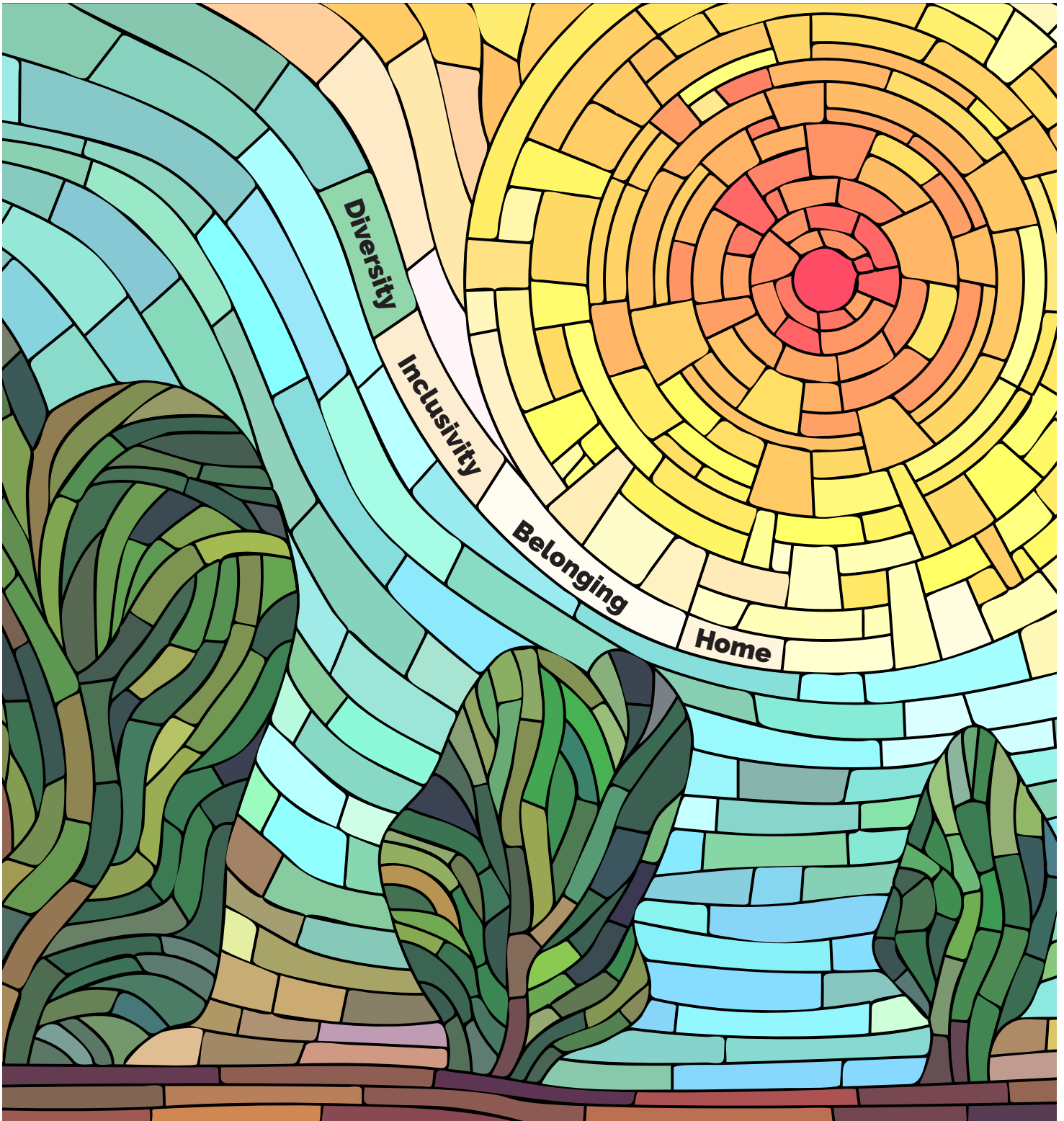


FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

LOPC is here to support you
on your journey of faith.



AUGUST 2018

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Diversity & Inclusion

by Gerald Chinen, Pastor – Care



Lucille Ball, the beloved actress and comedienne, once said she could walk into any home in America and be welcomed, and she was probably right. Everyone in America probably felt like they knew her because she was so familiar. She was like a family member.

I looked up synonyms for the word familiar and found these: at home, at ease, aware, and understanding. When we aren't "at home" with others, it can certainly lead to misunderstanding, to fear, and judgement. When people unlike us are seen as "other" we struggle to accept our differences and neglect to appreciate the gifts represented in those differences.

Session has commissioned a Diversity Task Force to review and envision how well we fulfill the goal of being an inclusive and diverse congregation, as diversity and inclusion is one of our Ministry priorities. One of the ways the task force would like to involve and engage our entire congregation is through a survey. The task force would appreciate knowing from you how you view diversity and inclusion. So in September, if you choose to do so, you will be able to go online to complete the survey, or hard copies will be made available to you at the front desk. The task force will also be inviting our congregation to listening sessions to hear your stories, as well as your hopes for the church. Please keep an eye out in Connections in the coming weeks for more information.

Brené Brown in her book *Daring Greatly* mentions her study with eighth graders and their observations on the difference between fitting in and belonging. This is what they said: Belonging is being somewhere where you want to be, and they want you. Fitting in is being somewhere you really want to be, but they don't care one way or the other. Belonging is being accepted for you. Fitting in is being accepted for being like everyone else. I get to be me if I belong. I have to be like you to fit in.

*Belonging is being
accepted for you.
Fitting in is being
accepted for being
like everyone else.*

Committing to a being a church of belonging!

MOUNT HERMON 2018

ALL - CHURCH RETREAT

Located in the beautiful Santa Cruz mountains, surrounded by stunning redwood forests and meandering creeks, it is the ideal retreat location. Mount Hermon is an opportunity for God's family to spend time together. An opportunity to laugh, relax and to play together. It is also an opportunity to learn and be inspired. There will be dedicated programs for preschoolers, children and youth, a barbecue, family-style meals, outdoor worship and outdoor activities for all ages. You are invited to join us!

The Relevant Bible

How to Read the Bible in a Way that Matters - Many modern Christians believe that they have to make impossible choices when they read the Bible. We will focus on how to approach the Bible as both divine speech that calls for our prayerful listening through spiritual practices, and at the same time, the speech of ancient humans—often wise but always limited by mortal finitude—that calls for rigorous study of history, science, and culture, in order to understand the worlds of thought and language that are very different from our own.

OCTOBER 5 – 7

Register online at LOPC.org

Questions? michelle@LOPC.org



Our Speaker:

Zach Flanagan, Ph.D., is Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Saint Mary's College, where he teaches courses in the development of Christian thought and in biblical studies. His teaching has earned him recognition by the student body as Faculty Member of the Year. Prof. Flanagan received his doctorate in the History of Christianity from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. In addition to his academic duties, he lectures frequently at churches on topics in the Bible and theology.

children

Vacation Bible Camp 2018 Immigration & Refugees

by Lori Robinson

At VB Camp we say that "Mission is loving others by what we do because God loves us." This year's mission topic was immigration and refugees. Our mission partner was ARTogether, a non-profit based in Oakland that offers art workshops for immigrants and refugees as a way to build community and empower individuals. It is the only creative arts program of its kind in the Bay Area.

The overall question in mission was "What can I do to help others feel more at home?" Each day, our 215 children pondered different aspects of immigration in simple ways to help them think about how and why people move from place to place. They talked about what home means to them and how everyone wants a safe place they can call home. They learned that an immigrant is a person who moves to a new country from somewhere else. And a refugee is a person who has to leave their country whether they want to or not because it isn't safe to stay where they are.

ARTogether artist Farnaz Tasbihgoo came to VB Camp to help the children make banners. Farnaz emigrated to the U.S. from Iran and the children had all kinds of questions for her about her immigration experience. The banners (which will be displayed at ARTogether workshops) are the children's way of helping people new to the Bay Area feel welcome and more at home. In addition to making banners, the VB Camp families donated over \$1,200 to ARTogether to support the work of this special organization.



ARTogether
artist Farnaz
Tasbihgoo came
to VB Camp
to help the
children make
banners.



Learn more!

Watch the interview we did with ARTogether
Executive Director, Leva Zand: <https://goo.gl/7yrdSE>.

For more about ARTogether and how you can
support their mission of providing free creative arts oppor-
tunities for immigrants and refugees, please visit them on
their website at: <https://www.projectarttogether.org>.



Third Grade Bible Class & Celebration!

Class: September 9, 10:15 a.m.
Celebration: September 16,
9 a.m. & 11 a.m. services

When a child reaches 3rd grade, LOPC celebrates the gift of Scripture to the body of Christ by asking families to participate in our Third Grade Bible Presentation. During either the 9 a.m. or 11 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, September 9 from 10:15 a.m. – noon in the Oak Room. 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 join us in worship on September 16 to
celebrate this Faith Milestone with our 3rd
graders and their families!**

It Takes a Village: Volunteer for Children's Ministry!

by Lori Robinson

"It takes a village to raise a child" is an Igbo and Yoruba proverb that exists in many different African languages. LOPC is our village, our community, our family of faith. It takes all of us—our whole village—to bring up our children to be followers of Christ. Everyone has a role, 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. Our programs represent how this community values the children in its midst. They happen because of the many volunteers who participate in them.

While we have a great group of volunteers in children's ministry, we're always in need of more! This is good news because we have so many children participating in our programs!

Although parents are often the first asked to volunteer their time and talent, 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 children.

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

"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, Associate Director of Children's Ministry, 925-283-8722 x251 or lori@lopc.org.

Children's Ministry Conference 2018: Building Blocks for Children's Ministry

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
Saturday, August 25
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6

The Bay Area Children's Ministry Colleague Group is hosting the Children's Ministry Conference for everyone who is interested in nurturing children in their faith development. This is a place where we come together from different churches to learn from, support, and explore this ministry with one another because we serve our kids better when we work together. This conference is for everyone, whether you've been serving with children for years or you're thinking of volunteering for the first time this fall.

Keynote Speaker

Our keynote speaker this year is Cheryl Garlick, Children and Family Minister at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda. Cheryl is an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church. A pastor to children and families for almost 25 years, Cheryl loves exploring scripture with children and discovering with them the unique shape of their relationship with God.

We would love to have as many LOPC participants as possible, so please join us on August 25!

Registration is open now at: <https://www.lopc.org/ministry/children/childrens-ministry-conference>

For questions and comments about the conference, please contact Ryan Timpote at ryan@LOPC.org or 925-283-8722 x234.



youth



Youth Sunday

Sunday, August 26
9 a.m. & 11 a.m. worship services

EVERYONE is invited to join us for worship services led by our faith community's children, youth, and their parents. Children and youth will share with the congregation what they learned and how they discovered God at work through their summer experiences with Vacation Bible Camp, Service Squad, Middle and High School

Mission Trips! Participants in these summer events are invited to represent their teams by wearing their event t-shirts to the services.

Summer Hangouts with LOPC Youth

Reconnect with your LOPC friends and advisors as we hang out, eat dinner, and play games! Please RSVP to Allison or Keris ahead of time so we don't run out of food!

High School Hangout at the Toth Home
Wednesday, August 1, 5 – 7 p.m.

5th-8th Grade Hangout at the Herrerias Home
Wednesday, August 15 @ 5-7 p.m.



BTW Kickoff

Sunday, September 9
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Upper Youth Room (CLC 201)

By the Way is our weekly main event for 9th – 12th graders. At BTW, we connect with God and

each other through games, service-learning projects, worship, devotionals, and small groups. Small groups are led by our fabulous and dedicated adult Advisors, who provide a safe space for authentic connection and learning as we grow in faith together!



YOW Kickoff

Wednesday, September 12
6 – 7:30 p.m.
Upper Youth Room (CLC 201)
Optional dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the Davies Room

Youth on Wednesdays is our high-energy midweek program for 5th – 8th grade youth. We gather together for a fun night of games, snacks, singing, service-learning projects, Bible-based devotional, and small group discussion. This is the place for youth to connect with peers who are having the same life experiences and ask their questions about life and faith as we seek to grow in faith together! Small groups are led by a team of caring adult and older youth Advisors.

Youth Alive Continues

Sundays
9 a.m. worship service
Upper Youth Room (CLC 201)

5th – 8th graders gather every Sunday for fun activities and a Bible lesson. We learn how God has touched the lives of people in Scripture and how we continue to discover God at work in our lives today!

Seeking Volunteers

LOPC Youth Ministry is seeking volunteers for 5th – 8th grade Youth Alive on Sunday mornings during worship services and 5th – 8th grade YOW on Wednesday evenings. This is an incredible chance to reconnect with our youth, show them God's love in action, and guide them as they grow in faith!

For more information about these opportunities, please contact Allison at allison@lopc.org or Keris at keris@lopc.org.



The 7th – 8th Grade Mission Trip to San Francisco

special needs



Sunday School Buddy Program

LOPC's Sunday School Buddy Program is for children and youth with special needs on Sunday mornings.

Our Sunday School Buddies are trained to work with children and youth with all types of special needs.

Most of our Sunday School Buddies have been in the special education field for more than 15 years. The role of the Buddy is to be in Sunday school with children or youth with special needs and provide a safe and loving partnership, giving her/him the opportunity to grow in faith alongside her/his peers. If a child needs to take a break from the classroom setting, play outside or use particular sensory toys – this is what the Buddy will do.

To arrange a Buddy for your child or youth on any Sunday, please email susan@LOPC.org. We provide buddies by assignment in order to make sure your child is paired with the Buddy that fits best with their needs.

Please fill out an intake form ahead of your child's first visit. We invite families who are dropping off their children for the 9 a.m. Sunday school programs to check in at the kiosk on the plaza (in front of the sanctuary). Our greeters will direct you to the check-in location where

your child or youth will meet her/his Buddy for Sunday School. Our staff and volunteers will read the intake form and ask you any questions they may have before your arrival for Sunday School. We appreciate anything you can share to help us prepare to welcome your child or youth in the best and most loving way possible.

After your child visits, we encourage you to reach out to Rev. Jaime Polson, Pastor for Family Ministry, or Susan Wentworth, Preschool Ministry Director and Special Needs Coordinator, and let us know how the morning went with our ministry team.

Questions? Please contact michelle@LOPC.org.

Volunteer: Capernaum Young Life

Our Special Needs Ministry Team needs your support. Capernaum, a Young Life ministry partnering with LOPC, leads a weekly youth program for adolescents and young adults with special needs on Monday evenings from 6 – 9 p.m., throughout the year from October through May.

Are you interested in volunteering as a teen or adult youth advisor? You can make the difference in a young person's life.

For additional information or to sign up as a volunteer for this program, please contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org.

familyministry & Special Needs Ministry present

Respite Night

Friday, September 7, 6 – 9 p.m.

For parents who have children and youth with special needs, ages 2 – 22

Dinner, games, therapy dogs, crafts, activities and a movie!

Children and youth will be divided up by age groups with age-appropriate movies. Sensory and quiet rooms are provided. All staff and volunteers have had background checks and have had basic training in working with children and youth with special needs. Several professionals who work with children/youth with special needs will be onsite the entire evening. We will provide a staffing ratio to match your child's needs.

Please register by Monday, August 27 to Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

Space is limited.

We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.

worship

Sherril Barber

A Tribute to the Leader of the Flower Ministry



For over 40 years, Sherril Barber has been an active and committed member of LOPC. Almost immediately after joining the church, in the early 1970s, Sherril recognized that floral design was a talent and a gift she could share with the congregation. Upon hearing that news, Barbara Johansson immediately signed her up for the Flower Team. Sherril

has been a member of the Flower Team ever since, taking over the leadership position in the early 1990s. Under her leadership, the Flower team consistently generated memorable and meaningful displays for the weekly church services and for other important church occasions. Sherril herself has designed and arranged hundreds of presentations over the years. In addition to serving on the flower team, she is also an Elder and has served as a Deacon.

Sherril has wonderful stories of arranging flowers in the dark, on short notice, and needing certain items at the last minute!

"One Thursday, feeling desperate, I put out a prayer for magnolia leaves," she recalled. "Heading home after dinner with my granddaughter in downtown Lafayette, there in the street was a pile of magnolia branches the city gardeners had trimmed from the trees that afternoon. So, naturally, I gave thanks as I loaded the branches into the back of my car!"

Sherril is sought out for advice not just on the Flower Team; many members of the congregation call her for advice when they are having trees pruned or when a particular bush in their garden is at prime time for cutting.

Since January, Sherril has been working with her assistant and Flower Team member, Jane Ebe, who stepped into the leadership position of the Flower Team in July. Sherril will remain a member of the Flower Team.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to serve both as a member of the team and then as leader," she said. "I deeply appreciate your trust in sharing your joys,

celebrations and remembrances. You have touched my heart in so many ways."

Peter Whitelock says it best: "What Sherril has done with the floral ministry is nothing less than miraculous. On top of that, she has built up a great team. She is so conscientious, kind and committed... just a joy to work with."

Thank you, Sherril, for your leadership and devotion to the flower ministry over the years, and for your continuing commitment to this ministry.



August 5: Communion Sunday
"Paul, the Apostle"
Peter Whitelock

August 12
"Goodbye Christopher Robin"
Lauren Gully

August 19
"Black Panther"
Peter Whitelock

August 26: Youth Sunday
No movie. Youth Mission Sunday.

September 2: Communion Sunday
"Chariots of Fire"
Peter Whitelock

Worship Survey Results

by The Worship Team

In the Autumn of 2017 the Worship & Music elders and staff offered an informal online survey of the congregation in order to gather feedback about our worship services. We'd like to share the results with the congregation.

307 individuals between age 19 and over 85 completed the survey and the respondents' age distribution was roughly representative of our usual worshipping congregation. Most questions were either limited multiple-choice or multiple-selection. 53% are regular attenders (almost every Sunday), 25% attend a few times a month, and 22% attend once a month or less frequently.

Based on the data gathered by this survey our impression is that, overall, our congregation is pleased with our worship offerings. The vast majority of respondents selected positive words to describe how they feel after attending worship: inspired (74%); encouraged (73%); informed (54%); engaged (50%). They would also describe worship at LOPC to their friends in similarly positive terms: inclusive (71%); inspired (68%); intergeneration (48%); intellectual (48%).

When asked "Which of these aspects of worship resonate with you most?" the top responses were sermons, choir anthems, hymns, prayers, vocal ensemble, vocal

solos, prelude and postlude, and greeting one another after the service.

A free-response question asked "What is one thing you would change about worship at LOPC if you could?"

22% said, in one way or another, to not change a thing. Contained within the remaining 78% answers were diverse, but two or three themes emerged.

Inspired.
Encouraged.
Informed.
Engaged.

A number of people would like to sing more traditional hymns, while another group would like to see fewer hymns and more contemporary praise music. A small but strong group would like us to do away with the Passing of the Peace.

Like most local churches the LOPC congregation holds a fairly diverse set of preferences. While it is impossible to please everybody all of the time, we find great encouragement from the results of this survey. We also found some individual suggestions to be helpful even if they came from only one or two people. For example, a few respondents suggested finding ways to make the worship service more interactive—a term that we did not include in any question. We have since experimented with some program elements that, through their intentional informality and winsome presentation, make the worship experience engaging to more people.

Come Sing In the Choir!

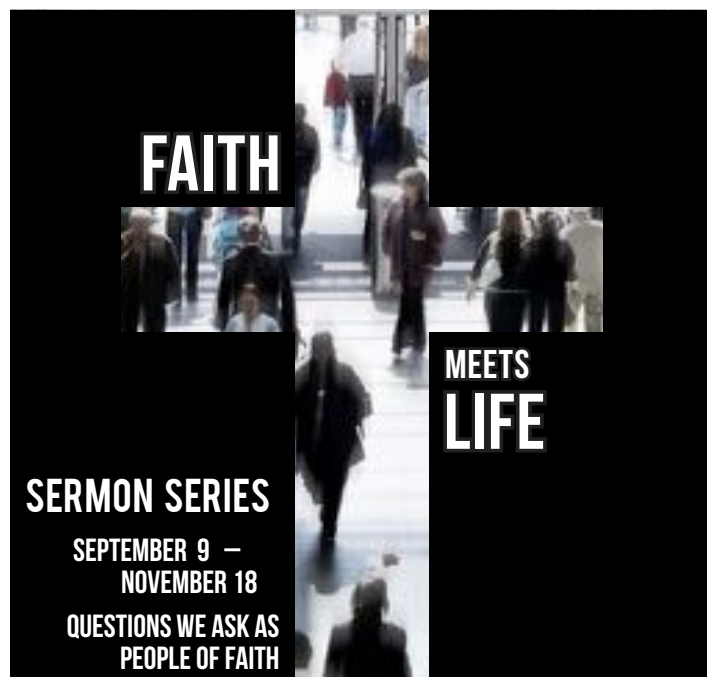
August Session
Led by Brett Strader

Rehearsal:
Wednesday, August 8, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
and Sunday, August 12 between services.

Worship:
Sundays, August 12 & 19
at both the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services.

Sign up at worship@lopc.org.

Attendance is required at rehearsals
and both Sundays.



care

Senior Ministry to Host Well-Connected Program

Sunday, September 16, 10 - 11 a.m.
Oak Room

Well-Connected, formerly the Senior Center without Walls, is an award-winning program of Episcopal Senior Communities offering activities, education, friendly conversation, and an assortment of classes, support groups, and presentations to seniors. Each week, seniors can access over 70 groups by phone or online, all from the comfort of home.

Amber Carroll and Pat Schroeder from Well-Connected will be here to share more information about the program. All are welcome!

Stephen Ministers!

On Saturday, September 22, at 10 a.m.,
Stephen Ministers will gather in the Oak Room
for brunch and celebrating 15 years
of Stephen Ministry at LOPC.

Details to come!

Mobile Giving is Now Available!

1. TEXT

"LOPC" to 77977

Click on the link and follow the steps.



2. GIVE

through the secure portal



THAT'S IT.

You're done!



The Small Print: You can set up your giving portal using ACH, debit card or credit card (ACH or debit preferred). Please be aware that Msg & Data rates may apply. For full Terms & Conditions please visit <https://pushpay.com/terms>. For the Privacy Policy please visit <https://pushpay.com/privacy>. For help reply HELP or STOP to cancel. If you give through the website, the link has been changed to PushPay. All the previous giving options are still available. Pushpay has been built with security at its core and is Level One PCI Compliant. To read more about how your data is secured, go to <https://pushpay.com/security>

mission

Building Schools in the Congo One Necklace at a Time



You may wonder what the connection is between a crochet necklace and a school in the Congo. Well, the crochet necklace is one of many, lovingly created by LOPC's Build Congo Schools Team. In just five years, the team has raised \$38,000 from the sale of these eye-catching necklaces.

This money has been used to build schools in

the Congo; our eighth school is now being built. Additionally, the funds raised have gone to support a Girls Program which teaches Congolese girls English and computer skills as well as used to purchase a much needed motorcycle to carry both supplies as well as teachers to remote schools. With over 900 schools run by the Presbyterian Church in the Congo and with 80% of them built with mud walls and thatched roofs, we have a long way to go.

We will keep crocheting, say our ladies!



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 Food Box drive with over 60 boxes full of food. The food boxes have helped many MCC families during the summer when school food programs are not available.

Atfaluna 16 Years and Still Making a Difference!

The upcoming 2018/19 school year marks the 16th consecutive year that LOPC has sponsored a classroom at the Atfaluna School for Deaf Children (ASDC) in Gaza City. Our support continues to provide the essentials: uniforms, hearing aids and batteries, transportation, medical assistance, hot lunches for the students, teacher salaries, and classroom supplies. Our funds also provide the parents with sign language training and job counseling.

The word Atfaluna means “our children” in Arabic. ASDC opened in 1992. Since that time the school has literally transformed the lives of thousands of deaf and hard of hearing persons of all ages and at all levels. Their services include academic education, vocational training, and job creation with the ultimate goal of integrating deaf and hard of hearing persons into the community.

Our continued support of the classroom helps to provide small but important financial stability for the school. Unfortunately, conditions in Gaza continue to deteriorate and the financial health of the school has been greatly affected. In response to the pressing financial need, on Sunday, September 16, and for the following two weeks, we will kick off our fundraising efforts to support the LOPC classroom at ASDC. Our goal is \$25,000. A table on the plaza will also offer detailed information about the students and school.

Questions? Please contact Melinda Darbee at (925) 299-1663 or Robin Freeberg at robin@LOPC.org



*The word Atfaluna means
“our children” in Arabic.*



Making Blankets for People Living on the Streets

**September 9 after the 9 a.m. service,
Davies Room
Blanket Donation: September 1 – 16**



This fall, LOPC will make polar fleece blankets as well as collect blankets for people who are homeless in Oakland. There are 2,761 people that are homeless in the city of Oakland according to the 2017 census survey. Out of this number, 859 are sheltered and 1,902 are without shelter. The blankets LOPC makes and collects will make cold nights a little warmer for those living on the streets.

To donate a gently used blanket (no stains please) go to the Ministry Center lobby and look for the box labeled Blanket Donation.

Questions? Contact robin@lopc.org.

community

Fourth Monday Book Group

Fireside Room



For over 20 years, this group has been gathering monthly on fourth Mondays from 2:45 p.m. until about 4 p.m. Every week, one person volunteers to facilitate discussion about the selected book. Selections include both fiction and nonfiction. We

start the meeting with light refreshments and a bit of poetry. Visitors and new members are welcome!

Here's what we're reading:

August:

Beneath the Scarlet Sky by Mark Sullivan

September:

The Wright Brothers by David McCullough

October:

Soul of An Octopus by Sy Montgomery

For more information, contact Bob Hoots at 925-944-0575.

New Membership Class

October 19 - 21



Are you looking to take the next step in your faith journey by committing to LOPC as a member? Are you curious about what it means to be Presbyterian or want to find out what LOPC is passionate about locally and globally? Want to explore what membership at a church is? All are welcome!

You can register online by visiting lopc.org or emailing Chris Baldwin at chris@lopc.org.

Disciple Bible Study

Wednesdays, September 12 - December 19
8:30 - 10 a.m.



BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

Remember Who You Are. Part 1, Letters of Paul

We invite you to join us for a 14-week study of Scripture led by Pastor Jaime. 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.

In Part 1, Letters of Paul, we will study the 13 Letters traditionally attributed to Paul in the sequence in which they were written. This study examines the connection between memory and identity as the people of God; to help us remember where we come from as we are a community of memory.

There is a \$15 fee for the study manual. We do not meet during the week of Thanksgiving.

If you have any questions or would like to register, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

Fall BBQ MINISTRY YEAR Kickoff

**Sunday, September 9
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 to be "Alive in Christ...in the world" in this upcoming program year.

Stay tuned for more details!

Welcome Michelle Browning!

Administrative Assistant to Family Ministries



I am so grateful to join the LOPC staff to support Family Ministry as well as the overall mission of our church. For many years, my family and I have been a part of LOPC and we finally became members in the spring of 2017. I have always held the belief that LOPC is a special place – and I am

very appreciative of all of the gifts that I receive from belonging to this wonderful community.

I am originally from Sacramento and have lived throughout the Bay Area as well as in Seattle. My husband, Randy, and I moved to Orinda nine years ago and feel so blessed to be able to live and work in such a beautiful neighborhood. We have two middle school-aged children, Dylan and Ashlyn, who enjoy participating in LOPC's youth programs, especially the mission and service activities. Personally, I find joy in yoga, playing tennis, hiking with my dog, listening to live music and traveling with my family (when time allows!).

I earned my Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Santa Clara University and love to continuously discover new things through reading and learning from others. My professional background has primarily focused on Human Resources Management within technology companies throughout the Bay Area. I am a dedicated volunteer in our community, especially at my children's schools. My favorite volunteer commitments are those in which I work directly with children, such as on Glorietta's Green Team and as a parent instructor for Think First lessons (empathy building and bullying prevention).

Having the opportunity to get to better know the LOPC family was a big part of my desire to join the LOPC staff. Please stop by to say hello when you have the chance!

thursday Fellowship

Starts September 6

Every Thursday, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

The Thursday Fellowship team of volunteers are taking some well-deserved time off this summer after a very busy 2017/18 season. Nearly 25 volunteers gathered each week and created engaging programs, prepared delicious food served on beautiful tables—all to welcome our guests each Thursday. Our weekly attendance was between 50 and 60 guests, and we celebrated birthdays and other life events, and enjoyed programs and activities that delighted us all.

August will be a busy month as we finalize the programs for the coming 2018/19 calendar year. We are excited about the coming year and invite you to come and join the fun. We welcome volunteers, guests, and visitors!

Stop by any Thursday to see what all the fun is about!

Questions? Contact coordinators:

Julie Peterson

julie@lopc.com

Clarita Wooldridge

clarita@lopc.com

**Both Julie and Clarita can be reached at
925-283-8722 ext 281.**



*Good times from
last season's
Thursday Fellowship.*



Study Groups: "I Am With You"



Join us as we discuss the times we may need God—in our uncertainty, in our discouragement, when we are powerless, or through our trials. Our study guide is available in the church office at a cost of \$12.

LOPC has four circles (study groups) that meet monthly from September through May/June and are open to new members. They are:

Agape, meets the second Wednesday of the month at 10:45 a.m. Contact Vickie Hipkiss at 925-933-5512.

Esther, meets the second Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. Contact Mary Lou Young at 925-283-6376.

Mary Martha, meets second Wednesday at 10:30. Contact Catherine Coleman at 510-928-9714.

Mary Magdalene, meets the last Monday of the month at 7:15 p.m. Contact Colleen Fawley at 510-704-1490.

If you are interested in visiting a circle, just drop by and visit one, or contact Helen Dygert at 925-283-6010 or Diane Steuber at 925-283-3871.

Presbyterian Women all over the United States meet for Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and mission activities. Our nationwide study guide for 2018/19, "God's Promise, I Am With You" was written by Amy Poling Sutherlun, co-pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in San Marcos, Texas, and mother to four children, ages 5-11. Busy lady!

LOPC Breakfast Group



Ted Clement

Executive Director

Save Mt. Diablo

September 19, 2018 at 7 a.m.

Davies Room

Come and learn about Save Mt. Diablo and the work they are doing to protect Mt. Diablo and connect people to the land which sustains us.

Save Mount Diablo is a nationally accredited land trust with a mission to preserve Mount Diablo's peaks, surrounding foothills, and watersheds through land acquisition and preservation strategies designed to:

- Protect the mountain's natural beauty, biological diversity, and historic and agricultural heritage.
- Enhance our area's quality of life.
- Provide recreational opportunities consistent with protection of natural resources.

**RSVP by noon on September 18
to janet@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x223**



Save the Date!

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

**Presbyterian Women's
Christmas Tea**

December 7 • 1 to 3 p.m.

Journey of Faith

by Bobbie Dodson



Ralph Olsen says his faith journey began at age 13 when he went to a rally held by his neighborhood church, which was very evangelical. "I made the commitment to follow Jesus at that time and He has been my guide ever since. I was looking for security, eternal security, and I found it."

The youth advisor at that church was very influential in Ralph's life, and he believes that's why he became a youth advisor at LOPC from 1988

to 1998. "I hoped I could be a positive influence on our high school youth," he said. "I wanted to share an awareness of God's love for everybody."

Ralph recalls going on a mission trip to Alamosa, Colorado, and having dinner at a homeless shelter: "One of our boys talked with a homeless man and found out he had been a teacher but his wife got sick, bills piled up and he ended up in this shelter. The boy said, 'I realized that could happen to me, or just about anybody.' It put a different face on homeless people for him. I'm glad our kids are able to take mission trips and learn about people whose life experiences are dissimilar from theirs, but love them as we are all God's children."

He related to the high schoolers experience when he went on his first adult mission trip to Weed this past May: "The fire came and destroyed the resident's homes through no fault of their own. It was an unplanned disaster and they needed help. I'm so glad our team, with people who knew how to do construction, could help build new homes and new lives for them."

Ralph had skills to contribute. After growing up in Buffalo, New York, he went to a Christian college, Houghton, where he majored in math and physics, and where he also met his wife, Barbara. He went on to receive a civil engineering degree at New York University and later obtained a degrees in Sanitary engineering.

His first job was working as an engineer with the public health service in Montana on a Native American reservation developing water and sewer systems. The

family moved to Washington D.C. and New Mexico before they came to Walnut Creek where Ralph worked for the Environmental Protection Agency on water treatment plants. After looking around, they chose LOPC as their church home.

It was the inclusiveness they felt that drew them to LOPC where they have been members since 1984. Ralph remembers the song "All God's Creatures Got a Place in the Choir." God's grace is extended to all of humanity.

Serving others was also important to Ralph and Barbara, and they were drawn to how LOPC served

the community. Barbara now organizes the backpack drive for junior and high school students in their Brentwood community. This year they raised 120 backpacks.

"[The backpack drive] takes you into people's real lives, and you realize these kids can do great things but may just need a little help along the way," he said.

Ralph looks for joy every day, and it pops up everywhere, he says. One way he finds joy is by sharing life's journey with likeminded friends. The Olsens are in a group that started at LOPC almost 20 years ago and meets every Monday night for dinner with lively discussions, and

He is also in a men's group which began after one LOPC member took his own life. "We hadn't realized how deep depression could go and our friend didn't talk about it," Ralph said. "We decided we needed to discuss these issues, so a group of eight of us meets twice a month talks about significant questions coming up in our lives, or learning a spiritual practice."

The Olsens also enjoy being a part of their family's lives. They have two daughters, one in Austin, Texas, and another close by in Lafayette. Each couple has a daughter.

The verse Ralph chooses to live by is Luke 10:26-27: *What is written in the law? How do you read it? (Jesus) answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

"Loving your neighbor means to love everyone," Ralph says, "not just people who live near us and are pretty much like us."

"Loving your neighbor means to love everyone, not just people who live near us and are pretty much like us."

Mom's Bible Study

First Wednesday of the month starting September 5
10 – 11:30 a.m.



Please join us for a monthly Bible and book study and discussion led by Pastor Jaime Polson. Beginning September 5, we will meet for studies centered on inspirational women, such

as Maya Angelou, Julian of Norwich, and women from the Bible, and how they have been called to live a faith-filled life. All mothers are welcome.

For additional information and to RSVP, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

Men with Young Families



The 2018 – 2019 program year kicks off on Monday, September 10. This ministry is open to all 30-50 somethings men and gathers on Monday nights for five different sessions. This ministry is for all guys, whatever your family situation looks like: single, married, kids, no kids—just come.

Make friends, create space for study/prayer, eat some good food, and join us for service opportunities. Join us for some or all of the gathering—whatever makes sense for your schedule.

Contact Chris Baldwin with any inquiries at Chris@LOPC.org.

Session I:

September 10 – October 1

Session II:

November 5 – December 10

Session III:

January 28 – February 11

Session IV:

March 11 – April 8

Session V:

April 29 – May 20

Parent-Daughter Workshop

With Girls Leadership
Beginning October 2018

GIRLS LEADERSHIP

Girls Leadership offers a series of courses for girls and grown-ups to build emotional intelligence. In the upcoming workshops, girl and grown-up pairs will learn about identifying healthy relationships, finding their voices, and communicating more effectively. Girls also develop resilient responses to conflict, drama, challenges, and mistakes. The program is interactive, fun, and enlightening, and it's also a great opportunity to gain insight and spend time with your daughter in a new and different way.

K - Grade 1:

Tools for Sunny & Cloudy Days with Friends

Thursdays: 10/18, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8
3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Grades 2 & 3:

Nine Tools for True Friendship

Thursdays: 10/18, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8
5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Grades 4 & 5:

Four Steps For Getting What You Need

Mondays: 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5
5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Grades 6, 7 & 8:

Be Who You Are, Say What You Mean

Mondays: 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5
5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Register online at girlsleadership.org.

Scholarships are available.

Visit girlsleadership.org/scholarships for more details.

Questions? Contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

spiritual formation

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

Coming this fall after the 9 a.m. worship service, grab a cup of coffee on the plaza, say

hi to a friend and come to the 10:10! OR Make your coffee at home, come to the 10:10 and continue on to the 11 a.m. service!

The 10:10 is a new program that will serve as a place to grow empowered to live in faith. Drop in whenever you can or make it part of your Sunday routine to learn, experience, and discuss. Childcare is provided!

Check out our schedule:

October 14

International Justice Mission (IJM) & the Spiritual Practice of Prayer

October 21

IJM & the Spiritual Practice of Advocacy

October 28

IJM and the Spiritual Practice of Giving

November 4, 11, 18

The Spirituality of Inclusion

November 25

NO PROGRAM

December 2, 9, 16

Advent Study

Companions for the Journey

October – June

Introductory Sessions:

September 24, 7 – 9 p.m.

September 27, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Are you seeking a way to listen for how God may be speaking into your life, or how the Holy Spirit may be at work in you? Would you like to journey with others who share this desire? Then consider joining us for a nine-month adventure with Companions for the Journey.

Companions is a safe, confidential community of people who gather to listen receptively to brief passages from the Bible and ponder how the words might connect to wherever we may find ourselves or where God may be at work in our lives. We listen supportively to each other, reflect back on what we may have noticed as we listen, and hold each other in prayer.

Companions meet once a month on Monday evenings or Thursday mornings from October through June.

For more information or questions, please contact Ashlee Rountree ashlee@lopc.org.

session

May & June Session Highlights

by Jody Black, Clerk of Session

Jaime Polson shared the progress the staff has made in aligning the team goals with LOPC's priorities I reported in the June/July Focus newsletter. A key component in this process is to bring greater transparency across all goals in all teams. A more transparent environment provides opportunities for various ministries to partner with others in shared missional objectives of LOPC. Session and our church staff recognize the challenges we face with competing demands for time, talent and treasure, both within and outside LOPC. In becoming more transparent with goals and priorities, our congregation will be better equipped to support changes that will build a more cohesive message and vision.

In our effort to achieve our priority to "enhance our community through representing the growing diversity in our area," we have formed a Diversity Task Force led by Gerald Chinen. During Session, he shared some of the preliminary work the team is doing. Over the next several months, the team will explore, through interviews with the staff and in congregational surveys, what diversity means to this community. Please pray for the team in this important work as they discover new perspectives that will inform their recommendations to Session.

lopc foundation

What's Your Story?

by Jim Beckemeyer, Foundation Trustee



“What’s Your Story?” Has anyone ever asked you that question? Maybe you attended a party, and someone who wanted to get to know you better offered that line to drum up a conversation. Maybe you asked this question of your-

self as you tried to craft a presentation that would be meaningful for your audience. Maybe you were preparing for a job interview and wanted to have your elevator speech ready to go.

In the spring, I attended a school reunion where a storytelling workshop was being offered. The workshop was intended for people like me – individuals who had been out in the world for a while (no need to ask how long) and would have stories to share with old friends. It sounded good. I signed up. How difficult could this really be?

The next thing I knew, I was given a homework assignment. Oops. Each workshop attendee was asked to prepare her or his story and make a short speech for their workgroup. Double-oops. The wheels started turning for everyone. What were the messages each of us wanted to share in the time allotted? What was the story I wanted to share? Would my story be “good enough”?

That is where things turned interesting – very quickly. Stories of professional success, climbing the corporate ladder, or having “made it” did not bubble up. Amazingly, we were all treated to the stories of what really mattered to people. One of my friends shared his remarkable journey of being a young boy and having to flee his home country with his mother and siblings, landing as political refugees in the United States. Others offered up about episodes of personal loss. Still others told of the ways they felt they were making a difference in the world through volunteer activities, non-profit organizations, and community outreach. These were the stories of what makes us who we are – and who it is we want to be.

At the end of the session, the workshop leader left us with a parting question, “What do you want your story

to be?” In effect, we were being asked to reflect on the legacies we have yet to create – the legacies we want to create. I began to consider my brief tenure as a Trustee of the LOPC Foundation. The Foundation is the vehicle which we at LOPC can use to pay it forward, investing now to support LOPC’s ministry of mission in both our local and global communities. By leaving a legacy gift – not matter the size – any of us can begin to draft the outline of an amazing story to be written by future generations.

As you begin to think about the chapters that you have yet to write, what do you want them to say? The next time someone asks you “what’s your story,” how will you respond? If you would like to speak with someone about drafting your next chapter, please feel free to contact me or any of the other LOPC Foundation Trustees: Dick James, president; Kristi Haigh, vice president; Phil Placier, treasurer; Dara Youngdale, secretary; Staci Johnston; Jerry Ducey; Jen Crocker; or Mike Ross.

Just a Reminder!

Parking Lot Closure in August

The parking lot will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, August 6 and 7, for sealing and re-striping. The office will remain open during those days, but the only access to the campus will be from the stairway from upper Knox Drive nearest Fellowship Hall.



IMPORTANT
Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 8/1/18
Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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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

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MINISTRY DIRECTORS

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

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Sara Warfield, Communications
Jennifer Shaul, Digital & Print Admin
Dick James, Editing
Janet Jourgensen, Proofreading

Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

August 1 for the September issue.

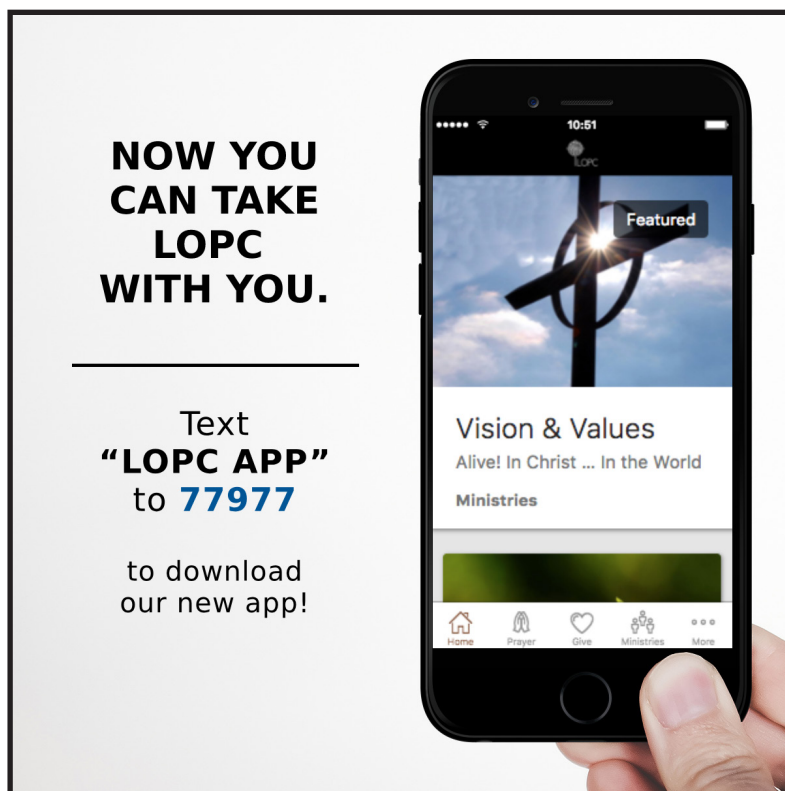
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Every Monday by 5 p.m. for the following Sunday's issue.

Submit items at:

www.lopc.org/submission-for-connections



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