



Lake Oconee Lutheran Church

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

Our Church Newsletter

January 2026

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.

1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays Holy Communion

2nd & 4th 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,

It's a new year! Not only do we turn over a page on the calendar, but we also begin a whole new calendar. It's human nature to want to look back on the old year and review it, see how it measures up. But what do we use as the measuring stick? Numbers? During 2025 Lake Oconee Lutheran received 9 new members through transfer or Baptism and lost 6 other members through death or moving away. We also have been blessed by having 8 regular worshippers in our midst who have not chosen to officially become members. This has brought our average worship attendance to 92, which is an increase of 11 as compared to 2024.

Service? During 2025 Lake Oconee and its members have continued to serve our community and our world, not growing weary of serving others or selfish in thinking only of ourselves. Both the Little Free Pantry and the Bread of Life pantry have expanded in the numbers of people served per month and the amount of food distributed each month (in addition to expanding in the financial contributions and volunteer hours that allow them to continue to serve.) We met our goal in contributing to Operation Christmas Shoeboxes and sharing the gifts we have received from God through a scholarship for a Seminary student and our mission pledge to District.

Mission? While progress has, at times, seemed slow on our Milledgeville project, we have continued to remain faithful to the Lord's call to share His Word and Love in that community. The lease with Oconee Valley Healthcare has been approved and events are set in motion for groundbreaking and remodeling to happen in 2026. We also expect to appoint a Call Committee in January as we look to God to provide a worker for that harvest field.

Despite all these measuring sticks, I believe that the real measuring stick for 2025 is the Grace and Presence of God in our midst. More than numbers or our own activity, 2025 measures up because it serves as a reminder that God continues to work in us through His Word and Sacraments and continues to call us and equip us for His Work in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Because God is the source, not you or me, I can be confident that 2026 will also measure up as a year blessed by God in our midst.

On a personal note, Linda and I thank everyone for the love, cards, gifts and prayers that you have showered upon us this Christmastime. Thank you for the loving words and for your contribution to our congregational gift. We see you not only as friends, but as gifts from God to us!

Thank you for being a blessing to us not just now, but all year long!

Pastor and Linda Hayden

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 Jan 8 and Feb 5. 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. **Women's Bible Study is on hold until January 6, 2025.**

Sunday Morning Bible class

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".

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"** restarting on 1/14/26 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 December we collected \$194. 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.)

The Church office will be closed January 1, 2026

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.

Christmas Tree and Decor Takedown Announcement

We hope you have enjoyed the beautiful Christmas decorations and tree throughout this festive season. As we transition into the new year, it's time to take down our Christmas tree and decor to prepare our church for upcoming events.

Takedown Date and Time

Date: Saturday, 01/10/2026

Time: 9 a.m.

We invite all available members to join us for this important task. Your help is greatly appreciated as we work together to return our church to its regular setup.

Thank you for your continued support and fellowship. We look forward to seeing you there!

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!



January Birthdays

- 01/03 Jeffrie Sayne
- 01/04 Lynda Bridwell
- 01/05 Mark Dentler
- 01/06 Donald Kunz
- 01/08 Janice Sollenberger
- 01/13 Pam Kunz
- 01/21 Bill Stokes
- 01/24 Jimmy Ethridge
- 01/29 Walter Krause
- 01/30 Jaye McCrea
- 01/30 Margaret Ringer
- 01/30 Dick Schneider

January Anniversaries

- None this month

LAKE OCONEE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Treasurer's Report - November 30, 2025

	Monthly Budget	Period Activity	Difference	Y-T-D Budget	Activity	Difference	Restricted Fund Balances
INCOME							Organ \$0
General Fund	36,090	56,471	-20,380	393,492	313,565	79,927	A/P \$16,203
Debt Reduction	0	715	-715	0	8,020	-8,020	Memorials \$10,959
Memorial Fund	0	400	-400	0	2,500	-2,500	OCC Fund \$8,007
Sunday School	0	0	0	0	0	0	Little FP \$8,681
Special Fund Income	0	23,542	-23,542	0	64,858	-64,858	M-of-M \$387
TOTAL OFFERINGS	\$36,090	\$81,128	-\$45,038	\$393,492	\$388,943	\$4,549	M'ville Min. \$19,630
							DOT Funds \$212,797
							LOYA \$1,450
							TOTAL \$278,114
EXPENSES							A/P: \$16,203
Pastor Expense	16,042	12,738	3,304	176,461	178,311	-1,850	District \$8,529
Worship Expense	2,612	2,821	-209	28,738	26,760	1,978	P/R \$7,674
Property Expense	6,925	9,963	-3,038	76,175	63,635	12,540	
Bus. & Admin. Expense	2,272	2,078	194	24,997	24,915	82	BANK BALANCES:
Education Expense	142	0	142	1,558	867	691	Bank South \$147,312.74
Evangelism/Outreach Exp.	1,892	210	1,682	20,808	2,866	17,942	BS CD \$111,735.63
Stewardship Expense	0	358	-358	360	358	2	Anderson \$130,837.23
Fellowship Expense	175	109	66	1,925	1,206	719	Comm. Ctr. \$12,183.37
Mission Expense (District)	0	0	0	29,700	22,663	7,037	Bread of Life \$39,459.37
DCE Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	Mortensen \$624.88
Other Expenses	2,617	20,368	-17,751	28,783	58,066	-29,283	Exchange CD \$157,335.39
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$32,677	\$48,645	-\$15,968	\$389,505	\$379,647	\$9,858	B-O-L M/S \$173,143.83
							TOTAL \$772,632.44
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPEN	\$3,413	32,483	-\$29,070	\$3,987	\$9,296	-\$5,309	

COMMUNITY CENTER

Treasurer's Report - November 30, 2025

	Monthly Budget	Period Activity	Difference	Y-T-D Budget	Y-T-D Activity	Difference
INCOME						
Rental Income	1,000.00	530.15	469.85	11,000.00	15,072.57	-4,072.57
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	530.15	469.85	11,000.00	15,072.57	-4,072.57
EXPENSES						
Rental Refunds	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00	4,371.13	-4,371.13
Utilities	250.00	279.00	-29.00	2,750.00	3,588.00	-838.00
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	420.00	105.00	5,145.00	4,830.00	315.00
Supplies	33.33	0.00	33.33	366.67	392.17	-25.50
Repair & Mtce.	83.33	0.00	83.33	916.67	340.61	576.06
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Expenses	178.33	0.00	178.33	1,961.67	0.00	1,961.67
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,069.99	899.00	170.99	11,140.01	13,707.91	-2,567.90
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENSES	-69.99	2,204.70	-2,169.69	-140.01	1,364.66	-1,504.67
Bank Balance	\$12,183.37					
Accounts Payable	\$0.00					

**Lake Oconee Lutheran Church
Council Meeting
December 12, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Pam Kunz. Pastor Steve led us in prayer.

Mike Joost and Kayleen Ringer were absent, and all other members were in attendance.

The minutes from the October 12, 2025, council meeting were approved.

Council Committee Reports:

VP/Personnel: Pam Kunz – No report.

Treasurer: Kathie Kueven – The November Treasurer's Report was reviewed. Year-to-date income was \$4,549 less than budget while year-to-date expenses were \$9,858 less than budget for a year-to-date difference of \$5,309. There were a few minor differences in income between the treasurer's and financial reports which will be reviewed and reconciled.

Financial Secretary: Walter Krause – The financial reports for October and November were distributed and discussed. Year-to-date November offerings were up \$8,601 from the same period last year primarily due to an extra Sunday in November and a gift of stock which was donated and then sold with the proceeds going to the church.

Congregation Secretary: Carol Campbell – No report.

Christian Education: Margaret Pedersen – There will not be Sunday school classes held the remainder of the year as most of the children will not be attending during the holidays. Classes will resume on January 11, and we are still in need of additional teachers.

Church Properties: Mark Dentler – There is another squirrel in the attic and Mark will call Bug House to have it removed. Terry Pedersen has agreed to be the point person on replacing lights as needed. Mark will work on fixing the street sign this week. The message board is working, but the static sign is not working. We will replace the sign from the Department of

Transportation monies after they finish widening the road. Christmas decoration take down day will be Saturday, January 10 at 9:00 am. Barney burned the brush pile in the back and will be covering the spigots due to the cold. Saturday, March 14 at 10:00 am will be the next workday. The Ringers donated the labor for a worker who cleared all the brush on the empty lot.

Lay Ministry: Don Menke – Don will be working with the Board of Elders to finalize the list to assign head elders for the month for 2026.

Christian Service/Outreach: Kayleen Ringer – The blood drive was very successful.

We received 58 donations vs. a goal of 39. Several people have thanked us for providing a regularly scheduled blood drive. The Red Cross sent a \$100 gift card to thank us for reaching our goal several times. That money was used to buy food for the Little Free Pantry. We reached our goal for Operation Christmas Child.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Hayden – Christmas Eve our service is at 7:00 pm and Christmas Day will be at 10:00 am with communion. Pastor's son is getting married on New Year's Eve so he will leave on Christmas Day after church and will be gone on Dec. 28th and Jan. 4th. Pastor Artelt will be leading services for those Sundays. We will update the bulletin board with the new church pictures. Thanks to Cheri and her husband for taking those pictures.

Old Business:

Milledgeville Update: We have new building plans. Dr. Ringer decided to expand the building with an addition. He will be going to the bank for financing.

Carol Dunn Estate – No update although we did receive a second gift of stock since we opened the brokerage account.

LOLC 25th Anniversary – Pam has changed the date for the celebration. It will now be held on February 21 so Pastor can be in attendance. We will be holding a luncheon that will be catered.

The woman who created the stain glass window plans to attend. The council discussed having Pastor Steve give a devotional, a slideshow of pictures and perhaps a souvenir booklet with pertinent anniversary information.

New Business:

Choir Member Payment – There was discussion as to whether to recruit a student to sing in the church choir for 2026 that would be paid \$45 per Sunday. A motion was made, seconded and approved to pay a student to sing on Sundays from January through May.

Installation of Officers – We will install the church council during worship service on Sunday, January 11, 2026.

Pastor's Annual Housing Allowance – A motion was made, seconded and approved on a standing resolution for Pastor's housing allowance. The resolution states "Be it resolved that LOLC has a standing resolution to remain in force until such time as it is amended or revoked. Hereby authorizes and establishes a housing allowance for Pastor Steven Hayden for the duration of the service in an amount each year up to 50% of said person's annual compensation."

Fire Inspection – Pastor received an inspection quote from Summit Fire in the amount of \$2,075 which includes inspecting the sprinkler system, hood in the kitchen over the range, fire alarms and fire extinguishers. The council approved paying for the inspection.

Photo of the Church Council – We will take a picture of the church council on Sunday, December 21, 2025. We will also need to take a group shot of the elders.

Election of Synod President – The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod will select the nominees for President, First Vice-President and Regional Vice President. The selection of officers will take place online. Each church receives two votes, which includes the pastor and a lay person. You register online, vote and then they announce it at the 2026 Missouri Synod convention. It is a timed vote. The council nominated Mike Joost to be the lay person voting for the officers which was seconded and approved.

Reminder:

We will start a call committee for Milledgeville in January. We are starting early as it will probably take a while as there is a shortage of church workers.

The meeting was adjourned followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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

Carol Campbell
Congregational Secretary

January 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Office Closed	2	3
4 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Communion	5	6 9am Quilt Guild 10 am Women's Bible Class Epiphany	7	8 11 Bread of Life 11 Blood Drive	9	10 The removal of the greens
11 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Non-Communion Council Meeting	12	13 10 am Women's Bible Class	14 10:30 ZOOM Bible Class	15	16	17
18 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Communion	19	20 10 am Women's Bible Class	21 10:30 ZOOM Bible Class	22 11 Bread of Life	23	24
25 9:00 AM Adult Bible School 9:00 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Worship Service Non-Communion	26 10 Quilt of Valor Bee	27 10 am Women's Bible Class	28 10:30 ZOOM Bible Class	29	30	31