



Lake Oconee Lutheran Church

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

Our Church Newsletter

December 2025

Pastor	Steven Hayden revshayden@gmail.com
Secretary	Cheri Kitchens officelolc@gmail.com
Instrumentalist	Dr. Lev Rybanin
Choir Director	Dr. Youngmi Kim

Sunday Service	10:30 a.m.
1 st , 3 rd , & 5 th Sundays	Holy Communion
2 nd & 4 th Sundays	Morning Worship
Bible Class	9:00 a.m.
Children's Sunday School	10am

1089 Lake Oconee Parkway
Eatonton, Georgia 31024
Church Office 706-485-4600

Visit our web site: www.lakeoconeelutheran.org

Dear Friends,

Everywhere, at this time of year, we notice that Christmas is near. The decorations, the bells, the carols all give evidence that the Christmas celebration is already in full swing. But are we celebrating Christmas shallow or Christmas deep?

Too often Americans observe a shallow Christmas complete with tinsel, glitter, holly and ivy, gift buying in crowded stores, Christmas music and, oh yes, silver bells. But these externals, fine in themselves, frequently leave little time for a deep reflection on the true meaning of Christmas.

There by the manger in the still of the night we find Mary looking in wonder at the newborn Christ Child and the visiting shepherds from the fields of Bethlehem. Luke writes, **“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart”.** *Luke 2:19.*

Mary is celebrating a deep Christmas. Already reflecting for nine months on the visit of the angel and the growing new life within her, she continues to focus on the meaning of this birth for the world. She knows the Savior is born from her womb.

Mary, not Scrooge nor the Grinch, is the model for our celebration of Christmas deep. We can enjoy the sights and sounds of the season along with family and friends. But we also take time to kneel at the manger and worship the Christ Child who is to die on the cross for our sins. By the Spirit's

power, as we worship together during Advent, we treasure up all these things and ponder them in our hearts.

Not Christmas shallow, but Christmas deep.

Pastor Steve

Upcoming Worship Schedule

Every Sunday Bible class at 9 am and Worship at 10:30am

Wednesday Advent Worship	12/3	Soup Supper 6 pm, Worship 7 pm
Wednesday Advent Worship	12/10	Soup Lunch noon, Worship 1 pm
Wednesday Advent Worship	12/17	Soup Supper 6 pm, Worship 7 pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight	12/24	Worship 7 pm
Christmas Day Communion	12/25	Worship 10 am

Announcements



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.



Lake Oconee Lutheran's next blood drives will be Dec 4 and Jan 8. If you are interested in volunteering a little of your time to help, please reach out to Pam Kunz at kunzpd3@outlook.com

LOLC offers Bible Study



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 is in 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.**

Sunday Morning Bible class

The Reformation has had an enormous influence on every area of life—on religion, politics, education, family life, and the world of work. Most of this was unintentional, at least on a human level, and both good and evil came of it. Yet God was doing His work, bringing thousands and, ultimately, billions of people to the knowledge of their Savior Jesus Christ and to saving faith in Him.

Join us on Sunday morning Bible study and we will examine the effects of the Lutheran Reformation—what consequences it had and how it continues to grow today.

Join us for each Sunday morning at 9 am in the church. This class will also be live-streamed on Facebook and our website.

Mid-Week Bible 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.

Join us for **"Cross, Suffering with Jesus" each Wednesday morning at 10:30am on Zoom.**

Worship Update -- Live streaming

Remember, we are now live streaming our Sunday Bible Class and Worship. This means both services will be broadcast live as they happen on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am and 10:30 am on Facebook **or** by clicking the button on our website homepage. Join us as we all come together in worship. If you are unable to be online while they are live, do not worry. The recorded services will remain available for you to watch later as well. You may find it on the @lakeoconeelutheranchurch page on Facebook or the website. God's blessings to each of you!

Choir Notes

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.

Mites

The Widow's mite of Mark 12: 41-44 is the inspiration for the LWML mite boxes.



The Ladies of the Church organize mites' collections on a continuous basis. The third Sunday of each month is the official Mites Sunday after which the monies gathered go to the Lutheran Women's Missionary League to support various ministries around the world. Detailed information is available at www.lwml.org and on Facebook. The third Sunday of the month is designated Mite Sunday, but donations are always welcome. In November we collected \$171. We express heartfelt thanks for your charitable generosity.



Coffee & Fellowship

The coffee fellowship that follows the Sunday church service gives us an opportunity to welcome visitors, meet new members and visit each other. We are thankful for familiar friendliness of our church family.

***We need volunteers signing up for snacks and serving.**

Look for the signup sheet in the narthex or register on Sign-Up Genius (see link below under the [Volunteers Needed](#) heading.)

Just a Reminder

Lake Oconee Lutheran can 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

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:

- Greeter
- Scripture Reader
- Communion Assistant
- Communion Usher
- Coffee Fellowship

Here is a link to Sign-up Genius (Ctrl + Click to navigate to site.)

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0849A4A723A5FBC25-57931584-sunday>

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.
- ❖ Ushers' 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.



25th Anniversary Celebration

For the past twenty-five years, the Lord has guided our congregation in obedience to His Word and strengthened us for lives of service in His name. We are grateful for the abundant blessings He has poured out on us, and we give thanks for the bountiful harvest within our community. As we approach our 25th anniversary in February 2026, we reflect on the blessings we have received and look forward to what the future holds.

Commemorative Photo Collection

In honor of this milestone, we are gathering photographs that capture moments from the life of our church. If you have photos you would like to share, please email digital copies to Pam Kunz at kunzpd3@outlook.com or place them in Pam's folder to be scanned and returned. If submitting physical photos, please note your name on the back so the photo can be returned to you.

Connecting with Former Congregants

We are also seeking to reconnect with former members of our congregation who have

moved away from the community. If you have any current contact information for these individuals, please share it to help us reach out to them.

Celebration Details

The celebration will be held on **Saturday, February 21**. Further information regarding the anniversary celebration will be provided in the coming months.



A Morning of Fellowship and Decorating

Get into the Christmas spirit by joining us for our "Hanging of the Greens." We will gather at 9 am on Saturday, **December 6th**, to prepare our church for the Advent and Christmas seasons. Many helping hands are needed to bring the festive spirit to life! Come for the fun and stay for the fellowship.

The Church office will be closed on the following dates:

December 24

December 25

December 31

January 1

Opportunities to Serve

Lake Oconee Lutheran Church Food Ministry

The goal of The Bread of Life Food Pantry and the Little Free Pantry is to respond to the needs of our community through food distribution and support by sharing God's love in Word and action with those most in need.

We do this in two separate ways:

1. The Bread of Life Food Pantry provides equitable access to food and staples twice per month to those in need in the community.
2. The Little Free Pantry provides emergency food for community members who might have run out of food and have no other means in which to feed themselves or their family.

We also have two different mechanisms by which LOLC members can provide either their time or their donations to help us sustain both important ministries.

- For the Bread of Life Food Pantry cash donations are the best way to support this ministry. We need a certain number of specific items for each distribution and limited storage. You can volunteer your time on the second and fourth Wednesday and Thursdays of the month to either set up the food distribution or distribute the food to those in need.
- For the Little Free Pantry, food and/or cash donations are needed. The food you provide goes directly into the pantry and any cash you provide is used to fill in supplies where we might be running short. You can volunteer your time by checking on the cabinet and filling it up when food supplies run low.

Volunteers may sign up for either or both pantries by signing the sheets provided on the blue table in the narthex.

Because the Little Free Pantry is to be used to fill in what is needed on an emergency basis, we thought it would be helpful to provide a shopping list for those who choose to donate food and a daily distribution list for those who fill up the Little Free Pantry. You will find a handy guide to help you with these important tasks posted on the doors where we keep the Pantry food. Please limit food donations to the items on this list. It can help you when you shop for the pantry or when you fill the pantry with supplies.

As always, we thank you so much for the wondrous gifts you provide for both important ministries.

Members of LOLC Celebrating Birthdays and Anniversaries this month!



December Birthdays

- 12/1 Joshua Ringer
- 12/3 Virginia Daley
- 12/3 Ron Schornhorst
- 12/5 Jean Page
- 12/11 Isaac Ringer
- 12/16 Shirley Mai
- 12/25 Glenn Papit
- 12/28 Audrey Kunz
- 12/30 Alison Ringer

December Anniversaries

- 12/1 Bill & Amy Stokes
- 12/24 Glenn & Alba Papit
- 12/27 Pat & Jean Page
- 12/28 Dale & Dorothy Foote
- 12/28 David & Cindy Plummer
- 12/28 John & Angelique Spadaro

**Lake Oconee Lutheran Church
Annual Voters Meeting
November 16, 2025**

The meeting opened with a prayer by Pastor Hayden.

Mike Joost called the meeting to order.

Carol Campbell – Secretary – Carol Campbell read the meeting minutes from the voters' meetings of September 21, 2025, and November 11, 2024. The minutes were approved as read.

Pam Kunz – Vice President – Pam informed the congregation that planning for the church's 25th anniversary is underway for the first Saturday in February 2026. She asked that people provide her names and contact information of any founding and former members. She also asked for any photographs that people might want to share.

Kathie Kueven – Treasurer – Absent – The October's Treasurer report and the 2026 budget were distributed to the congregation. Pastor Steve explained that our expenses have exceeded our income by \$23,000 year-to-date although all our bank balances are positive. The Community Center is up \$1,700 for the year. The Anderson fund had no withdrawals for 2025, and the balance is \$132,500 and the Bread of Life continues to thrive. We are feeding approximately 70 families twice per month. We've had volunteers to meet those needs, and our bank balance has increased from the initial donation.

Walter Krause – Financial Secretary – No report.

Margaret Pederson – Christian Education – No report.

Mark Dentler – Church Properties – No report.

Don Menke – Lay Ministry – Don recognized the Elders' team for their work with the congregation and mentioned that their pictures were displayed on the bulletin board.

Kayleen Ringer – Christian Outreach – We have reached our goal for Operation Christmas Child and are gearing up for the advent soup suppers.

Pastor Steve – Thanksgiving service is on November 26 at 7:00 pm. The next week advent services begin. Weds., December 3rd will be our evening advent service with soup supper at 6:00 pm and church service at 7:00 pm. On December 10 we will have a daytime service with lunch at noon and church service at 1:00. December 17, we have an evening service with soup supper at 6:00 and church service at 7:00. Christmas Eve, Weds., Dec. 24, we will have services at 7:00 pm and on Christmas Day, Thurs., Dec. 25, we will have service at 10:00 am which includes communion. Pastor thanked Cheri and Matt Kitchens for taking the congregations' pictures for the directory. We will be publishing a new directory in January.

Old Business:

Milledgeville - Pastor Steve reminded the congregation that we have signed the lease with Oconee Valley Health Care and Oconee Valley has also signed the lease. Dave Ringer has met with the contractor and finalized the remodeling plans. Once he receives the final estimate, they will move forward with financing. We will have some type of open house/groundbreaking ceremony that all can attend. In January, Lake Oconee Lutheran will be putting together a call committee to find a church worker who can work in Milledgeville. At this point, we don't know whether we will call a pastor or DCE. Our goal is to find the right person rather than a title. The finances for the new position are not in the 2026 budget. We will initially fund it through the Anderson Fund until those funds are depleted. The call committee will narrow the field down to a few people so the congregation can decide who we call.

New Business:

2026 Budget – Pastor Steve reviewed the 2026 budget in Kathie's absence. Income and expenses are up \$13,116 from 2025 which is primarily due to salary increases. The council has worked to keep the budget as low as possible. The only question was about the decrease in mission expenses. Pastor explained that the mission expenses were still based on 10% of actual income rather than budgeted income. A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2026 budget. The motion was passed.

Election of Officers – Pam Kunz reviewed the following slate of officers:

President – Mike Joost

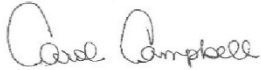
Vice President – Pam Kunz Treasurer – Kathie Kueven
Financial Secretary – Walter Krause
Secretary – Carol Campbell
Christian Education – Margaret Pedersen
Board of Elders: Jerry Campbell
 Pam Kunz
 Kathie Kueven
 Mark Ketchie

Mike asked for any floor nominations, and none were made. The slate of Council Members and Board of Elders were approved by the congregation.

Christmas Tree Decorating – A new pre-lit Christmas tree was ordered. Mike Joost asked that someone arrange to be at the church to receive the new tree since he will not be available. Decorating the church for Christmas is scheduled for Saturday, December 6 at 9:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned and Pastor closed with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol Campbell".

Carol Campbell
Congregational Secretary

LAKE OCONEE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Treasurer's Report - October 31, 2025

	Monthly <u>Budget</u>	Period <u>Activity</u>	<u>Difference</u>	Y-T-D <u>Budget</u>	Y-T-D <u>Activity</u>	<u>Difference</u>	Restricted Fund Balances
INCOME							
General Fund	35,590	27,744	7,846	357,402	257,095	100,307	Organ \$0
Debt Reduction	0	695	-695	0	7,305	-7,305	A/P \$7,889
Memorial Fund	0	200	-200	0	2,100	-2,100	Memorials \$10,559
Sunday School	0	0	0	0	0	0	OCC Fund \$7,487
Special Fund Income	0	3,652	-3,652	0	41,315	-41,315	Little FP \$6,195
TOTAL OFFERINGS	\$35,590	\$32,291	\$3,299	\$357,402	\$307,815	\$49,587	M-of-M \$387
							M'ville Min. \$20,003
							DOT Funds \$210,597
							LOYA \$1,450
							TOTAL \$264,567
EXPENSES							
Pastor Expense	16,042	14,460	1,582	160,419	165,572	-5,153	A/P: \$7,889
Worship Expense	2,612	2,488	124	26,125	23,939	2,186	District \$2,774
Property Expense	6,925	6,867	58	69,250	53,672	15,578	P/R \$5,115
Bus. & Admin. Expense	2,272	2,862	-590	22,724	22,837	-113	BANK BALANCES:
Education Expense	142	0	142	1,417	867	550	Bank South \$114,829.68
Evangelism/Outreach Exp.	1,892	168	1,724	18,917	2,656	16,261	BS CD \$111,399.75
Stewardship Expense	0	0	0	360	0	360	Anderson \$130,532.36
Fellowship Expense	175	317	-142	1,750	1,097	653	Comm. Ctr. \$12,552.22
Mission Expense (District)	0	6,237	-6,237	29,700	22,663	7,037	Bread of Life \$26,774.34
DCE Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	Mortensen \$624.78
Other Expenses	2,617	2,826	-209	26,167	37,699	-11,532	Exchange CD \$157,236.28
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$32,677	\$36,225	-\$3,548	\$356,829	\$331,002	\$25,827	B-O-L M/S \$172,579.10
							TOTAL \$726,528.51
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENSES	\$2,913	-3,934	\$6,847	\$573	-\$23,187	\$23,760	

COMMUNITY CENTER

Treasurer's Report - October 31, 2025

	Monthly <u>Budget</u>	Period <u>Activity</u>	<u>Difference</u>	Y-T-D <u>Budget</u>	Y-T-D <u>Activity</u>	<u>Difference</u>
INCOME						
Rental Income	1,000.00	682.20	317.80	10,000.00	14,542.42	-4,542.42
Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	1,000.00	682.20	317.80	10,000.00	14,542.42	-4,542.42
EXPENSES						
Rental Refunds	0.00	486.68	-486.68	0.00	4,171.13	-4,171.13
Utilities	250.00	313.00	-63.00	2,500.00	3,309.00	-809.00
Pest Control	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	186.00	-186.00
Yard Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Janitorial	525.00	315.00	210.00	4,620.00	4,410.00	210.00
Supplies	33.33	0.00	33.33	333.34	392.17	-58.83
Repair & Mtce.	83.33	0.00	83.33	833.34	340.61	492.73
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Expenses	<u>178.33</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>178.33</u>	<u>1,783.34</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,783.34</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,069.99	1,114.68	-44.69	10,070.02	12,808.91	-2,738.89
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENSES	-69.99	2,204.70	-2,169.69	-70.02	1,733.51	-1,803.53
Bank Balance	\$12,552.22					
Accounts Payable	\$0.00					

December 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 10 am Women's Bible Class	3 10:30 ZOOM Bible Class Advent Service <u>Soup</u> 6pm Worship 7pm	4 11-4 Blood Drive	5	6 9 am Hanging of the greens
7 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Elders Meeting Communion	8	9 9am Quilt Guild 10 am Women's Bible Class	10 10:30 ZOOM Bible Class Advent Service <u>Soup</u> 12 pm Worship 1pm	11 11 Bread of Life	12	13
14 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Council Meeting Non-communion	15	16 10 am Women's Bible Class	17 10:30 ZOOM Bible Class Advent Service <u>Soup</u> 6pm Worship 7pm	18	19	20
21 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Communion	22	23 10 am Women's Bible Class	24 <u>Christmas Eve Service</u> 7pm Office Closed	25 <u>Christmas Day Service</u> 10 am Office Closed	26	27
28 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Communion	29 10am Quilt Guild Bee	30 10 am Women's Bible Class	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed			

