

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2023

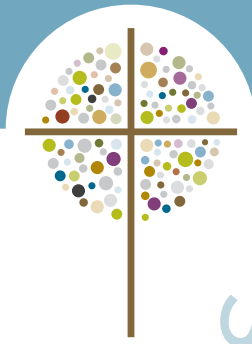
FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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

LOPC.ORG



So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

- 2 Corinthians 5:17

happy NEW YEAR!

By Peter Whitelock - Pastor, Head of Staff

It's time for us to mark the passing of another calendar year by greeting others with a hearty "Happy New Year!" With this good wish, we are expressing our hope that another person will have a joyful and blessed life this coming year. But what is the basis of our expectation that this might come true? Is there any real confidence for a better future contained in a simple greeting? Perhaps not, but we like to do it anyway!



In the passage above, the Apostle Paul lays out a foundation for his hope that a happy new year is possible for us all. When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, there is a true break with the past, and we are regenerated with new life that can only come from God. Old patterns, habits, and failures can be left behind with God's help, and the true story of our life is always the new life that the Spirit is seeking to build up in us over time.

As Barclay notes, "To Paul the Christian is, in his favorite phrase, in Christ, and therefore the old self of the Christian died in that death and he arose a new (person), as new as if (they) had been freshly created by the hands of God." So, while we celebrate the turning of a new year, Paul reminds us to give thanks as followers of Jesus Christ for the new quality of life we have received through him and are empowered to share with others always.

Happy New Year!

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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 January 1 for the February 2023 issue.

Thank you to all who contribute each month to Focus!

Need to reach us?

info@lopc.org • 925-283-8722



YOUTH

2023 Summer Service-Learning



Registration is open for the youth ministry summer service-learning experiences!

Short-term mission experiences can have a big impact for the youth at LOPC. Fifth through 12th graders who choose to spend a week of their summer vacation dedicated to service will:

- Discover where God is already at work in communities in need.
- Act as the hands and feet of Christ to share God's love with the world.
- Learn that those who seem different are not very different at all.
- Practice putting others' needs above their own desires.
- Lean on God to realize their ability to overcome new challenges.

June 5 – 9: Service Squad

A local day camp for youth completing 5th-6th grades in spring 2023.

Questions? Contact Alison Kunz
allison@lopc.org.

June 12 – 16: Salinas Middle School Service-Learning Trip

For youth completing 7th-8th grades in spring 2023.

Questions? Contact Alison Kunz
allison@lopc.org.

June 18 – 24: Guatemala High School Service-Learning Trip

For youth completing 9th-12th grades in spring 2023.

Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp
keris@lopc.org.

Confirmation Sunday February 5

Please join us in worship as we celebrate the youth confirmands for 2023! Through this program, youth confirm the promises made by their parents at their baptism; to share their intent to live as faithful followers of Christ. Youth will have learned more about Jesus and the Trinity, Prayer, the Bible, Creation, Sacraments and Worship, as well as God's Justice in a welcoming and relaxed environment.

This is a huge milestone not only in the life of the youth, but also in their families and the entire congregation.

We hope to see you there with us as we lift up these amazing young disciples of Christ!

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



A MONTH OF **love** does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Coming this February!

Every February, LOPC focuses on service and invites the entire congregation to come together to serve the greater community. It's a wonderful way to begin the new year reflecting on how we can all make a difference. A month of *love does* allows participants to experience what a volunteer opportunity at various agencies looks like with the hope that participants find a calling to serve on their own later in the year.

This year, the plan is to offer a hybrid approach that will consist of at-home and on-campus projects as well as several off-site projects at various LOPC mission-partner locations throughout Contra Costa County. We encourage everyone to choose at least one act of service during the month of February. Participants are welcome to work individually, with a friend, as a family, or can even serve as a group (fellowship, bible study, voyagers, et cetera.).

For more information on all the *love does* opportunities available this upcoming February, visit lopc.org/lovedoes.



mission

Recognizing LOPC's Winter Nights Family Shelter Leadership

This past November, LOPC hosted another successful season of Winter Nights Family Shelter on campus. For many years, members Jim Reiter and Rick Silvani have served as core leadership in the program, providing several weeks' worth of service and dedication to keep things running smoothly on campus. This year marks 15 years of service for Jim and 12 for Rick. In addition, 2022 marked the first year of adding an additional leader, Juanita Kizor, to the team. Both Jim and Rick have had a steadfast commitment to the program through its many challenges and successes. Jim and Rick share many fond memories of their experiences, such as when Jim helped a mother at the shelter get to the hospital while having gone into labor and when Rick helped give a teen some of their first driving lessons right here in the LOPC parking lot!

Please join us in thanking both Jim and Rick for their efforts over the years and join us in welcoming Juanita to the team!

2023 Monthly Food Donation List

Benefiting Monument Crisis Center

Place requested food in the MCC barrel on the plaza after Worship or to the Ministry Center Office during the week.

JAN	Peanut Butter (plastic container only)
FEB	Canned Soup
MAR	Tuna
APR	Ready to Eat (snap tops and pouch)
MAY	Oatmeal
JUN	Dry Rice
JUL	Canned Chili
AUG	Pasta
SEP	Canned Vegetables
OCT	Canned Fruit
NOV	Cereal
DEC	Dry Beans

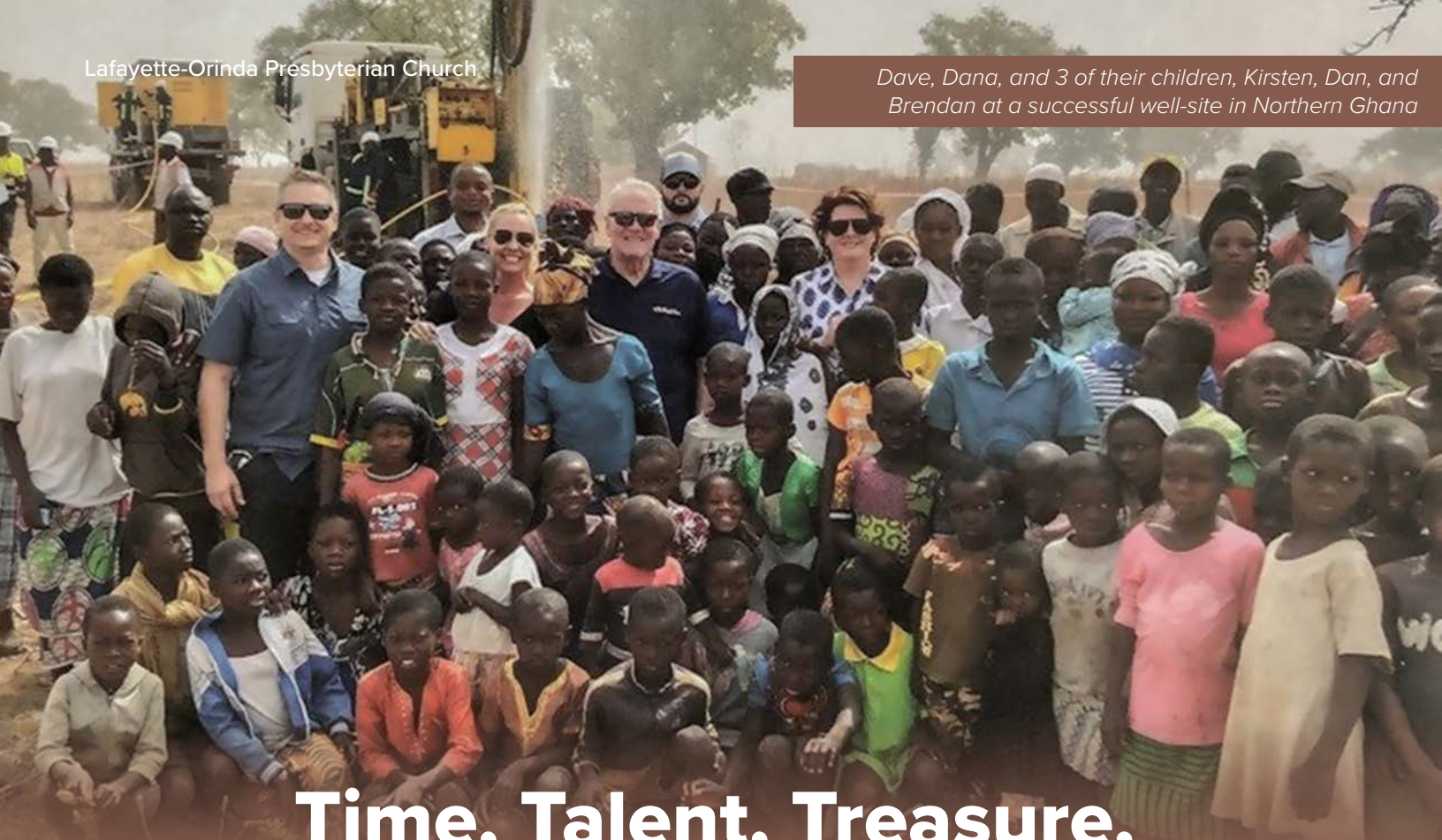


LOPC Member Recognized Posthumously by MCC

This past November, Monument Crisis Center, a LOPC mission partner, honored the late Diane Steuber for her long-time support and commitment to the organization. The facility dedicated its hospitality counter in honor of Diane. Monument Crisis Center provides all kinds of resources to Contra Costa County's most vulnerable residents and seeks to provide hospitality to all clients while at the center receiving services.



L to R: MCC Executive Director Sandra Scherer, Tom Stuber Hal Steuber, April Carlson, and Pastor Peter Whitelock.



Time, Talent, Treasure, & TRENCHES

an update on the Dornsife's water project in Africa

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

“If you get our financial help, you also get the Dornsifes,” says Dave Dornsife, LOPC member who, with his wife, Dana, have enabled millions of people in Africa to have clean water. “Our slogan is ‘Time, Talent, Treasure, and Trenches.’ All four are needed aspects of being stewards of the resources we provide to the projects we sponsor. We’re strong on trying to be good stewards in a large manner, but only in areas in which we participate.” Dana adds, “We feel blessed to have the resources we do, and really want to make a positive difference in the lives of these needy people.”

Dave has taken 36 trips, and Dana 16, to this impoverished part of the world. “We believe it is imperative

to have a firsthand understanding of the problem and witness the effects of proposed solutions in order to achieve the positive and sustainable results we expect,” says Dave, who has an engineering and mechanical background, and can often be seen helping with well digging.

Dave and Dana began their work in Africa over 30 years ago. Dave remembers his church sponsored 400 kids in a program of World Vision (an international Christian relief organization). “The church asked for volunteers to go and report back how these kids in a Nairobi slum were being helped. I went with three others, and the next year I went back again. After that trip I went to World Vision and asked, ‘Is there something more we

continues next page →

“When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”

-Isaiah 41:17

can do? I can see the need – people are starving and dying, and I want to change that.”

Soon after, several water projects in Africa were sponsored with World Vision, and drill rigs were supplied for digging wells in Ghana, Mali, Niger, and Ethiopia, Dave recalls that, in 2010, he and Dana approached World Vision about sponsoring a major new WASH (Water, Sanitation, Hygiene) initiative leading to work in 10 African countries.

“It’s an exciting program and growing,” says Dave. “We became involved in 24 African countries in 2016 and are moving toward our goal of serving nearly 3 million new people each year. In many villages, sanitation, latrine construction, and hygiene are approaching 100 percent in their homes which makes for dramatic changes in people’s lives. At this point we have brought WASH to 23.5 million people. The program brings WASH to a new person every 10 seconds.”

Dave points out that if he and Dana weren’t in the trenches and didn’t go to Africa every year to be involved in the work, they wouldn’t have developed better solutions and recognized the opportunity to ramp up the program.

“We chose to work in Africa because we had access to experienced personnel and management through World Vision,” Dave explains. “The staff works to improve the lives and education of the people. It is in this setting that we bring in the WASH practices. The challenge is that in Africa there are 345 million people without access to clean water.”

Dana has a great concern for the women who face an enormous task of simply keeping their families alive. “The one thing they need the most is the one thing they have the least of – clean water. The average distance a woman must walk to get water is about four miles, round trip. Millions of hours



Dana with villagers after town meeting in Senegal

are lost annually because women and their children must collect and haul water, hours better spent on childcare, development, education, agricultural production, and life sustaining economic activities.”

Over the years, the Dornsifes have provided countless drilling rigs to villages. For a village to have a rig come in, the people must create a water sanitation committee, which goes through specific training to understand how to maintain the well, how people get diseases, and why clean water is so important in preventing disease - all principles of WASH. A small amount is charged for the water and these funds are used for maintenance. After the village has a working well, a local representative of World Vision provides ongoing

guidance so the water supply will continue.

Dave and Dana say one reason they chose to fund water projects is that results are immediately apparent. “The difference is amazing when we visit a village that has received clean water. Children are cleaner, healthier, and going to school. Mothers have time to nurture their children, cook more, perhaps start a garden or a cottage industry,” says Dave.

“When someone looks you in the eye and says, ‘I just want my children to grow up without being sick all the time,’ and you are the vehicle that allows a person to achieve that goal, that’s a miracle. We believe God wants us to make thousands of those miracles possible through our clean water projects.”

community



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

Unwrapping the Riddle: Understanding the Russian Empire

With Larry Lamborn, Retired CIA Analyst
January 6 at 10:00 a.m. online

Larry Lamborn says: “Russia is a paradox – even to many Russians. It is ‘in’ Europe but not ‘of’ Europe. It has influenced Europe, yet for centuries was totally cut off from Europe and subjected to Asiatic rule. Some Russians embrace European ideas and values, while others, with equal force, reject anything foreign as ‘un-Russian.’ “Can we unwrap the Russian riddle?” Lamborn asks. “Let us try. We will search for the historical roots of Russian political tradition, discovering the legacy of centuries which still



Larry Lamborn

exert influence over current Russian policies and will look into the distinctive nationality of Ukraine. We will also try to comprehend Vladimir Putin’s vision for Russia.”

Lamborn is a retired U.S. Army Reserve full colonel and a CIA Senior Operations Officer with more than 40 years of service, including in Vietnam, Korea, Iran, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and many other hot spots around the globe.

A specialist in insurgency and revolutionary warfare, Lamborn is also an author of several books including his latest, *Invisible*. This

title focuses on covert Russian and Chinese efforts to use social media to spread disinformation with the intent to divide Americans and discredit our Constitutional procedures. He holds a BA degree in History and an MA degree in Chinese Studies and is an Air War College Graduate. Residing in San Antonio, Texas, Lamborn has served neighbors in various capacities, and presently has turned his attention to addressing the problem of homelessness in his community.

Note: This will be a webinar presentation with registration required. Please visit lopc.org/forum to register.

Our History, Our Power, Our Possibilities

Presented by LOPC’s Racial Equity and Engagement Team

Featuring the Rev. Sandhya Jha

February 5, 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

The work of LOPC’s Racial Equity and Engagement Team is to create educational opportunities to inform members and friends about issues of race and to provide new ways to think about how we can better live into the goal of being an anti-racist church community. Join us for an informative discussion this February, with the Rev. Sandhya Jha, on the history of race in the United States, as well as what gifts, power, and role LOPC has in

helping to create an anti-racist future for our community and beyond. The team hopes that this program creates worthwhile education and discussion, so please join us for this long-awaited event and support the work of the Racial Equity and Engagement Team.

Register online at lopc.org/ registrations no later than January 26. Suggested donation of \$10 for lunch.

Young Families Connect

January 8, following Worship on the Patio

Come hang out with each other enjoying breakfast bites and coffee.

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

Fourth Monday

Book Group

January 23, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *Taste of Ginger* by Mansi Shah.

Contact Jean Fiske at jdfiske@gmail.com to join.

Fourth Friday

Book Group

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

Join us to discuss *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur* by Alka Joshi.

Email Catherine Coleman at awaitingword@gmail.com to join



Rev. Sandhya Jha has spent 15 years as an anti-oppression trainer and consultant, primarily with non-profits, youth organizing groups, universities, and faith/interfaith organizations. She is the author of *Room at the Table*, *the history of people of color in the Disciples of Christ*, and *Pre-Post-Racial America: Spiritual Stories from the Front Lines* on the subject of race and spirituality in America.

finance



We Gather TOGETHER

For Good • For Giving • For God's Glory



2023 Pledge Campaign

Thank you to our members and friends who have already pledged so generously to the 2023 pledge campaign!

For those who have not yet had the opportunity to make their pledge, it's not too late! There is still time to help us reach our goal of \$2,450,000, and we invite you to submit your pledge this month.

Pledges can be submitted online, in person, or by mail. Pledge cards can be found in the Ministry Center office and sanctuary pews. Pledge payment envelopes are available in the Chapel during weekdays and on Sundays.

Your pledge will help LOPC plan and budget for the following:

- Growing Mission Ministry
- Working for a better, more just world
- Expanding our special needs ministry
- Nurturing and welcoming children, youth, and families no matter what challenges they may be facing.
- Providing support to Seniors in our community
- Taking care of LOPC staff
- Developing spiritual formation opportunities

Visit lopc.org/pledge to read more about the important ministry happening at LOPC. Please contact Farah Mohammadzai, LOPC Accountant, at farah@lopc.org or 283.8722 x229 if you have questions about pledging.

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.

What is Per Capita?

Per Capita is a Latin phrase that means "for each head." We use it to refer to an annual fee that our congregation pays to higher levels of the Presbyterian Church based upon the number of active members at LOPC. For 2023, the Per Capita amount is \$39.00 per family member, or \$78.00 per couple. We encourage members to make an extra contribution to help defray this expense in addition to their other gifts. To facilitate this, you can give a check to the church with "Per Capita" noted on the memo line or give online through the website Giving link. LOPC budgeted \$67,509 this year for our Per Capita obligation. We are hopeful the congregation remembers to donate to Per Capita, as we make the shift from using Pledge envelopes. Wouldn't it be wonderful if a significant portion of this could be covered by your extra contribution, enabling us to add additional support to LOPC ministries?

journey of Faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

What stands out in Joan Breece's journey of faith is her service to LOPC and to others. It varies from helping clean up after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans to teaching youngsters in our Sunday school, The Garden.

Joan relates that she first met Conrad, her future husband, in a Cazadero Christian Camp when she was 13. Joan didn't connect with him again, however, until 25 years later. The couple dated and then married in 1968. "Our lives changed two years later when we were blessed with our daughter, Kirsten. When she was 6 years old, she began asking questions about the Bible and religion. We tried a few churches but they didn't meet our needs. Then we visited LOPC and knew we had found a church home."

A program that the Breesces felt enhanced their faith journey was LOPC's Chair of Contemporary Theology. "All the speakers gave great food for thought and discussions in our household. Through their teaching, Jesus seemed real and was 'the way.'"

As an elementary school teacher, Joan also shared her teaching talent in various children's programs at LOPC. "These experiences have been very meaningful because seeing the faith of



Joan Breece

children has always deepened my own faith."

Joan served on the church Personnel Team where she says she learned how a Presbyterian really functions. She also was on the Presbytery Mission and Visionary Team for four years, meeting and working with people all over the Bay Area in many different types of Presbyterian Churches. It gave her a real understanding of both racial and income differences, as well as the wide range of political viewpoints present in many congregations – all

of which made her appreciate how fortunate she was to be a part of LOPC and its inclusive values. Joan also found meaning in LOPC's Bible studies (including those for Lent and Advent), participating on the board of Presbyterian Women, and Thursday Fellowship.

Joan has participated in several mission trips, including Houma, Pearlington, Jackson, Mississippi, and Joplin, Missouri, three times. She was on a trip that LOPC sent to Israel and its mission partners there. "Understanding various cultures and having true empathy for others is so important in the troubled world in which we live. Trying to show love and kindness to others is the reason we should exist on this earth," she says.

Joan remarks that, "Our amazing pastoral staff, past and present, have shaped me. And I feel so pleased to be part of the team which called Chris Baldwin to join our staff. I cannot imagine what my life would be without this church community."

Joan's favorite bible verses are from Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 8: "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven... A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace."

care

Tech Tutoring Session Returns

January 22, 4:00 – 4:30 p.m. on Zoom

Did you miss one of the fall Tech Tutoring sessions? Or do you just want more help on one of your devices? The Care team will be offering a Zoom Tech Tutoring session this month, once again taught by tutor, Cameron Shaw, a high school senior at The Athenian School in Walnut Creek, who provided help during the fall sessions. Check Sunday's Connections and Monday's Staying Connected email for instructions on how to register.



Dementia Support Group

January 4 & 18, 10:30 a.m. on Zoom

Join our ongoing support group to give you ideas for self-care and other-care.

Email Linda Fodrini-Johnson at LindaFJ620@outlook.com to register.

Stephen Ministry

Trained Stephen Ministers are waiting to be assigned to walk beside you safely in person, on Zoom, or over the phone. You don't need to go it alone. Conversations are confidential. Stephen Ministers are ready to meet with you weekly for as long as you need.

To learn more, please call Pastor Jaime at (925) 283-8722, ext. 226 or Shirley Moore at (925) 324-6466.

Home Communion

Deacons will offer in-person home communion for those unable to attend Sunday morning worship. A pair of deacons will come at the arranged day and time and hold a brief service. Deacons are fully vaccinated. If you know someone who may want home communion served, let us know.

Please call the Deacon line at 925-283-8722 x274.

hold in
PRAYER



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

Stephen Hunt, who passed November 6.

Gary Hargrove, who passed December 1.

Helping Hands

This team of deacons have a variety of ready-to-heat, nutritious meals that can either be picked up or delivered when needed. Special diets can be accommodated.

Call the Deacon line at 925-283-8722, ext. 274.

LOPC's Prayer Team

The prayer team has been meeting weekly for about 10 years and includes volunteers who are grateful for the opportunity to bring your requests and praises to God. The team now meets for about an hour on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. and welcomes all to join us weekly or even occasionally. The first Tuesday of the month they meet in the Davies Room while the other Tuesdays are exclusively on Zoom.

Starting with a devotional, the team shares thoughts and experiences, and then prays for individual requests submitted via prayer cards or from the website. These are held in the highest confidence with no information leaving our group unless the submitter asked to speak with a Stephen Minister or pastor. Did you know the team also prays weekly for groups of people including more than 40 educators, including Seedling staff, 40 doctors, nurses, first responders, and many more in the community. If you or a loved one works in education, health care, or public safety, please submit names to us and LOPC's Prayer Team will raise them up to God for his protection and provision every week.

If you'd like to submit a prayer request, prayer cards can be found in the pews on Sunday morning, and a digital version is available online at lopc.org/prayer-requests.

If you'd like to join our team, please contact Ciara Bird at ciara@lopc.org or Leslie Finertie at finertie@comcast.net or 925-255-3331. You can pray out loud or, if you want, you can simply listen and pray silently along with us.

WELCOME new members

Darci Olson

Darci has lived in Lafayette for the past 24 years with her husband and children. Her children all attended Seedlings Preschool and were very involved in all the youth programs at LOPC. She is happy to finally become an official member of this congregation and looks forward to getting more involved and meeting more people.



Cati & Stephen Dole

Cati and Stephen Dole live in Lafayette and have recently moved to the area from Houston, Texas. They have been married for 13 years and have three children: Maggie Cate (8), Christian (4), and Harrison (3). Stephen works at the Chevron Refinery in Richmond, and Cati is a stay-at-home mother. The family loves to watch Auburn and Saints football, swim, and do anything Disney. For the Dole family, the draw to LOPC was family ministry, the church services, the people (shout-out to the Men's Group), and the opportunity for community ministry.



foundation

LOPC Foundation Annual Report

by Jennifer Crocker, Foundation Trustee, Treasurer

The LOPC Foundation closed its September 30, 2022, fiscal year with \$9,976,000 of invested net assets (equity), after deducting \$319,700 of remaining commitments to LOPC. Legacy estate and other gifts in the amount of \$229,550 were received. The prior year amount was \$25,000.

The Foundation investments are made up of 23 diversified mutual funds and exchange traded funds. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) focused funds are 55% of the investments.

Foundation trustees appropriated \$395,000 for church ministries and \$146,500 for facilities reserve-study project expenses and facilities capital expenses.

Learn more about donor opportunities for legacy estate gifts and other gifts to stabilize Foundation support of church ministries at the LOPC website and from Foundation trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Doug Bontemps, Lois Boyd, Jen Crocker, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Staci Johnston, Linda Rosenthal, Mike Ross, Dara Youngdale.



Jennifer Crocker

Net asset values of the Foundation's 11 funds and Facilities Reserve Account on September 30, 2022, after additions and disbursements to the church:

Unrestricted

General Ministry Fund	\$ 2,970,000
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Restricted*

Deacon's Endowment Fund	\$ 216,000
Thursday Fellowship Fund	222,000
Youth Fund	322,000
Christian Leadership Fund	221,000
Women's Endowment Fund	2,000
Mission Endowment Fund	94,000
Music Fund	101,000
Landscape Maintenance Endowment Fund	111,000
Facilities Endowment Fund	4,982,000
Facilities Reserve Account**	717,000

*Restricted funds and accounts are available for grants for limited or restricted uses designated by donors or Foundation trustees.

**The Facilities Reserve Account provides funds for planned as well as unexpected facilities and future capital projects. In fiscal year 2022, \$172,000 was set aside in the account for future LOPC capital expenditures.

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

Happy New Year from all the Thursday Fellowship volunteers! In the new year, we look forward to welcoming new guests, new volunteers, and to making new memories.

On December 1, though numbers were reduced due to rainstorms and the effects of the flu, we had a magical day. It was filled with lively conversations and fun activities. Guests made pine cone Christmas trees for a craft project and sang Christmas carols with Mike Kistner on guitar, along with Gillian Roebuck and Bill Bowman leading the singing. Though it was rainy outside, Fellowship Hall was filled with a cozy warmth.

On December 15, we had a full house and a day packed with activities, which included making greeting cards, an appearance by Santa, with the children from Seedlings joining the festivities! After a tasty catered lunch, set on festively decorated tables, visitors were entertained by the choral octet Moonglow from Rossmoor. It was a special day filled with the joy, warmth, and fun that is the hallmark of our Thursday Fellowship community.

We hope you will join us soon!



January 5

Duo Gadjo, featuring Isabelle Fontaine and Jeff Magidson, will entertain us playing Jazz with a French Twist.

January 19

Mary and Rich Holden will educate us with a travelogue on Madagascar.

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

Thursday Fellowship is looking for volunteer drivers to bring guests to Thursday Fellowship two times a month at 11:00 a.m. Email Julie Peterson at julie@lopc.org for information.

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

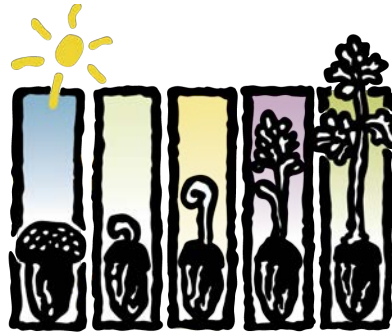
seedlings

Festive Fun at Seedlings

By Kaylin Deutscher, Communications, Seedlings Board of Directors

At Seedlings, the children and teachers love to get festive, and we kicked off the holiday season early with some exciting Halloween activities! Seedlings teachers made the occasion extra fun with costume days at school, special treats, and Halloween-themed art projects like painted pumpkins and paper jack-o-lanterns.

This year, the Seedlings board social chairs planned a new “Trunk-or-Treat” event, which was a big hit. Families decorated their cars with spooky and fun Halloween decorations and passed out candy to our adorable Seedlings trick-or-treaters in the LOPC parking lot. We had a costume contest, and the kids ate a fun dinner together on the labyrinth. The children had a blast, and it was a great time for Seedlings families to connect.



SEEDLINGS Preschool

The fun didn't stop when November came around – our great teachers and staff planned fun activities, lessons, and art projects to showcase the Autumn season and Thanksgiving. I especially liked the wreaths made of fall leaves one class made!

The winter holiday season is always an exciting time, and it was wonderful to see how Seedlings teachers make it special for the kids in their classrooms. Christmas decor, music, and books were a great treat for the kids in December, with special days where kids can wear Christmas jammies to school, have festive treats, and more. Our teachers also made sure that they incorporated families' unique holiday traditions and cultures for the time of year. It is important to help all children feel welcome and included, plus it was fun for kids to learn about how each other's families celebrate.

Everyone was looking forward to the holiday break in hopes that all the kids and Seedlings staff would be able to rest, recharge, and come back refreshed for more fun in 2023. Happy New Year!

session

November Session Highlights

By Jeanette Shearer, Clerk of Session

Much of the November session meeting was dedicated to discussion of the 2023 LOPC budget. Jim Nagle, Finance elder, gave a report which outlined closing out 2022 and financial goals for 2023. The final budget will be approved at the January session meeting.

Session also voted for the two at-large members to serve for 2023 on the session Planning Council (SPC); results of the vote will be announced at the December meeting. The SPC is comprised of the Clerk of session (Terry Clark, 2023), Moderator (Peter Whitelock), Finance Chair (Jim Nagle) and two at-large members (elders currently serving on session) selected

by the session. SPC meets monthly to ensure progress toward LOPC's vision and strategic plan, provide leadership in the vision-based budget process, establish plans for leadership development, ensure effective communication and coordination among leadership teams, and to formulate special topics for the session agendas. SPC communicates and provides feedback to session on a regular basis.

The church's 2023 annual congregational meeting will be held February 5 in the sanctuary immediately following worship. During this meeting the congregation will hear reports from Finance, Foundation,

Membership, and Personnel. Pastor salaries will be presented to the congregation for approval. All are welcome to attend this meeting but only members may vote.

Peter Whitelock provided session with a report on current staff transitions. Wonderful progress has been made in filling the Music Director and Technical Manager positions.

In conclusion, those rotating out of their elder positions in 2022 will have time during Spiritual Formation at the December 20 meeting to share some of the things they have learned and encountered during their tenure.



the GENEROSITY corner

Thoughts of the Kurth Memorial Garden

By Alan Coe, LOPC Member

The Kurth Memorial Garden (KMG) is a beautiful place for remembering those we loved. It is a place to find comfort and inspiration, a hallowed place of peace and tranquility, and a quiet place for meditation and prayer. Its birth traces back to an idea generated by the Rev. Andy Kurth, a former LOPC staff member who served the church for many years after his retirement as a pastor. Currently, its operation is supervised by three LOPC members, Lynn Trowbridge, Kristi Haigh, and Judy Kronmiller, who lovingly donate their time and talent.

These three volunteers would welcome others to join them in giving their time and talents, and experiencing the joy and sense of fulfillment they do. Right now, potential expansion plans are being discussed for the Garden's future to provide more space.

On a personal note, Jan, my wife of 46 years, was interred in the Garden in late 2020. We jointly made arrangements in advance of her passing. Our family loves to visit with Jan every time we are on campus.

More information on the Kurth Memorial Garden is available on the LOPC website at lop.org/kurth, including how to contact Lynn, Kristi, or Judy.

"Giving of one's time on the KMG board gives me a unique opportunity to listen to church members as they develop plans for what they want when they or their loved ones have left this earth."

– Lynn Trowbridge

"One of the kindest things a church member can do is to make arrangements for a niche in the Garden for a loved one's remains or a plaque to commemorate those buried elsewhere."

– Kristi Haigh

"Every time I have helped a person choose a niche or a plaque, I feel a sense of gratitude for having this site on our campus. Often, when helping a person choose a pre-need niche, we smile about where would be the best "view" in the Garden."

– Judy Kronmiller



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