



# JULY 2022

## LOPC NEWSLETTER JULY 2022

From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

### *A Missional Church (II)*

Yes, I am away but I thought I would take a moment and share a few thoughts with you. Psalm 57:9 says, “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.” I have so much to be thankful for. I am thankful for each of you, to live and serve with and among you. I am thankful for my family and friends, and for my country as we approach the Fourth of July holiday.

Above all else, I am thankful for the salvation that was given me by Christ and for my life in Christ. Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly,” (John 10:10).

Which brings me to last week’s historic decision by the Supreme Court to overturn the Roe v. Wade ruling which legalized abortion in this country, and to send it to the states to decide. First, I am thankful for this decision in favor of life. I am thankful for all the prayers and work that has gone on over the last fifty years to advocate for life. I feel like this is the right decision, that we should always be a church that stands for the sanctity of human life.

Which brings me to another point. Let me speak into this for a moment. Where do we go from here? What's next? I believe that now is the opportunity for the church to be the church. As my friend and PCA pastor, Mike Khandjian, puts it, "This is a call for the Church to be the Church rather than a political arm – our first mission is to the gospel, a message that meets sinners where they are in the Name of Jesus. If our celebration is louder than our mission, then we have failed." I agree with that. This is an opportunity for the church to truly be missional.

And what is our mission? We are to stand for and advocate for life. For all of life. Remember Jesus' words, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Scott Sauls, another PCA pastor, in his writing on this issue challenges us, "Perhaps the loudest outcry from pro-choice men and women against the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade is that, according to them, the so-called pro-life position seems focused on only one kind of life: infant life. The question is fairly asked: Why has pro-life messaging not accounted for other realities?"

I think, at the very least, we should listen to this outcry. What are a few things we can do? First, we need to keep our focus on the gospel of grace. The only hope for us and for the world is in the gospel of Christ. Our mission is to bring the transforming power of the gospel to our community. We need to remember and to proclaim that there is no sin that cannot be forgiven and covered by the gospel of Christ. Our vision is for our church to be a haven of grace. We want to be a place where we compassionately listen to everyone's story, to remember that everyone has a story and that everyone has been wounded by the Fall. It is a time for the Church to remember.

Second, it is also a time for the Church to continue to advocate for life. One of the things that I find most encouraging is how it has been the work of so many Christians to work in and support adoption, foster care, and crisis pregnancy centers. Now is not the time to stop. One of the things that attracted me to LOPC when I was seeking a call was the commitment to love and serve the community. Now is not the time to stop, but rather to double down, so to speak, in that commitment. I don't know specifically where the Lord may lead LOPC in this, but I do know that part of our missional call is to come alongside the most wounded and vulnerable of our community. This reflects the heart of Christ, and we are called to reflect His heart in loving our community. I have no doubt that we will want to partner with our centers and ministries who are coming alongside single moms, pregnant teens, and the most vulnerable of our community.

Lastly, as always, it is a time to pray. It is a time to pray for peace. It is a time to pray for the Church to be the Church. And it is a time to pray for LOPC to follow our Lord continually in His mission to bring healing, renewal, and peace to the Lake Oconee area.

Pastor Jeff Birch

July 4: Church Office Closed

A dark blue background with stylized fireworks in white and red. The fireworks are scattered across the top and sides of the page. The central text is white and reads "Independence Day" in a cursive font.

# *Independence Day*

In honor of Independence Day, the church office will be closed on Monday, July 4. We will resume regular office hours at 8:30 am on Tuesday, July 5.

## No Sunday School in July and August




The Session has decided that we will not be having children's and adult Sunday School for July and August. Our past experience shows that we have reduced SS attendance during these months due to summer travel schedules. This will also give our teachers a break as they get ready for Sunday School to resume in September. It's been a great year, and we look forward to picking up this vital ministry. Thank you all so much for your participation in Sunday School.

## ESL Volunteers Needed

# ESL English as a Second Lanaguage CLASSES



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

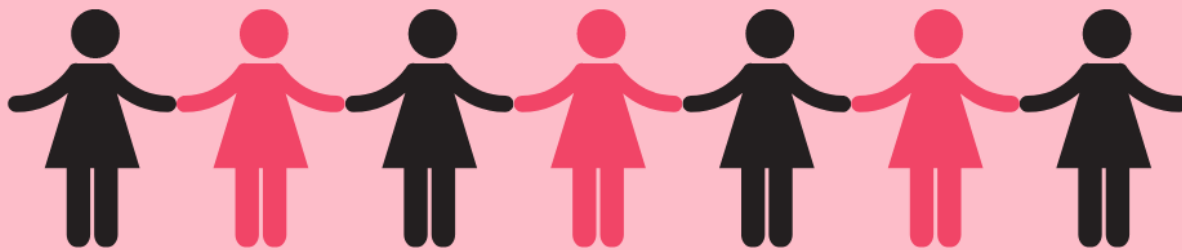
-  Teachers and assistants needed for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.
-  You don't have to know a second language!
-  Training and curriculum are provided.

Russell Puppe is spearheading our "English as a Second Language" Outreach Ministry program that will be starting this Fall. If you are interested in being a part of this ministry at LOPC, contact Russell Puppe. You do not need to speak another language (Spanish) to be a part of this ministry. Classes are being planned to start September 11 and will be held every Sunday from 3 - 6PM at the church (school system vacations excluded). We review a bible verse and share the gospel during each session. Teacher guides and student workbooks are provided. Training is available.

Women's Ministry



connecting  
Women 2 Women  
in prayer



All women are invited to join with other women to pray. Our first gathering (after a couple of years on pause) will be Tuesday, July 12 at 1:00 p.m. in the church library. Can't meet in July? That's okay, because we will meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month. There will be rotating women facilitators walking us through prayers as we pray for our church, community, state, country, and world as well as our church leadership and each other. We want to be obedient to God's command to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Women's Ministry Council is praying that you will join us. Questions? Contact Sue Burmeister.

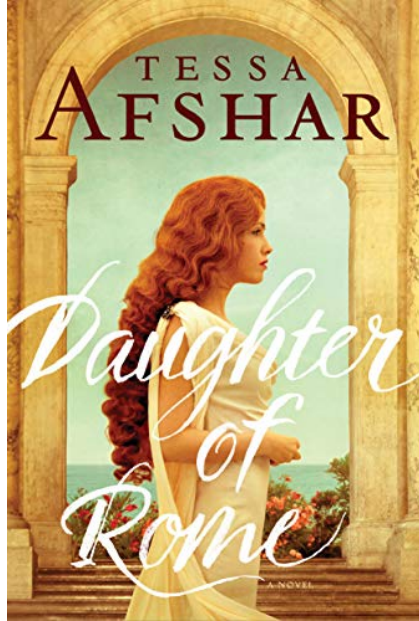
The Women's Council is planning a service project for the women in the church. Look for more details in the coming weeks.

Lynne Fowlkes, President  
Women's Ministry Council

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### Book Binders

Book Binders met on Friday, June 17, to talk about *Wolf Hall*, an award-winning novel about Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation. The discussion was lively and delved into the 1500s in England, which was confusing, chaotic, and has repercussions for us even today as our colonists brought



this history with them. Our next meeting will be Friday, July 15, at 10 at the church when we will discuss ***Daughter of Rome*** by Tessa Afshar. Priscilla and Aquila are the main characters of this historical novel written by a seminary-trained author. Our August meeting will be a salad luncheon at the home of Mary Ann Johnson – details to come later.

Mary Ann Johnson



### 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



instagram.com@lakeoconeepca

## MNA Disaster Response



### Sheds of Hope

Six members of the Sheds of Hope team recently traveled to Orangeburg, SC, to assist Trinity Presbyterian Church build their first shed. Another group from Lexington, SC, was also in attendance. The volunteers had a great time and shared some of their photos with us.







For more information about Sheds of HOPE, contact [Dick Forrester](#).

## 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



# Teach Me to Worship

Member Home Curriculum Outline Training Videos Curriculum Download Contact My Account Q

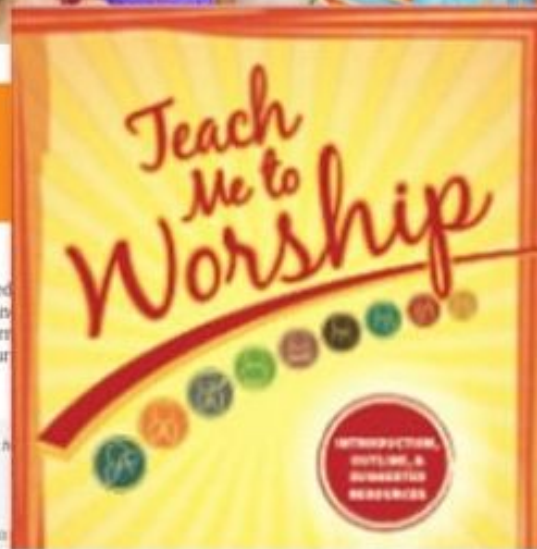


## Purpose

Teach Me to Worship is adapted from a curriculum originally developed by the staff at Orangewood Presbyterian Church in Maitland, FL. The curriculum presents and explains common elements of worship that the universal church has used throughout the ages. The material is available in PDF format which allows ministry leaders to download and print the material according to their schedule and need. A subscription to the curriculum includes unlimited access to the curriculum, handouts and activities for the children, letters to parents, training videos and worship music.

"It's theologically sound. It's a great resource for our ministry."

"The lessons are theologically sound. It's a great resource for our ministry."



## Ages

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During the Doxology, children ages 4-6 are dismissed for Children's Worship. We will be using curriculum from **Teach Me to Worship**.

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*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*

## July 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>01 Early Morning Ladies' Bible Study</li> <li>(CBS) Men's Community Bible Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>02 Mid-Morning Ladies' Bible Study</li> <li>Parker Home Fellowship Group (HFG)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>03 (CBS) Ladies' Community Bible Study</li> <li>Choir Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>04 Bulletin Helpers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5</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.