



## LOPC NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2022

From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

### ***Why Is Change so Hard?***

The phrase *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* means, "The church reformed, always reforming." The phrase comes from the Reformation era and is part of our reformed heritage. Often misunderstood, it doesn't mean that we support all change or innovation, such as theological or doctrinal compromise, but it does get at an important truth.

Our reformed tradition does, in fact, embrace change, or reformation of the church for the sake of the gospel. In fact, the word *reformed* refers to the desire to reform the church so that we are growing more Christlike and more effective in fulfilling God's mission of reaching our communities for Christ.

A very important Scripture in all of this is found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (which by the way we are currently reading in our Community Bible Reading). The context is Paul speaking of how he is willing to surrender his rights for the sake of the gospel. He says in 1 Cor. 9:16, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." Then he writes, beginning in v.19 of the same chapter, "For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings," (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

Do you notice how many times Paul says something to the effect of, “that I might win them,” or “for the sake of the gospel”? Paul’s primary concern is that he might be used by God to reach those who do not yet know Christ, that they may be saved. When he says, “I become like a Jew, or those under the law, or those outside the law,” he is saying he is willing to sacrifice or give up his rights, his preferences, what might be legitimately his for the greater good of winning others to Christ.

Harvie Conn, in his book *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* writes, “One cannot be a missionary church and continue insisting that the world must come to the church on the church’s terms. It must become a “go” structure.... The church must recapture its identity as the only organization in the world that exists for the sake of its nonmembers.”

So, friends being missional is not an option. It is obedience. God calls us to this. This is our identity. I believe Dr. Conn is right. The church is the only organization that exists for the sake of its nonmembers. There are implications to living out this conviction. It means change. And change is hard. We all like the way we do things. The status quo seems comfortable and familiar. We all love our preferences.

But I must challenge, don’t we want to align our desires with the Scriptures? Isn’t obedience more important than our comfort? Of course, we do not want ever to compromise the gospel. Our doctrine is non-negotiable. But isn’t what Paul is speaking about here in 1Cor. 9 part of our doctrine? And doesn’t our reformation heritage encourage us to be continually reforming? I know these are tough questions and difficult issues, but they are very important for us to wrestle with if we are to be obedient to Christ’s command for us to, “Go and make disciples of all nations,” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Change is hard. I get that, and I do sympathize. But these are exciting times here at LOPC and I believe God has a rich and exciting future ahead for us. I am excited to join with you in the adventure of joining God in His mission to reach this community for Christ and to be used by Him in bringing renewal, healing, and peace to Lake Oconee for the glory of God.

## September 5: Church Office Closed

In honor of Labor Day, the church office will be closed on Monday, September 5. We will resume regular business hours on Tuesday, September 6.

## Sunday School and Home Fellowship Groups

**Here at Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church, we believe that it is essential for the spiritual health and growth of Christians to be involved in regular Bible study and fellowship. We invite you to be part of a group, meet new friends, and find fellowship and encouraging community in a Sunday School Class, Home Fellowship Group (HFG) and/or Bible Study. We want**

you to learn new things and grow in Christ. If you need more information than what is listed here, please call the church office at 706-484-0600. We'd love to talk to you.

*"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another."* Hebrews 10:24-25.

### Sunday School

Sunday School is set to resume on September 11, at 9:15 a.m. **The adult class** (Rooms 111-112) will be a team-taught class, *Practices of Missional Living*. In this class, we will be exploring the practical aspects of what it means to be missional, and how every member is called to participate in God's mission. **The youth class** (middle/high school students) meets in Room 108. Led by Harold Parker, they will continue with their study on *The Gospel According to Joseph*. **The children's class** (K5-5<sup>th</sup> grade) led by Evie Birch, meets in Room 106 and is using the curriculum *Investigating God's Word* from One Story Ministries. **Nursery** is available for infants/toddlers in Room 104.

### Home Fellowship Groups

- **Hunt HFG – Restarts September 7.** Led by Wes Hunt, they meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., in various homes. On September 7<sup>th</sup>, they will meet for dinner and discussion at the home of Wes & Valerie Hunt. This group will study *The Book of Job* by Derek Thomas.
- **Parker HFG – Restarts September 7.** Led by Harold Parker, they meet the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the church in rooms 110-112. This group will continue their study of the book *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges.
- **Forrester HFG – Restarts September 14.** Led by Dick Forrester, they meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the church in the Choir Room. They will continue their study of the *Gospel of Mark*, based on a study guide by Tim Keller.
- **Wood HFG – Restarts September 18.** Led by Harley Wood, they meet the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at 6:30 p.m., in the home of Dick & Barbara Pomarolli. The group will study *Union with Christ*, by Sinclair Ferguson.

### Bible Studies

- **Life on Life** – Are you looking for a new kind of Bible study? Life on Life (LOL) ministry will begin its fifth year at LOPC in mid-October. It features intimate groups of 4 to 5 people who share the gospel and their lives, as well, each week. LOL is a global Christian ministry reaching nearly every continent and 14 countries.
- **Tuesday Early-Morning Ladies' Bible Study** – Led by Karen Hildebrand and Jan Murray, they meet every Tuesday (year-round) at 7:30 a.m., for deep study in the Word, discussion, and prayer. Meetings are held in person at the home of Karen Hildebrand. This group will continue their study of Isaiah. All women are invited.
- **Wednesday Mid-Morning Ladies' Bible Study** – Restarts September 7. Led by Sue Burmeister, they meet every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m., at the church in rooms 110-112. The group will study of *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. The book and workbook will be \$27. All women are invited.

# ESL Beginning September 11

## ESL English as a Second Language CLASSES

FREE!

- For adults of all levels
- Childcare available
- Sundays 4-6 pm

**BEGINNING**  
9.11.2022



**COMENZANDO**  
9.11.2022

## CLASES DE INGLÉS

¡GRATIS!

- Para adultos de todos niveles
- Cuidado de niños disponible
- Los domingos 16:00-18:00

113 Scott Rd • Eatonton GA 31024 • Scan for a registration form.



ESL has entered its promotion/advertising phase. There are pamphlets and posters in the narthex. Please take some to give to your favorite nail salon, restaurants, construction site, house cleaner, and/or lawn maintenance /landscaping crew. Adults speaking any foreign language are welcome. Registration begins Sunday, September 11, 4:00 p.m., but interested persons can also join a class any Sunday after the first Sunday. We still welcome any volunteers, as we don't know how many students our God will send to us. Many workers help share the workload to provide relief for travel or illnesses. We share the gospel in every class session.

## Here's Life Africa: September 30

**Friday, September 30**  
**LOPC Sanctuary**  
**7-8 pm**

featuring  
**Bishop Dr. Stanley Hotay,**  
Director



**Here's Life**  
**AFRICA**  
BRINGING JESUS TO MILLIONS





**Mark your calendars:** LOPC presents *Here's Life Africa* with guest speaker Bishop Dr. Stanley Hotay, September 30, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. More details coming soon.

## Women's Ministry



***Fall into service with the women of LOPC*** In an effort to support MNA (Mission to North America) Disaster Relief Response, we will be assembling Flood Buckets and Hygiene Kits, **Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:00** in the Pavilion (weather permitting). Sign-Up will begin Sept 11<sup>th</sup>. Light refreshments will be available. Come join the fun!!

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A little rain didn't stop the fun on Monday night, August 29, at the "**Pastor and Potluck**" event hosted by the LOPC Women's Ministry. In fact, the rain cooled temperatures off to be downright pleasant, and the fellowship was sweet and the food plentiful. Thanks to everyone who planned and attended!



## Women Connecting to Women in Prayer

All women are invited to join with other women to pray. We meet in the church library on 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

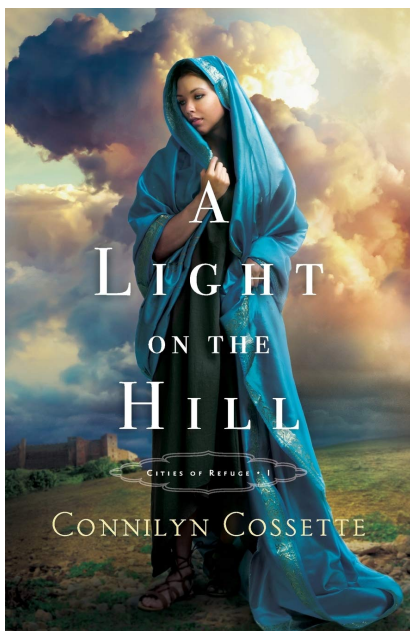




each other. We want to be obedient to God's command to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Women's Ministry Council is praying that you will join us.

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## Book Binders



Book Binders met for a salad luncheon at the church on Friday, August 19. Over the delicious shared meal, ideas were shared about past and future books to read. A schedule for books to be read this year will be forthcoming.

Our book for **Friday, September 16, from 10 – 11**, in Room 112 at the church, will be *A Light on the Hill* by Connilyn Cossette. Joshua 20: 1-3 records the establishment of cities of refuge, and this novel envisions how those cities would have worked. This is definitely a book that will stretch your imagination and take you to Old Testament times.

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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

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# 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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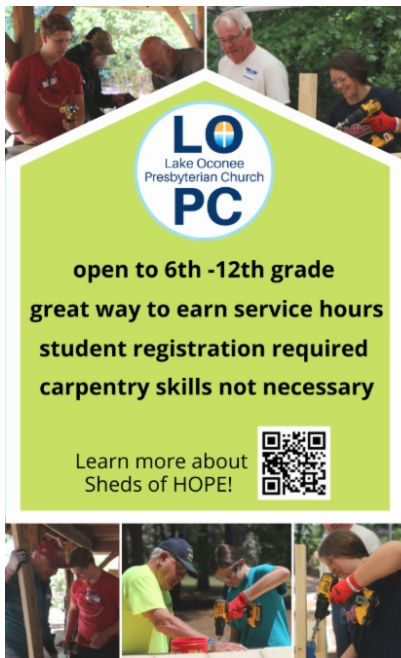




## Sheds of Hope

Sheds of HOPE has an upcoming shed build scheduled for September 19-21. Volunteers are needed, and carpentry experience is not necessary!

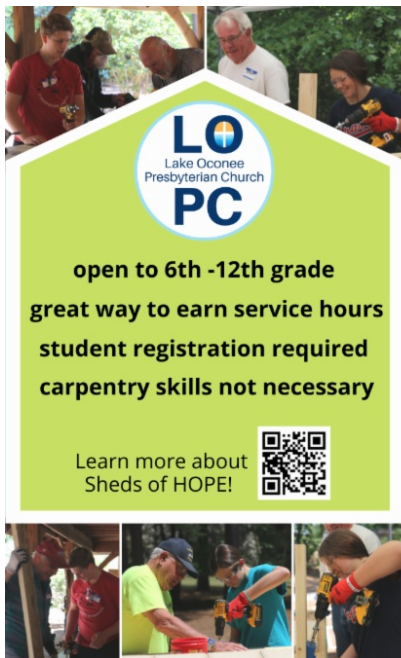

**In October, we will host another Youth Build,** and we'd love your help getting word out to our community. We'll be promoting this through social media, public service announcements, and word of mouth, so please help us by sharing this exciting opportunity with anyone who might be interested. Church membership is not required, and neither is woodworking experience.



**LO**  
Lake Oconee  
Presbyterian Church  
**PC**

open to 6th -12th grade  
great way to earn service hours  
student registration required  
carpentry skills not necessary

Learn more about  
Sheds of HOPE!



The flyer is a vertical rectangle with a light green background. At the top, there are two small photos of people working on a shed. Below the photos is the Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church logo. The text is centered and lists the event details. At the bottom, there is a QR code and another photo of people working on a shed.

## Sheds of HOPE youth build

- Thursday, October 20 (1 pm - 3 pm)
- Friday, October 21 \*(9 am - 3 pm)
- Saturday, October 22 \*(9 am - 3 pm)

\*Students are invited to join us during these times!

## HELP PROVIDE A SAFE PLACE

### FOR FAMILIES WHO

have lost their homes to disasters  
lack dry storage for salvaged items  
need encouragement and care

Public welcome. Church membership is not required.



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 Grapevine Studies. Grapevine's mission and vision is 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...*

## September 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.

LOPC  
Lake Oconee  
Presbyterian Church  
PC

### 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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