

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2022

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



Frames Can't Catch You When You're Moving Like That

By Chris Baldwin - Pastor, Community Life

As a belated birthday present from loved ones, I recently attended a concert to see professional surfer-turned-musician Jack Johnson at The Greek Theatre at UC Berkeley. Jack played one of my favorite songs that seemed to hit me differently that night than it had at other times. The song is entitled “Inaudible Melodies,” and the chorus lovingly goes like this:



Slow down everyone you're moving too fast. Frames can't catch you when you're moving like that.

Slow down. Breathe. Look around. Rest. Enjoy. Notice. Let go. It's a counter-cultural invitation of living a life of joy and gratitude which is all too familiar for Christians (Exodus 20:8: Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy).

What has your pace of life been lately? If you're like me, autumn can often feel like a season of rush and hurry; the start of the school year, youth sports with the family, the launching back up of church programs, and so much more. If you're not careful, the transition of seasons from summer to fall can easily move from excitement for all of the great things finding their way to our calendars to an overwhelming list of to-dos and obligations. As a consequence of being over-scheduled, the people and activities that we love tend to take the biggest hit of our time and attention. Friends, how are you doing with your schedule now that we've reached November and we're moving to the season of winter?

As Thanksgiving, a holiday of gratitude and abundance, approaches, I invite you to reflect on and assess the pace of life you're living. Does the pace you're living reflect the person God has called you to be? Does the pace you're living honor yourself, family, loved ones, and friends? Are you needing to adjust or adapt your priorities?

Now is the time to recalibrate and rest, knowing you are the beloved of Jesus Christ. We all are! My prayer for you this month is that you might experience a time of shifting toward love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control by slowing down and taking a breath.

Frames can't catch you when you're moving like

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Pastoral Staff

Peter Whitelock - Head of Staff
Lauren Gully - Associate Pastor
Jaime Polson - Associate Pastor
Chris Baldwin - Associate Pastor

Ministry Directors

Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz - Youth
Coleen Moulton - Seedlings Preschool

Treasurer

Staci Johnston

Focus Newsletter

Jon Corry - Communications
Dick James & Lexi Morrissey - Editors

Submissions & Deadlines

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

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

Need to reach us?

info@lopc.org • 925-283-8722

finance

Financial Update

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

The month of August was a great month for Congregational Giving, although year-to-date Congregational Giving was lower than budgeted by approximately \$84,000. Mission Special Gifts and Offerings were \$208,000 higher than planned levels due to the deployment of unbudgeted gifts, including \$110,000 to Ukraine and \$50,000 to Hope Solutions.

Ministry teams continue to spend less than budgeted levels. Personnel has experienced many unplanned staff transitions and open positions relative to budget. Year-to-date expenses include the \$208,000 of unbudgeted Mission items mentioned above.

LOPC closed August, with a shortfall of \$43,849 which is less than the budgeted shortfall of \$125,268.

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.







We Gather
TOGETHER
For Good • For Giving • For God's Glory

**Giving Sunday is
November 6**

Pledge materials were recently mailed and now is the time to prayerfully discern your pledge for 2023.

Your giving helps us do great things.

**Questions about pledging?
Contact LOPC Accountant Farah at
farah@lopc.org**



mission



WINTER NIGHTS Family Shelter

Volunteers Needed • November 7 - 21
Visit lopc.org/lovedoes to sign up!

Winter Nights Family Shelter is a traveling shelter for families experiencing hardship whether it be from loss of a job, death in the family, domestic violence, or other unfortunate circumstances. Unlike most shelters, Winter Nights Family Shelter allows families to stay together. Many families who are homeless find themselves couch-surfing or living in their cars for fear of being split apart. When they discover they can stay together at

Winter Nights Family Shelter there is a sense of relief and hope.

Winter Nights Family Shelter depends on multiple faith communities throughout Contra Costa County to house families for two-week commitments. This year, LOPC will host the shelter on campus November 7 - 21. As host, LOPC makes sure guests are provided healthy, hot meals and a comfortable, clean environment in

Fellowship Hall to call home during their stay. Many volunteers are needed to make this a reality. Opportunities include preparing meals, tutoring, and creating fun activities for guests to participate in. Past activities have included movie nights, outdoor games, crafts, music, and even sharing a family pet with the guests.

To volunteer individually or with a fellowship group go to lopc.org/lovedoes.

Refugee Study Group Meeting

November 13, 9:00 a.m., in the Chapel and on Zoom

When viewing most newscasts, it is difficult to remain unmoved by reports of atrocities occurring around the world, even as we go about our daily lives. Our faith leads us to be involved and to love neighbors near and far. When we witness a country invaded such as Ukraine, or the Taliban overtaking Afghanistan, or violent gangs threatening the lives of citizens in Guatemala, our hearts are touched. We are motivated to reach out, to not remain silent, and to do whatever we can to help those impacted.

Ever since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, LOPC has heard the

cries of those displaced by the war. A special collection raised over \$100,000 for Ukrainian relief and was sent to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to help feed the people fleeing to Poland. Additionally, since May, nearly 40 LOPC members have been meeting and discerning how LOPC can respond to the humanitarian crisis of helping displaced persons around the world. The invasion of Ukraine is new, but thousands of other displaced persons are also pleading for our help. How can we help? We have held several meetings to answer that question, to review findings, and to discuss possible next steps.

We invite you to gather in the Chapel at our next meeting to hear reports of efforts being taken by agencies working in Contra Costa County and partnering with other local Presbyterian churches to help find housing for immigrants. We work to put hope into action. Please join us and discover ways you can help make a difference.

This will be a 'hybrid' event. To receive the Zoom link or if you have questions, contact Phil Hunter at Hunter.p@mac.com.



Chai & Chat

with Children of Faith

November 13, following worship in the Chapel.

Rosie Thandu from Children of Faith will be visiting LOPC and will provide updates on the program and their students.

love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Christmas
OPPORTUNITIES



Toy Collection

November 1 - December 4

Harbor House is a Christian organization located in the diverse San Antonio district of Oakland and provides after-school care, tutoring, ESL programs, food, clothing, and books to help the community flourish. This Christmas, Harbor House is asking for help supplying gifts for their toy store where low-income parents can choose a toy and wrapping paper for their child. Requested are unwrapped items such as balls, games, dolls, books, art sets, legos, hoodies, and other items for babies, kids, and teens. Please return your unwrapped item to the Ministry Center office by Sunday, December 4.

You may also purchase a toy on Amazon and have it shipped directly to Harbor House. Gifts must be received no later than December 5.

Visit lopc.org/lovedoes for more information or for a link to Harbor House's Amazon Wishlist to make your purchase online.

Holiday Food Boxes

Begins November 17

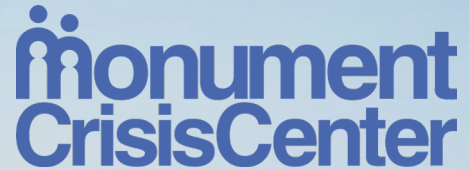
Pick-up a box and flyer on the plaza on Sundays starting November 17 or during the week in the Ministry Center.

These boxes help low-income families supplement their food for the holidays. Boxes must be returned on December 11 only. A truck parked in front of the Oak Room will be available to accept your donation that day. Please, no boxes before this date. **Contact Robin Freeberg at robin@lopc.org with questions.**

Shopping List:

Please note: No glass allowed.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-\$25 Food gift card in a separate unsealed envelope (Safeway or Grocery Outlet) | <input type="checkbox"/> [3]-vegetables (14-16oz. cans) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-cereal (12-16 oz. box) | <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-pounds of ground coffee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [3]-pasta items (one pound each) | <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-tuna (5oz. cans) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-peanut butter (12-16 oz. plastic jar) | <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-soups (8-16oz. cans) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-baking items (cake mix, corn bread mix, muffin mix, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-applesauce (14-16oz. plastic jars, or cans) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-mac and cheese (7-10 oz.) | <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-instant mashed potatoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> [2]-beef ravioli or chili (14-16oz. can) | <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-stuffing mix |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-cranberry sauce (10-16oz. can) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-gravy mix packet |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> [1]-vegetable oil (12-16oz.) plastic |



Giving Tree Opportunity

November 1 – December 7

This Christmas, White Pony Express is helping to fulfill holiday wishes for those in need in our community. Look for special Giving Trees located in front of Seedlings during pick-up and drop-off. Pull an ornament of your choice, purchase the item listed, and simply return the unwrapped gift to the collection barrels located in front of the CLC **no later than December 7.**

worship

Join us this Advent season to explore the nativity and all the pieces that contribute to the wonderful story we tell each year. Every element to the nativity tells a different story about how the divine, people, and animals played a part in the incredible story of Jesus' birth.

November 27, "The Stable"
(Micah 5:2-4)

December 4, "The Animals
and the Manger" (Isaiah 1:1-3)

December 11, "The Angels"
(Matthew 1:18-25)

December 18, "Joseph and
Mary" (Luke 2:1-5)

December 24, "The
Shepherds" (Luke 2:8-10)

December 25, "The Christ
Child" (John 1:14-18)

January 1, "The Magi,
Camels, and the Star"
(Matthew 2:1-12)

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

Building the NATIVITY



session highlights

By Jeanette Shearer, Clerk of Session

Session gathered September 27 in hybrid format. Coming together, whether in person or online, always proves energizing for elders and staff!

Pastor Peter Whitelock started by sharing plans for an October presentation to the congregation entitled, "The Post Pandemic Church." It aims to shed light on current national and local trends and how LOPC is responding. Rebuilding the lay volunteer teams is a priority as church programs develop and grow. Needs in the community have changed as a result of the pandemic, he said, and LOPC is focused on addressing them.

Peter reported on the process the Church Nominating Committee (CNC) made with its work to put together a full slate for the positions of elders, deacons, CNC members, and Foundation trustees. Terms for the new officers start January 1, 2023. We are blessed to have dedicated members willing to give their time and talents to serve in these important roles.

Also discussed was the annual pledge campaign, which starts in October. The Generosity team is working to inform the congregation about the current state of LOPC's finances and the critical support that is needed to operate all phases of church life. There will be a finance presentation on October 23 with Finance Chair Jim Nagle and Executive Leadership Pastor Jaime Polson, which Peter encouraged elders to attend and also help get the word out to the congregation.

Session received an update on staff transitions. A strong turnout celebrated Pastor Gerald Chinen's luau/goodbye luncheon, where he received heartfelt thanks for his years of service to the church. A step toward finding a full-time choir director has been the arrival of Mitchell Covington as interim director. It is a blessing to hear the choir again! We also welcomed to staff Emily Austin as a program coordinator for both Campus Operations and Children's Ministry.

Pastor Jaime Polson reported about

the ministry team goal-planning work, a process that occurs each fall when staff, elders, and lay leaders develop programs for the next year. Jaime shared the goal highlights from each team. The event is an exciting one as teams re-imagine ways to meet the needs of our community and how to share our blessings with the world.

The next session meeting is slated for Tuesday, October 18 at 7:00 p.m.

2023 Elders & Deacons:

Elders: Julie Atkinson, Jeff Budke, Jeff Eyet, Bettie Graves, Chris Johnson, Jim Nagle, Sally Roberts, Ginny Ross, Diane Vollering

Deacons: Heather Breen, Barbara Duff, Michele Faxel, Sue Fernstrom, Muriel Franz, Stephen Kiyoi, Randi Long, Jeanette Shearer, Claire Van Rooyen, Mary Welte

Youth Deacons: Paige Carpenter, Griffin Dubois



Service Opportunities at Winter Nights Family Shelter

Youth Alive

Sunday, November 6, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Youth on Wednesday

Wednesday, November 9, 5:00 – 7:15 p.m.

By the Way

Sunday, November 13, 5:00 – 7:15 p.m.



Join us for these special nights of service and fellowship as we prepare dinner for the guests at Winter Nights Family Shelter in Fellowship Hall. Youth Alive will prepare signs and decorations to make the families feel at home when they arrive. YOW and BTW will prepare dinner and participate in games and crafts with the children. It is a wonderful experience -- something not to miss. Youth and families can also sign up to serve in additional ways and at various times during November 7 - 21 while families are living on our church campus. Youth may also earn service hours for participation. Please bring applicable forms for staff to sign.

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp at keris@lopc.org or Allison Kunz at allison@lopc.org.

By The Way Homegroups (High School)

November 19 & 20

While youth groups break from November 20-27, high school small groups will plan off-site gatherings to share a time of fellowship together. This is a great way to get to know one another better, establish trust, and have fun! All Covid-safe regulations will apply. Stay tuned for specific small group information soon.

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp at keris@lopc.org

community

The Spiritual Practice of Art

7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Chapel starting November 7

Are you an artist interested in connecting your art with your faith? Join Pastor Lauren Gully in a three-week long program connecting the expression of art to the spiritual practice of discovering more about God. Participants will come together to set intentions around their art project and connect and explore how God can meet us in our creativity week by week. Artists can also create at home on their own time between sessions. If you are a trained artist or would like to try out something new to help grow your faith, this class is for you! This project is open to all art forms!

November 7

Session 1 – Creation: exploring the expression of creation and setting intention for your creative project.

November 14

Session 2 – Connection and Transformation: opening yourself to God during the artistic process.

November 21

Session 3 – Spiritual Practice of Art Showcase: share your art with our group and share how God has met you in your project.

For questions or to register, please contact Pastor Lauren at lauren@lopc.org

Our History, Our Power, Our Possibilities

Presented by the Racial Equity and Engagement Team

Featuring The Rev. Sandhya Jha

November 6, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Join us in learning about the history of race in the U.S. and also about LOPC's gifts, power, and role in creating an anti-racist future!

Contact Pastor Lauren Gully at lauren@lopc.org for more information.

Young Families Connect

November 6, following Worship on the Patio

Are you a family with young kids (infant-4th grade) looking to hang out with other families? Join us on the back playground where kids can play on the playground and parents can hang out with each other enjoying breakfast bites and coffee. YFC meets on the first Sunday of each month at 11:00 a.m.

For more info, email Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org.

staff update

LOPC is happy to welcome Emily Austin in the role of Children's Ministry/Campus Operations Coordinator. She is excited to serve LOPC combining her skills as a community builder, event planner, creative thinker, and vibrant educator. Emily expects to help LOPC further its outreach to the greater Lamorinda community by offering quality facility usage in a welcoming atmosphere. Her daughter, Lucy, enjoys participating in many youth activities, so Emily looks forward to supporting Children's Ministry programming in addition to her role in Operations. Outside of church, Emily enjoys all things theatre – especially if her husband, Michael, is on stage - hosting dinner parties, hiking local trails, and playing with their new pup, Cinder.



Fourth Friday Book Group

December 2, 5:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *The Henna Artist* by Alka Joshi.

Contact Catherine Coleman at awaitingword@gmail.com to be added to the group.

Fourth Monday Book Group

December 5, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *The Patron Saint of Second Chances* by Christine Simon.

Contact Jean Fiske at jdfiske@gmail.com to be added to the group.

*thursday*Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program of Senior Care Ministries

November 3 & 17, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall



November has arrived, and its arrival signals the start of the holiday season. Thanksgiving reminds us of all the reasons to be grateful. First, our Thursday Fellowship program is now able to meet regularly two times a month, and we are thrilled to welcome both new volunteers and guests. Second, our volunteers are working hard to provide activities and programs that are interesting and entertaining for all. Third, our kitchen and hospitality volunteers provide us with tasty snacks, beverages, scrumptious salads, and desserts served on festively decorated tables. Guests and volunteers alike enjoy attending Thursday Fellowship, and we are so thankful for the friendship and loving community that is created.

On October 6, we enjoyed Mike Kistner who sang and played his guitar. He is a longtime friend of Thursday Fellowship and has been entertaining us for 17 years! On October 20, Bob Simon entertained and educated us with a very interesting talk about the concept and history of time through the ages. Morning activities found guests creating fall paintings using a variety of leafy branches and leaves. Also, Keris Dahlkamp led us in stretching exercises, which everyone enjoys.

Be sure to join us on November 3 and November 17. We look forward to seeing you!

November 3

Douglas Bryson, a renowned tenor who has had a career as a soloist in opera and oratorio, will perform some beloved “greatest hits,” and it will be a program not to miss.

November 17

LOPC’s recently retired organist Stewart Scharch will return to give a demonstration of the magnificent pipe organ in the Sanctuary. We will learn about the inner workings of the organ and will enjoy hearing Stewart play.

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 includes salad, dessert, and beverage. Guests may bring a sandwich.
- 12:45-1:30 p.m. Entertainment

Look for further information in the weekly *Staying Connected* email and in *Connections*. We look forward to seeing you in person again this month!

Questions? Contact Julie Peterson at julie@lopc.org or call 925-283-8722 ext. 281.

journey of Faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Leslie Finertie's Faith Journey began in an unlikely way. Both of her parents were in groups for alcoholism, and she began attending a group called Adult Children of Alcoholics. "When I went to the Adult Children of Alcoholics meetings, I found that this group of people became my 'Higher Power.' Attending four meetings a week, I learned a lot. Expressing envy to a friend in the program about their relationship with God, he invited me to pray as if there were a God – something I had only done one time when I was in lonely agony. Peace came. God showed me, in one moment, all the occasions my husband and I had built walls and stopped trusting each other, which almost doomed our marriage. I've believed in God ever since.

"God is patient, and he waited many years before I opened the door further. I was the breadwinner, married to Bob, who had colon cancer. We had twin babies when my mom was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's. I returned to my therapist who had been an adult Sunday school teacher. She knew of a class for folks who had questions and doubts.



Leslie Finertie

"I became a seeker, attending Sunday School and church every week. I took communion, praying for forgiveness, thinking perhaps I didn't believe enough. Over time I came to believe that Christ was my Savior. In God's perfect time, I was invited on a "Walk to Emmaus" weekend where I experienced God through talks, music, and one-on-one conversations. My visit from God was so tangible that I trusted him enough to turn my life over to him that very day.

Sadly, my last church family led me on a journey of rejection, which was followed by my very loving acceptance at LOPC as I dealt with LGBTQ issues in my family.

"It's a joy to be a member of the Body of Christ in times when I can serve and in times when my husband, Bob, and I receive support. I love choir, Stephen Ministry, and serving in Kairos (prison ministry). I look forward to joys and heartbreaks ahead, all part of being fully alive in Christ.

"God speaks to me through music as well as scripture. I'll never forget singing Great is Thy Faithfulness and realizing it wasn't up to me to be a "good girl" as I had learned in childhood. Instead, God had cared for me all those years, even when I didn't believe.

"About 15 years later, words from the following verse also hit me as I was holding on by my fingernails with my job. 'Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine and ten thousand besides.' God wants me to thrive and be fully alive, not just survive in this gift of life he has given me. So, with gratitude, I embrace his many gifts."

“God is patient, and he waited many years before I opened the door further.”

care

Electronic Device Tutoring for Seniors

November 6, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Oak Room

A high-school senior computer science expert will lead us to proficiency with our computers! He has been very helpful in our first two sessions. We had a great turnout of people come to our first session and receive help, so don't miss this last opportunity! Bring your laptop for hands-on training – of course some of you will have to leave your desk-top computers at home.

Please send your questions to Catherine Coleman at awaitingword@gmail.com so that our instructor is prepared. And come anyway if you don't have questions. Refreshments will be served.

Care Team Happenings

Writing birthday cards and general notes of encouragement to clients served by Trinity Center in Walnut Creek are a fine way to celebrate the holiday spirit! Cards and tips for writing are available in the Trinity Center basket by the Reception Desk.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who served at this year's Fall Festival!

Helping children making crafts and writing cards for isolated seniors was a good time for everyone!

hold in
PRAYER



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

Cindy Saba, who passed September 21. A memorial has been scheduled for next year, September 16, 2023.

Virginia Swanberg, who passed September 23.

Caring for AGING PARENTS

Love & Listening on Life's Journey

Sunday, November 13, at 11:11 a.m., live in the Oak Room and also online via Zoom.

Celebrate parents' stories and values in a loving way that continues to honor them. Learn how to respect your family members' values in your conversations that might encourage honest discussions about health concerns and hope. Featured

speakers include LOPC member, Foundation Trustee, and author Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, and Presbyterian Foundation Ministry Relations Officer Maggie Harmon, Esq.

Register online at lopc.org/registrations.

Possible questions include:

- Are you worried about aging parents? How you address each person's concerns can make all the difference in successfully developing a shared strategy to provide the support they need.
- We all should have a plan for the "what ifs" of a longer life. What are the key issues that you and your parents need to address?
- How can we celebrate parents' stories and values – and those of generations that preceded us – in a loving way that continues to honor them?
- How can we respect our family members' values in our conversations that might encourage honest discussions about health, concerns, and hopes?



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



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

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The LOPC Foundation strives
to be a permanent, reliable
source of significant funding
for LOPC's ministries.

*“ I believe that philanthropy is much more than just giving.
It is our opportunity to respond to God's commandment to
care for each other and for the planet, and to ensure that
our values live on for generations. ”*

—Maggie Harmon Ministry Relations Officer for the Southwest, Presbyterian Foundation

**If you want to know more about legacy giving, please reach
out to a Foundation Trustee or visit lopc.org/foundation.**

