

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Holy Week Begins  
Sunday, March 25

# PREPARING *for*



# EASTER

# MARCH 2018

## An Easter Reflection

by Gerald Chinen, Pastor - Congregational Care



On the PBS Channel, a new series entitled *We'll Meet Again* tells the stories of people searching for individuals who have left an indelible impact on their lives. Each week, two stories are told in each hour long episode. In the first episode, we meet Reiko, now in her eighties, searching for her childhood friend, Mary Francis. When Reiko and Mary were children, they did everything together, Reiko, an American of Japanese descent, Mary Francis, an American of European descent.

But after President Roosevelt declared war on Japan, following the attack on American soil at Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, hostility toward anyone of Japanese ancestry became so intense, that even Mary Francis' mother forbade her from seeing Reiko again. But Mary Francis went against her parent's wishes, and continued to seek Reiko out. One day, Mary Francis' uncle caught the two girls playing and told Reiko to go home and then said to Mary Francis, "and I'm going to punish you." Even after that, Mary Francis stood by her friend, even when other children spat on Reiko, called her names, and threw rocks at her. Soon after, Reiko and her family were forced from their home and taken to one of 10 Internment Camps; theirs was Heart Mountain, Wyoming. After that, Reiko lost touch with Mary Francis.

Reiko wondered all these years, how Mary Francis found the courage and strength to disobey her parents to continue to be her friend. And she wanted desperately to find Mary Francis again to thank her for her strength, kindness and love. After 75 years, Reiko and Mary Francis had a tearful, joyful reunion, in the Japanese Garden in Golden Gate Park. Reiko lives in Sacramento, Mary Francis in Kentucky.

At the conclusion of this episode, Reiko thanks her for standing up for her, to which Mary Francis replies, "I was always mouthy!" No, she was a friend, a brave friend who knew in her heart of hearts what was right and what was wrong.

"Mouthy." No one could shut Jesus up either! He spoke up for the poor, the despised and the outcasts. He spoke out and confronted the comfortable, the contented. He challenged the leaders in the empire and in the church.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." And on Good Friday, for his friends, and for the world, his courage, bravery, and, yes, his love led him to the cross, and he died. But on Easter morning he rose, letting the world know that there is no greater power than love.

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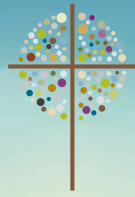
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See more at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)



# Easter

@ LOPC

## Holy Week

March 25

### **PALM SUNDAY SERVICE**

9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.  
All Ages in Worship

March 25

### **EGG HUNT & POTLUCK BRUNCH**

12:15 p.m.

March 29

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE**

7:00 p.m. | Communion Served  
Childcare provided

March 30

### **GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

7:00 p.m. | Service of Darkness  
Painter Daniel Panasiuk  
Childcare provided

## Easter Sunday

April 1

### **EARLY MORNING SERVICE**

6:30 a.m. | Communion Served

April 1

### **EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE\***

8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.  
Childcare provided,  
4 years and under

April 1

### **CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS**

Pre-K - 4th Grade  
9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

*\* Communion will be served on  
April 8 but not on Easter Sunday.*

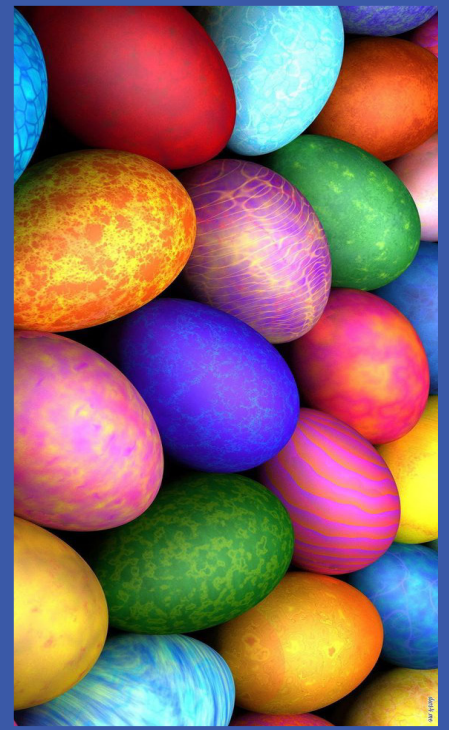
# LOPC PALM SUNDAY EGG HUNT & POTLUCK BRUNCH

This Palm Sunday, March 25, LOPC will once again host an egg hunt and potluck brunch! Our talented kitchen staff will provide an egg dish and attendees are asked to bring a side item to share.

Brunch will be served at 12:15 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Immediately following brunch, children and their families are invited to participate in an egg hunt! Bring your kids, grandkids, and your neighbor's kids!

All who enjoy fun and celebration are welcome to attend! Brunch tickets available on the Worship Plaza beginning March 18.

## SEE YOU ON PALM SUNDAY!



### Easter Lilies

Once again, during Easter Week, our Sanctuary will be adorned with lilies. Their bloom coincides with the beginning of spring, the season of our earth's renewal. They have special significance for us as Christians, symbolizing rebirth through Christ's resurrection. Before fully opening, lilies assume a trumpet shape. This shape is said to represent God the Father calling his son Jesus home. The choice of white lilies indicates purity and freedom from sin through Jesus' death on the cross.

You may give a beautiful Easter lily for the Sanctuary, available for a \$15 donation at the Deacon Booth on the Plaza after Sunday services on March 4, 11 and 18. Donors will be listed in the Easter Sunday bulletin. After the Easter services, the lilies will be delivered to the homebound and to those in convalescent care facilities. Questions? Contact ashlee@lopc.org.

# Easter Lilies

Deadline to receive form: Sunday 3/18/18

## \$15

Yes, I / we would like to donate an Easter Lily to help decorate the Sanctuary for Easter Sunday Worship Services.

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

OR

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Contact ashlee@LOPC.org.

Given by \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 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.*

### Meet Ryan Timpte

by Jennifer Shaul, Digital & Print Administrator



Spend a few minutes with Ryan and you'll quickly realize how just approachable, nice, and funny he is. You'll likely also notice that he prefers to discuss ministering rather than himself.

As Director of Children's Ministry, Ryan oversees all ministry with children from birth through fourth grade. According to

Ryan, Children's Ministry deals with both the universal and the particular. "In one sense, kids haven't changed," he said. "Developmentally, psychologically, kids have basically been the same over the last hundred years, and that helps ground us in our decision making – especially when we deal in particulars, or the challenges that kids are facing right now. We want to raise up a generation of kids who are grounded in the virtues of kindness, justice, and mercy through the love of God, so that they can lead the next

*"We want to raise up a generation of kids who are grounded in the virtues of kindness, justice, and mercy through the love of God, so that they can lead the next generation of kids."*

generation of kids." Ryan and his team help children develop these virtues through various programs like The Garden, Kids Rock, Children's Choirs, and

Vacation Bible Camp.

*"I am not LOPC's only children's minister! Children's Ministry is a shared responsibility of the community at large."*

Ryan also works with his team to cast this vision for ministering to children in our community, both at LOPC and Lamorinda at large. Likewise, he encourages a community approach to ministering. "I am not LOPC's only children's minister," he explains. "Children's Ministry is a shared responsibility of the community at large. As Jesus says in Mark 10, we are to enter the kingdom of God like a little child, and there's no better way to learn how to do that than to work with kids. Our team would love to partner with you as you make the decision to volunteer with us."

While Ryan has been the Director of Children's Ministry at LOPC since 2011, a look at his journey here makes clear that he was called to serve at a young age. While in preschool, his mother became the Director of Children's Ministry adjacent to his school. It was through his mother's work that he first came to know the love of God that helped him discover his calling. As an undergraduate, he majored in English and Religious Studies. After that, he studied at the Princeton Theological Seminary as a graduate student. Prior to joining the LOPC team, Ryan served as an Elementary Ministry Director for a large church in New Jersey.

The light Ryan brings to the church is rooted in his life at home. When not ministering at LOPC, Ryan devotes his time to his wife Kathy and their son Beckett, age two-and-a-half. In his spare time, he plays narrative video games, like Final Fantasy and Dragon Age.

## Community Life

### Moms' Retreat Recap



In January, 140 young women, moms from LOPC, Seedlings Preschool and the larger community, gathered in Fellowship Hall for the Moms' Retreat. Rachel Macy Stafford, well known author of *Hands Free Mama* and *Only Love Today*, was the retreat leader. She spoke to the gathered

women about being present for our family members – especially our children, making the most of moments through practical tips on media use and ways to really connect emotionally and spiritually with our families while relying on our faith to help us. We are particularly grateful for the retreat-support team which created a beautiful setting with delightful food and beverages that helped make the retreat a very special experience.

### We Believe (?!?)

Sundays, 10:15 a.m.



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

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

- 3/11 Inclusion in the Bible.  
Gerald Chinen. Davies Room.
- 4/22 Demystifying the Book of Revelation.  
Jaime Polson and Professor Zach Flanagin.  
Davies Room.
- 5/06 Why Did Jesus Have to Die?  
Peter Whitelock. MC Oak Room.

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

### New Members Class – May 4 – 6



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.

We have welcomed 23 new members into our community from the February class. Next month each new member will be featured with bios and pictures.

The next LOPC Membership Class meets May 4-6. Childcare is available by reservation. Questions? Contact [chris@LOPC.org](mailto:chris@LOPC.org). Register online at [www.lopc.org/welcome/join-lopc/](http://www.lopc.org/welcome/join-lopc/)

Join us on March 3 at 5:00 p.m.!

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

Please join us in the LOPC Sanctuary for a new worship opportunity. All ages are welcome in this casual, contemporary service. 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.

**Please bring hotel toiletries to the service to donate! They will be packaged into toiletry kits for the homeless.**

Future service schedule: May 5, June 2.

**Community Life**

**Soul Friend: Extending the Friendship of Christ through Meaningful Visits**

A Workshop on Home and Hospital Visits; Sunday, March 18, 12:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m., Oak Room

The Reverend Dr. Russel Ikeda and his wife Linda Ikeda, along with Pastor Gerald Chinen, will be co-leading a workshop designed for all who visit or plan to visit loved ones and friends either in homes or in hospitals and care facilities.

Russel Ikeda (MDiv, DMin) served as an Associate Pastor at Saratoga Federated Church for 21 years. Currently, he is Director of Emmaus Ministries of Silicon Valley, which is a relational marketplace ministry of coming alongside people on their faith journey and providing pastoral counsel and spiritual direction. He serves on the Leadership Team for SoulCARE (ministry of WellSpring for pastors/ministry leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area), is an adjunct instructor at William Jessup University (Bay Area extension program), and the chaplain for the Los Gatos/Monte Sereno Police Department.


Linda M. Ikeda (BS/RN, MFT) was a pediatric intensive care nurse for 15 years before changing careers and entering into private practice with Hope Counseling of Silicon Valley in San Jose as a licensed Marriage Family Therapist. Her focus of work includes children and adolescents (with special emphasis on attachment),



adults recovering from childhood or critical incident trauma, family of origin issues, married couples and individuals with chronic illness.


Russ and Linda are parents of two married adult sons who have blessed them with two grandchildren.

Lunch will be provided for a \$5 donation. Contact Ashlee Roundtree at [Ashlee@lopc.org](mailto:Ashlee@lopc.org) or at extension 228 to register. This workshop is sponsored by the Barnabas Visitation team of the Deacon Board.



## Men's Breakfast

3/28



### Jim Boyd

*Monument Crisis Center*

Come learn about Monument Crisis Center and the difference they are making in our community.

Bring friends & family | 7:00 a.m. | Davies Room  
 \$5 donation at the door for breakfast  
 RSVP by noon 3/27 to [janet@LOPC.org](mailto:janet@LOPC.org) or x223

**Enough As She Is – Thursday, 3/22**

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary



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

*Lives*. Her talk will focus on how to teach girls self-compassion as an alternative to self-criticism, how to manage overthinking and resist the constant urge to compare themselves to peers, how to take healthy risks and navigate toxic elements of social media.

Tickets – \$10 – are available for purchase at [rachelsimmons.com/tour](http://rachelsimmons.com/tour). All proceeds will benefit Girls Leadership. Questions? Contact [dave@lopc.org](mailto:dave@lopc.org).

## Community Life



### 2018 Speaker Series



**MARCH 2**

**Dr. Sarah Anzia**  
*Prof. of Political*  
*Science, UCB*

**“Pensions: The**  
**Big Squeeze”**

1:00 p.m. Refreshments - All are invited  
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

"The Politics of Public Pensions" is the lecture to be presented by Dr. Sarah Anzia at the First Friday Forum Lecture Series on March 2, 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church,

Dr. Anzia states, "In the last several years, Californians have heard a lot about the State's public pension problems. Those problems aren't confined to California. The same issues are affecting state and local governments throughout the country. By one estimate, public employee pensions across the United States are underfunded by \$1.1 million. Others say the underfunding levels are much larger.

"What exactly are the problems associated with public employee pensions?" she asks. "How and why did these problems come about and what are the likely consequences for state and local governments, for

government employees, and for the citizens of California?"

She continues, "This talk will focus on the 'politics' behind the nation's pension problems. Specifically, it will zero in on the politics behind how public pensions benefits have been expanded, the political considerations of those who are charged with fully funding those benefits and the political factors that shape how local government across the country responds to their rising pension costs."

*"What exactly are the problems associated with public employee pensions? How and why did these problems come about and what are the likely consequences for state and local governments, for government employees, and for the citizens of California?"*

Sarah Anzia is a political scientist who studies American politics with a focus on state and local government, elections, interest groups, political parties, and public policy. Her book, *Timing and Turnout: How Off-Cycle Elections Favor Organized Groups*, examines how the timing of elections can be manipulated to affect both voter turnout and the composition of the electorate, which, in turn, affects election outcomes and public policy. She also studies the role of government employees and public-sector unions in elections and policymaking in the U.S. In addition, she has written about the politics of public pensions, women in politics, the historical development of electoral institutions, and the power of political party leaders in state legislatures.

Her work has been published in the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, the *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, and *Studies in American Political Development*. She has a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University and an M.P.P. from the Harris School at the University of Chicago.

The lecture will be preceded by refreshments served in Fellowship Hall at 1:00 p.m. For further information call (925) 283-8722.



## Science and Religion – 3/19

7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room



### Faith and Reason in the Search for Truth

Please join us on March 19 7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room to hear this stimulating

Presentation and discussion with Fr. David Gentry, Professor of Theology, St. Mary's College.

From Albert the Great to Teilhard de Chardin, many Catholic thinkers down through the centuries have understood that Creation itself is a source of revelation about God. Thomas Aquinas, and other medieval thinkers, often spoke of the two books of revelation: the book of Creation and the book of the Bible. As we learned in Professor Flanagin's lecture, the "divorce" between religion and science that takes place following the Galileo controversy led to a polemic in which religious wisdom and scientific fact came to be pitted against one another, as if the two were not compatible. Rather, what is needed is a respect for the methods proper to each of these disciplines. Theology has its own proper sources and methods, as does science. Christians believe that religious wisdom and scientific fact complement one another and that ultimately they lead to a deeper grasp of Truth, which is simply another name for God.

## 2017 Financial Report

The LOPC financial statements, in summary form, are available at the Ministry Center front desk. They show the budget for 2018 and the actual balance sheet, income and expenses for 2017 and 2016. If you would like a more detailed version of the expenses email Char Casella, church Treasurer, at char@LOPC.org.

	January to December 2017	
	Actual	Budget
Pledge Income	\$ 2,443,497	\$ 2,175,000
Non-Pledge Gifts & Loose Offerings	257,370	240,000
Faith Component	140,026	230,000
Mission & Other Special Gifts	322,780	103,859
Foundation Support	238,381	253,494
Seedlings Offset to Shared Costs	150,000	150,000
Session Emerging Needs Fund	-	70,000
All other	31,922	55,000
Total Income	3,583,976	3,277,353
Expenses	(3,482,052)	(3,277,353)
Net Surplus	\$ 101,924	\$ -

## 2018 Pledge Campaign Update

The Stewardship Team is pleased to report that through week 15 of the 2018 Pledge Campaign – "My Pledge" – pledges totaling \$2,224,115 have been received from 518 households. If you have not yet turned in your pledge for 2018 there is still time to do so. Pledge cards and envelopes are available in the pews and Ministry Center, and they can be placed in offering plate during worship or mailed. Another option is to complete your pledge online or by email which is so fast and easy! Please visit [www.lopc.org/give-back/pledge](http://www.lopc.org/give-back/pledge) or send Lidia an email at lidia@LOPC.org. Our thanks to the congregation for this good result!

**MY PLEDGE**  
pray·discern·pledge

**2018 Stewardship Report**

Households: 518  
Pledges: \$2,224,115  
Goal: \$2,397,473

Questions? Contact Conrad Breece at [brecelaf@comcast.net](mailto:brecelaf@comcast.net).

## What is Per Capita?



Per Capita is a Latin phrase that means "for each head." We use it to refer to an annual fee that our congregation pays to higher levels of the Presbyterian Church based upon the

number of active members in LOPC. For 2018, the Per Capita amount is \$36.25 or \$72.50 per couple. We encourage members to make an extra contribution to help defray this expense in addition to their other gifts. To facilitate this, you will find a blue Per Capita envelope in your box of giving envelopes. You can also give a check to the church with "Per Capita" noted on the memo line. We have budgeted \$66,556 this year for our Per Capita obligation. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a significant portion of this could be covered by your extra contribution enabling us to add additional support to ministries of LOPC?

familyministry presents

# DISMANTLING RACISM, TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

## THE ROLE OF PEOPLE OF FAITH IN HEALING OUR COMMUNITIES

In our current social climate, we are constantly reminded of the divisions among people and even encouraged to view others as threats to our own wellbeing. In such a time as these, how can we recognize and advocate for the common humanity that connects all people to one another?

Join the Rev. Sandhya Jha (pastor, director of the Oakland Peace Center, author, community organizer and anti-racism trainer) to reflect on root causes of racism and the spiritual tools we can access to confront the systems that hurt some and benefit others. During our four hours together, we'll look at some terms that will help us develop shared language around racial justice, examine how our faith can strengthen our work to address divisions in our community, and discuss the possibilities for concrete action by people of faith.

Lunch will be served.

Please RSVP to [dave@lopc.org](mailto:dave@lopc.org) by April 9, 2018.

Rev. Sandhya Jha will also be preaching at LOPC on April 8, 2018.

**SATURDAY APRIL 14, 2018**  
**12:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M. , OAK ROOM**

## Officer Nominations Needed By 5/6



One of the cornerstones of our Presbyterian heritage is election by the congregation of church officers to provide leadership for the church, as well as loving support for those in the church community. Each year we elect officers to serve for the following year, drawn from nominations from the congregation.

We are now in the process of selecting new officers and leaders for LOPC for terms beginning January 2019. It is a great privilege and responsibility to nominate members who will serve LOPC as elected lay leaders. It is also necessary for us to participate in the essential process that will influence our church in the near future.

The primary qualifications for nominees are:

- Strong commitment to Jesus Christ and the church's Mission Statement.
- Active participation in worship and in other ministries at LOPC.
- Stewardship commitment of time, talent and financial resources.
- Leadership ability and organizational skills.
- Compassion in human relationships.
- An open-minded approach to ideas and problems.
- Spiritual depth and maturity.
- Ability to equip people for ministry and work in a team-based leadership role.

Elders, together with the pastors, lead and direct the ministry of the church. They are persons of faith, dedication and good judgment. Elders serve on Session, the governing body of the church. They also chair various church teams through which all ministries are conducted. Eight elders are ordained to serve three-year terms.

Deacons, as set forth in Scripture, are leaders who serve as the caring, compassionate arm of the church, providing loving support to all those in need within the church community. The primary area of Deacon service is care of members. Ten deacons are ordained to serve a three-year term and two deacons of high school-age serve a one-year term.

The Congregation Nominating Committee (CNC) members are elected for a one-year term. Their duties include receiving and reviewing nominations for church officers and selecting candidates to present to the congregation.

Foundation Trustees serve on the LOPC Foundation. This seven-member foundation receives gifts in various forms and designations, manages investments and provides funding for LOPC needs that cannot be accommodated in the church's annual operating budget. Trustees serve an initial term of four years and are eligible to be re-elected for one three-year term. Members who have served in the past can be nominated for a two-year term.

Nomination forms will be available from March 18 through May 6 in the Ministry Center, the Sanctuary pew racks or send an email nomination to [cnc@LOPC.org](mailto:cnc@LOPC.org). We need your nominations, so please fill out and submit at least one nomination form. Any questions? Contact a CNC member: Michael Kim (Chair), Jody Black (Clerk of Session), Jeff Patton, Randi Long, Katie Owensby, Ann Loar, Linda Kinrade (Deacon Representative), Peter Whitelock and Gerald Chinen.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration. We are looking forward to hearing from each of you.

## Community Life

### Thoughts on the Stocks and Bond Market

by Dick James, Foundation Trustee



Dick James

The recent gyrations of the financial market probably have left some investors gasping for breath. And, thinking of the LOPC Foundation, whose assets are invested in some of those markets, it raises a logical question – what’s the impact on funds the Foundation gives to the church? The answer is “not much.”



The reasons are several. First, the Foundation draws only a tiny fraction – 4% – of its assets to help fund the church budget. That’s a policy which has been in place for a number of years, and the

underlying idea is trustees want those moneys to last far into the future, if not in perpetuity. The 4% guideline is conservative, one endorsed by numerous financial experts, including our own investment advisor, Schultz Collins.

Another reason is the 4% rate isn’t applied to asset amounts of just one year, but to an average of assets for the past three years – or, more correctly, for the past 12 calendar quarters. The aim here, of course, is a recognition that markets do just what they’ve been doing the past few weeks – fluctuating. Looking beyond a one-year time frame as the effect

of smoothing out the markets’ peaks and valleys.

Also, Foundation assets are invested in a large number of mutual funds – 22 by my last count. And those funds cover not only a large variety of different-sized companies, but companies spread out geographically in many countries around the world, including the U.S. Such diversification is one key to lowering risk.

Finally, the Foundation’s investment policy calls for dividing the assets into two different pots of securities – stock and bonds. The current split roughly is 70% in stocks and 30% in bonds. Again diversification is the goal. Different types of investments behave differently at different times; theoretically when some are up, others are down. Of course, it’s true any single investment performance is a function to a certain degree of what the entire market is doing – like a tide that raises and lowers all the ships.

So what’s the best strategy? Set goals and stick to them no matter what the markets are doing short term. Don’t try to outguess the markets. That’s the policy of the Foundation, and it has worked well.

*Current Foundation Trustees are: Dick James, President; Kristi Haigh, Vice President; Phil Placier, Treasurer; Dara Youngdale, Secretary; Staci Johnston; Jim Beckemeyer; and Jerry Ducey.*

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### Session Highlights – January 2018

by Jody Black, Clerk of Session

Greetings from your 2018 Session. As in past years, the main focus of the January Session meeting was to establish the year’s budget. Our Finance Team presented their recommendations after weeks of conferring with our ministry teams and evaluating the response to our stewardship campaign. It was gratifying to be reminded of the fact that we are blessed to have such a generous congregation that supports the multiple ministries of LOPC.

We also began the new year with our annual leadership retreat, held this year on campus. Rev. Dr. Eric Law, Founder and Executive Director of the Kaleidoscope

Institute, highlighted ways for us to bring respect, diversity, hope and energy to the ministry of our faith community and beyond. The workshop was thought provoking and inspirational all at once. Our deacons and elders will seek ways to lead with these fresh ideas in 2018.

I look forward to serving as your Clerk of Session for 2018. We have a vibrant community that is led by such capable pastors, staff and volunteers. Such strong leadership listening for God’s direction will help us truly live out our vision to be “Alive! In Christ...in the World.”

## Spiritual Formation

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

### Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



LOPC members have enjoyed the gift of song which Elizabeth Becker has brought to our worship services. This is her faith journey.

Elizabeth, a high school student, says, "Coming to church on Sundays since I was small child and hearing

the wonderful and lively music put on by Brett and Tony – originally by Julie Ford and her team – and sometimes getting to be a part of it has been one of the most significant influences on my faith journey.

"The first time I had the opportunity to sing at LOPC I was probably about 10 years old, and a part of the Psalmsters choir. Standing in that beautiful worship area and sharing love through music was when I first knew being a child of God was going to be a big part of my life. Since then I have always felt a strong connection to music and the ways it has helped me understand more about being a Christian, and about God's love. I hope through my singing, sharing the words of meaningful songs, others will feel this too."

Going on mission trips has also strongly influence her Christian walk. "Two middle school trips to San Diego and Los Angeles were eye opening and brought me so close to the youth and leaders in the church. Every person I met had such a big heart and made me feel like an important member of LOPC. In Los Angeles one of the first activities was purchasing pastries from a local bakery and sharing them with homeless people in a park. As a group, we sat down with people who looked like they had had a rough day or were hungry and shared a pastry with them. Some of them were quiet and kept their peace. Some shared with us what they have been through. Although this was not an easy activity and I was out of my comfort zone, I really felt like it made an impact on these people's lives to have a conversation with a stranger who just listened to whatever they needed to get off their chest.

"These trips were helpful in taking me out of my

comfortable daily life. I felt like I could perhaps step into the shoes of some less privileged people in the world and experience what their lives might be like. It was also extremely enlightening to see the joy and great perspectives they had, despite having extreme challenges. Although I will never completely know what their lives are like, I captured a glimpse and it changed my perspective. It made me realize how important it is to focus on others and to be grateful for everything I have."

Elizabeth had another experience with the homeless which gave her further insight. "When I was visiting my extended family in Nashville, Tennessee, we all went to a soup kitchen on Christmas Eve and talked to women who had recently been released from prison. Their stories were genuine and gave me insight into their lives which were so different from anything anyone I knew had experienced. I put on a small performance for the women which made me happy. I felt like I used my gift of song to benefit others in a positive way. They all seemed to be feeling the spirit and we all enjoyed each other so much through music."

Elizabeth says as a Christian she has learned how her faith has made her realize what is really important in life – to love others and to treat others as you would want to be treated. "Not only that, but I learned to be kind and generous to people who have not necessarily acted the same toward me," she shares.

As to future plans, she says she feels called to share her music with the world. "I think music makes people feel important emotions. I find great joy in sharing music with others and writing music that means something to me and others. I hope that by singing in church and around the community I can continue to share my passion for the way it brings the message of God's love."

Elizabeth says these verses that have helped her in her daily walk with Christ. 1 Corinthians 13:4-13, "Love is patient; love is kind; it does not envy; it does not boast; it is not proud; it is not rude; it is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth."

## 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.

### Finding the Right Preschool for Kids with Special Needs

by Bridgette Thomas, Seedlings Communication Board Member



Selecting a preschool for your child is a top priority no matter the situation, but if she has a special need, finding the right school could become vital to her overall development. In addition to searching for a program that is high quality and provides a loving, rich environment, you

will need to find a preschool program that has experience working with students who have special needs.

It is especially important to tour the school before accepting placement. You'll want to look at the school to see if the environment will meet your child's individual needs. Place yourself in your child's shoes: would she be able to access and utilize the entire classroom and all activities? Look for how the room can be modified to meet her needs, and give suggestions.

As you prepare for your tour, write down a few questions to ask the teachers and administrators. If a preschool cannot meet your child's needs, it is better to know ahead of time. Here are some suggestions.

- What is your curriculum's focus?
- What is the adult to child ratio and total group size?
- How do you keep track of students' growth?
- How do you foster a connection with students' families?
- Have you ever worked with a child with the same challenges as my child?

**Did you know Seedlings Preschool is an inclusive school, welcoming students with special needs?**

At Seedlings, your child will be part of an inclusive classroom where she will learn side-by-side with children who may also have special needs and those who are experiencing typical development. Seedlings' gifted teachers meet each child's needs and create

*"Our Seedlings preschool classes include students with various disabilities who are high functioning. We are aiming to support both social and learning goals for these families, as well as provide a supportive community for the families."*

learning experiences that are meaningful for all students.

"Our Seedlings preschool classes include students with various disabilities who are high functioning. These children can cope academically with the curriculum requirements, but may need extra support in other areas," said Coleen Moulton, Director of Seedlings. "Students may, for example, have hearing impairments, autism at mild ranges within the spectrum, Down Syndrome or speech and communication delays. We are aiming to support both social and learning goals for these families, as well as provide a supportive community for the families."

Seedlings' mission is to provide a play-based learning experience which nurtures the emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of young children. Seedlings' core values include excellence in staffing and planning; a developmentally appropriate and safe learning environment; and support of parents and families. Our intent is to model and encourage the Christ-like values of responsibility, belonging, joy, respect, tolerance, compassion and charity.

Seedlings works with the nonprofit COCOKIDS (formerly the Contra Costa Child Care Council) and the school districts to help support families who have children with a variety of special needs. For more information about Seedlings, please visit: [www.lopc.org/seedlings/](http://www.lopc.org/seedlings/)

## Family at LOPC



### Calling all 4th Graders to our YOW Preview!

Wednesday, March 14 at 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Here at LOPC, 5th graders are a part of our Youth Ministry program. That's why 4th graders and parents are invited to preview Youth on Wednesdays, our middle school midweek youth group!

- 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. Meet & greet with our Youth Directors at dinner in the Oak Room for youth and parents.
- 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Children's Directors will accompany 4th graders to check out what's in store for them next year at YOW; including games, worship, devotional, and small groups!

Please RSVP by emailing [ryan@LOPC.org](mailto:ryan@LOPC.org)



### Confirmation Sunday

SAVE THE DATE: Confirmation Sunday is April 15! Please come to either service that morning to worship God and celebrate this year's Confirmands as they are confirmed!

### Mediocre Talent Night at BTW

High School Youth: Come to BTW youth group on March 18 and show off your *mediocre* (things you are only kinda good at) talents! Bring a friend for this fun and festive evening! (6:30 – 8:30 p.m., CLC 201)

### 2017 LOPC Directory Corrections

We have a few minor corrections/updates to the 2017 Directory. You can pick up a copy of the corrections in the Ministry Center Office on weekdays or contact [janet@LOPC.org](mailto:janet@LOPC.org) to have a copy emailed to you.

### Join the Reception Desk Volunteer Team!

This talented team of volunteers intermittently helps staff the front desk weekdays when the Receptionist is on vacation. Your cheerful attitude is the only requirement!

- Greet visitors and answer the phone...no computer work (*unless you want some!*)
- Shifts are generally 2–3 hours, morning or afternoon.
- Provide an invaluable service to visitors and guests.
- Great chance to interact with LOPC Pastors and Staff while enjoying that delicious LOPC coffee or tea.
- **Full Training provided!**

For questions or to volunteer, contact [janet@LOPC.org](mailto:janet@LOPC.org) or the church office at x223

## Family at LOPC

### theFANTASTICproject

by Ryan Timpte, Director of Children's Ministry

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

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

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

To access these videos visit:

[LOPC.org/ministry/children/the-fantastic-project/](http://LOPC.org/ministry/children/the-fantastic-project/)





## High School Mission Trip

Houston, TX, July 7-14

For all high school students in the 2017/2018 school year Join us as we grow closer to God through repairing the homes of those affected by Hurricane Harvey!

Register by March 15 at [www.LOPC.org/youth/mission](http://www.LOPC.org/youth/mission).

### Fees

\$780 for students

\$390 for advisors

Scholarships available!

*Commissioning on June 10, 2018.*

Contact [keris@LOPC.org](mailto:keris@LOPC.org) with any questions.



## 7th-8th Grade Mission Trip

San Francisco Bay Area, June 24 – 30

For youth having completed 7th & 8th grade as of June 2018.

Partner with ministries in the inner city of San Francisco and Oakland by serving at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, food banks, after school programs, and more. Join us as we discover God at work in the bay area communities!

Register by March 15 at [www.LOPC.org/youth/mission](http://www.LOPC.org/youth/mission).

### Fees

\$310 for students

\$155 for advisors

Scholarships available!

*Commissioning on June 10, 2018.*

Contact [keris@LOPC.org](mailto:keris@LOPC.org) with any questions.



## 5th & 6th Grade Mission Daycamp

East Bay Area,

June 11-14, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

June 15, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

For youth having completed 5th & 6th grade as of June 2018.

Come serve others and experience God in a new way through service as we partner with east bay mission organizations! Youth will experience a variety of ways we can serve those in need close to home. Parents are required to participate before, during, or after the week of camp.

Register by March 15 at [www.LOPC.org/youth/mission](http://www.LOPC.org/youth/mission).

Fee - \$75

*Commissioning on June 10, 2018.*

Contact [keris@LOPC.org](mailto:keris@LOPC.org) with any questions.



## Adult Mission Trip to Zimbabwe Information Meeting

March 18, 2018



Now that the political situation has stabilized in Zimbabwe with the removal of the controversial president, LOPC is planning a trip to Zimbabwe to visit JF Kapnek. Participants will travel to Zimbabwe in Aug/Sept 2018 to help repair and perform simple

maintenance on a few of Kapnek Trust's preschools.

As many of you know, LOPC has a long relationship with the JF Kapnek Trust. In 2010, LOPC Senior High students and their advisors helped build some of the first Kapnek Trust's preschools. Through their preschool program the Kapnek Trust not only provides an education but a nutritious meal to thousands of children daily, often the only meal the child receives for that day.

Kapnek Trust now has over 220 pre-schools across Zimbabwe. The plan for this trip is to spend approximately a week working at Kapnek sites. The projects LOPC participates in will be selected based upon our groups skill level and abilities. Participants may choose to extend their time sightseeing in Africa after the week of service to places like Victoria Falls or Hwange National Park.

LOPC is inviting all of those who want to learn more about this proposed trip or to express an interest to attend an upcoming meeting on **Sunday, March 18 at 10:15 a.m. in the Ministry Center's Library**. The exact dates will be determined based upon the best time for people who show interest. If you have always wanted to travel to Africa, this might be the perfect trip for you to serve others while discovering the beauty of this magnificent continent.

For more information please contact Phil Hunter at [hunter.p@mac.com](mailto:hunter.p@mac.com).

Learn more about JF Kapnek at [jfkapnektrust.org](http://jfkapnektrust.org)

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## Congo Mission Team Continues Its Goal of Helping the Congolese People

The LOPC Congo Mission Team, started in 2012, is composed of 15 members. Our principal objective is to help the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its mission co-workers, carry out its charge to help the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In 2017, the team, with the invaluable help of LOPC Mission staff and the congregation:

- Raised funds for Build Congo School including the Girls English/Computer program, with sales by the Congo necklace team and individual donations.
- Donated funds to complete a second round of training for Healing Hearts facilitators, some of whom became master facilitators so they can train others. Healing Hearts is a curriculum designed to help traumatized children. Funds for this opportunity came from individual donations and also \$2500 from the Mission Emerging Needs Fund.
- Sent \$5000 from the Emerging Needs Fund to the UN's World Food Program to provide food for the

devastated Kasai region of the Congo.

- Continued to grow the Advocacy effort by meeting and communicating with Senatorial staffs and other government officials and advising them on how to help the Congo.
- Hosted the annual Congo Mission Network conference; first time on the West Coast.
- Continued to build relations with the Congolese community
- Added four new team members.

Unfortunately, the chaotic, dangerous and devastating conditions remain in the DRC. Actually, the situation there has gotten worse. But our denomination continues its invaluable work.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Congo Mission team and what we do, please contact Herb Long at [herblong7@gmail.com](mailto:herblong7@gmail.com). And, we are always looking for new team members.

## Thank You from the Thandus in India

To our friends at LOPC,

Thank you so much for your generous contribution through your mission program that enabled us to purchase a brand new bus for the children in our home in Visakhapatnam, India. This bus, with 39 seats will improve the lives of our children in many ways. First, the bus will provide safer transportation; we have been using an Auto rickshaw to take the kids places. It holds just a few kids, and doesn't offer much protection if there is an accident, and of course it doesn't go very fast. More children will be able to go to church each Sunday, which will be so important for forming their faith. The bus will enable us to take the children out on educational fieldtrips to museums, the aquarium, the zoo and more. The bus will also be used for fun outings, which all growing children need, such as the beach and the park. Lastly, the bus will help us transport groups of visitors, reducing their costs of renting a bus. You can't imagine the children's excitement when the bus arrived at our home. We have been praying for a bus, and all 120 children thanked God for this wonderful gift.

We are deeply grateful for all the support your congregation has given us. Through your support we are able to provide a better life for our children. We know God has plans for each of our children, and thanks to your support they can achieve those plans.

Yours in Christ,  
Rosie and Anand Thandu



## "Listening to Your Life" A Spring Contemplative Retreat

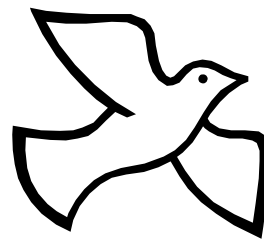
This year – with freedom, spontaneity and prayers – we will listen to our lives, to what we are learning in the here and now. We will wait for the little golden nuggets, the life changing messages from the divine that will steer us on our life long spiritual quest.

The title of the retreat comes from the well-known quote from Presbyterian Minister, Rev. Dr. Frederick Buechner.

"Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."

For many at LOPC this will be the 24<sup>th</sup> year of this life impacting event at the beautiful Santa Sabina retreat center in San Rafael. We will gather together in community and we will take time to listen to our lives and to each other and what we are learning in the here and now. We hope you will consider joining us Thursday, April 26 to Sunday, April 29. Please contact Kaaren or Larry Rose for more information. (925) 947-4374, khrose@sbcglobal.net, or lirose@sbcglobal.net.

## Grief Support



Have you or someone you know experienced the death of a spouse recently or within the last few years? Sharing our experiences during this 10-week class is extremely helpful to our healing process. Find hope, support

and successful ways to process this significant life event. The course is open to all Widows and Widowers. Enrollments are now being accepted for the group to start **March 6 – May 8, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.** at LOPC. **Pre-Registration required.** The workbook is \$15. If you want to register or have more information, contact Bev Fellows, (925) 949-7628 or beverlyfellows@comcast.net.



LOPC

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

49 Knox Drive  
Lafayette, CA 94549

MARCH 2018

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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 & Allison Kunz, Youth  
Chuck Fry, Operations  
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool  
Ryan Timpte, Children

**FOCUS NEWSLETTER**

Martin Kang, Communications Associate  
Jennifer Shaul, Digital & Print Admin  
Chuck Fry / Dick James / Paul Cohune

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

**Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:**

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

**Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:**

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

**Easter @ LOPC**

<p>March 25 <b>PALM SUNDAY SERVICE</b> 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.</p> <p>March 25 <b>EGG HUNT &amp; POTLUCK BRUNCH</b> 12:15 p.m.</p> <p>March 29 <b>MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE</b> 7:00 p.m.   Communion Served Childcare provided</p> <p>March 30 <b>GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE</b> 7:00 p.m.   Service of Darkness Painter Daniel Panasiuk Childcare provided</p>	<p>April 1 <b>EARLY MORNING SERVICE</b> 6:30 a.m.   Communion Served</p> <p>April 1 <b>EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE</b> 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Childcare provided, 4 years and under</p> <p>April 1 <b>CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS</b> Pre-K - 4th Grade 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.</p> <p><i>* Communion will be served on April 8 but not on Easter Sunday.</i></p>
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**Sunday Worship Services**

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

Invite Friends & Family

**Connect with us online!**

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