

The Opequon Spirit

"Prayerfully Equipping Disciples of All Generations
To be Christ's Hands, Heart and Feet in the World!"



April 2024

Opequon Presbyterian Church
217 Opequon Church Lane
Winchester, VA 22602-2421

www.opequonchurch.org
540-662-1843
office@opequonchurch.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

Sunday, April 7

Second Sunday of Easter

† Isaiah 65:17-25; John 21:1-19

Sermon: "Here's My Heart"

Communion; CCAP

Sunday, April 14

Third Sunday of Easter

† Acts 3:12-19, Luke 24:36b-48

Sermon: "Let's Get Real!"

New Members Received

1:30 PM - Spring Arbor Worship

Sunday, April 21

Fourth Sunday of Easter

† Ecclesiastes 4:7-12;

2 Corinthians 8:16-24

The Rev. Kristin Harris,

Mission Co-Worker for NOROC

Sunday, April 28

Fifth Sunday of Easter

† Psalm 23; John 10:11-18

Sermon: "God's Shepherds"

Ordination & Installation of

Deacons; Four Cents A Meal

SPRING FORWARD

CELEBRATING A NEW SEASON

Who:

Have you recently gone through a big life change?

Are you a recent empty-nester, newly retired, or have you gone through a recent life-transition?

Have you been at Opequon for a long while?

Come and join us and catch up!

When:

Sunday, April 14, 4:00-5:30 pm

Where: Opequon Church Fellowship Hall

What: A party and fellowship time

Goodies and beverages provided along with uplifting conversations

please RSVP by April 7th by phone (540) 662-1843, or email office@opequonchurch.org

Sponsored by The Discipleship Team

DISCIPLE



BECOMING DISCIPLES
THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

Congratulations to our brothers and sisters who recently completed the Disciple 1 Bible Study: Bill Bender, Alyce Callahan, Mike Crawford, Trish Crawford, Judy Moody, Dave Richards, Ruth Richards, Brenda Steffens, Brian Steffens, Elaine Stephens, and Porter White.

In 25 weekly meetings, they journeyed from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22, following Jesus' admonition, "If you make my word your home, you will indeed be my disciples." (John 8:31)



NOTES FROM PASTOR DAVID

Dear Friends in Christ,

You may have heard me say that I'm more comfortable cooking up a meal in the kitchen than I am with my head under the hood of a vehicle. That does seem strange for the grandson of an auto mechanic who owned a garage! But as the youngest grandchild on both my mother's and father's sides of the family, my grandfather was retired by the time I came onto the scene, except for repairing lawnmowers in his workshop. So, I didn't learn much about mechanics from him. Instead, I learned to cook by sitting at the kitchen table and watching my mother fix dinner. Also, as no surprise to you, I love to eat, so I had a passion early on to cook things that were satisfying.

On Saturday night before the Potato Bake, I was in the kitchen baking and cooking. We had just arrived home from being away in Richmond for a family event. Carole had prepared some things in advance as she always does, quite different from her procrastinating husband. At about 8:15 PM, I began my preparations, putting a pan of brownies in the oven while grating carrots for an old-fashioned carrot-raisin salad. With mixing bowls and wooden spoons scattered about, I remembered my mom often working hard in our kitchen on Saturday night, getting ready as much as she could for our weekly Sunday dinner after we got home from church. I am still amazed how she pulled it all together each weekend because it was the best meal of the whole week, and we usually sat down to eat right about 1:00 PM.

These are good memories for me, memories about daily living, memories about family, memories about good times shared, memories about the rhythm we followed, memories about peoples' gifts and talents. I hope you have special memories too, memories that feed your soul, memories that bless your heart and bring a smile to your face, memories that enrich who you are and what gifts you share.

As time flows on and life unfolds, as we move through the seasons of the year and the seasons of our lives, we discover that we not only have our powerful memories but also deep and profound life in the now. In this season of resurrection and new life, hope and promise, each of us still has gifts to share. God has blessed us in this community of faith and given us a vibrant life together. I hope you not only sense that but know that. While I may not be a mechanic, I can cook. While I may not _____, I can _____. You fill in the blanks.

"How can I serve?" "What might I offer?" "When and where will I say 'yes' or say 'no'?" Maybe you will answer those questions differently than you did the last time you were asked, maybe a year or two or five or fifteen years ago. For time flows on and life unfolds. These questions are for all of us. And for those who have called Opequon Church home for a while or for those who have gone through some age and stage changes, I hope you will join us this month, on Sunday, April 14, for our "Spring Forward Event." It will simply be a time to celebrate and reconnect through meaningful fellowship. For we all still have gifts to share.

Together in Christ's Service,

PASTOR JULIA'S MUSINGS

Friends in Christ,

I have started a new hobby this past month. As someone who is outside as much as I possibly can be, when I noticed that the Bowman Library had a free birding class on Monday evenings, I jumped at the opportunity to learn.

I don't often take the time to stop, to notice the world around me. I wonder if you ever have felt that way? I feel like I am often rushing from one meeting to another, going from church, to car, to home, to whatever other activity that I have. I don't often get the time to pause, take a breath, and notice the world around me.

In her book *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day*, Kate Bowler prays:

"But, Lord, somewhere at the center of me is an alarm bell, ringing.

*This rare and precious life you give,
all my hours and my days,
are being carefully placed into boxes
and packed away by this schedule,
these errands,
these acts of good, good service.*

*No matter how much forethought,
working ahead, 'life hacking,'*

I will never finish it all.

So give me a fresh sense of urgency.

When is the sunrise?

Read me a poem.

*Who here has an amazingly
embarrassing story?*

*There will need to be a delay
at the pharmacy, the pickup line,
and the checkout counter.
You are giving me back this day."*

There is a world around us, a world of stories, of beauty, of birds chirping because it's morning. When we pause, we get to hear the whole story of creation around us. We get to take in the world outside our calendars. We get to live more in these in-between moments and appreciate God's beautiful creation.

This birding class reminds me: it's okay to pause, to be a second behind because there's a beautiful song outside my window. That is my hope for you all as well, to be able to pause, to take a second, to listen to the stories around you that you may miss in the hustle and bustle of the day.

God speaks in the world around us. Let us take a moment and listen.

Blessings,



PASTOR TRACIE'S JUST THINKIN'

Many of you are aware that I spent a week in Syracuse, NY recently. Our daughter-in-law, Liz, had surgery and needed mothering. I was pleased to be asked to come and to visit North again.

My last call before retirement was in Syracuse and it was great to see old friends. I even got to worship in my former church. I am so proud of the congregation; the church is thriving.

I was especially thrilled not to recognize about half of the worshipping congregation. The church has grown. They have used several methods and they have worked. The strongest reason these ideas have worked is that the congregation has maintained its flexibility. In fact, in some ways it has become even more flexible than it was when I was there. Astounding!

First, the Old Robinson Memorial church has taken in several congregations that were on the verge of dying. Growth through adversity is not unknown in Christianity, but it is unusual. Growth through combining fragile congregations is hardly ever successful. It is like yoking two sick mules to the same wagon and expecting them to get better. Generally, anger, grief, and competition take a toll and overwhelm both churches. In this case, however, just the opposite has happened. As congregations and seekers worshipped together, their ideas and traditions were valued, adopted, and celebrated. A new member told me that she cannot always discern who belongs to which remnant congregation without asking pointed questions. This is truly putting the first things first.

Being there made me think of our own Opequon Church. We know putting the first thing first works!

So, what is the first thing? Where does it truly fall when we put it first? What does it precede? The first thing is our relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the First, the Last, and everything in between. Putting Him instead of ourselves first sets the stage for effectively valuing others, supporting those in need, and overcoming the inertia that is pervasive in so many current congregations. First is... well... FIRST!

When we put Christ first, politics fall in their rightful place and can no longer separate us. By politics, I am speaking of turf, egos, and local agendas as well as today's ever-present nationwide political strife. When Christ is first, working in communion jumps well ahead of "my way or the highway." As a church family, a "Christ first" congregation works more on including than on excluding. There are no losers. We find a way. We figure it out with God's help.

As I drove through the city of Syracuse, I passed two of several churches I helped close. Both would have been called "tall steeple" churches at one time. Both buildings are now owned by other groups. Both congregations have dispersed and no longer exist. Both were wealthy when I moved to Syracuse. Both died of a terrible disease... rigidity. Putting the first thing first could have saved them, but they made other choices.

Now, having come home to OPC, I look out on Sunday morning as well as at the many people who are in contact with the church from day to day and I have to admit that it is good to be in communion with such flexible, welcoming, loving people. As I write this message, I realize that flexibility and welcome are two sides of the same coin—love. Striving to be Christ's heart, hands and feet is surely effective. It was good to come home.

—Tracie

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

- ✓ Pastor David shared a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the gift of the lives and love of Opequon members who died in 2023: Richard "Dick" Robert Widell, Sr., Edith Ernestine Redmond Garthoff, Thelma Warren Stratton Cameron, Patricia King York, Carol Rae Grimes Treece, James "Jim" C. Baccary, Jeanette Frances Walker Stivers Baccary, Gene Floyd Walker, John David Ervin, Larissa Jocelyn Strosnider, Jack Milan Treece, and Donald Larsen.

- ✓ The Annual Statistical Report reflects an active membership as of January 1, 2023, of 521. Over the year, there were 31 gains and 17 losses, resulting in an active membership of 535 as of December 31, 2023.
- ✓ Those officers who have completed their recent terms were thanked and honored: Elders Beth Barr, Mary Himelright, Susan Ritter, and Marj Praml, who is now serving a new term; Deacons Bill Bender, Heather Burton, and Robin Cooke, with Heather and Robin now serving an additional term; and Trustee Laverne Cooper, who is now serving a second term.
- ✓ We ended 2023 with a financial surplus of \$35,211.
- ✓ Treasurer/Elder Ron Smith presented the 2024 church budget, totaling \$844,603.
- ✓ Bill Bender, Laurel Hathaway, Ray Jones, and Robin Owens were elected as Congregational Representatives to the 2024 Church Nominating Committee.
- ✓ A celebration of Opequon's ministry in 2023 video, prepared by Debbie Bender, with photos from Debbie, Alyce Callahan, and Rebekah Witt, was shown.
- ✓ Travis Morgan, Chair of the Trustees and President of Opequon Presbyterian Church Inc., reviewed the investments and presented the slate of corporate officers who were then elected: Travis Morgan, President; Laverne Cooper, Vice President; Bill Bayliss, Secretary; and Ron Smith, Treasurer.
- ✓ The congregation encircled the Sanctuary and sang the Doxology.

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SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARCH 19, 2023

- ✗ Session approved the Livestream Area Enhancement Plan for reconfiguration of livestream space as recommended by the Technology and Communications Team. This will include shortening three pews and installation of a raised platform with new Livestream desk.
- ✗ Session enthusiastically approved the recommendation of the Personnel Team to extend the contract with Parish Associate Tracie Martin for another year (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025).

- ✗ Session approved the summer worship schedule to begin Sunday, June 2, 2024, with one worship service at 10:00 AM, continuing through June, July, and August, concluding on Sunday, August 25, 2024. Summer WOW (Wonderful Outdoor Worship) services will be held on June 23, July 28, and August 25 at 6:00 PM in the Pitcock Shelter area.
- ✗ Session expressed appreciation to the LOGOS leadership and the wonderful team of volunteers for a very successful 26th year.
- ✗ After a productive Deacons Retreat, the Deacons are busy with plans in preparation for the April 2024 ordination and installation service and transition to a full 12-member Diaconate.
- ✗ The newly expanded Architectural Review Team (ART) of diverse and talented members met with the Vision Team in March to begin visioning about OPC's future master plan.
- ✗ The Mission Ministry Team is conducting a "deep dive" to critically look at and discern the "why" regarding each of OPC's different Mission ministries.
- ✗ Evangelism's visitation teams are full, but recruitment of additional Hospitality Greeters is ongoing.
- ✗ Fellowship is busy planning 2024 events, including the High School Graduate Reception on June 2 and return of outdoor WOW summer services in Pitcock Shelter on the 4th Sundays in June, July, and August.
- ✗ Buildings and Grounds recommendation to contract with Lasting Impressions Concrete for the sidewalk replacement and ramp project at OPC was approved by Session. The project will be funded from OPC's Reserve Fund.
- ✗ Stewardship and Finance's February Financial Reports were approved; they present a strong financial position.
- ✗ Requested leave dates from Pastor David (6 days in September 2024) and Pastor Julia (6 days in October 2024) were approved by Session.
- ✗ In 1974, the Winchester and Lexington Presbyteries merged to establish the Shenandoah Presbytery. In celebration of their 200th meeting, Shenandoah Presbytery is sending each congregation \$200 to be used for a mission-related project.

Ann C.M. Smith, Clerk of Session, Opequon Presbyterian Church

OUR CHRISTIAN LOVE AND EMPATHY EXTENDED



We extend our empathy and Christian love to the following families...

- ☞ Terry McKay and her family upon the death of her brother, Darwin "Doc," in February.
- ☞ Bill Robinson and his family upon the death of his sister, Betty Lou Robinson Kelly, who died on March 12.
- ☞ Carolyn Campbell and her family upon the death of her grandmother, Judith Stanley, on March 13.
- ☞ Vonnie Johnston and her family upon the death of her husband and OPC member, Fred Johnston, who died on March 24.

*"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord.
"Those who believe in me shall live,
even though they die, and whoever lives
and believes in me shall never die."
—John 11:25-26*

NOMINATE AN OLDER ADULT FOR OPEQUON'S "2024 OLDER ADULT OF THE YEAR"



So many of our older adults have been recognized as our "Older Adults of the Year." We celebrate those crowned in the past: Roy Bayliss, John Boyd, Frances Smith, Louise Duncan, Bill Robinson, Shirley and Dave Brumble, Rob MacGregor, Ty Headley, Edgar Tufts, Howard Kent, Donna Coffman, Betty Ganoë, Carol Tubbs, Graham Taylor, Carol and Jack Treece, Dick and Gail Crane, Martha Fulton, Becky Proctor, Steve Brown, Edwina Johansen, Betty Chicklo, June Malone, Alan McKay, and Jean Smith. It is time to share your nominations for this year's Older Adult of the Year.

Who would you like to nominate? There are forms available on the Gathering Area table. Share who you nominate and **WHY**. Nominations are **due by Wednesday, May 8** and they may come from anyone in the congregation. Forms may be returned to Carole Witt or dropped in the box provided on the table.

The Session will review the nominations and make the selection. The 2024 Older Adult of the Year will be announced at the Older Adult Luncheon on Wednesday, May 29.

MUSIC AT NOON



On April 17, the noon hour will be filled with the music of our sanctuary organ and piano. The music is eclectic and the atmosphere informal, as our organist shares new pieces and old favorites from his repertoire. Church members, neighbors, and guests are invited to come and go as their schedules allow. This time of "just music" repeats each month on the third Wednesday from noon to 1:00 PM. Feel free to pass along this invitation to those outside our church family. All are welcome to come!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



With the arrival of spring, that means summer is right around the corner. Summer brings Vacation Bible School and we are planning for those warm evenings of fun at Opequon. Our fun-filled week of VBS is scheduled to happen June 9—12, 5:00 PM—7:30 PM. The theme this year is: "SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING CHANGED, A FAMILY GREW!" We will be focusing on the story of Abraham and Sarah with very exciting activities happening each night! Vacation Bible School will be available for 4 year-olds through 8th grade with an adult class as well. Registration will begin April 21. Watch for the display to appear in the Gathering Area. Invite your friends now to come along with you to VBS. We want you to be part of it all!

RACHEL BAYLISS SCHOLARSHIP TAKING APPLICATIONS



The Claytor and Bayliss families established the Rachel Bayliss Scholarship Fund more than twenty-five years ago to support Opequon youth in their college or vocational endeavors. This fund has been supplemented by additional contributions and through regular donations by Happy Days in memory of older adults after their death. Thousands of dollars have been awarded through the years to well-deserving young people.

Scholarship applications ARE NOW AVAILABLE to graduating high school seniors; please contact the church office by calling 540-662-1843 or emailing office@opequonchurch.org to request an application.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY SUNDAY, APRIL 30.

APRIL MINISTRY TEAM NIGHT

Tuesday, April 2

6:00 PM Meal: beef stew, biscuits, salad, dessert, & drinks

6:45 PM Devotions & Team Meetings

A "GIFT" Event

**Sunday, April 28 at 9:45 AM
in the Fellowship Hall**

"GIFT" stands for **"Generations in Faith Together"** and it truly is a gift to have all ages and stages together during the Sunday morning educational hour (known as FAITH FORMATION) at 9:45 AM. The theme for this morning is "REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE." Enjoy clips from the classic *LION KING* movie and ponder some important quotes as we emphasize how we are all God's children. Come enjoy some good food, good company and a good morning experience. Everyone is invited.



THE LATEST IN LOGOS

"Our God is So Big" was a great theme for our LOGOS year, which concluded on March 20 with a 'Dinner and Movie' night. Families were invited to dinner and we all enjoyed the grand finale slide show.

We persevered through our 26th LOGOS year and have so much to be thankful for, especially the almost 60 young people, from age 4 through high school, that we were privileged to spend time with each Wednesday evening. We also celebrate our SPOON HANGING Competition winner this year: Kolton Kramerage! Dakota Davis was our first runner up! Kolton had a spoon hanging from his nose for over 5 minutes. We appreciate evaluation comments from our LOGOS young people, parents, and LOGOS staff as we begin now to plan for the new LOGOS year, which will begin in September. It has been said that "LOGOS is one of the best things happening at Opequon!" We aim to keep that going year after year. LOGOS year #27 is on the horizon and we have our eyes on it. We will miss one another each Wednesday now. We look forward to growing stronger each year in our love for God and one another. For more info about LOGOS, contact Joanne Berson (opequonlogos@gmail.com) or Carole Witt (540-662-1843 or dce@opequonchurch.org).

APRIL CHILDREN'S LESSON



Children will receive an adapted lesson called, "Jesus Calms the Storm," written by Kristin Schmidt. This interactive lesson revolves around Mark 4:35-41. This story reminds us that Jesus and God are present and in control, even when it seems God is hidden or "asleep in the bottom of the boat." God cares for us and is always with us. God can help our anxious minds just as Jesus brought peace to stormy weather.

OPIE'S PLAYHOUSE

We are back to our regularly scheduled Opie's Playhouse on Sunday, April 7! We can't wait to see all our friends and their parents and grandparents for our monthly playgroup! All children ages 7 and under and their families are invited to join us in the Memorial Sanctuary from 9:45 AM—10:45 AM. We are excited to have received donations of new toys including puzzles, play food and dolls. Coffee, juice and snacks will be provided. This is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship between families with young children. Please drop in any time!

YOUTH: GRADES 6-12

April 2 (12:30 PM) - Bowling (meet at church)

YOUNG ADULTS: AGES 18-35

April 30 (6:15 PM) - Bowling (Northside Lanes)

OUR DAILY BREAD

Starting April 10, Our Daily Bread Faith Formation with Pastor Julia will gather at 4:30 PM in the Bageant Room and on Zoom. This class digs deep on the scripture for the coming Sunday, allowing us to wrestle with the scripture to better prepare us for worship. Drop-by or attend online however it works best for you! If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Julia (pastorjulia@opequonchurch.org).

Upcoming Discussion Topics:

- > April 10 - Luke 24:36b-48
- > April 17 - 2 Corinthians 8:16-24
- > April 24 - John 10:11-18

Join us virtually by using the following Zoom info:
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84996337422?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84996337422?pwd=aG13U3I1QUFSZjBTK1U3b2FxEExDUT09)
[pwd=aG13U3I1QUFSZjBTK1U3b2FxEExDUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84996337422?pwd=aG13U3I1QUFSZjBTK1U3b2FxEExDUT09)

Meeting ID: 849 9633 7422
Passcode: 309811

APRIL GATHERING WITH THE MEN OF OPEQUON

The Men of Opequon's (MOO) April gathering will begin with dinner at Chick-fil-A on Monday, April 8, at 6:00 PM. We will then travel to the church for our meeting at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall, where we will share devotions and prayer and enjoy a special presentation by George Saar, who will talk about his hobby of radio-controlled planes. We are planning on having a demonstration outside as well. All men are invited—we hope you will join us!

Also, all men: please join the prep/cooking/serving team for Ministry Team Night on April 2. Be in the Fellowship Hall at 4:30 PM!



GOD-LOVING OPEQUON WOMEN

GLOW is Opequon's multi-aged women's group that meets monthly to build friendships and enjoy heart-warming activities together. Last month, we had a terrific Game Night and enjoyed a Full Taco Bar.

GLOW meets this month on Tuesday, April 9, at 6:00 PM in the Bageant Room and Dell Room areas. We are having a "CARD MAKING" Night. Women are asked to bring a \$3 donation towards supplies. All women are invited to come make a beautiful card that will be great to send to some special person. We will have devotions and refreshments too. It is a great opportunity for ladies to be together. Give yourself a little time with the girls.



LIFE GOES ON

Life Goes On will gather on April 15 at noon in Fellowship Hall. Life Goes On is a monthly lunch meeting of people who have lost their partners. We enjoy a meal, laugh, and talk. A main dish is provided and participants are asked to bring a side or dessert to pass or to chip in a couple of bucks toward expenses. No reservation is needed. Just come. Gluten-free food is always provided. If you need a ride, please let us know (540-662-1843 or assocopc@gmail.com).



JAVA WITH JULIA

Swing by Hopscotch Café in Winchester for Java with Julia on Friday, April 26, anytime between 11:00 AM—1:00 PM!

OLDER ADULT HAPPENINGS

Ah, Spring is here! The miracles of the new season are abundantly around us. There is much to praise God for every day. We praise God for our older adults of Opequon. The Older Adult Team will meet on Monday, April 8, at 9:30 AM in the Bageant Room to discuss plans for Happy Days gatherings and other events. New faces are always welcome at the meetings. (Happy Days is the monthly Older Adult Fellowship Gathering.)

This month's Happy Days Gathering takes place on Wednesday, April 10, at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Our guest speaker will be Jim Stevenson from Northwestern Works. We will begin with our covered-dish lunch. Rotisserie Chicken will be provided along with beverages. All older adults are welcome. Come enjoy the friendship of one another and the delicious food.

An adult trip is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, to American Celebration on Parade with a stop by Route 11 Chips and lunch at Southern Kitchen. The cost of the trip is \$25, plus lunch. Check with Carole Witt to see if spaces are still available.

CCAP

During April, the Mission Ministry Team will be collecting macaroni & cheese dinners for CCAP.



SENIOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Senior Outreach Ministry will meet Sunday, April 14, at 12:15 PM by the church office doors to load up the totes and distribute to the Shenandoah Senior Apartments. Donations of paper towels would be appreciated.

FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB

The Fellowship Book Club will meet on Thursday, April 25 at 6:00 PM in the Bageant Room to discuss the book *The Five Wishes of Mr. Murray McBride* by Joe Siple.



MISSION CONNECTIONS:

Douglas Dicks



Douglas Dicks is our regional liaison and facilitator for education for justice and peacemaking in Israel, Jordan, and Palestine, serving with St. Andrew's Scots Memorial Church in Jerusalem and other partners in the region.

For decades, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has promoted a just peace in the Middle East. Acting in solidarity with the Palestinian Christian community and partner churches across the Middle East, the church pursues peace in the region. Central to the PC(USA)'s Middle East peace initiative is the promotion of human values and human rights for all people, including the Palestinians. We stand alongside them in their quest for peace, and in the hope that the long-standing Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza might end. The church advocates for the right of Israelis and Palestinians "to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force."

The Israeli occupation, with its many layers of oppressive practices and its consequences of crushing hardships, has contributed to a large exodus of Christians from Palestine. In 1920, about a tenth of the Palestinian population was Christian, but now estimates place the Christian population at around 1 percent. Despite declining numbers, the Christians of Palestine contribute a significant voice to the cause of reconciliation and peace in the Middle East.

According to Doug Dicks, Middle Eastern Christians have a major role to play in bringing peace to the Middle East. They bring to the table a commitment to Christ's reconciliation and a deep understanding of the region's culture. Though relatively small in number, Arab Christians have great potential to build bridges of understanding.

Christian influence, which began in New Testament times, is woven deeply into the history of the Holy Land. Christians make valuable contributions throughout the region in health care, education, and civic and political life. They look to Christians outside the region for solidarity and encouragement, and a large part of Doug's job is to help fill that need.

Over the years, Doug has accompanied hundreds of Presbyterians who have come to the region seeking to walk alongside Arab Christians as well as to learn from them. He has also engaged with Israelis committed to peace, justice and the freedom of both peoples to live as caring neighbors. "I would hope that our ministry of presence in the region, particularly at this volatile and historic time, demonstrates the commitment on behalf of our church to accompany people where they are — whether in good times or in bad," Doug says.

Through serving in a region where people are yearning for better lives, we are living in accordance with how Jesus Christ lived his own life. "I believe our ministry and mission should still be one of helping to give voice to the voiceless and empowering people," Doug explains. "Though at times it can be politically sensitive to challenge the powers that be, I still believe that we are called to be faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ in whatever context we serve in. Our Lord challenged both the religious and political leadership of his day. I think we can do no less."

Doug holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and archaeology from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. His home church is Buckton Presbyterian Church in Front Royal, Virginia.

(<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/doug-dicks/>)

"Christ Amidst the Rubble"

Doug's Spring 2024 "Christ Amidst the Rubble" letter provides personal insights regarding the war that are difficult to read. To view his letter and photos, visit:

https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/letter/christ-amidst-the-rubble/?utm_medium=email&hsmi=297058085&utm_content=297058085&utm_source=hs_email

Within his letter, Doug also shares a link to a Palestinian Pastor's Christmas sermon from Bethlehem that is eye opening! To listen to this powerful sermon, you can click the link within the letter or view it on YouTube by visiting: https://youtu.be/Md_hw_A-ols

ROOTS & SHOOTS GARDEN

Welcome Spring! Seedlings planted in March are thriving in the greenhouse. Raised beds are ready to receive and nurture new life. Many varieties of vegetables and companion flowers have been thoughtfully planned. Sheds, tools, irrigation, and rain water collection systems are in place and ready for the growing season. The Roots & Shoots Garden Team has had some assistance from children, youth, and other adult volunteers. All are excited to get the garden growing!

Many food insecure members of our community will benefit from our bounty of fresh produce this year. If you would like to have a tour, assist in the garden, or make food pantry deliveries, please contact the church office. Most needed are volunteers to deliver produce to the Sherando Food Pantry on the first and third Thursdays of every month.

New this year, several garden events will be hosted throughout the growing season. All are welcome to participate, or simply share in the glory of this beautiful space. We look forward to seeing you there!

LENT JIGSAW PUZZLE PROJECT



Thank you for completing the Lent Jigsaw Puzzle by Easter! Many hands helped in fitting all the pieces together and making the beautiful picture come alive. Some people found working on the puzzle calming and they didn't want to leave the puzzle table!

The finished puzzle will be preserved and hung in the church building. Great job all you puzzle-doers!

GENEROSITY MOMENT

(From Pastor Tracie Martin)

Spring is here and summer is not far behind. Soon we will be outside more than inside. We will even worship at the picnic shelter for WOW. The warmer seasons offer opportunities to breathe deeply, to rest a bit, to regroup. Some of us even use this time to wash windows and other surfaces free of fingerprints and other smudges.

At OPC, we especially value the fingerprints that cannot be washed away. Your fingerprint on the OPC congregation, the local community, and the world are indelible. They are not smudges; they are markers.

Your fingerprints feed hungry people. They help heal; they lift people who are falling. They offer comfort when people are ill. They teach valuable lessons; they prepare us for other seasons. They plan; they matter.

A house without fingerprints is a house without people. Even the most aggressive cleanser will leave something behind because it cannot eliminate the marks of those who choose to make their difference.

As we look toward the warmer months, it is important to take care of ourselves but it is also important to remember that Christ's heart, hands, and feet are always needed close to home and in the world. WE need to make people and God smile—even when it is hot out.



From
 Nick Deptula
 Bill Bender
 Thanks from
 Mike Nutry
 Carol Nutry

Max Agbayan

Thank You

To our friends and loved ones who have made so much possible

We cannot how much all of your love supported us through prayers, donations, thoughts and emotional support that meant to all of us. Through your sponsorship we were able to bring God's love to so many in need of even basic kindness and attention. The influence this experience had on the communities we were able to aid, as well as the palpable effect on our team was made possible by your love. Thank you again and we cannot wait to share what experiences we brought back

Happy Easter to All, Volunteers & Church

REJOICE!

With Appreciation
 Asking God to bless you for your thoughtfulness, your kindness... ..and your generous heart.

He is not here For He IS Risen
 Matthew 28:6

THANK YOU so much
 Sherwood
 Apartment Residents

Thank-you FOR your Caring & Compassionate Ways!
 Debbie Propper

Thanking God for you.
 EPHESIANS 1:16 NLT



DEAR LOGOS STAFF,

We did it! We finished our 26th year of LOGOS! I can't thank you enough for your dedication to our children and youth. You surrounded each child with love and shared your faith with them. You taught them they are loved by our great big God and that they are cared for and valued by all of us. You created joyful memories they will always hold with them of their time in LOGOS. God is truly working through you! Every staff role, big or small, is vital to LOGOS. We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you.

With love and gratitude,
 Joanne Berson, LOGOS Director

SPECIAL NOTES OF THANKS



It was a grand St. Patrick's Day celebration with a beautiful LOGOS service followed by our annual Potato Bake. Thank you's go to: Bill Robinson, who has arranged for baked potatoes, rolls and butter from Golden Corral for the last 35 (or so) years; the LOGOS Team for desserts; Becky Proctor, Jeannie Wright, Dana Kelly, Cindy Sousa, Scarlett and Kat Kibler, Rick Praml, Shannon Brannon, Brenda and Brian Steffens, and David and Carole Witt for all their help in setting-up and cleaning-up; Robert Sydnor for setting up and covering the tables (I think that David helped with this also); Kyle Homan, Tracie Martin, and Bill Thomasson for their scrumptious chili; and to our guests, for allowing us to be part of your Sunday afternoon lunch. So many hands made our event successful, full of good food and OPC Fellowship... and I for one REALLY appreciate everyone's help.

With much love, Marj Praml

APRIL NURSE NOTES:

Irritable Bowel Syndrome



- IBS affects up to 5-10% of individuals worldwide and affects children and adults of both genders. Although IBS does not shorten a person's life span, it is associated with a large health care and economic burden.
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a disorder in which people have reoccurring issues with abdominal discomfort or pain that is associated in some way to their bowel movements. Typically, this intermittent abdominal pain is accompanied by diarrhea, constipation, or alternating episodes of both (mixed). Bloating or distention of the abdomen is also common, and other symptoms may be present as well.
- Some patients with IBS, particularly those whose problems started after food poisoning or traveler's diarrhea (post-infectious IBS) can gradually get better over time. Others will have IBS for their entire lives.
- In IBS, the normal functioning of the bowels are affected and don't work properly. Sometimes motility is abnormal – the bowels move too much or too often, and sometimes they don't move enough or often enough.
- Usually sensory perception is abnormal – the nerves in the bowels are more sensitive to stretch or movement and this can lead to more pain.
- These abnormalities may in turn relate to disordered brain-gut communication, genetic factors, infection and altered gut bacteria, and intestinal inflammation.

SUBTYPES OF IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME:

Identifying the subgroup of IBS is helpful when deciding which tests and/or treatments are best. The severity of the symptoms should also be considered.

Irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhea (IBS-D): symptoms of diarrhea occur most often

Irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C): symptoms of constipation occur most often

Irritable bowel syndrome mixed (IBS-M): symptoms of both constipation and diarrhea occur

TREATING IBS:

The key to achieving relief for IBS is for people to embrace the understanding that IBS is a condition in which multiple factors can contribute to its development and can trigger the symptoms. Some examples include: there may be a family history of IBS or disease with similar symptoms; symptoms may be preceded by a GI infection, such as food poisoning; or symptoms may be related to stressful events.

A knowledgeable healthcare provider can diagnose IBS by careful review of your symptoms, a physical examination, and selected diagnostic procedures that are often limited to a few basic tests.

The first line of treatment for IBS includes general measures such as: establishing an effective patient-physician relationship, obtaining education about IBS, and implementing lifestyle changes, which may be associated with symptoms. If lifestyle changes do not completely relieve IBS symptoms, medications and/or other therapies may be helpful.

Opequon Presbyterian Church
Financial Summary for the period ended
February 29, 2024

	Annual Budget 2024	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Annual Budget Used
Income					
410000 Offering Income	843,003	42,076	133,909	709,094	15.9%
420000 Other Income	1,600	156	234	1,366	14.6%
Total 400000 Income	844,603	42,232	134,143	710,460	15.9%
Expenses					
500000 Personnel Costs					
510000 Installed Pastors	219,432	17,889	35,772	183,660	16.3%
520000 Other Ministerial Staff	144,436	11,465	22,620	121,816	15.7%
530000 Administrative Staff	146,818	12,387	23,969	122,849	16.3%
Total 500000 Personnel Costs	510,686	41,741	82,360	428,326	16.1%
600000 Other Ministries					
610000 Christian Education	14,100	1,471	1,970	12,130	14.0%
620000 Congregational Care	2,800	414	354	2,446	12.6%
630000 Evangelism	1,900	0	25	1,875	1.3%
640000 Fellowship	3,800	174	532	3,268	14.0%
650000 Mission	73,575	14,433	17,142	56,433	23.3%
660000 Worship	7,000	126	358	6,642	5.1%
Total 600000 Other Ministries	103,175	16,618	20,382	82,793	19.8%
Total 700000 Church Administration	129,632	9,752	20,619	109,013	15.9%
Total Expenses	743,493	68,110	123,361	620,132	16.6%
Net Operating Income (Expense)	101,110	(25,878)	10,782	90,328	10.7%
920000 Other Income	17,625	2,926	4,849	12,776	27.5%
930000 Other Expenses	118,735	10,902	20,952	97,783	17.6%
Net Other Income (Expense)	(101,110)	(7,976)	(16,103)	(85,007)	15.9%
Income Greater Than (Less Than) Expenses	0	(33,854)	(5,321)		

	<u>2/29/24</u>
Cash	<u>\$ 122,069</u>
Sanctuary Mortgage Principal Balance	<u>\$ 464,687</u>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Easter Sunday 6:30am - Easter Sunrise Service 7:15am - Easter Breakfast 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - Family Easter Event 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>OFFICE CLOSED 6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10am - Staff Meeting @ Bageant 12:30pm - Youth Bowling 5pm - Tech Team Meeting 6pm - Ministry Team Night</p>	<p>Rebekah Away 6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Shelter/Mem 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry 7pm - ART @ Assembly Room 7pm - Vision Team @ Bageant</p>	<p>9am - Church Workday @ Outside</p>	
<p>Communion 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - Faith Formation 9:45am - Opie's Playhouse 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>9:30am - Older Adult Meeting 6pm - MOO @ Chick-fil-A 6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary 7pm - MOO in FH @ Bageant</p>	<p>9:30am - Tuesday Morning 6pm - GLOW Bageant/Dell Room</p>	<p>Rachel Away 12pm - Happy Days @ Fellowship 1pm - SVHC @ Bageant Room 4:30pm - Our Daily Bread Faith 5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension 6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>Rebekah Away 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Shelter/Mem</p>		
<p>8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - Medical mission forum 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary 12:15pm - Senior Outreach 1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship 4pm - Spring Forward Event</p>	<p>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 12pm - Life Goes On @ Fellowship 5pm - LOGOS Leadership Team 6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10am - Staff Meeting 4:30pm - VBS Team Meeting 7pm - Session Mtg @ Bageant</p>	<p>Julia Away 12pm - Music at Noon 4:30pm - Our Daily Bread Faith 5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension 6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>Rebekah Away 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Shelter/Mem 10:30am - WANC Meeting 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry</p>		
<p>Blood Pressure Checks 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - Forum with Rev. Kristen 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10am - Interfaith and Housing 3pm - TVOR Gathering 5:30pm - Highland Food Pantry</p>	<p>10am - Older Adult Trip 4:30pm - Our Daily Bread Faith 5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension 6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>Rebekah Away 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Shelter/Mem 10:30am - WANC Lunch 2:30pm - GLOW planning 6pm - Fellowship Book Club</p>	<p>11am - Java With Julia</p>	
<p>4 Cents a Meal Offering Ordination & Installation of 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - GIFT Event @ Fellowship 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>11:30am - Staff Lunch 6:15pm - Young Adult Bowling</p>	<p>4:30pm - Our Daily Bread Faith 5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension 6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Shelter/Mem 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry 7pm - Vision Team</p>	<p>JULIA AWAY OFFICE CLOSED 8am - Breakfast Feast Group</p>	

VISIT FROM NOROC'S REV. KRISTEN HARRIS

Last summer, seven individuals from Opequon were joined by others from around the US and went to Romania with NOROC to learn and serve. We worked alongside moms to build a play ground for the kiddos, educated ourselves on the Romanian child support system, learned about the Ukrainian Relief efforts, and ate incredible food. It was truly an amazing experience, one that we all will think of fondly for the rest of our lives.



One of the most enjoyable parts of the trip was getting to know Rev. Kristen Harris, the PC(USA) Mission Coworker for NOROC. Rev. Kristen is truly a bright and shining light, serving the families in Romania with energy and awareness. We are delighted to welcome her to Opequon on April 21 to preach the Word of God in both services and also share about her and NOROC's work. Join us in the Fellowship Hall between the two services to learn more about the work Rev. Kristen does!

APRIL OFFICE & STAFF SCHEDULE NOTES

- April 1:** CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
- April 3-6:** Rebekah Witt - GenOn Training
- April 6-7:** David & Carole Witt - away
- April 10:** Rachel Lesink - out of the office
- April 11-13:** Rebekah Witt - GenOn Training
- April 17-20:** Julia Burkley - away
- April 18-20:** Rebekah Witt - GenOn Training
- April 25-27:** Rebekah Witt - GenOn Training
- April 26-27:** David & Carole Witt - Continuing Ed

If a pastoral concern arises during these times, please contact the church office (540-662-1843 or office@opequonchurch.org) or please note who is away and email one of the pastors directly.

ADDRESS UPDATES

Congratulations to Rebekah Witt on purchasing her first house! Her new address is:

Rebekah Witt
223 Tudor Drive
Winchester, VA 22603

Graham Taylor has moved in with his daughter. His new address is:

Graham Taylor
c/o Myers Family
20397 Bowfonds St
Ashburn, VA 20147



MAKE NOTE OF THESE MAY HIGHLIGHTS

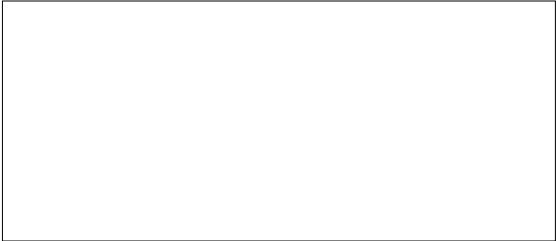
- **Friday, May 3:** CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED (Apple Blossom Friday)
- **Sunday, May 5:** Communion
Older Adult Sunday
Apple Blossom Sunday
Opie's Playhouse
- **Tuesday, May 7:** Ministry Team Night
- **Saturday, May 11:** Roots & Shoots Planting Day
- **Sunday, May 12:** Mother's Day / Christian Family Sunday
- **Sunday, May 19:** Pentecost Sunday
Taizé Worship (6:00 PM)
- **Monday, May 20:** Ethiopia Forum
- **Sunday, May 26:** May GIFT Event
- **Monday, May 27:** CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED (Memorial Day)
- **Wednesday, May 29:** Annual Older Adult Luncheon (11:30 AM)

OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

217 Opequon Church Lane
Winchester, VA 22602-2421
www.opequonchurch.org

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**OPEQUON
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CHURCH**
217 Opequon Church Lane
Winchester, VA 22602-2421
Website: www.opequonchurch.org
Phone: 540-662-1843
Office: office@opequonchurch.org
Church Office Hours:
Monday—Thursday, 9:00 AM—2:00 PM
Friday, 9:00 AM—12:00 PM
Worship Services:
Sunday, 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM
****The deadline to send newsletter submissions to the church office the 15th of each month. Thank you!**



CHURCH STAFF
Pastor David R. Witt
Associate Pastor Julia H. Burkley
Parish Associate Tracie Martin
Church Office Administrator..... Rachel Lesink
Church Finance Administrator Ken Smiy
Director of Christian Education Carole Witt
Youth & Young Adult Director Rebekah Witt
Director of Music Susan Homan
Organist William Heavner
Facilities Coordinator Robert Sydnor
Nursery Supervisor Laurie Carver
Faith Community Nurses Bill Martin,
Mike Nutry, Pat Williams