of friendship!

Join the Science and Religion study group to share a warm meal, good conversation, and comradeship around the table. We will meet and anticipate a wonderful evening of Fellowship.

Community Life

Presbyterian Women's Christmas Tea – 12/1

12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Join other ladies of LOPC for our annual Christmas Tea.

Our theme this year is
Angels Watching Over Us.

We will enjoy a musical program by the Saint Mary's College Chamber Singers led by Julie Ford.

The program will be followed by tea and goodies where we will have time to greet old and new friends and admire the holiday decor.

Don't miss this special day, the introduction to the Advent Season.

Questions? Contact Catherine Gallinger at catherinegallinger@comcast.net.

Disciple Bible Study

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

DISCIPLE

BECOMING DISCIPLES
THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

We invite you to join us for a semester-long study of Scripture. This study, DISCIPLE: BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE

STUDY, is a 34 week overview of the entire Bible. 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 will begin January 9, 2018, and end on May 29, 2018. We will meet each Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

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. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Engelbrekton. There is a \$15 fee for the book. To register for this Bible study, 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



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.

FEBRUARY 2

Dr. Catherine Wolfram

"Energy Policy in California and Around the World"

MARCH 2

Dr. Sarah Anzia

"Pensions"

APRIL 13

Dr. Glenn Robinson

"What Going on in the Middle East"

MAY 4

Representative from the Nation Heart Association
will address Strokes

JUNE 1

Professor Karen Musalo

"Refugees & Asylum Seekers: US Policy—Past & Present"

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

A Gift of Love – 12/3

in the Oak Room 12:15 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Senior Ministries

In the midst of grieving the death of a loved one, it can be a challenge to prepare their memorial service. A gift that we may offer our family is to leave with them our written desires for our own memorial service. In this workshop, we will explore how we may prepare for a memorial service and what elements go into a memorial service. A light lunch will be served.

Contact ashlee@LOPC.org to register for the workshop.

Community Life

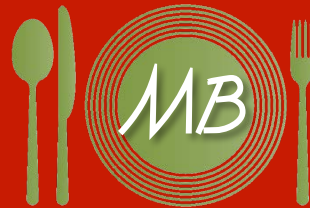
Deadline To Beat The Tax Man Is Near

The end of the year is rapidly approaching. Anyone who plans to make tax-deductible donations to LOPC in 2017 is reminded that the church must either receive your gift by 5:00 p.m. on December 31 or receive your mailed gift postmarked December 31 or earlier. Sorry, we can make no exceptions to these IRS rules. For those giving stock, please note that these gifts must be in LOPC's brokerage account no later than December 31. Please notify Lidia Jesionek (x229 or Lidia@LOPC.org) or Char Casella (x253 or char@LOPC.org) if you are making a stock gift, what stock(s) you're donating and how it should be applied. That way, we'll be on the alert for this gift and will know who it's coming from.

Year-end statements will be mailed in January. To insure the deductibility of your gifts, do not file your 2017 tax return until you receive this statement. Some of your gifts may not be tax-deductible if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgement of your gifts to LOPC.

Men's Breakfast

Where women are always welcome



Topic:

"Imagine What
More
We Can Build"

December 20



Kristin Lincoln

Habitat for Humanity East
Bay/Silicon Valley
Board Member

Bring friends & family

7:00 a.m.

Davies Room

**\$5 donation at the
door for breakfast**

R.S.V.P. to

**janet@LOPC.org or
call (925) 283-8722**

**x223 before noon on
the Tuesday before
breakfast**

Community Life

LOPC Foundation Finances Update

by Phil Placier, Foundation Trustee, Treasurer



Phil Placier

LOPC Foundation closed its September 30, 2017, fiscal year with \$9.9 million of invested net assets (also called equity), after deducting \$350,000 of commitments to LOPC. Net assets increased \$973,000, after disbursements and commitments to the church, due primarily to an extraordinary 13 percent investment return on three investment portfolios of 23 diversified mutual funds. The increase includes \$125,000 of estate and other gifts. Foundation trustees appropriated \$273,000 for church ministries, \$100,000 for the first installment of a three-year pledge to the Sanctuary Campaign, and \$71,000 for the Sanctuary projector project.

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



General Ministry Fund – Unrestricted	\$2,499,000
Homan Mission Endowment Fund - Restricted*	98,000
Homan Music Endowment Fund – Restricted*	105,000
Newcomer Women's Endowment Fund – Restricted*	3,500
Deacons Endowments Fund – Restricted*	226,000
Dornsife Youth Endowment Fund	335,000
Thursday Fellowship Endowment Fund	231,000
Cranmer Christian Leadership Fund – Restricted*	230,000
Steuber Landscape Maintenance Endow. Fund – Restricted*	115,000
Facilities Endowments Fund – Restricted*	5,725,000
Facilities Reserve Account - Restricted*	348,000

**Restricted funds and account are available for grants for limited or restricted uses only, as designated by donors or Foundation trustees. The Facilities Reserve Account purpose is to provide funds for planned and unexpected facilities and capital equipment projects. An additional \$210,000 was set aside in the Account in fiscal 2017. You will hear more in 2018 about donor opportunities for legacy estate gifts and other gifts that will increase Foundation support of future church ministries.*

Learn more about the Foundation at the LOPC website and from Foundation trustees Dick James (President), Kristi Haigh (Vice President), Dara Youngdale (Secretary), Phil Placier (Treasurer), Lynn Trowbridge, Alan Kizor, Staci Johnston. Jim Beckemeyer and Jerry Ducey will join the Board of Trustees January 1 to replace Lynn Trowbridge and Alan Kizor who have completed four-year terms as trustees.

Session Highlights – October 2017

by Bill DeWolf, Clerk of Session

As the leaves turn fall colors and drop and rains arrive, Session turns its attention to budgets, present and future. At our October meeting we were pleased to hear from the Finance Team that we were on track for this year's budget. This prediction is predicated on the assumption that pledges are paid as they have historically been, and that year-end giving is comparable to that of the past. We are also starting the budgeting process for next year. We are asking our various Ministry Teams to meet with our Finance Team to understand the goals and aspirations our teams have for next year and work together to support them.

Session was also pleased to be able to pass a motion that would provide additional funding for the health-care benefits for our staff. This was done after a survey of other organizations to determine how LOPC compared. It was clear that for us to remain an "employer of choice" we needed to provide some additional support for our health-care offering. This was passed unanimously. In the context of our budget discussions, this served as a reminder of the challenge to optimize the funding for our remarkable suite of programs and, at the same time, making sure we are supporting adequately our wonderful staff that can help make them happen. Session appreciates greatly the tremendous support that we receive from the congregation.

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.



Kristi Haigh

We have often heard the call, "Give of your time and talents." Kristi Haigh has answered that call to the benefit of LOPC in many ways. "I often get tagged with the financial task because of my background, an MBA from Cal and a career in banking. Some of the times I've said 'yes' it has led me into paths I never would have taken and has enhanced my faith journey," she says.

Kristi says she stepped out in a new way when her husband, Art, was transferred to Moscow where they lived from 1998 to 2001. "We worshipped at the Protestant Chaplaincy which was supported by five denominations, including ours. There were many African students in the congregation who were trapped there as the Russians, who brought them over, no longer, supported them. They suffered a lot as Moscow was a violent, racist place and they were very often beaten on the Metro. I, with them, volunteered in the three soup kitchens the Chaplaincy ran, which fed 1,500 Russian pensioners a day. For them, and the Africans, too, who got to eat there, it was probably the only hot meal of the day. Being right there with these people who endured such hardship was such a different experience than I had living in Orinda. I wanted so much to help them. I did serve as bookkeeper working hard to keep money from the Russians in authority."

Looking back, Kristi says she's a lifelong Presbyterian, having been baptized in a Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh, PA, as a toddler and feels lucky that church has always been a part of her life. "My parents were involved in the church and we had a dynamic minister. Church was an exciting, fun place. All through high school it was the place to be and we were counted on.

"The high school group sang in church every Sunday. I love learning, history especially. So, thinking about how far back the Bible goes, the changes Jesus brought, and learning about how the church developed intrigued me." Kristi's college was Duke, where religion courses were required. "They were taught by great professors, Bible, Christian literature—fabulous!" It was there she met Art Haigh. After graduation he was in the Navy and was gone 12 of the first 18 months they were married. This was

Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

during the Vietnam war and he served four years. He then received his MBA at Tulane. A move to San Francisco followed. Kristi admits even though Art, too, had been raised in the church, they hadn't been going that often but they began to feel something was missing and realized they needed to get involved. That's when they became active in Calvary Presbyterian. When they bought a house in Concord they visited many Presbyterian churches and finally LOPC. That was it. Dr. Jim Little was the senior pastor with a great staff, and a fine children's program, which was important because Caroline and Emily were now part of the family. "Like many parents we got involved in whatever the children were doing. I remember teaching first grade Sunday School with Sandy and Doug Landin. We were junior high advisors. Art became an elder. I was asked to be an elder and my first-year assignment was for Youth, then Finance and Personnel the following two years."

The Haighs have a special spot in their hearts for the Atfuluna School for the Deaf in Palestine. "These children have such a bleak future without our support," Kristi says. The family also treasures the Kurth Memorial Garden. Kristi serves on its board and says she hopes LOPC members fully appreciate how wonderful it is. "My parents and Art's parents are there. It's a lovely place. For those who haven't walked through it, I recommend their doing so. Even if you don't have family members there, it is a tranquil place where we can think of all who have gone before us and give thanks for them."

Kristi now serves on the Foundation Board. "We are going through a long transition from being rather small to a bigger entity, but we are making progress in becoming and even better partner with LOPC to help it expand its ministries and missions as well as taking care of all the wonderful resources we have. It's a glass more than half full."

"I'm grateful I've been able to give back with my time and talents at LOPC," Kristi says. "Hopefully, we all will consider, what talent do I have to which I could give my time that will help our church in its mission to be 'Alive! In Christ...In the World.'"

Spiritual Formation

Christmas and the Incarnation: the Stories of Jesus' Beginnings.



Christmas trees, lights, presents, and, of course, a Nativity scene: all of these represent Christmas to American Christians. But how does each Gospel narrate Christ's birth? You might be surprised to know that only two of the four Gospels even include stories of Jesus as a baby.

Kathy Timpfe, PhD student at Princeton Theological Seminary and adjunct professor at St. Mary's College of California, is teaching a series on unique introductions to Jesus. Each Gospel is intent on conveying certain themes about who Jesus is: King, Servant, God, Social Revolutionary. And each of these themes is central to how they chose to begin each Gospel.

Sunday, December 3, at 9:00 a.m. in Davies Room

The Gospel of Matthew: In Matthew, Jesus is deeply tied to a Jewish lineage, tracing decent back to Abraham and through David. Jesus is represented as the King, and also narrated to show his status as a second Moses.

Sunday, December 10, at 9:00 a.m. in Davies Room

The Gospel of Luke: Luke's Gospel contains most of the "Christmas Story" as told in Christmas pageants. Luke consistently focuses on God's promises being fulfilled through the Spirit. These promises are often given to unlikely and socially marginal people: women, and shepherds. Jesus is the great servant, born to help the outcasts.

For Questions, contact ashlee@LOPC.org.

Save the Date!



One Sunday will take place on Sunday, February 25, 2018.

Advent Interfaith Gathering – 12/7

7:00- 8:30 p.m. in the Chapel



The gift of Advent is that all of us can symbolically relate to Mary. Although Advent is a Christian tradition, we will also look at it with the focus of all our faiths waiting for something new and

miraculous to happen in our lives and the world in which we live, trusting that God will guide us as well as others to make a difference.

Neighbor to Neighbor Interfaith Women's Groups and their friends invite you to meet with us in the LOPC Chapel for an Advent Service with messages and music representing many faith traditions. All Women Are Invited. Refreshments and conversation afterwards.

Special Offering for Christmas

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church has a tradition of illuminating the need that exists for children globally during Christmas. This need is highlighted by acknowledging two LOPC partners whose mission focuses on helping children. This year the two organizations that will be the recipient of the Christmas special offering are JF Kapnek and FOTOKIDS. Both organizations are dedicated to helping children thrive, despite the challenges they face daily.



The JF Kapnek Trust responds to the most urgent threats to child survival in Zimbabwe including HIV/AIDS, hunger and access to education.



Fotokids continues to break the cycle of poverty through training children from violence-stricken communities in Guatemala in visual arts and technology.

Please give prayerful consideration to lifting these two organizations up this Christmas.

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.



LOPC has a tradition of offering several meaningful ways to give during the Christmas season. Please consider choosing one of the several offered.



Harbor House supports low income children in the San Antonio district of Oakland. The UNWRAPPED gifts collected provide inventory for an on-site store that provides parents the joy of choosing a gift for their own child during the holidays.

Pick up list of items on the plaza on December 3. Return unwrapped toy to Ministry Center on December 10.

Go to LOPC.org for more information or contact robin@LOPC.org.



Food Boxes

Help families in the Monument Corridor celebrate Christmas with a holiday meal.

Pick-up a box and flyer on the Worship Plaza on December 3 and return filled box on December 10 to truck in front of the Oak room.



December 3 & 10
Chapel Narthex between services

A great ways to discover need around the globe. Give a gift in honor of a loved one that can change a life!

Congo Necklace sales on December 17 on the Worship Plaza between service. Buy a Congo necklace to give girls in the Congo access to training in computers and English.

**LOVE MERCY
WALK HUMBLY
DO JUSTICE**

BE LOPC Mission

LOPC Friends, Let your voice be heard! The LOPC Mission Task Force wants your input. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey below before November 30. Note: When you open the survey you must finish it and it may only be taken once.

Go to LOPC.org/category/news to fill out the survey. We appreciate and value your response!

Lauren Gully,
Pastor Mission and Spiritual Formation

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.

'Tis the Season at Seedlings Preschool

by Bridgette Thomas, Seedlings Communications Board Member



How will you celebrate Christmas in December? It's the most wonderful time of the year, for sure. It's filled with joy and excitement—especially for kids. Seedlings students will have fun in class with holiday-themed play and Christmas parties; and families can participate in the annual Holiday Toy Drive.

You will find a big Christmas Tree in the Seedlings' lobby. If you would like to take part in our Toy Drive, please select an ornament from the tree with a child's age and gift ideas. Your new, unwrapped toy or teen gift can be brought back to school by Friday, December 8th and will be given to the children at Harbor House, in Oakland.

Also in December, Students will enjoy a special Christmas sing-a-long concert, led by the incredibly talented Seedlings' dads, Josh Dobies and Jesse Debban. Seedlings will host a "Daddy Drop Off Day" too, where moms get a break and students' dads bring them to school, enjoy a coffee and meet other dads.

Friday December 1 – Daddy Drop Off Day.

Friday December 8 – Final day to donate Christmas toys for Harbor House.

Seedlings Christmas Concert (students only, please).

In the midst of the December hustle and bustle, parents are sometimes challenged to keep emphasis on the true meaning of the season—the celebration of Jesus' birth. Here are a few simple, yet effective ways to celebrate Christmas at home with your preschooler, and help your family focus on the lasting joy of the season.

Sing Christmas Songs

Play Christmas music and sing along! You can even make up your own Christmas songs by using tunes to familiar songs. For example, to the tune "Mary Had a Little Lamb," sing: "Jesus was a baby boy, Baby boy, baby boy. Jesus was a baby boy, a special baby boy."

Play with a Manger Scene

Make or purchase a non-breakable Nativity set. Select one that is sturdy enough for young fingers to handle and move. Our favorite is the Fisher-Price Little People "A Christmas Story" set (available on Amazon for \$34). Read Luke 2:1-20 while your children play with the scene and help them name the figures. Pray together, thanking God for Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Worship through Giving

It's easy for both children and adults to get so caught up with the giving and getting of gifts that they sometimes forget whose birthday they are celebrating. This year, decide as a family on gifts you will give to Jesus. Help your children understand that Jesus does not want bright packages from the store. Your family's gift for Him might be your love, prayers, gratitude, praise, or even an act of ministry.



Family at LOPC

DECEMBER YOUTH EVENTS!

5TH - 8TH GRADE:

Mediocre Talent Night

12/13 • 6:00 – 7:30pm, CLC 201

Come show off your not so great talents or cheer on your friends!

Movie Night

12/20 • 6:00 – 7:45pm, CLC 201

Come enjoy popcorn and “Elf” during Christmas break!

HIGH SCHOOL:

High School Progressive Brinner

12/10: 6:00 - 8:30pm

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

Movie Night

12/17 • 6:30 – 8:30pm, CLC 201

Come enjoy popcorn and “Home Alone” during Christmas break!

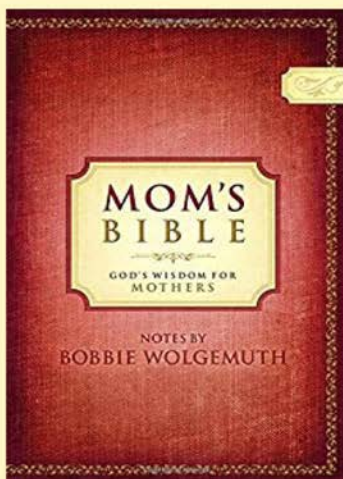
College Dinner & High School Seniors' Dinner

12/21 • 7:00 - 11:45pm

An evening of fellowship for returning college students and high school seniors to share their experiences. Dinner will be followed by broomball at Dublin Iceland! Please bring \$10.00 for broomball. Contact Keris for details.



Mom's Study



A group of moms with young children meet monthly, on the first Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., with a Bible and book study and discussion led by Pastor Jaime Polson. Currently we are exploring the book by Rachel Macy Stafford, *Hands Free Momma*. We are also very excited to have Rachel Macy Stafford with us in January as the keynote speaker at our Mom's Retreat.

All of our studies focus on incorporating faith in our daily lives, including how we parent. We invite all moms with young children to join us. Please join us on December 6.

Questions or RSVP to dave@LOPC.org.



LOPC
LAFAYETTE-ORINDA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549

DECEMBER 2017

IMPORTANT:
Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
Before 12/1/17
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 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:

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

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

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

Sunday Worship Services

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family

theFANTASTICproject

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.



Check out our latest video about Balloons: When your sharp words pop someone's balloons, make sure you restore what was broken.

Connect with us online!



Livestream.Com/LOPC



Facebook.com/lopchurch



Google.com/LOPC



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