



LOPC NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2023

From Jeff Birch, Senior Pastor

God's Passion for His Church

God amazes me with the way He works. Think about it for a second. God is all-powerful, Almighty, all-knowing, all-wise. He is completely sovereign over the universe. Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all his host." All He did was to breathe, and out came the universe. Pretty amazing! Even more amazing to me is that this God who can do anything chooses to accomplish His work in the world through the church. God, who could simply accomplish His redemptive kingdom purposes simply through breathing, chooses to use you and me - the church - as His means or agents of redemption. When we talk about being missional, let us never forget that being missional begins with the fact that God has a mission. The church is here to serve God's mission.

During the month of February, we celebrate Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day is all about love. Now, that can be a happy topic for many, but it can also be a difficult topic. But I want to encourage you with something here for a minute. How much does God love the church? What is God's passion for the church? Let's take a look.

One of the images used in Scripture to depict the church is the temple in the Old Testament. The temple, built by King Solomon, had as its purpose to be a place for God's Name to dwell. God chose the temple to be a dwelling place for Himself. It would be where He would reveal His glory and from where He would demonstrate His rule in the world. Solomon's prayer of dedication gives us a vision of the temple as God's dwelling place. In 2 Chronicles 6 we read, "But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens,

cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence. May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, this place of which you said you would put your Name there." And later we read after Solomon finished his prayer of dedication, "When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."

The New Testament tells us that we, as Christians, are the temple of God. "For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." How would you like to come to church this next Sunday and see fire come down from heaven? This is God's vision for the church. That His glory and power would dwell with His people in such a way that it would be like fire from heaven. God's vision is that the church would be the place for His glory to dwell and be revealed to the world.

How are we doing at revealing His glory? Is this our vision for the church and our commitment to the church? How should we respond? We learn a little later in a very famous verse that is often quoted from 2 Chronicles, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there."

Do we realize that this instruction is for the church? It is for Christians. It is instruction to Christians to humble themselves, pray, seek the face of God, and turn from their wicked ways. Is this what we are committed to? Is this what we have a passion for? It needs to be. And listen to God's promise. God longs for the church to live this way. He says if the church will be committed to these things, He promises to not only forgive but also to heal and to dwell with us. Glory. Fire from heaven. This is God's passion for the church. He wants the church to be His power center for revealing Himself and ministering to the world. He wants the church to be His agents of bringing about His kingdom, His rule and reign. He wants the church to be where His invisible rule and reign is made visible for all to see. Is this your vision for the church? Are you on the same page as your Lord?

How do you get on the same page? Well, as with everything, it begins with your mindset. How you think about things will always determine how you live. It is why Paul said we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. So, we must have this perspective, this mindset, when it comes to the church. And, lastly, we must see this is why Christ died for the church. His passion was enough that our Lord was willing to give His life for the church to accomplish this vision. Paul says in Ephesians 5, "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church

and gave Himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

God’s passion for the church? His passion led Him to send His Son, Jesus, to die for her and to make her radiant and beautiful. God sees His church as a beautiful bride, spectacularly radiant, without spot or blemish. And we are His church. He is everyday making us more beautiful for Himself.

Do you have the same passion for the church that God does?

Pastor Jeff Birch

Youth Group Super Bowl Party



The Youth Group (grades 6-12) will gather at the Skillingstad’s home (187 Loch Way, Eatonton) on **Sunday, February 12, 6-10PM**, to fellowship, play games, eat, compete for prizes, and watch the Super Bowl. Plan to invite your friends! This will take the place of normal Sunday afternoon activities.

ESL Ministry + Goodwill

Turn your donations into gift vouchers!

LOPC's English as a Second Language Ministry (ESL) partners with Goodwill. As a partner, we can participate in a voucher program that benefits our ESL students and/or those in need. Here's how it works:

1. When you take a donation to Goodwill, include one of the LOPC donor referral



Donor Referral Card



Date: _____
Donor Name: _____

Please take all donations to a Goodwill Donation Center or Retail Store.

This form is to be left with a Goodwill Donation Center employee.
A current list of donation sites and retail stores is available at www.goodwillworks.org.
Vouchers will be issued directly to the organization listed above by Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and the CSRA.

cards. These are available for free in the narthex.

2. For every three donor referral cards received, Goodwill issues a \$20 voucher to LOPC (good at any location). These can be given to our ESL students or to any other benevolence need deemed appropriate by the Deacons.

Inquirers' Class



INQUIRERS' CLASS

New to LOPC?

Interested in church membership?

Want to know more about being a Christian?

Join us for the Inquirers' Class!

Friday, February 24 (6 - 9 pm)

Saturday, February 25 (9 am - 3 pm)



Contact the church office to register.

GriefShare Begins February 20

Help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend

GRIEF SHARE®

Monday afternoons (13 sessions)

beginning February 20

3:00 - 5:00 pm at LOPC

\$20 (includes workbook)

Women's Ministry



Thank you to all who helped plan the "Trauma Awareness and Resiliency" presentation with guest speaker, Bob Delaney! (And a special thanks to Dick Forrester for braving the traffic on Highway 44 to install a banner in front of Truist Bank - with permission.) We had several first-time guests for the event, and we thank those in our church who not only attended but also invited family, friends, and neighbors.

BETTER
together

a TEAM BASED approach to
Women's Ministry

Women's Leadership Training Conference
February 23-25, 2023 • Atlanta, Georgia

cdm *Women's* MINISTRY

Ladies, mark your calendars for March 25, when Sue Burmeister and Rhonda Manis will be leading a day retreat and sharing highlights from the "Better

Together" training conference in Atlanta (see above). Details are forthcoming, and volunteers are needed to help plan this event! If interested, contact anyone on the Women's Ministry Leadership Team to volunteer:

- Sue Burmeister, President
- Rhonda Manis, Vice President
- Carol Johansen, Treasurer
- Karen Tepper, Spiritual Growth Advisor
- Laura Terry, Secretary

Women Connecting to Women in Prayer

All women are invited to join with other women to pray. We meet in Room 109 at 1:00 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. **This month's date is Tuesday, February 14, and the facilitator will be 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. Please contact Brenda Roberts at 404-316-8579.

Church App


Join realm[®]
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 Sheds of HOPE team at LOPC is planning a special build in March to work alongside some students from GA Tech and to help train a group from another church. More details to come! Please continue to pray for this ministry and the work they do.

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...

Psalm 78:5-7a

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

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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