

FOCUS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

LOPC is here to support you
on your journey of faith.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. Therefore, if you are on the way to court with your gift there but you have remembered that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the court, go, and be reconciled to them. Otherwise, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. It was also said, 'Whoever commits adultery or marries a divorced woman commits adultery.' Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one. You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evil doer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone takes away your coat, let your adversary take your tunic as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go on for two. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse them. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, for he who loves those who love him, what reward does he have? But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, for he who loves those who love him, what reward does he have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you. Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to

Living the Good Life

Practical Guidance from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

Sermon Series January 6 – March 3

JANUARY 2019

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Love Does

by Lauren Gully - Pastor, Mission & Spiritual Formation



Love protects.
Love hopes.
Love perseveres.
Love never fails.

At the beginning of this new year, as many of us set resolutions and intentions about how to mark the next 365 days, I'll share with you how 2019 for LOPC will be a year of service.

One of the most wonderful things about LOPC is our members' commitment to mission. So many of you volunteer at different non-profits, participate in holiday-service opportunities, and, of course, about 400 of you serve in the ONE Sunday program. All of these things are ways LOPC shows love to our local community.

Last year, through our Mission Task Force, we heard from you that you love ONE Sunday and want more opportunities to serve throughout the year. We couldn't agree more!

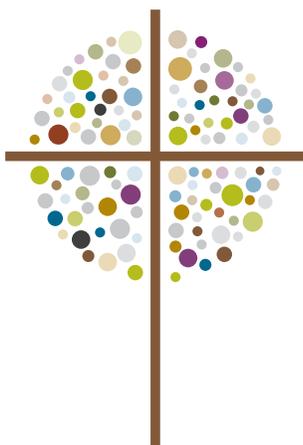
This year we will launch a new program that copies all of the best elements of ONE Sunday and adds more programmed service throughout the year. We are calling this new offering: Love Does.

In thinking about what it means to be Christian in our local community, how we love and show up for our community matters. We want to help our community to succeed in every way possible; we want people to know LOPC loves them—not just in thought, but also in action. We are reminded of the call Paul gives us as Christians to love in 1 Corinthians 13:7: "Love protects, love hopes, love perseveres, love never fails."

We have summarized this call to be: Love Does.

This year, consider how it may be a year of service for you, too.

Please join us for a new traditional service event on February 24 to kick off Love Does!



LOPC



LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
PRESENTS

RAISING AN EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY COMMUNITY

WITH LYNN LYONS

Lynn Lyons, LICSW, is an internationally recognized psychotherapist, author, and speaker with a special interest in interrupting the generational patterns of anxiety in families. She specializes in the treatment of anxiety disorders in adults and children, including generalized anxiety, phobias, social anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, and performance anxiety.

Lynn is known for providing concrete, usable skills to teach families about how anxiety works and to help families respond and react to stress and anxiety in a more productive way. She will talk with parents and caregivers about the positive role that they can play in problem solving, embracing discomfort, and fostering emotional management as we seek to raise resilient children.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Session I: 6 - 9 p.m.

For parents of tweens and teenagers

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Session II: 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

For parents of children in preschool
and elementary school

Session III: 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

For Community Caregivers



Online Registration opens on January 1, 2019
\$15 registration fee (no fee for community caregivers)
QUESTIONS? Email michelle@lopc.org

youth

Sunday Mornings



Youth Alive
5th – 8th Grade Youth
Sundays during 9 a.m.
worship services

January Theme: Justice

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.



TBH (To Be Honest)
9th – 12th Grade Youth
Spring Session
Sundays, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.,
January 27 – March 10

Theme: How We Relate to the World

This program takes deeper dives into some of the more pressing and difficult questions youth have about their faith.

Breakfast pastries and juice provided!



BTW
9th – 12th Grade

Sundays, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

At BTW, we connect with God and each other through games, service-learning projects, worship, devotionals, and small groups.

January 6: Classic Program

January 13: Study Break, 5 – 6 p.m.

January 20 & 27: Classic Program



Youth on Wednesdays
5th – 8th Grade

Wednesdays, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

We gather together for a fun night of games, snacks, singing, service-learning projects, Bible-based devotional, and small group discussion.

January 2 – No YOW (Break)

January 9, 16 & 23: Classic Program

January 30 – Big Games Night! (Bring a friend!)

Confirmation Information Meeting

January 13, 10:15 – 10:45 a.m., Davies Room
For youth 8th – 12th grade and their parents

At this stage of life, youth are asking, “What do I really believe?” Come join us in the Davies Room for an interactive discussion about what Confirmation is and what to expect.

Confirmation is a milestone where LOPC staff support each student as they explore their faith, ask questions in a safe environment, and seek to take ownership over their faith journey. Students explore their faith, doubts, and questions in a safe and encouraging space. This series of interactive theological discussions is focused on the basics of Christian belief and action. Students will have the opportunity to listen, learn, question, write a personal statement of faith, and publicly proclaim their Christian faith in front of their church community.

Confirmation classes will take place on Sundays,
February 3, 10, 17 & 24, 9 a.m. – noon.

Confirmation Sunday is March 17.



Save the Dates!

High School Overnight

February 8 – 9, 6 p.m. – 10 a.m.

Online registration will open on January 13.
Contact Keris at keris@lopc.org with questions.

Summer Service-Learning Experiences

Online registration opens in February.

Service Squad (5th & 6th Grade)
June 10 – 14

Middle School (7th & 8th Grade)
June 23 – 28, Los Angeles, CA

High School (9th – 12th Grade)
July 14 – 20, Salinas, CA

parents

Moms Bible Study

First Wednesday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.
CLC 201



Please join us for a monthly Bible and book study and discussion led by Pastor Jaime Polson. Studies for the year will be 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.

SAVE THE DATE

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT

FEBRUARY 2, 5 - 8 P.M.

We're getting together to watch a movie for Oscar season. We'll have tacos for dinner, potluck dessert, and, of course, popcorn!

Please RSVP to Julie at julie.l.atkinson@gmail.com so we can get an estimate of how many people will be attending.

\$15/PERSON.

LOCATION AND MOVIE TBD.

CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED.

Please join us for our annual

Moms Retreat

January 18, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Oak Room

Ann Killion, an American sports journalist, author, and sought-after speaker, will share insights on how to find balance and to live a happier, more fulfilled life while raising a family.

For additional information and to register, please email michelle@lopc.org

Childcare is provided *Space is limited*

special needs



familyministry & Special Needs Ministry present

Respite Night

Friday, January 18, 6 – 9 p.m.

For parents who have children and youth with special needs, ages 2 – 22

Dinner, games, therapy dogs, crafts, activities, and a movie! Children and youth will be divided by age groups with age-appropriate movies. Sensory and quiet rooms are provided. Several professionals who work with children/youth with special needs will be onsite the entire evening.

We will provide a staffing ratio to match your child's needs.

Please register by Monday, January 7, to Michelle at michelle@lopc.org.

Space is limited.

We welcome you to connect with us before the Respite Night.

worship

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Living the Good Life

Practical Guidance from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

Sermon Series January 6 – March 3

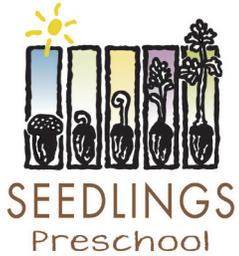
January 6: What is the Good Life?

January 20: Don't Give In to Evil

January 13: Strive for Greatness

January 27: Honoring Commitments

seedlings



Thank you, Thursday Work Crew!

By Tina Clendenin, Seedlings Communications Board Member

The Thursday Work Crew is a group of LOPC volunteers that completes repairs and performs updates for both Seedlings Preschool and the church. It has helped maintain and update Seedlings in many ways over the years.

On the playground, the crew built a playhouse, revamped the rock wall to make it more developmentally appropriate, built a shed to store outdoor toys and games, and put up a play-yard fence. They also installed an outdoor sink that students play with as a water feature and helped take down and reinstall the playground shade tents seasonally.

The crew also helps update the classrooms. In addition to small fixes here and there, they have built racks to store student sleep mats and to give the classrooms more space, installed drying racks for art in several classrooms, and remodelled the upstairs closet so staff can more efficiently organize rainy-day equipment.

Both the church and preschool are so thankful to have such kind, caring volunteers upon whom to call when they need handiwork. Thanks, Thursday Work Crew!!

Meet the Crew!



Terry Gleason, Don Couch, Jeff Spiers,
Bruce Kronmiller, Kathy Bradshaw,
Rich Lewis

*Missing from photo: Jim Lee

Seedlings kids are so grateful
for their playhouse!



love does

love protects, love hopes, love never fails

Save the Date February 24 – Kick-off

Be part of our new church wide Mission event!

How you can be involved?

Come serve with us on February 24! After getting to know the partner you serve, you may be interested in how you can continue to serve that partner on your own or through one of the upcoming love does events.

What can I expect?

Fun, fellowship, and elbow grease! All of our projects are different and have varying activity and skill levels. There are projects that are great for children or even those with mobility issues, there is something for everyone!

Why is Spiritual Formation important?

As a church we believe that our call is to serve our community but differ from other community service opportunities because of our motivation in service. Our call to serve comes from our belief that God loves those who are impacted by our service and we can be part of God's vision for this world by helping others. Therefore, we want to actively remember why we are serving and even ask how we may see or experience God in our service! At your site you will also be given materials for Spiritual Formation, and may even have a brief group discussion.

What if I can't get enough?

We thought you would ask that! Love does is not just a once-a-year event. February 24 is our kick-off, but there will be more ways to serve in smaller groups throughout the rest of the year.

Registration coming soon!

Talking With Our Legislators



Four members of LOPC's Congo Mission Team travelled to Washington, D.C. to talk with our legislators on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Both Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, and

Representatives Marc DeSaulnier and Barbara Lee's legislative or foreign policy aides set aside at least half an hour to meet with us. We asked for their support for humanitarian aid for the DRC, and to support House Bill 6207, which calls for free and fair elections in the DRC as well as humanitarian assistance to those areas severely affected by violence and repression. (We are happy to report that the House passed the bill in late November and now we pray for Senate passage.)

Eighteen others from the Congo Mission Network had also set up meetings with their respective states' legislative assistants. A meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Africa Subcommittee staff was arranged for several of us. We were very impressed by the knowledge of the staff members who met with us. As the annual Congo Mission Network conference was being held in Portsmouth, Virginia, meeting our legislators the day before the conference began was a natural extension.

Spending "A Day on the Hill" was an LOPC Congo Team idea as we have been active advocates for the Congo for the past several years.

If you would like to know more about our "Day on the Hill", please talk with Sue Gibbons, Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, Connie Whitting, or Roberta Spalding.

Want to Hear a Story About Zimbabwe?

The Mission team that travelled to Harare will be speaking at the 10:10 on January 13. See page 10 for more information.

spiritual formation

10:10

grow empowered to live in faith

10:10 will resume January 6

As always, enjoy the 9 a.m. service, grab a cup of coffee, and head over to the Oak Room at 10:10 for a 40-minute session. Or if you want to sleep in, come to campus at 10 a.m., and head to the 11 a.m. service after you've been spiritually fed at 10:10!

January 6: How would Jesus make a New Year's Resolution?

How many of us have made New Year's Resolutions that have failed before January is even over? Pastor Gerald Chinen will bring us into the new year, shifting our focus from coming up with New Year's Resolutions, to coming up with a Centering Word for the year. A Centering Word, like "hope" or "joy," focuses less on a checklist of things to do, and more on shifting your outlook on life. Pastor Gerald will guide us through choosing a centering word, and how to be mindful of it throughout the year.

January 13: Want to Hear a Story about Zimbabwe?

A team made of LOPC members took their skills and energies to Harare, Zimbabwe, in October 2018. They partnered with JF Kapnek Trust, an LOPC mission partner and recipient of the annual Christmas Eve Special Offering, to help build a new Kapnek preschool in an impoverished community. The team also visited the Harare Children's Hospital Rehabilitation Clinic and other hospitals to distribute nearly 100 blankets made by LOPC members and school supplies donated by Seedlings and other members of the congregation.

January 20 & 27: Learning How to Grieve Well

Bob Finertie will teach a two part series on death. Most of us are uncomfortable with death, and try to think about it as little as possible. Bob will guide us through some humorous societal ways we attempt to minimize or ignore death. He will continue by guiding us through facing our discomfort with death, and giving ourselves permission to grieve.

community

Science and Religion

Reading the Bible in a Way that Matters

January 14, 7:15 p.m., Oak Room



For those who were unable to attend LOPC's fall retreat at Mount Hermon, the Science and Religion group has invited Dr. Zach Flanagin from St. Mary's College to

offer an abbreviated introduction to the topic of how to read the Bible as thoughtful Christians. Many modern Christians believe they have to make impossible choices when they read the Bible: either divine or human, either faith or reason. The problem is the Christian faith does not work that way. Jesus, the Word of God, is not God or human, but God and human. Thus, a Christian approach to the Bible requires seeing it 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.

Membership Class

February 8 - 10

The LOPC Membership Class is an opportunity to meet the pastoral staff, have your questions answered, learn about the programs and ministries of the church, and make new friends. The class also serves to clarify what LOPC believes God has called this church to be, so visitors can make an informed decision about formalizing their commitment to this faith community. Ask questions and find out more about LOPC. All are welcome!

Childcare available by reservation.

For more information, contact Chris Baldwin at chris@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x110.

Humans Being:

Four Chapters in the Bible that Help Us Through Hard Times

Join Pastor Peter Whitelock for a four-week journey through four key chapters that have much to say about how we can weather the challenging seasons of life. This class will be practical, interactive and, most importantly, applicable to your life. To RSVP, contact Michelle at michelle@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x248.

Thursday Evenings in February
7 – 9 p.m., Oak Room

February 7: Ecclesiastes 3 – Being Present

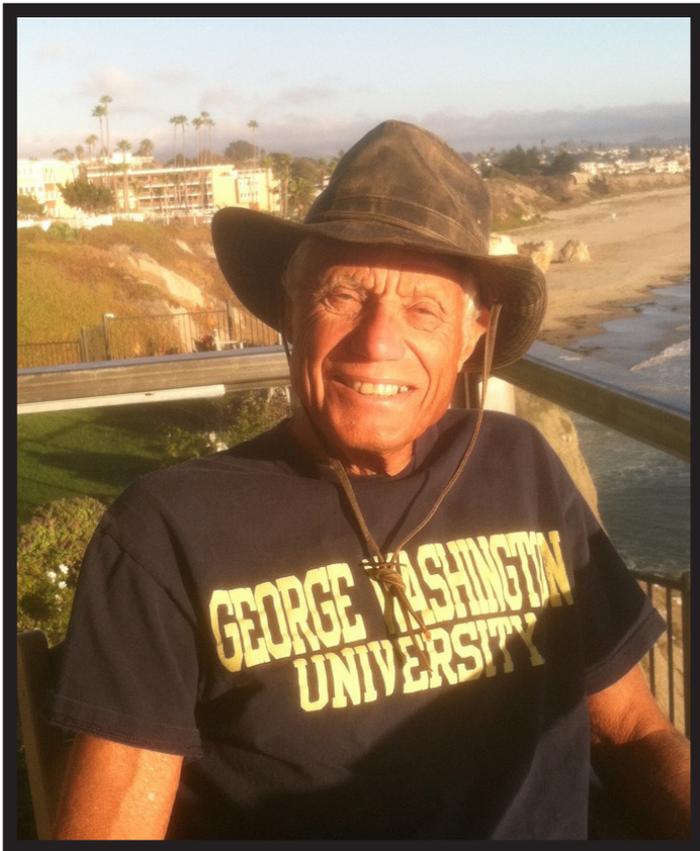
February 14: John 14 – Being Faithful

February 21: 1 Corinthians 13 – Being Focused

February 28: Romans 8 – Being Hopeful

Faith Journey for The Gathering

by Stan Morner, LOPC member



Stan Morner

As a very young child I was diagnosed with a heart murmur. However, I never let this stop my lifelong interest in sports and athletics, cheerfully forgetting all about it. Finally, in 2017, this caught up with me, and I underwent open-heart surgery to replace an aortic valve, a procedure complicated by a stroke and seizure following the surgery.

Perhaps I was close to death. I felt that I never left my body, but I had the experience of traveling through the walls into some landscapes where I felt comforted and secure. I was never frightened and felt a gentle hand on my shoulder, so to speak. After all, who or what was the force pushing my bed? How and why did I find these beautiful scenes? In fact, as I began to return to what we call reality, I found it repugnant. I could hear the television, and lay in misery, wondering why I might want to reenter such a world after experiencing such otherworldly comfort.

During and after 19 days in the hospital and rehabilitation center, my family, friends, and professionals gave me the support I needed as I

*'If I rise on the wings of dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me*

Psalm 139: 9-10

relearned how to walk, take care of myself, write and speak, a process that would go on for months. The work was hard, but the love surrounding me made my recovery possible. My gratitude is more than I can express in words.

Now, I wonder at the life I am leading, not without some survivor's guilt. I am taking care of myself, driving my car, swimming again in competition, and liking my new heart. When I say "heart" I mean this in more than one sense. Without the help and support of a few very special friends, my recovery and support would have been so much more difficult. I have just published my first book of poetry and art in 16 years. I am enjoying my work in Thursday Fellowship at the church. Tom Scovel and I continue our work with Clifton Perry, a prisoner on death row in San Quentin prison, who is a poet. We work with him in many ways, including publication of his first book of poems.

Another part of my faith journey was during and after the protracted illness and death of my wife, Sally, in 2014. That time was the most hurtful blow in my life. I struggled. But now my athletic background became paramount in my mental and physical recovery. An increased effort in swimming gave me much needed discipline, as I competed nationally and internationally. However, in other ways, I did not do so well. My faith lacked vitality and spontaneity. My creative life seemed blocked and stillborn.

To my amazement and joy, now I feel my creativity has been unblocked. I never lost my faith, but now it thrives in an atmosphere of freedom. Every day I am given more reasons to live what I hope is a meaningful life.

New Retreat Programming at LOPC

Over the past five years, we have introduced more than 15 new programs at LOPC in different ministry areas. During this time, we also have been exploring new retreat ideas for our church community.

Based upon information gathered, our team of pastors, staff, and church leadership identified opportunities to enhance and expand our retreat programming at LOPC. We found that our church community desires new opportunities for transformational, cross-generational faith formation and fellowship.

In October 2018, we hosted the LOPC All-Church Retreat at Mount Hermon. We will begin hosting the LOPC All-Church Retreat at Mount Hermon every other year in 2019.

However, we will still have the opportunity to attend Mount Hermon annually with another church. In 2019, LOPC is invited to attend a Mount Hermon All-Church Retreat with the First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame. This will begin a two-year cycle, with our next LOPC All-Church Retreat at Mount Hermon in 2020.

In alternating years from the LOPC All-Church Retreat, we will host a Men's Retreat (fall) and Women's Retreat (spring).

The retreat schedule for 2019-2020 is as follows:

- Fall of 2019 – High School Houseboat Trip (date to be determined).
- Fall of 2019 – Men's Retreat at Mount Hermon (October 4-6, 2019).
- Fall of 2019 – LOPC members are invited to attend the All Church Retreat led by First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame (October 18-20, 2019). One of our LOPC pastors will be in attendance as a part of this retreat. More information and sign-ups to follow in the spring of 2019 for the LOPC community.
- Spring of 2020 – Women's Retreat (date and location to be determined).
- Fall of 2020 – LOPC All Church Retreat at Mount Hermon (October 2-4, 2020).

We look forward to seeing how our new retreat programming will fulfill your fellowship and spiritual growth needs. We would love to hear from you if you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns. Please connect with the Pastor for Family Ministry, Jaime Polson, at jaime@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x226 or Michelle Browning, the Assistant for Family Ministry, at michelle@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x248.



LOPC

Breakfast Group

(formerly Men's Breakfast)

Joe Whitehouse

"37 Days & 5 Stans"

January 23, 7 a.m.

Join us for breakfast as Joe talks about his world travels!

\$5 donation for breakfast at the door.

RSVP by noon on January 22 to Chris at chris@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x110.

Men with Young Families & Professionals

Session III

Four-week session starts January 28

A men's group for guys (20-50 somethings) to connect with other guys, grow in your faith through study and service opportunities, and receive prayer. We are a come as you are, when you're available group. If you can only join us for one gathering, that's great! If you come to all of our offerings, awesome!

If you're interested, contact Chris Baldwin at chris@lopc.org or 925-283-8722 x110.

thursday Fellowship



FIRST FRIDAY
FORUM

First Friday Forum to Address Health Care



The 2019 First Friday Forum (FFF) lecture series kicks off Friday, January 4. Dr. Thomas Rundall will discuss “The Future of Hospitals” at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall at 1 p.m.

Dr. Rundall will take on the good and the bad of hospitals. “The care provided in U. S. hospitals saves lives and improves the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of patients every year,” he says. “But hospitals are expensive to operate and they expose patients to many risks, including hospital-acquired infections and medical errors.”

“Hospitals are facing enormous challenges. Healthcare organizations are increasingly investing in outpatient clinics, same-day surgery centers, free-standing emergency rooms, and micro-hospitals. Medicare and other insurance payers are encouraging hospitals and doctors to keep patients out of hospitals, if at all possible, and to reduce the length of stay, if they are admitted, while simultaneously pressuring hospitals to improve patient outcomes.

“However,” he states, “hospitals are an important health-care resource. They are uniquely suited to care for patients with complex illnesses and injuries. So we will be addressing the question, ‘How will hospitals change in the face of this turbulent environment and what are the keys to future success?’”

Thomas Rundall, Ph.D., is the Henry J. Kaiser Professor of Organized Health Systems Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley.

Nancy Holtzapple, chair of the FFF program, says, “Since health-care issues appear to be at the top of the list of the public’s concerns, this talk is most timely. Please come, and bring friends, to this free lecture.”

Happy New Year from Thursday Fellowship!

Resumes January 3
Every Thursday, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

Thursday Fellowship had a great fall. We ended the season on December 13 with a glorious celebration and catered luncheon of quiche accompanied by fresh croissants and fruit salad. Our celebration began with a performance by the Notables Choir. Michael Kistner serenaded us at lunch with his beautiful voice and wonderful guitar, playing more Christmas songs. We ended the day with a choir from Rossmoor called Harmony. It was a perfect end to the year.

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.

Questions? Contact coordinators:

Julie Peterson Clarita Wooldridge
julie@lopc.org clarita@lopc.org

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

session

November Session Highlights

By Jody Black, Clerk of Session

We continued our “State of the Union” meetings with an extraordinary presentation from our Children and Youth ministries. Our children and youth leaders described their integrated program that spans our infants to graduating seniors. From early on, our children are taught they are loved, they belong, and they can know God. This foundation leads our youth to know they are a welcome part of a community that, together, can do great things. These ministries reflect a wisdom and vision that strengthens the Church now and for years to come.

We learned that our children and youth programs are continuing to grow and thrive. It is necessary that we support and invest in this ministry in order to meet new demands. Currently numerous volunteers are serving these ministries, yet we recognize there is an ongoing need to expand the number of volunteers to meet the demands of weekend and mid-week programs, along with mission trips. Also advisory boards require time, talent, and treasure from our LOPC community. There are often wait-lists for children and youth programs; with additional volunteers, those who are wait-listed could be welcomed into these programs.

Throughout LOPC, we face challenges with recruiting and retaining volunteers. This was expressed last month in worship and music teams, and the theme is repeated with our children and youth ministries. As a session, we are forming a task force to explore the state of volunteerism, both within our community as well as other organizations whose success depends on volunteers. I have been asked to lead this task force, and look forward to continuing my service to our church through this important work. As we are in the early stages of building this, we have a lot of “spade work” over the next month before beginning in earnest. Please begin praying for the task force now to help us bring glory and honor to God throughout the process.

lopc foundation

What Is Your Vision?

By Dara Youngdale, Foundation Trustee



This is the time of year when many of us take stock of the previous year and think ahead to the upcoming year; a time when we reflect on what is important, and perhaps what we want to accomplish in the next 12 months and beyond.

If I were to write a list of New Year’s resolutions, which I will not, at the top of my list would be to dental floss every day. (This has been on my list since college, and sadly I have yet to live up to the resolution.) On the more esoteric end of the spectrum, my resolution would be to, “Live more fully in God’s kingdom on earth.”

This is harder to do than flossing, but I am continually bolstered by our LOPC community in this pursuit. In an age of increasing isolation and lack of community for many, I am blessed to be part of this faith community that extends Christ’s love here on Knox Drive and beyond, to our neighbors near and far.

LOPC Foundation trustees have been taking stock of where we are and where we want to be in 2019 and beyond and have crafted a new vision statement: “The Foundation will be a permanent, reliable source of significant funding for LOPC’s ministries.” This means the Foundation will support LOPC this year in its target areas of Mission, Justice, Special Needs, Youth Service, Staff Care and Faith Formation, among others, while reserving and growing assets for the future.

I imagine, like me, you support LOPC annually, are committed to active participation in our church where our relationships and faith are deepened, and we are equipped for service. Like me, do you also envision an enduring LOPC community that future generations can enjoy?

What is your vision for 2019 and beyond? If you are considering a legacy gift that will support LOPC well into the future, please talk to a trustee:

Dick James, president; Kristi Haigh, vice president; Dara Youngdale, secretary; Phil Placier, treasurer; Staci Johnston, assistant treasurer; Jim Beckemeyer; Jerry Ducey; Jen Crocker; Mike Ross.



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Coleen Moulton, Seedlings Preschool
Ryan Timpte, Children

FOCUS NEWSLETTER

Sara Warfield, Communications
Dick James, Editing

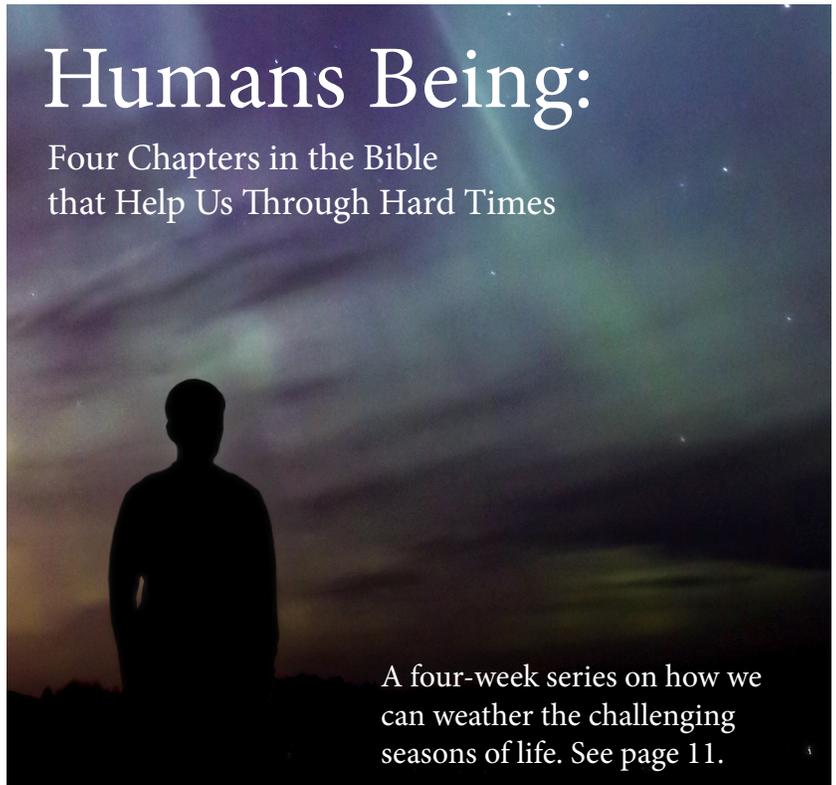
Thank you to all who contribute to each issue.

Monthly FOCUS Newsletter Deadline:

January 1 for the February 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



Humans Being:

Four Chapters in the Bible
that Help Us Through Hard Times

A four-week series on how we can weather the challenging seasons of life. See page 11.

Sunday Worship Services

9 a.m.

11 a.m.

Invite Friends & Family

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