



## LOPC NEWSLETTER JULY 2021

From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

### **True Freedom**

I am looking forward to my first Fourth of July holiday here at Lake Country. Where should Evie and I view fireworks?

I remember some of my favorite times on the Fourth were spent when Joel was young and we were living in Edmond, OK. The day would start with a parade that would take place in the center of town. That was followed by getting together with friends (our families all lived a distance) for the cookout and delicious hamburgers and hot dogs. Finally, the day ended with fireworks that we would take in at a local park. We had a great time building memories.

These memories remind me that, no matter what the occasion, life is all about relationships. God is a relational God who desires to commune with us and invite us into his trinitarian life. So, it should not surprise us that when it comes to freedom, it is all about relationships.

First, in our relationship with God, the Bible says quite amazingly in Galatians 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again

to a yoke of slavery.” That means Jesus has come into this world for the purpose of freedom. He has come to free us from sin and death in order to remake us into new creations. Paul writes in Colossians 3:10, “And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

This, in turn, leads to another question. What is the purpose of freedom? Does freedom mean doing whatever we want? Are we free to pursue our own agendas? That’s not the message of the gospel. Paul continues, “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). I like to word this freedom as, “freedom to.” A freedom to the common good, to loving one another, to doing what is best for the other person.

We are free to deny ourselves, to give up our agendas, for the good of others. That is what it means to be truly human, to be renewed after the image of its creator.

Imagine if we all could cultivate living like this. How much better our lives and communities would be.

LOPC, have a wonderful Fourth of July holiday. Let us thank the Lord for the freedom that we have been given.

Rev. Jeff Birch

## Church Office Closed on July 5

The church office will be closed on Monday, July 5, in observance of Independence Day. We will resume regular business hours (8:30 am - 5 pm) on Tuesday, July 6. Enjoy the holiday weekend, everyone!

## Sermon Series: Romans

Join us in person or online at 10:30 am on Sundays we explore the book of Romans. To access the online bulletin for each service, [click here](#). If you've missed a sermon in the series, find it archived [here](#).

# ROMANS

GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP



Part I (chapters 1-4): Gospel Vision

Car Decals Available

Our new logo is now available as a 4" circular car decal, and best of all, it's free! Pick one up in the Narthex.



Women's Ministry

From the President

Ladies, make your plans now to join us for our gathering on Thursday, August 5, at 10 am in rooms 111-112. Evie Birch will be our guest speaker. Evie is excited to be with us and to spend time together getting to know the ladies of the church better. You don't want to miss this special time with Evie and the other ladies of





LOPC. No RSVP is necessary.  
*Brenda Roberts*  
*President, LOPC Women's Ministry*

A graphic for 'T.E.A. time' featuring two stylized teacups and a tea bag. The left cup is teal and contains the text 'Thursday, August 5'. The right cup is maroon and contains the text '10 am until 11:30 am'. A white tea bag is positioned between the two cups. The background is a light yellow with faint, swirling patterns.

**T.E.A. time**  
WITH EVIE BIRCH

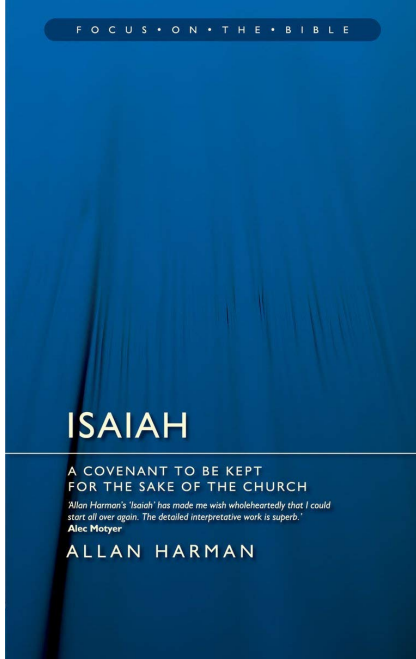
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Presented by the Women's Ministry of  
Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church

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### **Early Morning Ladies' Bible Study**

The Early Morning Ladies' Bible Study meets at 7:30 a.m. every Tuesday morning in the home of Karen Hildebrand and is led by Karen Hildebrand and Jan Murray. We combine deep study in the word, discussion, and prayer.



## Mid-morning Ladies' Bible Study

The Mid-Morning Ladies' Bible Study meets every Thursday from 10 – 11 a.m. at the church in rooms 110-112, and via Zoom for remote participants. Sue Burmeister leads the study from the book *The Attributes of God*.



## 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 social media!

**facebook**

[facebook.com@lakeoconeepca](https://facebook.com/lakeoconeepca)



[twitter.com@lakeoconeepca](https://twitter.com/lakeoconeepca)



[instagram.com@lakeoconeepca](https://instagram.com/lakeoconeepca)

MNA Disaster Response



## Sheds of HOPE

“The storm struck two days ago. Thankfully, the weather service warning came in time for the family to find shelter and no one was hurt. But the house is gone. Neighbors opened their homes and we have relatives nearby, so we’ll have somewhere to live until we can find a place to rent while we put our life back together. We need to save what we can that the storm didn’t ruin or destroy – clothing, dinnerware, pots & pans, appliances, tools, family pictures, books – there’s so much of our life just lying there in the wreckage of our house. But all the mini-storage places are full and there’s no safe storage available...”

This story is frequently heard soon after a disaster happens, and it’s the reason the Presbyterian Church of America’s Mission to North America Disaster Response created the Sheds of HOPE ministry. As you’ll see in the attached video, Sheds of HOPE provides a dry, secure place for families to store their belongings while they put their lives back together after surviving a disaster. Led by MNA Disaster Response specialists, volunteer workers demonstrate the love of Christ by setting up and giving Sheds of HOPE to families in need. During the following two years, volunteers from local PCA churches maintain contact with the families. To learn more about the national Sheds of HOPE ministry, go to [www.shedsofhope.com](http://www.shedsofhope.com).

Since our beginning during a cold week in January 2017, volunteers of the LOPC Sheds of HOPE ministry have built more than 100 Sheds of HOPE kits. LOPC-built Sheds of HOPE kits have been delivered to families across the southeast USA, including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. Our sheds have helped families recover from fire, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and family financial crises. Our first two sheds were given to families affected by tornadoes in Albany, GA. Most recently, our sheds were among those given to tornado victims in Brent, AL.

Here at LOPC, we’ve learned that the Sheds of HOPE ministry begins helping people as soon as kit building begins. By working together and enjoying fellowship with other Christians, our volunteers – including the very young and the very not-so-young, male and female - have built stronger bonds with fellow church and community members. We’ve discovered (or rediscovered) our ability to contribute and make a positive difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters. We’ve welcomed and gotten to know new members more quickly. We’ve gained some really effective church officers. **And we have fun!** It’s not only the hands-on shed builders – the ladies who provide lunches and those who contribute financial and other support enjoy being part of the Sheds of HOPE ministry, helping others



in a direct and tangible way.

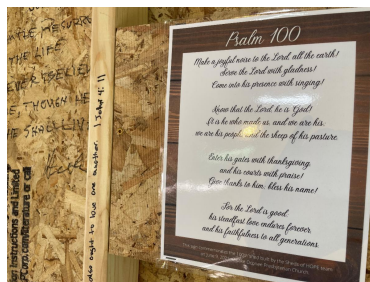
Since our beginning, God has blessed the LOPC Sheds of HOPE ministry with resources – volunteers, tools & equipment and funding – needed to accomplish our mission. However, recent steep increases in the cost of materials have nearly doubled the cost to build a shed kit, from about \$850.00 to more than \$1,500 per shed. The Session recently approved our request to launch a fund-raising drive during July and August. Our goal is to raise \$25,000.00, which will enable us to fulfill our commitment to build another 12 sheds this fall and provide funds to begin next year’s building schedule.

You will hear more about Sheds of HOPE and why we need to ask for your financial support in the coming weeks. We hope you will be able to help us with your one-time or continuing contribution. You can place your contribution in the collection plate during morning worship or you can send it directly to the church office. Please show “Sheds of HOPE” on the memo line of your check. Please feel free to contact Dick Forrester (706-473-7442 – [dhforrester@icloud.com](mailto:dhforrester@icloud.com)) or any member of the LOPC Sheds of HOPE team if you have questions or need additional information.

Thank you for your support, and thanks to God for the blessings he continues to shower on the LOPC Sheds of HOPE ministry!



The 100th shed build being commemorated with a copy of Psalm 100 being nailed to the shed interior.



The Sheds of HOPE team wrote names and scripture along the shed interior.



The Sheds of HOPE team for the June 2021 build.

Check out our Sheds of HOPE video by clicking on the graphic below, and please share the link with anyone who might be interested in joining or supporting our ministry!





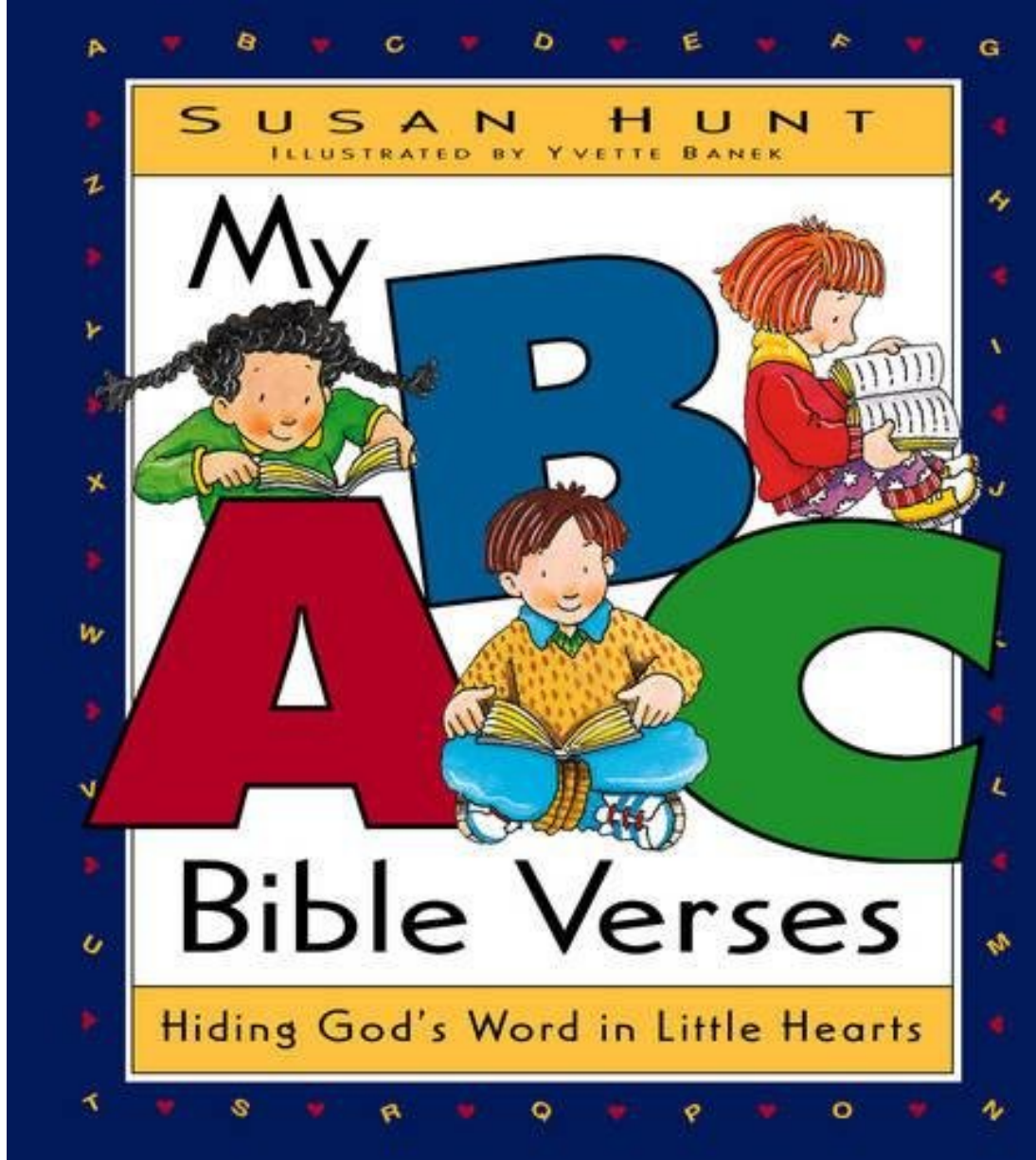
## Youth Ministry



The LOPC Youth Group meets on **Sundays from 5-7 pm at LOPC** where there is food, fun, and Bible Study - and we **WANT YOU** to join us! We are looking for all middle and high school kids in and out of LOPC. Youth Group is for rising 6th grade students through high school.

## Children's Ministry





During the Doxology, children ages 4-6 are dismissed for Children's Worship. We are using Susan Hunt's **My ABC Bible Verses** for curriculum.

*Knowing the Bible can help you know God better. Here is a colorful, story-filled way for even the youngest child to take God's Word to heart—and learn the alphabet too! Presented in an easy-to-use story format that applies individual Bible verses to real-life situations, this illustrated book for 3- to 7-year-olds is perfect for reading to your children or grandchildren, and great for use in churches, Christian schools, Bible clubs, or home schools. It can also be easily adapted for family devotions with young children. The ABCs are building blocks to your child's formal education. And these verses are the building blocks of the soul—the building blocks that can lead to eternal life.*

-Crossway.org

*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...*

*Psalms 78:5-7a*

# 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.