

LOPC NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024



From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

What to Pray For

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your

inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

As I am currently writing this, it is Valentine's Day, and as we all know, Valentine's Day is all about love. But, if we are honest, we all have different experiences with love. Not all of us have the fairy-tale, picture-perfect life that hallmark cards like to convey. Again, if we are honest, these thoughts from Dan Allender's seminal book, *Bold Love*, ought to resonate with us:

All of us want out sometimes. Love is too hard; forgiveness seems impossible. Why try when our efforts to love seem to make matters worse? Even in our best relationships, the wounds of the battle hardly seem worth it sometimes. But it's hard for a human heart to live long or well without love. Love offers life. It softens the dark moments and keeps the heartbeat of hope alive. Love is both a mysterious friend and, at times, a terrible disappointment. Love one day satisfies and the next seems to strip the heart bare before the cold winds of betrayal. If we are honest, we often have mixed feelings about love.

Which brings us to our passage here in Ephesians 3. Notice, first, that this is what the Apostle Paul prays for us. He is praying for our ability to understand how loved we are. For only to the degree that we understand how loved we are will we be able to love others. Let's prime our hearts with some of Paul's language here. He prays specifically, that, ***according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*** Isn't that amazing! First, according to the riches of God's glory. How much are the riches of God's glory? Well, to begin with, think of God as Creator. We have our own planet, then the solar system and galaxy. Then, how many galaxies are there actually? There have been estimates that there could be upwards of a trillion galaxies. How big is God's glory? Incomprehensible! Then, according to the riches of his glory, he prays that we would be strengthened with power so that Christ would dwell in our hearts through faith. That is, because our only ability to love comes from abiding in our union with Christ.

Then, he prays, that you, ***being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*** Paul's prayer is that we, both individually and as a church, would comprehend the fullness of God's love which surpasses knowledge itself. That means if we say we really understand God's love for us we are being dishonest with ourselves. None of us really gets God's love. Thus, this is our greatest need to pray for and to seek. We need to pray to understand more deeply the love that God has for us in Christ.

And what is the key to understanding God's love for us? Again, Allender is instructive. He writes,

Love is dependent on forgiveness. A formula can almost be structured from this concept. The extent to which someone truly loves will be positively correlated to the degree the person is stunned and silenced by the wonder that his huge debt has been canceled.

And this is what Paul prays for us. Which leads me to wonder: how much time do you spend praying for yourself and others to understand God's love? Is this a focus of your prayer life? And if not, why not? Have you ever considered it? Maybe, it's because, at least consciously, we do not consider the debt that has been canceled by Christ's work on the cross to be all that huge. Maybe as we exit another Valentine's week and enter into the season of Lent leading to Holy Week and Easter, it would do us well to focus on the wonder of God's love.

Pastor Jeff Birch

Combined Sunday School on February 18

Come hear from our global partners!

This Sunday, we welcome Coby & Pamela McGinty, LOPC-supported missionaries currently on home assignment from University of Cape Town, South Africa. **This will be a combined Adult Sunday School in the sanctuary beginning at 9:15 AM.**

Coby & Pamela have served in Reformed campus ministry at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, the top-ranked university on the continent, since 2007. At this world-renowned university of 28,000 diverse students, from over 100 nations, they combine their passion for student ministry and love of Africa. Coby & Pamela will share with us their vision to see the gospel go out to all the nations through teaching the Word and making disciples. Come see the McGintys and hear about a truly international campus ministry at work.



LOPC Prayer Guide



LOPC PRAYER GUIDE

**copies
available in
the narthex**

It is our desire that we would be a praying church. To that end, we have created a weekly prayer guide to help us in this endeavor. In this prayer guide, you will find Scriptures and prayer points for each of our ministry teams. If you follow this prayer guide, that means you will have prayed through almost everything our church does in a week! Feel free to take one or a couple (located on the display table in the Narthex) home with you as we all labor in prayer together for the advancement of God's church.

Church Officers for 2024

On Sunday, January 21, and on Sunday, February 4, LOPC ordained and/or installed church officers for 2024. Please be in prayer for the following men:

ELDERS



Bill Benzur



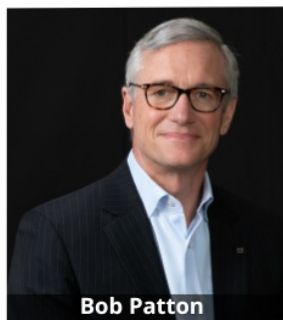
Rich Driessnack



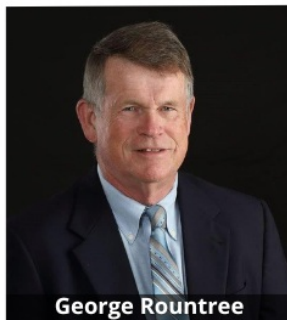
Randy Gritters



Bill McCartney



Bob Patton



George Rountree

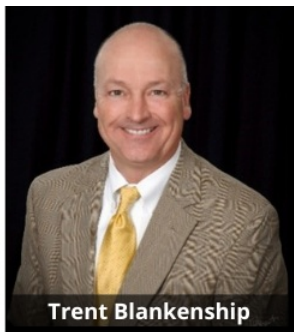


Harley Wood

DEACONS



Doug Attaway



Trent Blankenship



Bill Burmeister



Dennis Clark



Dick Forrester



Brent Johansen



John Morrison



Paul Slifko



Gary Thomas

Super Bowl Party Recap



Our Super Bowl Outreach Party at Bruzze Brewing brought out both new and familiar faces. We were able to meet numerous members of our community, and several from LOPC invited and brought friends from the area. We were also able to build relationships with two local businesses (Bruzze Brewing and Boss Lady Catering). Thank you for your support and attendance!

Pickleball: Connect Across the Courts



PICKLEBALL OPEN PLAY

EVERY SATURDAY | 2-4 PM



Our pickleball courts are open to the community with scheduled open play every Saturday! Newcomers to the sport have access to paddles and balls, and all skill levels are welcome. In addition to our registered group on pickleheads.com, we now have a pickleball page on our church website.

Women's Ministry



On January 28, the Women's Ministry Leadership Team for 2024 was installed during our morning worship service. The newly elected council includes Rhonda Manis (President), Barb Moore (Vice-President), Laura Terry (Secretary), Linda Martin (Treasurer), Renee Benzur (Spiritual Growth Chair), and Carla Larson



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.

Children's Ministry



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

MNA Disaster Response



Sheds of HOPE



SHEDS OF HOPE BUILD SCHEDULE 2024

- BUILD 1** MARCH 25-27
- BUILD 2** APRIL 18-20 (YOUTH BUILD)
- BUILD 3** MAY 8-10
- BUILD 4** SEPTEMBER 16-18
- BUILD 5** OCTOBER 24-26 (YOUTH BUILD)
- BUILD 6** NOVEMBER 11-13



Sheds of HOPE are dry storage sheds provided for free to families who have lost their homes to disasters such as hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, and floods. Sheds are built by volunteers and flat-packed. They are then delivered to a disaster site where they are set up to provide families with safe storage and to build bridges of ministry during recovery.

February 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"> Early Morning Ladies' Bible Study (CBS) Men's Community Bible Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Morning Ladies' Bible Study Parker Home Fellowship Group (HFC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (CBS) Ladies' Community Bible Study Choir Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bulletin Helpers 		5

Mark Your Calendars!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mar 8-9** DiscipleNOW (DNow) for grades 6-12
- Mar 28** Maundy Thursday Communion Service @ 7pm
- Mar 29** Good Friday Service @ noon
Easter Festival @ 5pm
- Mar 31** Easter Brunch @ 9am
Easter Service @ 10:30am

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

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.

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

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