

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Alive!
In Christ... in the World



October 2019

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Spiritual Practices

By Lauren Gully, Pastor, Mission & Spiritual Formation



Outside of the church, there aren’t many people I interact with who are “practicing” Christians. Most of my friends considered themselves “religious” at some point in their lives, but today, they no longer attend church. Yet, the thing we still have most in common is a longing for a deeper experience in life—a desire for general wellness of mind, body, and soul. My friends are continually being drawn into “practices” to strive towards that fuller sense of wellness.

Among my friends, and friend of friends, there is a growing curiosity of secular spiritual movements. To paraphrase one of my favorite Christian writers Nadia Boltz-Webber: “In yoga, as great and healing as it is, no one tells me that I am forgiven!” To put it another way, those who gravitate towards secular spirituality still aren’t given the language or infrastructure to deeply engage in that divine thing that is in us all and still beyond us all.

This is where the church can actually help. We as Christians have a deep tradition of “practices” that those who have gone before us have used to develop their understanding and relationship with God—helping us to be present to God in the midst of our daily lives.

This is an immense opportunity for those who are searching for something deeper that they cannot find elsewhere in our world, and maybe not even in church! And guess what? It takes practice!

God’s primary call for us is deeper into relationship with the one who created us, knows us and loves us. It isn’t always easy in our busy lives to hear this call. Sometimes we need the help of these spiritual practices to draw us in.

If you are interested in exploring spiritual practices, join me this fall in a 10-week course I’m teaching called Centered Living!

Learn more on page 5!



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



Talent



Treasure



Time

Giving Sunday is November 3

On either side of the river is the tree of life with its 12 kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 22:2

Your giving keeps this church moving forward in service to many, and an annual pledge that honors God from your substance allows us to plan and direct our ministry to the greatest and most efficient good.

On this day, we encourage members and friends to bring their pledge cards to worship. If you can't come to worship that day, you can always mail your card or drop it by the church office. Pledge packets will be mailed this month. You'll also be able to access these materials online at the same time at:

lopc.org/give-back/pledge

Questions about processing your pledge?
contact Lidia Jesionek at 925-283-8722 x229 or at lidia@lopc.org.



youth



5th-8th Grade Overnight!

October 5 - 6

Registration is open for our annual 5th-8th grade overnight, now taking place in the Fall! We'll play all-campus games like capture the flag and sardines, eat pizza, play table games, and eventually get some sleep too! We're happy to work out late-arrival or early-pickup needs. 5:30 p.m. Saturday to 9 a.m. Sunday. Registration closes 10/2 or when we fill up, whichever comes first. Parent chaperons are appreciated and help us accommodate more youth!

Register on the LOPC website under the Event Registration tab.



BTW Photo Hunt

October 6

Spend a fun-filled night with your BTW peers and advisors as you drive throughout Lamorinda in search of illusive clues and perform team challenges for points! This is a great night to bring your friends! Interested in being an adult volunteer driver? Talk with Keris!

YOW Small Group Fun Night

October 16

Come for an evening full of great games, laughs and smiles as we bond with our YOW small groups! Friends are welcome!

children



Bible Class: November 3, 2019

Bible Presentation: November 10, 2019

At certain points during a person's spiritual journey, the community of faith comes together to celebrate a particularly meaningful rite of passage. At LOPC, we call these moments Faith Milestones. It is our hope to walk with our children throughout the journey and to be particularly present as a community during these events.

When a child reaches third grade, we celebrate the gift of Scripture to the body of Christ by asking families to participate in our Third Grade Bible Presentation, this year scheduled for Sunday, November 10. During either the 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. service, our third graders will be presented with a special Bible from LOPC as the congregation commits to walking through the Scriptures with these children and their families.

Prior to that, all third graders and their parents should attend the Third Grade Bible Class on Sunday, November 3 from 10:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. During this time, the children will learn the fundamentals of the Bible, and parents will learn how to read the Bible as a family. Participation in this class is a prerequisite to being a part of the presentation. Please contact Ryan Timpte to sign up for the class at Ryan@LOPC.org

We invite everyone in the LOPC congregation to join us in worship on November 10 to celebrate this Faith Milestone with our third graders and their families!

It Takes a Village

By Lori Robinson



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; 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 compelled to join us, here are some of the areas where we need volunteers:

Sunday mornings 9:00 a.m.

- 1st grade assistants
- 3rd grade small group leader
- 4th grade small group leader

Sunday mornings 11:00 a.m.

- PreK-1st grade storyteller
- PreK-1st grade assistant
- 2nd-4th grade storyteller
- 2nd-4th grade assistant

Kids Rock (Wednesday afternoons)

- Kitchen helpers (3:30-6:00 p.m.)
- Table leaders (5:00-6:00 p.m.)

*"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*

For more information or to volunteer in the children's ministry programs at LOPC, please contact Lori Robinson, at 925-283-8722 x. 251 or lori@lopc.org.

Sundays in The Garden

Faith formation for kids, Sundays, 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m.

What is a virtue? A virtue is something that God places in us to change the world around us.

October virtue: Courage - Being brave enough to do what you should do, even when you're afraid.

New This Year - Children's Offering: An offering will be collected from children in The Garden each Sunday and the children will collectively decide where to donate their offering at the end of the program year.

Communion Sunday: Starting October 6, children in The Garden will come to church to receive a blessing on Communion Sunday each month. The children will return to their classrooms for pick up after the service.

Mission Sunday in The Garden: On October 20, children in The Garden will talk about what mission is and do a special mission project.



spiritual formation

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

Later this month, join us for a three-part series on stewardship led by Linda Fodrini-Johnson, elder for Stewardship, and Pastor Jaime Polson. We invite you to think about the ways God calls us to be caretakers for God’s creation and faithfully use the resources God has entrusted to each of us. We will share practical ways that people of faith can and do give of their talents, treasures and time.

October 6:

OAK ROOM

World Christianity Chai & Chat with Rosie Thandu of Children of Faith Missions

October 13:

OAK ROOM

The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue

October 20:

OAK ROOM

CHAPEL

Part 1

Talent: How Your Gifts and Abilities Can Literally Change the World Around You!

Spiritual Journaling

October 27: OAK ROOM

Part 2 - **Treasure:** How to Share Your Treasure in A Way that Reflects God’s Love... Instead of Being Used By It!

November 3: OAK ROOM

Part 3 - **Time:** Tips to Keep Your Most Valuable Asset (time) Under Control and Create Impactful and Compassionate Change!

“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 10, two-hour weekly meetings, with time for sharing, discussion, reflection, teaching, and weekly assignments.

This course will meet Wednesdays, 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.

Spiritual Direction at LOPC

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



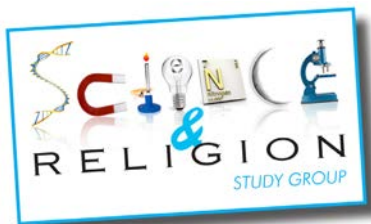
To find out more about Spiritual Direction, contact Diane Grant, LOPC Spiritual Direction Coordinator, at 925-825-8225 or dianebeegee@yahoo.com.

NOTE: All sessions are confidential. There is a modest fee on a sliding scale.

Science & Religion

The Spiritual Brain

Do you ever wonder how the human brain is particularly wired for spirituality and/or religion? In October, we will revisit one scientist's research on The Spiritual Brain. Last year we had a lively discussion on two of Dr. Andrew Newberg's video lectures that showed brain functions during various types of "religious experiences." This month, we will watch two more of his lectures and go deeper into our exploration of how we humans are uniquely created to experience God's presence in our lives. Please join us on Monday, October 21, 7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room.



lopc foundation

National Make-a-Will Month??

By Dara Youngdale, LOPC Foundation trustee



Did you know August was "National Make-a-Will Month?" I knew June 7 was "National Donut Day" -- and celebrated that! But a month-long event for wills? NO, not until a friend sent me an article about estate planning. Really, who would highlight such a morbid subject to begin

with (okay, a group of lawyers) and who wants to be reminded of wills for one whole month, let alone one whole day.

According to the article, only 42 percent of adults have a will or living-trust document. That number does rise with age, but I wonder if you, like me, have an outdated trust that has not kept up with the passage of time.

I thought about this during the recent Youth Mission Sunday worship service as I listened to the four amazing young women -- Alice, Magdalena, Sarah and Hannah -- share their mission stories. I was moved by the music of Elizabeth, Julianne, Katelyn, and our worship and music staff. I thought about how it takes the time, talents, and treasures of our multi-generational community, including financial support from the LOPC Foundation, to raise our youth, to provide the staff and space to nurture them throughout the year, and send them into service in the world, sharing Christ's love.

Our LOPC community changes with each passing year. Our youth grow up before our eyes, and new classes of young people go on mission trips each year, lead in worship, and teach and inspire us with their stories and songs of love and service. New families arrive, babies gurgle in the sanctuary, and we adults grow older. So -- back to that pesky subject of wills -- have you taken time to create yours, or update the one you have? Are the future generations of our LOPC community important to you? If so, consider becoming a Friend of the Foundation, committing to a legacy gift. To learn more, please contact one of the Foundation's Trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Jen Crocker, Jerry Ducey, Dick James, Staci Johnston, Kristi Haigh, Phil Pacier, Mike Ross or Dara Youngdale.

Remember: where there's a will, there's a way.

care

Season of Care

Saturday, October 26
Oak Room, 9:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m.

Aging with Eyes Wide Open: Making My Next Chapter The Best!



Linda Fodrini-Johnson

Are you contemplating retirement? Are you recently retired, or are you well into your retirement? Whatever stage of retirement you find yourself in, you will find this seminar with Linda Fodrini-Johnson extremely helpful. Linda, who is an elder here at LOPC, is also a family therapist and the founder of Elder Care Services. She has been in professional care management for over 35 years. We'll consider how we can lead a healthy and active life in retirement, as well nurture strong social connections and meaningful spiritual lives. We'll also consider our best housing options and explore the legal tools we need as we age. You can register online at lopc.org and follow the link on the Care page or contact Renée at renee@lopc.org. This seminar is free. Please arrive at 8:30 to register and partake of the continental breakfast. This seminar is co-sponsored by Care Ministries and Senior Ministries of LOPC.

mission

Warm Winter Nights

October 21 - November 4

Every fall, LOPC commits to hosting Warm Winter Nights, a traveling homeless shelter which runs from October to May annually, sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and 17 faith congregations. This program is vital to our community, as homelessness increases and affordable housing becomes scarcer in the Bay Area.

The shelter serves homeless families with dependent children. Homelessness is defined as having no access to traditional or permanent housing or finding temporary or occasional shelter in cars, on the street, in places not meant for human habitation, or even staying on a rotating basis with friends or relatives.

The shelter provides homeless families with a clean, safe, and warm place to sleep at night and support programming during the day. Participants either go to work or receive resource services at the Oasis Center in Pittsburg while their children attend school. All participants must be clean and sober, comply to behavioral standards, and work toward self-sufficiency and permanent housing. This shelter meets key needs as families struggle to transition back into permanent housing.

LOPC will host Warm Winter Nights this fall for two weeks from Oct. 21- Nov. 4 under the leadership of Jim Reiter and Rick Silvani. There are opportunities for LOPC members to help in a variety of ways with meal preparation, tutoring, entertaining, or playing games with the children while their parents do laundry or simply take a moment for themselves. Small groups, Voyager ships, bible study groups, and families are all encouraged to serve a meal together. There are opportunities to help serve dinner Monday - Sunday or a hot breakfast or lunch on Saturday or Sunday. Additionally, tutors are needed Mon. - Thurs. and entertainment including crafts, games, therapy pets, and sports activities are always welcome.

Share your talents and sign up to help at least one time during our guests' two-week stay Oct. 21-Nov.4.

Register on the LOPC website under the Event Registration tab.

community



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.



Young FAMILIES Connect

October 27 at 10:00 a.m.

Parents with children (ages infant-4th grade) meet on the back playground and let the kids play while adults enjoy some coffee and donuts. Come out and connect with other families like you! We meet on the last Sunday of the month between worship services at 10:00 a.m. from September-May.

thursday Fellowship

A program of Senior Care Ministries

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

Our first meeting in September had all the excitement of “a first day of school” with guests and volunteers eagerly greeting each other after our summer recess. As we welcomed many new faces and celebrated being together again, the room seemed vibrant with excitement and laughter. It was a great start to our new program year!

The excitement extended through the month as we were blessed with some outstanding musical talent. We welcomed Jim Pearson and Company, Bob Marshall performing his “September Song,” Michael Kistner, and the outstanding talent of Carlos Reyes, a renowned folk harpist and violinist. We also had a fascinating talk by Jolene Babyak, author of *Eyewitness on Alcatraz*.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Help: We need drivers! If you have even one hour, once a month to provide a ride for a senior who no longer drives, contact julie@lopc.org

There are also opportunities to provide a salad or baked cookies.

We welcome guests, volunteers, and visitors!

- **October 3:** Sing-a-long with Jim Pearson and Gillian Roebuck.
- **October 10:** Sue Farmer, singer and guitarist, will perform a variety of musical genres.
- **October 17:** Michael Kistner, vocalist and guitarist will sing our favorite oldies.
- **October 24:** “Music Mike” Zampicenzi will perform a wide repertoire on his accordion to celebrate Oktoberfest.
- **October 31:** Costumes are optional for our “Halloween Howl Party” exploring Canadian humor through “Just For Laughs” videos.

Come and experience our exciting and varied activities and programs and be a part of our very special caring community!



Julie Peterson
julie@lopc.org



Clarita Wooldridge
clarita@lopc.org

925-283-8722
x281

Membership Class

Sunday, October 20, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
on the LOPC campus

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. It 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. All are welcome!

For more information, contact Chris Baldwin at chris@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x110.
RSVP for childcare to susan@lopc.org by **10/8/19**.

LOPC Breakfast

October 23 - 7:00 a.m. in the Davies Room



This month’s speaker will be Leslie Gleason, Shelter Inc.’s Director of Programs. Come and learn about the work that Shelter Inc. is doing in our community preventing homelessness, ending the cycle of homelessness and providing affordable housing.

\$5 donation for breakfast at the door.

Contact Joan Grimes at joan@lawofficeofjoangrimes.com for more information. RSVP to Lexi at lexi@lopc.org.

session

August 2019 Session Highlights

By Lois Boyd, Clerk of Session

As summer ends, the ministry areas are gearing up for fall and winter programs. Pastor Jaime Polson, presented the summary of LOPC Goals and Priorities developed by the various ministry teams and staff. These establish a structure to provide for the long-term sustainability of the church. The work was guided by LOPC's top priorities:

- Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in our community and training up committed Christ followers (disciples) in our contemporary world.
- Developing or expanding ministry that leads people into active service in the world in service of others (mission).
- Expanding or developing ministry in one or multiple ministry contexts (i.e., onsite, offsite, online).
- Broadening our ministry to draw in and serve younger people and enhancing our community through representing the growing diversity of our area (inclusion).
- Prioritizing worship as a central component for disciples to nurture and deepen their Christian faith individually and in community.

Peter announced that Jake Metcalf, pastor of Hayward Presbyterian Church, will be the facilitator for the leadership retreat in late January. Jake has led the redevelopment and revitalization of his church and will share "lessons learned" that apply to all churches.

While LOPC is blessed to be a vital church with active member participation, it is important for us to focus on our development on an ongoing basis.

Phil Hunter, team leader of the Communications ministry, advised Session that we have retained a consultant to help us better understand the characteristics of our community and extended community so we may more effectively communicate the church's vision and opportunities for participation. The consultant will be funded by a generous gift designated for this purpose.

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, team leader of Stewardship, described the plan for this year's campaign to focus on sharing our time, talents, and treasure using an interactive fall theme.

David MacKenzie, chair of the Congregational Nominating Committee, reported that the Committee will complete its slate of nominees for the open Elder, Deacon, and Foundation positions soon. A congregational meeting was scheduled for Sunday, September 15 to vote on nominees. The installation/ordination of new officers will be held on Sunday, November 10, at both services.

Lauren has started Session on a spiritual-formation series where members will share their faith journeys. Linda Fodrini-Johnson led off by sharing the experiences in her life that have shaped and continue to form her faith. It was a privilege to hear her story.



journey of faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member



“Many paths have been involved in my faith journey,” Jen Crocker says, “but the cornerstone has always been Jesus Christ. This has given me the belief that I can endure whatever life throws at me. Christ gives me eternal hope. This hope is the one thing that never leaves me, no matter what has happened. This

Bible verse helps me: ‘Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.’ Matthew 6:34.”

Her faith journey began in junior high through involvement in Young Life. “I stayed very involved throughout high school, including attending many of their summer camps, weekly meetings, Bible studies, and leading J-High groups. My involvement at LOPC during this time was just Sunday mornings and the brief confirmation classes.”

Her involvement at LOPC grew during her last years in college and through her mid-twenties. She was a youth advisor for the high school group on Wednesday evenings, led an early morning high school Bible study, and went on many mission trips. “After I had children I became part of the child-care team, and my husband, Steve, and I taught Sunday school for many years. During the past 10 years I have broadened my activities at LOPC to include being on the Family Ministries, Stewardship, and Finance teams. Now, I am a trustee of the LOPC Foundation.

“Our family’s involvement at LOPC has enriched our lives in so many ways,” Jen explains. “We have enjoyed

participating in various mission projects, attended a variety of study groups and been part of various teams. We have made many wonderful friends here. Sunday mornings are my favorite part of the week — the most peaceful part!”

Jen continues, “I have had many different phases in my relationship with Christ. As a teenager, discovering Jesus and the impact that faith can have on my life was much more intense. It was very powerful and all-encompassing. As I grow older my faith has a more peaceful, calming impact on my life. I still have the yearning to continue growing in faith and my relationship with Christ, but in a calmer fashion. Also, I struggle more with making time for study and prayer.”

Thinking of these different phases, she admits that during time of immense grief she had a lot of anger towards God. She was able to overcome that by knowing she wanted her children to have the same experience growing up in the church as she’d had. Then, during the most amazing times in her life, she has felt so much love and thankfulness toward God.

“Today, I try to live out my faith by understanding who I am, and, knowing that, help as many people as I can, using the strengths I have,” Jen concludes. “I try to love the best I can, try to be positive even when things are not as positive as I would wish, and always hold onto hope. The Bible verse that guides me: ‘But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love! 1 Corinthians, 13:13.”





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OCTOBER 2019

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FOCUS NEWSLETTER

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Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

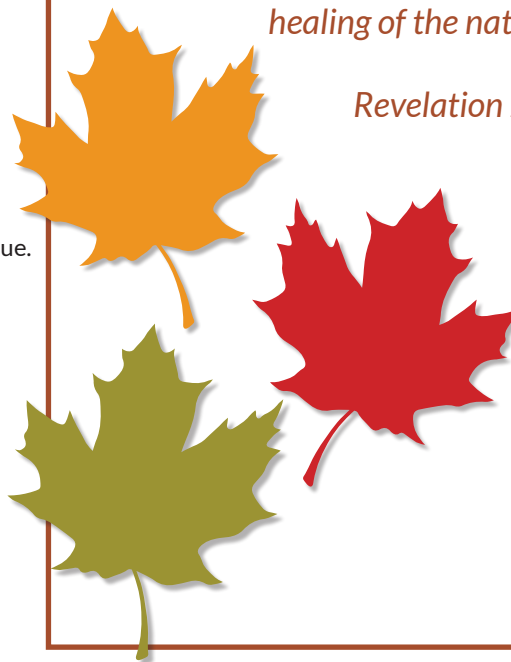
October 1 for the November issue.
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

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

*On either side of the river is the tree
of life with its twelve kinds of fruit,
producing its fruit each month; and
the leaves of the tree are for the
healing of the nations.*

Revelation 22:2



Talent • Oct 20
Treasure • Oct 27
Time • Nov 3

Giving Sunday is
November 3

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

Invite Friends & Family!

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