

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2024

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



A New Season for God’s Work in Our Lives

By Jaime Polson — Pastor, Care & Executive Leadership

“Jeremiah, go down to the potter’s house. I will give you my message there.” So, I went down to the potter’s house and saw him working with clay at the wheel. He was making a pot from clay. But there was something wrong with the pot. So, the potter used that clay to make another pot. With his hands he shaped the pot the way he wanted it to be. Then this message from the Lord came to me: “Family of Israel, you know that I can do the same thing with you. You are like the clay in the potter’s hands, and I am the potter.” -Jeremiah 18:1-6



As a mom to two teenagers, my life follows the school calendar and its patterns. I see each new school year as a new beginning – a chance for renewal, restoration, new life; a chance that new opportunities and challenges will help me be better formed in faith by God. It is a season and time to welcome God to continue to open my heart and spirit to take on the joys and challenges of a new year.

During my family trip this year, I read one of my favorite texts in the Bible – God sharing with Jeremiah that God is generous of heart and spirit despite the behavior and ways his people were acting at this moment. God’s people are forgetting God’s ways and following their own paths of righteousness, justice, idolatry, and not living as God intended for his beloved people. We all need to invite God into our lives on a regular basis through prayer, listening to God, and the study of Scripture to allow this transformation to happen – God as the potter, and we, God’s people, as the clay.

This text is a reminder that God will work in our hearts and minds when we falter, helping us each day back on our path to live in more Christlike ways in the world. As our new church programming year begins, may we come together in this season as the body of Christ, ready to meet the new school year, the election season, and the realities of our life together. May we be a community ready to be continually formed by God the potter that our lives and church will reflect Christ’s love in the world! May it be so.

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Chris Baldwin - Pastor, Community & Formation
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Please send requests for submissions to:
communications@lopc.org
no later than September 1 for the October 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



special offering

Atfaluna Update

By LOPC member Chris Azim Johnson



The LOPC community has been a strong supporter of Atfaluna since 2003, establishing an LOPC sponsored classroom there to build stronger relationships with our Abrahamic brothers and sisters in this part of the world.

That is perhaps needed more now than ever.

Atfaluna, a registered Palestinian non-governmental organization (NGO), has been working in the field of education and allied services for the deaf since 1992. Staff, students, and families have suffered some devastating setbacks this year from the continuing military attacks and blockade of Gaza. The entire school has been destroyed, and a founder, Hashem Ghazal, and his wife were killed when their home was bombed. Staff and families have been displaced multiple times and currently face significant challenges including physical safety from military attack and lack of electricity, sufficient food, water, and medical care.

Atfaluna embodies the Arabic word sumud, or “resilience.” Staff continue to provide multiple services for the hearing impaired and children and families sheltering with and without disabilities. Atfaluna worked with other organizations to build the first tent-shelter camp for people with disabilities. They provide meals and nutritional assistance to the children and families, hearing screenings and hearing aids, hygiene kits, and psychosocial support. The Atfaluna kitchen is run by a group of skillful culinary youth with disabilities serving nutritious hot meals for more than 7,000 conflict-affected individuals daily (providing more than 96,000 individual hot meals).

Conflict and disasters disproportionality negatively affect those with disabilities, and Atfaluna has continuously provided inclusive interventions and psychosocial support for them. Atfaluna’s teams have worked to provide a sense of normalcy and fun for the sheltering children with and without disabilities. Atfaluna has only been able to continue their mission through the generous support of donors.



Give Today!

In response to the dire situation in Gaza, Atfaluna has shared with us their greatest needs and priorities to alleviate the intense suffering. Our funds will be used to provide for these priorities:

Nutrition and Food Assistance: Atfaluna families are unable to afford basic nutrition for their children.

Hygiene Kits: Because of the bombing of sanitation infrastructure, hygiene kits are increasingly important to hinder the rise of skin diseases and to provide women’s menstrual hygiene products.

Hearing Aids and Other Assistance Devices: Families have reported increased difficulty to access basic supplies and necessities without assistance devices like hearing aids.

Psychosocial Support: There is intense need to begin to address the trauma of children and adults as a result of the constant explosions, airstrikes, and excessive visual exposure to the bodies of those killed.

There is intense need in Gaza, and we are confident that LOPC can raise funds to provide crucial aid that will matter to our friends at Atfaluna. Our goal this fall is to raise \$10,000 to help address these top priorities and critical needs of some of Gaza’s most vulnerable children and their families.

To make a gift towards our Special Offering please go to lopc.org/giving and select “Atfaluna” from the drop-down menu or designate a gift by writing “Atfaluna” on an envelope or in the memo line of your check. Giving will begin on September 9!

interfaith

Interfaith Dialogue

We continue to grieve the continued violence, loss of life, and humanitarian crisis stemming from the Israel/Gaza conflict. The statement below, which was released shortly after this recent conflict began, still holds and continues to call for our collective, urgent action and prayers for peace in the region.

We have updated our Interfaith Dialogue webpage at lopc.org/interfaith. It contains our statement on the conflict as well as access to resources from our PC(USA) denomination, Churches for Middle East Peace, and our own congregation. There are also easy ways you can get involved in advocacy for peace and justice and sign up for email updates.

In addition, we will continue to engage with regional and theological experts to deepen our understanding of the complex realities at work in the Israel/Palestine region. Please note the details of our next speaker.

The Rev. Dr. Alex Awad

Sunday, September 15 at 11:11 a.m. in the Oak Room



The Rev. Dr. Alex Awad was born and raised in Jerusalem. He received an MA in Missions and Evangelism from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

For 26 years, Rev. Awad, along with his wife Brenda, served as missionaries with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church in Israel/Palestine. He was the pastor of an international church in East Jerusalem and served as a faculty member, dean of students, and board member for Bethlehem Bible College. Until his retirement in June 2015, Rev. Awad directed the Shepherd Society which is the humanitarian arm of Bethlehem Bible College. Many needy Palestinians seek the help of the Shepherd Society in meeting emergency needs such as food, medicine, and employment.

Rev. Awad has written *Through the Eyes of the Victims* and *Palestinian Memories*. Both books reveal the realities of life under Israeli military occupation. He has published numerous articles that call for justice for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Statement on Israel/Gaza Conflict

Based on our Christian values and guided by the materials and positions of the Presbyterian Church (USA), we support and pray for peace and an end to hostilities as well as the safe return of the hostages to Israel and a dramatic infusion of humanitarian aid for all those suffering in Gaza. We also recognize the traumatic impact these hostilities have had both on our local Jewish brothers and sisters and on our local Arab and Muslim brothers and sisters.

We join our Jewish interfaith neighbors, especially our partner congregation at Temple Isaiah, to decry the actions of Hamas which resulted in the tragic loss of Jewish civilian lives and the taking of the hostages who must be released. Simultaneously, we join our Muslim and Arab interfaith neighbors, especially our partner congregation at the San Ramon Valley Islamic Center, to grieve the overwhelming loss of innocent human life, deprivation of sustaining humanitarian aid, and destruction of property being inflicted by Israel on the

Palestinian people in Gaza.

Under the guidance of the PC(USA), we acknowledge the complexities which have led to these enormous tragedies while being faithful to the teachings of the Gospel that all lives are precious. On the one hand, we continue to support Israel's right to exist as a free and sovereign nation within their internationally recognized borders, the right of Israeli citizens to live safely in secure borders, and for the state of Israel to hold accountable to justice those who carry out acts of violence and murder against them.

Similarly, we stand firm in support of Palestinians and their right to live free in their internationally recognized land, without occupation, aggression, and bloodshed. We therefore urge the Israeli government to honor the Palestinian people with the same freedom they offer their own citizens and continue to do so amid this crisis. We also urge Hamas to release all hostages safely and refrain from

additional violence. Moreover, we urge all leaders to immediately put an end to the bloodshed, end the fighting, and open corridors to provide the people of Gaza with medical attention and necessary humanitarian supplies (sufficient food, safe water, fuel, electricity, etc.) to everyone who is in need.

Recognizing the immense destruction that is being inflicted in the Gaza strip, and in support of our mission partners there, LOPC has raised funds to provide relief and humanitarian support to the victims, and we hope to continue to do so. In worship and through prayer, we will lift up the families of victims on both sides, the hostages who are held captive, and intercede for peace and the cessation of hostilities. We will also remain in contact and solidarity with our Jewish and Arab and Muslim neighbors as well as our mission partners in Gaza, and keep the congregation informed on any actions developed in support of those interfaith and mission partners.

community

Attention, Quilters!

Once again, our sanctuary will be adorned with the traditional November quilt display! This is a time to show off your own skills, or perhaps those of a beloved relative or friend. The display goes up for the entire month of November, so start considering what you might want to contribute. We hope you will! We take great care of your quilts, and you will get them back at the end of November. A letter will soon follow with details for those who have loaned their treasure in the past.

If you are new to this, and need that more detailed letter, or you have any questions, please email Ann Loar at annloar@icloud.com.



New! Join a Community Group

Join a Community Group focusing on service opportunities and fellowship! Discover ways to make a difference through service while building meaningful connections.

Open to all. Kick-off is September 8.

Register by September 1 at lopc.org/registrations. Come and be a part of something impactful!

Fourth Monday Book Group

September 23 at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom

The group chose the title selection at their August meeting (after printing of *Focus*).

For the month's book and to join the group, email Jean Fiske at jdfiske@gmail.com.

Fourth Friday Book Group

September 27 at 4:00 p.m. on Zoom

The group will discuss *How Migration Really Works* by Hein de Haas.

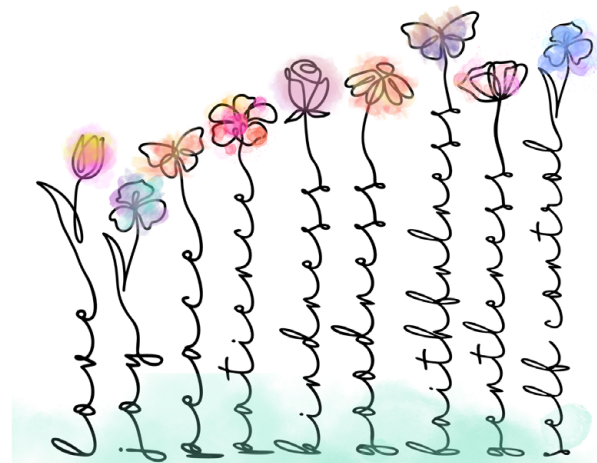
All are invited. Email Catherine Coleman for the Zoom link at awaitingword@gmail.com.

Congregational Meeting

September 29 following Worship in the Sanctuary

Please join us for this special meeting during which members will vote to approve the slate of nominees for elder, deacon, CNC, and Foundation positions with terms beginning January 1, 2025 as presented by the Church Nominating Committee.

Visit lopc.org/cnc to read about each of the nominees.



FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

Fall Sermon Series: Being Your Best Self

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul writes of some gifts that come to us from the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are not things that we can simply produce ourselves, as Paul sees it, but rather gifts that God wants to build up in us over time, if we're open to it. For each fruit, we'll be looking at what it is, how Jesus modeled it, and practical ways we can cultivate it.

September 8: Love

September 15: Joy

September 22: Peace and Patience

September 29: Kindness and Generosity

October 6: Faithfulness

October 13: Gentleness and Self Control

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

Trudy Ausfahl,

who passed on July 4. A service will be held on January 4 at 1:00 p.m.

Michael Smith,

who passed on July 25. A service will be held on September 14 at 11:00 a.m.

Maggie Eggen,

who passed on July 27. A service will be held on October 19 at 11:00 a.m.

Roz Breuner-Phair,

who passed on August 1.

Connie Mueser,

who passed on August 10.



The Port Chicago 50: A Conversation with Jonathan Lee



**RACIAL
EQUITY &
ENGAGEMENT**
at LOPC

On the 80th anniversary of the deadly explosion, the Navy announced a full exoneration of the African American sailors who were charged in 1944 with mutiny and refusing orders to return to work in dangerous conditions loading ammunition. One of the leaders of the grassroots effort advocating for exoneration was LOPC member and Assistant U.S. Attorney (working in his personal capacity only), Jonathan Lee. After he led an information session for our members, LOPC joined the numerous churches, community groups, and politicians that supported exoneration of these 50 sailors. LOPC's Racial Equity and Engagement Team (REET) asked Jonathan to share about his three years of advocating on behalf of these families.

REET: What motivated you to become involved with this advocacy effort?

Jonathan Lee: The initial idea in early 2021 was to use my training and experience as an attorney to call attention to this local history. I knew about the Port Chicago disaster and the mutiny trial from studying history, both in college and more recently. But in early 2021, I started researching the topic in-depth to present a continuing education program for attorneys. After that program in November 2021, I wanted to put my greater understanding of the injustice at Port Chicago to some active use. I proposed that the Contra Costa County Bar Association form a task force to advocate for exoneration. The task force was formed in February 2022.

Since then, I have been motivated by my perspective that attorneys have a special obligation to seek justice, at least some of the time, in some aspect of their work, such as providing pro bono representation to those who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. I was also motivated by the perspective that as a local bar association, we should use our status and energy to attempt to rectify an injustice that occurred here in our community. As I got to know more about the men and their families, my motivation to work on this project only grew.

REET: What sustained you over the years you have been active?

JL: I have been sustained by my family's support as well as the support

Contra Costa County Bar Association

Empowering attorneys
to deliver outstanding
legal service to the
community since 19



of other members of the task force, but let me describe two themes that also became important to me. First, based on my research, I had conviction that we were on the right side of the argument. One of our goals was for the Navy to exonerate the sailors of Port Chicago, rather than through an act of Congress or other means. But we didn't hear anything from the Navy until I received a phone call the morning the order had been signed by the Secretary. Without any word from the Navy for those three years, there were some difficult times, but I was sustained by the work itself and the meaning each of us on the task force found in seeking exoneration. We found strength in the knowledge that our work on behalf of the Port Chicago 50 was going to make a difference — we just couldn't be sure of what difference that would be.

I was also sustained by the positive response to our advocacy in the local and national community. In the last year or so, our advocacy included speaking to various community groups, to city councils and other politicians, and to the Navy through letters and petitions. We also presented two partial reenactments of the mutiny trial, based on a detailed study of the individual testimony of the Port Chicago 50. We researched the life stories of the Port Chicago 50, other sailors who survived the blast but were not court-martialed, and the men who were killed in the

disaster. What I experienced along the way was moving. The overwhelming community response to our advocacy gave us hope. The more we learned about each member of the Port Chicago 50, the more we understood about them, their humanity, and the toll on their families. These men were courageous to take a stand against the Navy, and their stand played a direct role in the desegregation of the Navy in 1946. I began to understand that this was the most important aspect of the project because we could play a small role in ensuring that the men were remembered for their courage in the face of injustice, separate and apart from the Navy's ultimate position.

REET: What gifts have you received from this work?

JL: What first comes to mind are the new relationships and friendships. I have worked very closely with community members who were on the task force. Working closely on a project like this requires true collaboration where everyone's ideas are considered and used. I learned that to understand another's ideas requires listening and getting to know the person well. I place a high value on these relationships.

The second thing that comes to mind is the response of the community. Our goal was to create a way for a wide array of community members and groups to be heard by the Navy. We connected with religious groups,

veterans, civil rights, and other lawyer groups. Their response was favorable and often very moving. All of us on the task force could feel the momentum of something special in the community over the past year or so — a unifying desire to see the stain of injustice removed from our history. It became apparent, and we spoke openly about it at our meetings, that in our minds it was a question of when, not if, the Port Chicago 50 would be exonerated (of course, the Navy's order went beyond the 50 to reach also the 206 who initially refused but relented after the admiral's firing squad comment). Hearing, seeing, and feeling the groundswell of support for correcting this injustice was a gift.

Finally, I received the gift of being a witness to history and the chance for healing where before there was pain and shame. The Navy sent its leadership to the 80th Commemoration, and the Secretary's public comments embraced the Navy's responsibility for what happened at Port Chicago. It was an incredible experience to watch. After 80 years, I believe there is now a real chance for healing among the families most adversely affected by these events. It has been a true honor and privilege to work on this advocacy project.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the LOPC community — the people, REET, Session, and staff — for its support for and engagement in this advocacy.

YOUTH



► **Questions? Email**
Jaime Polson:
jaime@lopc.org

Youth Alive!

August 18, Sunday
Mornings, 10:00 a.m.
in CLC 201

Youth Alive! is back for the 2024–2025 school year. 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.

SAVE THE DATES

Raising Emotionally Healthy Children and Teens

September 18, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. focusing on high school youth

September 24, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. focused on elementary/middle school youth
In the LOPC Sanctuary

Join us for parent education events on Raising Emotionally Healthy Children and Teens featuring Dr. Denise Pope. Dr. Pope is the cofounder of Challenge Success, a non-profit affiliated with the Stanford University Graduate School of Education, which partners with school communities to elevate student voice and implement research-based, equity-centered strategies that improve well-being, engagement and belonging for all K-12 students.

These seminars are in collaboration with the Lafayette and Acalanes School Districts. For more information or to register, please contact Cathy Scheve at cathy@lopc.org.

BTW: By The Way **Starting in September!**

BTW is LOPC's ministry for high school youth and meets on Sunday evenings in CLC 201 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Reach out to jaime@lopc.org for more information.

YOW: Youth on Wednesday **Starting in September!**

YOW is LOPC's ministry for 5th–8th grade youth and meets on Wednesday evenings in CLC 201 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. with an optional dinner in the Davies Room at 5:30 p.m. Reach out to jaime@lopc.org for more information.



Vacation Bible Camp

Every year at Vacation Bible Camp, children, volunteers, and Children's Ministry staff collect a special offering in support of a non-profit organization whose mission is aligned with our scripture study. The 2024 theme of VBC was "SCUBA: diving into friendship with God," so we sought an organization that focused on being good stewards of clean water and discovered Surge for Water.

Surge is a Chicago-based nonprofit partnering with marginalized global communities via safe water, sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health solutions to help end the cycle of poverty. Our campers looked under couches and in their piggy banks, and some even did extra chores to earn money to give. After five days of collection and some generous matches, VBC kids were able to raise \$1367.70, which translated to classroom water filters for 683 students at Kakuya Primary School in Uganda. These ceramic water filters

CHILDREN

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

are a simple, locally sourced solution that ensures students have immediate access to safe drinking water. Here is a photo of one of the filters in action. For more information about this impactful organization, we invite you to visit surgeforwater.org. We send a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to this special summer cause.

finance

Financial Update

Submitted by Jim Nagle & Staci Johnston

LOPC is off to a solid start for the first half of 2024. Year-to-date total contributions were \$96,896 improved from budget. Several factors related to the stronger giving were receipt of \$74,568 unbudgeted member gifts of thanks, \$24,958 in higher special gifts and offerings, and \$12,982 in higher pledge giving, offset by a \$47,310 in lower giving for non-pledge giving and loose offerings. 2024 investment income is higher than budget, which is a nice upside for 2024.

Ministry Team spending of \$1,776,036 was less than budget by \$33,564, excluding additional mission and special

gifts spending. Overall ministry team is spending consistent with or favorable to ministry budgets.

Year-to-date June 2024 ended with net expenses of \$252,931 which is an improvement from the projected year-to-date budget shortfall by \$105,502. It is normal this time of year to have total year-to-date expense exceeding total contributions.

LOPC is grateful to our generous friends and members of LOPC for their 2024 giving. We encourage anyone who has not pledged to consider making a pledge so that we can plan and continue our great ministry. It is never too late to pledge!

Giving at LOPC

One of the most practical ways you can help is through your financial support so LOPC can share God's love through our ministries.

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





**GRADES
K-4**

PLAY!

on Wednesdays

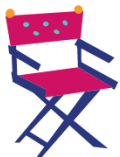
Epic Bible stories transformed by YOU!

Learn
Improvisation,
tableaux, shadow
puppetry, prop
& costume design
stop motion
animation,
soundscape,
& more!

Fall session:
September 18 - November 6
Wednesdays
3:15 - 5:00 p.m.
Fee: \$175 per child
Scholarships available

**Register
Now!**

For more information, call 925-283-8722 x260 or visit lopc.org/registrations.



Sounds of the Season

A Fall Concert Celebration

September 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Artists include:

Hardy Hemphill ● Michael
Henning ● Tony Lindsay ●
Terry Miller ● Stu Rosenberg ●
Matthew Szemela ● Tim
Weed ● and more!

More
Grammy
winning
talent at
LOPC!

Tickets at
lopc.org/tickets

All net proceeds
benefit LOPC
mission partner
Atfaluna School
for the Deaf
with a \$3,000
matching gift.

**Lafayette-Orinda
Presbyterian Church**
49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA

care

Dementia Caregivers Support Group

September 4 and 18

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.



Widow/Widower's Grief Support Group

Wednesdays, September 25 – November 27,
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at LOPC

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. Find hope, support and successful ways to process this significant life event. The course is open to all widows and widowers.

Enrollments are now being accepted.

Pre-registration required. The workbook is \$20. For more information or to register, contact Cathy Scheve at 925-283-8722, ext. 240 or cathy@lopc.org.

spiritual formation

Consider Companions for the Journey

There comes a time for most of us when we discover a deep desire within us to live from the heart what we already know in our heads and do with our hands.

You may be in a season of personal transition in your daily life or in your spiritual life. In Companions, we covenant together to seek spiritual community and to support one another in our identity as God's beloved children. Our time together is a time of learning and listening to each other, to ourselves, and to God. We use Scripture, prayer, silence, and time in smaller Companioning groups with a trained facilitator. The time together is a safe place, free of judgment, advice, or questioning.

Spiritual community is the work of the Holy Spirit, to which we add our intentional commitment and effort. We commit to learning to listen to God, to self, and to others while using timeless spiritual practices. In this community, we can grow in our ability to discern and respond to God's gracious presence and action in us, among us, and through us.

If those intentions call to you, consider Companions. In seeking, we learn. This journey of finding is available to us together through Companions. No prior experience necessary. The Holy Spirit accepts and gathers us as we are and helps us become who we wish to be.

Companions meets monthly from October to June. Keep an eye out for future announcements regarding meeting details.

For more information, contact Carl Grant at clgrantsd@gmail.com or Robyn Dean at r2dean@sonic.net.



Deacon Support

The Deacon Ministry consists of LOPC members who 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 parents, 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.

the GENEROSITY corner

Prayer Team Offers Gifts of Time and Presence

By Nancy Henderson, Generosity Team Member



God hears your prayers. Nothing is outside the boundary of God's love. No prayer is too trivial, and nothing is too big, from meeting a new challenge to pleading for world peace.

Prayer is central to being Christian. We all pray, so why a prayer team? Sometimes we encounter something so overwhelming that we need our community to pray with us and for us. Jesus promised that "where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). In response to your prayer requests and to Jesus' promise, the Prayer Team offers time and presence to care and to pray.

Every Tuesday morning, team members join in holy space. Prayer time is prayer for all. Each request on LOPC's confidential prayer list is lifted up—sometimes for years—always at least on Tuesday and beyond.

As a group, we can look at and listen to the people we pray with. Sometimes another's prayers inspire us. Sometimes we recognize in ourselves another's plight as we pray for things we also have been through. In praying for others, our hearts are sometimes broken open and prayer shifts the way we look at the world. We humans grow as we pray.

If you ever want or need prayers, submit a prayer card on a Sunday morning, or go to lopc.org/prayer and let us know how we can pray for you.

If you feel a nudge or call to join this sacred time together, please contact Pastor Jane MacKenzie at jane@lopc.org or Pastor Jaime Polson at jaime@lopc.org. Know that all are welcome — you don't have to be "good at praying," because we pray from our hearts, and words follow. Remember Paul's affirmation that "we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." (Romans 8:26)



LOPC FOUNDATION

Inspired by the faith and generosity of those who have come before us, we have confidence in the future of LOPC and want to share the love of Christ beyond our lifetimes.

We appreciate your prayerful consideration of joining those who have become Friends of the Foundation.

Trustees of the LOPC Foundation



Devotional Videos

Ever since March 2020, your clergy and program staff have been creating short devotional videos multiple times a week, totaling over 750 videos! We have heard from you that our devotional video ministry has helped you learn more about our staff and receive meaningful faith-filled messages throughout your week. Starting in September, we will debut a year-long video library for devotional videos that can accompany you on your faith journey throughout all the seasons chosen from our favorite devotional videos! If you have been a faithful devotional video watcher, we'd love to hear what you enjoy about this ministry, and if you haven't watched any videos, we invite you to sign up to be on our email list or subscribe to our YouTube channel and get notified when we post new videos!

Visit youtube.com/@lopcyoutube.

Questions? Please contact Lauren Gully at lauren@lopc.org.

*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

SAVE THE DATE

**Thursday Fellowship
starts September 19!**

During August, volunteers were busy finalizing plans and programs for Thursday Fellowship's 46th program year which begins September 19. The Ministry Fair on August 25 provided an opportunity to meet potential volunteers and guests on the plaza. We enjoyed the opportunity to introduce Thursday Fellowship to some new friends and are enthusiastic about them joining us on Thursdays.

All volunteers will gather for a Volunteer Appreciation Kick-off Luncheon on September 12. We are always delighted to gather and celebrate the beginning of a new year. We will be ready to welcome our guests on September 19.

We meet every Thursday from September through early June in Fellowship Hall from 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. except for holidays.

Mark your calendars and join our community for some fun, fellowship, and friendship as we share activities, a meal and enjoy some fabulous entertainment. Come and be a part of our welcoming community!



Celebrating Frank Grannis on his 100th birthday in July!

We will celebrate our new program year by welcoming two of our favorite entertainers.

September Schedule

- **September 19:** Michael Kistner, singer and guitarist, and longtime friend of Thursday Fellowship will perform our favorites as we sing along.
- **September 26:** Syria T. Berry, popular Bay Area entertainer, guitarist and versatile vocalist is a Thursday Fellowship favorite.

We are so excited about the coming year. We warmly welcome guests, volunteers, and visitors.

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.

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



WELCOME new members



From left to right: Myra & Tom Snyder, Will & Meighan Dawson, Sam Austin, Christine Raymond, Diana Yorgan & Bob Schwab, Molly Vorwerck & Robert Ansel, Warren Sheets (Not pictured: Karen Martin)

Sam Austin



Sam manages NEPC's Western Region public fund consulting business. For over 35 years, Sam has offered consulting advice to corporate, government, multi-employer, endowment, and eleemosynary clients. Sam represents his fellow partners on NEPC's Governance Board, most recently serving as board chair. He has also previously chaired NEPC's Partner Nominating Committee. Sam served in portfolio management and senior management roles at Bank of New York, Mitsui Trust & Banking, Bankers Trust, Barclays Global Investors, Seneca Capital, Virtus Investment Partners, and Xponance prior to joining NEPC in 2017. Sam is the founder and board chair of the Investment Diversity Advisory Council (IDAC), an industrywide organization dedicated to promoting talent maximization as an indispensable precondition for excellence. Sam attended MIT and earned his M.B.A. degree in Finance from the Questrom School of Business at Boston University.

Will & Meighan Dawson



Will and Meighan live in Pleasant Hill with their newborn son, Ford, and two daughters, Emmi and Della. Will is a general contractor and loves most outdoor activities. Meighan is a preschool teacher and enjoys fitness and culinary hobbies in her spare time. Together, they love to travel and experience new restaurants local to the east bay. Their favorite aspect of LOPC culture is how consistently warm, friendly, and welcoming members are.

Robert Ansel & Molly Vorwerck



Molly and Robert live in Lafayette and have been married for two years. They have an 8-month old son named Owen and a rescue cat named Maxie. Molly works at

Monte Carlo, a data quality software startup based in San Francisco, as the head of marketing; prior, she worked at Uber as a content and brand lead. Robert is a staff software engineer at Slack, responsible for site reliability and infrastructure engineering. In their (very limited) spare time, they like to travel (Molly is from southern California and Robert from Texas), watch movies, hike, and play board games. What attracted them to LOPC was a desire to raise their son in the Christian faith surrounded by a great community of people.

Christine Raymond



Christine grew up in Indianapolis, graduated from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, and completed graduate studies in organizational psychology.

After college, she spent 25 years on the east coast, primarily in the Farmington Valley in Connecticut and had a vacation home in Killington, VT. Her adult son, Jason, currently lives in Michigan. Christine moved to California in June 2014 and initially lived in Santa Cruz, then moving to Lafayette in 2017. She owns Greet Lafayette and BeLocal Lamorinda & Diablo, two print, digital, and social platforms that emphasize and celebrate the importance of building community and supporting local businesses. She also has the honor of sitting on multiple Lafayette-based boards. In her spare time, Christine enjoys reading, swimming and working out at Oakwood Athletic Club, traveling and exploring northern California, snow skiing, and spending time with close friends (and her pup, Buddy). She's happy to now call LOPC her new church home.

Karen Martin



Karen is a retired Civil Engineer, living with her husband Bob in Lafayette, where they've raised two adult daughters. She loves dogs and cats, hiking in the Briones

hills, and playing with her grandson. She was drawn to LOPC for its inclusive love of God and worship. She stayed at LOPC because of its dedication of service to our neighbors and community. After 5 months as a regular visitor, she decided to take a leap of faith and volunteer for Vacation Bible Camp. The week was definitely challenging, but oh-so-rewarding, as she met LOPC's children and worked with such dedicated and fun volunteers and staff. "I knew I was 'home.' I look forward to serving and loving Jesus with LOPC."

Tom & Myra Snyder



Tom and Myra are delighted to be back in California after global careers to be closer to family which includes four highly active granddaughters.

Tom, a retired professor, has taught in graduate programs in public policy and urban planning, and has been involved in campus ministries, church missions and finance, as well as serving on a school board. Myra, an information technology consultant, has been active in volunteer work serving on a pediatric cancer foundation board, as a mentor to high school students, an election judge, and a deacon at church. "We enjoy discovering new places to visit and dining with locals. We look forward to making new connections at LOPC, and to serving others."

Bob Schwab & Diana Yorgan



Bob and Diana live in Orinda and have been married 35 years. Bob has four adult children who have grown the family tree to include four great great grandchildren. Bob and Diana

keep busy managing their commercial property, traveling, gardening, and golf. They both agree their best trip was a trip to Israel in 2019. After attending LOPC for five years, they decided they loved LOPC too much not to become members. "From inspiring sermons to many opportunities to grow in faith we're excited about joining LOPC."



**LAFAYETTE-ORINDA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

49 Knox Drive
Lafayette, CA 94549



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

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Games & Prizes
Delicious Food

All are welcome!