

# LOPC NEWSLETTER MAY 2023



From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

## *Jesus' Heart*

***But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves...As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:13,18,22-23)***

This is going to be a very significant summer in the life of our church, and I wanted to write to you to celebrate with you where God has brought us, encourage you as we move forward, and share with you some of the significant things going on.

Last fall, we launched LOPC 2.0, a campaign designed to revitalize us as a church in what we have always been about, the commission God has given us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We began to implement a vision where our desire was to see God work in our lives, church, and community to bring spiritual renewal and restoration to Lake Oconee. We wanted to join God in His mission of bringing the gospel to Lake Oconee with

the hope of seeing God bring renewal, healing, and peace to our community for His glory. One way we have of stating this vision is *rooted in the gospel for the renewal of the world*.

And we have seen God work in some amazing ways. We have been blessed to see God's faithfulness in bringing us an amazing staff in Mike and Whitney and Travis and Ellen, and we anticipate in the coming months bringing on a new worship leader to help us launch a second service, geared to reaching our community with the gospel. We experienced an incredible family movie night with over 100 people in attendance. Travis has been given opportunities to develop relationships with youth, both in our church, and in the community through involvement with the LOA football team and FCA events. Mike is getting ready to unveil a revitalized small group ministry to not only help us **grow** in our faith, but also to **go** with our faith to our friends and neighbors. There is much to celebrate as a church family. God is on the move.

When we held our meetings last fall in many of our homes, we mentioned that there were two main planks of LOPC 2.0. One was the hiring of staff. The other was to refresh and update our facilities. You have already experienced the amazing work done on the exterior of the church. This has created quite a buzz. We have already had many in the community comment on how incredible the outside of the building looks.

The reason behind this update is twofold. One was that the building is twenty years old, and part of our responsibility is to be stewards of the wonderful building that God has blessed us with. There are aspects of the building that needed updating for us to continue to provide our beautiful, classical 10:30 worship service, while building our second service. The second reason is that everything we have and everything we do is to be used to serve God's mission. Thus, as we stated, LOPC 2.0 is a call to obedience. We are simply striving to be faithful to God's call. And God's mission is outward focused. As my former seminary professor, Harvie Conn, said, "The church is the only institution that exists for the sake of its non-members." Thus, the purpose of our building and facilities is not to serve ourselves or our preferences, but it is for the purpose of connecting to and loving our community. Thus, as we refresh and update our building, we do so with the express purpose of how this will attract, be relevant to, and connect with our current community here in 2023, a community, which, as we shared, has grown considerably younger. So, the updates that are being made are being made for the purpose of connecting with and bringing into the church younger families, so that we together, as a family of disciples, can serve the next generation.

So, what specifically will we be doing through the summer? Later in the summer, we plan on redesigning and refreshing spaces used for adult education, children's education, and to have a dedicated youth space. And, very importantly, we need to ensure that young families feel secure and safe when they entrust us with their children. This is simply a part of loving people and our community well.

During May, work will be done in the narthex and sanctuary:

- During the week of **May 15<sup>th</sup>**, the audio and visual system and lighting will be updated.

- On Sunday **May 21<sup>st</sup>**, you will experience our first worship service with the new equipment. Immediately following worship on May 21<sup>st</sup>, we would like to invite you to an informational congregational meeting to continue our communication with you and answer any questions you may have.
- The week of **May 22<sup>nd</sup>** is when the flooring in the narthex and sanctuary will be done.
- On Sunday **May 28<sup>th</sup>**, we will have an outdoor worship service down in the pavilion followed by a Memorial Day picnic where we hope we can invite family, friends, and neighbors to enjoy not only worship but fellowship with us. Again, this is a wonderful time to connect relationally with our community.
- The week of **May 29<sup>th</sup>** is when the painting will be completed.
- Sunday, **June 4<sup>th</sup>**, will be our grand re-opening celebrating together the goodness of the Lord.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us, but with every opportunity there is also considerable risk. I implore us to be in prayer, not only for the work but for our hearts, as well. We recognize that change is hard. Change always involves loss of some kind. But I am calling us to remember why we are doing this. Jesus, in the passage I cited at the beginning of this article, in His High Priestly prayer, states that He wishes for us to have His own joy fulfilled in us. Jesus' heart for us is joy. And then He goes on to say that as the Father sent Him into the world, He has sent us into the world. There seems to be a connection there between our experiencing Jesus' joy and being sent. The more we are a family on mission together, the more joy we will experience. And, as Jesus then prayed, He asked that we would experience unity for the express purpose that the world may know that the Father sent Jesus. Our putting aside our preferences for the sake of unity is, itself, missional.

May Jesus' joy truly be in you as we together serve Lake Oconee for the glory of God.

Pastor Jeff Birch

## Save the Date!

### Memorial Day Weekend

While the narthex and sanctuary are getting some upgrades over Memorial Day weekend, we're moving worship outdoors to the pavilion. Following the service is a picnic that's open to the public, so please invite family, friends, and neighbors to join us. The church will provide burgers and hot dogs, but we need help with sides and desserts. Sign up in the narthex!







**MISSIONAL**  
**COMMUNITY**  
*lifestyle training*

**3rd WEDNESDAYS**  
**5:30-7:00pm**

May 17  
June 21  
July 19  
August 16

**Check out the insert in Sunday's bulletin for more details!**

## Kairos Prison Ministry



**COOKIES**

for 

Washington State Prison  
Davisboro, GA

**PLEASE DROP OFF AT LOPC BY 1PM  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2023**

Cookies are needed for the Kairos Prison Ministry! If you would like to help, here are the guidelines:

1. Each cookie should be 2" to 3" in diameter.
2. Cookies should be baked with prayer.
3. Cookies should be sealed in a Ziploc bag (6 cookies per bag).
4. Please label anything that contains peanut butter or nuts.
5. A note can be placed in each bag to say something about God's love, such as, "Jesus loves you and so do we."
6. Short on time? We've got cookie mix in the coolers located in the LOPC kitchen. Pick up at your convenience. Thank you to Tommy Evans for the donation!
7. **Please drop off cookies at the church by 1pm on Wednesday, May 10.**

# Women's Ministry



The ladies who attended the **Daughters of the King Tea** had a wonderful time reconnecting with one another and hearing from Ellen Skillingstad and Whitney Palombo. Thank you to these two women for sharing their stories and their prayer needs, and thank you to the team of volunteers who helped pull off such a special evening for the Women's Ministry! We'd also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Deacons who moved everything indoors due to the weather. We appreciate you!

## Better Together Day Retreat

On Saturday, May 20, from 10 am – 4pm (rooms 110-112), the Women's Ministry Leadership Team will host "Better Together" led by Sue Burmeister and Rhonda Manis. This day retreat is **\*\*FREE\*\*** and is designed for women in the church who want to be more intentional in discipling one another and being Gospel-centered within our community. The schedule will be a combination of prayer, training sessions, and round-table discussion/Q&A. Lunch will be included at no cost. This is a terrific opportunity to meet new faces and share ideas about how to work together to love our neighbors. Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office.

**Registration deadline is Sunday, May 14.**



## Women Connecting to Women in Prayer



Our core group of women coming together to prayer for our church met on Tuesday, April 11, to pray for our church, including our pastors and staff, LOPC 2.0, elders, and all our church family in need. We included prayers of lament for our community, as well as the nearby community of Nashville, TN, that suffered tragic deaths in their PCA church school. We also lifted up our General Assembly committee and Mission to North America for the month of April as they continue to find new ways to serve the PCA in planting new churches and building God's kingdom. We invite all women to join us in this prayer ministry and will be meeting on **Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 1:00 pm. in room 109**



Barb Rountree



### 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!*

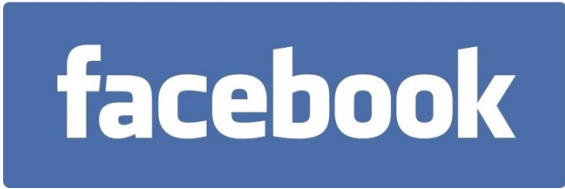
Check us out on podcasts and social media!



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



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## MNA Disaster Response





## Sheds of HOPE

The LOPC Sheds of HOPE team had a very productive month in April! They completed a youth shed build and welcomed two students, with one traveling from Griffin, GA, after hearing about it from a family friend who is an LOPC member. The following week, the Sheds team was back on campus for skid steer training with Mike Kennamer, Warehouse Manager for Mission to North America Disaster Response in Rome, GA. **The next Sheds of HOPE build is scheduled for May 8-10.** We'd love to have you join us!

## 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...*



# May 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 (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.

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

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