

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MAY 2023

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” -Hebrews 13:16

taking a BREAK

By Peter Whitelock - Head of Staff



It’s hard to believe, but we’re just around the corner from summer. When we think about those months, of course, our thoughts go towards rest, relaxation, travel, and a slower pace a life. Given the press of daily living, it’s a good thing to

take time annually to slow things down a bit, and I hope you are looking forward to that this year.

One can’t help but notice, though, that in this issue of Focus we’re lifting up mission and service projects our church is planning for this summer. While it may seem at first glance that this timing competes with the spirit of a season where we are usually doing less, the truth is that it’s a perfect match. As it turns out, summer presents us with a unique opportunity to get active in mission and service.

May is the perfect time to be asking the question, “What special project or opportunity do I want to take on this summer to do some good in this world? It might look something like:

- Volunteering with one our LOPC mission partners or upcoming trips.
- Taking on a task or project for another service organization you support.
- Giving a few hours to serve children in our upcoming VBS program.
- Reaching out to someone you know who needs a helping hand.
- Identifying one thing you can do to combat racism, poverty, or global warming.

Pulling back from our normal busy routines can open a door to doing good, sharing what we have, and pleasing God!

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Jaime Polson - Pastor, Care & Executive Leadership
Chris Baldwin - Pastor, Community & Formation

Ministry Directors

Keris Dahlkamp - Youth
Coleen Moulton - Seedlings Preschool
Bryan Dunnewald - Music

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 May 1 for the June/July issue.

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

Need to reach us?

info@lopc.org • 925-283-8722

2023 Youth Service Trip to Guatemala

BE PART OF OUR JOURNEY!

LOPC youth are a very special part of the community, and they invite everyone in the congregation to be part of their upcoming journey. LOPC has a special tradition of allowing our high school youth to serve internationally. During the pandemic, youth lost this opportunity, but this summer, we are pleased to

announce a service trip to Guatemala with 20 high school youth to visit long-time LOPC mission partner, Fotokids. Serving over a thousand at-risk children affected by poverty and violence, Fotokids gives children a chance to dream of a better life, using photography, graphic design, media technology, and vocational training experience as a tools for self-expression, creativity, leadership, and future employment. LOPC youth are looking forward to working with the students and learning how they document their lives through the lens of a camera as they share what they have learned about photography and digital art. This cultural exchange of thoughts, hopes, and dreams between the students will leave a lasting impact on our youth. In addition to working alongside the students of Fotokids, LOPC will help prepare food baskets for Fotokids families and plant avocado trees.

How You Can Get Involved



Join us in worship on June 4 at 10:00 a.m. to commission the Youth as they go forth into the world to serve and be an example of Christ's love. After the service, stop by the Chapel Narthex to meet the students going on the trip and see a special exhibit featuring some amazing photos from the students of Fotokids and beautifully crafted bracelets.

You are also invited to write a prayer card for our youth, and, as always, please keep them in your daily prayers during the dates of their trip.

Be sure to follow their journey daily on the LOPC website, lopc.org/youth.



Help Prepare **HYGIENE KITS** for Pediatric Patients and Their Mothers in Zimbabwe

Hygiene Kits for Pediatric Patients and Parent

(All contents should be placed in a gallon-size Ziploc bag)

- Adult toothbrush
- Child toothbrush
- Travel-size tube of toothpaste
- A full-size bar of soap, preferably Dove or similar
- A travel-size container of shampoo
- A travel -size container of hand sanitizer
- A simple 'Get Well' message or drawing

JF Kapnek Trust, one of LOPC's mission partners, has worked for decades to support women and children's health in Zimbabwe. In recent years, the Kapnek Trust spearheaded the creation of the only children's hospital in the entire country, located in Harare. This 250-bed hospital treats children who are seriously ill, struggling with burns, trauma, appendicitis, or infectious diseases such as pneumonia. Most of the patients come from rural areas and parents often stay with the child during the hospitalization.

Last spring, the LOPC community created over 600 personal hygiene kits that were distributed to mothers and children at the hospital. Many of the kits also included written words of encouragement to the

patient and family—tangible messages of God's love, good will, best wishes for a complete recovery, and safe travels home.

On May 14, an opportunity to help is offered us once again. You are invited to create a Hygiene Kit for the Zimbabwe children and family reaching half way around the world with a message of hope. Please drop off completed kits to the church office by Mother's Day, Sunday, May 14. Kapnek Trust will ship them as part of a large relief container to the Children's Hospital in Harare, Zimbabwe.

This is a great hands-on project for a family with kids to help other children a world away. If you have any questions, please contact Phil Hunter at Hunter.p@mac.com.

mission

Interfaith Update

After conversations with Temple Isaiah about how LOPC can be a good neighbor to the synagogue, the unfortunate need for increased security measures to address the steep rise of antisemitism over the past few years has become abundantly apparent. To this end, LOPC thought that it was appropriate to show support with a financial gift. This past March, the Mission Team in partnership, with the Deacon Community Fund, made a



\$5,000 donation to Temple Isaiah for their fundraising efforts for much needed security improvements on their campus in Lafayette.

While we also desire more programming and events that speak to an increased awareness of the rise

of antisemitism and how to respond to hate, we view this contribution as a continued step in a long-valued friendship with Temple Isaiah and LOPC's important interfaith work in the community.

Senior Rabbi of Temple Isaiah Jill Pearlman, responded: "We truly value our friendship and look forward to the many ways we will stand by one another in the years to come."

LOPC Helping Refugees

By Beth Hunter, LOPC Member

A little over a year ago, as we began to witness the many refugees fleeing the ongoing war in Ukraine, a group of LOPC members asked the question, could we do more to help the growing numbers of those seeking refuge right here in our own community? Since last May, this group has been exploring ways to help.

In May 2022, the group met with Dr. Jane Pak, co-director of Refugee and Immigrant Transitions (RIT), a nonprofit operating in the Bay Area that provides free education, family engagement, and community leadership programs for refugees. Dr. Pak enlightened us to the formidable and often multi-year process required for refugees and other displaced persons to fully integrate into our communities. Since that initial introduction, the group has been educating itself on the many different classifications of refugees which include asylum seekers, immigrants, visa holders, Temporary Protected Status, and more. The group has also become more aware of the various local service providers working with refugees in Contra Costa County. From multiple interviews with over a half dozen organizations, we've learned what each organization does and how long each assists a given family.

Throughout the process, we've considered how the LOPC community might become involved. At the most recent group meeting, it was decided to work with the Extended Family Program (EFP), organized through Walnut Creek United Methodist



Volunteers assist with donations.

Church. EFP assists recently unhoused and refugee families by providing furniture and household items to transform empty apartments into homes. It is an all-volunteer organization serving families with dignity and a warm, loving, hands-on personal touch as they move forward into their new lives.

Last year saw EFP helping 59 families.

With no end in sight for the demand in their services, volunteers from Walnut Creek UMC as well as Lafayette Christian Church are now in the process of obtaining a 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit, making it much easier to secure funds through grants.

LOPC member Randi Long has generously agreed to coordinate LOPC's initial collaboration with EFP. Volunteers meet weekly on Tuesdays at Walnut Creek UMC (1543 Sunnyvale Ave) to sort donated furniture and household goods. On Fridays or Saturdays, volunteers move furniture and boxes of household items into a family's new apartment.

The group will continue to meet to identify other volunteer opportunities, seeking to fully understand the time commitment organizations request and training required so that they can better communicate needs to those in the LOPC community interested in volunteering.

If you are interested in volunteering with EFP, please contact Randi Long at hrlong13@sbcglobal.net and visit extendedfamilyprogram.org for more information.

For more information on meetings, or for other questions, please contact Phil Hunter at Hunter.p@mac.com.

mission



RACIAL EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT at LOPC

Continuing in its work to form relationships with communities of color, the Racial Equity and Engagement Team at LOPC has completed six months of consultation work with Rev. Sandhya Jha which included two recent church-wide events: “Our History, Our Power, Our Possibilities” in early February and “The Spiritual Practice of Advocacy” in late April. After the team’s time with The Rev. Jha and after these two church educational events, The team is now planning opportunities for LOPC for the fall and next spring. True to our founding documents, our team continues to prioritize bringing about a new ERA for our church. For our team, ERA stands for:

Education: In an effort to grow in our understanding of racial inequity, including systemic and institutional racism, the team is planning to offer a book study and video series in partnership with LOPC’s small group ministry this fall, including a final gathering across all participating groups. Please look for more information in late summer.

Relationships: Part of the team’s initial charge is to form relationships with communities of color. We are excited to look forward to building relationships with other churches of color in an awareness trip to a local Japanese Internment Camp that we plan to offer in conjunction with other churches in 2024.

Advocacy: Throughout the past year, our team has been piloting a partnership with a local non-profit that focuses on advocacy and the overlap of current social issues with racism. We’re continuing to evaluate this relationship and explore advocacy opportunities with them. Meanwhile, the team is also planning an event on responding to hate crimes, including hate crimes that target other faith traditions.

As always, we would like to thank the LOPC congregation for its continued support of the team’s efforts. We look forward to having you join us for one of our upcoming programs or events!

For more information about the team, its mission and vision, please visit lopc.org/racialjustice.



care hold in PRAYER

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

Sherri Nissen,

who passed January 8. A memorial was held April 22.

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 August 5 at 11:00 a.m.

Jim Stalker,

who passed March 2. A memorial will be held July 15 at 2:00 p.m.

Brenda Nirenstein,

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

Bill Whiting,

who passed March 22.

Mildred Hipkiss,

who passed March 29.

Kay Choi,

who passed March 30. A memorial will be held May 3 at 1:00 p.m.

David Dodge,

who passed away April 3.

Phil Placier,

who passed away April 9. A memorial will be held October 7, time TBD.

Rowell Potts,

who passed away April 13.

care

Deacons: Serving the Congregation & Community

By Eddie Reiter, LOPC Member

LOPC Deacons are a group of about 30 members, each serving a three-year term, to care for members of the LOPC community. As one of the elected, ordained bodies of the church, deacons are charged to show “compassion, witness, and service, representing the ministry of the church in the world and the presence of the world in the church.” Their compassionate volunteer spirit puts a friendly face on service to our brothers and sisters at LOPC. Below is a list of just some of the many ways deacons serve the LOPC community:

Memorials:

Deacons help facilitate memorial receptions. We work alongside families and LOPC staff to provide a gracious and supportive venue for family and friends to gather following a memorial service. In coordination with the family, we serve refreshments to the attendees - who may number several hundred - and receive and display catered and floral deliveries. In addition, deacons provide coffee, tea, water, punch and homemade cookies, as well as table settings and paper goods. In 2023, Deacons hosted 23 memorial receptions – that’s more than 120 individual volunteers.

Sanctuary Communion:

Deacons prepare the elements of grape juice and bread for Communion services on the first Sunday of each month, plus some special Sundays. As you probably realize, this task changes

as times require. Prior to the pandemic, LOPC routinely used intinction (dipping a piece of bread into the juice). Since then LOPC has moved to individual packets of juice and wafers, and currently we provide squares of bread and individual cups of juice. Deacons, along with elders, help the pastors in serving all who come forward to receive Communion.

Home Visits & Home Communion:

After years of severely limited social opportunities, deacons can now visit you at home, in-hospital, in a care facility, or meet you wherever you are. During your visit, if you would like the deacon team to serve Communion, let us know and we can do that! They can also provide at-home Communion packets for those who would like to use them along with the Livestream service.

Deacon Community Care Fund:

The DCCF is a special service for LOPC members and friends who need one-time confidential financial help. This can be a life-saver for someone with a sudden unexpected need, a leg-up, or some special care for one of LOPC’s mission partners.

Outreach:

LOPC has a special place in the Lamorinda Community, and deacons look for ways to extend outreach into the community. The Outreach team has a special interest in coordinating

with local schools around mental health support for children, youth, and their families. For instance, in 2022, in partnership with the Acalanes School District, LOPC hosted an event on suicide prevention that served over 350 community members. Last March, deacons hosted speaker Julie Lythcott-Haims as she spoke on “Raising Healthy Adults.” More than 400 community members attended the event, which was co-hosted by Acalanes, Moraga, and Orinda School Districts.

Home Meals:

Deacons have historically kept home-cooked meals in the freezer for delivery to those who are sick, just home from the hospital, have a new baby, or other need. That is now being expanded and may eventually be replaced by catered or takeout meals. Deacons can provide meals for families of any size, or who have special requirements, gluten-free or vegetarian as an example.

Transportation:

Deacons hope to begin offering this service in the Fall, to members who sometimes need a ride to church or Thursday Fellowship. Check back in future issues for further developments.

Other:

Deacons also help with various church events and activities such as the Fall Fest and more!

Workshop: for those with a New Diagnosis of MCI or Dementia

May 18, May 25, and June 1; 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Senior Ministry is offering a three-week class with Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MFT, CMC for those with a new diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) or Early Dementia.

The class is open to the individual with the diagnosis and their primary care partner. Participants must have a short interview with Linda to ensure the class is appropriate for them at this time.

For more information and the weekly schedule, please visit lopc.org/registrations. To sign up, please contact Lexi Morrissey at lexi@lopc.org.

children

Join us for LOPC's



Vacation Bible Camp

June 5-9

Kids 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.

Visit lopc.org/vbcamp for more information.

YOUTH

2023 Summer Service-Learning

Join us for a special youth service-learning commissioning during worship on June 4!



JUNE 5 – 9:

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

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 12 – 16:

Registration closes May 5. 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.

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.

Lighthouse at Hope Solutions

May 13

On May 13, a committed group of youth and advisors visited Hope Solutions Lakeside Apartments site in Concord for an afternoon of fellowship, food, crafts, and games. Lighthouse, now in its fifth year of activities, and is an ongoing program that establishes a deeper, long-term relationship with resident families at Hope Solutions. It was wonderful to watch the friendships and understanding continue to grow between the youth from LOPC and the children from Hope Solutions. We already cannot wait for next year!

Senior Blessing

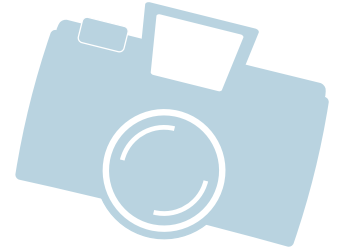
May 21

At the 10:00 a.m. worship service, LOPC will recognize high school seniors as they prepare to transition into their next phase of life. Please come show your support as we celebrate their amazing commitment!

► **Questions? Contact Keris Dahlkamp keris@lopc.org.**



Seedlings Preschool Picture Days



By Kaylin Deutscher, Seedlings Board, Communications

It was smiles all around at Seedlings for Picture Days 2023! On two days this past March, we had the fabulous Sandbox Photographers back on campus to capture portraits of our Seedlings children and staff and the results were adorable!

Our students came dressed to impress for their photos and gave their best

poses for the camera. As any parent can tell you, it can be a small feat to capture a smile for the camera and our kids did great!

Parent volunteers were on hand to help fix hair, wipe faces, and gather the kids when it was their turn. They reported that all went smoothly, and it was a fun (and very cute) day!

One of the great perks of picture day is the sibling pictures, which families with more than one child at Seedlings get to enjoy. The class composite pictures are always a hit with the Seedlings children as well, many of whom love to point out their friends to their families in their class picture at home.



*thursday*Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program of Senior Care Ministries

May 4 & 18 at 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall



Michael Kistner & guests.

By Julie Peterson, Coordinator

April showered us with many blessings when we gathered on April 6 and 20. Our guests were greeted warmly, our crafts and exercises were stimulating, and the tables were set to match the theme of the day.

On April 6 we were thrilled to celebrate Frank and Mary Grannis's 76th wedding anniversary. We saw a slideshow highlighting special events in their life starting with their first dinner date, their graduation from CAL, and their wedding day. It was special to share in their memories and witness their love of each other. We honored them with a special anniversary cake, flowers,

and cards as well as some special cupcakes for all of the guests. It was a celebration that truly touched us all. After lunch, the Dancers Circle performed. Their graceful movements to spiritually inspired music was an Easter blessing and left us spellbound. It was a spectacular day that left everyone with a warm glow.

On April 20, we shifted gears to welcome the Rossmoor Square Dancers. As predicted, our toes were tapping as we watched their Do-Si-Do's and promenades. They have always been a great addition to our entertainment lineup, and everyone enjoyed them

Join us:

May 4

A special craft is planned for the morning activity, followed by lunch, after which we will welcome our faithful, long-time guitarist and singer Michael Kistner.

May 18

The day will start with gentle chair-stretching exercises. After lunch pianist Sharon Lee Kim and violinist Jiwon Evelyn Kwark will perform a program of chamber music.

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 or call 925-283-8722 ext. 281.

community



Gaining Ground

The Importance of Conserving Land and the Critical Challenges Facing Our Society.

May 5 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Linus Eukel's topic for this month's First Friday Forum is "Gaining Ground: The Importance of Conserving Land and the Critical Challenges Facing Our Society."

Issues of land conservation will be addressed at this month's First Friday Forum, featuring speaker Linus Eukel. Eukel joined John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) in 2004 where he serves as executive director. He works closely with the board of directors, staff, and regional community to help achieve JMLT's ongoing mission of permanently protecting the places that make the East Bay special. Eukel is also a member, elder, and past clerk of session of LOPC, board member and past board chair of the California Council of Land Trusts, board member and co-chair of the East Bay Leadership Council's Infrastructure Task Force and board member of the Warren W. Eukel Teacher Trust.

As he explains, "The John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) protects and cares for open space, ranches, farms, parkland and shoreline in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. Since its founding



Linus Eukel

30 years ago, JMLT has become one of the leading forces for conservation in northern California. With more than 3,500 acres protected, many beautiful places in the East Bay are permanently preserved for recreation and wildlife habitat. The JMLT team believes that the vitality of

our natural open spaces is essential to the health of our earth, air, water, native plants and animals — and all of us." Acquiring land is at the heart of what the Land Trust does. It identifies and purchases open spaces that should be conserved in a natural state and enjoyed by everyone. It carefully stewards these properties by providing low-impact opportunities for public recreation while protecting the needs of wild residents.

The energetic JMLT community of supporters has protected a diverse collection of special places. These range from small community gardens to former ranches covering hundreds of acres. These remarkable places all have one thing in common, they have been preserved forever by the John Muir Land Trust, providing outdoor recreation, protected habitat

for wildlife, stunning scenic beauty, sources of pure drinking water, natural economic benefits, and close-to-home places where young people can experience nature and learn about our shared environment.

"Foresighted people shaped the beautiful natural landscape where we live today," Eukel explains. "The lands protected by JMLT are an inspiring window into that past and a hope for what's to come. The challenges of waves of population growth in the last century were huge and population pressure will become even more intense over the coming years. It's an endgame; the next few decades will shape the East Bay forever. We urgently need to permanently protect our remaining essential wild lands to ensure an abundant, biodiverse future for nature...and all of us. JMLT is proud to be advancing a many decades-long effort to conserve the places that make the East Bay special. The next few decades will define the character of this region for generations to come — likely forever. Come see how the Trust is working to make this happen."

For more information and to register for the Zoom webinar, visit lopc.org/forum.

Fourth Monday Book Group

May 22, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *Crying in H-Mart* by Michelle Zaunery.

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

Fourth Friday Book Group

May 26, 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *The Perfumist* by Alka Joshi.

Contact Catherine Coleman at 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.

journey of Faith

By Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, LOPC Member

Lisa Toth says of her faith journey, "At LOPC I feel so much a part of a wonderful community of all ages. When I was growing up I felt like church was very separate from my life like two separate worlds. Here, I feel like my faith is interwoven with everything in my life and that's great."



Lisa Toth

Lisa was born in Illinois and lived outside Chicago until she was nine-years-old. "My father died and my mom, Margaret Kaluzny, my brother, Thomas, and I moved to Austin, Texas, where I graduated from high school. I grew up Catholic and went to Catholic schools, attending church somewhat regularly until I was in my early teens.

Attending U.C. Berkeley, I met and fell in love with my husband, Fred. We were married at LOPC in 1992 because I wanted to get married in a church, and Fred's mom, Lillian Heydt, was a member there."

The Toths lived in Fremont, and tried churches in the area, but in the end, they chose LOPC, and made the trek from Fremont to Lafayette, and became members and moved here in 2000.

"Being part of LOPC for the past 30 years has been an amazing blessing to me and my family. We raised our daughters, Melanie and Olivia, in the church where they participated in Godly Play, LOGOS, Kids Rock, YOW and BTW, as well as going on numerous mission trips all over the United States and India. Along the way, Fred and I taught Sunday School and

volunteered in various ways with the children's and youth programs.

"We went to Mt. Hermon every year as a family. It was a truly special time where we could connect with others in the church and contemplate our spirituality while in nature and away from our everyday busyness. I enjoy helping in the community with love does projects. Also, I enjoyed participating in different women's Bible study groups. I learn from others and make new friends at the same time."

Lisa explains she has had various favorite Bible verses at different times in her life. One now is Colossians 3:12,14. "As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

session

March Session Highlights

By Terry Clark, Clerk of Session

Session's first dinner meeting together in a few years was cancelled at the last minute due to a power outage at LOPC caused by severe weather, so session met online. Pastor Lauren Gully opened with Spiritual Formation based on Howard Thurman's "The Sound of the Genuine" and the quest for each of us to find our own true inner guide.

Reports included a summary of the March 5 Interfaith Program held at LOPC regarding the recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions on abortion and prayer in the public schools, presented by Elder Terry Clark, who spoke on the legal issues, and Pastor Peter Whitelock joined by clergy from Temple Isaiah and the San Ramon Valley Islamic Center. The program

focused on how the Court's decisions impact our freedom to practice each of our faiths. About 130 people (in person and online) from our respective faiths attended.

Peter discussed the annual goal-planning process where each LOPC ministry team is requested to deliberate on its goals for the coming year. The "25 Good Things" we learned from the January Leadership Retreat were offered as resources for goal-setting consideration; and the templates for the criteria and goal determinations will be sent to each elder for their respective teams' deliberations to be concluded by June 15.

The status of the pending search,

screening, and interview process planned for Co-Youth Director and Children's Ministry Director was presented by Pastor Jaime Polson. She then provided highlights of her well-deserved sabbatical (starting after Easter, until June 2) involving a good mix of study on prayer in our lives, time with family, and travel stays in South Carolina and Europe.

Elder Jeff Patton reported that the Church Nominating Committee (CNC) is beginning its annual process to identify candidates for the 2024 Classes of Session and Deacons.

All are encouraged to submit their nominations on forms available in church pews, the office and online at lopc.org/cnc.

finance

Financial Update

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

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

Year-to-date, March total contributions came in at \$820,644, slightly trailing our budgeted levels of \$821,470. Pledge giving is lower than planned by \$104,441. We are encouraged by historical annual giving trends which are usually higher than annual pledged levels. A generous estate gift to the church of \$67,500, and higher mission and special gifts giving of \$34,393, offset the shortfall in pledge giving. The donor also left a legacy gift to the LOPC Foundation.

Most ministry teams are at or below budgeted spending. Year-to-date expenses of \$877,442, are lower than budget by \$9,752, excluding spending for mission and special gifts.

Operations is experiencing higher gas utility rates than plan by about \$15,000, despite measures to lower and conserve gas usage on campus.

LOPC ended the three-month period with a \$56,798 shortfall of net contributions. The budgeted net contribution was also a shortfall of \$31,431 for the same period. Please consider pledging if you have not done so already. Thank you to those who have pledged and made contributions in 2023, you are making LOPC's ministry possible.

Statement of Giving & Expense			
March 31, 2023	2023 YTD Actuals	2023 YTD Budget	Fav (unfav)
Congregational Giving			
Pledge Income	\$ 602,559	\$ 707,000	\$ (104,441)
Non-Pledge, Loose Offerings, Other Giving	136,466	70,250	66,216
Faith Component	2,220	2,220	
Congregational Giving w/o Special Gifts	741,245	779,470	(38,225)
Giving: Mission & Special Gifts & Offerings	72,293	38,000	34,293
Total Congregational Giving	813,538	817,470	(3,932)
Session Emerging Needs Fund	-	-	-
Seedlings	-	-	-
User Fees	7,106	4,000	3,106
Foundation	-	-	-
Total Giving:	820,644	821,470	(826)
Expense: Ministry Teams	805,149	814,901	(9,752)
Spending: Mission & Special Gifts & Offerings	72,293	38,000	34,293
Contributions in excess of Expense:	\$ (56,798)	\$ (31,431)	\$ (25,367)

generosity corner

Seeding a Generous Heart

By Tim Carlson & Mark Weaver, Generosity Team Members

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

Personal finance education is a topic now receiving considerable attention in the public sector. Around half the states in the U.S. have enacted legislation mandating financial literacy courses. Such legislation charges state education boards with the responsibility for implementation. In California, legislation proposed over a year ago has been stalled in committee. In terms of available financial literacy courses, sadly, California ranks 44th nationally.

The more systemic problem is that we live in an economy where personal consumption expenditures represent some 70% of U.S. economic activity. In terms of priorities, generosity is often placed far down the list. As Christians, we strive to keep in mind the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35). There is, however, a secular worldview which pulls us in another direction.

Spend > Borrow > Spend More > Save > Give (if anything left).

Scripture teaches us a different worldview with a different prioritization.

Give > Spend (wisely) > Save.

While we applaud efforts to educate our young people in the schools when it comes to finances, we believe that good money habits start in the home! Further, as shared in recent issues of Focus, giving embraces generous sharing of time and talent (in addition to treasure).

God's Word is full of wisdom on personal finance and the joy of having a generous heart!

"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." Proverbs 11:25

CNC

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

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.

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**

49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 5/1/23

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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



**LOPC
FOUNDATION**

A Solid Foundation

“ Whether it is our parents, our teachers, mentors, friends, churches, or neighbors, people have been pouring into us. We are standing on a foundation. It should come as an incredible relief. Our only job is to build on what we’ve been given, and, even then, even our gifts we can trace back to the creativity, generosity, and foresight of others. Thank God we are a group project. ”

-from Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation.

**To Learn more about legacy giving, please reach out to a Foundation Trustee
or visit lopc.org/foundation.**