

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

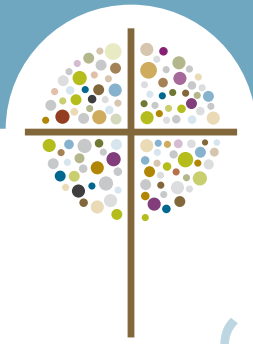
JANUARY 2025

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

LOPC.ORG



A Prayerful Year Ahead

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

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ.”
 – 2 Corinthians 5:17 – 20a NRSV



Happy New Year – 2025! For several years, I have chosen a word to live into for the year instead of setting new year’s resolutions that are quickly forgotten or left undone by me. Some familiar? We are not alone! Most people have given up on resolutions by mid-January.

I have had much more success choosing a word that offers the opportunity to find more places to live out these resolutions in many areas of my life. The last five years, I have chosen words like joy, rest, spontaneity, solitude, and contentedness. This year, my word is prayerful. Perhaps it is because I now have a teen driver (only kidding). Or more seriously, perhaps after an election year, and so much distress and war in the world, it feels like I need to remain more centered and rooted in Christ’s love than ever before. For me, prayer is one of the most powerful ways I connect with God.

2 Corinthians 5 reminds us that because of God we are offered new ways to see the world and one another. We are promised that we are reconciled to God through Christ’s love and sacrifice for each one of us. In turn, we are new creations in Christ, forgiven, loved, and sent into the world to serve others and seek places where we can bring about reconciliation between people and groups – through prayer, service, and loving actions.

May this be a year of reconciliation and serving as Christ’s ambassadors at LOPC and all throughout the world! Let’s ours be a message of hope, love, and faith, spreading the love of Christ wherever we may be called this year.

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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 Doty MacKenzie - Pastor

Ministry Directors

- Emily Austin - Children’s Ministry
- Bryan Dunnewald - Music
- Coleen Moulton - Seedlings Preschool
- Cynthia Purvis - Youth
- Susan Wentworth - Children’s Ministry

Finance

- Suzanne Ferraro

Focus Newsletter

- Pamela Moidel - Design
- Lexi Morrissey - Editor

Submissions & Deadlines

Please send requests for submissions to:
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.

Need to reach us?

info@lopc.org • 925-283-8722





Living Questions

Winter Sermon Series

January 12 – March 2

We tend to ask big questions in life, as do the characters we encounter in the Bible. Finding the right questions to ask can move us towards answering life's problems, help us find meaning, positively impact ourselves and others, and even lead us to identify more useful questions! A good question is worth pondering over time and may not easily (if ever) yield a complete answer but can influence how we live our lives as people of faith. In this series, we'll be looking at some great questions asked by faithful people in the Hebrew Bible and considering how living with those questions under the witness of Scripture can shape and form us in positive ways.

Volunteer Opportunities at LOPC! Join us in the New Year!

The Garden

Children's Check-In

Sundays, 9:50 – 10:15 a.m.

Come help welcome families on Sunday mornings and get them checked-in for the Garden and Youth Alive programs. We can have you back in the Sanctuary in time for the sermon.

Please email Susan Wentworth at susan@lopc.org if you can help one or two Sundays a month!

Friday Fun Nights

Once a month, LOPC hosts an evening for children with special needs in our community and their siblings. There are art projects, games, puzzles, music, and a movie. We need adult volunteers to help be a buddy and provide an evening of respite for our families.

Please email Susan Wentworth at susan@lopc.org if you would like to volunteer. No experience necessary.

“Friday Stuffers”

Help prepare the Sunday bulletins for distribution. Volunteers meet for an hour at 10:30 a.m. in the Ministry Center.

Please contact Ciara Bird at ciara@lopc.org for information.

Join the Flower Team

The LOPC flower team creates the beautiful arrangements that grace our church each week. If you have a passion for floral arranging or experience with floral design, being a part of this team is a wonderful way to use your skills!

For information, please email Jayne Hegenbart at hegenbart.jk@gmail.com.

Front Desk at the Ministry Center

We are looking for volunteers to help cover the front desk in the Ministry Center when our receptionist is unavailable. Responsibilities include greeting guests and answering phones. All you need is a smile!

Please contact Ciara Bird at ciara@lopc.org if you are interested in helping out periodically.

Worship Hospitality

Looking for new members to usher/greet on a monthly basis and for special services throughout the year. Duties include passing out bulletins, taking collections, and directing Communion. This is a wonderful way to meet new people and to connect with the Congregation.

Contact Carol King at caking53@pacbell.net to learn more.

The Sanctuary Guild

Join this volunteer team behind the scenes that prepares the sanctuary to welcome members and guests to LOPC by ensuring clean, organized pews each week. Teams of two work approximately once every six weeks.

For more information or to volunteer, please email Tim Carlson at timmycarlson541@gmail.com.

Welcome Center

Be an LOPC ambassador and welcome all on Sunday mornings in the Welcome Center. The shift is on Sundays, 9:45 – 11:30 a.m. No experience needed!

To sign up and for additional information, contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org.

Vacation Bible Camp

Many volunteers are needed to make this week a success!

See page 3 for details.

YOUTH & CHILDREN

MEET NEW TRAIL BUDDIES AND NAVIGATE A WILD ADVENTURE!

June 9 - 13, 2025
2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Register NOW
AT LOPC.ORG/VBCAMP

AGES 4 - COMPLETED 4TH GRADE



The background of the banner features a vibrant aurora borealis over a mountain range with a river in the foreground.

Vacation Bible Camp 2025

Trek with us on the ultimate Alaskan Adventure where northern lights glow over majestic mountains, racing rivers, and glistening glaciers. As kids trek through the tundra, they'll explore what's true in our wild world today — Jesus is our True North! June 9 – 13, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. For kids ages 4 through completed 4th grade.

Registration opens January 15 at lopc.org/vbcamp.

Volunteer with Us!

Are you looking for a fun and meaningful way to kick off your summer? Look no further than becoming a volunteer for this year's Vacation Bible Camp at LOPC. There are many opportunities to serve, from crew leader to hospitality greeter, set/prop builder to rotation leader or assistant. There really is something for everyone at every skill level, and it takes many hands to make this memorable experience happen for the kids. Come make a difference and let God's light shine through you as we point the way towards True North.

Apply to volunteer: lopc.org/vbcamp. Questions? Email Emily Austin at emily@lopc.org.

BTW *By the Way*

LOPC's weekly program for 9 – 12th graders resumes January 12.

YOW *Youth on Wednesday*

LOPC's weekly program for 6 – 8th graders resumes January 15.

For more information, contact Cynthia Purvis at cynthia@lopc.org.

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).

Sunday Morning Infant Care

If your child is younger than one year old, please contact Susan Wentworth at susan@lopc.org prior to attending on a Sunday to make special arrangements.

Children's Ministry The Garden

Sundays during Worship

Children 6 months – toddlers
Kid-friendly time for growing friendship with Jesus and with one another.

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church presents

PLAY!

on Wednesdays

Epic Bible stories transformed by YOU!

Winter Session open!

January 15 - March 19
Wednesdays
3:15 - 5:00 p.m.
Fee: \$175 per child
Scholarships available

Kids grades K - 4th

ARTS & TECH skills taught:

- Improvisation
- Puppetry and Puppet making
- Stop motion animation
- Prop & costume design
- Soundscape
- and MORE!

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



LIGHTHOUSE
at Hope Solutions

Lighthouse Service-Learning Program

Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
February 8, March 15, and May 3

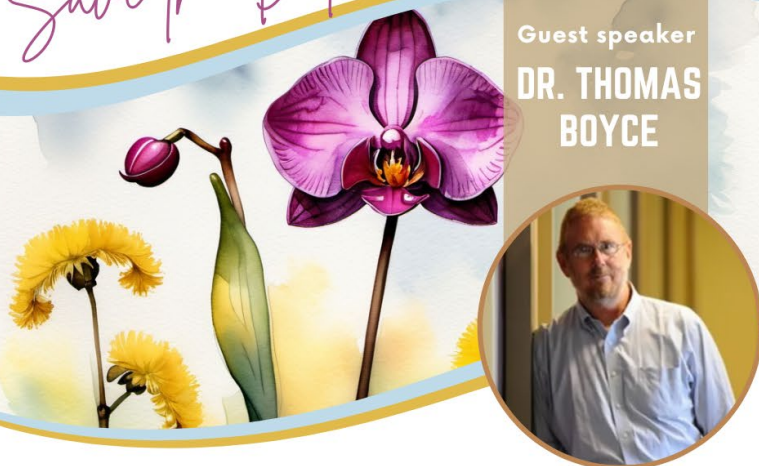
Join us for Lighthouse, a youth service program in support of Hope Solutions! Throughout the year, middle and high school students will have the opportunity to connect with local youth at the Hope Solutions community center in Concord. Activities include fun games, arts and crafts, and lunch.

Drop-off and pick-up will be at LOPC. While we'd love you to join us for every session, please feel free to attend whenever your schedule allows. Parents and caregivers are welcome to participate (though not required), and we will also need volunteers to help with carpooling.

Advance registration is requested at lopc.org/registrations. Contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org for more information.

UNLOCKING THE SCIENCE OF SENSITIVE KIDS

Save the Date



Guest speaker
DR. THOMAS BOYCE

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
49 Knox Drive Lafayette, CA 94549

1:30PM | FRIDAY | FEB 7

LOPC'S FIRST FRIDAY FORUM WELCOMES DR. W. THOMAS BOYCE UCSF PROFESSOR EMERITUS PEDIATRICS & PSYCHIATRY

Why do siblings differ even though they share the same parents and environment?
Why do some children appear to flourish despite facing serious obstacles, sometimes even tragedies, yet others wither when confronted with stress, and sometimes end up severely troubled? Dr. W. Thomas Boyce answers these questions in his popular book, *The Orchid and the Dandelion*, and will address these topics for parents, grandparents, teachers, and all those who engage with children at any level.

All are welcome in person and online.



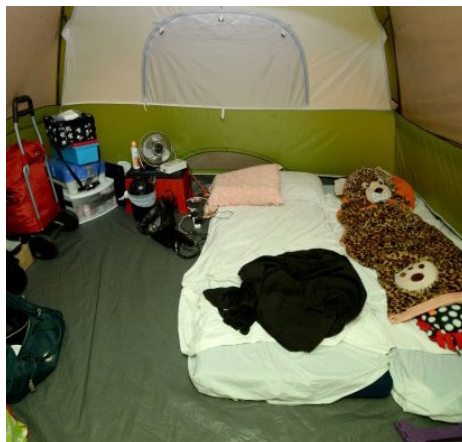


Winter Nights 2024

This year, Winter Nights Family Shelter arrived on the LOPC campus on October 28. A small group of five guests arrived, and three tents were erected in Fellowship Hall which would act as their home for the next two weeks. After settling in on Monday, a rhythm began to emerge, and guests began to relax after a couple of days on campus. By the beginning of the second week the number grew to 19 guests comprised of five families of six adults and 13 children.



Volunteers happily crafted homemade meals of chicken and mashed potatoes and even a pasta bar with different sauces to choose from. Most days, guests eat a cold breakfast of cereal and toast, but the weekends bring a delicious hot breakfast of eggs, bacon, French Toast, and more. This is always very much appreciated and feels more like home.



Thank you to those who provided daily snacks, tutoring, and fun activities for the children. LOPC Youth transformed the Oak Room into a dance party allowing the children an opportunity to dance and have fun. Since the guests were on campus on Halloween many went trick or treating in the nearby neighborhood.



Several families made Friday and Saturday nights special by providing crafts, snacks, and movies for families to enjoy. The LOPC quilters stopped by to gift each guest with a handmade quilt of their choice that touched their hearts.

LOPC always hopes that the time our guests are here on campus is special and provides them with experiences and interactions that show them they are important and loved. Thank you to all 235 people that volunteered — we couldn't have done it without you!

love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

love does is LOPC's annual opportunity to serve alongside each other in work that is meaningful to the greater community. This year it is on February 23. *love does* is a day where we come together to serve as a faithful community, working to bring Christ's light to others through our actions. Whether it's helping Habitat for Humanity build a home, deep cleaning a kitchen that serves those who are food insecure, or sorting baby clothes for low-income moms leaving the hospital with their newborns, this day allows us to show our love for others in a powerful way that is undeniable to those we serve.

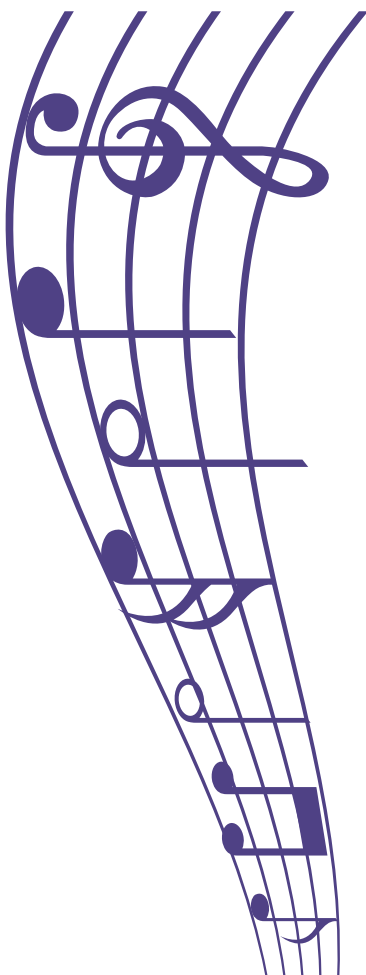
The *love does* projects are chosen by our mission partners for help they need, but do not have the staff or resources necessary to fulfill it. There will be on-campus opportunities as well as opportunities at multiple locations throughout Contra Costa County. Individuals of all ages and skill levels are welcome to join.

The collective gift of one day's work has a powerful impact not only on our partners and those we serve, but on ourselves. It offers us a glimpse into need that we don't often see in our daily lives or even realize exists. It broadens our minds and more importantly touches our hearts.

Please consider giving your time on February 23 by:

- Signing up to serve individually, with friends or family.
- Sparring a few hours to make an impact on the greater community.
- Connecting with people in the LOPC community in a meaningful way.

Visit lopc.org/lovedoes to see the projects available and sign up to participate.



Watch music come alive!

CHOIR RETREAT & WORKSHOP

February 8, 2025
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
LOPC Sanctuary

Experience a fun, dynamic rehearsal
with the LOPC Chancel Choir

Register at lopc.org/registrations

And don't miss McCormick's organ
improvisations in worship on February 9!



**Robert
McCormick**

*Internationally
renowned choral
conductor and
organist*

community

LOPC Celebrates 40 Years with the Lafayette Chamber!

On November 18, the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce acknowledged LOPC's 40th anniversary as a member of their organization. We are proud to be part of the Lamorinda community and look forward to another 40 years!



From left to right: Susan Wentworth, Staci Johnston, Tom Galbraith, Chris Baldwin, Dave Engelbrektsen, Julie Peterson, Lexi Morrissey, Cathy Scheve, Kevin Miller, Farah Mohammadzai, Michelle Browning, Robin Freeberg, Jane MacKenzie, Emily Austin, Peter Whitelock, Jaime Polson, Elizabeth Ball. **Not pictured:** Ciara Bird, Bryan Dunnewald, Lauren Gully, Cynthia Purvis, Brianna Stutzman.

Book Groups

Join one of LOPC's book groups in 2025! Looking ahead, here are the upcoming selections for each group:



Fourth Friday Book Group

January 24 – *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave

February 28 – *American Nations* by Colin Woodard

March 28 – *Atlas of the Heart* by Brené Brown

April 25 – *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett

This group meets on Zoom at 4:00 p.m.

To join the Friday book club, please contact Sharon Bartlett at bartlett004@aol.com.

Fourth Monday Book Group

January 27 – *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

February 24 – *Welcome to Glorious Tuga* by Francesca Segal

March 24 – *The Women* by Kristin Hannah

This group meets on Zoom at 2:00 p.m.

To join the Monday book club, please contact Leslie Finertie at leslie-finertie@comcast.net.

Welcome Cynthia Purvis!

Director of Youth Ministry



Cynthia is thrilled to be joining the LOPC community to serve as our new youth director beginning January 2. A little about Cynthia:

A native of California, Cynthia looks forward to the handful of cold and rainy days that California offers. In her free time, she loves to take her niece and nephew to the Los Angeles Zoo. Cynthia loves to play board games and card games and is always down to teach others how to play Spicy Uno.

Cynthia is dedicated to empowering students to live out their faith with integrity and love. She looks forward to engaging and guiding the next generation in their spiritual development. Ordained in 2012 by the Presbytery of Santa Barbara, Cynthia served as the Associate Pastor of Youth and Young Adults at

StoneBridge Community Church in Simi Valley, California. During the pandemic, she served as Campus Chaplain at St. Andrews University in North Carolina and most recently served at burlpres church as the Associate Pastor for NextGen. With a Bachelor of Arts in English from Westmont College, she wishes she had enough time to read all the books on her reading list. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry, she has over fifteen years of experience developing programs and strategies for children, youth, and young adults to engage in worship, Bible study, and missional service. Cynthia is working on her Doctor of Ministry degree in Family, Youth, and Culture from Fuller Theological Seminary. Please welcome Cynthia to the LOPC community!

session

November Session Highlights

By Mark Weaver, Clerk of Session



The November session meeting was held on November 19. Elder Sally Roberts opened the meeting by sharing her faith journey with us, after which we approved the consent agenda.

Clerk of Session Mark Weaver began his report by acknowledging receipt of Elder Catie Dole's resignation effective as of year-end. Catie shared that she and her family are moving to Houston because of a job change; we expressed our thanks for her service and will certainly miss her. This creates an elder opening on the Children's Ministry Team and, together with another opening on Spiritual Formation, the Church Nominating Committee will be hard at work to fill these spots in 2025.

During the meeting, elders cast their votes for the two at-large positions to serve on the 2025 Session Planning Council. Those elected will join 2025 Clerk of Session Chris Johnson, Pastor Peter Whitelock, and Finance Elder Jim Nagle.

Elder Bettie Graves and Pastor Chris Baldwin then updated session on the Presbytery meeting that was held online on November 12.

The annual Leadership Retreat (for elders, deacons and Foundation trustees) will be on February 1 and will focus on 12 Keys of an Effective Church. The next day, on February 2, we will have our annual congregational meeting immediately following the worship service in the sanctuary.

A discussion followed regarding the potential addition of a second service. Because we do not yet have the volunteer framework in place to staff a second service (particularly with respect to children), more discussion will take place in early 2025.

Finance Elder Jim Nagle then reported that we expect to finish 2024 with a balanced budget if the Faith Component goal of \$175,000 is met. We anticipate approving the 2025 budget at the session meeting on January 21.

Generosity Elder Linus Eukel reported that the pledge campaign is off to a good start. The Generosity Team will continue to send out reminders in early 2025 so that we can meet our goal of \$2.5M. Peter shared statistics on our giving trends that were compiled on a complimentary basis by the Presbyterian Church Foundation.

We closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

2025 LOPC Elders and Deacons

Elders and their Ministry

Jeff Budke	Operations
Jeff Eyet	Spiritual Formation
Bettie Graves	Worship
Chris Johnson	Clerk of Session
Jim Nagle	Finance
Sally Roberts	Senior Adult
Diane Vollering	Care
Jim Davis	Digital Outreach
Linus Eukel	Generosity
Juanita Kizor	Mission
Royce Nicolaisen	Personnel
Jonathan Nolen	Fellowship
Alexis Thompson	Care
Leslie Vallee	Youth
Andrea Hilsabeck	REET
Patrick Chen	Membership
Nancy Grabow	Youth
Phil Hunter	Mission
Cathy Eberhardt	Fellowship
Laurel Browman	Membership
Carolyn Bauer	CNC

Deacons

Heather Breen	Eddie Reiter
Susan Cliff	Alethea Sargent
Sue Fernstrom	Puja Sarna
Jean Fiske	Jeanette Shearer
Norman Fitzsimmons	Ginger Stambaugh
Muriel Franz	Dominique Thomas
Cyndy Jacobsmeyer	Lisa Toth
Paula Lair	Claire Van Rooyen
Ann Lofton	Mary Welte
Randi Long	Tom Whitelock
Xander Mitman	Carrie Wiseman
Jeff Patton	Marty Woehrle

WELCOME

new members

LOPC warmly receives the following individuals into membership.



Christy Casassa

Christy has lived in the Bay Area all her adult life. She is widowed with two married children and one grandchild. She is a retired RN. She's spent 30 years sailing the Bay, and now lives in Rossmoor, enjoying golf, bridge and reading.



Carrol Mills

Carrol grew up on a farm in Missouri and has lived in Martinez since 1979. She has worked as a newspaper journalist in Riverside and Hayward, CA. Later she worked in Information Technology and retired from Chevron. Her husband passed in 2010. Carrol is an avid reader and enjoys travel, quilting, and staying in touch with family and friends near and far. Music first attracted her to LOPC, but she was further impressed by the congregation's community service emphasis, openness to women in ministry, and to the LGBTQ+



Dorothy Moore

Dorothy has lived in Lafayette for 35 years with her husband Jeff. Together they have three grown children, Duncan, Julia, and Alec. Dorothy retired from SJSU as an associate professor in Nursing in December, and she now works as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. She retired from Kaiser after 17 years as an ICU/ER nurse. She enjoys reading, knitting, and masters swimming. She is attracted to LOPC for the sense of fellowship, worship services, wonderful music, and opportunity to give back to the community.



Jane Hargrove

Jane has been a member of PCUSA since a teenager at First Presbyterian Church Berkeley and most recently at a parish in Illinois. She has a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree and worked as a critical care nurse, an occupational health nurse, and upon retirement volunteered at military and civilian hospitals. She served as the head of the American Red Cross of Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage. She's worked at food banks in Fargo, ND, Johnson City, TN, and Belleville, IL. Her husband, Dr. Gary Hargrove, passed in 2022. She has two adult daughters, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren – most live locally. She enjoys the fellowship, the programs, the worship service, and music at LOPC which sustains her walk with the Lord.



Johanna Sistek

Johanna has been attending LOPC for several years and looks forward to joining some of the small groups (books, knitting, baking for others). She's lived in the East Bay since attending Cal, primarily in Point Richmond, and will be moving to Walnut Creek (Rossmoor) early in 2025. She works as a trademark attorney for Oracle, and retirement is on the horizon. For fun, she enjoys exploring the regional parks, book groups, following the Giants baseball team, and spending time with her daughter and her husband, who live in Rockridge.



Lenie Evangelista

Lenie is from the Philippines and is a caregiver. She has visited the sanctuary every Sunday to accompany Marsha Dean for her Sunday worship. Eventually she is looking forward for Sundays to come, because she feels she "belongs," and is accepted. She attributes the true kindness of Marsha and Robyn Dean for allowing her to attend the new member classes even while still on duty. Now that she is a member, she pledges to do her best to become a good servant of the church.



Namki Hong and Hyelin (Lynn) Lee

Namki & Lynn live in Lafayette and have been married for 11 years. They have two children, Jina (9) and Jinseo (7). Namki's family came from South Korea three months ago as Namki had the opportunity to be a one-year visiting scholar in UCSF as an endocrinologist studying aging. Lynn worked as an anesthesiologist running a private pain clinic in Seoul, and she is now enjoying time with kids and family. What attracted them to LOPC was the Children Ministry and worship services. Jina and Jinseo love LOPC, and the whole family feel that they are welcome here. They are looking forward to having more opportunities to be connected and to serve.



Robert Mittendorff

Robert and his wife, Ashley, live near LOPC in Hidden Valley and moved to the area in 2021 after getting married that year. They have two children, Kate (12) and Hugo (7 months). Robert is a physician and venture capitalist leading healthcare investing at a global venture firm. In their spare time they can be found attending Kate's sporting events or theatrical performances, or coordinating play dates for Hugo. They have the opportunity to travel and spend time each summer in Rhode Island, where Ashley grew up. Robert was active in his church as a young adult and valued the ability to contribute to the church. They were attracted to LOPC's focus on families and activities with children to bring the gospel to the younger generation.



Ryan Berns and Whitney Wu-Chu

Ryan and Whitney live in Richmond with their baby girl, Suzetta, and their pets, Jack the cat and Kona the dog. Whitney is a Bay Area native, who was born in Moraga but grew up in Richmond. Ryan, on the other hand, is a New Jersey expat. Whitney is a lawyer, and Ryan is a high school physics teacher. Whitney and Ryan love to cook, watch movies, play board games, and meet new people. Whitney and Ryan were introduced to LOPC by Whitney's mom, Stella, as well as her Aunt Christine and Uncle David. They were drawn to LOPC by the ministries, the members, and the music. They are looking forward to being a part of this



Stella Wu

Stella moved from Taiwan to the Bay Area in 1975. She now lives in Walnut Creek. Stella is a registered dietitian, has a private practice, and serves as an aging services consultant for government agencies. She was active in youth ministry in her Formosan church before joining LOPC. What draws her to LOPC is the older adult ministry. She loves spending time with her two precious granddaughters (one 13 and one 5 months). In addition, Stella enjoys traveling, reading, attending concerts and opera, visiting museums, and hanging out with family and friends.



Kurth Memorial Garden Is Open!

After months of construction, Kurth Memorial Garden (KMG) has reopened and is as beautiful as ever! LOPC celebrated this milestone on December 15 with a prayer of dedication for the newly refurbished and expanded Garden and its ministry to our LOPC community.

The project included the installation of additional niches on the outside of the Sanctuary walls as well as along the low wall opposite, increasing capacity by 75%. This ensures a special place at LOPC for the remembrance of our loved ones for generations to come. If you are interested in learning more about the Garden and how to plan for the future for yourself or your family, please reach out to a KMG board member to schedule an appointment.

For more information and contact information, visit lopc.org/kurth.

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

Happy New Year from Thursday Fellowship! In the new year, after a very rewarding and successful fall, we look forward to welcoming new guests and volunteers and to making new friends and memories.

Our December gatherings were filled with Christmas spirit. On December 5, we decorated Christmas cookies and created beautiful, edible works of art. Big thanks to LOPC receptionist, Ciara Bird, for her help! After a delicious lunch we celebrated December birthdays and enjoyed the amazing talent of Cris Hussey, who entertained us with her unique blend of musical styles. We cannot wait to have her perform again! The choral octet “Moonglow” from Rossmoor performed on December 12. Their performance was wonderful and created lots of Christmas cheer. The laughter of children and the sound of Christmas carols emanated from Fellowship Hall on December 19, as we welcomed the Seedlings Preschool children to join us. What a gift it was to hear their laughter and to witness their joy and wonderment as they encountered Santa and sang Christmas carols with Michael Kistner. Our catered lunch, served on festively decorated tables, was divine, and a cozy feeling radiated throughout the room. The day was not only fun, but also filled with the joy and hope of Christmas.

We will resume meeting on January 9 and look forward to welcoming you to join in a variety of activities and entertainment.



Looking forward to January:

- **January 9:** Syria T. Berry, popular Bay Area entertainer, guitarist and versatile vocalist is a Thursday Fellowship favorite.
- **January 16:** Michael Kistner, singer and guitarist, and longtime friend of Thursday Fellowship will perform our favorites as we sing along.
- **January 23:** Bingo Extravaganza!
- **January 30:** Ann Shulenberger, local ceramic artist and media and PR coordinator of the Rossmoor Ceramic Arts Club will share her art pieces and her journey through creative arts.

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! Come and bring a friend.

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



FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

Economist Jon Haveman Addresses the Economics of Immigration

Friday, January 3 at 1:30 p.m.



With the new administration promising to deport illegal immigrants, you may wonder about the economic and social implications of this. Economics has something to say about both. Attend this event for an opportunity to receive answers to your questions.

In his talk “The Economics of Immigration,” Haveman will shed light on several aspects of immigration that tend to overwhelm the narrative, such as crime, government support programs, and jobs, and will raise other issues that ought to be contemplated when developing appropriate immigration policy.

Haveman is the executive director of the National Economic Education Delegation (NEED.) NEED unites the skills and knowledge of a vast network of professional economists to promote understanding of the economics of policy issues predominately through presentations to the public. Presentations are written by a team, reviewed by two well-known economists with different perspectives on the subject, and distributed to all NEED participants for comments.

Prior to starting NEED, Haveman was a principal at Marin Economic Consulting, a founding principal at Beacon Economics, and the director of the Economy Program at the Public Policy Institute of California. He has been a senior economist with the President’s Council of Economic Advisers, an economist with the Federal Trade Commission, and held a faculty position in the business school at Purdue University.

Haveman is an expert on economic policy issues and speaks regularly at events across California, including UC Berkeley’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He has a reputation for providing audiences with accessible economic information to better understand the issues of the day.

Haveman holds a Ph.D. and Master of Science in Economics from The University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of Wisconsin.

This program is open to the community. It is held in the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church sanctuary and is simultaneously available online. To attend online, click “Watch” on the First Friday Forum webpage. Registration is not required.

First Friday Forum runs from January – June. Please visit lopc.org/first-friday-forum to view the full schedule of speakers.

care



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 moms, grieving families, or anyone who might need a meal in a time of crisis.

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



Spiritual Direction and Stephen Ministry

January 19 at 11:11 in the Oak Room

Did you ever wonder what the differences are between the services of Spiritual Directors and those of Stephen Ministers? Pastor Jane MacKenzie will facilitate a discussion with a panel of representatives from these services and how you can benefit from their gifts. Both groups have completed specialized training programs. One provides assistance in exploring your spirituality, and the other is Christ-centered crisis care.

All are welcome.

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.

Ben Hemphill, who passed on November 6. A service will be held on January 18 at 1:00 p.m.

foundation

LOPC Foundation Annual Report

By Jennifer Crocker, Foundation Trustee, Treasurer

LOPC Foundation closed its September 30, 2024 fiscal year with \$13,884,000 of invested net assets (equity), after deducting \$177,200 of remaining commitments to LOPC in 2024. Legacy estate and other gifts in the amount of \$297,700 were received in the fiscal year September 30, 2024.

A 26% 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 \$435,000 for church ministries plus \$185,000 for facilities reserve-study project expenses and facilities capital expenses. The operating expense incurred by the LOPC Foundation were 0.5% of the net assets.

Net asset values of the Foundation's 11 funds and Facilities Reserve Account at September 30, 2024, after additions and disbursements to the church:

Unrestricted	
General Ministry Fund	\$4,730,000
Restricted Funds*:	
Deacons Endowments Fund	\$289,000
Thursday Fellowship Fund	\$297,000
Youth Fund	\$435,000
Christian Leadership Fund	\$293,000
Women's Endowment Fund	\$3,000
Mission Endowment Fund	\$127,000
Music Fund	\$135,000
Landscape Maintenance Endowment Fund	\$149,000
Facilities Endowment Fund	\$6,332,000
Facilities Reserve Account**	\$1,094,000

*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 2024, \$170,000 was set aside in the account.

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, Mark Weaver.

finance


Giving through Fellowship One

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

Please inform Farah Mohammadzai, LOPC's Accountant, farah@lopc.org x253, of your intentions, so she can make sure your giving is correct in 2025. 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 2025, the Per Capita amount is \$40.00 per family member, or \$80.00 per couple. Our goal is to double member participation in 2025 to 15%. 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 \$66,760 in 2025 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?



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

Did you know that LOPC pays an annual fee to PCUSA for each member of our congregation? In 2025, 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: _____

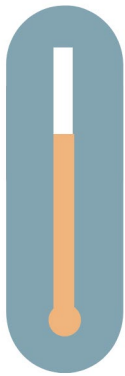
Email: _____

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.

Questions? Contact Suzanne Ferraro, Treasurer, at suzanne@lopc.org

Amazing 2025 Pledge Campaign
GRACE
how sweet the sound...

2025 Pledge Campaign



So far, our community has pledged **\$1,613,308*** for 2025. Our goal is **\$2,500,000.**

*as of 12/16/24

2025 Pledge Campaign

LOPC is blessed to have a congregation filled with so many people giving generously of their time, talents, and treasure. Your gifts make our ministry thrive, and we really do make a difference in this world. Please join us during this annual pledge season. We ask that you take this time now to prayerfully consider your gifts for the coming year.

Visit lopc.org/pledge to learn more about how to pledge and why. For questions, please contact LOPC treasurer, Suzanne Ferraro at suzanne@lopc.org.

New Ways to Give

Gifts to LOPC can now be made through Venmo and Paypal in addition to credit or debit card, and bank ACH. One-time gifts can be made with Apple Pay and Google Pay.



Please visit lopc.org/waystogive to learn more!

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.



HAPPY NEW YEAR! WELCOMING 2025 TOGETHER

As the new year begins, we're filled with excitement for the opportunities and growth the second half of the school year brings. January is a time of fresh starts and new goals as we look forward to seeing our students continue to learn and explore.

Looking back, the holiday season was truly magical thanks to our incredible students, families, and staff. The classrooms were filled with joy, creativity, and community spirit as we celebrated the season together. Special moments like festive crafts, holiday songs, and sharing traditions brought us closer and reminded us of the beauty of this time of year.

One highlight was our participation in the White Pony Giving Tree Drive. Thanks to the collective Seedlings families' generosity, we collected a remarkable number of gifts to share with families in need. It was heartwarming to see our community enthusiastic about giving back and leaning into the importance of helping others. This initiative was a tremendous success, and we couldn't be prouder of our preschool.

As we step into 2025, we're eager to build on this momentum. The months ahead will bring new learning themes, enriching activities, and meaningful connections. We'll also continue to focus on fostering kindness, curiosity, and resilience in our little ones, equipping them for a bright new year.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Here's to a joyful, productive, and inspiring 2025!

Warm wishes,

Seedlings Preschool



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



info@lopc.org
925-283-8722

IMPORTANT

Dated Material
PLEASE DELIVER
BEFORE 1/1/25

Thank you!

Return Service Requested

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

LOPC MOVIE NIGHT!

It's showtime!

FRIDAY
JANUARY
24

FELLOWSHIP HALL
6:30 PM

**FREE
event**

**ALL ARE
welcome**

**JOIN US FOR A
FAMILY FRIENDLY MOVIE:
DESPICABLE me 4**

REGISTER AT WWW.LOPC.ORG/REGISTRATIONS