

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JUNE/JULY 2022

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A welcoming and loving community of faith
that learns, grows, and serves together.

LOPC.ORG



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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
- Chris Baldwin - Community Life

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- Lori Robinson - Children
- Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz - Youth
- Coleen Moulton - Seedlings Preschool

Treasurer

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Focus Newsletter

- Jon Corry - Communications
- Dick James & Lexi Morrissey - Editors

Submissions & Deadlines

Please send requests for submissions to:
communications@lopc.org
 no later than July 1 for the August issue.

Thank you to all who contribute each month to *Focus!*

a new season OF LIFE

By Gerald Chinen - Pastor, Care

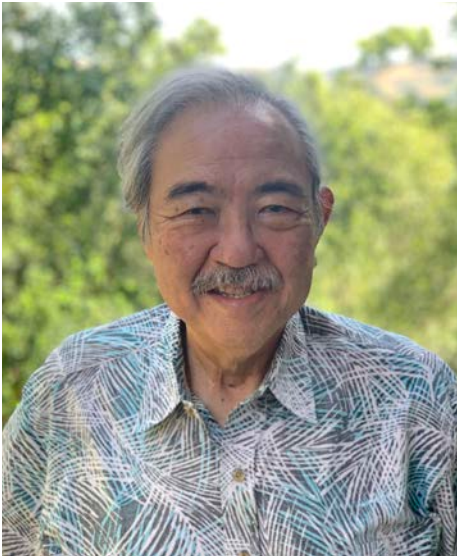
I attended the graduation ceremony of a friend who was receiving the Master of Divinity degree. I had never attended a ceremony for a post-graduate degree before, and I was so taken by the colors, the speeches, the sense of something greater than oneself. I had been considering seminary before, and that graduation ceremony was the final convincing factor. I hope that doesn't sound superficial -- that it took bright lights and fancy speeches to help me make my decision!

"...the sense of something greater than oneself." What I felt then was a conviction that, indeed, the calling I sensed to ministry was real. That was in the summer of 1977, and I applied to seminary a few days after the graduation, and by God's amazing grace, I was accepted and enrolled that September! I thought, if I got in, it probably wouldn't be until the following spring, but more realistically, the following fall. It was truly a "God thing!"

And now 45 years later, I am feeling quite certain again, that God is calling me to a new chapter in life. Though I am uncertain what is in store, I am sure it is time to retire from pastoral ministry. I believe God will open doors and opportunities for me to find a way to share my gifts and passions, and I look forward to whatever and wherever God will lead

Session and the Personnel Team have been kind and gracious to me and have given approval for a sabbatical from September through December. So, although I "officially" retire at the end of 2022, I will be leaving LOPC in mid-September. I will spend the fall traveling California to visit with friends and say goodbye. In January 2023, I will be moving to Honolulu. My intention is to "do nothing" in the first year! Rest, relax, get acquainted again with family and friends, and take up golf! I think I may also subscribe to YouTube Tv so I can watch the Giants and Warriors live on the San Francisco stations! I know many of you travel to Hawaii, mostly to Maui

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“ ... together, we have done our best to show our community and the world just how good God is. ”

or Kauai, but now that I will be living in Honolulu, you now have a reason to come to Oahu!

I have tried to serve as faithfully as possible to our God. It has been my joy and privilege to pastor five churches and to serve several years as a hospital chaplain. I hope that I made a difference for Christ. I also hope that, even through my shortcomings and flaws, God found some treasure to share with others.

I have enjoyed my 15 years with you here at LOPC. I am deeply appreciative to all the folks I have met along the way. Our pastors, program and support staff, our custodial staff, our volunteers, and all of you who have had a part in my life here, I cannot thank you enough. This church has been there for me through the valleys and the

celebrations of my life, and I have gained so much from you. It is difficult to put into words just how impactful you have all been. There are amazing people here, open-hearted, generous, thoughtful, and filled with God’s spirit. You have touched my life in significant ways.

God is good, and together, we have done our best to show our community and the world just how good God is. I will always treasure my time with you. We have made great partners in spreading the love of Jesus, and I have been honored to serve alongside all of you! May God bless you beyond measure; may your cup overflow with love and grace.

For more about Gerald’s retirement can be found on page 3.



Thank you GERALD

“Gerald is an inspirational servant leader who inspires others to follow his lead in love.”

– Bettie Graves, LOPC Deacon

After 15 years of ministry at LOPC, our beloved Pastor Gerald Chinen has announced that he will retire this fall. Words cannot express the love, dedication, and commitment that he has poured into our congregation and community. Gerald has developed significant ministry while directing our caring ministries, and we know the gifts he has shared with us will continue to have a lasting impact.

Gerald will continue in his current role through September and will

then embark on a well-deserved sabbatical before transitioning to full time retirement. A fuller account of his plans are in the Pastor’s Column on Page 1 of this issue. Rest assured, there will be no shortage of opportunities to celebrate Gerald this fall! Plans are underway for a congregation-wide retirement luau celebration on September 18 following worship, and additional details for that event will be shared with you all this summer. There will also be an opportunity for us to contribute to a special “Retirement

Love Gift”. Contributions to this fund may be sent in now to the church business office through September 10 and can be paid by a check (please note “Gerald” in the memo) or online at lopcc.org/giving. If you are able, help us send Gerald into retirement with a generous gift!

We will miss Gerald dearly and commend him to this new work of enjoying a well-earned retirement.



“Gerald embodies the principles of a faithful leader. He is highly empathetic, puts other first, and listens carefully. He is committed to the well being of others before considering his own well being.”

– Brian O’Shea, Worship Elder

changes ahead...

In line with Gerald’s retirement, we have already begun work on revising our LOPC ministry model and staffing configuration to best meet the needs of a “post-pandemic” church and community. The leadership of LOPC have been hard at work discussing exciting new ways to connect LOPC members with each other and the broader community. Priorities of the church will continue to be focused on the areas of worship, mission, racial equity work, in person and online

engagement, spreading the good news of the gospel, and so much more. Jaime Polson is going to be coming alongside our Deacons and Care Team to provide pastoral leadership as Gerald leaves our staff, and we have every confidence that even more opportunities to serve our members, friends, and community are on the horizon. Peter Whitelock, Lauren Gully, and Chris Baldwin will also be serving in new ways, and we believe our excellent clergy team is well positioned

to provide the pastoral leadership our church requires in a dynamically changed and changing world. We are confident that this restructuring will provide the support needed to keep the church running smoothly and efficiently, and we are looking forward to the new and exciting ministry ahead. Stay tuned for more information about the new developments with our ministry model as we meet the needs of the LOPC and broader community during this time of transition.

SAVE THE DATE

Gerald's

RETIREMENT
LUNCHEON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18
FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Ticket Sales will open on August 1.

lopc.org/aloha

\$10 suggested donation

More information coming soon!

hold in PRAYER

Prayers of comfort and peace go
out to the families and friends of:

Linda Dodge, who
passed April 24. A
service will be held on
June 18 at 2:00 p.m.

Clarence Seth Savage,
(father of Cynthia Savage
Tabibian) who passed
April 26. A service will be held on June
25 at 10:30 a.m.

Nancy Placier, who passed January
18. A service will be held on June 25 at
2:00 p.m.

Ruth Merrifield, who passed May 4.



FAITH

AT THE MOVIES

10th Annual Summer Sermon Series June 19 - September 4

6/19 • **Coda** ☼ 6/26 • **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind**

7/3 • **Parenthood** ☼ 7/10 • **Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings**

7/17 • **Sing 2** ☼ 7/24 • **Marvelous and The Black Hole**

7/31 • **Encanto** ☼ 8/7 • **The Tragedy of Macbeth**

8/14 • **The Godfather** ☼ 8/21 • **Still Alice** ☼ 9/4 • **The Straight Story**



CONGO UPDATE

By Herb Long, Congo Team Member

LOPC's mission partner in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the Presbyterian Church (USA). PC(USA) continues to address issues of education, trauma, healing, and health, with a primary focus on women and children in the Congo. PC(USA) has five mission co-workers currently in the Congo, the Boyds, the Streshleys, and recent arrival, Jose Jones. The two couples have remained primarily in the Congo throughout the pandemic. Most of the time, they were sheltered in place until the recent relaxation of travel restrictions.

With the new freedom to travel, the Boyds visited the Kasai region. There, Christi Boyd had numerous discussions regarding the scheduling of the next round of training for Healing Heart (HH) facilitators in July/August. HH is the Bible-based curriculum for children and adults to help those traumatized by the violence and chaos that continues to ravage the DRC. Last year, the LOPC Easter special offering went to support

this training. Unfortunately, the training was postponed to 2023 due to the pandemic. LOPC was instrumental in getting Healing Hearts started in 2016, with the first training of facilitators who, once trained, branch out into the local communities to deliver the curriculum. The next training session will include training prior facilitators to become Master Facilitators who then can train others as a means of sustaining this ministry.

LOPC's mission supports Build Congo Schools, which has built new schools serving over 5,000 students in the Congo. Build Congo Schools is working on its 10th school, now nearing completion. LOPC also supports other areas of education including teacher training, textbook acquisition, and a special program to educate girls in English and Computers to help them pursue careers or college. All necklace sales for the Congo have gone to support these education ministries.



In addition to supporting PC(USA) programs, the LOPC Congo team continues to advocate on behalf of the DRC. The LOPC Congo Team recently participated in a video call with the U.S. embassy in the Congo to dialogue on the challenges facing the Congo. The conversation resulted in confirming that the population continues to suffer extreme poverty and displacement. Over 27 million people face food insecurity in the country. In addition to providing financial support and advocacy, spiritual support is also part of the holistic approach for the Congo, as evidenced by a weekly prayer call.

The LOPC Congo team presently has 12 members, but always seeks new members. It meets monthly, usually on the first Sunday of the month. All are welcome to attend.

If you have any questions, contact Herb Long (herblong7@gmail.com) or Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen (bobbiedodson109@gmail.com).

SUMMER

of love does

Monument Crisis Center

2022 Backpack Drive

Every year, low-income students struggle to purchase the necessary supplies to start school. The Monument Crisis Center is committed to providing a backpack for those students that would otherwise not have one. You can help by choosing to fill a backpack for either an elementary or high school student. All the contents are listed below. Please drop-off your filled backpack to the barrel in the Ministry Center offices from July 1-July 17.

Kindergarten - 5th grade

- 1- New Backpack (no solid RED or BLUE)
- 2 - Spiral Notebooks (wide rule)
- 1-Package of Dry Erase Markers
- 1- Large Eraser
- 1- 12" Ruler
- 1- Pencil Sharpener
- 1- Box of Crayons (24 count)
- 1- Box of Colored Pencils
- 2- Pocket Folders
- 1-Box Colored Markers-Wide Tip
- 2- Large size Glue Sticks

**Please place all supplies
in a Ziploc Bag.**

Middle/High School

- 1-New Sturdy Backpack (no solid RED or BLUE)
- 1-New Binder: 1 & 1/2"
- 1-Package of College Rule paper
- 1-Package of Index Dividers
- 2- Spiral Notebooks (college rule)
- 1- Package of #2 Mechanical Pencils
- 2- Pocket Folders
- 2-Highlighters
- 1- 12" Ruler
- 1- Pack of Pens (Blue or Black)
- 1- Box of colored pencils
- 1-Box of fine tip-colored markers (No permanent or Sharpies)
- 1-pack of 3 x 3 post-It notes



LOPC Food Bank

Workday

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Join others as we work together at one of the largest food banks in the nation, the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano Counties. You will help sort and package food into boxes to be distributed at various sites throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties. Please note that mask-wearing is mandatory and social-distancing guidelines will be observed. You will be met by LOPC Leader Sandy Ducey.

Sign up at: lopc.org/lovedoes

mission

Ukraine Special Offering Update

The congregation responded with overwhelming generosity to LOPC's special offering to support Ukraine which resulted in \$110,844.65 sent to the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24. Bombs and shelling have continued to escalate—deliberately targeting civilians, residential buildings, hospitals, and essential infrastructure. Currently more than 4.5 million people—mostly women and children—have left to seek safety in neighboring countries and over 7 million people are displaced inside the country. As a result, thousands of people have been left without water or electricity and many are unable to buy food and basic supplies amid the destruction.

IRC has responded in several ways to the devastation by helping evacuate women and children from the Ukraine as well as providing emergency assistance to those remaining as internally displaced people. An Internally Displaced Person is defined as a person who is forced to leave their home due to war but remains within their country's borders. IRC helps internally displaced people by first helping them register as displaced and then ensuring they receive the

essentials to stay alive including groceries, blankets, warm clothes, cash, and even stoves that work where power has been cut off.

IRC is also working on the ground in Poland with multiple partners to assist refugees arriving from Ukraine. Working with partners allows the IRC to bolster the crisis response of people who have already been active in the community and expert on the local context. IRC is helping provide the more than 2 million newly arrived refugees from Ukraine with psychosocial and legal support, cultural assistance, and translation services. In addition, IRC is providing much needed medical equipment for health teams operating at refugee reception centers and border crossing points. They are procuring other essential items such as sleeping bags and blankets for distribution at reception centers on the Ukrainian/Polish border.

The war in Ukraine is now considered one of the largest humanitarian crises seen in decades in Europe. The collective donation from LOPC will make a huge impact on both those that are left in Ukraine considered internally displaced as well as refugees that have fled to Poland. Thanks to all who contributed and continue to keep Ukraine in prayer.

Helping Refugees in Contra Costa County

June 5, following worship in the Fireside Room

“No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark. You only run for the border when you see the whole city running as well.” This quote, from Warsan Shire, a Somali British poet, was shared by Jane Pak, co-director of Refugee & Immigrant Transitions (RIT) in a talk she gave over to 40 people on May 1. Jane explained the extensive actions required of refugees to actually arrive in the U.S. and then the multi-year process to fully integrate into our communities. She concluded by challenging the church to be part of the solution. On June 5, please come to discuss ideas on how LOPC might help refugees in Contra Costa County through the wide-ranging steps necessary to become integrated and productive community members. If you have questions, please contact Phil Hunter at hunter.p@mac.com.

care

Stephen Ministry Training Sessions

Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide confidential, one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need.



LOPC's Stephen Leaders, together with those from neighboring churches, will be conducting the requisite 50-hours of training for candidates from September 2022 through January 2023. Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings via zoom and in-person on a few Saturdays, with long holiday breaks.

For those wishing to participate, an interview will be required during the summer. To register, or for additional information, please call Jean Lee at (925) 943-2237 or Pastor Gerald Chinen at (925) 283-8722, ext. 227. Your prayerful consideration on joining this ministry would be appreciated.

“Stephen Ministry has strengthened my faith by witnessing God at work in people's lives. It is a privilege to join others as they make their way to renewed health and deepened faith during significant transitions. God clearly is the Cure Giver! This ministry also has helped me be a better parent of adult children, prompting me to listen more fully without offering unsolicited advice.”
— Leslie Finertie

session

April Session Report

By Jeanette Shearer, Clerk of Session

Elders decided that the upcoming May meeting can be attended either in person or via Zoom using new technology called “The Owl.” The wise, all-seeing equipment allows those on Zoom to better hear and see speakers at the meeting. This dualism is yet another indication that church and its processes are a-changing.

The meeting’s focus also featured filling elder and deacon positions at LOPC. Led by Jeff Patton, the discussion encouraged nominations to promote member participation, involvement, and engagement in the community. The session particularly expressed its sadness in the passing of Elder Judy Clark, close friend, dedicated member of session, choir, and worship. Open team positions include Family, Mission, Worship, Seniors, Personnel, Finance, and Spiritual Formation, as well as two Youth positions. Session encourages all to prayerfully consider serving our church through this way.

Bill DeWolf and Pastor Peter Whitelock also noted that interviews and acceptance of resumes is underway for Director of Music, Director of Technology, and an Administrative Coordinator for Children’s Ministry. With God’s help, these three positions will soon be filled, and LOPC will have a staffing model more suited to a post-pandemic church.

Finally, Lauren Gully, pastor, addressed the concept of Spiritual Formation – one way that keeps members connected to God and aware that we are different from other community-service groups. She had numerous suggestions for presenting topics and generating conversations about one’s spiritual growth and welcomes any need for assistance.

Congratulations to Elder Terry Clark who will serve as 2023’s Clerk of Session. We look forward to working under his leadership!



LOPC FOUNDATION How Should We Give?

By Mike Ross, Foundation Trustee

Many of our concerns about giving involve how much and to whom to give. If these legitimate questions were not enough, there is the additional issue of how we should give.

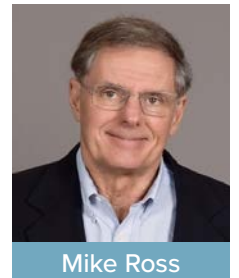
As Christians, we naturally look to scripture for guidance, and in this case, we find Jesus’s proclamations on the subject in two chapters of the gospel of Matthew.

From Matthew 5: 4-16, we read, “You are the light of the world... In the same way, let your life shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

But then in Matthew 6:1-4, we are told, “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them... So, when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpet, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others... But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Your Father, who see what is done in secret, will reward you.”

On the surface, at least, these two passages seem contradictory. Are there ways to reconcile them and proceed in the knowledge we are heeding Jesus’s teachings? The one way I have found is to focus on why I am giving – my principal motives. On one hand, I may be giving only out of altruism, that is, genuinely to help the recipient and to set a good example. On the other hand, I may be giving to draw attention to myself. Asking myself about my motives can help me know if, and when, I am giving in the proper spirit. I encourage you to take time and look inward to determine your priorities for giving and how you hope to leave your legacy.

For information about the Foundation, please contact Jim Beckemeyer, Doug Bontemps, Lois Boyd, Jen Crocker, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Kristi Haigh, Staci Johnston, Mike Ross or Dara Youngdale.



Mike Ross

seedlings

Summer at Seedlings

Our program returns for six weeks of fun this summer! This camp includes time outside exploring, going on scavenger hunts, maneuvering through obstacle courses, luaus, and rubber duck relays! Our kiddos will dress up for Disney Days and enjoy downtime on Pajama Day.

We will be welcoming back a few of our very favorite special guests: Fur, Scales, and Tales with Tracy Hill; Samba music show with James Henry; Creepy and Crawly Petting Zoo with Little Explorers; and Mad Science with our very own Mr. Max. Like all years past, our camp will wrap up with water fun and snow cones --just the best way to close our program!

All children should come ready to have fun, see good friends, and meet new ones. The plan is to explore, play, get dirty, and laugh a lot. It is going to be a wonderful Summer at Seedlings!

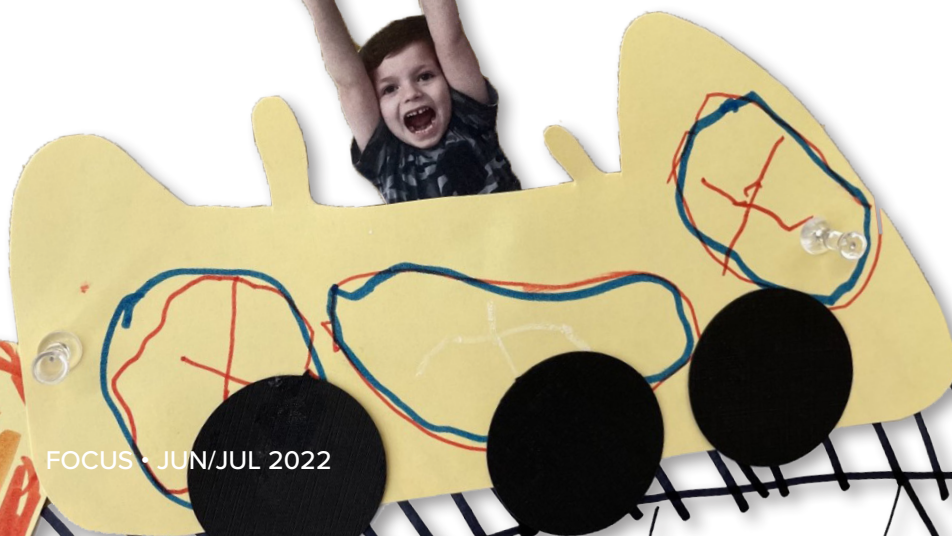
Spring Showcase Returns

By Kathy LaPlante and Sarah Bennett

After a two-year hiatus, the annual Seedlings Spring Showcase finally returned! The teachers, staff, and students were so excited to welcome all of their Seedlings families back into the school building.

On Monday, April 25, Seedlings opened its doors to the families and proudly showed off the classrooms and amazing artwork from the school year. Spirits were high because for some of the families, this was their very first Spring Showcase, and for all the families, it was their first time inside the school in over two years.

It was a beautiful sunny evening, perfect for families and staff to mingle together as they enjoyed an outdoor Taco Truck party in front of the school.



youth

Pray for the Youth Service Teams!

Please pray for our Service Squad and Wapato service teams this summer! Service Squad will be the week of June 6-10, for youth who just completed 5th – 6th grades. They will be serving at local (East Bay) LOPC mission partner locations in a variety of ways. Youth will become acquainted with some of the difficulties faced by people living right here in Contra Costa County and the many ways in which we can share God’s love within our own community! Our dream is that this week will inspire youth to serve and love others throughout life.

During the week of June 19-25, youth who just completed 7th – 12th grade will travel to Wapato, Washington, to partner with an indigenous-led organization: S.L.A.M. (Students Learning About Missions). S.L.A.M. is based within the Yakama Nation and focuses on teaching outside groups about their native traditions. Youth service teams will witness various ceremonies, learn about the history and culture of the Yakima people, and provide basic housework service in tribe elders’ homes.

Both service teams will be commissioned in the June 5 worship service, and the Wapato service team will meet at LOPC on June 12 for an informational meeting.

Lighthouse at Hope Solutions

On March 19 and April 23, a committed group of youth and advisors visited Hope Solution’s Lakeside Apartments site in Concord for afternoons of fellowship, food, crafts and games. Lighthouse, now in its fourth year of activities, is an ongoing program that establishes a deeper, long-term relationship with resident families at Hope Solutions. It was wonderful to watch the friendships and understanding continue to grow between the youth from LOPC and the children from Hope Solutions. We already cannot wait for next year! In the meantime, our 5th & 6th grade youth look forward to visiting with the children at Hope Solutions’ Lakeside site on Friday, June 10, during Service Squad.



Youth & Family Service Day

July 17

Youth who just completed 5th-12th grade and their families are welcome to join us for a fun afternoon of service as we pack backpacks to be delivered to children through our longtime Monument Crisis Center. The registration link for this special event will be emailed out in early July.

Questions? Contact Allison Kunz: allison@lopc.org

Scandia Fun Day

August 7

Youth and their friends can join us for an exciting afternoon of mini golf, arcade games, laser tag, bumper boats, and racing cars.

Youth Sunday

August 28, 10:00 a.m.

Children and youth will lead us in all aspects of the worship service. They will deliver sermons on their experiences at Vacation Bible Camp, Service Squad and the Wapato service-learning trip, respectively. There will be an informal time of fellowship and refreshments on the Fellowship Hall patio after the service from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. for all children, youth and their families.

journey of Faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

“Although God gave me proof of His power each day, it took the complete defeat of my self-will to ask Jesus for his forgiveness and become his disciple,” explains Jeff Eyet. This is his story.

“I was baptized and confirmed into a mixed Methodist and Presbyterian congregation in rural Pennsylvania. A flood brought the two congregations together, a perfect blend of my dad’s Methodist upbringing and my mother’s Presbyterian background. Housed in a new chapel with large, stained-

the best avenue to build friendships that matched my values, but at the time, I chose my self-will over Jesus’ way.

“My next life-changing event happened in my mid-20s when I moved from Maryland to California. I intended to refocus on the values I learned in that small Pennsylvania church. Instead, I doubled down on a self-centered lifestyle, pursuing a career in finance with the goal of earthly wealth. However, at age 28, a combination of personal and professional

“ .. I found my bottom and turned my will over to God and my life over to Jesus. ”

glass windows, tall, white walls, a high, vaulted ceiling, and hardwood pews stocked with traditional hymnals, the church instilled a sense of duty and the responsibility of being a church member.

“My first life-changing event was at age 15 when my family and I moved to a large, suburban town in Maryland. Overnight, I was picked up from a school of 500 students and placed into a class of 500 students and a school of 2,000 students. My belief that I was responsible for making the transition successful set me on a path of self-will, which kept me away from the church throughout high school and college. With the benefit of hindsight, my distance from the church took away

circumstances led me to complete self-defeat. In tears before the cross at St. John’s Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, I found my bottom and turned my will over to God and my life over to Jesus.

“Rebuilding my relationships with people who were followers of Jesus, I set out to be his disciple, although still stinging from the realization that my way had failed. My first act of discipleship was volunteering at our congregation’s weekly food distribution event, where I met other followers of Jesus. My best friend was a Vietnam veteran, a retired Army chaplain who was my support and role model while rebuilding myself.



Jeff Eyet

“Soon after that, the biggest blessing happened when I met my wife, Janelle. She was (and is) a woman of deep faith and a disciple of Jesus but lived in Walnut Creek, and I was in San Francisco. I firmly believe God brought us together, just as Jesus shepherded his flock, He gave us a life I could never have imagined that Sunday, crying before the cross.

“Since our marriage, we’ve received the biggest blessing of our lives, a daughter named Harper Eden. Peter baptized her as a child of God and a disciple of Jesus. Later, she attended Seedlings and now is a rising third grader at St. Perpetua School in Lafayette.

“Today, I continue to do Jesus’ work alongside my brothers and sisters at LOPC. By joining the men’s small group, led by Chris Baldwin, I’ve built a deep community within the church. Specifically, those relationships have led me to be of service as a board member of Seedlings with Jamie Polson, through the Love Does ministry, and with Lori Robinson in Kids Rock. Janelle and I are grateful for the opportunity LOPC gives us to be of service to God, doing the work of willing disciples in a loving and spiritually-based community.

thursday Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program of Senior Care Ministries

By Julie Peterson, Coordinator

We had two spectacular Thursday Fellowship gatherings in May. On May 5, we had a Cinco de Mayo themed day. The room was inviting with colorfully decorated tables, and the musical entertainment by Mike Kistner added to the celebration.

On May 19, we began the day with gentle stretching and exercise led by Keris Dahlkamp. Everyone participated and we are grateful for his expertise. He is a blessing to our program. Due to a Covid situation we had to rescheduled our ragtime piano player Virginia Tichenor. the Fall. We were so grateful to have Syria T. Berry, prominent Bay musical artist and performer entertain us. He was a big hit!

We are meeting one time on June 2, before our summer hiatus begins, and are excited for our annual Hawaiian-themed party. We are providing a



catered lunch and will have a special program featuring Gerald Chinen performing a variety of Hawaiian melodies. We know with the decor, special lunch, and music we will be transported to the Islands. Lastly, we will have the honor of celebrating the birthday of someone very special to Thursday Fellowship, our friend, past volunteer and guest Winnie Watson, who is turning 104 on June 3. It will be a day not to be missed.

We are thankful we have been able to meet eight times so far in 2022. We look forward to the fall, hoping that our

regularly scheduled weekly programs can resume.

Look for further information in LOPC's weekly email, Connections, and the monthly issue of Focus.

Have a safe summer and see you in the fall!

Any questions contact Coordinator Julie Peterson at julie@lopc.org or call 925-283-8722 ext. 281

Our typical program day schedule:

- 11:00 a.m. -1:30 p.m.
- 11:00 a.m. Meet-and-Greet with snacks and beverages.
- 11:15 a.m. Crafts or light exercise
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch (will be provided June 2, 2022)
- 12:45-1:30 p.m. Entertainment
- 1:30 p.m. Program ends

Thursday Fellowship Celebrates Winnie Watson's 104th Birthday!

While we are excited about our annual year-end Hawaiian party, we're equally thrilled to be able to celebrate Winnie Watson's 104th birthday in person! The last two years we had to social distance and sing to her through masks. June 2 will be an occasion not to miss!



grandmother to six grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Winnie has lived in Rossmoor for many years, and her love and talent for gardening is apparent in the beautiful gardens she has created and still supervises. Her roses are a sight to see. Winnie loves people and

enjoys going out to lunch almost every day. Though she is now an armchair traveler, she has traveled extensively; among her favorite places is Yosemite.

As a longtime LOPC member, Winnie has been a faithful volunteer/guest of Thursday Fellowship since its inception 43 years ago. Rarely has

she missed attending and sharing her loving, caring, and generous spirit with guests and other volunteers. While she has been active in every facet of the program, she especially loves creating crafts using her sewing and stitchery skills, and cooking and baking with the kitchen team. Some years ago, Winnie transitioned from dedicated volunteer to weekly guest, though she still has a servant's heart. Each week, without fail, she gives each volunteer and guest an individually wrapped chocolate candy. It's a small, loving gesture that richly testifies to her gracious generosity! What a joy she is in our Thursday Fellowship community. Happy 104th birthday, Winnie!

Winnie was born and raised in El Cerrito, CA, and raised her family there, too. After high school graduation, Winnie attended Heald's Business College and worked as a secretary. She and her husband raised three daughters, and she is now a devoted

community



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

The Impact of the Pandemic on Children and Families

June 6 at 10:00 a.m.

The Covid Pandemic has reached into all facets of our lives. First Friday Forum (FFF) lecturer Ryan Timpte former LOPC staff member, will explore one aspect in the next FFF program, entitled “The Impact of the Pandemic on Children and Families.” It will be a webinar presentation, with registration required.



Ryan Timpte

“The pandemic has disrupted life for everyone in our society, especially young children and families,” says Ryan. “An interdisciplinary approach shows that the cracks through which kids have been falling weren’t created by the pandemic. Instead, it merely exacerbated problems already inherent in our systems.”

His talk will walk the audience through some of the key research that shows the cracks in our systems as well as the questions that parents, grandparents, and concerned community members should be asking as our society moves forward in 2022. “An example of what I’m talking about is the ways schools function in our society: Instead of just being centers of learning, they function as food banks for kids who would otherwise go hungry, counseling

centers for kids going through mental-health crises, and childcare facilities so parents can work. All three of those issues (food insecurity, mental health challenges, and childcare) were greatly exacerbated during the pandemic because schools were closed.

“It’s worth asking, why has our society structured itself to place such a burden on schools? How can grandparents, and the community at large, step up to alleviate some of that pressure? Why is our society structured to treat the issues facing children as ‘burdens’ in the first place?”

Ryan is former Director of Children’s Ministry at LOPC and has served children in churches and other non-profits for over 20 years. He holds a Master of Divinity and M.A. in Christian Education degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary. His primary job now is as a stay-at-home dad for two sons, ages six and three, here in the Bay Area. He says that job is “incredibly difficult and so much fun.”

Register for this event at lopc.org/first-friday-forum.

Respite Night

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

June 3 - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Drop off your kiddos for an outdoor evening of fun while our trained, background-checked, and fully vaccinated staff will care for them. Advanced registration is required.

Please email Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org to register.

Fourth Friday Book Group

June 24 and July 22, 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us June 24 discuss *Gordo* by Jaime Cortez and July 22 to discuss *Island Sea Women* by Lisa See.

Email Catherine Coleman at awaitingword@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

Fourth Monday Book Group

June 27, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *These Precious Days* by Ann Patchett.

To be added to the group, contact Jean Fiske at jdfiske@gmail.com.

Giving at LOPC

One of the most practical ways you can help during times like these is to continue to support LOPC financially.

To give, visit lopc.org/giving, or scan the QR code on your mobile device.



finance

Financial Update

By Jim Nagle & Finance Team

LOPC is off to a strong financial start in the first quarter. We are truly blessed to have a supportive congregation and staff that make this possible.

Year-to-date, March Congregational giving came in at \$843,991, slightly below budget. The shortfall is due to lower than budgeted pledge giving, offset by approximately \$33,216 higher mission giving. This year pledging is a bit below budget; if you have not pledged yet, please consider doing so. Thank you to those who have submitted pledges.

Year-to-date expenses are \$885,306, slightly below budget the favorable variance was due to lower spending in unstaffed positions and positive variances across all ministries, offset by \$33,000 more from higher mission spending.

We ended the quarter with a shortfall of (\$41,315), which is (\$27,606) unfavorable to budget.

January 1 to March 31, 2022

Congregational Giving	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Fav (Unfav)
Pledge Income	\$ 717,795	\$ 782,100	\$ (64,305)
Non-Pledge, Loose Offerings, Other	60,870	67,467	(6,597)
Faith Component	7,300	7,300	-
Mission & Special Gifts	58,026	24,810	33,216
Total Income	843,991	881,677	(37,686)
Expenses	885,306	895,386	(10,080)
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (41,315)	\$ (13,709)	\$ (27,606)

We Give Stock to LOPC

By Doug Bontemps, LOPC Member

When Stephanie and I pledge each year, we always complete our pledge with a donation of stock. It makes much more sense for us than cash. Our situation may not be the same as yours, so you might want to talk to a tax professional; however, let me tell you about the advantage in our case.

We have some stock that we got many years ago, and it has gone up nicely over time. When we sell that stock, we will have to pay tax on the increase in the stock's value. For most of us that capital gains tax is 15% or 20%, depending on tax bracket.

However, if I donate that stock to LOPC, we don't have to pay that tax, and LOPC doesn't either. What's more, the donation is at the stock's current value. I get the tax deduction at that higher price as well.

Here's an example of the savings. Say I have pledged \$1,000 to LOPC, and I have stock currently worth \$1,000, which I bought a several years ago for \$600. If I sell the stock, I will need to pay tax of \$74 (\$400 gain x 20% tax rate = \$74). It would be better to give the stock to LOPC. LOPC would sell the stock for \$1,000, and together we saved



\$74! However, I get the \$1,000 tax deduction for something I paid \$600.

How do you donate stock?

Step One: Transfer the stock from your brokerage account to LOPC's Schwab

account. You can either do this online from your brokerage account, or by calling your brokerage firm. Either way, this is what your broker needs:

How many shares of which stock you wish to donate; and

Transfer information:

- Charles Schwab
- DTC#: 0164
- Acct#: 5320-8343
- Acct Name: Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
- Your name

Step Two: Send our LOPC accountant, Farah Mohammadzai, an email at farah@lopc.org to let her know a stock donation is on its way. My email would say, "Farah, I am sending [# shares] of [stock name] to your Schwab account. Please use this to pay my 2022 pledge."

Donating stock is easy to do and will save you money!

Contact Staci Johnston, Treasurer at (925) 283-8722 x 253 for more information.



**LAFAYETTE-ORINDA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549



IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 6/1/22

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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

Stay tuned for the launch of LOPC's new & improved website this summer!



**This July, LOPC will introduce
its new website that will offer
easier navigation and the most
up to date and relevant content.**