

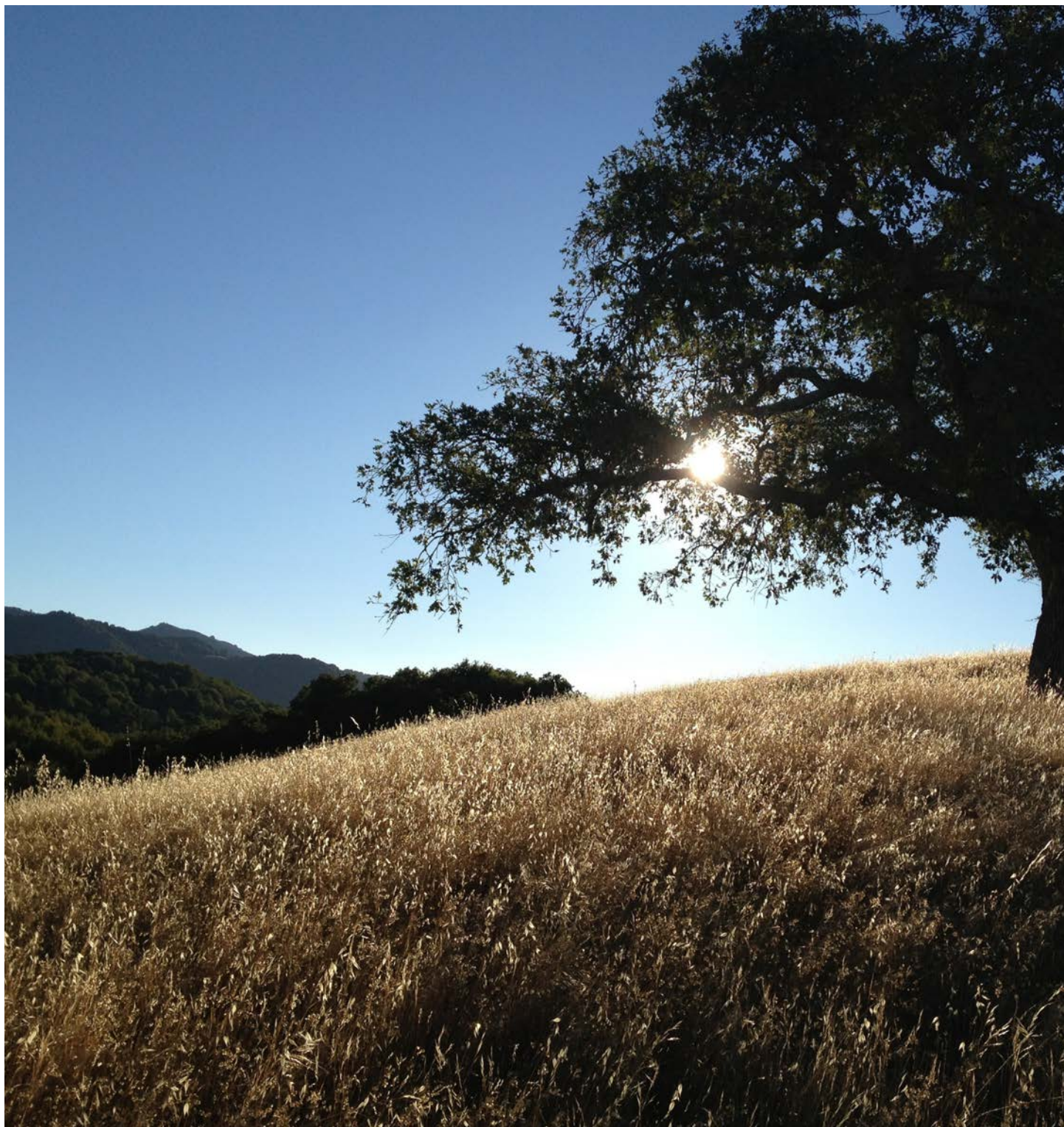
FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Pastor Peter's 20th
Anniversary Celebration!

September 8

See page 2



September 2019

Contents

Community..... 2

Fall BBQ..... 3

Men’s Retreat 3

Thursday Fellowship..... 4

Mission 5

love does Day..... 7

Care 10

Stephen Ministry 10

Youth..... 11

Spiritual Formation..... 13

10:10..... 13

Science & Religion 14

Sermon Series 15

Journey of Faith 16

Financial Update..... 17

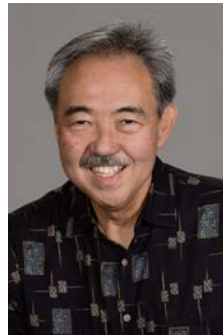
Foundation 18

Staff Contacts 18



Desert Sunset

By Gerald Chinen, Pastor Congregational Care



In early May, our church staff went to the Presidio Officer’s Club in San Francisco to take in a special exhibit: Exclusion, The Japanese American Incarceration. This exhibit has been so well attended that it’s been extended twice and will now be there until June of 2020. If you have the opportunity to visit, please do so.

Several of our church staff mentioned how moving the exhibit is, and of the similarities today of how some ethnic and religious communities are being treated. And among Japanese Americans today, there is great sadness and pain knowing of the plans to detain over a thousand undocumented minors, children without their parents, at the Fort Sill Army base in Oklahoma, which was used as a temporary holding center for Japanese Americans before they were sent to their more permanent camps during World War II.

Soon after our trip to the museum, a friend and I had the opportunity to visit with a few members of the church I served many years ago in San Mateo. Many of the older members of this church were imprisoned during the war in one of the 10 camps. We asked one of the women what she remembers most about the camp. She was just a child of 11 when she and her family were taken to Topaz, Utah. She said, “I remember the desert sunsets. There was nothing there and so the horizon was as far as one could see, long and deep. The sunsets were spectacular. I remember, as I looked out at the beautiful sunsets, I felt God saying, ‘I’m so sorry that you’re here, but I will care for you.’” That’s what I remember.”

I was so moved by the sense of peace I could see in her that very moment as she spoke, and I couldn’t help but think that that same peace filled her spirit every time she looked out into the Topaz sunsets. While it was, and still is, a horrible blight on our history, so many of the survivors leaned on their faith and trusted God those days in camp and continued to do so long afterward.

In each challenge we face, may we see the light of Christ at the horizon, speaking to our hearts and minds: “I will care for you.”

community



Please join us as we celebrate Peter's 20th anniversary at LOPC!

September 8 on the plaza between services.

In 1999, The Rev. Dr. Peter Whitelock was called to serve as Senior Pastor here at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. 20 years of faithful care is certainly something to celebrate!

Thank you, Peter, for sharing with our community your steady leadership, thoughtful encouragement, support through difficult times, and for enriching our lives. You have been there in our joyful events and in our most challenging of times. Your words and your presence have meant so much to us in helping us to live meaningful lives. We want to express our loving gratitude and celebrate your 20th anniversary on September 8th.

We love and appreciate you, Peter!

Young Families Connect Last Sunday of each Month!

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.

Neighbor 2 Neighbor 5th Annual Interfaith Picnic

Saturday, September 14, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Lafayette Reservoir

Join us as we meet and deepen our connections with our neighbors of different faiths, enjoy each other's foods, play, and pray together in a fun, family atmosphere designed for all ages. Please bring a vegetarian dish that reflects your tradition to share with eight people.

For more information and to RSVP visit www.bit.ly/2Z5eRf7 or call 925-283-8575.

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 is now open – more information about this retreat can be found online at: <https://burlpres.org/retreat2019/>

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

Fall BBQ

Ministry Year Kickoff!

Sunday, September 22, at Noon
Fellowship Hall

Join the entire LOPC Community for our Fall BBQ Ministry Year Kickoff. Join us for 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.

Returning September 5 !

thursday Fellowship

A program of Senior Care Ministries

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

Join us September 5 as we kick off our new program year! We welcome you with open arms and warm hearts every Thursday (except holidays) from September through mid-June. We guarantee that you will love being a part of our very special fellowship.

The typical schedule for the day is as follows:

- 11:00 a.m. "Meet and Greet" with snacks and beverages
- 11:15 a.m.: Craft activities and/or a light exercise program
- 12 p.m.: Lunch - please bring a half sandwich and we will provide the salad, beverage and dessert.
- 12:45 p.m.: Entertainment

Come join us and experience our exciting and varied activities and very special caring community! We welcome volunteers, guests, and visitors!

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Buying salad ingredients from a list we provide or providing baked cookies
- Providing a ride for a Senior who no longer drives is an ongoing need. Assignments are scheduled a month in advance and are flexible.

September's Schedule:

- **September 5:** Jim Pearson on piano, accompanied by several of our talented male volunteers leading the singing!
- **September 12:**
11:15 a.m.
What does a tri-centurion, Walter Houston, "Knickerbocker Holiday" & LOPC's Dr. Jim Little have in common? Come hear Bob Marshall as he presents his "September Song".
12:40 p.m.
Jolene Babyak, author of Eyewitness on Alcatraz, will relate stories of her childhood growing up on "The Rock" as the daughter of a guard.
- **September 19:** Mike Kistner guitarist and vocalist entertains with our favorite "oldies".
- **September 26:** Don't miss Carlos Reyes, world-renowned Paraguayan folk harpist and violinist, who will entertain us with his fusion of jazz, rock, Latin and classical music genres.



Julie Peterson
julie@lopc.org



Clarita Wooldridge
clarita@lopc.org

925-283-8722
x281

4th Monday Book Group

September 23 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
in the Fireside Room

The group reads both fiction as well as non-fiction books. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Check the Connections bulletin for the current read.

For more information, contact Jean Fiske at jdfiske@gmail.com



4th Friday Book Group

The group meets the 4th Friday of each month us at 4:00 p.m. for about an hour-and-a-half to two hours of great discussion!

If you are interested in joining, contact Catherine Coleman at 510-928-9714 or awaitingword@gmail.com

community



The LOPC Chancel Choir will join the Pacific Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Conductor Lawrence Kohl in two performances of Beethoven's monumental Symphony #9 September 14, 7:30 p.m. at LOPC and September 15, 3:00 p.m. at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore.

Beethoven's 9th Symphony defied categorization, leapfrogging to a new pinnacle of what the symphonic form can achieve. If you find yourself sitting up a little straighter, tilting your head to listen, forgetting where you are, you are traveling and experiencing with Beethoven the hero's inner journey from mysterious and humble beginnings to thundering triumph expressed in the enduring "Ode to Joy" featuring Soprano Rhoslyn Jones, Mezzo Sylvie Jensen, Tenor Christopher Bengochea, Baritone Ben Brayd, and the combined Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church/Pacific Chamber Orchestra choirs, Brett Strader, Chorus Master.

The members of the Pacific Chamber Orchestra also appear in such prestigious groups as the San Francisco Symphony, Opera and Ballet Orchestras, touring Broadway shows, and feature films recorded at Skywalker Ranch. They are touring soloists and chamber musicians. Conductor Lawrence Kohl delivers "Electrifying performances with just the right blend of public rhetoric and intimate delicacy."—San Francisco Chronicle

Tickets are available at PacificChamberOrchestra.org.

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.

Please join LOPC in welcoming our WWN guests this fall. Share your talents and sign up to help at least one time during our guests' two-week stay Oct. 21-Nov.4. Look for the registration at LOPC.org. Contact Robin at robin@lopc.org for more information.

Be the Change We Wish to See in the World

by Carolyn Bealmear



Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church sent a team of twenty on an adult mission trip to respond to the devastating Tubbs fire that hit Sonoma county in October 2017. Now in its 13th year, previous adult-mission trip efforts have taken teams led by Rich and Marty Lewis, to locations along the Gulf Coast, responding to Hurricane Katrina, to Joplin, MO, in response to the F5 tornado in 2011, to Moore, OK, to rebuild after one tornado and while ironically experiencing another, and to Weed and Clearlake, CA, to rebuild following the raging wildfires of recent years.

LOPC partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma, working at two locations in and around Santa Rosa. The main location was at Medtronic, a biomedical company collaborating with Habitat for Humanity to construct cottages on their property. A dozen LOPC volunteers spent the week working at this location bending rebar, creating forms, pouring concrete, and preparing foundations for the prefabricated “cottages” that would eventually be assembled at that location. Several team members even had to drill into solid granite for rebar to be set which as you can imagine was very difficult.



I was one of six sent to work at the second location in the town of Graton, which consisted of two home sites: one with a poured foundation and the second in the process of creating the form for a foundation. We also worked with a pick axe and jack hammer at our site, which proved to be very HARD work for me.

For those not familiar with Habitat for Humanity (H4H), it is an organization that builds homes for people struggling with homelessness, but with a requirement that each adult who will live in the home must put in 500 hours of sweat equity with the

organization. That can mean helping build or doing office work for H4H. During our week in Graton we worked alongside a single father of two who was to receive a house in another location but came to work with us on his day off. His house hadn't even been started yet but he was putting in time now when he could.

Two years after the Tubbs Fire, the need for housing in the Santa Rosa area is still very real. There are many who are displaced, living in hotels and RVs while they try to find a house they can afford, waiting to for a

contractor who can rebuild their home or even sorting out their insurance claims. The “cottages” at the Medtronic site were being built to address this post-fire need while the two homes in Graton were a response to the general housing crisis found throughout the greater Bay Area.

On the last day, as I was heading to Graton, a feeling came over me that made me stop to acknowledge it as something new, and it took a few minutes to realize what it was. It was a sense of peace, the peace that I was where I was supposed to be, doing what I could with an open heart, and I had the hope that this was pleasing to God and it made me happy. A lot of my days, weeks, years it feels like I'm doing a lot of “to-do” items and running from one activity to another, exhausted, often doing things for others, yet that peace isn't there. I am glad to have a week once a year as a potent reminder of the opportunities available to me to “be the change we wish to see in the world.”

After returning home, Rich Lewis received an email from the H4H manager who oversaw both sites, Rick Oberdorfer, who said, “Thank you for the great week. It was one of the most pleasurable as well as productive in my tenure at Habitat for Humanity SoCo.”

mission love does

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

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Trinity Center Needs Your Help!

Trinity Center serves people who are experiencing homelessness and poverty. Take a look at the items below and see if there is a way you can help:

- **Trinity Center - September 28**

Sign up to help sort and organize on-site food pantry and clothing closet at Trinity Center.

Go to lopc.org/lovedoes to register.

- **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.

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 age 5.

12:15 p.m. - 3:15 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 and games 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 age 5 and under.

At LOPC: 10:10 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.

Go to lopc.org/lovedoes to register.



Changing the Face of Deafness in Gaza

Growing up with a disability is hard even in the best circumstances, but in the Gaza strip the challenge is even more profound. Atfaluna School for the Deaf, a long time LOPC Mission partner, is located in Gaza city and provides an oasis for those with hearing challenges. The school's mission is to improve the lives of deaf persons in the Gaza Strip by empowering them socially, economically, culturally, and civilly.

To accomplish this, Atfaluna provides a variety of services including early intervention and diagnostic testing, speech therapy, sign language and academic education in addition to providing hearing aid repair, vocational training, and counseling services. Twenty years ago, Palestinian attitudes toward deaf people were negative, said Naeem Kabaja, director of Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children in Gaza. "It was perceived by many as a mental disability. But we've been able to change that and it has since improved, through our work, the spread of sign language, activities by the deaf, and raising public awareness about this disability."

LOPC will kick-off raising funds for Atfaluna's School for Deaf Children on Sunday 9/15. 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.

Questions? Please contact Robin Freeberg at robin@lopc.org

• Write a check payable to LOPC with "ATFALUNA" in the memo line. *Contributions accepted beginning 9/15.*

OR

• Go to LOPC.org >GIVE BACK>ONLINE GIVING and click "ATFALUNA" in the dropdown menu.

OR

• Use LOPC APP > Press "Give button" > Click "ATFALUNA"

Congo Mission Co-Workers, Christi & Jeff Boyd, to Visit LOPC!

September 29 at the 10:10

"My name is Benjamin. I am 14 years old. My parents died in the war when I was 10. I thank God for this Healing Hearts Club which has helped me to heal my wounds which I was carrying. This way, I have faith in God when I know that it is Him, my help, and I will serve Him all my life."



The words above are from one of the many children who have experienced the Healing Hearts curriculum in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is a Bible-based program that helps children and adults traumatized by violence in the Congo. PC(USA) is a major sponsor and organizer of this program.

In 2016, the LOPC Congo Mission team asked the LOPC congregation to support the first round of training of 30 facilitators charged with introducing this program in the eastern part of the Congo, the area of the Congo most devastated by violence. With the generosity of our congregation, the training was funded. We have continued to provide funding, and other churches have stepped up as well. A second round of training was held a year later. Also, this program has been introduced in the Kasai region of the Congo, another area that has suffered from violence. Over 2,500 children and adults have experienced the Healing Hearts program.

Christi and Jeff Boyd, PC (USA) mission co-workers in the Congo, will be at LOPC on Sept. 29 at the 10:10 program to talk about Healing Hearts and their experiences in the Congo. The Boyds are long-time friends of LOPC and we are excited they can join us.

mission



LOPC, for many years, has partnered with Fotokids, an organization in Guatemala that teaches employable skills to impoverished students. Nancy McGirr, the founder of Fotokids, is always a wealth of knowledge on events happening in Guatemala and Latin America as a whole. She has a unique vantage point on the current immigration attempts from her work. What follows is a helpful perspective from Nancy, in understanding what is going on and how our work with organizations like hers can help:

I am so deeply upset watching videos of the thousands of people flowing north in a stream of swelling migration. Having lived in Central America for over 30 years, I can say it is not surprising, it is not new, but it is disheartening. You could see it coming. I have a small project educating and giving vocational training for children in Guatemala and rural Honduras. Statistics have gotten progressively worse in the time I have lived here. People are fleeing from violence, gang extortion, and the inability to find a job to support their families.

Almost half of the population of Guatemala is under the age of 15. Seventeen million people live here, nearly 60% in poverty and 79% in indigenous villages. Opportunities to attend school are scarce and have not improved appreciably in recent years. Eight out of 10 kids live in poverty and only three out of 10 receive a middle school education. If, against these odds, a young person does succeed in getting an education, they will find there are very few jobs. Last month 150,000 young people applied for 12,000 openings during a job fair in Guatemala City.

My project, "Fotokids," is an example of what can be done with few resources. For 27 years now, we have helped thousands of kids from some of the poorest areas of Guatemala and Honduras. In that time, we have had just three migrate to the U.S. and none at all since the year 2000. Why is that?

I have asked myself that question more than a few times. I believe we have an integrated program that focuses on a long-term commitment. It is because we start them young (9-10 years of age), give them scholarships to get them educated, provide them an identity and a peer group, and show them what types of opportunities are out there. The children stay in our project from primary through high school. We teach photography, graphic design, web design, video, and writing, along with leadership skills and critical, creative thinking. There are jobs in these fields and our program, combined with a traditional education, gives them a distinct advantage when applying for employment.

All of our staff, themselves Fotokids graduates, have grown up mired in extreme poverty in Guatemala City's garbage dump and isolated rural areas. Those that work in our program teach in order to give back. We have many kids who have gone on to the university studying business administration, law, graphic design, communications, systems engineering, education, social work, and clinical psychology. Our students find employment.

The gang violence and extortion of both small businesses and families in the barrios is pervasive... there were three violent deaths of minors at the end of a gun every 24 hours. There is little foreign or domestic investment due to violence; coupled with poverty and lack of meaningful education, this is a time bomb.

No one wants to walk thousands of miles with a baby on their hip, leaving everything they have struggled so hard for behind. We have families who have literally built their houses block by block, paying for cement as funds become available, slowly creating a wall behind the front of their tin shacks.

There are no reasons grassroots programs like ours cannot be fostered by governments and business people. The caravans will continue. If the United States wants to stem the flow of migration from their neighbors, then let them act as neighbors, using funding wisely to encourage innovative programs - programs that are designed to address the needs of the 21st century and the creation of jobs.

N. McGirr Founder CEO Fotokids

care



Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

Get In on the Action

Fall training session begins September 17

Would you like to be a part of a ministry that makes a real difference in others' lives when they need it most-and in your own? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister!

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who provide one-to-one caring ministry to people experiencing grief, divorce, loneliness, job loss, hospitalization, and many other life difficulties.

Stephen Minister training equips you to do an excellent job as a Stephen Minister as well as to improve the quality of all our relationships. Topics include listening, feelings, confidentiality, providing Christian care, maintaining boundaries, crisis theory and practice, as well as ministering to people experiencing life events such as divorce, hospitalization, illness, and more.

Once equipped, Stephen ministers are prayerfully matched with people who are going through a stressful time or life difficulty. A Stephen Minister meets with this person once per week for about an hour to listen, care, encourage, and pray. The Stephen Minister brings Christ's presence into the person's life and also experiences Christ in the other person. It's really a life-changing ministry for both the care receiver and the Stephen Minister.

If you'd like to learn more about how to become a Stephen Minister, contact Pastor Gerald Chinen at gerald@lopc.org or by calling 925-283-8722 x227.

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@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.

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. The course is open to all widows and widowers. The next group meets September 17 - November 19, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., at LOPC. Pre-Registration is required. The workbook is \$15.

If you want to register or have more information, contact Bev Fellows, 925-949-7628 or beverlyfellows@comcast.net.

youth

Youth Alive

For 5th-8th Grade Youth

Sundays during 9 a.m. worship services

CLC 201



Hang out with your peers as we grow in faith together! We'll start with some free time to enjoy a variety of games and activities all together. Then, younger and older grades split off for small group Bible stories with relevant connections to our modern lives and encouragement for the coming week.

Middle School Overnight

For 5th - 8th Grade Youth

October 4-5, 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Register now at LOPC.org for our sleepover! We'll play all-campus games like flashlight tag and sardines, eat pizza, play table games, watch a movie, get some sleep, and play more games in the morning. We're happy to work out late-arrival or early-pickup needs. Registration is open until September 30 or when we hit capacity.



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

TBH (To Be Honest)

For High School Youth

Sundays during 9 a.m. worship services starting September 15

Lower Youth Room

If you're looking for a place to chat about life and faith with your peers, this is the place to be! Join us Sundays for a small group Bible study, snacks, and occasional service experiences and group visits to "big church" worship services. Youth who attend the 11 a.m. worship service are encouraged to enjoy the service with family and friends.

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.



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.



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.

My Salinas Mission Trip Experience

by Amanda Young



From working in the fields at the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) to serving meals at Dorothy's Place, a drop-in center for people experiencing homelessness, the Salinas High School Mission Trip provided an opportunity to reflect on my circumstances and God's calling.

My experiences on the trip reminded me of a lyric from "Break My Heart" by Jonny Diaz: "Help me see through the eyes of the hurting / Lord break my heart." God calls us to be empathetic and compassionate, and to allow our hearts to be broken - two of the most enduring lessons from my time in Salinas.

Soon after arriving, we watched East of Salinas, a documentary about a migrant boy. The film shed light on challenges affecting migrant families: for example, many move abruptly throughout the year to follow the harvesting seasons and find work. These frequent moves adversely impact a child's education, emotional health, and social skills. It was both eye-opening and heart-wrenching to see the boy's story - and to discover its prevalence.

Parts of the documentary were filmed at Sherwood Elementary, a school where we were lucky enough to serve. While assisting with crafts and reading with the children, I was amazed by the love and energy of the leaders and kids. The four children that I spent time with - Jose, Alex, Rosita, and Jimena - were so willing

to share their projects with me, even though we'd just met. Kids truly are kids - regardless of their family's struggles, legal status, or uncertain futures.

We also worked alongside farmworkers at ALBA, a program that helps farmers develop their own businesses. The work was taxing, but it forced me to reflect on the efforts required to harvest our fresh produce.

The farmers encouraged us to think about our foods' journey and to consider buying produce from local farmers, rather than major corporations.



During an evening program, Casimiro Alvarez, an organizer for United Farm Workers, spoke to us about the horrible treatment farmworkers often endure, prompting our youth leader, Keris, to share a particularly meaningful verse: "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself..." (Leviticus 19:33). Through our work at ALBA, Casimiro's moving speech, and my experience at Sherwood Elementary, I've realized the importance of advocating for farmworkers, immigrants, and their families; after all, God calls us to stand for the oppressed and with those who are different.

Are you   
in the know?

Missed out on our youth sharing about their summer service-learning experiences on Youth Sunday? Listen anytime on LiveStream!

Head to <https://livestream.com/accounts/1890161> and be sure to select the worship service for 08/25.

- Sign up for monthly youth ministry emails, including, weekly event topics and special event info. Contact Allison at allison@lopc.org.

- Subscribe to our weekly text messages which share YOW & BTW event details and faith-based inspirational messages by texting @lopcms to 81010 for middle school texts or @lopchs to 81010 for high school texts.

- For fun photos, follow us on Instagram @lopc_youth!

spiritual formation

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 on the first Wednesday of each month beginning September 4, continuing through December 4, from 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., in the Fireside Room.

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).

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

10:10 is a weekly program between worship services (10:10-10:50 a.m.) that serves as a place to grow empowered to live in faith. Drop in whenever you can and make it part of your Sunday routine to learn, experience, and discuss relevant topics in community with others. After the 9:00 a.m. service, grab a cup of coffee and head to either the Oak Room or Chapel, or come early for the 11:00 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!

September 8:

OAK ROOM CHAPEL
What happens on OR Confession of 1967
a Sabbatical?

September 15:

OAK ROOM CHAPEL
Stanford OR Economic Poverty
Children's Study

September 22:

OAK ROOM CHAPEL
Companions: OR Sexual Orientation
Introductory Session #3 and The Church

September 29:

OAK ROOM CHAPEL
Congo: Boyd Visit OR Race Matters

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

JAMES

Presentation and discussion
led by Pastor Peter Whitelock

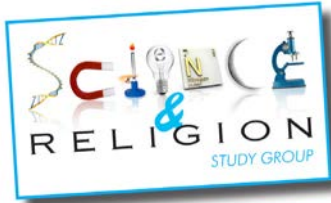
Thursdays
7 p.m. in The Oak Room
No experience required

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

Email lexi@lopc.org to sign up.
Drop-ins welcome!

CRISPR Gene Editing: The Flashing Yellow Light of Caution!

Monday, September 16, 7:15 p.m. in the Oak Room.



Should we sneak into the human genome with our wrenches and screw drivers to edit our genes? Should we delete genes?

Add genes? Modify genes that will be passed on via the germ line into future generations? Should we risk creating Frankenstein monsters without knowing it? Scientists the world over are embroiled in a controversy over these questions. Should churches weigh in with wholesome values aimed at the future well-being of the human race? Yes, indeed.

Ted Peters co-edits the journal, *Theology and Science*, at the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. He is author of *Playing God? Genetic Determinism and Human Freedom* (Routledge, 2nd ed., 2003) and co-author of *Sacred Cells? Why Christians Should Support Stem Cell Research* (Roman and Littlefield, 2008). He is currently co-editing a book on the CRISPR controversy. See his website: TedsTimelyTake.com.

All are welcome to attend!

“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.

Disciple IV Bible Study

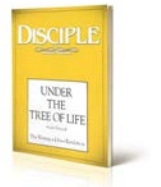
Under the Tree of Life

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. in Room CLC 201. 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.



spiritual formation

Companions for the Journey

By Hilde Clark

Have you ever heard of the saying “stopping to smell the roses?” The program, Companions, is like that. Companions, as a Christian practice, gives us pause once each month to ‘sit with’ and ponder what, where, and with whom we felt moved in some way. So often in our day-to-day busyness, we experience something in our lives that might ‘bother’ us or even bring us joy, but we can’t appreciate what it might mean for us because we have to move on to another task or appointment. Or perhaps, do you ever wake up at night with that ‘knowing’ feeling that something wasn’t right? Companions provides us the time and space to slow down and re-examine that thought or feeling while experiencing God’s presence by listening to a short passage in the Bible (often a Jesus’ story).

- We call it God ‘speaking’ to us or helping us become more aware of what God wants us to hear,
- Another suggested way of saying it: “We call it becoming more aware of what God wants us to understand,” or
- Sometimes, what the scripture denotes for us personally helps to clarify that feeling or thought that wasn’t clearly understood or realized.


Companions, for me, is like a magnifying glass. Looking through the lens makes me stop and look at each item under the magnifier with more clarity and detail. Doing so often results in a better understanding of what I am seeing. In Companions, we use our sacred time and space to act as our magnifying glass. As we ponder our lives over the past month, and then listen to a short scripture, we begin to see/hear/experience God’s presence, resulting in seeing things in new ways.

Introductory Session

Sunday, September 22, 10:10 – 10:50 a.m.

Important: First time participants must attend an introductory session. For more information or to sign up, please contact Renée at renee@lopc.org.

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

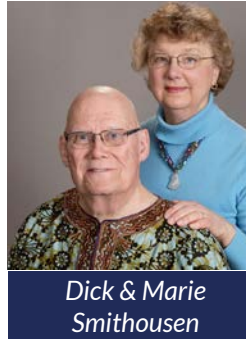
10/6
A Global Communion
1 Peter 2:9-17

10/13
Openness and Respect

journey of faith

by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Dick Smithousen says, "I was born to help others. My mantra is 'Here I am Lord, lead me to those who need my help.'" Many at LOPC have benefited from the rides he gave them to an area airport or a doctor appointment. His passion has been working with Thursday Fellowship. Here is his story of why.



After, Dick was offered a job in Concord. "I wrote to a friend in the area asking where I could meet some girls. His answer was 'First Presbyterian Berkley.' That was the right advice. I joined a post college group, the Corinthians, and that's where I met my wife, Marie."

"I had retired from 35 years of teaching biology and physiology at Ygnacio Valley High School. I didn't know what I was going to do to fill my time. More importantly, all my years in the world of science would not be used. Then I received a phone call asking me to be a deacon. I accepted and my assignment was to Thursday Fellowship. Cindy Robbins was a volunteer and used her training as an occupational therapist to create a learning program. She asked me to present little lessons in science for her program. I felt like I had been hit by a bolt of lightning from God. What joy I felt because now my knowledge would be used for the glory of God."

In a far different way LOPC has had a great influence on Dick's life. "It turned out that after two-and-a-half years of being ill and losing hope I would ever recover, the prayers of our congregation and particularly those of the volunteers of Thursday Fellowship, as they gather for reflection and prayer before each session, I recovered." Dick especially thanks Carol Walsh and Stan Morner for walking beside him during this time. He reiterates, "God answers prayer."

Dick didn't grow up in a church-going family, he says his mother was "not religious but spiritual and embodied grace and goodness." When he was 15 his father died, with Dick at his side. "This was quite a shock, and it influenced my journey on the road to Christ. I needed a 'rock' to hang onto and Christ was it.

"My mother only had a ninth-grade education, as she had to drop out of school to help support the family during the depression. But she was very smart. After my father's death she took a job in a drug store for \$1.25 an hour. Education was very important to her, and with her saving ways, my sister and I both graduated from college, I at Chico State where I also received a master's degree.

As a married couple the Smithousens first belonged to the Berkeley church, then Montclair, and next Ygnacio Valley Pres, where they worshipped for 25 years. Then Marie wanted to attend a church that offered more spiritual and academic Bible studies and chose LOPC. "I really didn't want to leave as it was a small church and I was needed there where I did every job there was, including being an Elder. However, wanting to be with Marie, I did leave and now know it was one of the best things I ever did. I love everything about LOPC, but especially all the opportunities it gives me to serve others."

Dick also feels he was born to be a teacher and that it, too, has given him the opportunity to serve and help others. His love of science is infectious. He taught over 4,000 students, many of whom became doctors, dentists, nurses, and occupational and physical therapists. "Often, I see some who are now in their 40's - 60's, whom I don't recognize but they recognize me, and I ask how? They invariably say, 'You have not changed.' I can hardly keep from laughing! "

Not surprisingly, Dick belongs to the Science and Religion group at LOPC and is also active in the Congo Team and many of the classes which are offered. The Smithousens also participate in Mt. Hermon.

Dick chooses as a Bible verse which inspires him, Isaiah 40:31. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings of eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not be faint."



financial update

By Jim Nagle, Finance Chair

As LOPC completes the first half 2019, it is a good time to reflect on where we stand financially and how we are trending for the full year. Continued thanks to all our members and friends for the support given to our ministries. Your time, talents, and treasures have gone a long way to support the church’s mission; LOPC has a thriving Children and Family ministry, Mission ministry, Seniors and Youth ministries, all because of your contributions. The staff continues to do a great job of managing expenses and therefore, we are in great shape related to budget. We are truly blessed to have such a devoted group to support our ministry.

On the income side of the budget, we continue at a slightly slower pace than last year. As of June, pledge commitments are only covering 97.6% of our \$2.3 million budget, which means we are \$74,000 short. Nonpledge giving is higher, making up some but not all of the pledge shortfall. We need everyone’s help to close this gap.

June income year-to-date is \$1,316,274, or \$36,720 better than budget. Mission & Other Special Gifts is \$25,174 better than budget due to deployment of special gifts from the balance sheet. Other congregational giving is consistent with budget because non-pledge giving is higher than expected. Expenses through June are \$1,670,443, or \$5,494 higher than budget, mainly due to the additional Mission spending mentioned above, offset by slightly lower spending in Personnel and Office & Facilities.

As in prior years, the 2019 budget includes a Faith Component. This represents giving beyond pledge commitments and historical non-pledge trends needed to cover the expense budget. This year’s Faith Component is \$200,000. Traditionally we have focused on giving to this in the final quarter of the year. However, it is never too early to give to the Faith Component, if you are able. All contributions you make to the church in time, talent, and treasure are appreciated. Thank you to everyone who has given so much to help support all of the great ministries at LOPC.

January - June 2019		
Congregational Giving:	Actual	Budget
Pledge Income	\$ 1,073,911	\$ 1,095,000
Non-Pledge, Loose Offerings, & Other Giving	\$ 161,715	\$ 130,250
Mission & Other Special Gifts	\$ 73,018	\$ 47,844
Faith Component	\$ 1,901	\$ 1,260
Total Congregational Giving	\$ 1,310,545	\$ 1,274,354
Other Sources:		
User Fees	\$ 5,729	\$ 5,200
Total Income	\$ 1,316,274	\$ 1,279,554
Expenses	\$ (1,670,443)	\$ (1,664,949)
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (354,169)	\$ (385,395)

foundation

Let's Be Friends...

By Dick James, LOPC Foundation Trustee



How many friends do you have? A few? Dozens? Hundreds? Can you name all of them? Suppose some people, or many people, consider you a friend and you aren't even aware who they are? And yet one day they send you a financial gift. Surprise!! It's happened at the LOPC Foundation.

Do you know how easy it is to become a Friend of the Foundation? Do you even realize you may already be a Friend of the Foundation? You're a Friend if you've made a financial provision for the Foundation in your estate plan or trust. Being a Friend of the Foundation lets you be a friend to the church, even long into the future when you're no longer here. It's an easy way to make a *BIG* difference.

If you haven't already told us, please let us know. That's all there is to it – you're a Friend. Have you told your family you're a Friend of the Foundation?

Let's be friends....

Here are your friends on the Foundation Board: Trustees, Staci Johnston; Kristi Haigh; Phil Placier; Dara Youngdale; Jim Beckemeyer; Jerry Ducey; Mike Ross; Jen Crocker; Dick James.

staff contact info

STAFF	Ministry Area and/or Title	Email	Ext.
Allison Kunz	Director of Youth Ministry	allison@lopc.org	241
Bev Fellows	Memorial Coordinator	contact office for info	
Brett Strader	Director of Worship and Music	brett@lopc.org	224
Char Casella	Treasurer	char@lopc.org	253
Chris Baldwin	Director of Community Engagement	chris@lopc.org	110
Clarita Wooldridge	Thursday Fellowship Coordinator	contact office for info	281
Colleen Whitelock	Facilities and Database Coordinator	colleen@lopc.org	260
Dave Engelbrektsen	Campus Operations Manager	dave@lopc.org	280
Devin Crane	A/V Technician and Website Administrator	devin@lopc.org	231
Elizabeth Ball	Administrative Manager	elizabeth@lopc.org	221
Gerald Chinen	Pastor of Congregational Care	gerald@lopc.org	227
Hiroko Shibuya	Worship and Music Coordinator	hiroko@lopc.org	264
Jaime Polson	Pastor of Family Ministry/Executive Leadership	jaime@lopc.org	226
Jon Corry	Communications Associate	jon@lopc.org	240
Julie Peterson	Thursday Fellowship Coordinator	contact office for info	281
Keris Dahlkamp	Director of Youth Ministry	keris@lopc.org	233
Lauren Gully	Pastor of Mission and Spiritual Formation	lauren@lopc.org	225
Lexi Morrissey	Office Coordinator	lexi@lopc.org	223
Lidia Jesionek	Accountant	lidia@lopc.org	229
Lori Robinson	Associate Director of Children's Ministry	lori@lopc.org	251
Michael Morales	Worship and Music Assistant	michael@lopc.org	235
Michelle Browning	Administrative Assistant	michelle@lopc.org	248
Peter Whitelock	Pastor/Head of Staff	peter@lopc.org	255
Renée Wigginton	Administrative Assistant	renee@lopc.org	228
Robin Freeberg	Associate Director of Mission Ministry	robin@lopc.org	250
Ryan Timpote	Director of Children's Ministry	ryan@lopc.org	234
Stewart Scharch	Organist	stewart@lopc.org	243
Susan Wentworth	Associate Director of Preschool Ministry	susan@lopc.org	237
Terry Conte	Kitchen Ministry Administrator	terry@lopc.org	245
Tess Houston	Bell Choir Director	contact office for info	
Seedlings Preschool			
Bobbi Cassettari	Director of Outreach/Enrichment	bobbi@lopc.org	238
Coleen Moulton	Director	coleen@lopc.org	238
Kathy LaPlante	Assistant Director	kathylaplante@lopc.org	239



49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549

SEPTEMBER 2019

IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 9/1/19

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LAFAYETTE, CA
PERMIT NO. 12

PASTORAL STAFF

Peter Whitelock, Head of Staff
Gerald Chinen, Congregational Care
Lauren Gully, Mission & Spiritual Formation
Jaime Polson, Families & Executive Leadership

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Brett Strader, Director
Stewart Scharch, Organist

TREASURER

Char Casella

MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement
Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz, Youth
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool
Ryan Timpte, Children

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Jon Corry, Communications
Dick James & Lexi Morrissey, Editing

Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

September 1 for the October 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

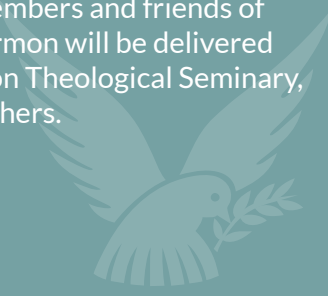
Please Join us at LOPC for Jane MacKenzie's Ordination Service

Sunday, Sept 15 at 7:00 p.m.



Please join us for a special ordination service for Jane MacKenzie. Jane has been an active member of LOPC for many years, and discerned a call to ministry which led to her to Princeton Theological Seminary and now to Burlingame Presbyterian Church as Associate Pastor.

An ordination service is a powerful witness to God's love, grace and guidance, and all members and friends of LOPC are invited to support Jane. The sermon will be delivered by Dr. Craig Barnes, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, one of our most gifted and dynamic preachers.



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

Invite Friends & Family!

Connect with us online!



[/lopchurch](https://www.facebook.com/lopchurch)



[/LOPC](https://www.linkedin.com/company/LOPC)



[@lopc_church](https://www.instagram.com/lopc_church)



[@lopchurch](https://twitter.com/lopchurch)



[/lopc](https://vimeo.com/lopc)

- Give.
 - Ask for prayer.
 - Get the latest news.
- All on the LOPC app.



Text "LOPC app"
to the number 77977
to download it today.

and at lopc.org