

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2024

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

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





# New Year and New Life

By Lauren Gully — Pastor, Mission & Outreach

As we stand at the beginning of the New Year, I greet you with warmth and anticipation for the blessings that lie ahead. In the spirit of fresh beginnings and the hope that the dawn of a new year brings, I'm writing from the anticipated start of a new journey of my own! In fact, by the time you read this I will already be on maternity leave and should have already welcomed our new baby girl into the world!



With hearts full of gratitude and excitement, my family and I are preparing to embrace a new chapter in our lives. Just as we eagerly await the turning of the calendar to embark on the journey of a new year, our family has anticipated the arrival of our little one with joy and expectation. I am deeply grateful for the support, love, and understanding that you, LOPC, have already showered upon us.

During this time of personal newness, I encourage each of you to reflect on the blessings of the past year and to look forward to the promise of new beginnings in the year ahead. Even if you do not have a newborn at home, the New Year reminds us of the possibility of newness in our lives that we see echoed in Scripture. As we step into the newness and unknown of the coming year, may our faith that God is at work in our lives and in the world sustain us.

May the New Year usher in blessings of joy, peace, and renewed faith for each of you. I ask for your prayers for our family during this exciting time, and can't wait to introduce our daughter to LOPC.

Wishing you a Happy New Year filled with God's abundant love!

## CONTENTS

### January 2024

Upcoming Events .....	2
Mission .....	3
New Members .....	5
Foundation/Community ...	6
Movie Night .....	7
Generosity .....	8
Finance .....	10
Thursday Fellowship .....	11
Care .....	12
Session .....	13
Youth/Children .....	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](mailto:communications@lopc.org)  
no later than January 1 for the February issue.



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

### Need to reach us?

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





# FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

The First Friday Forum speaker for January 5 is Dr. Joe Whitehouse, world traveler and photographer, who will speak on “Iraq: Cradle of Civilization.” Joe Whitehouse’s travel presentations are beautifully done and very popular at LOPC. He will present amazing pictures of interesting sites of historical, cultural, and religious significance in Iraq, Kurdistan, and Lebanon.

Iraq is called the cradle of civilization since it consists largely of ancient Mesopotamia, the native land of the Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian civilizations. Mesopotamia was

the source of a writing system, mathematics, timekeeping, a calendar, and a law code. Joe has pictures of Shi’a and Christian historical sites, modern Kurdistan, and the Yazidi community, which was viciously attacked by ISIS in 2014.

Dr. Whitehouse has visited 157 countries and so is certainly a world traveler. He thinks his travel bug began when boarding a train at age 11 to visit a relative and traveling by bus to visit a friend at a young age. “By 1965, I had a summer job in Hawaii and in 1967 and ‘68 a summer job in Greenland for the DEW Line. I first

traveled to Europe in 1969. While in the Air Force in 1970–72 on Okinawa, I traveled to Asia including then recently opened Burma.” Joe teaches travel planning quarterly at Piedmont High School.

All First Friday Forum (FFF) 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 January and June programs are only available on Zoom. **To attend this program, you must register using a link on the FFF webpage [lopc.org/first-friday-forum](https://lopc.org/first-friday-forum).** The February through May programs are available simultaneously on the LOPC campus and LiveStream. A complete list of 2024 programs is on the FFF webpage.



A Journey Through Lent  
with

The Gospel According to Mark

**2024 Lenten Study**  
February 14–March 31

[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.

Please visit [lopc.org/registrations](https://lopc.org/registrations) to sign up for the daily email and small groups. Questions? [michelle@lopc.org](mailto:michelle@lopc.org)

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.



mission

# love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

## IN FEBRUARY

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, with other members 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.

### ON-CAMPUS

#### 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!

#### 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

#### 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.

#### Package Diapers

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

#### 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.







## Diaper Drive for MCC

Many families who are struggling financially are overwhelmed by the expense of diapers and sometimes have to make the choice between buying food or buying diapers. Diapers of all sizes are needed. Full and partial packages of diapers are gladly accepted. Donations will be accepted through February 19. Look for the barrel in the CLC lobby labelled "Seedlings Diaper Drive for MCC" or in the Ministry Center office.

Contact Robin Freeberg at  
[robin@lopc.org](mailto:robin@lopc.org) with questions.

## 2024 Monthly Food Donation List

### Benefiting Monument Crisis Center

Place requested food in the MCC barrel on the plaza after Worship or to the Ministry Center Office during the week.

JAN	Peanut Butter (plastic container only)
FEB	Canned Soup
MAR	Tuna
APR	Ready to Eat (snap tops and pouch)
MAY	Oatmeal
JUN	Dry Rice
JUL	Canned Chili
AUG	Pasta
SEP	Canned Vegetables
OCT	Canned Fruit
NOV	Cereal
DEC	Dry Beans

## Donate: Extended Family Program

By Phil Hunter, LOPC member

### Happy New Year!

If you're in the process of downsizing, please consider donating unwanted household items to the Extended Family Program (EFP). It was started by Walnut Creek United Methodist Church (WCUMC) and Lafayette Christian Church to help furnish new residences for refugees in Contra Costa County (CCC).

For refugees, the journey to the U.S. is difficult, and can take years. Bringing only what they can carry, they arrive with more hope than possessions. Full of gratitude and relief when they locate a living space—sometimes only a couple rooms in a shared apartment - they rely on the kindness of strangers for basic household items. EFP accepts gently used items such as bath and bed linens, kitchen pots, pans, knives, sets of dishes, water glasses, bowls, and mugs. However, EFP does not accept clothing at this time.

EFP is the organization with which the LOPC Refugee Study Group decided to work to help refugees moving to Contra Costa County. Donations of small items can be made Tuesdays 10:00 a.m.–noon at WCUMC at 1543 Sunnyvale Ave.

There, volunteers receive, sort, and deliver donations to refugees' apartments. Small furniture is welcome, and can be picked up by volunteers. If you are interested in donating furniture, please email Randi Long with the dimensions of any item at [hrlong13@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hrlong13@sbcglobal.net). There is always a lag in time between when donated items are received, sorted, and delivered to refugee apartments. Therefore, storage of donated items has become an issue. Currently, EFP's greatest need is for storage space in central CCC to hold donated items until they can be delivered.

If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved, the next Refugee Study Group will be Sunday, January 21, at 11:10 a.m. in LOPC's Davies Room. Randi Long will provide an update on LOPC's relationship with EFP and specifically how to solicit more furniture donations. Additionally, there will be an update on a grant request to the SF Presbytery to help alleviate housing-funding issues for refugees in Contra Costa County. Plans for a *love does* volunteer opportunity will also be introduced at the meeting.

For questions, contact Phil Hunter at [hunter.p@mac.com](mailto:hunter.p@mac.com).



# WELCOME

## new members

### Barbara and Rob Weikert

Barbara and Rob are enjoying belonging to LOPC and getting involved in the church community. They are blessed with four adult children. Their eldest daughter, Kendall, and her husband, Garrett Ley, live in Austin, TX and welcomed a baby daughter, Peyton Rose, at the end of November. Their son, Kyle, lives in New York City, so they're happy their son, Neil, and daughter, Laurel, live in the Bay Area. Over the years, Barb and Rob have been active volunteers in the greater Lamorinda area, so they're looking forward to growing their faith by getting involved with LOPC's ministries.



### Kelly Metzler Randall

Kelly lives in Lafayette with her husband, James, and their daughter Brooke (2). She is a financial planner at a financial advisory firm in Walnut Creek. They enjoy spending time outdoors and traveling to visit with family on both coasts. Having moved to Lafayette last year, Kelly looks forward to getting to know the LOPC community and having the opportunity to raise Brooke in this faith community.



### Alethea Sargent

Alethea lives in Lafayette with her husband, Daniel, and three children, Corrina Mary (11), Ramona Elisabeth (8), and Johanna Rosalynn (4). Alethea is a federal prosecutor based in Oakland, and Daniel is a history professor at UC Berkeley. In her spare time, Alethea enjoys letting her kids teach her to ski and trying to teach her kids to play golf. As a family, they love to travel to national parks and, more locally, to go to Six Flags. Alethea especially looks forward to getting herself and her kids involved in service opportunities through LOPC.



### Drew and Sara Sanders

Drew and Sara Sanders live in Alamo and just celebrated 25 years of marriage. They have two children, Ryan (19), a sophomore at Cal Poly SLO, and Brooke (17), a senior at San Ramon Valley, plus 9-year-old golden retriever, Kona. They have a consulting company, Banyan Tree Strategies, that Drew runs and Sara has helped with for the last ten years. Sara is also a professional golfer and recently turned 50, so is enjoying a restart in some Senior LPGA tournaments. They love to spend time in Hawaii and with their family. What drew them to LOPC was the feel of community, friendliness, and the beautiful setting.



### Melanie Walterspiel

Melanie Waters and Alex Walterspiel have been married 18 years and are longtime Orinda residents. Their three children, Hawken (14), Blythe (11), and Quinn (11), have been active participants in LOPC's youth programs since their time at Seedlings. Melanie has especially enjoyed engaging in LOPC's small groups and programs for mothers. The family loves to be active outside and travel.



### Thiago and Ana Barbara

Thiago and Ana Cecilia live in Orinda and have been married for 12 years. They have one child, Noah (7). Thiago is a lawyer and Ana is a psychologist. In their spare time they like to play board games, read books, and enjoy nature. They all share a passion for music. What attracted them to LOPC was the desire to build a sense of community (especially for their son), and after the first visit they knew that LOPC was a safe and loving place.



### Christine and Younggi Choi

Christine and Younggi live in Orinda and have been married for 10 years. They have two children, Owen (6) and Derek (4). Christine works in public finance and Younggi works in tech finance. The Chois love sports (Cal, 49ers, Warriors, and Giants), hiking, and snow sports. "We felt so welcomed at LOPC, and our kids were so excited about going to 'church school' and the Oreo after-party."





# foundation

## LOPC Foundation Finances – Annual Report

By Jennifer Crocker, Foundation Trustee, Treasurer



**L**OPC Foundation closed its September 30, 2023 fiscal year with \$11,374,000 of invested net assets (equity), after deducting \$275,100 of remaining commitments to LOPC in 2023. Legacy estate and other gifts in the amount of \$432,300 were received in the fiscal year September 30, 2023. The prior year amount was \$229,550.

A 15% investment rate of return for the fiscal year was earned on the Foundation investments, made up of 14 diversified mutual funds and exchange traded funds. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) focused funds are no less than 51% of the investments.

Foundation trustees appropriated \$411,000 for church ministries plus \$158,000 for facilities reserve-study project expenses and facilities capital expenses.

**Learn more about donor opportunities for legacy estate gifts and other gifts to stabilize Foundation support of church ministries in the future at the LOPC website and from Foundation trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Lois Boyd, Jen Crocker, Andy Gill, Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Gwenn Lennox, Linda Rosenthal, Mike Ross, Dara Youngdale.**

**Net asset values of the Foundation's 11 funds and Facilities Reserve Account as of September 30, 2023, after additions and disbursements to the church:**

### Unrestricted

General Ministry Fund	\$ 3,679,000
-----------------------	--------------

### Restricted\*

Deacon's Endowment Fund	\$ 239,000
Thursday Fellowship Fund	246,000
Youth Fund	358,000
Christian Leadership Fund	244,000
Women's Endowment Fund	2,000
Mission Endowment Fund	105,000
Music Fund	112,000
Landscape Maintenance Endowment Fund	123,000
Facilities Endowment Fund	5,391,000
Facilities Reserve Account**	899,000

\*Restricted funds and accounts are available for grants for limited or restricted uses designated by donors or Foundation trustees.

\*\*The Facilities Reserve Account provides funds for planned as well as unexpected facilities and future capital projects. In fiscal year 2023, \$174,000 was set aside in the account.

# community



## LOPC Education Event: LOPC's advocacy for the exoneration of the Port Chicago 50

Sponsored by LOPC's Racial Equity and Engagement Team and Mission Team  
**January 28, 11:15 a.m. in the Oak Room**

Please join us for a special educational event to learn about the Port Chicago 50, a group of 50 African American naval sailors who were wrongly convicted of mutiny by the Navy. Led by LOPC member and attorney, Jonathan Lee, this event will provide a historical look at the deadliest home-front disaster during WW II and the brave men, the Port Chicago 50, that fought against continued unsafe work conditions for African American sailors. The actions of these brave sailors are considered a catalyst of the modern civil rights movement, and after nearly 80 years, it's long past time for the Navy to restore honor and justice to the legacies of the brave sailors of Port Chicago through full exoneration.

For more information, contact Cathy Scheve at [cathy@lopc.org](mailto:cathy@lopc.org).



## Fourth Friday Book Group

January 25, 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

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

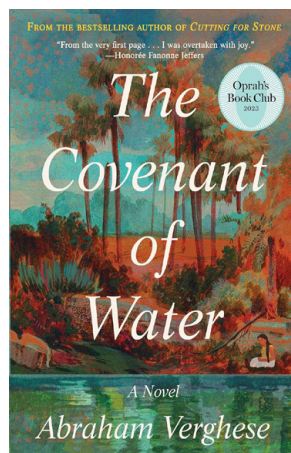
All are welcome. If you'd like to join, please email Catherine Coleman at [awaitingword@gmail.com](mailto:awaitingword@gmail.com).

## Fourth Monday Book Group

January 22 at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Join us to discuss *The Covenant of Water*, a 2023 novel by physician and author Abraham Verghese, author of *Cutting for Stone*. *Covenant* is an epic story of three generations of an Indian Christian family in the Kerala state of southwest India, from 1900 to the 1970's. The novel weaves history and medicine into a rich story of human connection and frailty, of secrets and triumphs. It explores love, caste, poverty, farming, art, faith, and activism.

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





# LOPC MOVIE NIGHT

FRIDAY  
JANUARY

19

FELLOWSHIP HALL  
6:30 PM

ALL ARE  
WELCOME

FREE  
event

*It's showtime!*

*Please join us for a family friendly event!*

REGISTER AT [WWW.LOPC.ORG/REGISTRATIONS](http://WWW.LOPC.ORG/REGISTRATIONS)

*“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”* Matt 18:20

# the GENEROSITY corner

By Nancy Henderson, Generosity Team Member

## Generosity to Ourselves and Others Through Contemplative Practices

Contemplative practices draw us closer to God and help us attune to God's presence in our lives. Companions Co-Leader Carl Grant reminds us of Frederick Buechner's dictum, 'Listen to your life.' For Carl, "contemplation is a way of deeply attending to the slow, steady, mysterious work of God in my life, to the great themes that define my life and weave a unity into it. In contemplation, I come to know myself and simultaneously come to know God a little bit better."

Years ago, Ben Johnson and Judy Durff saw this hunger at LOPC, and identified it, so that as a church, we can ask what it is that we're here for and also how to honor our inner lives.

Now at LOPC, contemplation takes many forms, from the centering breath at the beginning of worship, to quiet group reflection on scripture, to praying together, to sitting together in silence as we listen for the "still small voice." Our contemplative groups

empower us to go deeper and feel more whole. Many find that the quality of silence and prayer is different when we're together. Muriel Franz speaks for many of us: "I need these moments to sit with God while sitting with others in order to find peace."

Contemplative groups encourage us to slow down, look at our priorities, and discern what matters. Sometimes we attend a meeting because we made a commitment, and we end up nurtured from the experience. The discipline of "showing up" leads to loving people because we hear their stories, learn from each other, and realize that none of us is on a spiritual journey alone. Sue Gibbons says, "It is essential for me if I am to connect with and experience God's Holy Spirit and to know myself fully as a person. And it is important for our community."

Contemplation benefits more than our personal spiritual growth. For Donna McLaughlin Endress, contemplation fosters both "true communion with God, and trust in the guidance received enough to act on it in the world." For Robyn Dean, "it increases my compassion and patience towards

others. It helps me to attend to what Love would have me do. In my case, that has led me to a leadership role in Companions and to a closeness to my 92-year-old mother who needs my help." And for Andy Amstutz, "The tools and processes I've learned at LOPC enable and empower me to reach out to other communities and listen better and support our neighbors in meaningful ways."

Donna concludes, "through contemplation, I'm becoming ever more clear that having 'more God' in my life rests on sharing the truth of our mutual Being with others and not on having some glow-in-the-dark special experience for myself. As a result, the discipline, practice, and commitment I accept and experience affects all of my relationships in ways that constantly bring me closer to my personal mission of seeing Christ in every person I encounter."

**If you feel drawn to more contemplation in your life, and wish to explore possibilities at LOPC, please contact Pastor Chris Baldwin at [chris@lopc.org](mailto:chris@lopc.org), who will point you to a group that fits your need.**



# LOPC Christmas Fun

*The most wonderful time of the year...*





# finance



## 2024 Pledge Campaign



**So far, our community has pledged **\$1,677,666\*** 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](https://lopc.org/pledge) to learn more about how to pledge. For questions, please contact LOPC Treasurer Staci Johnston at [staci@lopc.org](mailto:staci@lopc.org).**

\*As of December 18.

## Financial Update

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.

Contributions totaled \$3,217,575 through November, ahead of the \$2,961,108 budget. Many components factored into that. While pledge giving was lower by \$78,904, we are optimistic for the full year. Non-pledge and loose offerings, and other income, were \$31,705 ahead of plan. In November, LOPC was blessed by a member's grant of \$100,000. Earlier in the year LOPC received 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.

Special gifts exceeded budget by \$123,381, 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 \$14,131 reduction in memorial giving and campus user fees, offset by \$24,602 of investment income, which wasn't budgeted.

Most ministry teams operated at or below budget. Excluding spending for special gifts, year-to-date expenses totaled \$2,956,897, which was \$100,330 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 and prepaid worship concert expenses.

Overall, we ended the eleven months with contributions exceeding expenses, resulting in a surplus of \$56,226, instead of the expected \$177,190 deficit. LOPC is truly blessed to have strong support from the congregation and staff. Thank you!

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

## 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](mailto:farah@lopc.org) x253, of your intentions, so she can make sure your giving is correct in 2024. Thank you.**



# *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*

**H**appy New Year from Thursday Fellowship! In the new year, after a busy and successful fall, we look forward to welcoming new guests and volunteers and to making new memories.

In December, our gatherings were filled with the Christmas spirit. On December 7, we created a Christmas craft in the morning, and after a delicious lunch we were entertained by the choral octet Moonglow from Rossmoor. December 14 was an equally special day. The laughter of children and the sound of Christmas carols emanated from Fellowship Hall as we welcomed the Seedlings Preschool children. This has been a tradition over the years, and what a gift it was to hear their laughter and to witness their joy and wonderment as they encountered Santa and enjoyed the Christmas music. Our catered lunch, served on festively decorated tables, was divine, and a warm feeling flowed throughout the room. The day was so much fun and filled with love and joy, which has become the hallmark of our Thursday Fellowship community.



In January, we will meet on January 11, January 18, and January 25 and look forward to a variety of activities and entertainment.

### Looking forward to January:

- **January 11:** Jen Carne, beloved music instructor in Lafayette Schools and from Lamorinda Music, will showcase her expertise in fiddling styles—bluegrass, old-time, and Irish, as well as play a tune or two on her banjo!
- **January 18:** Mike Kistner sing-along.
- **January 25:** LOPC member Stan Morner will draw on his personal experience as a poet and educator to guide us to an understanding and appreciation for the beauty of poetry.

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 look forward to seeing you in the new year!

**Contact Julie Peterson at [julie@lopc.org](mailto:julie@lopc.org) for more information.**



## care



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

This is a class for those with a new diagnosis of Mild Cognitive Impairment or early dementia. The class is open to the individual with the diagnosis and their primary care partner. This is not a general education class.

Participants will have a short interview with our presenter to see if the class is appropriate for them at this time. Classes will be held in person from 10:30 a.m.–noon at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church – 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. There are limited spaces available and no fees. This is a community service of the Senior Ministry of LOPC.

**January 11:** “What is Dementia?” and Brain Health Ideas: In this class, we will discuss what the different dementias are and how lifestyle changes can help improve functioning and quality of life.

**January 18:** The Emotional & Spiritual Journey: In this class, we will talk about how the diagnosis is affecting the individual and the care partner. We will also look at how the spiritual journey (using mindfulness) can assist with keeping a focus on hope, joy, and peace.

**January 25:** What Type of Road Map is Needed for This Journey? Planning done early reduces stress. We will cover legal issues, housing, financial concerns, and local support systems.

Each class will consist of equal time for questions and support. Committing to all three classes is highly recommended. Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MFT, CMC, will be the instructor. Linda has over 40 years’ experience working with individuals and their families when dementia is an issue. The goal is reducing anxiety and replacing it with the peace that knowledge can bring.

**Contact Cathy Scheve at [cathy@lopc.org](mailto:cathy@lopc.org) to register. She will put you in touch with Linda Fodrini-Johnson for a short interview to see if these classes will meet your needs.**

## 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.

**Gwendolyn Wallace,** who passed on November 26. A service will be held on January 27 at 1:00 p.m.

**Cathy Gallinger,** who passed on November 30.

**Doreen Oliver,** who passed on November 30.

**Mary Grannis,** who passed on December 16.

**Arlene Sargent,** who passed on December 18.

### Tuesdays at Two: Our Faith Journey of Aging

Join LOPC members Bob and Leslie Finertie to share stories of triumphs and challenges related to aging. We’ll spend an hour via Zoom at 2:00 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month listening, supporting, and encouraging each other through this second-half journey of life.

Each time, we’ll highlight inspiring scripture that God offers us “a hope and a future.” How has your connection to God and community evolved during this season of your life? We’ll begin on Tuesday, January 16 and meet through March 19.

**All are welcome. Contact Cathy Scheve at [cathy@lopc.org](mailto:cathy@lopc.org) to receive the Zoom link to join us.**

**Questions? Contact Leslie Finertie at [leslie-finertie@comcast.net](mailto:leslie-finertie@comcast.net) or 925-255-3331.**

### Dementia Caregivers Support Group

**January 3 and 17**

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](mailto:lindafj620@outlook.com).**



# session

## November Session Highlights

By Terry Clark, Clerk of Session

The November session meeting was in-person and provided a preliminary gathering time with snacks to engage and catch up informally. Elder Jim Davis began the meeting with spiritual formation based upon his faith journey that “changed him on the inside” and brought him back to LOPC. Several new elders (January 1, 2024) were welcomed as guests and invited to attend the December meeting.

Seven current elders who attended the November 14 Presbytery meeting recapped the proceedings, including actions taken to adopt a balanced budget and revise the Presbytery governance model over time. Next, results of the session vote in October for elders-at-large to serve on the 2024 Session Planning Council were reported: Elders Bettie Graves and Cheryl Miller were elected to fill those positions. In December, session will hold its meeting as a potluck supper, with outgoing elders sharing what has

been most meaningful in their time serving on session.

Pastor Peter Whitelock announced, and elders discussed, several issues, including plans to hire of interim clergy to help with pastoral care while Pastor Lauren Gully is on maternity leave; the launch in December of LOPC’s YouTube Channel on which Elder Jim Davis and Pastor Lauren have worked so hard; the December 10 program in Fellowship Hall on Table Talk: Presbyterians Dialogue on Israel/Palestine with Pastor Peter and Elders Terry Clark and Chris Johnson; and the February 3, 2024 session retreat to be headlined by President Jonathan Walton of Princeton Theological Seminary.

The financial report was presented by Elder Jim Nagle, who outlined the timeline and work underway to develop the 2024 budget forecast, with overview details for the receipt/review of December financial results

and pledges, and the proposed adoption of the final 2024 budget at the January 16 session meeting. A Q & A followed, identifying significant factors driving budget areas now and for the future. Elder Mark Weaver provided the Generosity Team report on current pledges and the importance of increasing the number of pledges.

On behalf of the MIS/Racial Equity & Engagement Team, Pastor Lauren described the team’s Port Chicago proposal to exonerate 50 Black sailors wrongly convicted on Navy charges in connection with the Concord port explosion in WWII. Further details will be provided to session for December consideration and then a January program to educate the congregation.

We concluded our meeting with a circle of well-wishing prayers around Pastor Lauren followed by celebratory cake in honor of the pending birth of her daughter.

## 2024 LOPC Elders and Deacons

### Elders and their Ministry

Julie Atkinson	Worship	Jim Nagle	Finance
Jeff Budke	Operations	Royce Nicolaisen	Personnel
Patrick Chen	Membership	Jonathan Nolen	Fellowship
Jim Davis	Digital Outreach	Jeff Patton	CNC
Cati Dole	Children	Sally Roberts	Senior Adult
Linus Eukel	Generosity	Pat Stevens	Spiritual Formation
Jeff Eyet	Spiritual Formation	Alexis Thompson	Care
Nancy Grabow	Youth	Leslie Vallee	Youth
Bettie Graves	Worship	Diane Vollering	Care
Andrea Hilsabeck	REET	Mark Weaver	Clerk of Session
Chris Johnson	Mission		
Juanita Kizor	Mission		
Cheryl Miller	Fellowship		
Patrick Morrissey	Membership		

### Deacons

Carolyn Bealmear	John Minney
Heather Breen	Marilyn Mulhollan
Michele Faxel	Kay Poullos
Sue Fernstrom	Jeanette Shearer
Jean Fiske	Sophia Sinha*
Margaret Ann Fowler	Linda Snyder
Muriel Franz	Dominique Thomas
Linda Groobin	Lisa Toth
Sue Handy	Claire Van Rooyen
Jake Jacobsmeyer	Katie Weaver*
Esther Kim	Mary Welte
Stephen Kiyoi	Carrie Wiseman
Paula Lair	Marty Woehrle
Randi Long	*Youth Deacons



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

# YOUTH

► **Questions? Email**  
**Keris Dahlkamp:**  
[keris@lopc.org](mailto:keris@lopc.org)  
**or Junha Kim:**  
[junha@lopc.org](mailto:junha@lopc.org)

## **YOW** *Youth on Wednesday* **Wednesdays, 6:00–7:30 p.m.**

Youth in 5th–8th grade gather for fun games, worship, a Bible-based devotional lesson, and small group discussions. Together, we discuss topics such as discovering God at work in the world, growing in faith, friendships, dating, school, family, and more. Youth meet with a consistent small group including peers, and teen and adult advisors throughout the year in order to build relationships, authenticity, and trust. YOW regularly includes fellowship-oriented events and service-learning opportunities. YOW meets in the Upper Youth Room (CLC 201).

## **BTW** *By the Way* **Sundays, 6:00–7:30 p.m.**

Youth in 9th–12th grade connect with each other through games, worship, Bible-based devotions, and small group discussions. Together, we discuss a wide range of age-appropriate topics including God's vision for justice in the world, how to grow in your personal faith journey, and what it looks like to live as a follower of Christ. Youth meet with a consistent small group including peers and adult advisors throughout the year in order to build relationships, authenticity, and trust. BTW meets in the Upper Youth Room (CLC 201).

## **Confirmation** **Saturdays, January 20 and 27; 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**

Confirmation is a faith milestone where LOPC staff and adult volunteers support current 8th–12th grade students as they explore their faith, ask questions in a safe environment, and seek to actively explore their own faith journey. Through this program, youth confirm the promises made by their parents at their baptism: to share their intent to live as faithful followers of Christ. Not sure what that means? Then this program is for you! Come explore what Christians believe and how Christians relate to others in the world while asking questions in a judgement free zone. At the end of our two half-day retreats, youth will choose whether they feel ready to be Confirmed at this time.

## **Youth Alive** **Sundays, 10:00–11:00 a.m.**

Youth in 5th–8th grade take part in fun games, activities, and Bible-based discussions relevant to their lives while connecting with peers. Students learn about how God has connected with people in Scripture and how we continue to see God at work in our lives today. Youth Alive is located in the Upper Youth Room (CLC 201).

# CHILDREN

## **Children's Ministry** **The Garden** **Sundays during Worship**

Ages 6 months–4th grade. Kid-friendly time for growing friendship with Jesus and with one another.

## **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](http://lopc.org/kidsrock) to register today.

## **Email Emily Austin:** ◀ **[emily@lopc.org](mailto:emily@lopc.org) or** **Susan Wentworth:** **[susan@lopc.org](mailto:susan@lopc.org)**





**LAFAYETTE-ORINDA  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

49 Knox Drive  
Lafayette, CA 94549



info@lopc.org  
925-283-8722

IMPORTANT

Dated Material  
PLEASE DELIVER  
BEFORE 1/1/24

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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