

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 2023

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



Thoughts on Advent

By Jaime Polson — Pastor, Care Ministry & Exec. Leadership

“Look, the virgin Mary shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him ‘Emmanuel,’ which means, ‘God is with us.’”
Matthew 1:23



On December 3, we begin the liturgical season of Advent. This is a fancy way of saying the church will begin a new year as marked by the Christian calendar and the season of Advent. The word advent comes from a Latin word, *adventus*, which means arrival or coming.

This seems ordinary enough, but if you take a minute to really think about it, Advent is a time where we are shown that God loves each one of us so very much that he sent Jesus to come and minister directly to people. The very people God created to love God and to be loved by God! It’s awe inspiring! Scripture in the book of Matthew tells us that this is God’s way to come closer to us and share lived experience among us. Emmanuel – God with us. This season we are reminded to slow down and live into the joy that the birth of Jesus brings us as individuals, as a community, and for the world.

What is our spiritual work during Advent? To stand in awe of Jesus. To spend time giving thanks to God for the gift of Jesus, whether through prayer, worship, devotionals, time with family and friends remembering God’s love, or service to others. To take time to quiet our minds, our busy lives, and pray for the people Jesus loves (everyone). To take time and remember the people hurting and suffering in our world and make this a season where we give generously of ourselves to others that they, too, may know that God is with them.

As a church, we will celebrate this joyous time together by worshiping each Sunday during Advent and lighting the Advent candles, seeking to live out the messages of the candles during the four weeks of Advent – hope, peace, joy, and love. Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle – the reminder that God is love and that we are rooted in God’s love. “Whoever lives in love, lives in God and God in them” (1 John 4:16b).

Beginning November 19, LOPC will provide an Advent Devotional for you and your family. We hope you will take one and participate with us as we prepare our hearts and make way for Emmanuel.

CONTENTS

December 2023

Mission	3
Special Offering	4
Community	5
First Friday Forum	6
YouTube Launch	7
Thursday Fellowship	8
Session	9
Finance	10
Seedlings	11
Youth/Children	12
Generosity	13
Poinsettias	14

Pastoral Staff

Peter Whitelock - Head of Staff
Lauren Gully - Pastor, Mission & Outreach
Jaime Polson - Pastor, Care & Executive Leadership
Chris Baldwin - Pastor, Community & Formation

Ministry Directors

Keris Dahlkamp - Youth
Junha Kim - Youth
Coleen Moulton - Seedlings Preschool
Bryan Dunnewald - Music
Susan Wentworth - Children’s Ministry
Emily Austin - Children’s Ministry

Treasurer

Staci Johnston

Focus Newsletter

Pamela Moide - Design
Dick James & Lexi Morrissey - Editors

Submissions & Deadlines

Please send requests for submissions to:
communications@lopc.org
no later than December 1 for the January issue.



Staying Connected: Sign up for our weekly email to stay up-to-date on all things LOPC! **Visit:** lopc.org/email.

Need to reach us?

info@lopc.org • 925-283-8722



Christmas Eve Services

Morning Worship
10:00 a.m.

Family Service
3:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Traditional Service
7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Editor's Note

Dear reader,

You may have noticed while reading the November issue of *FOCUS* that there were some words with missing letters. Our printing company did a thorough review of their processes and cannot say for certain what happened. They have assured us they will keep a closer eye on production so that this doesn't happen again. While we strive for perfectly produced materials, at times technology can create unforeseen challenges. Thank you for your support during this time of review of our production processes.

Your Focus Staff

Welcome Cathy Scheve!

We are delighted to welcome Cathy Scheve as administrative assistant to Pastor for Care and Executive Leadership, Jaime Polson. Cathy has worked in church administrative roles and most recently as registrar/instructional aide at a Christian school in Contra Costa County. Cathy lives with her husband, Curt, in Moraga. She has two sons, Ben, who is an accountant and Matt, who is finishing his senior year at the University of Oregon, and a puppy named Izzy. In her free time, she loves to read (she is half-way to her goal of reading 100 books in a year), hike, watch basketball and football and hang out with her family. Cathy is excited to serve in this new role and looks forward to meeting many of you.



Kurth Memorial Garden

Please note, there will be a price increase for niches and plaque wall space in Kurth Memorial Garden effective January 1, 2024. If you are interested in making future plans at today's prices, one of the four volunteers on the Kurth Memorial Garden Board would be glad to meet with you and show you where space is available.

For additional information, please visit lopc.org/kurth or email KMG chair, Lynn Trowbridge at lynnntrow@comcast.net.



mission

love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Christmas OPPORTUNITIES



Congo Necklace Sale December 17, following Worship

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



Giving Tree Opportunity

The mission of White Pony Express is to help eliminate hunger and poverty by delivering food to all those in need—with love. This Christmas they are also helping to fulfill holiday wishes. Look for the Giving Trees located in front of Seedlings during pick-up and drop-off and on the plaza after Worship beginning November 12. Pull an ornament of your choice, purchase the item listed, and return the unwrapped gift to the collection barrels located in front of the CLC or in the Ministry Center by December 10.

Questions? Contact Robin Freeberg at robin@lopc.org.

Learn more at whiteponyexpress.org.

Winter Nights Family Shelter

LOPC's Winter Nights Shelter guests were on campus for two weeks, and it's unbelievable how quickly the time went by. Thank you to all who volunteered to help make our guests feel welcome and cared for. LOPC hosted five families that consisted of six adults and 13 children ranging in age from five months to 17 years old.

Volunteers provided warm, comforting food throughout the two-week stay. Nightly dinners ranging from chicken and mashed potatoes to tacos were served, and the guests appreciated the care that was put into every meal. On most weekdays, guests ate a breakfast of cereal and toast, so the hot breakfast on the weekends of eggs, bacon, French toast, was much appreciated and felt like home.

Thank you to those who provided daily snacks, tutored students, and created fun activities for the children. Guests received homemade hats, scarves, and quilts from Chicks with Sticks and the LOPCiders quilters. LOPC youth transformed the Oak Room into a dance party allowing the children visiting an opportunity to dance and have fun. They even had the opportunity to go trick-or-treating in the neighborhood during their stay.

LOPC always hopes that the time our guests are on campus is special and provides them with experiences and interactions that show them they are important and loved. Thank you to all the 225 volunteers who came together to make our guests feel welcome.

Holiday Food Boxes

Help those who are food insecure this Christmas by filling a box with nutritious holiday food. Start by picking-up a flyer listing the items required and a box on the plaza before or after worship on Sundays or in the Ministry Center during the week from November 19 through December 10. You can also view the list online at lopc.org/lovedoes. **All boxes should be returned on December 10 to the U-Haul truck parked in front of the Oak Room.**

Contact Robin Freeberg at robin@lopc.org with questions.

Shopping List:

Please note: No glass allowed.

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

Special Offering of Hope and Healing

Benefitting Kapnek Trust and Healing Hearts

Each Christmas, LOPC lifts up organizations to the congregation that help improve the lives of others. This Christmas season, we want to provide an opportunity to give “a gift of hope and healing” to children in Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Kapnek Trust, led by local pediatrician, Dr. Robbins, supports programs saving thousands of children each year from HIV infection, providing early childhood education, critical daily sustenance, and regular health care for thousands more. Kapnek also improves the lives of hundreds of disabled children through treatment and reducing the stigma once associated with disability. They focus on providing nourishment daily to preschool children throughout Zimbabwe guaranteeing all children receive at least one nutritious meal daily.

This year, part of the funds we collect will be to purchase medication boxes



for over 45 schools in Zimbabwe to provide health and healing for children and families in those communities.

Healing Hearts is a trauma healing program based out of the DRC. This Bible-based curriculum was created to help those who have been harshly affected by violence. The program, with the help of trained facilitators, goes into villages where occupants

have been left traumatized by ongoing war in the Eastern Congo. Healing Hearts facilitators help children and women work through their trauma and navigate toward a road of healing. Since 2016, there have been five training sessions resulting in 60 facilitators being trained, and well over 3,000 children have received benefits of this ministry.

This year, part of the funds we donate will provide training in 2024 for new facilitators and master facilitators to run the program and supervise others in this much needed ministry.

Ways to Donate

All donations received will benefit the Kapnek Trust and the Healing Hearts program.

- Go to lopc.org/giving and click “Give one time” and then “Christmas Offering” in the dropdown menu.
- Write a check to LOPC with “Christmas” in the memo line and place in the collection box in the Narthex or the black mailbox in front of the Ministry Center.

For more information, go to lopc.org/specialoffering.



community



Book Groups

Please note date changes due to end-of-month holidays in November and December.

Fourth Monday

Book Group

December 4, 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

On Monday, December 4 (note date change due to holiday scheduling), please join us to discuss *The Great Escape* by Richard Saket Soni. Looking ahead to January 22, 2024, the selection is *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Vergeese.

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

Fourth Friday

Book Group

December 1, 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

On December 1 (note date change due to holiday scheduling), the group will discuss *Rules for Commuters*, by Claire Poole. Looking ahead to January 25, 2024, the group will discuss *Lady Tan's Circle of Women*, by Lisa See. All are welcome.

If you are interested in being added to the group, please contact Catherine Coleman at awaitingword@gmail.com.

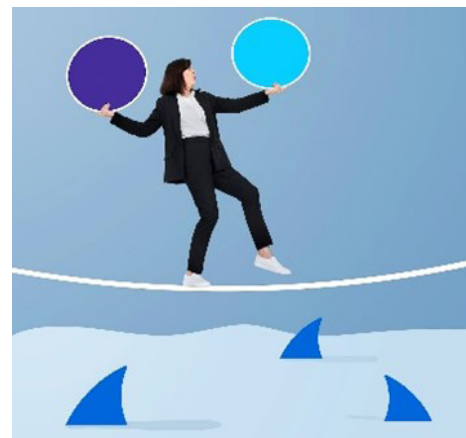
Intergenerational ADVENT Festival

Intergenerational Advent Festival

**Sunday, December 3
11:00 a.m. in the Davies Room**

Join us for the annual Advent Festival immediately after worship on December 3. There will be refreshments for all and craft stations for children. Make an Advent wreath and decorate an ornament in addition to other activities. This festival is in partnership with Young Families Connect, so the playground will be open for children to play.

**For questions, please contact
Cathy Scheve at cathy@lopc.org.**



“The Family Circus” Recap

The Family Circus: Walking the Tightrope of Aging & Eldercare event that was held on October 21 was a huge success. With seven speakers, breakout sessions, and a keynote by Dr. Leslie Kernisan, the Lamorinda community received invaluable resources and guidance for preparing for a person's older years. If you are interested in viewing the general session and keynote video recordings, please follow the links in the Monday Staying Connected emails or email Cathy Scheve at cathy@lopc.org. A big thank you goes to Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Dara Youngdale, and Sally Roberts for their hard work and efforts initiating and planning this wonderful event.

This informative day was sponsored by Senior Ministry and the LOPC Foundation.

Young Families Connect

**First Sunday of the month
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.

Email Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org for additional information.



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

First Friday Forum Begins in January
Put these Dates on Your 2024 Calendar

hold in
PRAYER

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

Mary Jacuzzi,
who passed on September 23.
A memorial will be held on
January 5 at 1:00 p.m.

Bernice Ward,
who passed on October 24. A
service will be held on December 6
at 1:00 p.m.

Inga Stiles,
who passed on October 29. A
service will be held on December 11
at 11:00 a.m.

The First Friday Forum speaker series provides lectures of importance and interest to the entire community about this ever-changing world, sponsored by Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church.

The programs are offered at 1:30 p.m. on the first Friday of the month. For January through May, they are available simultaneously on the Lafayette campus and virtually on Livestream. The June program is only available on Zoom.

Attend the programs that interest you with no subscription or entry fee. For more information, go to lopc.org/first-friday-forum.

January 5: Joe Whitehouse, world traveler and photographer, on "Iraq: Cradle of Civilization." Dr. Whitehouse's travel presentations are beautifully done and very popular at LOPC. He has pictures of Shi'a and Christian historical sites, modern Kurdistan, and the Yazidis, who were viciously attacked by ISIS in 2014.

February 2: Adam Hochschild, author and lecturer in journalism at UCB, "Post WWI Challenges to American Democracy." Prof. Hochschild paints a vivid picture of the repression and vigilantism that took over America in the four years following the country's entry into WWI. The U.S. government targeted anti-war advocates, passing new laws, including the Espionage Act of 1917, that were used to crack down on minorities, immigrants, socialists, and labor union members.

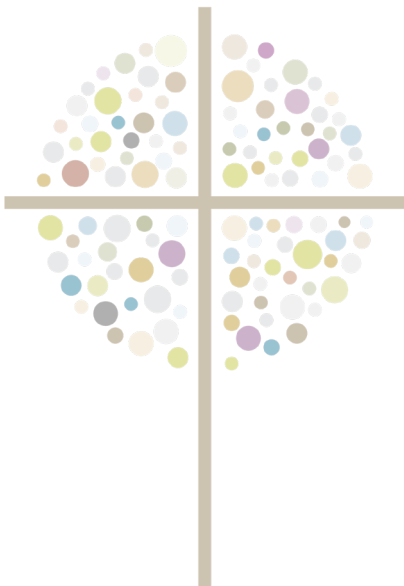
March 1: Carolyn Chen, professor of Ethnic Studies at UCB, "Work, Pray, Code: When Work Becomes Religion in Silicon

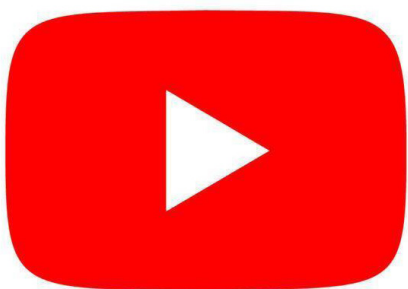
Valley." Prof. Chen explores how tech companies are bringing religion into the workplace in ways that are replacing traditional places of worship, blurring the line between work and religion as well as transforming the very nature of spiritual experience in modern life.

April 5: William Jagust, professor of Public Health and Neuroscience at UCB, "Untangling Alzheimer's." Dr. Jagust discusses the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's, the development of Alzheimer's in the brain, and the challenges in developing effective treatments.

May 3: Laura Beth Nielsen, professor of Sociology and director of the Center for Legal Studies at Northwestern University. "Northwestern University's Prison Education Program." Prof. Nielsen describes a path to a university education for maximum security prisoners. She says, "My students are amazing people living in squalid conditions, and they still do all their homework."

June 7: Gordon Chang, Oliver H. Palmer Professor in Humanities at Stanford University, "Forgotten, Even Ignored, the Chinese Who Built the Western Portion of the Transcontinental Railroad." Dr. Chang says, "They should be remembered and honored for their contributions; my talk will help restore their lives, work, and sacrifices to our history." His published research has focused on the relationship between race and ethnicity in America and its impact on U.S. and Asian diplomatic and cultural relations. *This program is available on Zoom only.*





YouTube

LOPC YouTube Channel Launch

By Pastor Lauren Gully

In today's digital age, churches are increasingly embracing technology to connect with their congregations and reach a broader audience. One exciting development in this digital realm is the launch of LOPC's new

YouTube channel, which promises to be a transformative platform for our faith community.

LOPC YouTube is not just another YouTube channel – it is a dynamic space where we aim to strengthen our congregation's spiritual connection and foster a sense of unity. Through this channel we will be able to broadcast sermons, devotional messages, and other community and spiritual content to individuals who may not have the opportunity to attend worship and events in person. This innovative approach will enable us to share the teachings of our faith and engage in meaningful discussions, allowing our message to reach far and wide.

The channel will feature not only weekly sermons and devotional messages but also explore contemporary issues, community outreach, and stories of faith. It will serve as an interactive hub for our members, where they can connect, comment, and participate in ongoing

dialogues. Additionally, the YouTube channel will be a resource for those in our community who have relocated but wish to remain close to our community, as well as newcomers seeking spiritual guidance and a place to discover the welcoming embrace of the LOPC community.

We invite you to subscribe to the new channel, to turn on notifications, and join this exciting digital journey as we embark on a mission to connect, inspire, and uplift the lives of individuals seeking solace and meaning in their faith. With the new channel, we look forward to strengthening the connection with our congregation and extending the love, hope, and teachings of our church to a global audience.

To see the new LOPC channel please visit youtube.com/@LOPCYoutube, hit subscribe, turn on notifications, and please share this with your family and friends!



A Storybook Christmas

A COZY CONCERT WITH THE
LOPC CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA.

HOT COCOA RECEPTION FOLLOWING.

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 9
1:00 P.M.

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 9
4:00 P.M.

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 10
4:00 P.M.

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS AT LOPC.ORG/REGISTRATIONS

thursday Fellowship

caring • sharing • loving

A program for Senior Care Ministries

Every Thursday
11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

By Julie Peterson, Coordinator

In November, there were many reasons to give thanks. We were thankful for the growth of our program as we continued to adjust to the lingering effects of the pandemic on our Senior population.

The ability to meet weekly has provided continuity which has enabled us to engage and build stronger relationships with one another. Lastly, we are truly blessed by a dedicated group of volunteers that gives generously of their time and talents to make the program possible. As a result, we have welcomed new guests and new volunteers this fall to add to our already wonderful group.

To accommodate LOPC's hosting of Winter Nights Family Shelter in Fellowship Hall, we met in the Oak Room on November 2 and enjoyed hearing Mary McCosker, speak about her fascinating book, Building the Caldecott Tunnel. Joe and Gillian Roebuck wowed us with their "Music from the Movies" on November 9, and on November 16 we welcomed Michael Kistner. Of course, we didn't meet on Thanksgiving, but we ended the month



with a bang on the 30th when we welcomed classical harpist and pianist Laura Garner, and cellist Louis Panther. Their program was truly sublime, and we are truly grateful to be able to offer such outstanding programming.

We are looking forward to two December gatherings on December 7 and December 14. Due to the holidays, we will not be meeting on December 21 or 28. We will resume meeting weekly on January 11, 2024.

Looking forward to December:

- **December 7:** Rossmoor's "Moonglow," an octet of singers, will fill Fellowship Hall with Christmas joy!
- **December 14:** Thursday Fellowship's traditional Christmas Party! Seedlings preschoolers will join us for a visit from Santa, and we will sing our favorite Christmas carols with Mike Kistner leading us.

Our typical daily schedule is as follows:

- 11:00 a.m. "Meet and Greet" with snacks and beverages.
- 11:15 a.m. Creative arts and crafts, activity, or light exercise program.
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch: Bring a sandwich and we will provide salad, beverages, and dessert.
- 12:45 p.m. Entertainment.
- 1:30 p.m. Program ends.

We invite you to join us, and look forward to welcoming you!

Contact Julie Peterson at julie@lopc.org for more information.



session

October Session Highlights

By Terry Clark, Clerk of Session

Session met in person this month, and the opening Spiritual Formation by Elder Betty Graves fittingly spoke to the need for community and coming together. The horrors and tragedies of the Israel/Palestine conflict and the impact on our friends and neighbors locally were then discussed as matters of great community concern.

Adoption of the consent agenda included approval of a motion to apply a Foundation grant to replace obsolete video equipment in the sanctuary. Session also passed a motion to schedule the 2024 Annual meeting on February 11. Lastly, following discussion and a presentation by Foundation Trustees Jim Beckemeyer and Mike Ross, session approved changes to the LOPC Foundation bylaws on trustee terms and years of service and required qualifications. It was then approved to schedule a congregation meeting on November 19, 2023, to consider the election of three Foundation nominees.

Pastor Peter Whitelock outlined the annual process of adopting team ministry goals; and the other pastors each provided a summary of the goals adopted by their respective teams:

Pastor Jaime Polson highlighted those of **Personnel** (including review of staff compensation and housing), **Seedlings, Children and Youth** (all of which need more volunteers), and **Deacons** (building intergenerational and support groups.)

Pastor Lauren Gully reviewed the goals of **Mission** (responding to justice issues, working with other diverse churches, more direct service opportunities), **Worship** (welcoming more people back to in person worship, increasing diversity representation in worship/music), and **Digital Outreach** (externalizing extensive ministry content, activating YouTube Channel).

Pastor Chris Baldwin noted how all the ministry teams were working together, and then summarized the complementary goals of both **Community Life** and **Spiritual Formation** (retaining existing, and building new, large and small group ministries to engage new people; and creating opportunities for teams to serve together and to build pathways for taking the next step of faith.)

A report on the 2024 Generosity/Stewardship pledge campaign, entitled "The Generous Heart," was presented by Elder Mark Weaver, highlighting the explanatory brochure mailed to members and emphasizing how necessary pledges are to session's development of the annual budget.

Under new business, Pastor Lauren noted LOPC's hosting of Winter Nights families the first two weeks of November, and Pastor Peter reminded session of Lauren's maternity leave starting December 11, when we will need interim assistance to fill in all that Lauren does for LOPC. The meeting then adjourned with prayer.



the GENEROUS HEART

2024 Pledge Campaign



So far, our community has pledged **\$1,240,673*** for 2024.

Our goal is **\$2,425,500.**

Your pledge will help LOPC plan and budget for the following in 2024:

- Growing mission ministry.
- Working for a better, more just world.
- Expanding our special needs ministry.
- Providing youth with service learning and spiritual growth opportunities.
- Engaging seniors in fellowship, care, and support.
- Developing new spiritual formation opportunities.
- Taking care of LOPC staff.

Visit lopc.org/pledge to learn more about how to pledge.

For questions, please contact LOPC Treasurer Staci Johnston at staci@lopc.org.

*As of November 13.

finance

Financial Update

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

LOPC is thankful for the many ways the congregation gives of their time, talent, treasures to LOPC! Consequently, the church is in a solid financial position as we approach the end of 2023.

For the 10 months ended October 31, contributions totaled \$2,854,612, ahead of the \$2,657,360 budget. Many components factored into that. While pledge giving was lower by \$44,841, we are optimistic for the full year. Non-pledge and loose offerings, and other income, were \$61,560 ahead of plan. LOPC was blessed by a total of \$138,328, from a member's gift of thanks and praise and an estate bequest. These gifts eliminated the need to draw \$93,210 from the session's reserve fund.

Mission and special gifts exceeded budget by \$106,243, contributing favorably to year-to-date congregational giving. Seedlings closed the 2022-2023 school year with an additional contribution to the church of \$23,541, resulting from higher summer

tuition rates. LOPC had a \$15,332 reduction in memorial giving and campus user fees, offset by \$20,962 of investment income, which wasn't budgeted.

Most ministry teams operated at or below budget. Excluding spending for mission and special gifts, year-to-date expenses totaled \$2,681,877, which was \$108,025 below budget. Much of this improvement stems from reduced spending for personnel, and children's ministry, offset by higher spending for utilities and repairs to the heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems.

Overall, we ended the 10 months with expenses exceeding contributions, resulting in a shortfall of \$12,579, instead of the expected \$211,283 deficit. LOPC is truly blessed to have strong support from the congregation and staff. All who have heeded requests to make timely pledge gifts are appreciated, helping the church align giving more closely with budget. Thank you!

Double Your Blessings

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

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

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

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

December Finance Giving Deadline for Tax Purposes

If you plan to make a year-end gift, LOPC must receive your mailed donation (postmarked 12/30/2023) or in-person by on December 31, 2023. There can be no exceptions.

If you are making a stock gift, please notify our accountant, Farah Mohammadzai, (x229) with the type of stock it is, and how the gift should be applied. It must be in LOPC's brokerage account by December 30, 2023.

Please do not file your 2023 tax return until you receive your year-end

LOPC statements, with written acknowledgment of your gifts to LOPC, which will be mailed in January 2024. Thank you for your generous giving to LOPC!

Giving at LOPC

One of the most practical ways you can help during times like these is through your financial support.

To give, visit lopc.org/giving, or scan the QR code on your mobile device.





HALLOWEEN FUN AT SEEDLINGS

By Kaylin Deutscher, Seedlings Board, Communications

We love to celebrate the holidays at Seedlings, and Halloween is one of the favorites for our kids!

Each year the children are invited to dress up in costumes for the day and each class does something special to celebrate. There were spooky art projects made, themed snacks, Halloween books and music, and more! Some classes even performed some special Halloween song and dance numbers for their parents. It was a blast!

The highlight of the Halloween season for many at Seedlings was our second annual Trunk-or-Treat event. Our Seedlings Board social team organized the event and parents volunteered to decorate their cars and pass out candy to our trick-or-treaters as they walked from car to car in the LOPC parking lot. Parents went all out to make the day fun and festive for their kids, and they all had a great time running around in costume with their Seedlings friends.

According to Jamie Ousman, social co-chair of the Seedlings board, "We had a great turnout at our second annual Trunk-or-Treat with most kids and families coming by and partaking in the event! Many kids were dressed up in their Halloween costumes and several parents came in character too! It was also wonderful to see the participation from many parents who decorated their cars and trunks! It was so appreciated! There were amazing, fun themes to many of the trunks including 'under the sea', 'farm animals', Frozen, and many more. We hope everyone enjoyed the afternoon and we look to continue this event every year!"





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

YOUTH

Christmas Break

No Youth Alive: December 24 and 31

No YOW: December 27 and January 3

No BTW: December 24 and 31

► **Questions? Email**
Keris Dahlkamp:
keris@lopc.org
or Junha Kim:
junha@lopc.org

HS Seniors & BTW Alumni Christmas Dinner

December 23, 6:00–8:30 p.m.

A special dinner reunion for high school seniors, advisors, and BTW alumni! Join us as we enjoy a delicious meal, talk about what life is like after high school, and worship together in the comfort of a local LOPC home. Please RSVP to Keris by December 19.

YOW *Youth on Wednesday*

Mediocre Talent Night

December 20, 6:00–7:30 p.m.

Come showcase not-so-great talents at YOW's annual mediocre talent night on December 20! Sing, dance, tell a joke or story! Prizes for the most average performance!

BTW *By the Way*

Progressive Brinner

December 17, 5:30–8:00 p.m.

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

Lighthouse at Hope Solutions

December 9, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

We are heading back to Hope Solutions' Lakeside Apartments site in Concord for a time of fellowship, food, crafts, and games. Lighthouse, now in its sixth year of activities, is an ongoing program that establishes a deeper, long-term relationship with resident families at Hope Solutions. It is wonderful to watch the friendships and understanding continue to grow between the youth from LOPC and the children from Hope Solutions. If you are interested in joining, contact Keris.

CHILDREN

Intergenerational Advent Festival

Sunday, December 3
11:00 a.m. in the Davies Room

Join us for the annual Advent Festival immediately after worship on December 3. There will be refreshments for all and craft stations for children. Make an Advent wreath and decorate an ornament in addition to other activities. This festival is in partnership with Young Families Connect, so the playground will be open for children to play.

For questions, please contact
Cathy Scheve at cathy@lopc.org.

The Garden and Preschool Ministry will not be meeting on December 24 and December 31. Children of all ages are welcome to join everyone in the Sanctuary and worship as a family.

Kid's Rock

Kids Rock will return for two more sessions this program year: **WINTER 1/10–2/7** and **SPRING 2/21–3/20**. This is for kids Kindergarten–4th grade to join our time of friendship, fun, fellowship, and service.

Visit lopc.org/kidsrock to register today or email Emily Austin at emily@lopc.org for more info.

Email Emily Austin: ◀
emily@lopc.org or
Susan Wentworth:
susan@lopc.org.





the GENEROSITY corner

by Alan Coe, Generosity Team Member

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing...

'Tis the season for "all nations [to] rise and SING and proclaim the good news of the Savior's birth!" The LOPC nation celebrates a Chancel Choir of more than 56 volunteer and professional singers, plus a band, and multi-talented Music Director Bryan Dunnewald.

Bryan builds on his background at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, the Mannes School of Music in New York, and Interlochen Arts Academy to offer a broad base of music (contemporary, traditional, gospel, jazz) to the choir and the instrumentalists.

Choir member Kyle Mohr says the choir brought him back to church after the pandemic break. Bryan's passionate sales pitch for new choir members struck a chord with him.

For Andy Gill, the choir is a major part of his LOPC community, allowing him to share his love of music with others, especially his daughter Miranda. A pre-school teacher by day, she enjoys having "adult time" with her friends in the choir: "It is an avenue for spiritual growth, and it is FUN!"

Linda Rosenthal adds, "It is impossible to join a group of friendly people, to all breathe and make music together, and not be moved in some way. The music we sing uses so much poetry and scripture and covers pretty much every emotional state we experience as humans. I am moved by it over and over again – a regular dose of 'awe' for the week. Getting to soak that up and

then express it to the congregation is a real joy and privilege."

To all who are involved in the music ministry at LOPC, thank you for your gifts of time and talent. The congregation enjoys the fruits of your labors every Sunday morning. We appreciate the balance between the music and the message, which Bryan and the pastors work closely to achieve.

The choir rehearses every Thursday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., and they welcome more volunteers! Pre-requisites? Can you carry a tune, and can you commit to 85% participation? That's it.

To join the joy, contact Bryan Dunnewald at bryan@lopc.org.

...Glory to the newborn King!





FROM
GENERATION
TO GENERATION...

Advent Sermon Series

December 3

There's room for every story

December 10

God meets us in our fear

December 17

We can choose a better way

December 24

We see God in each other



Sanctuary Flower Sponsorships

2024 Calendar Open Now!

Each week, LOPC's talented and creative flower team design the large Sanctuary chancel arrangement to enhance the worship experience. Sponsoring the flowers for a Sunday worship service is a beautiful way to celebrate or honor your loved ones. For a \$150 suggested donation to our Flower Fund, your personal dedication will be published in the worship bulletin on the Sunday of your sponsorship, and the flower team will do their best to accommodate any special requests for the arrangement.

Sign up at lopc.org/flowers to confirm your Sunday of choice for 2024.

christmas eve POINSETTIAS

This Christmas, LOPC will continue its well-loved tradition of adorning the sanctuary with poinsettias. You can sign up on the plaza after worship on November 26, December 3, and December 10, or you can mail or drop this form to the Ministry Center

offices. All requests must be received by December 15. A list of poinsettia dedications will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Those who have donated poinsettias may take their plant home with them after the final Christmas Eve service.

Christmas Eve
Poinsettias

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



Given by: _____

In Memory of: _____

OR

In Honor of: _____

Email: _____ Amount: _____ Cash ☐ Check ☐

Paid by (circle)

Poinsettia donations are \$20 each. Please make checks payable to LOPC.
Please fill out this form and return to the Ministry Center Office by December 15.





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



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 12/1/23

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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



LOPC
FOUNDATION

By making a legacy gift to the LOPC Foundation, you can give the way you live - by making a better future for your loved ones and a lasting impact on our LOPC community.

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