

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2023

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

[LOPC.ORG](http://LOPC.ORG)



“ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. ”

- Romans 15:13

# the ministry OF CHRIST

By Jaime Polson - Associate Pastor

One of things that most encourages my faith is reading stories about how Jesus ministered to those who have been told they are less than others. Perhaps they were those suffering from an illness like leprosy, or those who don't conform to societal norms of the time. Through Jesus and his healing, poignant words, people find their dignity restored and their faith renewed or deepened. Jesus, and the way he prioritizes both people and relationships over rigid structures and rules, gives people hope and creates a renewal of spirit within them.



As followers of Jesus, we are offered the opportunity each day to experience this same joy and peace in believing. By living lives committed to prayer, worship, study, service, and connection with one another through our Christian faith, we can experience God's spirit within us and others. As we continue into the second month of a new year, I invite you to find one new way you can deepen your relationship with God this year. Perhaps it's joining a small group, reading Scripture daily, or joining in worship services. Through these spiritual practices, may we be blessed with new experiences with God that bring us joy and hope as we serve others in our community and world.

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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](mailto:communications@lopc.org)  
no later than February 1 for the March 2023 issue.

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

### Need to reach us?

[info@lopc.org](mailto:info@lopc.org) • 925-283-8722

# FORGIVENESS

## *a Lenten Study*

### *Sermon series*

Combined with a small group study, this sermon series will explore the different facets of forgiveness, and, in the words of study author Marjorie J. Thompson, how it is “the healing stream flowing out from the crucified Christ over a world that does not know how desperately it needs the healing.”

**February 22 • Ash Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.**

### *Two Lost Sons*

Luke 15:11 - 32

**February 26 • Psalm 51**

### *When the Truth Hurts*

**March 5 • Matthew 5:43 - 48**

### *Be Perfect*

**March 12 • Luke 23:32 - 43**

### *Repentance*

**March 19 • Matthew 18:23 - 35**

### *Forgiving as a Living*

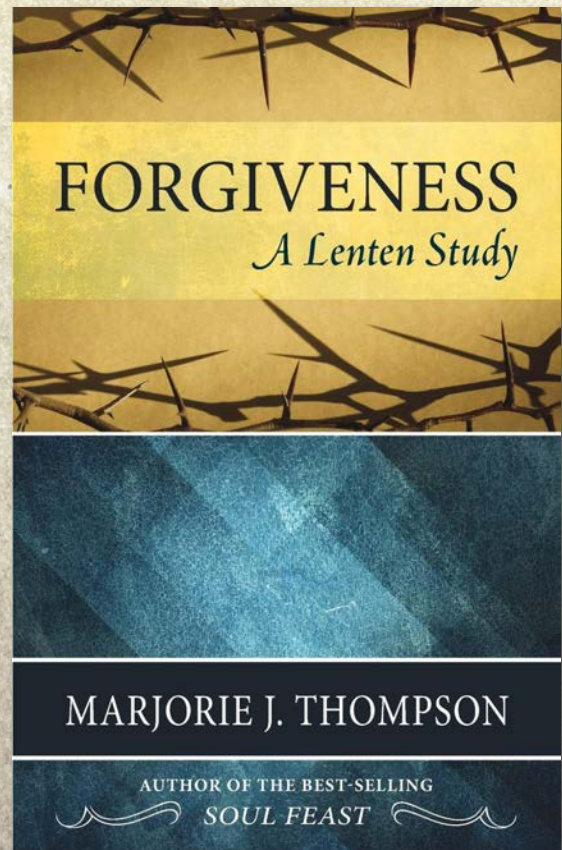
**March 26 • Luke 7:36 - 47**

### *Overwhelmed with Love*

### *Small-group study*

This series and study will focus on the book *Forgiveness: A Lenten Study* by Presbyterian pastor Marjorie J. Thompson.

**Sign-ups and more details on available study groups are coming soon. Please visit [lopc.org/lent](http://lopc.org/lent) for more information.**



Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church



# A MONTH OF **love does**

love protects, love hopes, love never fails



3 FOCUS • FEBRUARY 2023



# For more details or to register please visit [lopc.org/lovedoes](https://lopc.org/lovedoes).

A Month of *love does* provides participants with an experience volunteering at various mission partners in the hope that participants find a calling to serve on their own later in the year. This year's hybrid approach offers at-home, on-campus, as well as off-site projects. We encourage everyone to choose at least one act of service during the month. Participants are welcome to work individually, with a friend, as a family, or can even serve as a group (fellowship, Bible study, Voyagers...).

## off-campus

### Habitat for Humanity

February 25, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
1250 Las Juntas Way, Walnut Creek

*Note: Please register no later than February 12 to participate in this activity.*

Join others to work at Habitat for Humanity's newest project, Esperanza Place in Walnut Creek. The project aims to build 42 affordable homes with the help of many volunteers and donors. Come serve together with others from LOPC and make a gift of your time and talents to this new community.

### White Pony Express

February 26, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
3380 Vincent Rd, Pleasant Hill

Join others as we sort and repackage food for distribution from farmer's markets, grocery stores, and restaurants throughout the East Bay to be redistributed to those in the community that are food insecure.

### Food Bank of Contra Costa

March 5, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
4010 Nelson Ave. Concord

Join others from LOPC sort, pack and box food for distribution by the Food Bank.

## from home

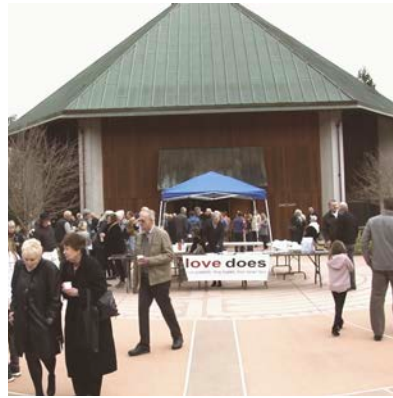
### Hygiene Kit Assembly

Assemble hygiene kits that provide those experiencing homelessness dignity. The kits will be delivered and distributed to Operation Dignity.

### Breakfast Bags

Assemble breakfast bags for those experiencing homelessness. The kits will be delivered and distributed to Trinity Center and Operation Dignity.

## on-campus



**On-campus activities start at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 26, in specified locations.**

### CALICO

Davies Room

Join others to creating pola-fleece blankets for abused children who visit CALICO to achieve justice and healing.

### Loved Twice

Oak Room

Sort baby clothes for distribution to low-income parents in Alameda County.

### Monument Crisis Center

Fellowship Hall

Work with others to assemble 40 shopping carts to be used by the clients of MCC that do not have transportation.

### Trinity Center

Fellowship Hall

Sort donated clothing including warm coats, jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, and shoes into categories for delivery to Trinity Center for distribution.

### Hygiene Kit Assembly

Fellowship Hall

Work with others to assemble toiletry kits to be distributed through the Monument Crisis Center to those in need.

# YOUTH



## love does with YOW & BTW

February 22 & 26

On Wednesday, February 22, at YOW and Sunday, February 26, at Youth Alive and BTW, the youth and adult advisors will participate in service projects as part of LOPC's wider love does ministry. Activities at Youth Alive and BTW will include folding and packing baby clothes for Loved Twice, a not-for-profit organization that provides clothing to new parents. YOW will pack Spring gift baskets for Hope Solutions! This is always a highlight experience for everyone involved. Please join us!

See page 4 in this issue for more information and please visit [lopc.org/lovedoes](http://lopc.org/lovedoes) to register.

## 2023 Summer Service-Learning

### Registration is open!

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.
- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:keris@lopc.org).

## BIG Games @ YOW

February 8

Middle school youth will spend the afternoon at YOW playing fun and interactive team games! We hope they join us for a special time of fun, fellowship, and bonding.

Questions? Contact Alison Kunz [allison@lopc.org](mailto:allison@lopc.org)



## 4th Grade Preview @ YOW

February 15

Youth in fourth grade will have the opportunity to visit YOW and see what it's like to be a part of LOPC's youth ministry! Fourth graders, along with Children's Ministry Staff, will join YOW youth in games, participate in worship, and listen to a short devotional from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Youth are encouraged to Invite fourth-grade siblings and friends!

# community

## 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

Join us for an informative discussion with author and consultant the Rev. Sandhya Jha. Rev Jha will speak 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](http://lopc.org/registrations) by January 31.**  
**Suggested donation of \$10 for lunch.**



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.

### About the Team:

The LOPC Racial Equity and Engagement Team pursues its charge to form relationships with communities of color and to work toward racial justice, we take to heart the example of Christ and the discernment of LOPC, and embrace these values so we “bend the arc” toward God’s justice. As followers of Christ, we are called to love, seek justice for, and care for those who have been pushed to the margins of society. Indeed, Jesus declared that he was called to “set the oppressed free,” (Luke 4:18), and we see Jesus repeatedly seeking out those who were left out of the power structure of his day.

## FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

### Covid, RSV, Influenza, and Polio

With Dr. Margaret Liu

February 3 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom

Dr. Margaret Liu, adjunct professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of California, San Francisco, will join us to explain the current state of medical science regarding the epidemiology of Covid, RSV, influenza, and polio and to describe vaccine and public health strategies.



Dr. Margaret Liu

The very recent successful development of RSV vaccines and their strategies (immunizing pregnant women and older people) will be outlined. These diseases will be covered in the context of how vaccine development and usage and other protective measures affect individual and public health going forward,

she says.

Dr. Liu earned an M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School, served on faculty, and is a Visiting Scientist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Renowned in vaccines, gene delivery, and cancer immunotherapy, Dr. Liu pioneered DNA vaccines, as well as bispecific antibodies for cancer. Named one of “The 50 Most Important Women Scientists” by Discover Magazine, she

is also known as “The mother of DNA vaccines” – a technology that laid the foundation for mRNA vaccines.

Dr. Liu was formerly senior advisor in vaccinology at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, board chairman of the International Vaccine Institute, and a member of the groups that drafted World Health Organization various vaccine guidelines, and a member of Anthony Fauci’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Advisory Council.

“This is a rare opportunity to learn firsthand about the latest developments in vaccine research. Be sure to join us for this important discussion,” says Darlene James, a member of the First Friday Team.

# community



## Andy Amstutz wins First Annual Don Jenkins/Lamorinda Village Service Award

By Bobbie Dodson, LOPC Member

L to R: Andy Amstutz, Teresa Geringer - 2022 Mayor of Lafayette, and Sharon Iversen, Board President of Lamorinda Village

The crowd assembled at the Lafayette Community Center burst into applause as longtime LOPC member Andy Amstutz was announced as the winner of the First Annual Don Jenkins/Lamorinda Village Service Award.

Executive Director of Lamorinda Village, Kathryn Ishizu, remarked, "It is fitting that the first Village Service Award goes to Andy. Don and Andy were in at the inception of the Village and became founding board members. They worked for years to develop the organization. I think Don would be very pleased to have Andy as his first honoree." Don Jenkins also was a prominent, longtime LOPC member, active in many of the church's programs prior to his recent passing.

"I feel very grateful for the recognition from our Village community..." Amstutz responded.

"When I said yes to Don's request that I join the Village organizing task

force it was just what I was looking for as my next personal growth chapter. Volunteering is best when you can work on things you care about and have some experience with. I was prepared by many years in leadership at IBM and at LOPC. Lamorinda Village was a natural idea whose time had come, and it continues to develop very well. I am fortunate to have found such a good place to serve and grow."

"Originally, I did not know Andy," Ishizu acknowledged. "However, I began to look forward to his being at meetings because he'd bring joy with him when he walked into the room. He still does."

A snapshot of what Andy has done for Lamorinda Village includes Task Force for Lamorinda Village Concept, chair of Outreach and Recruitment, Founding Board Member from 2015 to 2020, membership chair, starting a men's coffee and conversation group, and was responsible for upgrading the organizations database and website.

Some of the services he provided include being a driver, handyman, grocery and meal delivery, computer help, food preparation, gardening, and visitor.

Founded by Ruth McCahan, Lamorinda Village's doors opened to serve older adults in our community in April 2015. In recent years, the organization has more than doubled in size with 249 current members.

Ishizu explains, "Our Mission is to actively build a community that embraces connections, caring, and choices in how we live and thrive. We believe that Villages run on the power that comes from connecting people who possess abundant energy, creativity, knowledge, and the determination to make the world a better place with each other. At Lamorinda Village, we make every effort to meet the needs of our members through programs, services, and referrals."



# Friendship Circle

February 16 & March 16,  
5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

For youth with special needs who are freshmen in high school through young adult transition programs. This is an evening of fellowship with art and crafts projects, games and other social activities. We have special needs buddies that are from local high schools and colleges joining us for the evening.

We would love to have high school and college-age youth volunteer to be friendship buddies with our youth in the community that have special needs. This event will qualify for school volunteer hour requirements.

For volunteer registration and questions, contact Susan Wentworth at [susan@lopc.org](mailto:susan@lopc.org).

Registration required: Visit [lopc.org/registrations](http://lopc.org/registrations).



## People of Faith Respond: The Supreme Court and Us

Sunday, March 5, 4:00 p.m. at LOPC and on Zoom

Join us for a discussion focusing on the historic 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decisions relating to abortion and prayer in public school. The impact on religious freedom and the doctrine of the separation of church and state will be discussed along with an exploration of scriptural passages from different faiths. We will explore traditions and beliefs in the context of how the Supreme Court's decisions impact the freedom to practice faith in the U.S. Panelists include LOPC's Pastor Peter Whitelock, Sheik Hassan Maseehullah of the San Ramon Valley

Islamic Center, Rabbi Jill Perlman from Temple Isaiah, and Terry Clark, LOPC elder, as Moderator.

This event is sponsored by Neighbor 2 Neighbor: an East Bay initiative among Christians, Jews and Muslims whose mission is to grow understanding and respect for the religions of the world, through social initiatives that promote deep inter-relationships among neighbors of different religions, ages and cultures

For questions contact Terry Clark at [terence.clark08@gmail.com](mailto:terence.clark08@gmail.com).

## Warm Clothing Drive

To benefit Trinity Center

February 25, 9:00 -11:00 am,  
Oak Room.

On behalf of Trinity Center, LOPC is collecting blankets, sleeping bags, gloves, thermal tops and bottoms and sweatshirts for both men and women. Clothing should be gently used and free of stains.

February 25 drop off only please.

## Young Families

### Connect

February 5 following Worship

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.

For more info, email Michelle Browning at [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org).

## Fourth Friday Book Group

February 24, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *The Authenticity Project*, by Clare Pooley.

Contact Catherine Coleman at [awaitingword@gmail.com](mailto:awaitingword@gmail.com) to be added to the group.

## Devotionals

Want to start your day with devotional messages from our pastors and program staff? Devotionals are posted twice each week.

Catch our videos on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or at [lopc.org/devotionals](http://lopc.org/devotionals).

# *thursday* Fellowship

*caring • sharing • loving*

*A program of Senior Care Ministries*

Over the past several months, due to pandemic and weather related concerns, we have had to cancel on several occasions. Thus, we have been reminded of the value and importance of Thursday Fellowship to our guests and volunteers. The program offers all of us the opportunity to be a part of a caring, interesting, and happy group of people who share a meal and enjoy creative and enriching programs and activities together. Meaningful friendships are developed and nurtured—enriching our lives and bringing us joy.

Our guests and volunteers were looking forward to being back together after a prolonged Christmas and New Year's hiatus, but we were not able to meet January 5 due to the inclement weather and hazardous driving conditions. We made up for it on January 19, when we had double the fun! We started the day with lively conversation and snacks followed by a craft in which we created dream catchers. After lunch, we enjoyed the fantastic Duo Gadjó with vocalist Isabelle Fontaine and guitarist Jeff Magidson who performed "Jazz with a French Twist". It was a glorious day!



## **February 2**

We will start our morning with Mary and Rich Holden, who will give us a virtual tour of their travels to Madagascar, and after lunch, pianist Leslie Darwin O'Brien, accompanied by bassist Terry Miller, will entertain us with music. Leslie's beautiful spirit and delightful voice will warm our hearts as Valentine's Day approaches.

## **February 16**

Michael Kistner (always a Thursday Fellowship favorite!) will entertain us with a sing-along.

### **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

**If you are looking for a new activity in 2023 we invite you to come as a guest or a volunteer and bring a friend. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Julie Peterson at [julie@lopc.org](mailto:julie@lopc.org). We hope to see you in 2023.**

*Questions? Contact Julie Peterson at [julie@lopc.org](mailto:julie@lopc.org) or call 925-283-8722 ext. 281.*

# journey of Faith

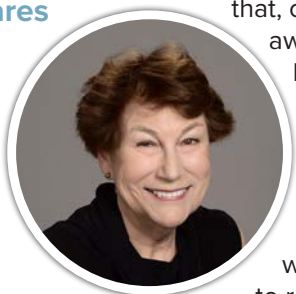
By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

## Roberta Spaulding shares her journey:

“There were Morning Prayers and the Ten Commandments posted on the walls of my classroom at the private elementary school I attended for several years. I also went to Sunday School.

These were the beginnings of my faith journey. In high school I attended a Presbyterian school at which we had chapel every morning, religion classes three times a week, and mandatory church attendance every Sunday.

“Like many of my generation, I revolted against religion during college and into my thirties. Then I began to realize



that, on my own, I had drifted away from being the person I had thought I wanted to be. During this time, I read Conrad’s Heart of Darkness and bolted awake on realizing that the heart of darkness lies within. Reflection led me to return to church and to a welcome detachment from some preoccupations.

“When I moved to San Francisco I found myself only a block and a half from a church. When I first attended Calvary Presbyterian I had the same feeling that I had when I visited my grandmother. It truly was ‘coming home.’ After I purchased my home in Concord, I looked for a church that

also felt both welcoming and diverse. I found it at LOPC. The gift of time after retiring allowed me to commit to joining ongoing groups. Being on the Congo Mission Team has been especially important. I have seen and learned from those who truly are companions in faith, who walk with those they serve, not trying to be the director or manager of others’ journeys.

“If you had asked me years ago what type of group I thought I would join, I would have said Science and Religion. But now I think faith is the dominating factor in all that we do—a gift one accepts, or not. The blessing is that God is kind and forgiving, offering His gift of faith when He knows one is ready to accept it.

## care

### Touch of Love



The Touch of Love project, sponsored by Congregational Care and Senior Ministries, gives many volunteers the opportunity to be the Body of Christ. A team of volunteers celebrate community by visiting with members who are isolated at home. This past November, about 12 deacons, elders, and others gathered to write several personal notes to senior

recipients. At the same time, another group of 10 volunteers met at Lassie Colebourn’s lovely garden to learn how to plant succulents and assemble Touch of Love bags that included arrangements, personal notes, fun word puzzles, and a reminder of the community’s loving support. Then eight families, recruited with the help of LOPC staff member Emily Austin, along with elders and deacons hand-delivered the bags in December. Lively conversations about Christmas memories gave the families and seniors a chance to connect, and, most importantly, experience how much everyone at LOPC cares for them and wants them to feel connected and remembered. They are our role models for how to live a long, life full of service and faith as they continue to share their gifts with all of us.



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

**Sam Gallinger**, who passed December 20.

**Verna Farr**, who passed December 27.

**Sherri Nissen**, who passed January 8.

# staff announcements

## Director of Music • Bryan Dunnewald

After a lengthy and eventful search process, LOPC is pleased to announce that Bryan Dunnewald has accepted the position of LOPC's Director of Music. He will assume the role on February 1. Bryan brings extraordinary gifts to the ministry of music. LOPC also would like to express gratitude for the phenomenal leadership of Mitchell Covington during the interim period, and for stepping forward at the right time, keeping the choir together in voice and spirit.



### Here is a special note from Bryan:

*"I'm honored and excited to lead the music at LOPC, a place and people that made an impact on me from my first Sunday as a substitute organist. Our worship, outreach, and community are truly remarkable, and I look forward to building our music program on a foundation of excellence established by my predecessors. Here's to a great new year ahead, full of beautiful music and friends united by a shared love of singing!"*

## Technical Operations Manager • Kevin Miller

LOPC welcomes Kevin Miller as its new Technical Operations Manager. Kevin comes from the world of storytelling, specifically using A-V equipment, and bringing all the excitement that comes with editing everything together to create a cohesive and immersive experience. He spent his college years at Academy of Art University in San Francisco, studying with professionals in the Motion Pictures and Television Department. In 2017 he received a BFA degree in Directing. On his career path to becoming a Hollywood filmmaker, with a special appreciation for the superhero genre, Kevin will manage LOPC's audio and video department.



## Co-Director of Youth • Allison Kunz

LOPC's Co-Director of Youth, Allison Kunz, will be stepping down from her position in March. Allison has decided to be a stay-at-home mom and take a rest from ministry. She and her family will be moving to Florida this spring to be closer to their extended family members. LOPC will miss Allison and her family dearly, and we wish them all the best.



### Here is a note from Allison:

*"After seven wonderful years serving as Director of Youth Ministry at LOPC, I have decided to resign to stay home with my young children for a time. My husband Rick's wonderful new remote-work position as Software Engineer with VMware makes this transition both possible & necessary for our family at this time. My last day will*

*coincide with the end of the 2022-23 youth ministry program year on Sunday, March 12.*

*I want to thank everyone at LOPC for sharing your community's incredible youth with me and for providing the opportunity for me to exercise my ministry leadership skills. It has been a remarkable joy in my life to know your youth, to walk together through life for the past seven years, and to encourage these youth as they discover and share their individuality with the world. The youth, families, volunteers, and staff of LOPC will forever have a special place in my heart. I am thankful for technology which makes continued connections possible, and I look forward to learning how the youth continue to grow, flourish, and give back to their communities in future years! I am also grateful for my opportunity to hold this role for a time; to help lead the ministry, to grow in compassionate*

*leadership, and to receive support from the entire congregation. Collaborating with our youth advisor team, family ministry team, and staff have made the work both meaningful and fun, while co-leading alongside Keris has been a particular blessing.*

*Please keep our family – myself, my husband Rick, Danielle (age 4), Zoey (age 2), and Ender the corgi – in your prayers as we make this career transition and also prepare to move to Florida in May."*

Moving forward as Allison departs, LOPC elders for Youth Ministry and several staff members will lead a hiring committee. During that time, LOPC will continue to offer excellent guidance to the many youth ministry programs.

**Please send any questions regarding the transition and search to Pastor Jaime Polson at [jaime@lopc.org](mailto:jaime@lopc.org).**

# finance

## Financial Report

By Jim Nagle, Finance Chair

We are truly fortunate and thankful for everyone that has given of their time, talent, and treasure to LOPC in 2022. LOPC is blessed to be in a strong position financially, after another interesting year. Overall, total contributions came in strong for the year, and exceeded expenses by \$64,584.

LOPC received \$95,790 in higher Pledging. Congregational Giving was \$2,767,811, or \$7,689, slightly less than planned. Because of an additional Seedlings contribution of \$30,181, higher User Fees of \$19,587, and lower ministry spending, LOPC did not use the Session Emerging Needs funds, of which \$132,694, was originally budgeted to supplement giving shortfalls and \$39,000, which was approved in May for staff bonuses. Our congregation generously contributed \$133,600 for the Faith Component in December. LOPC deployed \$415,463

in Mission, Special Gifts & Offerings, which was a \$266,365 increase, relative to budget, including gifts to Ukraine and Hope Solutions. Total Giving was \$3,763,569 and exceeded budget by \$176,021.

Year-to-date Ministry Expense of \$3,283,522 was \$154,927 lower than planned. Personnel expenses were lower than budgeted and Worship spending was higher, due to several staff transitions in 2022. Other ministry areas were below budget, related to post-pandemic programming changes. The staff at LOPC has done an incredible job being nimble and responsive by reallocating our resources, to meet the needs of the congregation and our mission partners.

**LOPC finished 2022 in a very solid position to start 2023, which will allow us to do more, in all areas of our ministry. Thank you for your ongoing support!**



### There's still time to pledge for 2023!

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

- Growing Mission Ministry
- Working for a better, just world
- Programs for children and families
- Providing support to Seniors in our community.
- Developing new spiritual formation opportunities

Thank you to members and friends who have made a pledge for 2023.

Pledge envelopes are available in the Chapel during weekdays and on Sundays.

Visit [lopc.org/pledge](http://lopc.org/pledge) to pledge or contact LOPC Accountant Farah Mohammadzai for assistance, [farah@lopc.org](mailto:farah@lopc.org), 283.8722 x229.

### Per Capita

Per Capita is an annual fee that LOPC pays to higher levels of the Presbyterian Church based upon the number of active members. **For 2023, the Per Capita amount is \$39.00 per person.** 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?

Statement of Giving & Expense			
January 1 to December 31, 2022	2022 YTD Actual	2022 YTD Budget	Fav (unfav)
<b>Congregational Giving</b>			
Pledge Income	\$ 2,305,790	\$ 2,210,000	\$ 95,790
Non-Pledge, Loose Offerings, Other Giving	328,421	365,500	(37,079)
Faith Component	133,600	200,000	(66,400)
Congregational Giving w/o Special Gifts	2,767,811	2,775,500	(7,689)
Giving: Mission & Special Gifts & Offerings	415,464	149,098	266,366
<b>Total Congregational Giving</b>	<b>3,183,275</b>	<b>2,924,598</b>	<b>258,676</b>
Session Emerging Needs Fund	-	132,694	(132,694)
Seedlings	160,181	130,000	30,181
User Fees	24,857	5,000	19,857
	395,256	395,255	1
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,763,568</b>	<b>3,587,547</b>	<b>176,021</b>
<b>Expense: Ministry Teams</b>	<b>3,283,522</b>	<b>3,438,449</b>	<b>(154,927)</b>
Spending: Mission & Special Gifts & Offerings	415,463	149,098	266,365
<b>Contributions in excess of Expense:</b>	<b>\$ 64,583</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 64,583</b>

# session

## December Session Highlights

By Jeanette Shearer, Clerk of Session

*“Believing in the true spirit of Christmas, I commit myself to: Remember those people who truly need my gifts, express my love in more direct ways than gifts, examine my holiday activities in light of my deepest values, be a peacemaker within my circle of family and friends, rededicate myself to my spiritual growth.”*

At December’s session meeting, Pastor Peter Whitelock gave these thoughts about inspiring others to be leaders in the church and in the community. Similarly, outgoing session members Catherine Coleman, Rick Burris and I gave witness to what being an elder has meant to us these past three years - especially in the light of the global pandemic, how we adjusted to worshiping a different way, and watching our faith grow.

Incoming elders, including Terry Clark, were welcomed into a new arena of serving others. Jeff Patton and Lee O’Haver have committed to serving on Session Planning Committee (SPC)

which meets regularly before Tuesday session meetings. Appreciation for all agreeing to serve was noted.

Discussion of staffing updates was presented by Peter, noting that a record number of seven staff changes occurred this year. This time of transition gave pastors and staff a chance to re-think their duties and come up with creative and meaningful ways to fill in gaps where necessary. It also meant many hours of searching and interviewing. Some positions have been filled and announcements for others are expected in 2023.

Mark Weaver, head of the Generosity Team, gave an update on the

stewardship campaign. On-line pledge cards were a new addition to LOPC , with the option of selecting a specified percentage increase from the 2021 pledge. Additionally, Peter reported that analyzing pledge data is underway in order to better understand the giving of the congregation. Age group, household size, and online versus printed pledge cards are some of the areas being reviewed.

Finally, Bill De Wolf, Personnel chair, led an executive session reviewing Peter’s accomplishments and goals for himself. In addition to providing an example for other staff members who undergo the review process, it gave session a better understanding of achievements and objectives for the future.

**Thank you for an opportunity to serve at LOPC. Have a blessed 2023.**

# seedlings

## It’s Seedlings Registration Time

By Coleen Moulton, Director, Seedlings Preschool



It is already time to plan for the 2023 - 2024 Seedlings program year with registration beginning February 27. Currently enrolled families are registered first, then members of LOPC, followed by community members. Seedlings serves over 100 families from Lamorinda and the surrounding communities. We offer programming for children six-months to five-years-old. This year, we reopened our Sweet Peas infant program and added an additional class for toddlers: the Tiger Lilies. We were able to welcome 34 new families to our program and look forward to more new families joining our community next year!

**To register for our program please email the office at [seedlings@lopc.org](mailto:seedlings@lopc.org).**



## the GENEROSITY corner

### LOPC Families and Individuals Offer Support at Winter Nights Family Shelter

by Nancy Henderson, Generosity Team

*Editor's Note: Each month the Generosity Corner will feature LOPC members who give generously of their time, talent, and treasure.*

Each year from October through mid-May, LOPC, alongside other congregations in the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, takes a turn sharing their facilities with homeless families. For two weeks, LOPC hosts and supports families with peace, love, shelter, nutrition, and respect at Winter Nights Family Shelter.

Last November, more than 160 members of LOPC welcomed 28 unhoused guests! Staff and volunteers set up a warm, safe, private tented neighborhood in Fellowship Hall. Adults and teens tutored kids after school, teams cooked nutritious and varied warm meals, and both youth and adults showed up before dawn to prepare coffee and breakfast cereals so families could leave by 7:00 a.m. each morning.

A key weekday activity offered at the shelter is a 5:00 p.m. tutoring session for children. Winter Nights volunteer tutors work one-on-one with school-age children to focus on

learning and literacy skills. This time also gives parents a chance to catch their breath, freshen up, or be fully present with younger children and infants.

One un-sung hero, Ursula Klier, has annually picked up, washed, folded, and delivered guests' linens. "It's unbelievable how so many single moms carry it all on their shoulders, yet manage to take care of kids and get them to school," she says. "This year, the families rose extra early on their last LOPC day, to wash and fold all the linens before they left. They are amazing."

It is amazing what our LOPC community can do using its time, talents, and treasure! In this case, not only did LOPC members provide a safe and nurturing space for our Winter Nights guests, but they also gained a sense of fulfillment by giving of themselves for others. We look forward to hosting again next year

*"Homelessness is not going away. Jesus told us to reach out and help fellow humans. Even if it's temporary shelter, we must offer warm food and space."*

– Rick Silvani

*"It's not what we expect. If we put ourselves in a position to touch, speak with, help someone we'll never see again, we gain an element of warmth and satisfaction that can't be bought."*

– Jim Reiter

*"Before Covid, we tutored the same student all winter, following them from shelter to shelter, working with their parents and teachers. It was incredible to build relationships and witness the progress."*

– Randi Long

*"My 8th-grade daughter Kennedy loved helping her 2nd-grade student understand and complete his homework. And Kennedy grew in her own self-worth as she realized that she had a lot to offer."*

– Jenny Bond



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

Thanks to past gifts received by the  
Foundation, we have committed  
**over \$581,000**  
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To Learn more about legacy giving, please reach out to a Foundation Trustee  
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