

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!
In Christ... in the World



August 2019

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Pastor's Message

By Jaime Polson, Pastor, Families & Executive Leadership

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

-Philippians 4:4-7



As we begin a new program year at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, I think about the many things to come for our church and community – the retreats, worship services, and other communal gatherings where we have the opportunity to connect with one another and remember that we belong to a community of people, called together by God, where we seek to love our neighbor, grow in faith, and serve others daily.

We have the chance to come together and study the Bible through Disciple Bible Study, Men’s and Women’s Bible Studies, and Lenten studies, in order to discern where God is calling us in our lives and to be transformed in how we live our lives. We have the opportunity to serve alongside one another in *love does*, adult and youth mission trips, and a chance to serve our children and youth in their programs like Kids Rock, Youth Group, and Sunday School. We welcome senior adults to LOPC to engage in friendship and companionship during Thursday Fellowship. We have so many different ways to serve, and I hope you will find a way to share your gifts so that others are encouraged in their faith, and our community will find God’s love for them.

As we begin our year together with new studies, worship, and gatherings, my encouragement is for us to begin praying more for all of our programs and people as we serve. Let us pray for the people we will serve, let us pray for ourselves that we would be humble and open in our service and love to neighbor, let us present the requests of our hearts and listen for God’s response, even when it is an unexpected answer or we can’t yet hear the response we yearn for from God.

During my sabbatical, I experienced the power of prayer in new ways - the ways people’s hearts change when we pray, the way eyes are opened when we pray, the stories that change people because of other people’s prayers for them. Every church I went into I saw people deep in prayer, some prayed alone, some prayed together, some lit candles to represent their prayers for their families and others. It reminded me of how important action is – including the active action of prayer for self and others. May we lift up our prayers as a way to transform and be transformed in our new church program year. May God’s peace be with you.

Pastors: Peter Whitelock, Head of Staff | Gerald Chinen, Care | Lauren Gully, Mission & Formation | Jaime Polson, Families

community

Fall BBQ

Ministry Year Kickoff!

Sunday, September 22, at Noon
Fellowship Hall

Join the entire LOPC Community for our Fall BBQ Ministry Year Kickoff. This will be a potluck event along with barbecued food, games for all ages, prizes, and music!

Are you new?

Come meet others in the community! We would love to introduce you to our many ministry opportunities this upcoming program year.



LOPC MEN'S RETREAT

OCTOBER 4-6
Retreat Leader: Ray Campton, MFT

"Coming Home"

There are many challenges for men in today's world—busyness, competition, need to produce and perform, pressure to advance professionally, struggle to balance family and work, to name just a few. These demands and expectations often result in fragmented lives, revealing men who have lost their way and their identity to self, to others, and even to God. Men, it's time to RALLY and RENEW our relationships with God, self, and others.

Join men of all ages as we explore ways to rally our way home: home to ourselves as men of integrity, home to authentic connection to family and friends, and home to a dynamic, life-giving relationship with God. Come hang out with other men in fellowship... ropes courses, hiking trails, games, free time, and more.

Limited space available. Register online at lopc.org. For more information contact Chris Baldwin at chris@lopc.org.

community



Welcoming Our Newest Members!

From our New-Members Class in May.

Bonnie Connor



Bonnie recently moved to Lafayette from Davis to be closer to her two grandsons, ages three and five. She believes she is called to reduce the suffering of others, which she does in her work as a neuropsychologist. In addition to spending more time with her grandkids, she looks

forward to getting involved with the Interfaith Ministry and currently takes Improv classes at Berkeley Rep Theater while working toward completing the audio academy at KALW. She was attracted to LOPC by its beautiful sanctuary, music that bridges the chancel choir with praise music, and sermons that challenge her intellectually. Bonnie says, "LOPC is vibrant."

Grant & Kingsley Frazier



The Fraziers are locals to the East Bay, as Kingsley grew up in Moraga, and Grant in Lafayette. They met at Campolindo High School and

started dating almost eight years later. They've now been married for almost eight years and have two children, Marley (5) and Clark (3). Kingsley is an Education Specialist at the Moraga School District and Young Adult Life Coach. Grant works as the Chief of Staff to the CEO at AAA (American Automobile Association). They were drawn to LOPC by community and fellowship opportunities.

Tom & Deloris Heathorn



Deloris was born and raised in Haddonfield, NJ, and Tom was born and raised in Oakland, CA. They met and were married in Tucson,

AZ, 59 years ago and have lived in the East Bay since 1961. They have four children, 16 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren. Now retired, Tom operated the family mechanical contracting business started by his father. Two of their sons continue to operate the business today. Deloris is a retired preschool teacher from CPC Danville and enjoys quilting and reading books, while Tom enjoys photography and gardening. Together they love to travel the world. They were attracted to LOPC by the music programs, the great ministers, and the friendly and welcoming members.

Ben & Katie Hejna



The Hejnas moved to Lafayette from Los Angeles four years ago. Katie, a former teacher, now is kept busy with their three young children,

including twins, Joe and Tom (3), and Max (1). Ben is a financial analyst for a healthcare investor. They are avid UCLA and Golden State Warriors fans. LOPC's family community, spirit, and leadership drew them to the church.

Pete & Suzanne Jones



Pete and Suzanne have been married 38 years and have moved to Lafayette twice, having lived here previously for two years, and most recently for four years. Over the span of 37 years, they have moved 13 times. Suzanne grew up in Tampa, FL, and went to college in North Carolina. She is now a retired teacher. Pete just retired in July as a banker of 38 years. They are both involved with Loaves and Fishes Ministry (feeding the homeless) and are interested in more opportunities to serve. They enjoy golfing, reading, and exercising.

Bart Moore & Cathy McAuliffe



Born in San Francisco, Bart is a UC Berkeley grad and served as a Captain in the U.S. Army for four years, and then returned

to the Bay Area. In 2015, he retired from G.E. Capital/Genworth Financial and now enjoys golfing four days a week! Cathy was born in Portland, OR, and graduated from Oregon State University, studying Elementary Education. She lived in Lafayette for 32 years with her late husband Michael, who passed away in 2001. About four years ago, Bart and Cathy married; they enjoy traveling, golfing, and time with family in Lake Tahoe. What attracted them to LOPC was the proximity to their home, worship music, excellent staff and programs, opportunities to help others, make new friends, and grow spiritually.

Sue Ruma



Sue has been an ICU nurse for 44 years and loves it! She enjoys hiking, camping, and dancing. She's a huge Oakland A's and Golden State Warriors fan. Her therapeutic hobby is glass fusing (firing glass). She was drawn to LOPC by the way in which it

implements the word of God through service to others and embraces diversity. She likes the wonderful pastors and their ability to articulate the word of God along with the worship music. Sue is attracted to the many local and global volunteer opportunities.

Carolyn Sconza



Carolyn has lived in Lafayette for 57 years and has three adult children (Julie, Janet, and Ronald) with her late husband, Jim. She previously worshiped at Northcreek Church in Walnut Creek and served as a Bible study leader. Carolyn heard about LOPC through her daughter and felt a special connection to the community after attending a memorial service for her husband, Jim. In her free time, she enjoys music, gardening, and spending time with her grandchildren.

First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame All-Church Retreat

LOPC members are invited to attend the All-Church Retreat led by First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame at Mount Hermon on October 18-20, 2019. One of our LOPC pastors will be in attendance as a part of this retreat. The speaker is the Reverend Donald Baird.

Registration opens in August – more information about the registration process and speaker topic will follow. If you are interested in attending this retreat, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org. We would like to track how many people are planning to attend this retreat in our off-year.

Accommodation pricing is per person and determined by the room category that you select:

- Deluxe: \$350/adult, \$150/child
- Standard: \$300/adult, \$150/child
- Economy: \$250/adult, \$150/child



community

Respite Night

For parents who have children & youth with special needs, ages 2-22

Dinner, games, therapy dogs, crafts, activities, and a movie! Children and youth will be divided by age, with age-appropriate movies. Sensory and quiet rooms are provided. Several professionals who work with children and youth with special needs will be on-site the entire evening. We will provide a staffing ratio to match your child's needs.

**Friday, August 23
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.**



Please register by Monday, August 12, to Michelle at michelle@lopc.org. Space is limited. We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.

Presented by Special Needs Ministry

thursday Fellowship

A program of Senior Care Ministries

Returns September 5!



**Every Thursday
11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. - Fellowship Hall**

The Thursday Fellowship team of volunteers are enjoying some well-deserved time off this summer after a very busy season. The volunteers worked hard each week to treat our guests to engaging programs and activities and to deliver delicious salads served on beautifully decorated tables. Our weekly attendance was between 50 and 65 guests and volunteers who looked forward to gathering together each week. We celebrated birthdays and other life events, with Thursday Fellowship's 40th anniversary party being our biggest celebration. We were blessed to have some of the original volunteers and coordinators in attendance, several of whom have continued to volunteer for all 40 of those years!

August will be a busy month, as programs and activities for the 2019 - 2020 calendar are planned and finalized. The volunteers will gather the end of the month for an "Appreciation Kick-Off Luncheon."

We are excited about the coming year and invite you to come and join us. We welcome volunteers, guests, and visitors. There is currently a critical need is volunteers to help drive a Senior to or from church. The scheduling is done a month in advance and is flexible.

Stop by any Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

**Questions? Contact Coordinators:
Julie Peterson - julie@lopc.org
Clarita Wooldridge - clarita@lopc.org
Both can be reached at 925-283-8722 x281**

Love Carved in Stone

The Presbyterian Women’s Bible study this year will take a fresh look at the Ten Commandments (or “Words”). Do you realize that the word “commandment” does not appear in the Hebrew text of the Bible? These utterances were called “words” which is just what they were. We will consider the Ten Commandments not as a harsh list of what not to do, but instead as a “love letter” from a loving God.

Study guides are now available in the church office for \$12. Be sure to get yours before P.W. Circles begin in September. If you are not a Circle member, why not join Presbyterian Women and enjoy Bible study and fellowship each month?

For more information on how to join a Women’s Circle (small group) contact: Diane Steuber, dhsteuber@sbcglobal.net, (925) 283-3871 or Helen Dygert dygerthl@comcast.net, (925) 283-6010.

Quilt Display

Quilt display will be the month of November. Start thinking about what quilts you would like to share. Letters will be going out this month with details.

If you have any questions contact Ginny Gifford at ginnycgifford@sbcglobal.net.



care



Christ caring for people through people

STEPHEN MINISTRY



What is Stephen Ministry?

**Fall training session begins
September 17**

Do you see yourself as a caring friend who listens, cares, and prays for those around you? Are you someone who supports and encourages those experiencing a time of adversity in their lives? Our congregation’s Stephen Ministry program equips individuals like you to provide one-on-one care to people in our congregation and in our community. Stephen Ministry provides you with 50 hours of high-quality training to help develop your caregiving gifts—giving you the skill set required to minister to members of the community. Then, as a Stephen Minister, you’ll be able to meet faithfully each week with your care receiver for as long as there is a need.

Our next training session begins September 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room. Our need for younger congregants to join our ranks is especially needed at this time, but please know that Stephen Ministry seeks people of all ages.

Your caregiving gifts may be your calling to share the love of God with others through Stephen Ministry. Contact Pastor Gerald Chinen at gerald@lopc.org or by calling 925-283-8722 x227.

mission

love does

Visit lopc.org/lovedoes to sign up for any of these love does projects!

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Family love does Day September 29

Families with children are invited to serve LOPC's Mission partners on Sunday, September 29, during two different family-based, *love does* activities:

Contra Costa Interfaith Housing's Los Medanos Village (LMV)

For families with children over 5

10:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Join other LOPC families in hosting a photo day at CCIH's Los Medanos Village (LMV), a 71-unit apartment complex providing affordable housing to low-income families in Pittsburg. A professional photographer will be taking photos of LMV families, and LOPC volunteers will lead and join residents in crafts, games, and lunch at this event. This project allows LMV families who may not have access to a professional photographer to make a special family photo and provides a fun way to build community between and within the families at LMV and LOPC.



Monument Crisis Center at LOPC

For families with children 5 and under

Oak Room, LOPC: 10 a.m. - Noon
LOPC families are invited to prepare birthday bags and package rice and beans for Monument Crisis Center families and then share lunch together to continue to get to know one another.



Trinity Center Needs Your Help!

Trinity Center serves people who are experiencing homelessness and poverty. LOPC is collecting both food and men's clothing for Trinity Center as a *love does* activity. Look for the collection barrels in the Ministry Center for both collections beginning August 11.



Food Collection Needs (until September 27)

Snack bars, jerky, canned meats (tuna), chicken, corned beef hash (pop tops preferred), soup, stew, chili (pop tops preferred), peanut butter, jelly (plastic cans only), cup of noodles, bottled water, Gatorade.



Men's Clothing Collection Needs (until September 27)

All clothing should be gently used and free of any stains. Men's only please.

Shirts (all types), pants, jeans (especially needed size 30-34), sweatshirts, sweatpants, lightweight jackets, socks, ball caps.



Contact Robin at robin@lopc.org for more information.

Go to lopc.org/lovedoes to register.

Atfaluna Fundraising Kick-Off September 15



The upcoming 2019/2020 school year marks the 17th consecutive year that LOPC has sponsored a classroom at the Atfaluna School for Deaf Children (ASDC) in Gaza City. Fundraising will kick off on Sunday, September 15. Funds donated will provide the essentials: uniforms, hearing aids and batteries, transportation, medical assistance, and hot lunches for the students, as well as teacher salaries and classroom supplies. Our funds also provide the parents with sign-language training and job counseling. Our goal is \$25,000. Look for a table on the plaza where you can receive more detailed information about the students and school.

Contact Robin at robin@lopc.org for more information.

Thank you!

This summer LOPC stepped up in a big way to help families and children in need.



Thank you to many people in our congregation for responding to the Monument Crisis Center Food Box drive with over 70 boxes full of food. The food boxes have helped many MCC families during the summer when school food programs are not available.

Thanks also to those of you who donated the 72 backpacks for children to start the new school year ready for success!

Congo Mission Update

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

While a new president of the country was finally elected in December, political chaos remains. The party of the prior president still controls parliament. As such, new initiatives by the newly elected president have been few.

The country is experiencing the second largest-ever Ebola outbreak. Ebola treatment has made significant strides, but much suspicion of the health workers is present: some have been killed. Over 1,600 have died from the disease, many of them children. Also, recently, ethnic violence has increased in the eastern part of the country.

Build Congo Schools (BCS)

BCS is raising funds for its ninth school. At right is a picture of the school that will be replaced. Only \$10,000 remains to be raised. Sales by the LOPC Congo necklace team help support BCS. And the Congo team decided to send \$4,000 (half of its 2019 budget) toward the new school.



Healing Hearts (HH)

This Bible-based curriculum continues to be introduced in the DRC; first in the eastern part of the country and then, last year, in the Kasai region where PC(USA) principally operates. The program helps children and adults who have been traumatized during years of DRC violence. A second round of training for the facilitators for the Kasai region is currently underway. Jeff and Christi Boyd will visit LOPC on September 29, and we will hear an update. Be sure to save the date!

Other team activities:

- Five of the Congo team will attend this year's Congo Mission Network conference in Knoxville, Tenn., in mid-October. LOPC hosted the conference two years ago.
- The team continues to advocate for the people of the DRC among elected U.S. officials.

If you have questions about LOPC's Congo mission effort, contact Herb Long at herblong7@gmail.com.

children

Children's Ministry: It Takes a Village

By Lori Robinson



"But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children."

- Deuteronomy 4:9-10

LOPC is our village, our community, our family of faith. And it takes all of us – the whole village – to support our children on their faith journey. Every community member has a role to play-be it large or small – because a few cannot do such important work alone.

Our children's ministry programs at LOPC are designed to educate, support, and nurture children's faith development, and our programs, which represent how

this community values the children in its midst, happen because of the many volunteers who participate in them.

While we have a great group of volunteers engaging in ministry with our children, we need more volunteers in order to sustain our programs. This is good news because we have so many children participating in faith formation here at LOPC!

We welcome parent volunteers who enjoy growing in faith along with their children. We're also looking for volunteers who don't have children in our programs, whose children are grown, who may be recently retired, or who have time to give in service to the children of LOPC.

Are you that person? Do you have a little time and a lot of love to share? Could you be the person who shows a child the love of God by your presence?

If you feel a nudge, an urge, or an awareness that you might be called to this ministry, please contact me and let's talk about it over tea!

For more information or to volunteer in the Children's Ministry programs at LOPC, please contact Lori Robinson, Associate Director of Children's Ministry, 925-283-8722 x251 or lori@lopc.org.



Images From
Vacation Bible School 2019

youth

Middle School Hangout

August 21, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., CLC 201

All incoming 5th – 8th graders are welcome to join us as we play games, have fun treats and share about our summer adventures! No need to RSVP!

High School Hangout

August 18, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., CLC 201

All incoming high school students are invited to have ice cream and play board games, directly after Youth Sunday rehearsal! No need to RSVP!

Youth Mission Sunday

August 25 (9:00 & 11:00 a.m. worship services)

Children and youth will lead in the Sanctuary as they recall their experiences from the summer mission events at Vacation Bible Camp, Service Squad, as well as the Middle School and High School Service-Learning Trips to Los Angeles and Salinas. Come celebrate the amazing things that they did, and worship God together as one whole congregation!



High School Houseboats Retreat

September 6-8

Online registration is open for the high school houseboats retreat on the Delta! All LOPC high school students and their friends are welcome to participate in this awesome weekend of fun, relaxation, worship, and fellowship! This is one of the highlights of the year so don't miss out!

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp at keris@lopc.org



Parent Socials

Parents and younger siblings are welcome to join us for the parent socials for both YOW and BTW. This is a great chance to get a sense of the ministry, meet the advisors, and connect with other parents. The evening will include participating in game and worship portions of the youth group activities and then having a small group with Pastor Jaime Polson and the other parents.

- BTW Parent Social: September 29
- YOW Parent Social: October 2

YOW & BTW Kickoffs

YOW, our weekly youth group for 5th – 8th graders, will kick off on Wednesday, September 18! Optional dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. and program, which includes games, worship, devotional and small groups, is from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. No RSVP required.



Questions? Contact Allison Kunz at allison@lopc.org.

BTW, our youth group for high school students kicks off on Sunday, September 15! Program, which includes games, worship, devotional and small groups, is from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. No RSVP required.



Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp at keris@lopc.org

summer at seedlings



Bee Keeping



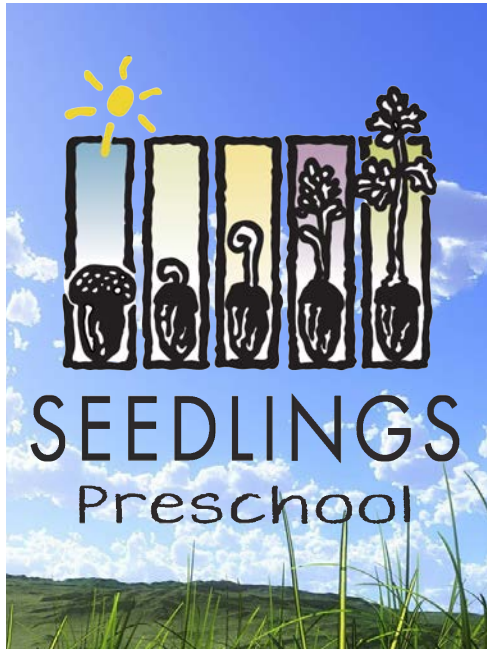
Lovely Cart Rides!



Vet Clinic



Planting Sunflowers



Pet Rocks



Puppet Show



Obstacle Course



Making Mud

spiritual formation

New Spiritual Formation Class Coming this Fall: “Centered Living-Rhythms for an Integrated Life”

with Pastor Lauren Gully

Throughout the history of the Church, followers of Jesus have found that practicing simple exercises, or “disciplines,” were a gateway to new, spiritual vistas. The word “discipline” can carry negative connotations; however, in today’s language, it might be better understood as “training.” The disciplines, rightly practiced, can free people from life’s obstacles and open a deep intimacy with God.

This course consists of ten, two-hour weekly meetings, with time for sharing, discussion, reflection, teaching, and weekly assignments.

The course will run Wednesdays, from Oct. 9-Dec. 18 from 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. (no class 11/27). Please contact Renée to sign-up at renee@lopc.org.

Mom’s Bible Study Beginning September 4

This Fall, Pastor Jaime Polson will lead a book study and discussion centered on Brené Brown’s *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Based on 12 years of pioneering research, Brené Brown, PhD, LMSW, dispels the cultural myth that vulnerability is weakness and argues that it is, in truth, our most accurate measure of courage.

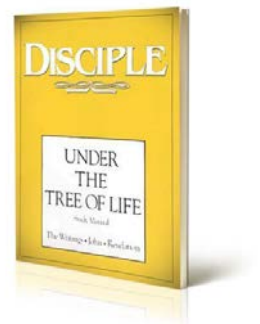
This group will meet monthly on Wednesdays beginning September 4, and continues through December 4, from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., on the LOPC campus. A new study for moms will be offered in the Spring, beginning in January 2020.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org. Space is limited to 12 and you must sign up in advance to participate (no drop-ins). Stay tuned for additional information about this group in our next issue of *Focus*.

Disciple IV Bible Study Under the Tree of Life

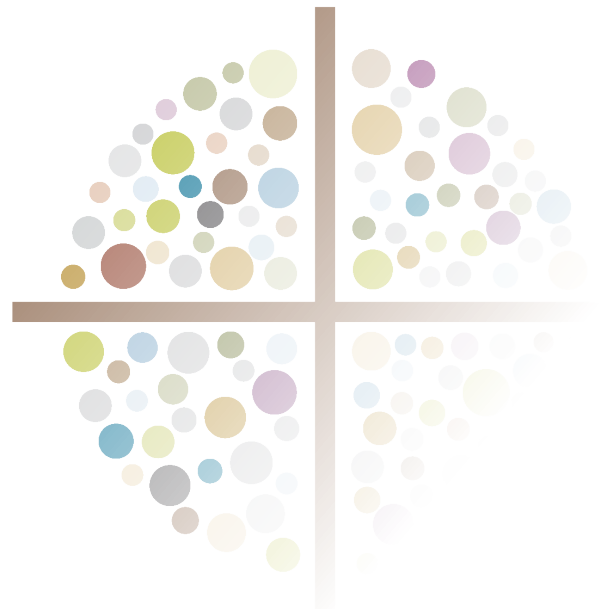
In the Fall, Pastor Jaime Polson will lead a Bible study using the Disciple IV study manual, *Under the Tree of Life*. The study concentrates on the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation and the theme of living toward completion, toward the climax of the message and the promise, extravagantly pictured in Revelation.

This study aims at transformation, not just information. It is an opportunity to greatly enrich your life through inspiring Bible study in a small-group setting. We will use the Bible and the study manual to complete daily reading assignments, generally about 30 minutes of reading per day, and meet weekly for discussion, video, and prayers.



This group will meet once a week on Thursdays for eight weeks beginning September 12, through October 31, from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m., on the LOPC campus. There is a \$20 fee for the study manual.

If you are interested in participating in this group, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org. Stay tuned for additional information about this study group in the next issue of *Focus*.



spiritual formation

Christianity for the rest of us...
not just the best of us!

JAMES

Presentation and discussion

led by Pastor Peter Whitelock

- September 19: On True Religion
- September 26: On Playing Favorites
- October 3: On Speaking Well
- October 10: On Patience

7 p.m. in The Oak Room
No experience required

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

Every Sunday after the 9 a.m. service, grab a cup of coffee and head to either the Oak Room or Chapel, or come early for the 11 a.m. service. We'll finish by 10:50 a.m. so you'll make it to church on time. Childcare is always available. See you there!

August 18:

Adult Mission Trip Update

Come to the Oak Room to see and hear about what was accomplished during the recent mission trip to Sonoma County.

August 25:

OAK ROOM

How to Create a Tradition of Service in Your Children

Encourage empathy in your kids and give them eyes to see the world!

CHAPEL

OR Spiritual Journaling

Bob Finertie will guide us through the spiritual practice of journaling and its importance for expression.

September 8:

OAK ROOM

What happens on a Sabbatical?

Come hear about Jaime Polson's sabbatical in Europe visiting at historic churches!

CHAPEL

OR Confession of 1967

Come and learn what this Presbyterian confession is, and why its insistence on radical reconciliation is so timely today.

September 15:

OAK ROOM

Stanford Children's Study

Join us to learn more about the results of this study and how we can support the centrality of the image of God in the faith of our children.

CHAPEL

OR Economic Poverty

How does the gospel bring and bear reconciliation across lines of socio-economic status?

Companions for the Journey

Our Christian faith is a mix of all the teachings and actions that inform us how to think, feel, and act.

Christian Education is the process of learning about God through various means—worship, Bible studies, Lenten studies, 10:10 programs, among others—to develop our knowledge of Jesus and our religious traditions. It is an essential part of our faith experience that provides us with guideposts for how to think and act.

But we are made up of more than our intellect. We also have a spiritual side that informs us how we feel, learn, and mature. It needs to be developed, nurtured, and given space to grow. However, in our busy everyday lives, it is often tough to do.

What exactly is meant by the ‘spiritual side’ of oneself? It might be described as the process of drawing closer into a more personal relationship with God. Just as with any friendship that takes time to develop, so does a relationship with God. The more authentic and honest we are with friends, the relationship deepens – so it is, too, with God.

How do we access our spirituality, develop it, grow it?

- We take the time to explore in more depth what we see, hear, or feel.
- We explore our authentic and honest selves.
- We grow by learning various practices that will help us get in touch with and become aware of, the spiritual side of ourselves.

Once learned, we need to exercise those practices to explore our spiritual center.

One way to actively grow the spiritual side of ourselves is to participate in a nine-month program at LOPC called Companions for the Journey. It offers a quiet, sacred, and confidential space to gather regularly and intentionally, in community, to experience God’s presence and unconditional love, meeting God on a personal level. As your relationship with God deepens, you begin to recognize how God’s presence changes your everyday life!

For more information, please contact Renée at renee@lopc.org.



foundation

Looking to the Future with Confidence

By Kristi Haigh, LOPC Foundation Trustee



On Pentecost Sunday, the description of that day's 10:10 class between services grabbed my attention because it included the words: "How the story of the birth of the church is encouraging during the decline of many churches today." If you are like me, you might be worried about the future of churches like LOPC in a world where we hardly

recognize the traditional ways of connecting with each other, where we hear about the decline of religious life and the struggles of churches.

I am so glad I went to hear what Pastor Lauren had to share about how our denomination and others are responding to these changes. Let's face it: change can be uncomfortable. I left the class cheered and heartened. Church is changing, but it isn't *our* church. The church belongs to Jesus. As one of the writers on this subject says, "The way we've done church won't be the way we do church." Churches will adapt and find new ways to be faithful, provide a spiritual home for their long-time members, reach out to the community, and minister to those in need, near and far. There will always be a place for a relational church, a place to worship God.

The LOPC Foundation's vision is to be a "permanent, reliable source of significant funding for LOPC's ministries." The gifts made by Friends of the Foundation, either now, or in the future as part of legacy giving, ensure that LOPC will be able to support the changes needed to be "Alive in Christ...in the World." To learn about becoming a Friend of the Foundation so LOPC can nurture the opportunities in the future, please contact one of the Foundation Trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Jen Crocker, Jerry Ducey, Dick James, Staci Johnston, Kristi Haigh, Phil Placier, Mike Ross, or Dara Youngdale.

session

Session Highlights

June 2019

At the June meeting, Peter Whitelock highlighted some of the progress made by the newly formed LOPC Communications team. The team is currently identifying areas that are working well and areas that need improvement. The team will continue to work on identifying and prioritizing areas to focus on and will report back to Session once it is ready to move forward with action items.



Jaime Polson reminded Session that ministry team goals have been submitted and a formal report with all team goals will be brought to Session in August. She then spent time sharing photos and telling stories of her recent sabbatical, during which she spent time in France and Italy.

Gerald Chinen presented to Session a detailed report on Congregational Care Ministry. He explained that their vision is to live as a Christ-centered church where members and friends of LOPC are welcomed, cared for, nurtured, and encouraged to share in the ministry of Christ. Our intergenerational care ministers to the needs of the community. He provided information on all of the different groups that make up the Care Ministry, including the Deacons, Stephen Ministers, prayer teams, and more.

diversity task force

An Update

In late 2016, Session established inclusion and diversity as one of the five priorities of the church. A task force was formed and began meeting in September 2017. Members of the task force included Co-Chairs Gerald Chinen and Kathy Timpfe, and members, Julie Atkinson, Marisela Geri, Jonathan Lee, Chad Runyon, Hiroko Shibuya, Yuji Shibuya, and Alan Young. The task force met for a year-and-a-half, and submitted a report with recommendations received by Session in June. Session will be monitoring our progress with these recommendations through its planning council, as well as developing any additional measures to implement the vision of LOPC as a truly inclusive and diverse community of faith.

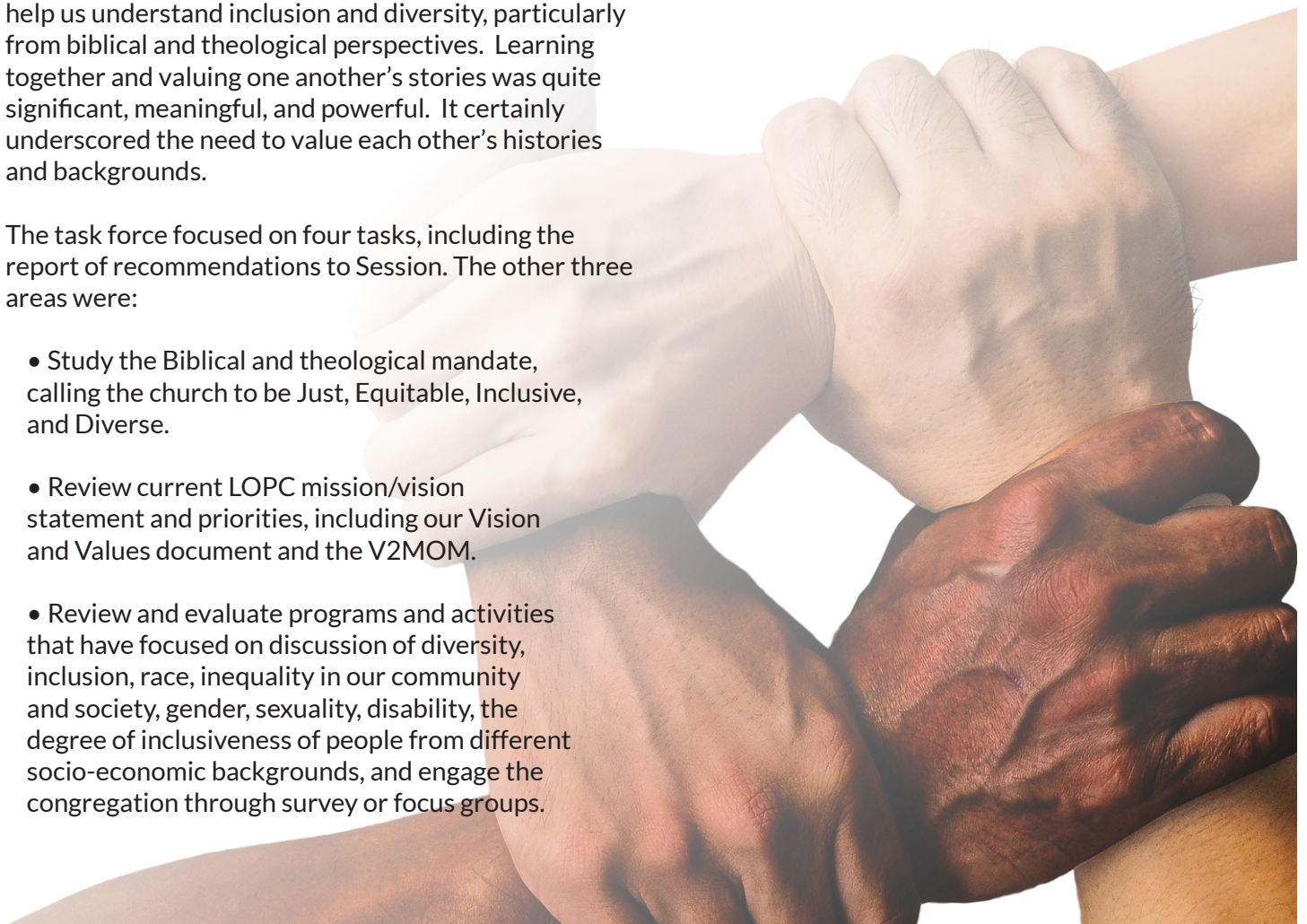
The task force took time to hear one another's stories as well as spend time in spiritual formation exercises to help us understand inclusion and diversity, particularly from biblical and theological perspectives. Learning together and valuing one another's stories was quite significant, meaningful, and powerful. It certainly underscored the need to value each other's histories and backgrounds.

The task force focused on four tasks, including the report of recommendations to Session. The other three areas were:

- Study the Biblical and theological mandate, calling the church to be Just, Equitable, Inclusive, and Diverse.
- Review current LOPC mission/vision statement and priorities, including our Vision and Values document and the V2MOM.
- Review and evaluate programs and activities that have focused on discussion of diversity, inclusion, race, inequality in our community and society, gender, sexuality, disability, the degree of inclusiveness of people from different socio-economic backgrounds, and engage the congregation through survey or focus groups.

The two major undertakings by the task force were staff interviews and a church-wide survey. Both were very helpful in leading the task force in forming its recommendations. As a result, the leadership of the church has already laid plans for implementing a few of the recommendations, including a staff retreat to be held in August on the theme of Inclusion and Diversity, and a Fall sermon series entitled "Reconciliation - How the Gospel Brings New Life to Broken Relationships."

Throughout the year, please watch for *Focus* and *Connections* articles about opportunities in which you may engage as we embark on an important journey of being a church where Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are part of our fabric of faith!



Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



Two words that describe Phil Hunter are “giver” and “doer” as he travels his faith journey. When he was about to retire, he says, his wife, Beth, challenged him with “What are you going to do now?” “My pre-retirement centered on Excel spreadsheets and Power Point presentations, so I looked for way to use these skills.

“I have been participating in a program where a small team of us provide pro bono consulting advice to non-profits in the Bay Area. I also found further ways to help them as I helped line up additional funding to assist people in Indonesia that were without potable water after a typhoon.”

Phil has participated in a number of adult mission trips to help communities recover from natural disasters. “When we show up, people are incredulous that we would come from our comfortable homes and help them. To me, coming is God/Jesus/Holy Spirit at work. ‘Why?’ Because you needed help.”

Another important place he’s helped is the Mother of Peace Orphanage in Zimbabwe. Phil’s heart went out to these children, many abandoned at the orphanage’s front door because either the parents or the children were HIV positive. “I found myself thinking about Jesus and how he reached out to children. When I extended my hand to a gaggle of three- and four-year-olds, each reached out to grab a finger and walk with me. I suspected these children had not experienced much comfort or human contact. What a blessing to be able to give some of that to them.”

Working through churches comes easily to Phil. His parents met in a singles group. “Growing up our Sunday family routine was all five of us kids heading to church with my parents. [After] our noon meal...dad would ask what we heard in church. Everyone was expected to participate in the conversation.

“In undergraduate school, at Presbyterian-related College of Wooster, there was a mandatory 45-minute forum always beginning with a prayer and often included a hymn. One of my favorite parts of the

campus-chapel ministry was when the pastor would say, ‘now the worship is over. Let the service begin.’”

At graduate school in Boston, the head pastor at the campus church was Peter Gomes, once honored as the Clergy of the Year and named as one of the top 10 preachers of his time. “His thought provoking sermons helped me keep my life in perspective and the service was a calming antidote to the pressure I felt in school. “When our kids were small I volunteered to teach Sunday School. It provided an opportunity for me to be involved in their religious education. It also modeled to the kids that it was important to contribute to one’s community.”

Phil concludes with this: “I think everything I do with the church enhances my faith journey. Singing old hymns on Sunday reminds me of my childhood, my parents, and resonates deep within me. The music grounds me. Membership in Lassers reminds me of the joy in participating in a loving, supportive community. Attending church regularly prompts me to be grateful for everything I have, and in gratitude I want to give back.” Adult mission trips, he says, have led him “to reflect on the meaning of work we are doing. Each day, there is a scripture we read and discuss in small groups. Then on the job site I find myself thinking about that discussion and how it impacts me in the moment. All of these have enhanced my faith.”

As his guiding Bible verse, Phil chooses Micah 6:8, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?”



worship

September - October Sermon Series

RECONCILIATION

How the Gospel brings new life to broken relationships.

9/8 **A Ministry of Reconciliation**
2 Corinthians 5:14-21

9/15 **Crossing the Chasm While We Can**
Luke 16:19-31

9/22 **An Orientation of Love and Freedom**
Galatians 3:23-4:7

9/29 **Race Matters**

10/6 **A Global Communion**
1 Peter 2:9-17

10/13 **Openness and Respect**



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FOCUS NEWSLETTER

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August 1 for the September issue.
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Every Monday by 5 p.m. for the following
Sunday's issue.
Submit items at:
lopc.org/submission-for-connections



August 4: Green Book
1 Corinthians 11:23-26

August 11: Up in the Air
Ephesians 4:25-5:1

August 18: If Beale Street Could Talk
Amos 5:24

Sept. 1: Won't You Be My Neighbor
Matthew 25:31-46

Sunday Worship Services
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

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