

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

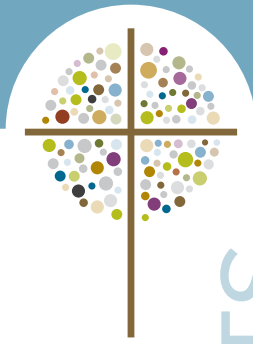
APRIL 2024

# FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

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



# A New Way of Life with Jesus

By Jaime Polson — Pastor, Care & Executive Leadership

*I have come that you might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

-John 10:10



We are in the season of Eastertide in the life of the church. A season of 50 days between Easter and Pentecost that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and the new way of life we are called to by following Jesus and having a relationship with him.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that by being in a relationship with him, we are promised a more abundant life. When we walk with Jesus, we are asked to follow in his ways—ways of justice, kindness, mercy, love, peace, hope, and faith to name a few. This means focusing our hearts and minds on the greater things in life and aspiring to the priorities Jesus has shared in his ministry on earth—love of self, love of neighbor, and above all else, love of God.

Jesus promises us, his disciples, that we will be guided by the Holy Spirit to help us emulate this way of life with Jesus: to love one another as God has loved us. It's not an easy way of life, and Jesus doesn't promise all bliss and happiness because we follow him. But he does promise us an abundance of life! A life that brings meaningful ministry and contentedness and peace that comes through a life with Jesus.

This month, I invite you to think about the ways you could help cultivate this life of following Jesus. There are so many opportunities at LOPC to get connected in community, in worship and study, and in service to help each one of us deepen our faith that we may reflect God's light and love to others in a broken and hurting world that needs God. As always, the LOPC pastors and community are here to walk alongside one another on this journey. We are here to meet with you and help you on this journey of faith.

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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](mailto:communications@lopc.org)  
no later than April 1 for the May 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





# Vacation Bible Camp

June 10-14  
2:00 - 5:00 p.m.



For kids 4 years old (by Sept. 1, 2024) to completed 4th graders (June 2024).

Registration opens April 1. Cost: \$155 per child.  
Volunteers needed.

Questions? Email [emily@lopc.org](mailto:emily@lopc.org) or [susan@lopc.org](mailto:susan@lopc.org).

Register at: [LOPC.ORG/VBCAMP](https://LOPC.ORG/VBCAMP)

### Upcoming Sermon Series

## THE CHURCH EMPOWERED

Snapshots of the First Christian Communities from the Book of Acts

- April 7 A GREAT GRACE  
*Acts 4:32-35*
- April 14 BY THE NAME MADE STRONG  
*Acts 3:12-19*
- April 21 OUR CORNERSTONE  
*Acts 4:5-12*
- April 28 THE SCRIPTURES FULFILLED  
*Acts 8:26-40*
- May 5 WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS  
*Acts 10:44-48*
- May 12 IN GOD'S HANDS  
*Acts 1:15-17, 21-26*



Yes! I would like to donate to the Per Capita fund.

Did you know that LOPC pays an annual fee to PC(USA) for each member of our congregation? In 2024, LOPC is responsible for contributing \$40 per member or \$80 per couple. If you are able, we ask that you consider covering this fee with an additional gift.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to the LOPC Ministry Center at 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, CA 94549 or make your donation online at [lopc.org/giving](https://lopc.org/giving).

Questions? Contact Staci Johnston, Treasurer, at [staci@lopc.org](mailto:staci@lopc.org).

# community



## Children of Faith is celebrating its 20th Anniversary

Join Rosie and Anand Thandu to celebrate the accomplishments of Children of Faith on May 10 at the Rossmoor Event Center on Dollar Drive in Walnut Creek, CA.

The evening will feature Indian influenced cuisine, and stories about the legacy that Children of Faith has been building, by providing care, nourishment, and education to some of India's most vulnerable children. Join us to hear about the accomplishments of the past 20 years and plans for the next 20 years. Don't miss this fun evening, put on your colorful cocktail attire, and get ready for an inspiring evening!

Tickets are available at [childrenoffaithmissions.org/20th-anniversary](http://childrenoffaithmissions.org/20th-anniversary) until April 26.

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# care

## Savvy Caregiver Workshop

Thursdays, April 18–May 23, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Go beyond the basics with Savvy Caregiver, an evidence-based dementia family caregiver training program. Savvy Caregiver distills core principles and insights from gerontology, nursing, and occupational therapy for the family caregiver. This six-week course provides 12 hours of in-depth knowledge, skills training, and mastery to support you and the person with dementia as you navigate the journey together.

To pre-register or for more information, please contact Cathy Scheve at [cathy@lopc.org](mailto:cathy@lopc.org). A brief phone screening with the instructor is required to see if the class will meet your needs. There is a fee of \$50 to cover the cost of supplies.

## Stephen Ministry Workshop

Saturday, April 27 in the Oak Room from 8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The Stephen Ministers invite you to join them on for a workshop led by Pastor Jane Doty MacKenzie, focusing on "The Presence of Grief Throughout Life." Most often, we think of grief at the death of a loved one, but there are many other types of loss which wrench our emotions. Grief can be ambiguous when prompted by the loss of a job or income, loss of identity, divorce, loss of community, or a newly empty nest. We can also experience anticipatory grief due a cancer diagnosis, a terminal illness, or in caring for a loved one with declining cognitive capabilities. Grief is a normal part of life and a response to having to let go when we don't want to let go. It is also an invitation to spiritual renewal and healing. Join us for a conversation on how we compassionately sit with ambiguous and anticipatory grief in our own lives and the lives of others, and lean into God's promise of hope and wholeness.

Register at [lopc.org/registrations](http://lopc.org/registrations) by April 24.

## Fourth Monday Book Group

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

Join us to discuss *1984* by George Orwell. We will look back at a classic published in 1949. Orwell's dystopian vision is set 40 years before 2024—is it relevant today? We probably first read *1984* many years ago—how does it affect us today? *1984* has been banned both in the USA and the USSR—does it deserve such opprobrium?

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

## Fourth Friday Book Group

April 26 at 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

(occasional in person gatherings to come):

The group will discuss *Awe, The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*, by Dacher Keltner.

All are welcome. Please contact Catherine Coleman at [awaitingword@gmail.com](mailto:awaitingword@gmail.com) to join.



## Widow/Widower's Grief Support

Wednesdays, April 3–June 5, 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Have you or someone you know experienced the death of a spouse recently or within the last few years? Sharing our experiences during this 10-week class is extremely helpful to our healing process. Course is open to all widows and widowers. Pre-registration required. The workbook is \$20.

To register or for more information, contact Cathy Scheve at [cathy@lopc.org](mailto:cathy@lopc.org).

## Dementia Caregivers Support Group

April 3 and 17

Join this one-hour support group for those caring for someone with dementia. The group meets 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).

## Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) Support Group

Mondays, April 22–May 20, 10:30–11:30 a.m.

In person four-week support group for those with a diagnosis of MCI.

To ensure appropriateness for this group an interview is necessary. Please contact Linda Fodrini-Johnson at [lindafj620@outlook.com](mailto:lindafj620@outlook.com) to schedule a phone or in-person interview. The group will be led by Pastor Jane Doty MacKenzie.

# Report from India: Faith in Action: LOPC's Service-Learning trip to Children of Faith

By Ginny Ross

The Children of Faith home in Visakhapatnam, India, welcomed 15 LOPC members in February. Children of Faith has been a mission partner of LOPC's for 10 years and has welcomed many visitors from LOPC, although this was the first group to travel there since the pandemic. After an enthusiastic welcome by all 120 school-age children, the group toured the home's campus and saw the improvements and equipment that LOPC has contributed over the years, including a dormitory building, furniture, a bus, and, most recently, a new van.

After settling in, LOPC's service team began to get better acquainted with the boys and girls in the home. Among the many projects the team participated in included a reading time with the Wizard of Oz, creative writing classes, carpentry, science lessons, Easter card crafting, harmonica lessons, sewing instruction, cookie decorating, and Zumba. In addition, the team planned and created a new garden space for the home and reached out to neighbors in the local community with gift bags they brought from the U.S. While the structured lessons and activities provided important learning opportunities for the children, the highlight for both the children and visitors was free play time. Basketball, cricket, crafts, and more filled the afternoons before a daily devotion time led by the service team. Crafts, games, songs, dancing, and stories helped the children explore daily themes including care, kindness, support, and hope as they learned more about Christ's love.

Both the children and the visitors were transformed by being together. Rosie Thandu, co-founder of Children of Faith, said, "It was wonderful to see the children happy with the team visiting. They were so engaged by the chance to improve their English and learn new skills. It meant a lot to all the children that people would travel across the world to see them, love them, and bless them. It helps them feel how much God values each of them."

Carolyn Bauer said of the trip, her second visit to the home, "It feels like I see the Lord at work when I look into the children's warm and eager eyes—the littles, the middles, and the teens who live and go to school here. During our closing prayer time each day, when they are given a nod by Rosie to say their own prayers, the magic happens. 120 boys and girls sit crossed legged with heads tucked down, their hands clasped in devotion, and they speak to God. A collective vibration of their voices and words lifts up to the heavens. Again on this trip, I gained such deep admiration for their faith."

Courtney Anderson wanted to visit the home after her two sons traveled there on LOPC youth mission trips. "It's an absolute blessing to witness God's love at work every moment of the day...it is truly God in action," she said.

In addition to time with the children, the visitors had a chance to see a little of Indian culture, taste authentic Indian food, and shop for souvenirs. After a tearful goodbye, the team began the long trip back to LOPC—filled with memories and joy from their time at Children of Faith. As Heidi Johnson reflected, "It's hard to put this experience into words. If you want to visit Heaven here on earth, it's right here at COF. This community is the embodiment of Christ."

**To learn more about Children of Faith visit their website at [childrenoffaithmissions.org](http://childrenoffaithmissions.org).**

### India trip participants:

- Courtney Anderson
- Brandt Andersson
- Mary Artist & Richard Holden
- Carolyn Bauer
- Nancy Henderson
- Heidi Johnson
- Juanita Kizor
- Susan Livingston
- Marjorie & Royce Nicolaisen
- Lisa & John Summerlin
- Caroline Wiseman
- Dara Youngdale



# 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



**M**arch roared in like a lion with a storm of huge proportions. Our participant spirits were not dampened, but heightened, and attendance increased as we enjoyed a month of terrific Thursdays.

We kicked off the month with flautist and composer, Sherry Finzer, who performed on her alto and bass flutes. Her music was beautiful, relaxing, and a balm to our souls.

On March 14, we got ready for spring planting as we learned about climate resilient plants from around the world with an informative speaker from the Ruth Bancroft Garden.

The following week, Mike Kistner brought his special gift of music and warmth of spirit as we joined in singing our favorite songs.

Lastly, we enjoyed the divine performance of opera and folk music with soloist, Sharon Lee Kim, who is on the faculties of St. Mary's College and CU Berkeley.

Other highlights of the month included birthday celebrations, a nod to St. Patrick's Day, Easter egg dying, and

chair exercises led by our very own Gillian Roebuck.

Each week, our program becomes more essential to our guests and volunteers alike as demonstrated by our increased attendance. Warm friendships have developed, and as one guest recently commented, "Everyone here is so friendly, and they have such interesting life stories." We welcome you to come and see for yourself! April promises to be equally engaging and fun.

### April Schedule:

- **April 4:** We warmly welcome Stewart Scharch to provide an organ concert in LOPC's beautiful sanctuary.
- **April 11:** Concert pianist Frederick Hodges demonstrates his versatility as he transports us back in time with his accompaniment to silent film clips.
- **April 18:** Thursday Fellowship favorite, Michael Kistner, will entertain us with a sing-along.

- **April 25:** Scott Macomber, trumpet player with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and a faculty member at St. Mary's College, will perform with his faculty colleague Sharon Lee Kim on the piano.

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, or volunteer! We look forward to welcoming you!

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





# FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

On Friday, April 5, Dr. William Jagust, Professor of Public Health and Neuroscience, will deliver his presentation entitled “Untangling Alzheimer’s.”

Dr. Jagust says, “I am going to talk about what we understand Alzheimer’s disease to be, how it is defined, and how it differs from the word ‘dementia.’ I will explain many of the insights that researchers have obtained over the past 10 years that have led to the development of new treatments that may have a big impact on the disease.”

Alzheimer’s affects approximately 5.2 million people in the United States. It is the most common form of dementia, and by 2025 it is estimated that the number of Americans afflicted with the disease will top 7 million as the baby boomers get older.

Dr. Jagust’s research is focused on understanding the changes in the brain that occur with aging and Alzheimer’s disease. His work uses multimodality imaging and cognitive neuroscience approaches.

After Dr. Jagust finished his medical training in Neurology, he was interested in understanding how the brain produces behavior. A new way to study brain function had appeared: positron emission tomography, or PET scanning. As a postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Jagust wasn’t really interested in Alzheimer’s disease or other age-related brain diseases. However, as he began running experiments, he realized that PET scanning could reveal ways of understanding how the brain changes in Alzheimer’s. His supervisor, who was studying Alzheimer’s, encouraged Dr. Jagust to continue this study.

Presently in his lab, they are working to understand how Alzheimer’s starts and spreads through the brain. They are also working to understand what may offer resilience to the disease.

Over the last 10 years researchers have come to understand more about the disease which has led to the development of new treatments. These new treatments may make a difference in dealing with the disease.

Dr. Jagust is a professor at UC Berkeley, a board-certified neurologist, and currently licensed to practice medicine in California.

**This program will be on Friday, April 5 at 1:30 p.m. and is open to the community. It is held in the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church sanctuary and simultaneously available online. To watch the program click *Watch* on the webpage at [lopc.org/first-friday-forum/](http://lopc.org/first-friday-forum/). Registration is not required.**



## LOPC’s Knitters & Quilters

By Louise Tanno

The LOPCided Quilters and the Chicks with Sticks Knitters work together to support the Hillcrest Congregational Church Layette Project. This team provides 20-25 layettes per month to struggling mothers of newborn babies in our community. The typical bundled layette consists of a 30-gallon plastic bag filled with approximately 70 new and/or gently used items for babies up to 18 months of age. These include clothing and blankets, among many other items.

LOPC has been a major contributor to this program for over 15 years. In 2023, they donated over 4,000 items including 225 handmade quilts and dozens of other items including sweaters, hats, booties, blankets, and tote bags. In addition, they provided innumerable purchased items that are crucial to filling the layettes. This would not have been possible without the support of the congregation.

The quilters and knitters want to share part of a thank you letter they recently received from the Layette Team expressing how much they appreciate their supporters: “The layettes bring smiles and tears to the recipient mothers and are transformational in their lives. The Team and the mothers thank you from the bottom of their hearts.” The donations that they receive ensure the ongoing success of the program which has been in place for over 50 years.

Each Spring the Chicks sponsor a baby shower to collect needed items. This gives everyone in the congregation the opportunity to participate in the project. Look for more information in upcoming issues of Focus and Connections.

**For more information or to join one of the groups, contact Louise Tanno at [louisetanno@gmail.com](mailto:louisetanno@gmail.com) or Dianne Schneider at [dianneschneider@hotmail.com](mailto:dianneschneider@hotmail.com).**

# the GENEROSITY corner

## Celebrating the Finance Team!

By Alan Coe, Generosity Team Member

1 Peter 4:10 — *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”*



Our Finance Team works with the ministry teams and staff throughout the year as “good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

Jim Nagle, elder for Finance, is serving his third term on session. Why? Because he wanted to help guide and navigate LOPC during the challenge of the pandemic. Jim, together with Ken Miller, Herb Montgomery, and Lindsey Ritchie, are volunteers with strong finance backgrounds, who give of their time and talents to help LOPC be a good steward of the gifts received, in order to share the good news of the gospel. Pastor Jaime Polson (Care and Executive Leadership) is a tremendous resource

to the team with her professional background as well as her insight and history with the church and its various ministries. Treasurer Staci Johnston (CPA) and Farah Mohammadzai (Accountant) round out the Finance Team.

The team meets monthly. Each meeting begins with a time for spiritual formation before focusing on the agenda. The team monitors congregational giving and ministry spending, as compared to budget as well as cash flow. They work closely with the LOPC Foundation on yearly grants for operations and capital projects. The team strives to be forward-looking and address topics such as the expansion of Kurth Memorial Garden, pastor housing, and staff compensation. The last quarter of the year and the first month of January is focused on preparation of the annual budget for session’s approval and the reporting of the past year’s annual results.

Lindsey says that serving on the finance team is a good fit for her because she likes to be involved and it is in an area that fits her skill set. She goes on to say that by being good stewards of LOPC’s resources, our ministries can do more. Jim Nagle reminds us of the importance of annual pledges in preparing a thoughtful and realistic budget, “One of the blessings of serving on the finance team is to see the impact of God’s provisions throughout the year.”

The members of the finance team so generously give their time and talents so the church can wisely use the treasure we give.

**Thank you!**

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## church nominating committee (CNC)

### Seeking New Church Leaders for terms beginning January 1, 2025!

#### Nominations can be submitted in April.

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

#### The primary qualifications for nominees are:

**Elders:** Elders, together with the pastors, lead and direct the ministry of the church. They are persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Elders serve on session, the governing body of the church. They also chair various church teams through which all ministries are conducted. Eight elders are ordained annually to serve three-year terms. At the time of producing this issue of FOCUS, the following teams need an elder assigned in 2025. CNC, Membership, Fellowship, Racial Equity/Engagement, Spiritual Formation, and Youth. Once the 2025 clerk of session is determined, there will be an additional team that will need an elder.

**Deacons,** as set forth in scripture, are leaders who serve as the caring, compassionate arm of the church. They provide loving support to all those in need within the church community. The primary area of deacon service is care of members. Deacons

serve a three-year term. Two deacons of high-school age serve a one-year term.

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

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

**Nominations can be submitted on the website at: [lopc.org/cnc](http://lopc.org/cnc).**

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



## Update: LOPC Mission Partner Atfaluna

By Chris Johnson



Even though this is a difficult article to write, and I'm sure not an easy one to read, many of you have asked for an update on our long-standing mission partner in Gaza, the Atfaluna School for the Deaf. They have had to evacuate their school, and we do not know if the school building still stands. By some estimates from satellite images, about 70 percent of residential buildings have been destroyed. The UN estimates that about 100,000 people have been killed, injured or are missing so far, the vast majority of which are women, children, and non-combatants. The circumstances with little food, water, shelter, or medicine are dire, and we do not know their location presently. It appears from social media updates and occasional emails that they are sheltering in southern Gaza which has recently

come under heavy attack. Atfaluna continues to function and provide care for students and many others sheltering in the war. Through the beginning of January 2024, Atfaluna has provided psychosocial support for 30,000 individuals, and distributed emergency relief services to more than 10,000 affected persons including food vouchers, hygienic items, and vital winterization items, aiming to alleviate the immediate hardships. They also organize games and activities for the students and impacted children, providing them with a sense of normalcy and comfort.

The war has devastated the healthcare system, limiting access to essential health services, including hearing screening and auditory interventions. The incessant explosions and loud noises during this time can

cause irreversible hearing damage, especially to children. Atfaluna is providing badly needed hearing screenings and auditory interventions in the midst of the current crisis. "Our auditory interventions emphasize the importance of restoring not only auditory abilities but also hope and resilience to individuals affected by the current crisis," said Fady Abed, MEAL expert at Atfaluna. Please keep the school in your prayers, as well as all innocent victims in this conflict. LOPC is continuing to provide financial support, and you can always make additional gifts via the church. LOPC will be a partner with Atfaluna in rebuilding to serve these precious children.

**You will also find more information on the crisis and how you can be an instrument for healing and restoration at [lopc.org/interfaith](http://lopc.org/interfaith).**

# YOUTH

## 2024 Summer Service-Learning



**Service Squad**

**June 10–14**

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



**SLAM Trip to Wapato, WA**

**June 16–21**

**SLAM (Students Learning About Mission) Trip to Wapato, WA**, for youth completing 7th–12th grades in spring 2024.



**Salinas & USA/Mexico Border**

**July 7–14**

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

### 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.

To register, visit [lopc.org/service-learning](http://lopc.org/service-learning).

### LOPC Youth Mission Scholarship Fund

The Youth Mission Scholarship Fund helps subsidize youth’s costs to attend service-learning trips and activities, allowing more kids to participate in these wonderful mission experiences. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send a check to LOPC with “YM Scholarship” in the memo line.

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

### **BTW** *By the Way* Overnight Retreat

**April 6–7**

All high school students are invited to join us for this very fun and meaningful event here at LOPC! Don’t miss it! We will meet in CLC Room 201 on the evening of Saturday, April 6 and stay through the worship service on Sunday morning April 7. Talk with Junha or Keris if you have questions!

### **Last BTW**

**April 28**

This will be our final BTW of the program year! Be in on the fun as we wrap up this amazing program with a great evening of fun, worship music, a devotional on wisdom, and fellowship.

# CHILDREN

## Meet the Children's Ministry Team

### The ABC's of...

#### Emily: C is for Creativity!

My favorite skill to use as your Children's Ministry co-director is creativity. Whether it is choreographing a dance to a VB Camp song, planning crafts for Palm Sunday, writing scripts to tell the story of Jesus' birth at Christmas, or reviewing multi-sensory curriculum for the Garden, I love to tap into my creative brain. Seeing the children delight in stories of the Bible, using sign language to remember our monthly virtue, and joining together in fellowship brings smiles to our faces each and every week. Susan is a wonderful collaborative partner who builds upon my ideas for Children's Ministry, making them stronger and more possible. As we start our journey as co-directors, it is our hope that we can deepen our relationships with your family, get to know how we can best serve your needs, and create a safe and vibrant community for your child's faith to grow. In my free time, you can find me taking dance fitness classes, heading to the theater, or planning fun family activities with my husband, Michael, and our 8-year old, Lucy!



#### Susan: J is for Joy!

Joy is a word that I use to describe my feelings when I think of working with children. I love being with the children here at LOPC and helping guide them on their faith journey. It is important to me that when a child comes to LOPC, that we embrace them and walk beside them. We want each child to know that they are loved and valued. I am excited to be working with Emily as a co-director of Children's Ministry, so that we can plan programming to engage the children of our community as they discover their faith and make it their own. It is a priority for Emily and me to get to know the kids outside of the Sunday morning classroom. We enjoy going to their events in the community to build a strong relationship with them, so that they know they can count on us to walk beside them in their daily life. Outside of LOPC, I root hard for my San Francisco Giants and Cal Bears, enjoy gardening, and keeping up with Greyson, who is 8, and all of the adventures that he plans for us.

### Questions? Email

Emily Austin:

[emily@lopc.org](mailto:emily@lopc.org) or

Susan Wentworth:

[susan@lopc.org](mailto:susan@lopc.org).



### Seeking Upcycled items for VBC

To turn our Sanctuary and classroom spaces into an underwater oasis, we are seeking the following supplies to create coral, creatures, and more:

- Pool noodles (used or new)
- Streamers
- Egg cartons
- One old rowboat (email [emily@lopc.org](mailto:emily@lopc.org))
- TP/ Paper towel rolls
- Small plastic bowls (not disposable)

Please deliver all supplies, boat excepted, to the Ministry Center VBC box located directly behind reception through April 15. Thank you!



# SEEDLINGS PRESCHOOL: A FEBRUARY OF FRIENDSHIP AND FUN

By Kaylin Deutscher, Seedlings Board, Communications

This February, Seedlings Preschool was abuzz with the spirit of love and camaraderie as our little ones celebrated Valentine’s Day and the Super Bowl, marking a month filled with joy, learning, and the warmth of friendship.

## Valentine’s Day: Sharing and Caring

As Valentine’s Day approached, our classrooms turned into creative spaces. Our students, with help from their teachers, made beautiful card boxes and decorations, making every corner of Seedlings festive. This activity wasn’t just about making things look nice; it was a way for our kids to show their creativity and work together.

On Valentine’s Day, the excitement was clear. The children brought in treats and cards for their friends,

showing the joy of giving and sharing. Each exchange was a little lesson in friendship, showing how good it feels to make others happy. It was a great way for our kids to learn about caring for their friends and enjoying the happiness that comes from being kind to others.

## Super Bowl Excitement with the Daffodils

The Super Bowl brought a special excitement to the Daffodils class. They turned their excitement into a mini sports day, filled with games and fun. Miss Cayte and Miss Jules led the class through various activities like races and games, focusing on having a good time and cheering each other on.

This wasn’t just about playing games; it was about learning to be a good sport, win or lose. The Daffodils showed how

to support each other, celebrate wins, and not get too down about losing. Their teachers were proud of them for showing such great teamwork and sportsmanship.

## A Month Full of Learning and Friendship

Looking back on February, it’s clear that these celebrations were about more than just having fun. They were chances for our students to learn about friendship, teamwork, and caring for others. These events remind us of the strong community we have at Seedlings and how special it is to share these moments together. We’re looking forward to more times like these, filled with laughter, learning, and friendship.



love protects, love hopes, love never fails

**Thank you!**

Over 200 volunteers participated in *love does* this year for LOPC mission partners both on-campus as well as off-site. Children and adults of all ages participated together with enthusiasm.

So often we think that a few hours of our time will not make much of a difference, but it can make all the difference to those whom we serve! See below to learn what the congregation accomplished together:

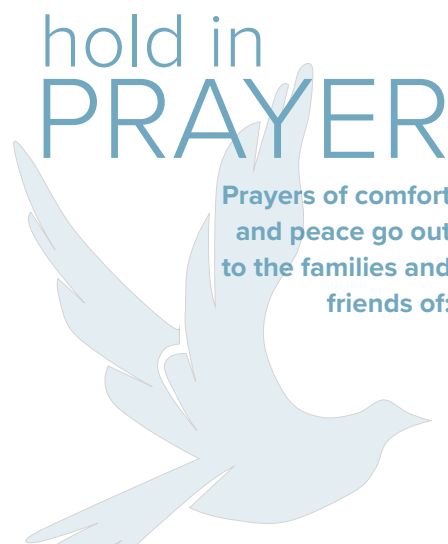
**ON-CAMPUS**

- 10,000 diapers were sorted and bagged to be distributed to low-income mothers.
- 60 shopping carts were assembled for Monument Crisis Center clients without a car or seniors who no longer drive.
- 72 polar fleece blankets were made for Calico, a center that provides a supportive environment where children who have been abused can tell their story one time to a detective, child welfare worker, and prosecutor. After their testimony each child receives a blanket and stuffed animal for comfort.
- 48 boxes of baby clothes were sorted and boxed to be delivered to Highland Hospital and disbursed to low-income mothers to clothe their infants.
- 515 breakfast bags and toiletry kits were assembled and disbursed to Trinity Center and Operation Dignity for those living on the streets.

**OFF-CAMPUS**

- Repainted the community room, cleaned and organized the garage, and deep cleaned the kitchen at STAND!.
- Repainted a bathroom and living quarters at Shelter, Inc.'s Mount View Home.
- Painted walls and ceilings and put final touches on housing units at Habitat for Humanity's new development, Esperanza Place, in Walnut Creek.

**Next year the *love does* day of service will be on Sunday, February 23, 2025. Don't forget to mark your calendars! Look for other *love does* opportunities throughout the year at [lopc.org/love does](http://lopc.org/love%20does).**



**Charlotte Huntley,** who passed January 2. A service will be held on April 6 at 1:00 p.m.

**Kaaren Rose,** who passed on February 27.

**Pastor Peter's Upcoming Sabbatical**

LOPC's Sabbatical Policy provides each pastor with eight-weeks of time off for study and renewal to promote personal and professional growth through prayer, reflection, rest, study, and travel. This temporary vocation allows the promise of God, who sustains us through a period of reflection, to lead to the renewal of energy upon return to LOPC.

Pastor Peter will be away on his well-deserved sabbatical mid-April through mid-June. Pastors Jaime, Chris, Lauren, and Jane will oversee Peter's areas of responsibility while he is away. Lauren is expected to return from maternity leave late April.

**Update: LOPC's advocacy for the exoneration of the Port Chicago 50**

Sponsored by LOPC's Racial Equity and Engagement Team and Mission Team

The Racial Equity and Engagement Team is pleased to announce that session approved a motion to affirm support for the efforts urging the President, Congress of the United States, and Secretary of the Navy to take all necessary actions to restore honor to, and rectify the mistreatment by the United States military of, any sailors who were unjustly blamed for and convicted of mutiny after the Port Chicago disaster, which occurred in the town of Port Chicago, California, in 1944. This approval by session came after an education event for the congregation led by LOPC member and attorney, Jonathan Lee on January 28, 2024. LOPC will now be listed as a supporter of the Port Chicago Task Force formed by the Contra Costa County Bar Association.

**If you would like more information about this issue, please feel free to contact Jonathan at [jonathan.lee10@comcast.net](mailto:jonathan.lee10@comcast.net).**

# session

## February Session Highlights

By Mark Weaver, Clerk of Session



**O**n February 20, elders and pastors gathered in the Oak Room for another in-person session meeting. Elder Cheryl Miller shared her faith journey, and then we approved proposed motions. Importantly, session approved a motion affirming continued support for the Port Chicago 50, a group of 50 African American U.S. Navy sailors who were wrongly convicted of mutiny by the Navy. Supporting the Port Chicago 50 continues a trend of advocacy over the past year by LOPC—most recently in connection with the Israel-Palestine conflict (with new materials added to our website on a continuous basis), as well as SB 4, the California law that encourages affordable housing development on land owned by faith groups (even though our own land is, unfortunately, not suitable for such development).

In a series of finance motions, we approved that a portion of the annual compensation for our new temporary pastor, Jane MacKenzie, be designated

as a housing allowance, and that funds be designated to repair the HVAC unit in the Ministry Center, and refurbish the Steinway piano. We also approved updated policies for the Deacon Community Care Fund, sabbatical leave for pastors, and the procedure for requesting funds from the LOPC Foundation.

Pastor Chris Baldwin, who spoke at the San Francisco Presbytery’s February meeting, provided an update on the Presbytery’s leadership transition. LOPC will host the next Presbytery meeting on May 21.

Pastor Peter Whitelock recapped our successful leadership retreat held February 3, which was led by Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, and which received uniformly positive feedback. Dr. Anne Stewart, an Old Testament scholar and Executive Vice President of Princeton Seminary, led a women’s retreat on March 9 which centered on living a life of faith in a tech-filled world. She preached the following day on Mark 8:27-30 during worship, followed by a discussion in the Oak Room on understanding God in the Old Testament.

Peter also informed session that ministry teams will soon begin formulating goals for the upcoming program year, which runs from July–June. Pastor Jaime Polson explained that ministry team metrics will be presented monthly to better identify trends in order to generate new ideas, as well as identify areas where we are growing and gaps to fill.

Lynn Trowbridge, Chair of the Kurth Memorial Garden (KMG), presented the group’s annual report. KMG plans to expand the garden for the first time since 2011 using KMG revenue, reserve funds, and cash on hand, in addition to a session approved loan from the church. During the meeting, in addition to approving Lynn as chair for 2024, session also approved Jaime Polson, David Engelbrektson, Kristi Haigh, and Judy Kronmiller as members of the KMG Board. Session gave Lynn a rousing round of applause thanking her for her service to date.

We closed with elders joining hands and being led in the Lord’s Prayer by Peter—a return to our traditional closing prayer now that we have returned to meeting exclusively in person.

# finance

## Financial Update

Submitted by Jim Nagle & Staci Johnston

**T**he church closed the first two months of 2024 with pledge income of \$542,539 which is ahead of budget by \$99,539. LOPC received \$300,297 in 2024 prepaid pledges. Non-pledge and loose offering giving were slightly lower than plan by \$8,184. Year-to-date total contributions as of February 29 were \$632,776 as compared to the budget \$525,596. Part of this increase relates to higher mission giving for the Kapnek Trust, related to the successful 2023 Christmas special offerings.

Ministry Team spending of \$591,925

was less than budget by \$28,513, excluding additional mission and special gifts spending. No unusual items were noted in ministry expense.

Year-to-date February 2024 closed with net contributions of \$40,852 favorably exceeding the projected year-to-date budget shortfall by \$121,463. We are grateful the new year is off to a strong start.

The finance team would like to thank all who have pledged so far. We encourage anyone who has not

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

pledged to consider making a pledge so that we can plan and continue our great ministry. It is not too late to pledge!

16 GRAMMY  
AWARDS  
BETWEEN  
THEM!

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MATTHEWS BAND  
& THE BLUES  
BROTHERS!

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TONY LINDSAY  
VOCALS



MICHELLE JORDAN  
VOCALS



TOM SCOTT  
SAXOPHONE



MADS TOLLING  
VIOLIN



JOHN R. BURR  
PIANO



TERRY MILLER  
BASS



GARY NOVAK  
DRUMS

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CHILDREN OF FAITH ORPHANAGE IN INDIA.**

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# LOPC FOUNDATION



In a recent devotional, Pastor Chris Baldwin shared a quote from Howard Thurman, American author, theologian, and civil-rights leader, that reads, “Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go and do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

At LOPC we do ask what the world needs, and we respond, but we are encouraged first to come alive in our faith, connect in community and then equip to serve the world. The Foundation provides financial support for all that LOPC does now and is poised to do for future generations. If you want to build on the LOPC “FOUNDATION” and the many gifts given already, please consider naming the Foundation in your estate plan.

To learn more about legacy giving and how the Foundation supports LOPC, visit [lopc.org/foundation](http://lopc.org/foundation).

