



December 21, 2025

LAKE OCONEE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday in Advent

God writes His Word on our Lives, building us into a Family engaged in Spirit-filled Service.



1089 Lake Oconee Parkway

Eatonton, GA 31024

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Cheri Kitchens, Church Secretary

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Pastor Steven Hayden

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In Preparation of Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at this congregation in the confession that, as He says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but His very body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us.

For further study, see **Matthew 5:23f, 10:32f, 18:15-35, 26:26-29, 1 Cor. 11:17-34**

We welcome to the Lord's Supper all Christians who are baptized, who have communed in a Christian church, and who share our understanding that, along with the bread and wine, we receive the very body and blood of our living Lord Jesus—for the strengthening of our faith and witness.

The glasses in the very center of each tray contain non-alcoholic wine for the use of those receiving communion who are unable to drink alcohol.

Children who do not commune are invited to come to the rail for a blessing.

If you need communion brought to your seat, please let an usher know.

Before Communing

Dear Savior, at Your gracious invitation I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your Holy Spirit that I may be ever watchful and live a true and godly life in Your service; through Jesus Christ, my Lord Amen

Elder of the Month: Don Menke

Greeter: Virginia Daley

Scripture Reader: Kathie Kueven

Communion Assistant: Kathie Kueven

Usher: Don Menke & Jerry Campbell

Coffee Fellowship: Connie Piepenbrink & Jackie Birtcher

Sunday Counter(s): Terry Pedersen & Charlie Crouch

Flowers: In loving memory of Lance Pailer on the occasion of his birthday

Pre-Service Music: This is time to turn our hearts & minds toward God in preparation of worship.

Instrumental Prelude

Dr. Lev Ryabinin

Choir Anthem

Dr. Youngmi Kim

Welcome

Invocation

Confession and Absolution

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

Congregational Hymn 350

"Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come"



1 Come, Thou pre - cious Ran - som, come, On - ly hope for
2 En - ter now my wait - ing heart, Glo - rious King and
3 My ho - san - nas and my palms Gra - cious - ly re -
4 Hail! Ho - san - na, Da - vid's Son! Je - sus, hear our



sin - ful mor - tals! Come, O Sav - ior of the world!
Lord most ho - ly. Dwell in me and ne'er de - part,
ceive, I pray Thee; Ev - er - more, as best I can,
sup - pli - ca - tion! Let Thy king - dom, scepter, crown,



O - pen are to Thee all por - tals. Come, Thy beau - ty
Though I am but poor and low - ly. Ah, what rich - es
Sav - ior, I will hom - age pay Thee, And in faith I
Bring us bless - ing and sal - va - tion, That for - ev - er



let us see; Anx - ious - ly we wait for Thee.
will be mine When Thou art my guest di - vine!
will em - brace, Lord, Thy mer - it through Thy grace.
we may sing: Hail! Ho - san - na to our King.

Text and tune: Public domain

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The First Lesson: Isaiah 7:10–17

¹⁰Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” ¹³And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

The Epistle: Romans 1:1–7

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

R: This is the Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

The Alleluia Verse



Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18–25

R: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew Chapter 1

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

R: This is the Gospel of the Lord
C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn # 357 v1-3

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d'rest
3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy

cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
all things might - i - ly; To us the path of
tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst

ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
knowl - edge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
give the Law In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.

Refrain

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el

Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text and tune: Public domain

The Message

Pastor Steven Hayden

Nicene Creed

C: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very

God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Offering

To Our Guests: We do not charge for any of our services. All our services, programs, and expenses are freely supported by the gifts and offerings of our members. As our guests, you have not been invited for what you can give, but for what God can give you. The Offering is collected at the door when you enter.

Prayer of the Church

** (After the pastor ends each petition with, "Lord in Your Mercy, the congregation responds with, "Hear our prayer.")*

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and

the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Preface

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

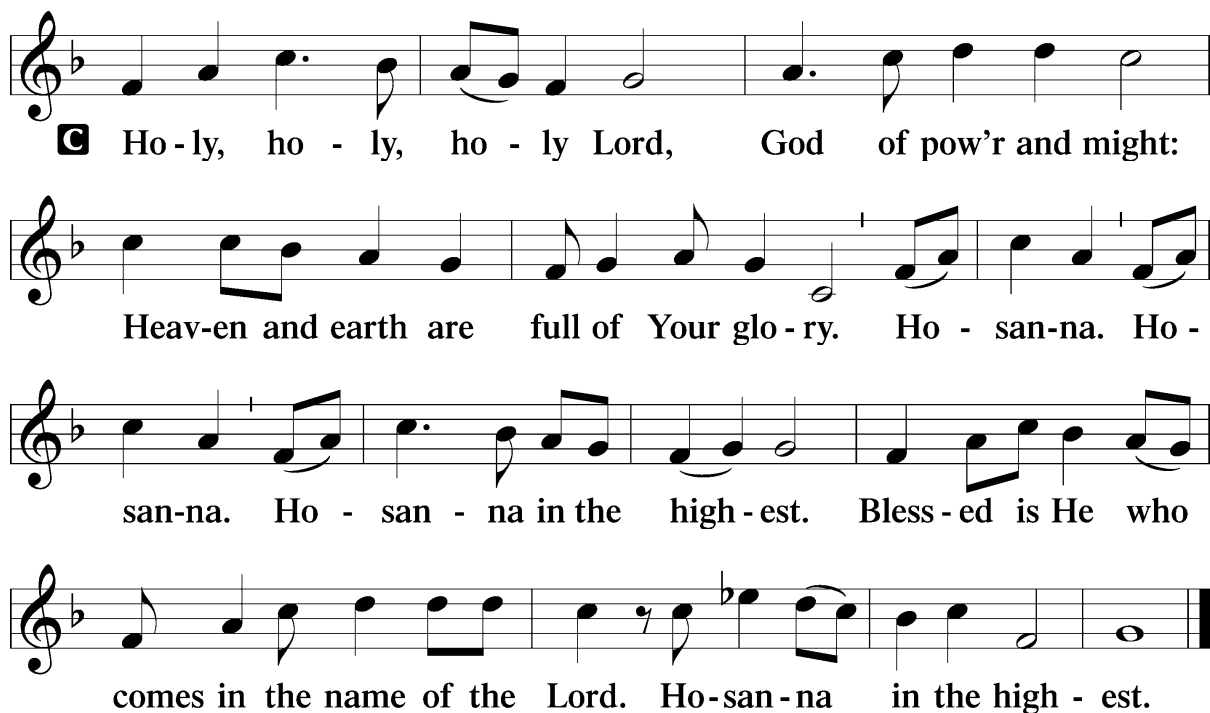
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of Your glo - ry. Ho - san-na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Words of Our Lord

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Proclamation of Christ

P: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.


C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pax Domini


P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.


Agnus Dei



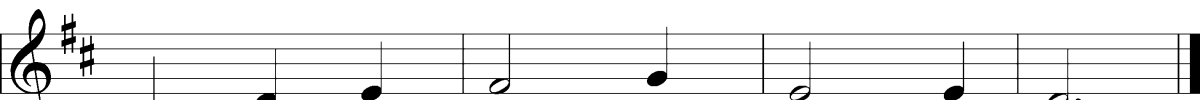
1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

The Distribution

Communion Hymn # 357, v 4-7

"Come, O Come, Emmanuel"



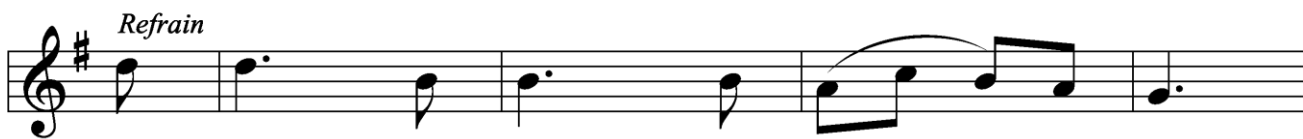
4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from
5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen
6 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us
7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In one the



Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y
wide our heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that
by Thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y
hearts of all man - kind; Bid Thou our sad di -



pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
leads on high, And close the path to mis - er - y.
clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
vi - sions cease, And be Thy - self our King of Peace.



Refrain
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text and tune: Public domain

Post-Communion Collect

P: We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Benediction

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Congregational Hymn # 361

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, And, gath - ered all a - bove
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!
4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;
While mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won-d'ring love.
So God im-parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.
Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear His com - ing; But in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
And prais - es sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!
Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text and tune: Public domain

Announcements

The Dismissal

P: Go in Peace, Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

+	<u>Post-service Music</u>	+
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GOD'S BLESSINGS to all those celebrating this week

Birthdays:

- 12/25 Glenn Papit

Anniversaries:

- 12/24 Glenn & Alba Papit
- 12/27 Pat & Jean Page

Best wishes!

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Tuesday	Women's Bible Class	10 am
Wednesday	Zoom Bible Class	No Class
Wednesday	Christmas Eve Service	7 pm
Thursday	Christmas Communion Service	10 am
Sunday	Choir	9 am
Sunday	Adult Bible Class	9 am
Sunday	Worship	10:30 am

Sunday Morning Bible

The study of the Old Testament is nothing less than an exploration into the thoughts and desires of God for ordinary people like you and me. It takes us from this hardened and selfish world into the promise of a world where God's peace, justice, and mercy will be complete.

We can view the world as meaningless and without hope. But Jesus Christ came to rescue the world from its quagmire, and His deliverance continues to change our lives.

Join us every Sunday morning at 9am in person in the church sanctuary or live-streamed on Facebook and our website, for “Exploring God’s Old Testament”.

Wednesday morning Zoom class

Martin Luther once identified three things that make a good theologian: prayer for the Holy Spirit to understand God’s Word; meditation on this Word; and, as the “touchstone,” enduring afflictions; afflictions not *even though* we are Christians, but afflictions *because* we are Christians.

Luther noticed a discrepancy in his day: On the one hand, Scripture is filled with passages about the necessary suffering of the saints in the world as they follow their crucified Lord in church, home, work, and state. On the other hand, the teaching and practice of many seemed to be about avoiding this God-sent cross at all costs.

Today being “religious” is widely seen as a path to freedom from pain and suffering. Scripture holds out a different vision, where we are shaped by the cross of Christ.

Wednesday Zoom Class is not meeting until January 14, 2026.

Women’s Bible Study

The Women’s Bible Study is meeting in the Council or meeting room around the big table with informal sessions and open discussion about the Bible and its impact on our everyday lives.

The Women’s Bible group has launched a study of the book of Proverbs. *The Way of Wisdom* considers principles on everyday topics like words, work, friendship, marriage, parenting, neighborliness, money management, leadership influence, and more. We will discover the wisdom of Proverbs as an invitation to steadily walk God’s way in God’s world. Please plan on joining us on Tuesdays at 10:00 am in the church

conference room for the study and the wonderful discussions we always have about how what we learn impacts our lives.

Please join The Women's Bible Study on Tuesdays at 10:00 am in the Council Room.



What do you remember about the church your family attended while you were a child? Perhaps you remember the look of the sanctuary. Perhaps you remember a certain pastor. Most likely when you think back you can remember one of your Sunday school teachers. After all, they were the ones who truly showed that they cared about you, and that God cared about you.

We are looking for Children's Sunday school teachers here at Lake Oconee to show our kids that Jesus cares about them. We would like 2 teachers for each Sunday. If you are willing to demonstrate God's love to the kids of our church, please find the signup sheet on the blue table in the entry way. Bible school will be held Sunday mornings from 9:00 -10am.



Upcoming Blood Drive dates are scheduled for **Jan 8** and **Feb 5**.

We will need volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering email Pam Kunz at Kunzpd3@outlook.com. To sign up to donate blood go to redcrossblood.org and use code LOLC.



Lake Oconee Lutheran Church is thankful for all who donate flowers for our Sunday morning worship. If you would like to give flowers, please remember the following points:

*If you would like the flowers to be listed in the bulletin, please include all the information that you want on the signup sheet: flowers given in memory of..., flowers given in honor of...etc. The signup sheet is located on the blue table in the entry.

*We would ask that you specifically request or include no lilies in the arrangements. We have a church member who is deathly allergic to lilies and cannot remain in the church if they are present.

Thank you for your help.

Just a Reminder



Lake Oconee Lutheran is able to receive gifts by credit card/debit card now. You will find the terminal in the entryway on the shelving near the kitchen. Please be aware that there is a charge to the church for each gift received in this way. **(If you include your name on the form (screen) when it asks, the gift will show up on your church statement, but we are unable to do that if you do not input your name).** You may also request a receipt sent to you if desired.



Benefits of Singing

- ♪ It makes you happier
- ♪ It reduces stress, anxiety and depression
- ♪ It brings people together
- ♪ It exercises your lungs
- ♪ It improves your posture
- ♪ It shares the love of Jesus

Please come and join our choir as we make “a joyful noise unto the Lord!”

The choir meets for rehearsal every **Sunday** at **9 am** in the choir room.



For a quarter of a century, the Lord has guided us in obedience to His Word and strengthened us for lives of service in His name. He has poured out His abundant blessings and we give thanks for a bountiful harvest in our community. As we celebrate our 25th anniversary in February 2026, we are looking back at our blessings and forward to our future. To help commemorate the occasion, we would like to collect photographs from the life of our church. If you have photos to share, please email digital copies to Pam Kunz at kunzpd3@outlook.com or place them in her folder to be scanned and returned. Be sure to note your name in the back of the photo so it can be returned. We are also looking to connect with former congregants who have left the community. Please share any current contact information you may have. Details for the celebration will be released in the coming months.

Christmas Services



✿ Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 24 • 7:00 PM

Join us for a beautiful evening of Scripture, carols, and candlelight as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. We invite you and your family to share in this peaceful and joyful time as we reflect on the true meaning of Christmas together.

✦ Christmas Day Communion Service

Thursday, December 25 • 10:00 AM

Come worship with us on Christmas morning as we share in Holy Communion and rejoice in the gift of Christ.

The Church office is closed on the following dates:

- Wednesday December 24
- Thursday, December 25
- Wednesday December 31
- Thursday January 1.



Volunteers Needed!

We need people to sign up to help! We need help in the Little Free Pantry, Coffee fellowship, greeters, ushers and more.

You can sign up for the following Sunday Worship Volunteer Roles online through Sign-up Genius or on the clipboard on the blue table:

- Greeter
- Scripture Reader

- Communion Assistant
- Communion Usher
- Coffee Fellowship

You can call or email Cheri in the Church Office to have her send a link to the Sign-Up Genius website or to sign up for you.

Additional volunteer Roles include:

- ❖ Altar Care there is a signup sheet in the narthex on the front table.
- ❖ Sunday service camera operator. We will provide training on how to manage it. signup sheets are in the narthex on the front table, or you can call/email the church office.
- ❖ Little Free Pantry signup sheets are in the narthex on the front table.
- ❖ **Sunday School teachers**, 2 teachers per Sunday to rotate, sign-ups are on the blue table.

Poinsettia Dedications and Remembrances

Lake Oconee Lutheran Church gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and families who have dedicated the poinsettias that decorate our church. Their gifts honor loved ones and celebrate important memories within our church community.

Name	Dedication
Jerry Campbell	In honor of parents
Carol Campbell	In honor of parents
Jean Page	In memory of Mary Rosenheimer
Ed Blosser	In honor of Lillian
Jack Carson	In honor of Rosalyn
Jerry Pailer	In memory of beloved husband Lance
The Ringers	
Mai (2)	In honor of parents
Pam Menke (2)	In honor of parents
Walter & Susan Krause	In memory of our parents
The Saynes	
Mike & Sandy Langan (2)	In memory of our parents
The Pedersens	In honor of Sunday School teachers
Don & Pam Kunz	In memory of Larry Pendergrass
	In memory of Linda Speagle
Robert & Marcia Elkins	In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Elkins
	In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Carl Johnson
The "Coasties" (2)	

LAKE OCONEE LUTHERAN CHURCH

We are Built for a Purpose

Built Through Word and Sacrament –

...believing in and making faithful and frequent use of the Bible, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper as the means by which God gives and sustains faith and empowers and strengthens us for Christian living.

Built Through Ongoing Learning –

...providing quality, Bible based instruction to foster greater understanding of God's Word and to better equip members for their discipleship.

Built For Service –

...reaching out to others by word and deed to join in the sharing of God's blessings and grace, which is free to all believers.

Built For Discipleship –

...utilizing fully our time, talents, and resources to serve and love the Lord, furthering our commission of discipleship.

Built For Fellowship –

...caring for and sharing with our church family; fostering greater love, understanding, and concern for the physical and spiritual well-being of all brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

The window behind the altar is our EASTER SUNRISE WINDOW.

The cross hanging in front of the window is an empty cross, reminding us that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive now to be with us here and always. Every Sunday is a celebration of Easter. The symbol on the front of the ALTAR is a combination of two Greek letters: the "chi," which looks like our English "x," and the "rho," which looks like our "p." In the Greek, these letters are the first two of "Christ." Combined as they are, they suggest the cross. Superimposed on the cross is a heart, the reminder that God's love for us is the reason Jesus died on the cross. God's love for us empowers us to share his love with others.