

LOPC NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2023



From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

Some Reflections

This past Sunday, we were blessed to have Jim Sheppard with us to preach, and afterward he met with our leaders to discuss the topic of stewardship and discipleship. It was a wonderful Sunday, filled with both encouragement and challenge from the Scriptures. Jim preached from Acts 2:42-47, not only a favorite passage of mine, but also a foundational passage for our vision of what we aspire to be as a church.

Jim discussed the five holy habits of the early church. They were that the early church was devoted to holy teaching, holy fellowship, holy breaking of bread, holy prayer and worship, and holy generosity. All these holy habits speak to the vitality of the early church's community and its being gripped by the message of the gospel.

First, it strikes me that Luke's description here of the early church is not a church that is experiencing extraordinary revival, but rather, the normal everyday life of the church. That is what a healthy church looks like. A healthy church is cultivating these holy habits. A healthy church is devoted to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, prayer and worship, and generosity. This is the normal Christian community, the normal Christian life.

Second, I can't help thinking that it all comes back to being devoted to the teaching. Why? Because the apostles' teaching was focused on the gospel. The teaching was gospel-centered and Christ-centered. That is why I loved Jim's emphasis on the heart. For example, when Jim was talking about holy generosity, he rightly pointed out that God is not after our money. He doesn't need our money. God is after our heart. Money is simply an indicator of where

our loves lie. What is we love most? I loved his mentioning Luke 16:13, “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” Our generosity is for the purpose of God transforming us. What a beautiful reminder.

And lastly, in Jim’s speaking with the leaders, the main thing that stood out to me, that I want to share with you, is that giving is a journey that God invites us to participate in. He mentioned that there were three categories of giving: (1) our everyday giving to support the work of the church; (2) opportunity giving, such as campaigns like the one for LOPC 2.0; (3) and legacy giving, where we can decide where we want our assets that God has blessed us with during our lifetime to go after we pass from this life. And he mentioned that, on this giving journey, there are five types of givers. There is the emergent giver who is seeking what they should do with their stuff. The consistent giver who is asking what should I do with God’s stuff? They might be giving but not fully committed to the concept of life stewardship. Next is the intentional giver who is giving, but still may be giving out of guilt. Then there is the spiritual giver who is growing in generosity, and finally the surrendered giver, who asks not what should I give but what should I keep? We are all on different parts of the journey, and the point is not to beat ourselves up (remember the holy teaching of the gospel), but to ask where am I, and where does the Lord want to take me?

I am grateful for Jim to take the time to come and invest in us as a congregation. I know I walked away with a lot to think about. God has truly blessed us. I hope the aspiration of being an Acts 2 church, one that is marked by these holy habits, is a compelling vision to you. I know this is a vision that gets me up in the morning, and I feel incredibly privileged to be able to give my life to serving this vision. I am overwhelmed by God’s generosity to me, and I love getting to serve this vision with all of you. I am excited about what the Lord is doing here at LOPC, and I hope you are as well.

Pastor Jeff Birch

The Month of October is...



APPRECIATION MONTH



Fall Festival & Trunk or Treat



Join us on Sunday, October 29th from 4-7pm for the return of our annual Fall Festival! This year we will have trunk or treat, a petting zoo, free dinner, crafts, games, and more! All are welcome so please invite friends, family, and neighbors. No registration required. Costumes encouraged (but please nothing too scary for young children)! **If you would like to host a trunk, please sign up the narthex, and Ellen will email you with more information. Candy**

donations also appreciated.

Prayer Walk



Inquirers' Class



INQUIRERS' CLASS

Learn more about LOPC
and church membership!

Friday, November 17 (6 - 9 pm)
Saturday, November 18 (9 am - 3 pm)

The next Inquirers' Class has been rescheduled for November 17 & 18. This will be a weekend class beginning with dinner Friday night (6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.) followed by teaching. The class will reconvene Saturday morning (9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) at the church. Lunch will be provided. Childcare is available upon request. There is no pressure to join the church, although the class is a prerequisite for membership at Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church.

Women's Ministry

Ladies, if you missed out on attending the Women's Outreach Retreat last weekend, there's still an opportunity to hear from Tami Resch and her wealth of wisdom and experience. Click on the video link below to access a recording on our YouTube channel.



Women Connecting to Women in Prayer

The next women's prayer meeting will be in January 2024. In the meantime, we invite you to join the monthly prayer walks led by Pastor Mike Palombo!



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.

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MNA Disaster Response



Sheds of HOPE

The Sheds of HOPE build for October has been cancelled. The next shed build is November 13-15, and we would love to see some new faces! No experience is necessary, and on-site training is provided. This opportunity is open to the public, and lunch is provided!

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

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...

October 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.



Click here for the LOPC website calendar.

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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