



## LOPC NEWSLETTER MAY 2022

From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

### **The Missional Church**

We have all heard the phrase, “April showers bring May flowers.” We usually think of this as the rainy period of April giving way to the May season of flowers blooming because of the rain recently received. Just this week, I read something online about this phrase which struck me. “By extension, this means a period of discomfort or hardship can provide the basis for a period of happiness and joy.”

This got me thinking about Holy Week, which we have recently experienced, and Eastertide, the fifty-day period between Easter and Pentecost, which is characterized by feasting and joy following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There was no greater hardship or discomfort in the history of the universe than what Jesus endured as he went through the afflictions culminating in the cross. And that hardship led to the resurrection, the greatest vindication, the ultimate victory over sin and hell and death.

The resurrection brings new life, the ultimate “May flowers.” And the church has the privilege of proclaiming that story to the world. Listen to how the apostle Paul put it to the church at Corinth. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new

creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God,” (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

Another way to put this is how the theologian Chris Wright sums this up. “It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission,” (Chris Wright, *The Mission of God*).

We see this in the passage before us. Paul says that, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself (v.19). The mission belongs to God. God is doing the reconciling. God takes the initiative. We are his instruments or agents in this mission. But the mission belongs to God. Therefore, Paul says that we are ambassadors for Christ. What does an ambassador do? He goes to a foreign country representing his home or sending nation. This means that this world is not our home. This is a foreign country to us. And we are sent by our sending nation (the kingdom of God) to represent God in this world. In a sense that makes the church a colony of heaven.

There are so many implications to this, and in the coming months, I will be sharing many of them. But for now, I want us to notice one major reality. That is, this is the identity of the church. The church is missional by nature. This is our identity. Missions is not simply something we do, but it is of the essence of who we are. Christ’s Church is a missional church. There is no escaping it. That is why Jesus, in revealing himself to his followers after the resurrection said to them, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you,” (John 20:21).

God has sovereignly sent us here in the lake country at this time and in this place as his ambassadors, to represent and proclaim him and the glorious gospel of the kingdom. That is our identity. That is our purpose. That is what it means to glorify God. We are sent here as Christ’s ambassadors. Michael Goheen writes, “Mission in Christ’s way is, first, to continue the ministry of the incarnate Jesus. This means we are to make known the kingdom of God. And we do it in the way that Christ did: by way of life, word, and deed,” (Michael Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation*).

Let’s bring new life, May flowers, to Lake Oconee.

Pastor Jeff Birch

Scholarship Recognition Sunday



DR. ELLEN CAUTHEN UTLEY

# Scholarship Recognition Sunday



**MAY 1, 2022 @ 10:30 AM**

**CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!**

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Our church will observe the Lord's Supper Sunday, May 8, during the Morning Worship service. We will be going back to pre-covid protocol. If you still have a concern for health reasons, please ask a deacon at the door next Sunday, and they will get you a pre-filled communion cup. Gluten-free wafers will be available.

Community Bible Reading Plan



**PARTNER WITH US AS WE READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2022:**



hard copies  
(available at the church)



weekly eblast



weekly Facebook  
post

## National Day of Prayer

# NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER



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Grace Fellowship, Greensboro, is hosting a community-wide National Day of Prayer service on Thursday, May 5, at noon. All are invited to come and exalt the Lord in prayer!

## Handyman Services

Many of you may remember R.J. Jennings, a friend of Russ and Jan Murray, who attended LOPC during his stay with them last year. R.J. is transitioning to a new job in Atlanta but will be in the lake area during the month of May. If you're in need of handyman services, he will be available. For more information, contact R.J. at 205-902-8099 or [email](mailto:Russ and Jan Murray) Russ and Jan Murray.

## Easter weekend with Elise Edmonds

The granddaughters of Dick and Barbara Pomarolli visited over Easter weekend



and made a special trip to see LOPC's favorite centenarian, Elise Edmonds! The girls had fun spending time with Ms. Elise, singing songs, and listening to her tell stories.



## Women's Ministry



The Women's Ministry is excited about the event we have scheduled for next week - The First Call Pregnancy Center's Fashion Show! And now that the Covid restrictions have been lifted, we anticipate many activities to come. We will be meeting soon as a Council and would love to hear if any of our women have any requests. **There is a box (and even a pad and pen) to put your ideas in for us**



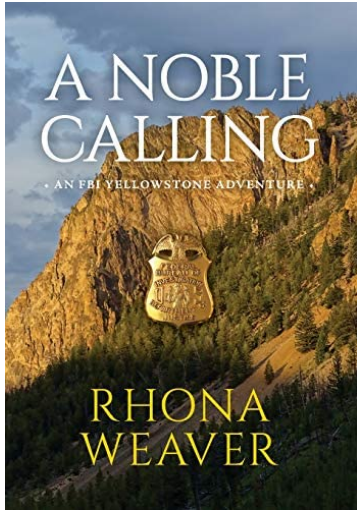
to consider. It's on the bulletin board above the nametag slots.

So stay tuned, and be looking for news from us soon!

Lynne Fowlkes, President  
Women's Ministry Council

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## Book Binders



Book Binders met on Friday, April 15, for an inspiring discussion of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, a biography of Dr. Paul Farmer by Tracy Kidder. Dr. Farmer's life and work with and for the poor and sick in Boston, New York, Haiti, Peru, and in Africa, with TB and HIV and other infectious diseases was in response to Jesus's commands in Matthew 25.

On Friday, May 20, at 10 a.m. at the church in Room 111, Book Binders will meet to talk about **A Noble Calling** by Rhona Weaver. Written by the wife of a national park ranger, this book offers behind the scenes looks at Yellowstone while also delivering an intriguing mystery involving a Christian FBI agent who is sent to the backwater post as punishment. Hope this has you interested – we'd love to have you join us!

Mary Ann Johnson

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## 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)



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

MNA Disaster Response



**Sheds of Hope**

The Sheds of HOPE team was delighted to have two guests join us for our youth build during April. These two young ladies from Lake Oconee Academy were smart, relaxed, respectful, eager to learn and help. After completing the Saturday



build, we connected with their parents and received the following reply:

*I can't tell you how much I appreciate you and what you do for our children. Sienna was incredibly exhausted and sore when she got home, but she said the rewards outweigh any of that. She also mentioned how kind and patient you and the others were. She truly enjoyed it and will plan to come back in the fall. It's not often you get such a glowing message about your child(ren). I'm so very proud of Sienna and Georgia.*

If you know local students in middle school or high school, encourage them to join us at our next youth build in October!







The next Sheds of HOPE build is scheduled for **June 6-8 and 10 (as needed)**. Volunteers are welcome, and experience isn't required, though it's helpful! 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





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

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.

*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*

## April Calendar of Events

**We've streamlined our calendar view to make it easier to read across different devices! The best way to see upcoming LOPC events is by visiting our website.**



# 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 (HFG)</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.