

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

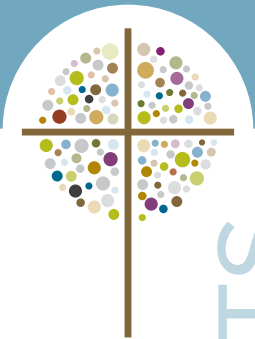
FEBRUARY 2024

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



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Anxious Times

By Peter Whitelock — Head of Staff

Stay calm; mind your own business; do your own job. You’ve heard all this from us before, but a reminder never hurts.

-1 Thessalonians 4:11



I’m hearing more and more these days a general lament that the times we live in are making us stressed out and anxious. I wonder if you think this is true. Many people seem to believe, based on their words and actions, that the world is falling apart on us. This feeling is, of course, not without historical precedence. The Apostle Paul, writing in 1 Thessalonians, addressed himself to a church consumed with the idea that the world was about to end, and the best use of their time was to stop working and stand around in groups speculating while upsetting themselves and everyone else. In his understanding, this was a futile path.

He urged the Thessalonians to avoid disturbing and riling one another up with endless conjecture, choosing instead to embrace the radical idea that God is still at work even when things seem chaotic. The adage is true that we don’t know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future. The better path was for them to stay focused on the quality and integrity of their own witness to Christ, making sure that what the world was seeing in them was commendable and qualitatively better than what was going on in the world around them. He urged them to stay focused on whatever job or responsibilities they had been entrusted with and to do good work to support themselves and their families. Sound advice, I hope you’ll agree, for these or any uncertain times.

February 2024

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Pastoral Staff

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

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 Moidel - Design
Dick James & Lexi Morrissey - Editors

Submissions & Deadlines

Please send requests for submissions to:
communications@lopc.org
no later than February 1 for the March 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





A Journey Through Lent with The Gospel According to Mark

Lent 2024

February 14–
March 31

Please visit
lopc.org/registrations
to sign up for the
daily email and small
groups. Questions?
michelle@lopc.org

Daily Devotion Emails

We invite you to read through the Gospel of Mark this Lent. Please sign up to receive a daily email that will include a reading and short devotion.

Small Group Lenten Study

All are welcome to join one of our popular small study groups for a weekly discussion.

Confirmed Lenten Study

Chris Baldwin & Jonathan Nolen • *Guys Group*
Mondays, 6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Heather Logan • *Intergenerational*
Mondays, 7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

Tom Scovel • *Intergenerational*
Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Sharon Bartlett • *Women's Group* (Zoom)
Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Patrick Chen • *Intergenerational*
Sundays, 11:10 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Additional groups may be available.
Please check the website for more information.

Sermon Series

Ash Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. service
February 14 • Mark 1:1-13

The Beginning

February 18 • Mark 2:1-12

Four Good Friends

February 25 • Mark 4:35-41

Peace, Be Still!

March 3 • Mark 6:30-44

Five Loaves, Two Fish

March 10 • Mark 8:27-30

Revealed, Concealed

March 17 • Mark 9:33-37

Rethinking Greatness



PLEASE JOIN US

for a special Sunday sermon & worship service

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

10:00 a.m.

LOPC is honored to welcome Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton, President of Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS), for a special Sunday worship service.

LOPC's Rev. Peter Whitelock, PTS Trustee and recent Presidential Search Committee member, is looking forward to introducing Dr. Walton to the LOPC community.

Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton is a social ethicist and religious educator known for engaging American evangelical traditions. On January 1, 2023, he became the 8th president of Princeton Theological Seminary.

love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

love does Congregational Day of Service – February 25!

Every February, LOPC invites the entire congregation to put “love into action” through LOPC’s aptly named service program *love does*. *love does* is a call to action for our community to look outside our busy lives and dedicate one day to service. We are encouraged to select an activity that day to participate in. Despite having service opportunities throughout the year, this day is special because we work together, side by side, to collectively make an impact in the greater community. This year *love does* day is **February 25 following 10:00 a.m. Worship**. There will be service projects on-campus and off-campus at various LOPC mission partner locations throughout Contra Costa County. Family, friends and neighbors welcome!

ON-CAMPUS



Package Diapers

We will sort diapers by size and repackage them for distribution through LOPC partner Monument Crisis Center.

Assemble Carts

We will work together assembling carts for Monument Crisis Center. Carts are needed for individuals who are food insecure and don't have a car, or for the elderly who are no longer able to drive. This is a great project for kids!



Breakfast Bags

Join others as we work together to assemble breakfast bags for the clients of Trinity Center.



Make Polar Fleece Blankets

We will make polar fleece blankets for distribution to abused children to provide comfort during their testimony process at Calico Center.



Sort Clothing for Infants

We will sort gently used baby clothing that will be delivered to low-income families, providing first-year essentials through Loved Twice.

OFF-CAMPUS



Organize and Deep Clean a Transitional Housing Unit

We will work at a STAND! transitional housing site, reorganizing their storage facility and doing a deep clean of several other areas on-site.



Deep Clean a Family Shelter

We will work at the Mt. View Shelter in Pacheco, helping improve their facility with deep cleaning, painting, and working in their playground and garden.

For more details & to sign up, go to lopc.org/lovedoes.

special offering



HOPE SOLUTIONS

Every year during *love does*, LOPC chooses a local partner to recognize and support. This year, the *love does* special offering will benefit Hope Solutions and their *Homes Heal Hearts* capital campaign.

Over the past few years, Hope Solutions has accepted a new and exciting challenge to create more affordable housing in the Bay Area, which is an extremely critical need in our area. Their goal is to create 50 new homes for families and individuals without shelter by 2025.

Hope Solutions broke ground on the first of their units in late 2023 at Grace Presbyterian Church, and plans for other communities are in the works! Hope Solutions has become a proven partner in the community that seeks to end homelessness in our area. 98% of their residents remain housed, 75% maintain or grow their income, and 100% of children in their enrichment programs move to the next grade level.

Hope Solutions is currently in the middle of a capital campaign to raise

love does Special Offering: **Homes Heal Hearts**

\$7 million to create this new housing. **Our aim for this special offering is to raise \$7,000 towards their goal to build 50 new housing units by 2025.**

Imagine! We can reach this goal if 100 people give \$70 towards this special offering!

To give, please designate your gift by writing “Hope Solutions” in the memo line of your check. If you wish to give online, please select “Hope Solutions” in the drop-down menu at lopc.org/giving. For more information, visit lopc.org/specialoffering.

Putting the Pieces Together



mission opportunity



Bed Linen and Towel Collection for Refugees

In 2023 LOPC's Refugee Study Group began working with Walnut Creek United Methodist Church's Extended Family Program, (EFP). EFP solicits, collects and delivers to refugees and other unhoused families, basic household necessities ranging from bed and kitchen linens to small appliances to bed frames and more.

This year *love does* includes a collection for items needed below.

Items Requested

Sheet Sets (Twin/Full only)
New or in very good condition with no stains or repairs.

Mattress Pads (Twin/Full only)
New or in very good condition with no stains or repairs.

Towel Sets or Singles (bath, hand, and washcloth).
Colors do not have to match. No beach towels please.

Shower Curtains (new only) and rings for hanging.

Items can be dropped off in the Ministry Center beginning February 1.



YOUTH



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

Youth Group Joins *love does*

February 25 and 28

The youth and adult advisors will participate in service projects as part of LOPC's wider *love does* ministry. Activities at Youth Alive will include folding and packing baby clothes for Loved Twice, a non-profit organization that provides clothing to new parents who are in need. The youth at BTW and YOW will help prepare spring gift baskets for Hope Solutions! This is always a highlight experience for everyone involved. Please join us and bring friends!

2024 Summer Service-Learning Registration

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

Short-term mission experiences can have a big impact. Youth in 5th–12th grade who choose to spend a week of their summer vacation dedicated to service will:

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

June 10–14 Service Squad: A Service-Learning Day Camp for youth completing 5th–6th grades in spring 2024.

June 16–21 Middle School Service-Learning Trip to Wapato, WA, for youth completing 7th–8th grades in spring 2024.

July 7–14 High School Service-Learning Trip to Salinas and USA/Mexico Border for youth completing 9th–12th grades in spring 2024.

BTW *By the Way* & YOW *Youth on Wednesday*

BTW 8th Grade Preview February 18

YOW 4th Grade Preview February 28

Youth in 8th grade will have the opportunity to visit BTW and Youth in 4th grade (along with Children's Ministry Staff) will have the opportunity to visit YOW! The purpose of these events is to allow the youth to see what it's like to be a part of LOPC's youth ministry. Youth will join in the fun games, participate in worship, and listen to a short devotional from 6:00–7:30 p.m.

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



CHILDREN

Come help our growing Garden!

Children's Ministry seeking Sunday morning volunteers.

Did you know that just upstairs and around the corner from the Sanctuary there are a bunch of bright, engaged, and creative kids who gather each Sunday to learn about God and be in fellowship with one another? The Garden is what we call our Sunday school program for children ages Pre-K through 4th grade. We start each Sunday with some casual play time: kids can craft, play games, build, read, all while sharing about their week. After everyone is gathered, we have a large circle time, where we share our monthly virtue (in February it is KINDNESS) and hear a story from the Bible that exemplifies it. Children then

divide into smaller groups by age and try out a few extension activities that further emphasize the lesson of the day. As parents come to collect their little ones, they are given a Parent Cue Card outlining the message of the week, the bible story studied, and a few reflection questions to ask their kids throughout the week.

Since fall, we have had consistently strong attendance which has been wonderful. It means LOPC is truly a welcoming place that young families are drawn to. With larger participation, adequate volunteer support becomes essential to the continued success of the program. We are looking for new participants to work with Susan, Emily, and our core volunteers so that we can keep offering curriculum in small groups that is meaningful and tailored to their age-appropriate level. The good news is that the requirements are simple – Love God & Love Kids!

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

Children's Ministry provides the rest: training, supplies, stories, structure. The time commitment is simply one hour, and boy does it fly by!

If you are wondering what life in the Garden is like, we invite you to come shadow one Sunday this spring. You may be surprised to see how the smiles of the kids and their inventive ideas are more than enough to make you BLOOM!

For more information, feel free to reach out to Emily Austin at emily@lopc.org for details or to book a visit!

community



Save the Date!

Palm Sunday Egg Hunt

March 24 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 for the community, and all are welcome!

Registration information is coming soon. If you would like to serve as a volunteer at this event, or if you have any questions, please contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org.

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 while enjoying breakfast bites and coffee.

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



LOPC is now on YouTube!

Visit youtube.com/@LOPCYoutube

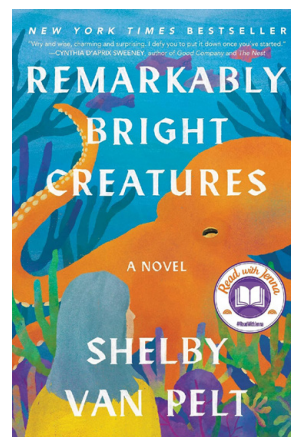
Check us out on your phone, tablet, computer, and Smart TV! Be sure to leave a comment, give us a thumbs up, and subscribe!

LOPC New Member Class

March 3, 11:15 a.m.–12:45 p.m. following Worship in the Oak Room

Are you ready to make LOPC your church home? We would love to invite you to consider joining the church as an active member. Attend this 90-minute class to learn about LOPC's vision, our pastors, rub elbows with Pastors Peter Whitelock and Chris Baldwin, and learn about how to get more deeply connected to the community. Childcare is available with advance reservation before February 20.

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



Fourth Monday Book Group

February 26 at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt, an exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope, tracing a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus. Set in the Pacific Northwest, with an unusual cast of characters (human and cephalopod), the book is an engaging and well-paced narrative with a combination of emotion, humor, wit and wisdom.

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



Fourth Friday Book Group

February 23, 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

This month the group will discuss *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See.

All are welcome. Please contact Catherine Coleman at awaitingword@gmail.com for the Zoom link.



LOPC Serving the Special Needs Community

By Susan Wentworth, Director of Children and Family Ministry

Special Needs Ministry here at LOPC is thriving. There are 30 families who have children with special needs participating each month and 60 families who partner with them to be a buddy for the evening events.

Friday Fun Nights, which is usually the first Friday of the month, welcomes more than 20 children with special needs and their siblings to an evening of arts and crafts, recreational play, movies, games, and a time of fellowship. To support the children, more than 30 volunteers come and hang out with the kids as a buddy and enjoy the evening's activities with them. The parents take off for a couple of hours for a time of respite.

During Friendship Circle, which happens on the third Thursday of the month, there are 20 high school youth with special needs who join us for a fun evening of activities. LOPC has partnered with the high schools in the area, and they provide more than 20

students who come to be buddies with their classmates. These gatherings have helped build friendships amongst all of the youth and have made many feel less isolated at school, which has been difficult for many in our community.

We are currently at capacity for these two programs and have a waiting list for both. With such a large number (40–50 children and youth attending), we need additional adult volunteers to provide guidance and leadership. Having more adult leaders will allow us to serve more families and continue to grow the Special Needs Ministry. No previous experience required. Both programs thrive with consistent buddies participating so that friendships are developed and nurtured.

Please reach out to Susan Wentworth at susan@lopc.org if you would like to join us for an evening of fun.

hold in PRAYER

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

James Ellis,
who passed on September 2.

Mary Grannis,
who passed on December 16.

Arlene Sargent,
who passed on December 18. A service will be held on February 9 at 2:00 p.m.

Kathy Bradshaw,
who passed on December 20.

Ginny Gifford,
who passed on December 24. A service will be held on February 17 at 1:00 p.m.

Peggy Hartz,
who passed on January 6.

Don Atherton,
who passed on January 9.

*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

On Thursday, January 11, Thursday Fellowship welcomed guests and volunteers to a day filled with activity. Jen Carne, music instructor in the Lafayette schools and at Lamorinda Music, showcased her fiddling styles from Bluegrass to Irish! Toes were tapping and hands were clapping. On January 18, Mike Kistner led us in a sing-along of our favorite tunes. We ended the month on January 25 with LOPC member Stan Morner, poet and educator, who helped us understand and appreciate the beauty of poetry. It was such fun to be back together after the Christmas and New Year's holiday break, and we look forward to meeting five weeks in February. It will be a month of the most varied programming we have yet to present.

February Schedule:

- **February 1:** Director John Coleman, member and past president of the East Bay MUD board of directors, will speak on how water makes its way from the mountains to our taps in Contra Costa County.



- **February 8:** "This and That." The unusual, the treasured, the amusing . . . Join us for the Thursday Fellowship rendition of Antique's Road Show and adult "Share and Tell!"
- **February 15:** Michael Kistner sing-along and Valentine's Celebration!
- **February 22:** A special creative arts and crafts project, games, and more!
- **February 29:** Eclectic guitarist Jean-Paul Buongiorno, whose personal style reflects the musical genres of Flamenco, Brazilian, and Latin music.

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,
bring a friend, volunteer!
We look forward to
welcoming you!

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



session

December Session Highlights

By Terry Clark, Clerk of Session

The December session meeting began with an informal gathering of existing and incoming elders during a potluck supper. Spiritual Formation consisted of outgoing Elders Brian O'Shea, Ginny Ross, Leslie Finertie, and Terry Clark sharing how meaningful their service on session has been for them and how they have grown in their faith over the past few years.

Session considered and approved a motion brought through the Mission in Society (MIS) Team to support a Regional Mission Partnership Grant Agreement facilitated between the East Region of the Presbytery and Refugee & Immigrant Transitions (RIT) to enable a project of RIT on behalf of refugees/asylees in obtaining housing in Contra Costa County. Additional motions were approved through adoption of the consent agenda, including those on the expansion and refurbishment of Kurth Memorial Garden, the deployment of gifts for the 2024 India Mission trip and *Stand! for Families Free of Domestic Violence*, and funding for campus-wide safety initiatives and training.

Elder Terry Clark then reported on the December 10 program in Fellowship Hall on Table Talk: Presbyterians Dialogue on Israel/Palestine, presented by Pastor Peter and Elders Terry Clark and Chris Johnson. This presentation covered LOPC's long-standing involvement

with our mission partners in Gaza, the complex history of the ongoing conflicts, the position and many guideline pronouncements over the years by the PC(USA) on these issues, and the traumatic impact of the current Gaza war on our local interfaith partners Temple Isaiah and the San Ramon Valley Islamic Center. Session engaged in a concerned Q & A dialogue and reached a consensus that a comprehensive position statement on the Israel/Palestine war be provided to the congregation. Additional Table Talk events will be held in 2024 to keep the congregation apprised on these very difficult events.

Pastor Peter reported that LOPC's leadership retreat, featuring Princeton Seminary President Jonathan Walton, will be held jointly with First Presbyterian Church Berkeley on Saturday, February 3. LOPC's annual meeting will be February 11 in the sanctuary following worship. Peter also announced that LOPC's YouTube Channel (youtube.com/@LOPCYoutube) is now up and running, and all are invited to check it out and subscribe. Pastor Jaime Polson explained the undertaking for LOPC's campus-wide plan to prepare for earthquakes and other emergencies, the expansion plans for Kurth Memorial Garden, and the Port Chicago advocacy event to

be presented to the congregation on January 28.

The meeting concluded with a positive and hopeful financial report by Elder Jim Nagle, as we awaited the final two weeks of 2023 donations, and the related Generosity Team report by Elder Mark Weaver regarding the status of the pledge campaign and efforts underway to close the narrowing gap between amounts pledged and the year-end goal.

Session then went into executive session, with guests and Pastors excused, to first discuss and approve a motion to hire an unbudgeted temporary pastor to help out during Pastor Lauren Gully's four-month maternity leave plus the two-month sabbatical of Pastor Peter once Lauren returns. Session then received and discussed the performance review of Pastor Peter from Elder Brian O'Shea on behalf of the Personnel Team, providing a summary of Peter's goals and objectives for this past year and Personnel's assessment of his clear accomplishments amidst many challenges. Peter was invited back into the meeting and given a very appreciative standing ovation, following which he closed the meeting in prayer.

There's still time—pledge *today!*

the
**GENEROUS
HEART**



2024 Pledge Campaign



So far, our
community
has pledged
\$1,862,416*
for 2024.

Our goal is
\$2,425,500.

Your pledge will help LOPC
plan and budget for 2024.

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 January 16.

finance

Financial Update

By Jim Nagle, Finance Elder

We are truly fortunate and thankful for everyone that has given of their time, talent, and treasure to LOPC in 2023. Generosity has been outstanding this year. Overall, total giving of \$3,662,815 came in strong for the year and exceeded expenses by \$52,954. LOPC is fortunate to have strong support from the congregation and staff.

Congregational giving, before special giving, was \$50,067 more than budgeted. Pledge giving was slightly lower than plan for the year by \$24,545. Non-pledge, loose offerings, and other income were \$88,606 higher than budget. During the year LOPC, was blessed to receive a total of \$240,828 from three large undesignated gifts. Session was able to designate \$175,000 of these gifts to provide partial funding of a loan for the expansion of Kurth Memorial Garden in 2024, resulting in a net bequest of \$65,828. Our congregation generously gave \$95,178 for the Faith Component.

LOPC deployed \$284,150 in Mission, Special Gifts, and Offerings, which

was a \$156,150 increase relative to budget, with gifts to 20 vetted mission organizations, including Monument Crisis Center, Atfaluna, Maui Wildfire Relief, Children of Faith, local food banks, and disaster relief in Syria, Turkey, and Israel.

Seedlings closed the 2022–2023 school year with an additional contribution to the church of \$23,541, resulting from higher summer tuition rates. Overall favorable congregational giving eliminated the need to draw \$93,210 budgeted from the session reserve fund, which was originally budgeted to cover income shortfalls. LOPC had \$9,683 in lower memorials and campus user fees from budget, offset by \$28,377 of higher investment income. We are grateful for the \$411,263 of support from the LOPC Foundation.

Year-to-date ministry expense, excluding special gift expense, was \$53,859 lower than planned. Personnel expenses were lower than budget, due in part, to staff transitions. Facilities related expenses were higher than plan, due to higher utilities rates, and repairs to the heating, air

conditioning, and ventilation systems, offset by savings in other areas. Other ministry areas were below budget. The staff at LOPC has done an incredible job managing expenses and allocating resources to meet the needs of our faith community and our mission partners.

LOPC finished 2023 in a solid financial position, which gives us confidence as we enter the new year. We look forward to serving together in ministry with you in 2024. Thank you for your ongoing support.

What is Per Capita?

Per Capita is a Latin phrase that means “for each head.” We use it to refer to an annual fee that our congregation pays to higher levels of the Presbyterian Church based upon the number of active members at LOPC. For 2024, the Per Capita amount is \$40.00 per family member, or \$80.00 per couple. Our goal is to double member participation in 2024 to 12%. We want to encourage more members to make an extra per capita contribution to help defray this church expense in addition to their other giving. Please write “Per Capita” on the memo line of a check or give online through the website Giving link. LOPC budgeted \$68,044 in 2024 for our Per Capita obligation. We are hopeful the congregation remembers to donate to Per Capita, as we no longer use pledge envelopes. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if a significant portion of this could be covered by members’ extra contributions, enabling us to add additional support to LOPC ministries?

Giving through Fellowship One

Each year, Finance needs approval from donors to continue credit card giving through Fellowship One’s recurring payment option.

Please inform Farah Mohammadzai, LOPC’s Accountant, farah@lopc.org x253, of your intentions, so she can make sure your giving is correct in 2024. Thank you.

Statement of Giving & Expense			
December 31, 2023			
	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	Fav (Unfav)
Congregational Giving:			
Pledge Income	\$ 2,185,455	\$ 2,210,000	\$ (24,545)
Non Pledge, Loose Offerings, Other Giving	408,606	320,000	88,606
Bequests & Gifts of Praise	65,828	–	65,828
Faith Component	95,178	175,000	(79,822)
Congregational Giving w/o Special Gifts	2,755,067	2,705,000	50,067
Giving: Mission & Special Gifts & Offerings	284,150	128,000	156,150
Total Congregational Giving:	3,039,217	2,833,000	206,217
Session Emerging Needs Fund	–	93,210	(93,210)
Seedlings	157,641	134,100	23,541
User Fees & Memorial Investment Income	54,694	36,000	18,694
Foundation	411,263	411,260	3
Total Giving:	3,662,815	3,507,570	155,245
Expense: Ministry Teams Spending	3,285,711	3,379,570	(53,859)
Mission & Special Gifts & Offerings Spending	284,150	128,000	156,150
Total Expense:	3,609,861	3,507,570	102,291
Contributions in excess of Expense:	\$ 52,954	\$ –	\$ 52,954

*"This is my commandment,
that you love one another as
I have loved you." John 15:12*

the GENEROSITY corner

By Nancy Henderson, Generosity Team Member

How Pledging Supports LOPC's Care Ministries

LOPC's commitment is to love and serve members and community by addressing needs as they evolve. Our Care Ministry offers many forms of care, some of which involve professional experts, such as gerontologists and psychologists for children, youth, and parents. They may be published authors, researchers, and/or practitioners. These programs require budgets, which is why LOPC encourages you to pledge – to allow our church to plan ahead.

For example, kids and parents today need support, especially for mental health and social wellness. Our Care Ministry partners with the Lafayette and Acalanes Union High School Districts to host community parent education programs throughout the year to help families thrive. These events feature experts who discuss subjects like suicide prevention, social-emotional health, and skills for social media use.

Another LOPC Care focus is successful aging, including basic changes in mind and bodies, and adapting to chronic illness. While numerous public programs support caregivers, few

support those experiencing dementia. Last May, LOPC held a pilot program for couples in which one partner had a recent diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment. Another session is now underway, with plans for more. LOPC also offers periodic half-day programs with legal and medical experts who provide holistic advice, including emphasis on diet, exercise, and community involvement.

Care Ministry also has an ongoing commitment to provide bereavement-support groups. While outside organizations sponsor such groups, folks often want one at the church, where they are familiar with the surroundings and feel a sense of comfort. It is also a benefit to make acquaintances to greet on the Worship Plaza after a Sunday service. LOPC plans to shorten the "wait-list" time for the 16-week program by offering drop-in groups that meet every other week as well as four to six-week grief support sessions with the possibility of on-going meetings.

Please avail yourselves of any programs that may benefit you. Please also know that every bit of your pledge and other financial support is put to good use. Thank you for your generosity.

care

Dementia Caregivers Support Group

February 7 and 21

Join this one-hour support group for those caring for someone with dementia on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 10:30 a.m. on Zoom.

To register, please contact
Linda Fodrini-Johnson at
lindafj620@outlook.com.



The Deacon Ministry consists of LOPC members that have been elected by the Congregation to serve as beacons of care. Deacons offer support in the following ways:

HOME VISITS

Deacons arrange and participate in visits to members who are homebound, hospitalized, or in various types of care facilities.

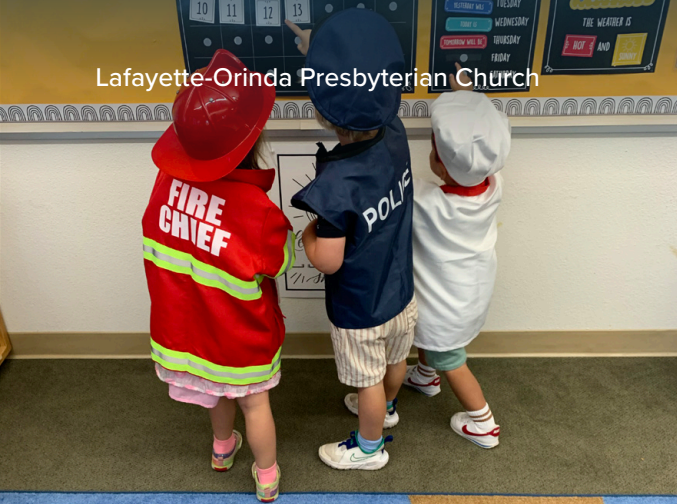
HOME COMMUNION

Upon request, home communion kits are available to members not able to attend worship services in person.

MEAL DELIVERY

Deacons order and deliver food to persons recuperating from illness, those recently discharged from the hospital, new moms, grieving families, or anyone who might need a meal in a time of crisis.

To request any of these services, please leave a message on the Deacon Line at (925) 283-8722, ext. 274. Messages are responded to in a timely manner daily.



SEEDLINGS

By Seedlings Director Coleen Moulton

Seedlings will begin registration for the 2024–2025 school year this month. We are so excited to be moving into our 40th year of providing quality care for the Lamorinda area. This year we have served more than 100 families on our beautiful campus! If you are interested in enrolling your child at Seedlings Preschool or know a friend who is, here are a few tips and reminders for you!

Please read carefully for important dates and directions that apply to you! Registration will be processed in the following order: Currently enrolled Seedlings families and their siblings who are not yet enrolled; next, members of LOPC; then, families who are currently on our waiting list; and lastly, members of the community. All enrollment is done electronically.

LOPC members who are interested in enrolling can email the Seedlings office at seedlings@lopc.org for a link to the form.

Members of the community (meaning you are not currently enrolled in our program, registered on our 2023–2024 wait list, or a current member of Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church), can email the Seedlings office beginning February 27 for the link to the registration form. Please note, space in all Seedlings classes is limited and may be filled by current Seedlings children and their siblings. If a space is not available at the time you register, you will be placed on the 2024–2025 wait list for a non-refundable fee.

If you have questions, please contact the Seedlings office by email at seedlings@lopc.org.

Special Announcement: Israel/Palestine Conflict Information

We've updated LOPC's website to include some of the latest information concerning the conflict in Israel/Palestine.

We live in a time when hostility and warfare between Israel/Palestine has created a state of crisis for people on both sides. LOPC's interfaith leadership, along with session's concurrence, issued an official LOPC statement on the Israel/Palestine conflict in December.

Please visit lopc.org/interfaith to read this statement. On the same webpage, you will also find additional resources and ways to get involved.



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

The First Friday Forum speaker for February 2 is author and lecturer Adam Hochschild, who will speak on "Post WWI Challenges to American Democracy."

Hochschild will talk about his latest book, *American Midnight: The Great War, a Violent Peace, and Democracy's Forgotten Crisis*. The New York Times Book Review described it as "A harrowing portrait of America in 1917–21, rife with racist violence, xenophobia and political repression abetted by the federal government. The book serves as a cautionary tale and a provocative counterpoint to our own era."

Hochschild graduated from Harvard in 1963 with a BA in History and Literature. When he was a college student, he spent a summer working on an anti-government newspaper in South Africa and subsequently worked briefly as a civil rights worker in Mississippi.

Hochschild has been a reporter for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, a commentator on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," and a co-founder, editor, and writer at *Mother Jones* magazine. He has received the Theodore Roosevelt-Woodrow Wilson Award from the American Historical

Association and in 2014 was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a three-time winner of the California Book Awards' Gold Medal for Nonfiction.

In addition to being a writer, Hochschild teaches at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley.

All First Friday Forum programs are offered at 1:30 p.m. on the first Friday of the month, January through June, and are sponsored by the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. The February program is available at the LOPC campus and on LiveStream.

For more information visit lopc.org/first-friday-forum. To view the Livestream event, go to lopc.org and click "Watch" at the top right of the webpage.





**LAFAYETTE-ORINDA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
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Lafayette, CA 94549



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

IMPORTANT

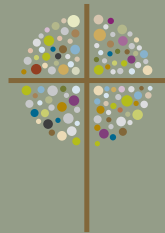
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LOPC FOUNDATION



Is one of your New Year's resolutions to update (or create) your estate plans? If YES, please consider naming the LOPC Foundation as a part of your legacy giving and join those of us who want to make a lasting impact on our LOPC community.

To learn more about the Foundation, please visit lopc.org/foundation or reach out to a Foundation Trustee (listed on the website).

