

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

APRIL 2023

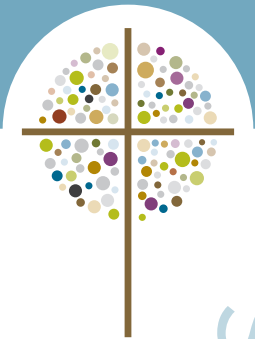
# FOCUS

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

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





# EASTER people

By Lauren Gully - Pastor, Mission & Outreach



**B**y the time this edition of Focus reaches you, we will be drawing nearer to Easter. As Christians, we believe we are Easter People. This means we are people who have been shaped by the resurrection of Jesus. Through this, we know that suffering, disappointment, and even

death can be transformed to new life. Because we are Easter People, we are people of relentless hope despite the challenging realities of this world.

Recently, I've experienced this congregation living into the role of Easter People. In late February, LOPC's session voted to endorse California Senate Bill 4 (the Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act), a comprehensive bill that provides a streamlined process for religious organizations to develop affordable housing on their properties regardless of local zoning restrictions. Even though LOPC has no unused available land for such a build, by supporting this legislation, we are helping local churches in our county and Presbytery with their own affordable housing projects and uniting with them to work to provide promising solutions to the housing crisis in our area. LOPC's support for this bill, reminds me that we are a people of hope even in the face of incredible challenging societal problems. (For more information, please see *Session Highlights* on page 13, and visit [lopc.org/advocacy](http://lopc.org/advocacy).)

I've also seen our congregation live into hope and our identity as Easter People through this year's Lenten study on forgiveness. It is incredibly challenging for us as Christians to live into forgiveness, a central theme of our religion. However, I've seen and heard our members explore questions around this topic and lean-in to where we are looking for forgiveness in our own lives or to extend forgiveness to others. As people of hope, we know that suffering and disappointment can transform into new life through forgiveness.

As we celebrate Easter this year, I hope that however you engage with our church community you will see the hope that God has for us and the world through Jesus Christ and feel inspired to live into our identity as Easter People

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Coleen Moulton - Seedlings Preschool  
Bryan Dunnewald - Music

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### Submissions & Deadlines

Please send requests for submissions to:  
[communications@lopc.org](mailto:communications@lopc.org)  
no later than April 1 for the May 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

# holy week & EASTER

Palm Sunday • April 2

Worship service at 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday • April 6

Worship service at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday • April 7

Worship service at 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday • April 9

Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m.

Worship services at 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

## Palm Sunday Egg Hunt Sunday, April 2, following Worship

There will be age-appropriate egg hunts, breakfast/dessert bites, live music, arts and crafts, games, and a lot of fun! This is a free event to the community, and all are welcome!



## Easter Azaleas

This Easter, we will continue our well-loved tradition of adorning the sanctuary with beautiful white azaleas. Please return this form with your payment to the Ministry Center in person or by mail to 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, CA 94549 by Thursday, March 30, or purchase after the Sunday service on the Plaza on March 19, March 26, and April 2. A list of flower dedications will be published in the Easter Sunday bulletin. Those who have donated azaleas may take them home following the 10:30 a.m. service, or they may be picked up in the Sanctuary narthex April 10 - 12.

Questions? Contact Lexi Morrissey at [lexi@lopc.org](mailto:lexi@lopc.org)



I / We would like to donate a white azalea to adorn the sanctuary on Easter.

Given By: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

or

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Azaleas are \$20 each. Please make checks payable to LOPC.**  
Please fill out and return this form to the Ministry Center Office at LOPC by March 30.

Contact Lexi Morrissey at [lexi@lopc.org](mailto:lexi@lopc.org) with questions.

Please Circle  
Cash      Check



# easter SPECIAL OFFERING

## Improving the Lives of Children:

Benefiting Children of Faith Missions & Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children

### How to Donate, starting March 27:

*(donations received will be divided  
equally between both organizations)*

- Visit [lopc.org/giving](https://lopc.org/giving). Be sure to select **Easter Offering** from the dropdown on the donation page.
- Write a check to **LOPC** with **Easter Offering** in the memo and place in the collection box in the Narthex or the black mailbox in front of the Ministry Center.

This Easter, LOPC's special offering will promote the work of two long-time mission partners, Children of Faith Missions and Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children. They will be lifted up for the work they are both doing to improve the lives of children.

Children of Faith plans to use the funds to purchase a new 10-seater mini-truck, vital to providing daily transportation for students to and from university, medical appointments, and various errands.

The funds Atfaluna receives will go to fund a classroom for a year. The work the school does for children who have lost their hearing includes a curriculum of hearing-loss rehabilitation, auditory training, speech training, and a well-rounded general education.



## Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children

**L**OPC has been a strong supporter of Atfaluna School for Deaf Children since 2003. The LOPC-sponsored classroom of second and third-grade students is currently filled with 20 wonderful kids (*pictured right*). A registered Palestinian NGO located in Gaza City, Atfaluna empowers children with hearing disabilities of every faith to have a fulfilling life through preschool, education, rehabilitation, advocacy, vocational training, and employment opportunities. In 2022, Atfaluna received the Humanitarian and Civic Services Award by the Takreem Foundation for 30 years of providing inclusive interventions for persons with and without disabilities in Gaza.

Atfaluna has an average enrollment of about 170 students annually, ranging in age from six to 17. Most children have additional disabilities beyond deafness and come from families well below



the poverty line. Curriculum includes hearing-loss rehabilitation (auditory training and auditory speech training) and a well-rounded general education curriculum. Atfaluna provides a close teacher-to-student ratio, with class size limited to no more than 12 students. Other school features include:

- Development of special educational curriculum tailored to the needs of hearing impaired

students;

- Non-curriculum activities including library sessions, arts and crafts classes, and recreational field trips;
- Healthy meals for all students to mitigate deteriorating conditions in Gaza affecting most of their families;
- Social support and counseling for deaf children and their families.

## Children of Faith Missions

**A**t Children of Faith, education is emphasized as the key to helping break the cycle of poverty. Based in Visakhapatnam, India, COF has partnered with LOPC for over 10 years. Founded in 2004 by Rosie and Anand Thandu, COF is both a children's home and school, serving 120 school-age children. The facility prepares students for a better future by promoting physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. Many children served by COF are orphans or have only one living parent or extended family that struggle to provide adequate care. Children who live at COF attend school on the grounds under the care and supervision of founders and their staff. The school provides first-through-10th grade, after which the children attend junior college in the nearby community for 11th and 12th grades. After 12 years of education, most children go on to college or technical school with support from COF.



COF Founder Rosie Thandu had the opportunity to visit LOPC this past fall to thank the congregation for the support and love they received and shared plans for the future. An immediate need that Children of Faith is facing is to replace an aging vehicle (*pictured above*) which they rely on to transport students. On school days, the vehicle works overtime taking older children to and from junior college, driving COF teachers back and forth to

the home's school, taking children to medical appointments or hospital visits, and for errands such as groceries and vegetables. The vehicle's age and growing mechanical unreliability have posed a serious threat to the organizations ability to serve children in their care. Your generous gifts this Easter can help replace it. Help COF continue to transform lives by providing a safe home, nourishment, and education!





# love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

This year's *love does* Day exceeded expectations! The enthusiasm and energy were palpable. People were not just excited about serving, but also about being back on campus together in-person. It was great to see so many families working together as volunteers to accomplish amazing things in the community! Thank you to the many volunteers who gave so generously of their time to help make this year's *love does* Day such a success. If you were unable to participate, there will be many more opportunities during the rest of the year. Below is a summary of just some of what was accomplished on that day:

- **49 boxes of baby clothes** were packed to be delivered to new mothers.
- **53 polar-fleece blankets** were made to comfort abused children.
- **40 carts were assembled** to help those without a car access food at Monument Crisis Center.
- **35 bags of warm clothing** were sorted for distribution to homeless men and women.
- **226 hygiene kits** were assembled for Monument Crisis Center to distribute to clients.
- **10 people worked at White Pony Express** sorting and packing food for distribution into the community.
- **10 people worked with Habitat for Humanity** on-site at Esperanza Place in Walnut Creek.
- **94 hygiene kits** were assembled by at-home volunteers.
- **194 breakfast bags** were assembled by at-home volunteers.
- **14 people sorted and packed food** for distribution for the Food Bank.
- A *love does* special offering resulted in **\$9,136.80 donated to LOPC mission partner STAND!**



Look for opportunities to serve all year long at [lopc.org/lovedoes](https://lopc.org/lovedoes).



# foundation

## That's What Friends are For

By Lois Boyd, LOPC Foundation Trustee

Imagine having a friend in your life whose sole purpose is to focus on and support you, your decisions, and your future successes – someone you can always rely on to be there for you. The analogy may not be perfect, but this describes the purpose of the LOPC Foundation, a faith-driven organization whose vision and mission are singularly focused on partnering with LOPC to:



Lois Boyd

- Be a reliable lifelong partner,

providing significant funding for its vibrant ongoing and new ministries.

- Support session's decisions on how to utilize LOPC Foundation grants with a particular focus on expanding mission outreach and maintaining and improving church facilities.
- Encourage members and others to become Friends of the Foundation, to ensure the future viability of LOPC and its ministries.

As we try to navigate these times of rampant divisiveness, it is reassuring to know that the Foundation remains dedicated as a loyal partner with LOPC, existing solely to align with and support the church's mission in perpetuity.

One of the verses of the song that is the title of this article captures this spirit:

*Keep smiling, keep shining*

*Knowing you can always count on me, for sure*

*That's what friends are for*

*In good times and bad times*

*I'll be on your side forever more*

*That's what friends are for.*

And as scripture tells us, *"Nothing will be impossible with God."* (Luke 1:37)

► To learn more about how to become a Friend of the LOPC Foundation visit [lopc.org/foundation](http://lopc.org/foundation).

# seedlings preschool

## Get Ready for Summer at Seedlings!

By Kaylin Deutscher, Seedlings Board, Communications

With summer just around the corner, we are looking forward to another Summer at Seedlings program!

Summer at Seedlings takes place for six weeks in June and July, with daily special events and special visitors throughout the program. It provides a fun and exciting environment for the children to enjoy, where they are surprised by activities like Dino Digs in the sandbox, puppet shows, and petting zoos.

### Some of the fun themes and activities in store for this summer include:

- Endless Imagination, featuring a magic show with Joel Paschall and a Goldilocks and the 3 Bears Puppet Show.
- Summer Olympics featuring relay races, obstacle courses, and

gymnastics.

- Up, Up, and Away featuring rockets, bubble mania, soda explosions, and dry ice science.
- Just for the Fun of It featuring a pajama and pizza party, snow cones, and a spray playground.
- Animal Planet, featuring a visit from Little Explorers Petting Zoo and Fur, Scales and Tales Animal Show.

This year, Summer at Seedlings coincides with Vacation Bible Camp at LOPC. We're excited to have some children join us for both and may have a bridge program these days for the Seedlings children to stay on campus to rest and recharge in between Summer at Seedlings in the morning and VBC in the afternoon. We hope everyone is as excited for Summer at Seedlings as we are!





children

Join us for LOPC's



# Vacation Bible Camp

## June 5-9

**K**ids will explore the sunbaked Southwestern desert as they dig into examples of God's great love! Each day campers sing songs, play team-building games, devour yummy treats, perform experiments, and create themed crafts, all while developing connections with peers and group leaders. This year, children will participate in hands-on service activities focused on the non-profit organization, and long-time LOPC mission partner, FotoKids. Camp attendees will then travel to Guatemala later this summer with LOPC's Youth mission trip. Each day at camp concludes with a Canyon Closing that

gets everyone involved in living what they've learned, preparing them to be the hands, feet, and heart of God in their community.

Staff would love to open camp to as many families as possible, but are dependent on volunteer capacity. Relationships built with children during this week can last a lifetime, and volunteers provide an essential component to our program. Daycare will be available for the children of volunteers (under age 4).

General registration begins April 1. We are also still actively recruiting volunteers. Capacity is determined by

how many volunteers participate and campers will be enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

- **Who:** Kids 4 years old (by September 1, 2023) to children who have completed 4th Grade by June 2023.
- **Dates:** Monday, June 5 – Friday, June 9, 2023.
- **Times:** 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- **Cost:** \$125 per child.

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

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Visit [lopc.org/vbcamp](https://lopc.org/vbcamp) for more information.

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# YOUTH

## ↙ 2023 Summer Service-Learning ↘



### JUNE 5 – 9:

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



### JUNE 12 – 16:

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



### JUNE 18 – 24:

**Currently Full.** For high-school youth completing 9th-12th grades in spring.

## 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.



## LOPC Youth Missions Scholarships Fund

If you would like to contribute to the LOPC Youth Mission Scholarships, please send a check to LOPC with that written in on the memo line. This will help subsidize the youths' costs, allowing more of them the chance to participate in these wonderful service experiences in the future.

► **Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp [keris@lopc.org](mailto:keris@lopc.org).**

# care

## Stephen Ministry Lookouts Needed

By Jean Lee, LOPC Member

Stephen Ministry began its ministry at LOPC in 2003. Over the course of its 20-year history, Stephen Ministry has benefited many in the congregation. You may have read some of their testimonials in previous issues of Focus or viewed their video testimonials in worship or on the church website. It is worth noting that several previous care receivers who were not LOPC members were so appreciative of the care this ministry provided, that they became active members of LOPC! Still, the fact remains that some are unlikely to reach out and ask for help. Nevertheless, many who are dealing with a difficult time are in fact very receptive to having the spiritual care of a Stephen Minister when it is offered.

Stephen Ministry would love to recruit more *Lookouts* - individuals who become aware of people in the congregation and in the community who are hurting and could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister. Lookouts pave the way by telling a potential care receiver about Stephen Ministry, perhaps giving them one of our informative flyers, and, if the person is interested, asking for permission to pass on the person's name and phone number to the Stephen Ministry Referrals Coordinator. The coordinator will then meet with the person to answer any questions, determine if Stephen Ministry is appropriate for the specific situation, and if so, assign an available Stephen Minister who would be a good fit.

In addition to pastors and other Stephen Ministers, lookouts are comprised of deacons, LOPC staff, and more importantly people just like you, who can seek out others in the community who are dealing with grief, illness, family issues, or any number life's challenges, and let them know about the care they can receive from a Stephen Minister.

**If you know someone in the community who could benefit from the care and support of a Stephen Minister, please contact the Referrals Coordinator, Shirley Moore, at 925-324-6466.**

**For more information, please visit [lopc.org/stephen-ministry](http://lopc.org/stephen-ministry).**



## Home Communion Visits

Deacons are happy to come and serve home communion at any time that is convenient for you.

**Please call the Deacon line at 925-283-8722 x274 to arrange a visit.**

## Meal Delivery

If you have a new baby, are recovering from illness, surgery, or in the midst of any other life situations, the deacons have a variety of meals that can either be picked up or delivered to your home.

**Please call the Deacon line at 925-283-8722 x274 to arrange a visit.**

## Home Visits

If you or someone you know may benefit from occasional or regular home visits, we have a team of deacons who are eager to do so! Our team members who call on you are vaccinated and will abide by county health guidelines.

**Please call the Deacon line at 925-283-8722 x274 to arrange a visit.**



### Sherri Nissen

who passed January 8. A memorial will be held April 22 at 11:00 a.m.

### Kathryn Heaney,

who passed February 2.

### Ginny Murphy,

who passed February 21. A memorial will be held May 20 at 10:00 a.m.

### Carlos Ontiveros,

who passed February 25. A memorial will be held July 8 at 11:00 a.m.

### Jim Stalker,

who passed March 2.

### Brenda Nirenstein,

who passed March 3. A memorial will be held July 22 at 11:00 a.m.



# *thursday*Fellowship

*caring • sharing • loving*

*A program of Senior Care Ministries*

*April 6 & 20 at 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall*



*Join us:*

*April 6*

In observation of Easter, it will be a blessing to welcome the Dancers Circle who will present a program of interpretive dance.

*April 20*

Join us for a toe-tapping good time as we welcome back the Rossmoor Square Dancers.

By Julie Peterson, Thursday Fellowship Coordinator

March “roared in like a lion”, but Thursday Fellowship escaped the stormy weather and we were so happy to be together. On March 2, we were delighted by the musical talent of flautist Meriel Ennik. She began with the hauntingly beautiful Ave Maria and also played several other sing-a-long songs.

On March 16, we celebrated with a Saint Patrick’s Day theme, with champion bagpiper Fred Payne to perform! Guests and volunteers alike were decked out and

“wearin’ the green”. Birthdays were acknowledged, tables, decor and food were coordinated. It was a grand day.

Every Thursday Fellowship gathering is fun and full of activity for seniors! Transitioning from crafts or exercise to lunch and back to our places to hear entertainment is a challenge because everyone is having so much fun visiting. We are truly a caring community who are interested in each other and share a deep bond.

**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

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

# community



## Breakthroughs in Learning

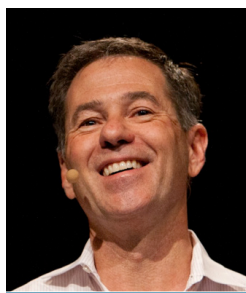
**When AI Meets Neuroscience: Making Your Child's World Their Screen, Without a Screen.**

**April 14 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom**

*By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member*

Entrepreneur, Jim Marggraff, is the featured speaker at April's First Friday Forum (FFF). Marggraff says, "New brain research can be combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create multi-sensory experiences that accelerate learning at any age. When this happens for young children, we will be preparing our next generation to lead the world to new heights and to solve our world's most challenging issues." Marggraff will present a hands-on sneak-peek demonstration of the new technology he is creating to show how this is possible.

A serial inventor and entrepreneur, Marggraff has been Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year, Father of the Year, and a TED speaker. For more than 30 years he has dedicated his energy, vision, and inventiveness to developing standards, applications, technology and products for companies committed to creating innovative solutions, improving learning, and advancing



Jim Marggraff

human creativity, curiosity, and communication. In 2020, he founded his seventh company, Kinoo.com, a breakthrough literacy and learning platform for young children and family members to develop critical skills without screens. Children interact with ordinary paper,

books with sounds, light, and motion.

Among Jim's achievements was helping to grow the startup LeapFrog from \$16 million to \$680 million in annual sales in five years. Jim's dedication to technology-based learning helped LeapFrog sell over \$1 billion of Leappads and educational content worldwide in less than five years. Jim's work as lead voice-over talent for LeapFrog, has been used by tens of millions of LeapPad users. His inventions and content have impacted more than 100 million children and adults in reading, math, and language skills and have sparked and fueled a passion for lifelong learning for people around the globe. Jim's LeapPad

invention is also listed in the "MIT 150," the top 150 inventions and contributors from MIT graduates.

In February 2019, Jim was awarded the "Rotary STAR Humanitarian Award" for his work in propagating information and education. Jim received his BS and MS in electrical engineering and computer science from MIT and holds more than 60 granted patents.

Currently Jim is CEO, chairman, and co-founder of Kinoo, Inc; board member, Foresight Mental Health; Advisor JIBE; chairman and co-founder, The Global Impact Group; board member, Gleason Family Foundation; and Leadership Council, One Shared World.

Mike Rusk, FFF chair, says, "This is an outstanding opportunity to learn from one of our own (Jim Lives in Lafayette) who is a leading innovator in today's world. Come to Fellowship Hall or follow on Zoom.

**For more information and to register for the Zoom webinar, visit [lopc.org/forum](http://lopc.org/forum).**

### Fourth Monday Book Group

**April 24, 2:00 p.m., on Zoom**

Join us to discuss *The Matrix* by Lauren Groff. Based on the life of a 12th century female poet.

**Contact Jean Fiske at [jdfiske@gmail.com](mailto:jdfiske@gmail.com) to be added to the group.**

### Fourth Friday Book Group

**April 28, 4:00 p.m., on Zoom**

Join us to discuss *Horse*, by Geraldine Brooks.

**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 weekly.

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





*“A new command I give you: Love one another...”*

*-John 13:34*

# the GENEROSITY corner

## Small Groups – Nurturing Ourselves and Others

*by Nancy Henderson, Generosity Team member*

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



**H**ow do we love each other? Let us count the ways – or at least name one: LOCP's many Small Groups. We humans are community creatures. With our varied interests and gradual emergence from Covid isolation, small groups offer vital, life-giving, respectful mini-communities in which we can share our time and talent.

LOPC sponsors small, long-term or short-term groups for personal growth, for service, and for fun and fellowship.

- **Belong:** Many join purely social groups, like Voyagers, Freebirds, and Young Families Connect in the back playground.
- **Grow:** Many enjoy learning together – in Bible studies, books groups, lectures, and/or shared research.
- **Care:** Many join together to care for others and to be cared for, like in Stephen Ministry, prayer groups, Barnabas groups, quilters, knitters, Thursday work group, and many others.
- **Serve:** Many join groups to serve the community and participate in a *love does* or Habitat-4-Humanity event.

Some groups ask for regular commitment. Some invite us to come for what makes sense to individuals'

schedules. All groups aim to show you that you always belong.

When working together in leadership teams (such as worship, finance, session, foundation), we experience what Proverbs 15:22 advises: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." We are, after all, Presbyterians, and we operate collegiately.

When reflecting and praying together (like Companions and Prayer Team), we join our hearts, minds, and presence to listen to and learn from the wisdom of others as we discern where God might be acting in our lives.

When serving together (like Stephen Ministry, mission efforts, visiting the homebound, hosting memorial receptions), we learn we can count on each other when we're in need, because we serve those in need when we are able. We enrich the lives of others – and ourselves in the process.

Whether focused on belonging, growing, serving, or caring, fellowship in an LOPC small group is a central component of faith in our community.

**New groups will be launching this upcoming fall. For more information, visit [lopc.org/groups](http://lopc.org/groups) to see which group appeals to you and come join us!**





# session

## February Session Highlights

By Terry Clark, Clerk of Session

Session continues to meet in hybrid format. Our February 28 meeting began with a moving spiritual-formation story from Betty Graves that highlighted being attentive to helping strangers in need and how we may be entertaining angels unaware. This correlated well with a report Pastor Peter Whitelock gave later in our meeting on the recent leadership retreat and the 25 Good Ministry Ideas that emerged on loving your neighbor by getting to know your neighbor.

Among its many discussions and actions, session completed its annual review and approved all LOPC's Policies; considered attendance at upcoming Presbytery meetings, with the possibility of one being at LOPC;

approved financial motions to deploy available funds to complete the remaining CLC lobby update and to assist Temple Isaiah in their need for a security fence.

Under LOPC's Social Justice Advocacy Policy, a motion was considered by session on providing (non-monetary) support for pending California Senate Bill 4, the Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act. This bill would not implicate any land of LOPC. But it would greatly expedite the process and expense of other churches in seeking approval for the much-needed affordable housing they would like to build. The request for support came from several of our mission partners that would also be assisted by SB 4, and had been vetted

and approved unanimously by LOPC's Mission team and the Session Planning Council. After considering that all of the Advocacy Policy criteria had been satisfied, session unanimously approved the motion to support.

Session also received the annual report on Kurth Memorial Garden (KMG) from its chair, Lynn Trowbridge, highlighting its positive financial status, current reduced availability of single and double niches, and quality plans at the ready to expand capacity for future additional niches and plaques. Session gratefully received the report and elected the five directors nominated for the KMG board.

# finance

## Financial Update

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

LOPC is off to a good start for the first two months of 2023. We are truly blessed to have supportive congregation and staff that make this possible.

Year-to-date, February total contributions came in at \$573,391, trailing budgeted levels of \$637,799. The shortfall is due to lower pledge giving, relative to plan, offset by higher mission and special gifts giving of \$23,544, due to deployment of Christmas offerings for mission partners. Historically annual pledge giving is stronger than pledged levels. We are hopeful this giving trend continues in 2023.

Year-to-date expenses of \$435,035, are slightly below budget, excluding spending for mission and special gifts. The favorable spending variance was due to lower spending across all

ministries, offset by higher gas utilities expense.

LOPC ended the two-month period with \$58,811 of net contributions. The budgeted net contribution was \$140,072 for the same period, resulting in a shortfall relative to budget of \$81,261. If you have not pledged yet in 2023, please consider doing so. Thank you to those who have submitted pledges for 2023.

## 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](https://lopc.org/giving), or scan the QR code on your mobile device.

# staff

## LOPC Pastor's Spring and Summer Sabbatical Plans

LOPC's sabbatical leave for clergy is a planned time of study and renewal to provide them with time for personal and professional growth through prayer, reflection, rest, study, and travel. Pastors are able to find through this temporary vocation the promise of God who sustains us through a period of reflection, leading to the renewal of energy upon return to the LOPC.

This year, two sabbaticals are scheduled:

- Pastor Jaime Polson will be on sabbatical from April 9 – June 2.
- Pastor Chris Baldwin will be on sabbatical from June 5 – July 31.

Highlights from both of their sabbaticals will be included in the September issue of *Focus*.



## Seeking New Church Leaders for terms beginning January 1, 2024!

Nominations can be submitted in April.

One of the cornerstones of our Presbyterian heritage is the annual election by the congregation of church officers to provide leadership for the church. It is a privilege and responsibility to nominate members to serve as elected lay leaders. It is also necessary for us to participate in the essential process that will influence our church in the near future.

### The primary qualifications for nominees are:

**Elders**, Elders, together with the pastors, lead and direct the ministry of the church. They are persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Elders serve on session, the governing body of the church. They also chair various church teams through which all ministries are conducted. Eight elders are ordained annually to serve three-year terms. At the time of producing this issue of FOCUS, the following teams need an elder assigned in 2024:

Care, Children, Communications, Fellowship, Mission, and Youth. Once the 2024 Clerk of Session is determined, there will be an additional team that will need an elder.

**Deacons**, as set forth in Scripture, are leaders who serve as the caring, compassionate arm of the church. They provide loving support to all those in need within the church community. The primary area of Deacon service is care of members. Ten deacons are ordained annually to serve a three-year term and two deacons of high-school age to serve a one-year term.

**Foundation Trustees** serve on the LOPC Foundation. This nine-member foundation receives gifts in various forms and designations, manages investments, and provides funding for LOPC needs that cannot be accommodated in the church's annual operating budget. Trustees serve an initial term of four years and are eligible to be re-elected for one three-

year term. Members who have served in the past can be nominated for a two-year term.

**The Congregation Nominating Committee (CNC)** members are elected for a one-year term. Their duties include receiving and reviewing nominations for church officers and selecting candidates to present to the congregation.

**Nominations can be submitted by filling out the form below and mailing it to the church or on the website at: [lopc.org/cnc](http://lopc.org/cnc).**

For more information, contact a CNC member: Jeff Patton (Chair), Terry Clark (Clerk of Session), Steve Crocker, Heidi Johnson, Linda Rosenthal, Lynne Terril, Andrea Hilsabeck (Deacon Representative), and Peter Whitelock. Thank you for your prayerful consideration. We are looking forward to hearing from each of you.



### Officer Nomination Form - For terms beginning January 1, 2024.

*Please give as many details as possible. If you feel God has called you to service, please nominate yourself.*

**First & Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominated for (please circle):** Elder      Deacon      CNC      Foundation

**Please tell us why you are nominating this person and be as specific as possible:**

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_





**LAFAYETTE-ORINDA  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
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**The Chancel Choir is looking for passionate volunteer singers to join our ranks!**

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Email Director of Music Bryan Dunnewald at [bryan@lopc.org](mailto:bryan@lopc.org).