



# the INDESCRIBABLE *Gift*

LOPC NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022

From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

### ***Understanding Advent***

The apostle Paul writes to the church at Rome, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,” (Romans 12:2). The church is called to be a contrast society to the world, but unfortunately the church is all too often just like the world. Instead of being an agent of transformation in the world, we typically mirror the world. A primary area is the season of the church year known as Advent.

Did you know that Advent is different from Christmas? The answer to that is probably yes, but do you know how it is different, in what ways it is different? Or do you see it more as just as a time to get ready for Christmas? In other words, what spiritual significance does Advent have, and in what ways does it shape our practices as believers and as a church?

Fleming Rutledge, a prominent writer on Advent says, “The disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain that characterizes life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory that is yet to come. In that Advent tension, the church lives its life.”

The word *advent* means *coming*, and the church lives its life between the time of Christ’s first coming (what we celebrate at Christmas) and His second coming. Theologians refer to this as, “the already and the not yet.” Christ has already inaugurated His kingdom, and we receive many of the benefits of the kingdom, but the fullness of the kingdom is not yet realized, thus the “not

yet"and the disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain spoken of above.

Thus, the whole of our lives is lived in a sense in Advent, or as Rutledge puts it in "that Advent tension." The question remains how are we to live in the midst of that Advent tension? How do we live as a contrast society in this tension? We can frame the question this way: what is the missional opportunity in this Advent tension?

The end of Peter's second letter (that we have been reading as part of our Community Bible Reading) has an interesting passage that gives us some clues about living in this tension. Peter writes, ***"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells," (2 Peter 3:10-13).***

Since this is a newsletter article, I can give you only a couple of quick thoughts. First, do not get bogged down in all the details of what it means that things will be burned up and dissolved. Do not miss the forest for gazing at the trees. The text clearly tells us that our future is one of new heavens and new earth in which righteousness will dwell. That means our future is a physical one. Resurrection gets the final word.

We can take away a couple of practical things that pertain to Advent, themes that help us to live missionally as a contrast society. Waiting is a prominent theme in Advent and in the Christian life. And waiting is not passive. We actively wait for the new heavens and new earth, meaning that two other themes in Advent are the reality of judgment and the promise of hope. Judgment is real, and that is good news. Judgment means that God will put everything to rights. He will restore that which is broken. Where there is disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain, there will be healing, renewal, restoration, and life. Do those who do not follow Jesus see the difference that this kind of hope makes in our lives? Do we tell them, yes even warn them, about the reality of judgment and where hope can be found in Jesus?

Friends, Advent can be such a missional opportunity. There are so many expectations leading up to Christmas. It can be a time of enormous pressure on people. Christmas can be a time where people feel a sense of unlimited obligation. Loneliness can run rampant. These provide opportunities for us to be honest with people about the pain of life as well as where hope can be found. May our eyes be open to the needs of those around us, and may He use us to bring the hope of Christ to a community that needs Him.

Pastor Jeff Birch



Lake Oconee  
Presbyterian Church

PC

# Christmas at LOPC



**Tuesday, December 6 at 6:30 pm**  
**Ladies' Advent Tea**



**Sunday, December 11 at 10:30 am**  
**Happy Birthday Party for Jesus**  
for children ages 4 years - 2nd grade



**Sunday, December 18 at 6 pm**  
**Let There Be Christmas**  
**Christmas Cantata**



**Saturday, December 24 at 5 pm**  
**Christmas Eve Service**



**Sunday, December 25 at 10:30 am**  
**Morning Worship Celebration**

*Invite your family, friends, and neighbors!*

**Volunteers Needed**



# volunteers needed

taking down Christmas decorations December 27 9:00 am

Women's Ministry



LADIES' *Advent Tea* 2022

December 6  
6:30 pm

HOSTED TABLES  
CATERED DESSERTS  
AMY REBER ON PIANO  
MEN'S QUARTET

## Women Connecting to Women in Prayer

All women are invited to join with other women to pray. We meet in the church library at 1:00 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. This month's date is Tuesday, December 13.



Meal Support



The Women's Ministry will coordinate meals to be provided for those in need due to illness, injury, recovery from hospitalization, or after childbirth.

Church App

Join **realm**<sup>®</sup>  
and stay connected!

*Call or come by the church office for assistance  
with installing the church's mobile APP!*

Check us out on podcasts and social media!



**MISSED A SERMON? SHARE A SERMON!**



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## MNA Disaster Response



### Sheds of HOPE & Little Free Library

The Sheds of HOPE team at LOPC not only builds dry storage sheds for families in need, but they have also created shed replicas and donated them for use in partnership with Little Free Libraries. In this picture supplied by the Boys and Girls Club of Greensboro, we can see some of the families who frequently use the library. Star Wars fans will love their reading material, but we love those smiling faces even more!



## Youth Ministry



The Youth Group is for rising 6th grade students through high school. We are looking for all middle and high school kids in and out of LOPC. For information about youth events, please contact Jan Murray at 706-817-9031 or by email at [jtmurray7@gmail.com](mailto:jtmurray7@gmail.com).

## Children's Ministry

Sunday, December 11

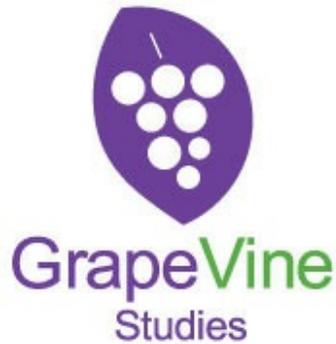
Happy Birthday Party for  
**JESUS**

ages 4 years - 2nd grade

Children ages 4 years-2nd grade are invited to a special **HAPPY BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS** on Sunday, December 11, 2022, from 10:30 am-11:30 am in room 107.

We'll be reading the Christmas story and playing games, enjoying snacks, and making crafts! Children are welcome and encouraged to invite friends. **Please RSVP by Wednesday, December 7.** Email or call the church office to sign up.

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During the Doxology, children ages 4 years - 2nd grade are dismissed for Children's Worship. We will be using the curriculum from Grapevine Studies. Grapevine's mission and vision are to, "Provide teachers a tool to confidently teach God's Word to their students while introducing them to the Gospel. We believe all students can understand the Bible and respond to the Gospel. Our desire is to see all students learn the process of Bible study in order to become confident and skilled in studying and eventually teaching God's Word."

*God established a testimony...which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children that the next generation might know...so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God...*

*Psalm 78:5-7a*

## December Calendar of Events

**The best way to see upcoming LOPC events is by visiting our website.** You can view upcoming events in three user-friendly formats.



# Events

Click on any of these three for viewing options.



Featured Events

Calendar View

List View

March 2022 Filter by Category

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Morning Ladies' Bible Study</li> <li>(CBS) Men's Community Bible Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Morning Ladies' Bible Study</li> <li>Parker Home Fellowship Group (HFC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(CBS) Ladies' Community Bible Study</li> <li>Choir Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bulletin Helpers</li> </ul>	

## Love God, Love One Another, Love the Community

### Our Vision

Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church exists to worship God, nurture and equip God's people, and mobilize the church to build his kingdom.

### Newsletter Archive

Missed a newsletter? [Use this link](#) to visit the archive at the member portal on our website. If you don't have the password, contact the church office, and we'll be happy to provide it.

Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church | 113 Scott Rd., Eatonton, GA 31024

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