

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 2022

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



“God loved us enough to become close and take on our humanity.”

THE NATIVITY and Christmastime

By Lauren Gully - Associate Pastor

I don't know about you, but it sure seems unbelievable to think that it is already Christmastime. You won't hear me complain, though, because I love Christmas – a very good thing for a pastor! Even while planning the Advent preaching series this year in August, I was listening to Christmas music to get into the spirit of the season!



Even though I love Christmas, it is a challenge to make time and space for the true reason for the holiday, which of course is to celebrate the incarnation of God becoming human in Jesus Christ. I can get so caught up on decorating my home for Christmas that it is easy to forget that what matters more than gifts and decorations is that God loved us enough to become close and take on our humanity.

In my home, the Christmas decoration that reminds me most about the amazing Christmas story is the Nativity. As a child I loved putting every character in its place. Mary right next to Joseph, the Shepherds as if they had just come in from the fields, and the camels away from the sheep—just in case they didn't get along! In the sermon series this advent, Building the Nativity, we will go through the stories of each of the figures in the Nativity. As you too perhaps build the Nativity with the figures in your home, my hope is that each week you are reminded of the true reason for the season: the incredible story of the birth of Christ, which certainly is worth remembering and celebrating each and every year!

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Please send requests for submissions to:
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no later than December 1 for the January 2023 issue.

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

Need to reach us?

info@lopc.org • 925-283-8722

mission

Christmas SPECIAL OFFERING

For more information, or to give starting December 10, go to lopc.org/specialoffering.

Did you know that the first food banks in the United States were started by churches?

This Christmas, LOPC's Special Offering will inspire us to go back to our roots of feeding people in the community by supporting organizations that address local food insecurity in our area. Food insecurity, defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, continues to grow across the nation.

Food insecurity is often rooted in the circumstances some households may face to meet the most basic of needs such as housing, healthcare, child-care, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

LOPC's special offering will go to three organizations: **Monument Crisis Center, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties, and The Alameda County Food Bank.** These organizations, with the help of many volunteers, work tirelessly to provide food for those who would otherwise go without.

All three organizations mentioned above continue to experience a rise in their demand for their services due to the pandemic, coupled with inflation and supply-chain issues, which have

all resulted in rising prices. As a food bank employee noted, "We may all be feeling the pinch, but it's getting harder and harder for our most vulnerable neighbors to eat right." These price increases not only affect their clients but impact the organizations' bottom lines as well. Inflation affects every aspect of their operations including purchasing, transportation, energy, fuel costs, and even vehicle maintenance.

This Christmas, let's continue the Christian tradition of feeding those in our local communities to make sure that people know where their next meal will be coming from.



mission

love does *Christmas*

love protects, love hopes, love never fails **OPPORTUNITIES**

Monument Crisis Center

Holiday Food Boxes

Pick up a box and flyer on the plaza on Sundays 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.

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

Smile Upon LOPC's Mission Partners this Season

As you begin shopping this Christmas season, please consider supporting LOPC's mission partners. Several mission partners are now certified with AmazonSmile – a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. By choosing one of LOPC's mission partners as your designated Amazon Smile charity, you can help them while doing your Christmas shopping all at the same time! As an Amazon partner, the organization of your choice will receive 0.5 % of eligible purchases

How does it work?

1. Go to Smile.Amazon.com and sign in with your Amazon account.
Note: if you do not have an account you will need to create one.
2. Click "Get Started" and search for the charity you wish to donate to.
3. Click "Select" on the charity of your choice.
4. Please note that for the organization to receive a benefit from your purchases you must always start at Smile.Amazon.com for every purchase.
5. Start shopping and help the organization of your choice!

Participating partners: Children of Faith Missions • Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano • Fotokids Inc. • Hope Solutions • J.F. Kapnek Charitable Trust • Monument Crisis Center • STAND! for Families Free from Violence.

Giving Tree Opportunity Through 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.**

Congo Necklace Sale December 18, following worship.

The Congo Team will once again be selling its handmade necklaces on the plaza just in time for the holidays. Donations received will support schools and education projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Youth on Wednesday (YOW) Mediocre Talent Night

December 14, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Come showcase not-so-great talents at YOW's annual mediocre talent night! Sing, dance, tell a joke or story! Prizes for the most average performance!

Questions? Contact Allison Kunz,
allison@lopc.org.

By-The-Way (BTW) Progressive Brinner

December 18, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Join us for a fun night of fellowship, food, and worship as we drive to three LOPC youth's homes for a progressive breakfast for dinner! Alumni are welcome.

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp,
keris@lopc.org.

HS Seniors & BTW Alumni Christmas Dinner

December 21, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

A special dinner reunion for high school seniors, advisors, and BTW alumni! Join us as we enjoy a delicious meal, talk about what life is like after high school, and worship together in the comfort of a local LOPC home. Please RSVP to Keris by December 11.

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp,
keris@lopc.org.

Confirmation

Confirmation is a faith milestone where LOPC staff and adult volunteers support current 8th - 12th grade students as they explore what Christians believe and how they relate to others in the world while asking questions in a judgment-free zone.

Contact keris@lopc.org to find out more or to register by December 31.

Confirmation Dates to remember:

- Class Sessions: Saturday, January 7 and Saturday, January 14, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. each day.
- Confirmation Dessert: Tuesday, January 31, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- Confirmation Sunday: Sunday, February 5



Christmas Break:

- No Youth Alive: Christmas Day and New Year's Day
- No YOW: December 21 and 28
- No BTW: Christmas Day and New Year's Day

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.

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



Christmas *Eve*

Family Service

3:00 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.

Traditional Service

7:00 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.

community

A Service of Lessons and Carols

December 10, 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

A special worship service with congregational carol singing, scripture reading, and music celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Christmas Cheer Bingo Night

December 16, 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

A night of fun for young and old. Come celebrate with cookies, prizes, carols, and of course, bingo!

RSVP at lopc.org/registrations.

Family Advent Devotional

This Advent devotional is designed for families to walk with through the season's four weeks of hope, peace, joy, and love. Each week includes a simple at-home faith-formation activity, a few bird-related fun facts to share, a handful of ideas for service during the week, and a lovely, simple bird ornament to cut out and hang on your tree.

Packets can be picked up in the CLC lobby or at the front desk of the Ministry Center.



Intergenerational ADVENT Festival

December 4, 11:00 a.m. in the Davies Room

Please join us in the Davies Room after worship to celebrate the season of Advent. Make an Advent wreath and decorate an ornament. Additional seasonal crafts will be available for young children. This festival is in partnership with Young Families Connect, so the playground will be open for young children to play.

christmas eve POINSETTIAS

This Christmas, we will continue our well-loved tradition of adorning the sanctuary with poinsettias. ***This year, they will be a gorgeous pink!*** Mail the form below to the Ministry Center or bring it by in person. All requests must be received by December 15. A list of poinsettia dedications will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Poinsettias will remain in place for Christmas Sunday. Those who have donated poinsettias may bring their plant home after the final Christmas Day service.



I / We would like to donate a poinsettia to adorn the sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Given By: _____

In Memory of: _____
or

In Honor of: _____

Email: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Poinsettias are \$20 each. Please make checks payable to LOPC.

Please fill out and return this form to the Ministry Center Office at LOPC by December 15.

Contact Lexi Morrissey at lexi@lopc.org with questions.

Please Circle
Cash Check

community



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM Returns January 6

First Friday Forum is a speaker series providing lectures of importance and interest to help inform the community about this ever-changing world.

The programs are offered at 10:00 a.m. on the first Friday of each month, January through June. The January 6 program will be a Zoom webinar (remote only), and registration is required. In December, a registration link will be available on the FFF webpage. Plans are underway to offer hybrid programs for February through June 2023.

FFF team is currently seeking new team members. If you are interested, please contact us at fff@lopc.org to learn more.

2023 Speakers:

January 6 - Larry Lamborn, Retired CIA Analyst, "Unwrapping the Riddle: Understanding the Russian Enigma." Larry gave a very well received talk about China in January 2021. We are very pleased he has returned to FFF with a very timely subject.

February 3 - Margaret Liu, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at UCSF, "COVID, MPox, and Polio: Update and Recommendations." Margaret provided a most informative talk in March 2021 with the latest information about the COVID-19 epidemic.

March 3 - Steve Woolpert, Professor of Political Science at St. Mary's College, "Healing a House Divided: Toxic Polarization Endangers Our Democracy." Steve has previously shared his keen insights on current affairs at FFF.

April 14 - Jim Marggraff, CEO of startup Kinoo and Serial Entrepreneur, "Developing Tomorrow's Respectful Leaders from Today's Children through Intergenerational Connection, Play, and Learning." Jim previously presented on the topic of video and augmented reality technologies at FFF.

May 5 - Linus Eukel, Executive Director of the John Muir Land Trust, "Gaining Ground: The Importance of Conserving Land to Address the Critical Challenges Facing Our Society." As a board member of the East Bay Leadership Council's Infrastructure Task Force, Linus can provide a Bay Area perspective on conserving land to benefit all.

June 2 - Joe Whitehouse, world traveler and photographer, "A National Geographic Expedition Through the Northwest Passage: Nome to Greenland." Joe's travel presentations are beautifully done and very popular at LOPC.

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.

Young Families Connect

December 4, 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.

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.

Friendship Circle

December 15, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Come and join our Friendship Circle for youth with special needs who are in high school and the adult transition program! It is a time of fellowship, games, and crafts. We would love to have high school and college-age youth volunteer to be friendship buddies with the youth that join us.

For questions or to volunteer, please contact Susan Wentworth at susan@lopc.org.

Register at lopc.org/registrations.

*thursday*Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program of Senior Care Ministries

December 1 & 15, 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

By Julie Peterson, Coordinator

The holiday spirit was in full swing at our two November Thursday Fellowship gatherings. On November 3, we made Thanksgiving napkin rings in the morning, and, after lunch, Tenor Douglas C. Bryson joined by two vocalists performed along with pianist extraordinaire Gary Neuman. There were lots of smiles, clapping, and toe tapping to a wide variety of music from opera to country to jazz all in one program. What a treat for us all!

On November 15, we changed our venue to accommodate Winter Nights Family Shelter. In the morning, we welcomed guests into the sanctuary to watch the wedding video of Colleen Whitelock and Lupe Lopez. Lupe has worked with the Thursday Fellowship program for a number of years and is an integral part of our team. It was so uplifting to witness such a special happy event. After lunch, Stewart Sarch demonstrated and performed on our grand organ. The program was informative, educational, entertaining, and a pure delight.

We look forward to welcoming you once again in December.



December 1

Michael Kistner will be entertaining us with a Christmas Carol sing-a-long.

December 15

The choral octet Moonglow from Rossmoor will perform a Christmas program.

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.



Chris Riley (center) with son Camden (L) and daughter Mirabelle (R)

journey of Faith

By Chris Riley, LOPC Member, and facilitated by Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Like so many, I grew up in the Christian tradition. I was baptized at a Presbyterian church in East Liverpool, Ohio where my grandfather was a long-serving deacon. After moving to Wheeling, West Virginia, when I was 10 years old, my family joined an Episcopal church, where I had become much more involved, first as an acolyte and later a member of the choir. The local Episcopal bishop said at my confirmation that he was betting I'd grow up to be a priest.

As I grew more engaged in the church's traditions, I found myself struggling with my faith. It started one day while I was reciting the Nicene Creed, which I had memorized years before. Because I had it memorized, I

didn't think about the words as I was saying them. Instead, I was thinking about a piece by celebrated humor columnist Dave Barry, who joked about the followers of the cult of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon who blindly repeated whatever he said and did.

That troubled me. I realized that despite engaging more with my church and its traditions, I had lost a depth of faith that had kept me rooted in the church. I'm sure the existential angst I felt throughout my teens and early 20s certainly didn't help either! For many years I considered myself an agnostic, even as I continued going to services. By the time I finished schooling, I had stopped attending

church regularly. I drifted away from the church community around me, focusing instead on the communities I built through my work.

However, throughout this period of life, deep down I truly felt like God was guiding me and protecting me. Whether it was in big moments, like when I had a melanoma found and removed at age 21, or in the little signals and coincidences of life that just feel like they couldn't be accidental I knew that God was with me... somehow.

Today, I'm glad to be back in a church community at LOPC, both for my benefit and also for my children. But my faith remains personal first, and I

continues next page →

← from previous

think it always will be, and I'm content with that. I find a strong foundation of faith in what I consider to be the core message of the Bible: the idea that God is love. God's love is a complex thing beyond what we can fully understand, but one part of it we can grasp was demonstrated throughout Jesus's life and death. When Jesus knelt to wash the feet of the disciples, he was showing love; when he embraced sinners in challenge to all accepted practice at the time, he was showing love.

The gospel of Mark remains my favorite, for a simple reason: at the very end, Jesus had given up everything

— even hope. It was the ultimate showing of love, beyond anything any of us could ever do, because we're human. To me, this notion of sacrifice of self — not sacrifice without purpose, a perverse martyrdom for glory, but sacrifice in service of others — is woven into love. No matter what each of us can do as individuals and as leaders, the greatest calling out there is that of serving others.

My faith has been challenged a lot over the past few years. I'm certainly not alone in that. Covid has been a disaster. The world is literally and figuratively on fire. I still have faith. But I can't accept that this is somehow all for

the better. I can believe that God has a plan, without accepting that all of the tragedies are somehow good. They're not. They're awful.

But what I can believe is that in the darkest moments, God is still there to be found — especially in God's people. One thing I've seen since Covid is that we all just kind of accept each other a little more. We can be late to meetings or cancel them last minute, our kids can interrupt that important Zoom call — and it's okay. We're all dealing with things. So many things. It's okay. We default to forgiveness and understanding. That didn't used to be the prevailing attitude. I see God at work there, and it helps me keep faith.

care

Care Team Happenings

Electronic Device Tutoring

Thanks to everyone who attended one of the Electronic Device Tutoring sessions! We all learned a lot about our phones, tablets, and computers and were able to ask lots of questions of our wonderful tutor, Cameron Shaw, a high school senior at The Athenian School in Walnut Creek.

Cameron offers free tech help to senior citizens in the Lamorinda Area and can be reached at 925-257-4247 or by email at cth@cameronshaw.me.

Touch of Love

The Care team will be putting together a Touch of Love to give to our seniors who aren't able to get out of the house on a regular basis to let them know we're thinking of them. The deliveries will be made by some of our families in addition to the Care team. This is a wonderful ministry for the givers as well as the receivers!

If your family would like to participate by delivering gifts this season or in the future, please contact Emily Austin at emily@lopc.org for more information.

Prayer Team Needs You

The prayer team meets every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m in-person on the first Tuesday of the month, and on Zoom the other weeks. The team prays for requests submitted through prayer cards and via the LOPC website. The team prays weekly for educators, health care workers, and first responders. If you know of people in one of these categories that you'd like to be added to the list, please contact LOPC receptionist Ciara Bird at ciara@lopc.org.

If you are interested in joining the prayer team, please contact Ciara or Leslie Finertie at Leslie-finertie@comcast.net.



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

Paul Jeans, who passed October 27. A memorial has been scheduled for November 27 at 1:00 p.m.

Ken Cornell, who passed November 7. A memorial has been scheduled for December 3 at 1:00 p.m.

Bob Runyon, father of Chad Runyon, who passed November 5. A memorial was held November 18.

Roger (Bud) Loar, who passed November 7.

seedlings

Seedlings Spotlight on Kathy LaPlante

By Kaylin Deutscher, Communications, Seedlings Board of Directors

Kathy LaPlante is Seedlings' Assistant Director and Director of the Summer at Seedlings program. Seedlings children and families know her as a kind, patient, and fun presence on campus, who is always there with a smile and a helping hand. This month we interviewed Kathy so you can get to know her as well:

Q: How long have you been with Seedlings and what was your background before joining?

Kathy: This is my 15th year at Seedlings. I first joined when my daughter, Sierah, was three and now she is in college! My son, Sutter, went to Seedlings as well and is now in 8th grade. Time really does fly!

I have my degree in child development and family relations. I thought I'd go back to school and get a Master's degree, but instead decided to open a private preschool in Chico, California where I was living at the time. When my husband was transferred to Kirkland, Washington, I worked for a corporate preschool, but realized that wasn't the type of school I liked. When my husband was transferred to the Bay Area, I learned about Seedlings from another teacher, Miss Jen, and it ended up being the perfect fit! I started as an assistant teacher three days a week, then went to five days, then eventually took on some of the administrative work. I've been the Summer Director for eight years now and the full-time Assistant Director for five.

Q: What's your typical day like at Seedlings?

Kathy: Every day is so different! I support the teachers as much as I can. In the morning I help them get materials or help with children who



Kathy LaPlante

need extra support transitioning into the day. Then I'll check emails, order supplies, do inventory for our Costco runs, etc. Coleen, our school director, and I will spend time collaborating on big picture things that we want to do for the school. Right now, we are also working on some teacher trainings and helping with curriculum. In the afternoon I will help with nap times and getting the kids ready to head home. It's all of the above!

Q: What do you like best about Seedlings?

Kathy: Coleen's philosophy is family first. That sets the tone for all of our teachers and staff to feel safe and welcomed. The Seedlings Board also helps support us and makes it a lovely place to work. The parents and families are great and make Seedlings a warm and welcoming environment. They treat us like professionals in our field.

The play-based philosophy of the preschool is exactly my philosophy about kids. We love them where they are, honor them, and respect their

process. This is really important.

Q: How has Seedlings evolved in your time here?

Kathy: When I first started working at Seedlings, we did a lot of shows and plays that were more parent-pleasers, but now we've backed off those things to instead get families in the classroom in a different way, keeping it more child-centered. For example, we have activities like "secret readers" and have more involved room parents. People take the field more seriously than they used to. It's much more about education as opposed to just childcare. So that has been great.

Q: Do you have any favorite Seedlings memories?

Kathy: In 2017 we took the whole teaching team to the annual conference for National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We learned so much and came back refreshed and ready to go with new ideas for the classroom.

Q: Summer at Seedlings is so great! What is your philosophy and approach in building that program?

Kathy: My goal for Summer at Seedlings is to keep it as fun as possible! We keep the classes small, which is different than other summer programs, and we have mixed groups. This way the kids can get to know new teachers and students, while still having consistency with some of their same teachers to make the transition easier. We have special guest activities like magic shows, puppeteers, petting zoos, and more. Some years we have to switch magicians because the older kids have figured out their tricks and give away the surprise! It's all great fun and the kids love it.

Thank you, Kathy, for all that you do to make Seedlings great!

the GENEROSITY corner

By Nancy Henderson, Generosity Team Member

Each week we approach worship with a variety of expectations, hopes, and needs. Each week a multitude of folks have lovingly prepared a space of worship for us. This month, LOPC thanks some of them for their dedication behind the scenes so we can comfortably experience all that worship has to offer when we arrive.

With the help of member Carol King, LOPC has recently revived the Sanctuary Guild. Fellow member Tim Carlson helps coordinate three teams of six who rotate to spend a couple of hours each week on the pew racks. The teams straighten hymnals and Bibles, replenish prayer cards, provide sketch paper for kids, pencils, and any seasonal materials, including pledge cards. New volunteers are always welcome, of course!

As part of the Worship Team, member Ann Loar coordinates banners from LOPC's selection to align with seasons or LOPC themes. All banners are hand-made by church members – some recently, some years ago. Ann

deliberately chooses to leave some weeks with no banner, to rest our eyes, so that when a new banner is hung, it will be a surprise. Recently, November's quilt display offered assurance that warmth abounded in the sanctuary.

We thank Sally Roberts' team that prepares monthly communion, which can now be enjoyed in person again. We also honor LOPC's floral display team, ushers, and greeters. And looking next to the chancel, we pause to appreciate the many individuals who coordinate sound, video, Livestream, and all the various technological elements to provide a remote worship experience.

We celebrate the time, talent, and collaboration of the many individuals who contribute weekly to LOPC's worship experience. In 1 Corinthians 12:4, Paul reminds us we have "...different kinds of gifts, [and] the same Spirit distributes them." All gifts are welcome, so if you'd like to offer your time or talent to worship preparation, LOPC needs and appreciates you.



I am absolutely hooked on aborigine fabric, and so putting together this somewhat abstract quilt was great fun for me. I think I need to do another one!

- Ann Loar



After a visit to the Monterey Aquarium, I was inspired to make this quilt which took me about a year to complete.

- Louise Tanno



I made this with Japanese fabrics, using yukata, shibori, and kasuri, dyes from indigo inks. It is hand appliquéed with sashiko embroidery.

- Marietta Champlin

foundation

Foundation Welcomes a New Trustee

By Jim Beckemeyer, LOPC Foundation President

As we prepare to ring in 2023, the LOPC Foundation looks forward to welcoming a new trustee while also saying goodbye to a long-standing board member.

Linda Rosenthal will be joining the Foundation in January to begin her first term as a trustee. Linda joined LOPC in 2000, and has been active in many aspects of our community life. She has served with Children's Choir, Vacation Bible Camp, Kid's Rock, Youth discipleship, Kitchen Ministry, Membership, as a Fellowship elder, and had served on two music search committees. Linda sings and



serves in leadership with the choir, and is also on the Worship Committee. She works with the Racial Equity and Engagement Team and served on the emergency food supply team for Monument Crisis Center during the pandemic. Linda and her husband, Jeff, celebrated 31 years of marriage earlier this year, and are avid cyclists. Sons Matthew, Alex, and Charlie reside in the Bay Area.

As Linda comes on board, we say goodbye to outgoing trustee, Kristi Haigh. Kristi has faithfully served the Foundation for seven years, having held the role of vice-president for a



portion of her tenure. We will miss the wealth of knowledge, dedication, and energy that Kristi brings to the team, but look forward to staying engaged with her in the years ahead.

Please join us in welcoming Linda as a new trustee and thanking Kristi for her faithful service and enormous contributions.

Should you have questions about the Foundation, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the 2023 trustees: Jim Beckemeyer (president), Dara Youngdale (vice president), Lois Boyd (secretary), Jen Crocker (treasurer), Staci Johnston (at-large), Doug Bontemps, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Linda Rosenthal, and Mike Ross.

session

October Session Highlights

By Jeanette Shearer, Clerk of Session

November is a time for gratitude, and during worship on November 13, we will be installing new elders and deacons whose terms begin January 1, 2023 – most certainly a time of thankfulness for LOPC! In addition, we will install Terry Clark as the new Clerk of Session.

Elder Mark Weaver gave a succinct report from the Generosity Team, explaining that the pledge season will run from November to March. Print materials for the campaign have been mailed and posted online, and two videos featuring LOPC members will be shown during worship services. Mark noted that the Generosity Team is focused on inflation, which has continued to climb in recent years. The team asks that members prayerfully consider inflation as they plan for

their commitments to the church in the coming year. Mark urged session and congregants to focus on the good work the church is doing and provide additional giving accordingly.

The Church Nominating Committee presented the slate of new church officers for the 2023 year.

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

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

Youth Deacons: Paige Carpenter and Griffin Dubois.

Church Nominating Committee

Members: Heidi Johnson, Lynne Terril, Linda Rosenthal, and Steve Crocker.

Foundation trustees: Mike Ross, Jennifer Crocker, and Linda Rosenthal.

Committee reports were received and noted, as were additional reports outlining goals and strategies to meeting these goals. Session heard about upcoming activities and programs and received a review of committee measurements and metrics.

During this time of Thanksgiving and an eye toward Christmas and the celebration of Christ's birth, it is important to embrace all that LOPC is, and what it offers to so many.

finance

2022 Third-Quarter Results

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

LOPC is entering the last quarter of the year in a sound financial position. While year-to-date Congregational Giving, excluding Mission & Special Gifts, is coming in slower than budget by \$75,482, we have had a strong outpouring of gifts for our Mission Partners. Mission & Special Gifts were higher than planned levels, due to deployment of \$226,704 in unbudgeted gifts, including approximately \$100,000 to Ukraine and \$50,000 to Hope Solutions. In May, after session approval, we were able to give our great staff a \$39,000 cost-of-living bonus. On the Expense side, our Ministry teams continue to do an outstanding job making the most of our resources. We all owe our staff a big thank you. Mission expenses include \$226,704 of unbudgeted spending for Mission Special Gifts.

LOPC closed the September 30 period in a strong position with a shortfall of \$160,200, which is \$112,778 better than the budgeted shortfall. Please consider giving if you have not already, and thank you to those that have given. Let's all help to close out 2022 on a strong note.

Double Your Blessings

There are many ways to give of your time, talent, and treasure to LOPC. In the past few years, some of LOPC's seniors have found that federal income tax law changes provide an even more tax-efficient pathway for giving arising from Investment Retirement Accounts - IRAs.

Seniors may benefit more directly from federal tax law changes because qualified contribution deductions directly reduce adjusted gross income. This has allowed some seniors to increase their giving to LOPC because of new income tax benefits:

- Higher standard deductions available to all taxpayers increased concurrently with limitations on certain itemized deductions.
- New qualified contribution deductions are available to taxpayers who are required to take age-related distributions from their IRAs.

If you are a senior and interested in learning more, please confer with your tax advisor to learn if it is advantageous to fund your LOPC giving out of your required IRA distributions. Thank you for remembering LOPC in your end-of-year giving.

2023 Pledge Envelopes

If you requested a box of 2023 pledge envelopes, the boxes will be available to pick up in the Chapel December 11 - December 22 (excluding Saturdays).

If you have questions, please email our LOPC Accountant, Farah Mohammadzai, at farah@lopc.org. Thank you.

Statement of Income & Expense

January 1 - September 30, 2022

Congregational Giving	2022 YTD Actual	2022 YTD Budget	fav (unfav)
Pledge Income	\$ 1,603,814	\$ 1,659,300	\$ (55,486)
Non-pledge, loose, & other	172,647	192,642	(19,995)
Faith Component	7,300	7,300	—
Mission & Special Gifts	337,586	110,882	226,704
Total Congregational Giving	2,121,347	1,970,124	151,223
Session Emerging Needs Fund	39,000	—	39,000
Seedlings	130,000	130,000	—
User Fees	5,725	3,750	1,975
Foundation	301,842	301,842	—
Total Income	2,597,914	2,405,716	192,198
Expense	2,758,113	2,678,689	79,424
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (160,199)	\$ (272,973)	\$ (112,774)

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.



December Finance Giving Deadline for Tax Purposes

If you plan to make a year-end gift, LOPC must receive your mailed donation (postmarked 12/31/2022) or in-person by 5:00 p.m. on December 31, 2022. There can be no exceptions.

If you are making a stock gift, please notify our accountant, Farah Mohammadzai, (x229) with the type of stock it is, and how the gift should be applied. It must be in LOPC's brokerage account by December 31, 2022.

Please do not file your 2022 tax return until you receive your year-end LOPC statements, with written acknowledgment of your gifts to LOPC, which will be mailed in January 2023. Thank you for your generous giving to LOPC!



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



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 12/1/22

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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



We Gather **TOGETHER**

**LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2023 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN**



**Scan to make your
pledge online today.**



Pledge commitment envelopes can also be found in the Sanctuary pews and in the Ministry Center office, and in mailed pledge brochures.

Visit lopc.org/pledge to learn more.

For questions about how to pledge, please contact LOPC Accountant
Farah Mohammadzai, :**(925) 283-8722 x229 • farah@lopc.org**