

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FALL BBQ KICKOFF

Sunday, September 9

Launching the new ministry year
with a party.

See page 13 for more details.



SEPTEMBER 2018

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Why Do You Go to Church?

by Lauren Gully, Pastor – Mission & Spiritual Formation



Why do you go to church?

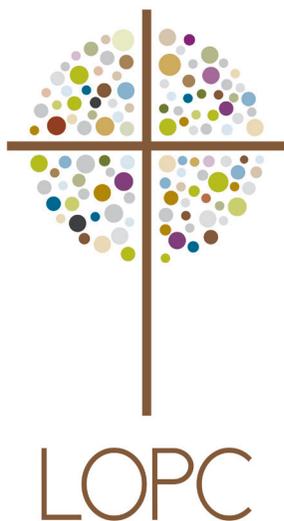
I’m sure that you, like me, get this question from time to time.

When someone asks a question like that it can be hard to tell if they think you are scary or weird, obsolete or misguided. This question reminds me of a quote Brian McLaren’s mentor once said to him: “Remember...in a pluralistic world, a religion is judged by the benefits it brings to its non-members.”¹

I find that I think a lot about how the church serves society at large, probably because a lot of people are understandably weary of organized religion. I have several friends—and family members, although they might be more reluctant to say—that what we aim to do as a church is “cute.” I think the Church (meaning all the churches) really does want to try to make a positive difference in the world, and we do stumble on ourselves a lot and have a loaded history, to be sure, of cringe-worthy moments/years/crusades. I’m sure people observe us and think “how cute that they still try,” or worse, “how cute that they think they can still make a positive difference.”

Yet, I still believe that religion, especially organized religion, has something to offer our communities and the world—there is something important about a group of people coming together to celebrate communal joys, i.e. worshipping a God who loves us, and communal pain. Brené Brown, research professor at the University of Houston, says that these collective moments of joy or pain “bear witness to the inextricable human connection.” Émile Durkheim, the French sociologist, calls this collective effervescence. When we come together either at a funeral, or a concert, or worship, we get a “sense of meaning, increased positive effect, an increased sense of social connection, and a decreased sense of loneliness—all essential components of a healthy, happy life.”² With all these things, we most certainly can make a positive difference!

I can’t wait to see you in worship, or at KidsRock, or any other group or program we offer for some collective effervescence!



¹ McLaren, Brian D. *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road?: Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World*. Hodder & Stoughton, 2013.

² “Hold Hands with Strangers.” *Braving the Wilderness: the Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*, by Brené Brown, Thorndike Press, a Part of Gale, a Cengage Company, 2018, p. 120.

MOUNT HERMON 2018 ALL-CHURCH RETREAT

Located in the beautiful Santa Cruz mountains, surrounded by stunning redwood forests and meandering creeks, it is the ideal retreat location. Mount Hermon is an opportunity for God's family to spend time together. An opportunity to laugh, relax and to play together. It is also an opportunity to learn and be inspired. There will be dedicated programs for preschoolers, children and youth, a barbecue, family-style meals, outdoor worship and outdoor activities for all ages. You are invited to join us!

The Relevant Bible

How to Read the Bible in a Way that Matters - Many modern Christians believe that they have to make impossible choices when they read the Bible. We will focus on how to approach the Bible as both divine speech that calls for our prayerful listening through spiritual practices, and at the same time, the speech of ancient humans—often wise but always limited by mortal finitude—that calls for rigorous study of history, science, and culture, in order to understand the worlds of thought and language that are very different from our own.

OCTOBER 5 – 7

Register online at LOPC.org by September 28

Questions? michelle@LOPC.org



Our Speaker:

Zach Flanagin, Ph.D., is Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Saint Mary's College, where he teaches courses in the development of Christian thought and in biblical studies. His teaching has earned him recognition by the student body as Faculty Member of the Year. Prof. Flanagin received his doctorate in the History of Christianity from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. In addition to his academic duties, he lectures frequently at churches on topics in the Bible and theology.

children

Children's Ministry Open House

Sunday, September 30
CLC Room 205
9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

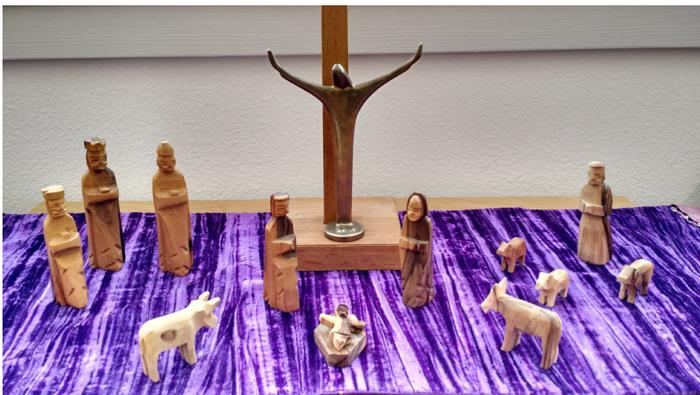


Have you ever been curious about what children do in The Garden on Sunday mornings? How they worship and learn together? What questions they ask? How they interact with their leaders? How God is present for them each and every Sunday?

If so, we invite you to experience what our children experience on Sunday mornings at our Open House! At both the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services, parents, grandparents, and all interested adults are invited to join us in The Garden.

For the first half of each service, you will be with the kids sharing in their spiritual formation experience. For the second half of each service, the adults will talk separately about the importance of children's spiritual formation and the children's ministry staff will answer any questions you have about children's ministry here at LOPC.

Please contact Ryan Timpte at ryan@lopc.org with questions. Hope to see you all there!



Third Grade Bible Class & Celebration!

Class: September 9, 10:15 a.m., Oak Room
Celebration: September 16,
9 a.m. & 11 a.m. services



At certain points during a person's spiritual journey, the community of faith comes together to celebrate a particularly meaningful rite of passage. At LOPC, we

call these moments faith milestones. It is our hope to walk with our children throughout the journey and to be particularly present as a community during these events.

When a child reaches third grade, we celebrate the gift of Scripture to the body of Christ by asking families to participate in our Third Grade Bible Presentation, this year scheduled for Sunday, September 16. During either the 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. service, our third graders will be presented with a special Bible from LOPC as the congregation commits to walking through the Scriptures with these children and their families.

Prior to that, all third graders and their parents will attend the Third Grade Bible Class on Sunday, September 9 from 10:15 a.m. – noon in the Oak Room. During this time, the children will learn the fundamentals of the Bible, and parents will learn how to read the Bible as a family. Participation in this class is a prerequisite to being a part of the presentation.

Please join us in worship on September 16 to celebrate this faith milestone with our third graders and their families!

Seedlings Board Update

by Bridgette Thomas, Seedlings Communications Board Member

Volunteers are essential in building our community of faith at LOPC, and we are incredibly thankful for those people willing to share their talents with the church, as leaders.

Thank You, Lori!

Long-time Seedlings Board Member, President, and Church Elder Lori MacLeod retired from all of her duties at the end of the school year. She was recently honored for her strong and thoughtful leadership and dedicated service to Seedlings Preschool during a board celebration at LOPC. Lori has been a steady and consistent presence at Seedlings who can turn vision into action and accomplishment.

“We can’t thank Lori enough for her selfless service to Seedlings,” said Seedlings Director Coleen Moulton. “She’s devoted her time, wisdom, and soul to our community. Her clear vision for the future will be her lasting legacy for Seedlings students to come.”

During Lori’s eight years on the board, including three as president, Lori had an immeasurable impact on Seedlings. Her background in child development and professional experience as a teacher gave her unique insight into curriculum development and how to best support the needs of the Seedlings staff. Lori championed Seedlings as a play-based preschool and helped leadership articulate its mission to provide a child centered learning experience which nurtures the emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs of young children.

She will be remembered for encouraging many positive school changes including enhancing the teachers’ weekly work schedule to allow for more focused curriculum development; minimizing the school calendar to enable fewer, more impactful school events and gatherings; and bringing leadership development to the seedlings staff through an on-site workshop with professional coach Paige Nolan, along with an off-site opportunity for the entire staff to attend the largest early childhood education conference in the world.

“We’re grateful that Lori chose to spend so many years in service to Seedlings Preschool and we’ll miss her dearly, but we are so happy for her to enter this next phase of life spent with her family and volunteering with LOPC’s Kids Rock program,” added Bobbi Cassettari, Seedlings’ Director of Outreach and Enrichment.

Welcome Ellen!

LOPC is pleased to announce that Ellen Stuart succeeded Lori as Seedlings Board President, in August. Ellen also has a background in early childhood education and is a former Burton Valley elementary school teacher. She has served on the Seedlings board for five years, most recently as the personnel chair. She has already begun work bringing Seedlings through the accreditation process with the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]. NAEYC is a large nonprofit focused on improving the well-being of young children, with particular emphasis on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age eight.



From left to right: Bobbi Cassettari, Ellen Stuart, Lori MacLeod, and Coleen Moulton

youth

Sunday Mornings

Youth Alive

(5th-8th Grade Youth)

Sundays during 9 a.m. worship services.

Engage in a weekly Bible story with activities that help reveal how the story is relevant to our modern lives. Get to know your peers and leaders as we grow in faith together! Youth who attend the 11 a.m. worship service are encouraged to enjoy the worship service with family and friends.

Book Group

(9th-12th Grade Youth)

Select Sundays during 11 a.m. worship services starting September 23.

Stay tuned for the official dates for our fall six-week book group session. We'll choose a faith-based book, then read a chapter together each week (no take-home reading, it's not school) and discuss the themes. Grow deeper in faith as we learn from one another! Youth who attend the 9 a.m. worship service are encouraged to enjoy the worship service with family and friends.



BTW Kickoff

Sunday, September 16

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Upper Youth Room (CLC 201)

By the Way is our weekly main event for 9th – 12th graders. At BTW, we connect with God and each other through games, service-learning projects, worship, devotionals, and small groups. Small groups are led by our fabulous and dedicated adult Advisors, who provide a safe space for authentic connection and learning as we grow in faith together!



YOW Kickoff

Wednesday, September 12

6 – 7:30 p.m. Upper Youth Room (CLC 201)

Optional dinner for \$5 at 5:30 p.m. in the Davies Room

Youth on Wednesdays is our high-energy midweek program for 5th – 8th grade youth. We gather together for a fun night of games, snacks, singing, service-learning projects, Bible-based devotional, and small group discussion. This is the place for youth to connect with peers who are having the same life experiences and ask their questions about life and faith as we seek to grow in faith together! Small groups are led by a team of caring adult and older youth Advisors.

Parent Open House

YOW Open House (5th-8th Grade Youth)

Wednesday, September 19, 6 – 7:30 p.m. with optional \$5 dinner at 5:30 p.m.

BTW Open House (9th-12th Grade Youth)

Sunday, September 23, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Parents, come join your students at our midweek programs to enjoy games, worship, and a devotional lesson together. We'll end with a parents-only small group with Pastor Jaime, Allison, and Keris to provide parent resources and answer questions. You'll also have a chance to get to know your student's small group advisors. Come see what YOW and BTW are all about!



YOUTH MINISTRY

Are you in the know?

For monthly youth ministry emails, including weekly event topics and special event info, or for access to our Google calendar, contact Allison at Allison@lopc.org.

For weekly texts, including YOW/ BTW event details, and related faith inspiration messages for both youth and parents, text "lopcms" to 81010 for middle school or "lopchc" to 81010 for high school.

For fun photos and reminders, follow us on Instagram @lopc_youth!

special needs

Sunday School Buddy Program



LOPC's Sunday School Buddy Program is for children and youth with special needs on Sunday mornings.

Our Sunday School Buddies are trained to work with children and youth with all types of special needs.

Most of our Sunday School Buddies have been in the special education field for more than 15 years. The role of the Buddy is to be in Sunday School with children or youth with special needs and provide a safe and loving partnership, giving them the opportunity to grow in faith alongside their peers. If a child needs to take a break from the classroom setting, play outside or use particular sensory toys – this is what the Buddy will do.

To arrange a Buddy for your child or youth on any Sunday, please email susan@lopc.org. We provide Buddies by assignment in order to make sure your child is paired with the Buddy that fits best with their needs.

Our Sunday School Buddies are trained to work with children and youth with all types of special needs.

Please fill out an intake form ahead of your child's first visit. We invite families who are dropping off their children for the 9 a.m. Sunday School programs to check in at the kiosk on the plaza (in front of the Sanctuary). Our greeters will direct you to the check-in location where your child or youth will meet their Buddy for Sunday School. Our staff and volunteers will read the intake form and ask you any questions they may have before your arrival for Sunday School. We appreciate anything you can share to help us prepare to welcome your child or youth in the best and most loving way possible.

After your child visits, we encourage you to reach out to Jaime Polson, Pastor for Family Ministry, or Susan Wentworth, Preschool Ministry Director and Special Needs Coordinator, and let us know how the morning went with our ministry team.

Questions? Please contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org.

Volunteer! Capernaum Young Life

Are you interested in volunteering as a teen or adult youth advisor?

Our Special Needs Ministry Team needs your support. Capernaum, a Young Life ministry partnering with LOPC, leads a weekly youth program for adolescents and young adults with special needs on Monday evenings from 6 – 9 p.m., throughout the year from October through May.

You can make the difference in a young person's life.

For additional information or to sign up as a volunteer for this program, please contact Michelle Browning at michelle@lopc.org.



parents

Parent-Daughter Workshop

With Girls Leadership
Beginning October 2018



Girls Leadership offers a series of courses for girls and grown-ups to build emotional intelligence. In the upcoming workshops, girl and grown-up pairs will learn about identifying healthy relationships, finding their voices, and communicating more effectively. Girls also develop resilient responses to conflict, drama, challenges, and mistakes. The program is interactive, fun, and enlightening, and it's also a great opportunity to gain insight and spend time with your daughter in a new and different way.

K - Grade 1:

Tools for Sunny & Cloudy Days with Friends

Thursdays: 10/18, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Grades 2 & 3:

Nine Tools for True Friendship

Thursdays: 10/18, 10/25, 11/1, 11/8
5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Grades 4 & 5:

Four Steps For Getting What You Need

Mondays: 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5
5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Grades 6, 7 & 8:

Be Who You Are, Say What You Mean

Mondays: 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5
5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Register online at girlsleadership.org.

Scholarships are available.

Visit girlsleadership.org/scholarships for more details.

Questions? Contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

Mom's Bible Study

First Wednesday of the month starting September 5
10 - 11:30 a.m.



Please join us for a monthly Bible and book study and discussion led by Pastor Jaime Polson. Beginning September 5, we will meet for studies centered on inspirational women, such as Maya Angelou, Julian of Norwich, and women from the Bible, and how they have been called to live a faith-filled life. All mothers are welcome.

For additional information and to RSVP, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

Freebirds

Are you an empty-nester, newly free of kids' school and sports schedules, eager to put some events on your social calendar which revolve around your interests and needs? Are you a parent of a young adult that is still in the nest, but is ready to fly? Or are you just eager and free to make connections at LOPC with adults whose schedules don't revolve around kids?

Freebirds is a newish social group at LOPC for adults who are interested in making a connection with other adults through shared activities such as meals, hikes, wine tasting, and service work. Group members take turns planning the activities that are scheduled monthly from September to May.

As we all know, with freedom and friendship comes responsibility, so we are asking that anyone who is interested be willing to commit to attend regularly.

If you have questions or want to be added to the mailing list, please contact Sue Nagle at suenagle@sbcglobal.net or Chis Baldwin at chris@lopc.org.

Freebirds is a social group for adults who are interested in making a connection with other adults through shared activities.

spiritual formation

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

Coming this fall after the 9 a.m. worship service, grab a cup of coffee on the plaza, say

hi to a friend and come to the 10:10! OR make your coffee at home, come to the 10:10 and continue on to the 11 a.m. service!

The 10:10 is a new program that will serve as a place to grow empowered to live in faith. Drop in whenever you can or make it part of your Sunday routine to learn, experience, and discuss. Childcare is provided!

Check out our schedule:

October 14

International Justice Mission (IJM) & the Spiritual Practice of Prayer

October 21

IJM & the Spiritual Practice of Advocacy

October 28

IJM and the Spiritual Practice of Giving

November 4, 11, 18

The Spirituality of Inclusion

November 25

NO PROGRAM

December 2, 9, 16

Advent Study

Companions for the Journey

October – June, once a month on Monday evenings and Thursday mornings

Introductory Sessions:

September 24, 7 – 9 p.m.

September 27, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Are you seeking a way to listen for how God may be speaking into your life, or how the Holy Spirit may be at work in you? Then consider joining us for a nine-month adventure with Companions for the Journey.

Companions is a safe, confidential community of people who gather to listen receptively to brief passages from the Bible and ponder how the words might connect to wherever we may find ourselves or where God may be at work in our lives. We listen supportively to each other, reflect back on what we may have noticed as we listen, and hold each other in prayer.

For more information or questions, please contact Ashlee Rountree ashlee@lopc.org.

care

Senior Ministry to Host Well-Connected Program

Sunday, September 16, 10 – 11 a.m.
Oak Room

Well-Connected, formerly the Senior Center without Walls, is an award-winning program of Episcopal Senior Communities offering activities, education, friendly conversation, and an assortment of classes, support groups, and presentations to seniors. Each week, seniors can access over 70 groups by phone or online, all from the comfort of home.

Amber Carroll and Pat Schroeder from Well-Connected will be here to share more information about the program. All are welcome!

Widow/Widower Grief Recovery Group

September 11 – November 13, 3 – 5 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.

Course is open to all widows and widowers. Enrollments are now being accepted.

Preregistration required. The workbook is \$15.

To register or for more information, contact Bev Fellows at 925-949-7628 or beverlyfellows@comcast.net.

Stephen Ministers!

On Saturday, September 22, at 10 a.m., Stephen Ministers will gather in the Oak Room for brunch and celebrating 15 years of Stephen Ministry at LOPC.

mission

JF Kapnek Trust Update

by Phil Hunter

Several years ago, as part of an International High School mission trip to Zimbabwe, LOPC youth helped refurbish one of the many JF Kapnek Trust Early Development Centers (EDCs)—or preschools as we know them. Since then, the relationship between LOPC and JF Kapnek has grown with the help of annual special offerings as well as the funding of several shipping containers. The mission of the JF Kapnek Trust is to improve family health, reduce child mortality and create educational opportunities for the children of Zimbabwe through the implementation of scalable, sustainable programs.

This fall, Lauren Gully, Pastor of Mission, will lead an adult mission trip with eight adults to Zimbabwe where they will visit JF Kapnek and work on a preschool (EDC), as well as visit a clinic that supports children with disabilities. They'll also learn more about Kapnek Trust's current programs.

In the past few decades, Kapnek Trust (KT) has focused on children's health issues, especially those related to the HIV pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Together with other NGOs, KT worked to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV. In 2009, Zimbabwe had a 30% HIV transmission rate. In 2015, the transmission rate was estimated at 5%. The Zimbabwe government

provides free health screenings but does not provide funds for nurses to travel to rural areas. KT promotes health screenings and AIDS education to some of the country by transporting nurses to rural sites, often meeting at community schools. In 2017, KT's health screenings helped 25,000 people obtain treatment for HIV.

The mission of the JF Kapnek Trust is to improve family health, reduce child mortality, and create educational opportunities for the children of Zimbabwe.

KT also works with parents of children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy. In 2017, over 1,800 parents and 2,500 children received training and physical therapy otherwise unavailable to them. KT covers the costs of transporting parents to training centers, child care while parents are being trained, and lodging if parents have traveled distances requiring an overnight stay.

KT's focus on children also led them to provide one fortified meal to pre-schoolers, and more recently first graders, each school day. Schools recruit parents to prepare and serve the meal

which enables the KT program to feed over 17,000 children daily. In some cases, it is the only meal that child will receive.

This fall's participants are looking forward to meeting with parents, children, and KT workers to learn first hand more about the Trust and its work.

Blankets for People Living on the Streets



LOPC will make polar fleece blankets as well as collect blankets for people who are homeless in Oakland. There are 2,761 people that are homeless in the city, according to the 2017 census survey, and 1,902 are without shelter. Blankets will make cold nights a little warmer for those living on the streets.

To donate a gently used blanket (no stains please), go to the Ministry Center lobby and look for the box labeled Blanket Donation. Blankets accepted through September 16.

Questions? Contact robin@lopc.org.

Atfaluna Fundraising Kick-Off

September 16 – 30

The upcoming 2018/19 school year marks the 16th consecutive year that LOPC has sponsored a classroom at the Atfaluna School for Deaf Children (ASDC) in Gaza City. Fundraising will kick-off on Sunday, September 16 on the Plaza. Funds donated will provide the essentials: uniforms, hearing aids and batteries, transportation, medical assistance and hot lunches for the students, as well as teacher salaries and classroom supplies. Our funds also provide the parents with sign language training and job counseling. Our goal is \$25,000. Look for our table on the plaza through September 30 where you can receive more detailed information about the students and school.

Questions? Please contact Melinda Darbee at (925) 299-1663 or Robin Freeberg at robin@lopc.org



Celebrate Congo!

November 4, 12:15 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Join the LOPC Congo Mission Team as they celebrate the Congo with lunch, Congolese music and dance. The luncheon will feature the Rev. Isaac Kalonji, one of the leaders of the Presbyterian Church in the DRC, who is visiting Virginia for the 2018 Congo Mission Network Conference which LOPC hosted on campus last year.

Contact Herb Long at herblong7@gmail.com for more information.



worship

Worship Volunteers Needed!

Contact Hiroko Shibuya for more details at hiroko@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x264.

Ushering during services: There are openings on four teams that serve on rotating Sundays. Additional help is needed for special services and events. Training will be provided.

Greeting Worshipers: There is currently one opening on one of the 11 a.m. service teams.

Decorating the Sanctuary: This team keeps inventory of the banners and occasionally creates new, commissioned pieces.

Floral Art Team: We welcome both experienced arrangers and those who would like to assist and support current team members.

Straightening the pew racks: Online sign-up allows the team members to choose the best time to help.

Singing in the Choir: Please contact Brett Strader, Director of Worship & Music, for an appointment. Email at Brett@lopc.org or call 925-283-8722 x224.

Playing in the Handbell Choir: Please contact Tessique Houston, Handbell Choir Director, for more details. Her email is tessique.houston@gmail.com.

2019 Flower Calendar

NEW location and format!

The Flower Calendar is now in a binder located in the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings and in the office during the week. If you would like to celebrate an occasion or honor your loved one's memory, please sign up on this calendar to sponsor the floral arrangement on the Chancel during Sunday worship services.

The suggested donation is \$150. All you need to do is select a date and write your name and contact information in the binder.

For more information, contact Hiroko Shibuya at hiroko@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x264.



community

New Members Class

October 19 - 21



Are you looking to take the next step in your faith journey by committing to LOPC as a member? Are you curious about what it means to be Presbyterian or want to find out what LOPC is passionate about locally and globally? Want to explore what membership at a church is? All are welcome!

You can register online by visiting lopc.org or emailing Chris Baldwin at chris@lopc.org.

The Time Is Now... But We Are Living In The Past

September 17, 7:15 p.m.
Oak Room



In the last 10 years there has been more change than at any other time in history. Faster change than people experienced with the invention of fire, the wheel, or the

printing press. Those inventions changed civilization profoundly but over thousands or hundreds of years. In just the past decade, the smart phone has given half the world's population, 3.5 billion people, access to 10,000 years of human history and knowledge. This has caused a cultural shock that we don't completely comprehend or understand.

Paul Fillinger will moderate this program and review how we got to where we are, the options for our foreseeable future, and how the mysteries of science and religion may be the same. He will introduce clips from two videos. One is an MIT scientist, optimistic about the future if we are able to define and control technology's growth. The other video is by a theologian who has proposed a new Christianity that is more in conformity with 21st century knowledge.

Disciple Bible Study

Wednesdays, September 12 - December 19
8:30 - 10 a.m.

Remember Who You Are. Part 1, Letters of Paul



BECOMING DISCIPLES THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

We invite you to join us for a 14-week study of Scripture led by Pastor Jaime. This study aims at transformation, not just information. It is an opportunity to greatly enrich your life through inspiring Bible study in a small group setting. We will use the Bible and the study manual to complete daily reading assignments, generally about 30 minutes of reading per day, and meet weekly for discussion, video and prayers.

In Part 1, Letters of Paul, we will study the 13 Letters traditionally attributed to Paul in the sequence in which they were written. This study examines the connection between memory and identity as the people of God to help us remember where we come from as we are a community of memory.

There is a \$15 fee for the study manual. We do not meet during the week of Thanksgiving.

If you have any questions or would like to register, please contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

The LOPC App has Arrived!



Now you and others can connect to LOPC anywhere you go. You can submit prayer requests, give, view FOCUS and Connections, watch LiveStream, view past sermons, and receive information about events and special offerings.

To download the app,
text "LOPC app" to the number 77977.

*thursday*Fellowship

Starts September 6
Every Thursday, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Thursday Fellowship volunteer teams have worked hard to organize exceptional activities and entertainment for the 2018/19 year.

Come join us and experience our exciting activities and caring community. We welcome volunteers, guests, and visitors.

Typical Thursday Schedule:

11 a.m.: “Meet and Greet” with snacks and beverages.

11:15 a.m.: Craft activities and/or light exercise.

Noon: Lunch. Please bring a half sandwich and we will provide the salad, beverage, and dessert.

12:45 p.m.: Entertainment.

September Calendar:

September 6: Kick-off Surprise!

September 13: Duo Gadjo-Jazz with a French Twist, featuring Isabelle Fontaine and Jeff Magidson.

September 21: Michael Kistner, vocalist and guitar player.

September 27: Syria T. Berry, Bay Area performer and recording artist.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Providing a salad or baked cookies.
- Providing a ride for a senior who no longer drives. This is an ongoing need and can be a weekly or a monthly commitment. Substitute drivers are needed, as well.

Questions? Contact coordinators:

Julie Peterson
julie@lopc.com

Clarita Wooldridge
clarita@lopc.com

Both Julie and Clarita can be reached at
925-283-8722 x281.

Fall BBQ MINISTRY YEAR Kickoff

Sunday, September 9
Noon, Fellowship Hall

Join the entire LOPC community for a BBQ to celebrate the start of a new program year! We'll have food, games, prizes, live music, and a chance for you to get to know others in the church! Invite your friends and bring your family.

Free tickets available Sunday, September 2 on the plaza or weekdays at the Ministry Center Office.

For more information contact Chris Baldwin at chris@LOPC.org.

Say Hello—and Goodbye—to Chuck

by Dick James, church member



Chuck Fry

On Sunday, September 30, everyone at worship will have the chance to say thanks to Chuck in person. For those who may ask “who is Chuck Fry?” or “what did he do?” or “why are we thanking him now?” read on.

As to the “who” question, Chuck has been Director of Operations at LOPC for nearly 14 years. As to the “why,” he will be retiring at the end of September. Finally, as to what he did, that requires a little more explaining, partly because he did his job so well he was often invisible to many – keeping a low profile, one might say.

Think about this: every time you walk on to the LOPC campus you may not realize it but you are seeing some of his handy work. The CLC Dornsife-Little Building, the Ministry Center, the Sanctuary retrofit, an expanded commercial kitchen, a refurbished Fellowship Hall with enlarged restrooms – all projects guided and supervised by Chuck, using resources provided by church members – in all, roughly \$24 million.

All the more amazing because Chuck is not a member of LOPC – he belongs to Berkeley First Presbyterian. Sunday, September 30, will be one of the rare times Chuck is even present at LOPC on a Sunday. And thinking about that, one might have to conclude it was thanks to the Holy Spirit that Chuck’s path even crossed LOPC’s at all. The timing couldn’t have been more propitious as some of the church’s major facilities

were starting to need renewal or replacement.

Bored with work as a management consultant, Chuck responded to an LOPC search to fill the job vacancy. “We reviewed many resumes and had several interviews” recalls Don Couch, a search team member and former elder for buildings and grounds. “When we sat down to review them all, it wasn’t even close. Chuck was tops on all lists. He took the job by the horns and proved to everyone that he is an excellent manager, leader, decision maker and listener.”

How lucky can a church get? In an earlier life, Chuck was an operations VP for a Fortune 500 company, with construction experience handling corporate facilities nationwide. His first task at LOPC was to tear down the old admin building that housed most of the church offices and put up the 14,200-square-foot Christian Life Center (CLC) in its place. Of course, before that, he had to set up temporary staff office space for 25 or so people in the parking lot. “That went better than anyone predicted, lasting through the CLC construction and on to the next big project, the new Ministry Center,” Don says. “Both of these projects had Chuck dealing with architects, outside project managers, construction contractors, city and county officials, neighbors and church members. And during this time he also was managing the LOPC operations staff.”



Demolition of the former Administrative Building.

Peter Whitelock, pastor and head of staff, remembers those days: “Chuck came to us with impressive skills in project management and administration,” he says, “but as much as anything else what has distinguished his leadership here at LOPC is a compelling faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to build up the church as a credible expression of the gospel.”

Thank you, Chuck Fry!

During those parking-lot days, Chuck shared an office with church member and treasurer Jim Fulford. “It didn’t take long for me to appreciate his talent for getting things done,” says Jim. “His sense of humor while doing it was a welcome feature, too. It was a testament to the skill of Chuck and his team that the projects were finished on time and on budget.”

With the CLC completed, his next assignment was to tear down an outdated classroom building and in its place, put up permanent offices to eliminate the parking-lot temporaries. The result became the church’s beautiful new “front door”—a 9,000-square-foot Ministry Center with offices for two dozen staff members plus a spacious meeting room at one end. Initially, this job was planned to be the church’s final major project. However, a structural review of the Sanctuary after the 2012 Napa earthquake revealed severe shortcomings. Thus was launched a \$5.9 million retrofit and refurbishment that required moving Sunday services into Fellowship Hall for six months.

Today, reviewing all his various projects, Chuck says he is “especially pleased with the Sanctuary work we did. It was a bit of a risky project technically, but it all worked out even better than we hoped.” Risky? one asks. The job comprised two major steps. First, choosing how best technically to strengthen the 12 massive concrete supporting columns—the choice, among several, ultimately saved the church \$600,000 and yielded the most esthetically pleasing look. The second step was actually doing the work. Had an earthquake struck at one critical point, “the building would have been much less capable of surviving the quake,” he says in his typically understated manner.



Chuck overseeing Sanctuary renovations.

Adds Don Couch: “Chuck took the lead in putting a team together to define the scope of the project and to select engineers, architects, project manager and construction contractor to implement the project. He led the LOPC team, which included LOPC program staff and involved church members. His leadership helped make the many structural design and architectural, musical, and visual improvements to the Sanctuary that we enjoy now.”

Chuck enjoys several outside interests, including cooking – especially holiday meals for family and friends – and music. At age eight, he learned how to play his grandfather’s violin, which he continued through junior high school. Since then, and to this day, he performs as a vocal soloist and in choral groups. Again, LOPC, has benefited; his familiarity with music and its vocabulary helped him work easily and effectively with the company handling the complicated dismantling, restoration, and reinstallation of LOPC’s complex pipe organ in the newly refurbished Sanctuary.

Has life at LOPC been what he expected? “Well, I don’t know that I had a vision coming in,” he recalls. “I had a job description that bore very little relationship to what needed to be done, and I just stepped in and filled the empty space with what needed to happen. I’m the sort of person who will just do that until somebody tells me to stop or wants me to slow down. So it worked out for everybody, I think.”

Thanks, Chuck! Happy retirement!!



CLC building Commitment Sunday.

All photos courtesy of Dick James.

Journey of Faith

by *Bobbie Dodson*



Jane MacKenzie was a Human Resources executive at Chevron, managing many responsibilities. However, she left this important position after sensing a call to ministry. In fact, during her last year with Chevron, she took some classes at Fuller Seminary's extension campus in Menlo Park.

Following God's call to her, she then transferred full-time to Princeton Theological Seminary and graduated last year with a Master's in Divinity.

"Sensing this call to seminary seemed like a crazy thing to do," she says, "but also the right thing, and I received encouragement from my family, and the LOPC community. I had been out of formal schooling for 30 years (she graduated from the University of Michigan majoring in chemical engineering), and my first class was a summer-intensive, Biblical Greek class that covered a full academic just in eight weeks. It felt like putting jumper cables on my brain. Fortunately I bonded with a classmate about my age. We supported each other then and a close friendship continues. My husband, David, remained in California working but made my two years away possible by flying to New Jersey every other weekend. He attended classes with me and got to hang out with my classmates, so we both have strong ties with students who were there with me."

As with any journey, there were off-ramps, on-ramps and detours. She points to a time that was pivotal in 1991. "I had just given birth to a beautiful full-term stillborn son. My obstetrician, not a man of faith, looked at me and asked, 'Why you of all people?' Despite being numb with grief, I replied, 'I don't believe God promises to hold out His hand to protect Christians from grief,' but wasn't sure if I believed the words I spoke. Later when a nurse came in I rudely told her do what was necessary, and then leave me alone. She nodded compassionately and said, 'My daughter just started as an intern at your church this morning. The staff prayed for you and she asked me to come to sit and pray with you.' Such a coincidence. I did let her sit and pray with me. She was a loving, valued presence in the midst of my grief."

Still feeling a great sense of loss, six weeks later the

MacKenzie's house burned down in the Oakland Hills firestorm. Within the following two years she experienced two miscarriages, and two close friends died. "All of this rocked my world and left me wondering where God was, and whether hope could ever be found again. Until that time, everything had been positive and full of blessings, and I hadn't developed mechanisms to respond to the rapid succession of tragedy and loss.

"I remember sitting in church, week after week, numb and raw with grief. It seemed each Sunday something in the service would cause me to weep from the depths of my soul. However, I knew that each Sunday I was experiencing a healing — there was something going on with the Holy Spirit that surrounded me and provided comfort simply through the faithful act of 'showing up.' I found myself living the Scripture, Romans 8:26: 'For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.' I could do nothing but surrender and let healing take place in the midst of a Christian community. Through those years, I found that my greatest comfort was in the assurance that God is present, even when there seems to be nothing but emptiness."

LOPC has played its part in her faith journey, beginning with participation in a new members' class 20 years ago. "Every person there had been drawn to LOPC because of its culture of grace and inclusion," she says. "That has continued to be my experience, and seems more important today as we seek to be faithful Christians. In our contemporary context, where fear, anger, anxiety and exclusivity seem to rule, the ministry of the Church is vitally needed to work toward the reconciliation of all people to God and each other. Attending LOPC keeps this front and center for me."

Currently, Jane serves in the Spiritual Formation ministry at LOPC and preaches occasionally at Oakland First Presbyterian, which is searching for an interim pastor. She just completed a certificate program in Spiritual Direction, so she is available, with other LOPC members, as a Spiritual Director. She and David have two daughters, Libby and Meg.

Her favorite Bible verse, Psalm 46, has been a tremendous source of strength and comfort, she says. It was read at their son's graveside service and her mother's memorial service. Verse 10 is special to her: 'Be still and know that I am God.' "Just sitting with those words keeps me grounded and hopefully, humble," she says.

Study Groups: "I Am With You"



Join us as we discuss the times we may need God—in our uncertainty, in our discouragement, when we are powerless, or through our trials. Our study guide is available in the church office at a cost of \$12.

LOPC has four circles (study groups) that meet monthly from September through May/June and are open to new members. They are:

Agape, meets the second Wednesday of the month at 10:45 a.m. Contact Vickie Hipkiss at 925-933-5512.

Esther, meets the second Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. Contact Mary Lou Young at 925-283-6376.

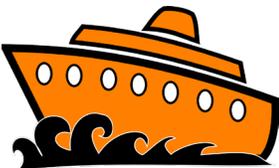
Mary Martha, meets second Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. Contact Catherine Coleman at 510-928-9714.

Mary Magdalene, meets the last Monday of the month at 7:15 p.m. Contact Colleen Fawley at 510-704-1490.

If you are interested in visiting a circle, just drop by or contact Helen Dygert at 925-283-6010 or Diane Steuber at 925-283-3871.

Presbyterian Women all over the United States meet for Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and mission activities. Our nationwide study guide for 2018/19, "God's Promise, I Am With You" was written by Amy Poling Sutherlun, co-pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in San Marcos, Texas, and mother to four children, ages 5-11. Busy lady!

Voyagers



The Voyager Ships are friendly small groups that offer warm and wonderful ways to make friends and share fun, food, fellowship, faith, and service to the church.

For more information, please contact Bev Fellows at beverlyfellows@comcast.net or 925-949-7628, or Diane Steuber at dhsteuber@sbcglobal.net or 925-283-3871.

LOPC Breakfast Group



Ted Clement
Executive Director
Save Mt. Diablo
September 19, 2018 at 7 a.m.
Davies Room

Come and learn about Save Mt. Diablo and the work they are doing to protect Mt. Diablo and connect people to the land which sustains us.

Save Mount Diablo is a nationally accredited land trust with a mission to preserve Mount Diablo's peaks, surrounding foothills, and watersheds through land acquisition and preservation strategies designed to:

- Protect the mountain's natural beauty, biological diversity, and historic and agricultural heritage
- Enhance our area's quality of life.
- Provide recreational opportunities consistent with protection of natural resources.

\$5 donation for breakfast at the door.

**RSVP by noon on September 18
to janet@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x223**



Save the Date!

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

**Presbyterian Women's
Christmas Tea**

December 7 • 1 to 3 p.m.

Midyear Stewardship Report

by Jim Nagle, Elder for Finance

It is hard to believe we have already completed the first half of 2018. Your support to LOPC makes possible our ability to provide excellent ministry to the community from Sunday worship to programs for our youth, children, and seniors. We are truly blessed to have your gifts and volunteer time, along with a devoted staff to make this all possible.

I am happy to report that LOPC finances are in great shape and tracking very closely to the 2018 budget. LOPC year-to-date congregational giving through June was strong at \$1,349,341, which is slightly better than what was budgeted and 47% of the full-year budget. This was consistent with this time last year. Total income was \$1,400,946, which is \$58,865 better than what was budgeted, mainly due to a \$50,000 Session-approved draw on the Session Emerging Needs Fund to support Hope Academy in India, a school being built by Children of Faith orphanage. This is reflected in higher Mission spending. We are very thankful for the \$256,000 budget support that the LOPC Foundation is providing to the church in 2018. This truly makes a difference and touches almost every ministry area. Related to expenses, our LOPC staff is doing an outstanding job staying within budget and has spent \$1,690,567 year-to-date (June), lower than what was budgeted, after adjusting for the Hope Academy gift. This is mainly due to the timing of ministry team spending.

LOPC is very fortunate to be in this strong financial situation halfway through this year. This is thanks to all of your support. We still have some work to do in the second half of 2018, but I am confident that we will stay on track. Along with continuing to fulfill your 2018 pledge, please consider giving to the budgeted \$240,000 Faith Component so we can close the year on budget. As the Sanctuary capital campaign comes to a close, this would be a good time to discern whether you are in a position to give a portion of your past capital campaign pledge to the ongoing operating budget to support our ministry.

Thanks to everyone for your gifts of time and treasures to LOPC. It is truly making a huge difference to our community on the hill and beyond.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Jim at JamesNagle@sbcglobal.net.

	January to June 2018	
	Actual	Budget
Congregational giving:		
Pledge Income	\$ 1,152,224	\$ 1,139,000
Non-Pledge, Loose Offerings, &		
Other Giving	96,542	112,500
Mission & other special gifts	98,575	82,731
Faith Component	2,000	1,000
Total Congregational Giving	1,349,341	1,335,231
Other Sources:		
Session Emerging Needs Fund	51,000	-
Foundation Support	-	-
User Fees	605	6,850
Total Income	1,400,946	1,342,081
Expenses	(1,690,567)	(1,652,775)
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (289,621)	\$ (310,694)

Men with Young Families & Professionals Group

**Mondays, September 10 – October 1
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

Men, ages 20 to 50, this is your group! This year we've organized hang outs (on and off-site), opportunities to pray and study (relevant books and the Bible), along with service opportunities to give back to the community. This is a come-as-you-are group, which means come for what makes sense for your schedule. Attend one or all of the sessions—whatever works for you. We're a place for you to belong.

Group Leaders: Chris Baldwin & Eric Housels.

If you have questions or inquiries, contact Chris Baldwin for more information at chris@lopc.org.

Session I:

September 10 – October 1

Session II:

November 5 – December 10

Session III:

January 28 – February 11

Session IV:

March 11 – April 8

Session V:

April 29 – May 20

lopc foundation

LOPC Getting Off the Hill

by Staci Johnston, Foundation Trustee



One of my co-workers died unexpectedly at age 38 from tragic kidney failure complications. He had no health or life insurance. He was waiting for a kidney transplant. His wife and two teenage daughters were left without their spouse, parent and provider. The family is devastated and struggling financially.

At a recent meeting of LOPC's Companions program, two people suggested I have the family contact the LOPC Deacon Emergency Team for assistance. I was initially hesitant, in part because of our church's relative affluence, in contrast to the modest church, where my co-worker's memorial was held.

Subsequently, the co-worker's relative did meet with the Emergency Team and then shared with me how welcoming and positive his experience was. The team referred the family to the Monument Crisis Center and its many resources. The LOPC team also offered potential relief by paying utility bills for a few months to help the family financially.

I am proud of LOPC in a way I have never experienced before. I learned firsthand how deeply the Deacons care and are committed to people in our community. I appreciate how the Deacon Emergency Team genuinely tries to assist the personalized needs of each client as they navigate life challenges.

As a part of the Foundation's annual giving to the church, it supports both the Deacons and the Monument Crisis Center. Both groups serve as the hands and feet of Christ. What a wonderful way for LOPC to do ministry "off the hill" and into the larger community, one of the church's major goals!

To learn more about how to become a LOPC Deacon or to donate to the Deacon Emergency Fund, contact Pastor Gerald. To learn how to become involved with the Monument Crisis Center, contact Pastor Lauren Gully. For information about the LOPC Foundation or if you would like to become a Friend of the Foundation, please contact one of the trustees: Jim Beckemeyer, Jen Crocker, Jerry Ducey, Kristi Haigh, Dick James, Phil Placier, Mike Ross, Dara Youngdale or myself.

LOPC Foundation Elects Additional Trustees

To strengthen personal connections with LOPC's members, the LOPC Foundation has expanded the size of its board of directors to nine from seven and elected two additional trustees, Dick James, president, reported. The move is part of a larger program the Foundation is developing to increase awareness of the Foundation among church members, he explained.

"With more trustees, we are striving to deepen the personal ties between the Foundation and church members," he said.

The newly elected directors are Jen Crocker and Mike Ross, both long-standing LOPC members who have been active in a wide variety of church programs. Their terms of office on the Foundation began July 1 and will run through calendar 2021. An induction ceremony was conducted by Pastor Jaime Polson at the trustees' June meeting.



Mike Ross and his wife, Ginny, grew up in Presbyterian churches and have been LOPC members for more than 20 years. Their son, Charlie, and daughter, Margaret, participated in the church's children and youth programs. Mike was a member of the Stewardship Team for several years and served on Session as Stewardship elder. He is the author of books of quotations and has extensive legal, business, management and teaching experience.



Jen Crocker grew up at LOPC, going through confirmation in high school. Later, she was a youth advisor. She and her husband, Steve, taught Sunday school for many years. Both of their children, Kristina and Danny, were involved in LOPC's children's and youth programs. Jen also has served on the Family Ministry Team, the Stewardship Team and the Finance Team. She works as a CPA, based in Orinda, specializing in real estate.

"Together with our existing trustees, Jen and Mike give the Foundation more voices to spread our message," Dick said. "I think church members can expect to hear much more from their Foundation trustees in the future."



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SEPTEMBER 2018

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Jaime Polson, Families & Executive Leadership

WORSHIP & MUSIC

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Stewart Sarch, Organist

TREASURER

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MINISTRY DIRECTORS

Chris Baldwin, Community Engagement
Keris Dahlkamp & Allison Kunz, Youth
Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool
Ryan Timpte, Children

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Sara Warfield, Communications
Jennifer Shaul, Digital & Print Admin
Dick James, Editing
Janet Jourgensen, Proofreading

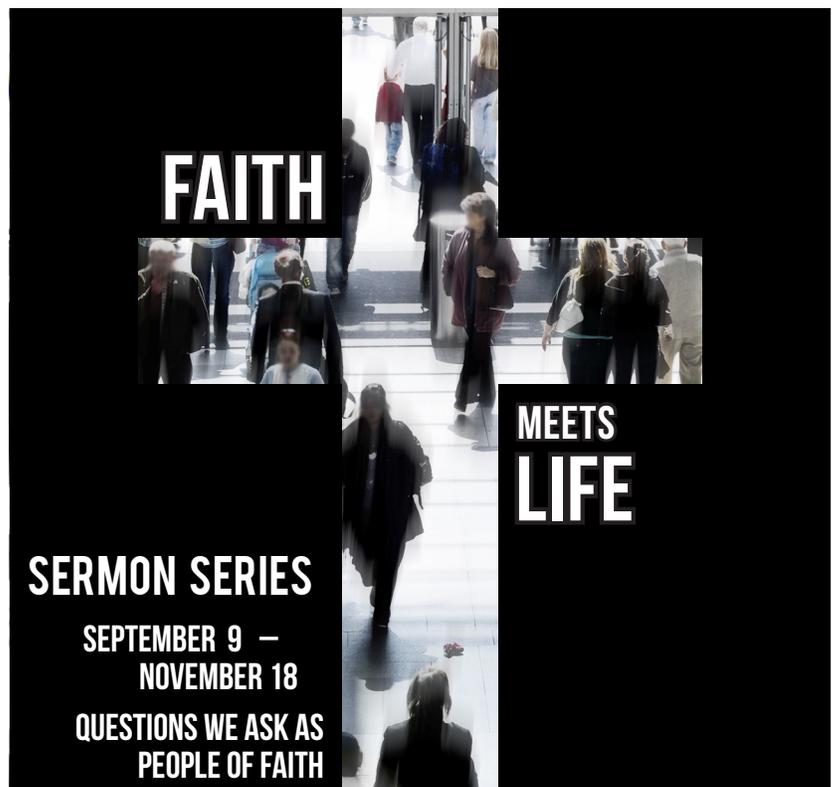
Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

September 1 for the October issue.
Email items to communications@lopc.org.

Weekly CONNECTIONS Deadline:

Every Monday by 5 p.m. for the following Sunday's issue.
Submit items at:
www.lopc.org/submission-for-connections



FAITH

MEETS LIFE

SERMON SERIES

SEPTEMBER 9 —
NOVEMBER 18

QUESTIONS WE ASK AS
PEOPLE OF FAITH

Connect with us!

Sunday Worship Services

9 a.m.

11 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family



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