

# The Opequon Spirit

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



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

## February 2025

[www.opequonchurch.org](http://www.opequonchurch.org)

540-662-1843

[office@opequonchurch.org](mailto:office@opequonchurch.org)

### WORSHIP SERVICES AT-A-GLANCE

#### **Sunday, February 2**

† 1 Corinthians 13:1-13;

Luke 4:21-30

Sermon: "And the Greatest of  
These is..."

Communion

#### **Wednesday, February 5**

**6:30 PM "Worship on  
Wednesday" (WOW)**

† Mark 2:1-12

Meditation: "One Anothering"

All LOGOS Young People

Participating; Special

Offering for Bright Futures

#### **Sunday, February 9**

*"Souper Bowl Day of Caring"*

† Isaiah 6:1-13; Luke 5:1-11

Sermon: "Called to Follow"

**1:30 PM Spring Arbor  
Worship**

#### **Sunday, February 16**

† Jeremiah 17:5-10;

Luke 6:17-26

Sermon: "Trust in the Lord,  
Through Blessings &  
Troubles"

Blood Pressure Checks

#### **Sunday, February 23**

*Youth, Youth Families, & Young  
Adult Sunday*

† Genesis 45:3-11, 15;

Luke 6:27-38

4 Cents A Meal

**9:30 AM Church Coffee**

**10:00 AM OPC Annual  
Meeting (Sanctuary)**

### **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING CAN COLLECTION: February 1-9**

Opequon Youth are collecting soup cans for the Souper Bowl of Caring!  
Between February 1-9, please bring the type of soup according to where  
you typically sit in the Sanctuary for worship:

**Choir Side = Tomato**

**Center Section = Vegetable / Beef**

**Window Side = Chicken Noodle**

Which section of the Sanctuary will be crowned the winners and bring in  
the most soup cans?! All donations are due to the collection area in the  
Gathering Area by Sunday, February 9, and will be given to the Sherando  
and Highland Food Pantries. Monetary donations (marked "Souper Bowl")  
are welcome for the pantries as well. Questions? Ask Rebekah Witt!

### **OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION & CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY**

The Session of Opequon Presbyterian Church calls for the Annual  
Meeting of the Congregation and Celebration of Ministry on Sunday,  
February 23, 2025 at 10:00 AM in the Sanctuary.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the written report to the  
congregation (available beginning Sunday, February 16), which will  
include statistical and financial reports, ministry team reports, staff  
reports, and the 2025 church calendar. We will also hear reports from the  
church's Vision, Architectural Review, and Capital Campaign Teams. The  
congregation will be asked to elect four representatives to the church's  
Nominating Committee. **Please prepare to nominate four individuals.**

In addition, the Annual Meeting of the Corporation (Opequon  
Presbyterian Church, Inc.) will occur, with a report by the Trustees on  
investments in 2024 and the corporation's and Trustees' organization in  
the current year.

The meeting will be called to order promptly at 10:00 AM and will be  
preceded by a Church Coffee in the Gathering Area from 9:30—9:55 AM.  
We look forward to this new format of worship, fellowship, and meeting or  
fellowship, meeting, and worship, depending on whether you attend the  
8:30 AM or 11:00 AM service that day. All active members of Opequon  
are encouraged to participate in this meeting, exercising both the  
privilege and responsibility of church membership, as we give thanks for  
our ministry and mission as the called people of God.



## NOTES FROM PASTOR DAVID

Dear Friends in Christ,

When I was a little boy growing up in the church, we heartily sang a chorus in Sunday School called, *Deep and Wide*: "Deep and wide, deep and wide, there's a fountain flowing deep and wide. Deep and wide, deep and wide, there's a fountain flowing deep and wide." Along with the jaunty tune, we enjoyed the hand motions, indicating the depth of God's love as our hands were stacked apart from each other and the width of God's love as our hands were outstretched. Then, we reversed the words and sang, "wide and deep," or we left out an original word and simply hummed, "hmmm" in its place. I think we understood we were singing about God's love and grace flowing like a fountain, but I can't be sure.

Today, I look back happily on "Deep and Wide," along with many other of those children's songs, songs that I once taught to our three children, and now teach our three grandchildren, and realize that the church has a sincere call to drill down deeply into God's love for its own strength and vision and to extend widely God's love to the community and world. As we live in and live out of the Lord's welcome to us, we are commissioned to share that same hospitality through outreach to others. I celebrate how Opequon Church seeks to humbly and faithfully minister through its deep and wide mission. Our church's mission statement, "Prayerfully equipping disciples of all generations to be Christ's hands, heart, and feet in the world," captures this ongoing endeavor and casts our congregational vision.

Building off the long-evolving work and conversations with our Vision Team that stretches back more than eight years and growing out of the five pillars identified by our congregational studies, we have moved forward since last spring with the appointment of our Architectural Review Team (ART) and Capital Campaign Team and the selection of our architects, Balzer & Associates, and pre-construction contractors, Kee Construction. One goal we identified as essential to our building plan is to construct a new fellowship hall and kitchen that, while adjacent and connected to our current building, are self-sufficient and self-secured, meaning this facility may be accessible from the outside and operate separately from the existing. This would meet the needs of our "community/mission engagement" pillar, as we seek to be a "deep and wide" church, extending hospitality through outreach, making our facility available to groups within the community. This is a priority as we consider how to respond to the world around us, making a difference as

witnesses to God's love. At a recent Vision Team meeting, we specifically focused on this aspect, as we often uphold both mission and ongoing conversation with community groups. Two years ago, Vision invited leaders from Valley Health, United Way, and the local school systems to come and share with us about their work. We anticipate doing that again in the coming months.

In the meantime, we ask you to enter a time of discernment with us about how a new fellowship hall, kitchen, and restrooms could be utilized with the community. Ponder and envision that with us. Think, feel, pray, and share. And reach out to Dave Schwantes and Bill Thomasson, Elder Co-Chairs of the Vision Team, with your ideas. "Deep and wide... there's a fountain... there's a church, flowing deep and wide!"

Together in Christ's Service,

## PASTOR JULIA'S MUSINGS

Friends in Christ,

This time of year feels like sabbath.

It's the breath after all of the Christmas festivities, when the nights are long and cold, when fires and hot tea make an evening with a book like sacred worship. When the garden seed catalogues come, and you dog-ear the possibilities of what is to come but what is not yet. It's the time to eat the comfort foods of nostalgia, preferably out of a handmade bowl with fuzzy socks on.

This is the time to rest.

God mandated this time in the very act of creation. God rested, and also created a world where the seasons of rest are built in.

So that is my call for you this month. Rest. Reset. Cozy in. Read a book that has been sitting on your coffee table for way too long.

Let me know what you want to read this winter, or a new show or movie that has caught your interest. Is there a recipe that you make every year during these colder months that you would want to share? I want to know. Because this time of year feels like a breath. A time where community collectively leans into God's sabbath, so let us do that together.

Give yourself in to this season, this time when God is calling us to take a moment, to settle in and cozy up. Lean into this rest.

Blessings,

## PASTOR TRACIE'S JUST THINKIN'

I am writing this newsletter article from home today. It is cold, icy, and, out here in West Virginia, the roads are snowy and treacherous. It feels like a normal day in Syracuse, except that there are no cars attempting to travel and there is less than a foot of snow. I would call this a snow day... a second snow day following Sunday when we watched worship on the TV and drank hot beverages as we watched. It wasn't quite like Communion, but it was great fun watching and worshipping from the couch.

Being snowed in for two days feels like a gift down here in the south. I am truly enjoying it. Being home has caused me to remember other snow days... good times and bad.

As a child, I would snuggle under the blankets and pray for the phone to ring on snowy mornings. Mom worked at the school so we knew before most others when school would be cancelled. The phone would ring, Mom would run to answer, and then she would call out, "Go back to sleep—no school." I would say a quick prayer of thanks and immediately become fully awake. Snow days were not to be wasted.

I will never forget the snow day when I was about 13. We had feet of snow and people were warned to stay off the roads until they could be cleared. I was looking out the window at the street in front of our house, when I saw my friend Joanie Waite and her father pull up in a one-horse open sleigh. I dressed in a flash, grabbed some toast, and jumped in. We were the only thing on the road. Mr. Waite drove from house to house, picking up friends, and then we were off. Our feet were warmed by soap stones that had been baked and wrapped in blankets. It was post-Christmas, but we sang "Jingle Bells" until we were hoarse. After a long ride all over town, we were treated to hot cocoa and popped corn made with bacon fat by Joanie's mother. It was wonderful. Then we all jumped back in to be taken home.

Another snow day, later in life, cancelled our Ash Wednesday service at Robinson Memorial. There was ice, over ½ an inch, and the county was closed. There were several people in the hospital, but I couldn't get there, and they were stable. Our driveway had yet to be addressed and leaving to go anywhere was not possible, so I made soup. Soup making was what my family of origin often did on snow days. It made the house smell great and was something to be shared with anyone within walking distance. In Syracuse, like in Winchester, only a few members lived close to Bill and me, but I soon learned that the few neighbors

we had were aware of the day and the snow and resultant soup. No ashes were imposed that day but soup was picked up by several folks, including one who plowed out the drive.

This time, our second snowy day taught me a lesson. You all know that tech hates me. This has been proven over and over as I have attempted to take several tests before the surgery that should give me back mobility. Don't get me wrong—I do understand the concept of "garbage in; garbage out." I know that it is my inability to remember and repeat the steps needed to manipulate technology that causes most of my difficulties. It wasn't really easier when I had to explain everything to a bookkeeper or secretary years ago, I just understood it better. Today, I learned that trying to use my fingerprint to open my cell phone after having made snow day soup, and cutting that finger, will not work. This is a small gain in my understanding, but I am thankful that I can work around even this obstruction.

God gave me a brain and people who can explain the vagaries of technology. God also gave us a snow day to figure everything out without a lot of stress. God is very good.

—Tracie

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## SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2024

- ☒ Session welcomed and examined newly elected officers at the December Session meeting: Elders-Elect Class of 2027: Michelle Hammer, Laurel Hathaway, Nancy Picklap, and Ron Smith and Deacons-Elect Bill Bender and Sara Gomez (both Class of 2027) and Beth Eisenhower (Class of 2026). Ordination and Installation of Officers and Commissioning will be Sunday, January 26, 2025, at 11:00 AM, with a reception to follow.
- ☒ Stewardship & Finance Ministry: Financial reports for October and November were approved by Session in November and December, respectively. At the December meeting, Session approved the balanced 2025 General Fund Budget prepared by Finance & Stewardship that includes projected income and expenses each totaling \$884,218.00.
- ☒ Buildings & Grounds Ministry: In December, the new sidewalks were sealed and water-stained ceiling tiles replaced in Gathering Area. Construction & installation of the new livestream platform in the Sanctuary begins January 2025.
- ☒ Personnel & Administration Ministry: Please welcome Fiona Cheng, who joined the Nursery



staff at Opequon as our new Sunday Nursery Substitute. The annual Staff Appreciation Lunch is planned for March 2025.

- ✧ Director of Youth/Young Adults, Rebekah Witt's leadership role in the Gen-On Ministry was instrumental in OPC being chosen as a pilot church for the Christian Parenting Project.
- ✧ Worship Ministry: Thanks to George Schember for designing an informational placard to be placed beneath the glass on the Historic Communion Table that now resides at the back of the Sanctuary. Session approved the 2025 communion monthly dates as proposed.
- ✧ Deacons & Congregational Care Ministry: Unspent 2024 budgetary funds were used to purchase faux wood and artificial flowers for the Worship Team to use on Sunday's not covered by real flower donations. A Deacon Retreat is scheduled for February 15, 2025.
- ✧ Responding to Shenandoah Presbytery's pledge request, Session approved the 2025 budgeted pledge (\$33,800), which was filed online by the Clerk of Session.
- ✧ Visioning Ministry: ART's recommended pre-construction contractor, Kee Construction, (approved by Session on December 5, 2024), joins with Balzer & Associates to participate in the Team Build Approach. Focus groups will continue in the new year.
- ✧ Mission Ministry: Thanks to all volunteers who supported WATTS Week at Opequon, December 28, 2024—January 4, 2025. The inaugural Graham Taylor Memorial Fundraiser to benefit WATTS, scheduled for September 20, 2025, will be a fish-fry (Graham loved fishing), built around the theme of "Loaves & Fishes."
- ✧ Evangelism Ministry: The new Hands, Heart and Feet blue t-shirts are now available for pick-up (\$20/each). Newcomers Classes begin January 5, 2025. Remember to have your picture taken for the Church Directory in the Dell Room by our photographers, Debbie Bender and Alyce Callahan.
- ✧ Session's required annual year-end review of the church roll led to the transfer of 16 members to inactive status, effective December 31, 2024, in accordance with the session action approved at the November meeting.
- ✧ Session re-elected Ron Smith as Treasurer and Ann Smith as Clerk of Session at the December meeting.

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

## EXTENDING OUR EMPATHY AND CHRISTIAN LOVE TO...



- ✧ Phyllis and Vern Gamble and their family upon the death of Phyllis' sister, Donna Royston, on December 24.
- ✧ The family of OPC member Mary Bettye Stirn, who died on January 16.
- ✧ Betty Ganoe and her family upon the death of her brother, Kenneth Webster, on January 16.
- ✧ Tim and Corene Roberts and their family upon the death of Tim's mother, Nancy Roberts, on January 21.
- ✧ Paula and Jack Marquis and family upon the death of Paula's brother, Robert Mylanak, on January 22.
- ✧ David and Gretchen Rusch and family upon the death of David's mother, Caroline Rusch, on January 27.

*"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*

### MINISTRY TEAM NIGHT

**Tuesday, February 4**

- 6:00 PM Meal: Lasagna Night, complete with vegetarian options, salad, dessert, & drinks
- 6:45 PM Devotions & Team Meetings

### LAST CALL FOR DIRECTORY PHOTOS!

Don't miss your chance to be included in the OPC Photo Directory! Photos will be taken in the Dell Room after the 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM services on February 23 and March 16.

Photos will also be taken at TVOR on Tuesday, February 25, at 3:00 PM.

If you have any questions or want to schedule a time for us to come to your home and take your directory photo, contact Debbie Bender (540-336-7689) or Alyce Callahan (586-801-0279).



## OPC STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Fiona Cheng, Nursery Substitute

Fiona joined our OPC staff as our Nursery Substitute in late November 2024. She is also a current teacher during the week at First Presbyterian Preschool. Fiona's daughter attended our LOGOS program and Fiona has helped Rebekah Witt with many of our youth activities. We are grateful to have Fiona and welcome her to our OPC team! When you see Fiona, please be sure to say, "Hello!"

Here are some get to know you facts about Fiona:

- ❖ Q: What hobbies do you enjoy?  
A: Sightseeing, spending time with family & friends
- ❖ Q: If you could travel anywhere, where would you like to go?  
A: Europe
- ❖ Q: What are three items you would take to a deserted island?  
A: Air conditioner, coffee, & medicine
- ❖ Q: Do you have a favorite sports team?  
A: I do not have a favorite sports team, but I love volleyball.
- ❖ Q: What is your favorite movie or TV show?  
A: *Marvel Avenger* movies & *Bones* TV series
- ❖ Q: What is your favorite snack or food?  
A: Brownies, tiramisu, & chili
- ❖ Q: What is a fun fact about yourself that people may not know?  
A: I can be very silly—especially around little ones.



Dear OPiE,  
OPC is planning a much-needed addition to the church complex. Can you give me some details on the proposed plans? —Questioning

Dear Questioning,

Yes, architects have made initial drawings of a proposed addition which will add space for larger meetings as well as a new kitchen and music center. The new construction will continue to allow us to meet the increasing needs of a vibrant and growing community. As we move forward with this project, all of us will be able to join in the work to move OPC forward in the future.

On Saturday, January 18th, I hid in a closet as the ordained leadership of OPC got more information. There was a lot of food and the people who sat at the back of Fellowship Hall were very generous and shared a lot with me. Sadly, a guy named Mike did not spill any of the noodle soup he was enjoying, so I could only smell that. It smelled wonderful!

They talked about a vaulted ceiling with side areas that will seat 300 people, more or less, depending on the set-up, more bathroom space than is required by code, a good-sized music center with storage for music as well as worship stuff, and a much larger kitchen. I like the idea of the larger kitchen a lot. It will all be on the same floor as the Sanctuary!

Mitch Orndorff talked a little about the Capital Campaign that will be needed. That seems to be coming along well. Pastor David talked about the plans and reminded us all that nothing is written in stone yet and ideas and questions are very welcome. Pastor Tracie has left a picnic basket with a fat cat on it upstairs in the Gathering Area with some pens and paper so we all can ask questions as they occur to us. She promised that every question would be answered. My question is, why didn't Mike share his soup???

## NOTES FROM THE WORSHIP TEAM

### Communion Prep

It must be said that our dynamic sister duo, Betty Chicklo and June Malone, are responsible for so much good that happens at OPC. A great deal of what they contribute happens behind the scenes and seems to appear like magic. It is not magic. It requires preparation and follow-through.

Our OPC communion preparation process is efficient and streamlined and it typically takes Betty and June less than two hours per month. In order for this seamless flow to continue, Betty and June could use some support. Specifically, we are asking for you to prayerfully consider sharing your time by helping with the communion preparation.

If communion is a meaningful focus of your worship, please consider including it in your ministry. We are asking for two people to team up and prepare communion every other month (six times per year). Betty and June will continue to cover the other months.

For more information, reach out to Jennie Wright at church or by email ([jpmwright@comcast.net](mailto:jpmwright@comcast.net)). Thank you!

### Sanctuary Flowers

Flowers are placed in the Sanctuary on Sundays throughout the year to enhance our worship experience. This is a wonderful way to celebrate a special occasion (birthday, marriage, graduation, baptism, etc.) or honor loved ones who may have passed away.

Individuals or families may provide and dedicate the flowers for any available worship date. You may select the florist of your choice and have the flowers delivered to OPC during office hours on Friday (9:00 AM—12:00 PM) or bring in and place the arrangement yourself.

You may sign-up to provide the flowers for an available date on the 2025 Flower Chart (posted in the church office) or by clicking on the "Flower Chart" link on the [OPC website](#).

### MUSIC AT NOON

On February 19, we invite you to the Sanctuary during the noon hour to enjoy this eclectic, informal time of "just music" that repeats on the third Wednesday each month.



## ATTENTION ALL OPC PERFORMERS:

This is your official  
'Casting Call!'

## OPC'S TALENT SHOW & POTLUCK DINNER

**FEBRUARY 22, 2025**

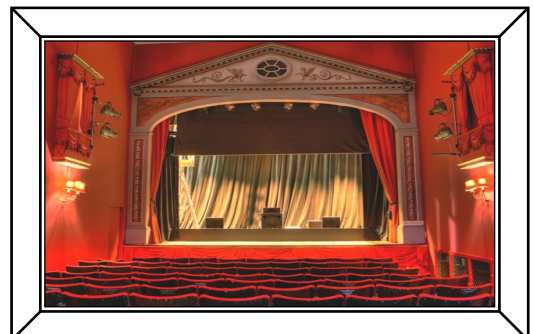
**5:00 PM**

OPC has LOTS of talents!

So, come on out and share your music, dance, literary reading, and audio visual talents with us!

Sign-up in the Gathering Area  
or contact Marj Praml  
(540-327-2667 or  
[pramlmarjory550@gmail.com](mailto:pramlmarjory550@gmail.com))

We are looking forward  
to hearing from you!





## OPIE'S PLAYHOUSE

Calling All Children! Our next Opie's Playhouse gathering will be on February 2, 9:45 AM—10:45 AM, in the Memorial Sanctuary. This is a time of fun and fellowship planned especially for our families with young children. We fill the room with toys for children elementary age and under, and provide snacks, juice, and coffee. You are also welcome to drop-off your children at Opie's Playhouse for an hour of supervised playtime while you attend Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation Class. We hope you will come play with us!



## THE LATEST IN LOGOS

LOGOS continues to grow! We are privileged to have new friends interested in joining us each Wednesday and we have recently welcomed two new members to the

Leadership Team—Abigail Ervin and Wendy Wygant! This month offers another helping of some great themes such as 'Picnic Night,' 'Roses Are Red Night,' and our annual competition with 'SPOON-HANGING Night'. We are looking ahead to LOGOS Sunday in March as our preparations begin now. The strong heartbeat of LOGOS is an important part of the ministry at Opequon. LOGOS is held on Wednesdays, 4:30—7:15 PM, and it is open to all Pre-K—12th grade young people. The LOGOS Ministry truly puts a HUG around the church as so many ages come together to love God and one another.

On February 5, LOGOS time will also include "Worship on Wednesday" (WOW) in the Sanctuary, 6:30 PM—7:15 PM. LOGOS young people will be sharing in worship and everyone is invited to worship with us that evening.

For more info about LOGOS, contact Joanne Berson ([opequonlogos@gmail.com](mailto:opequonlogos@gmail.com)) or Carole Witt ([dce@opequonchurch.org](mailto:dce@opequonchurch.org) or 540-662-1843).

## NEW FAITH FORMATION CLASS:

### Women in the Hebrew Bible Class

This new class will walk through the different women in the Hebrew Bible with Pastor Julia and Pastor Tracie. Each week, we will focus on a different woman, tell her story, discern what we can learn from her, and walk with women as we learn about our own faiths. Join us on Tuesdays, February 11—April 1, from 1:30—2:30 PM in the Bageant Room. Each class stands alone, so while we would love to have you each week, feel free to come and go as you can! This will be the first of a two-part series, which will continue with some of the women in the New Testament. Email Pastor Julia or Pastor Tracie with any questions.

## HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP

Youth completing grades 8—12 are invited to sign-up for the Mission Trip to New Bern, NC on July 6—12. We will team up with First Presbyterian Youth to provide disaster relief. Contact Rebekah Witt for more details about registration, payment, or with any questions you may have.

**\*\*Registration is due by February 14.**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER

### CONFERENCE AT MASSANETTA

Youth completing grades 5—8 are invited to register for the Massanetta Middle School Summer Conference that will be held July 15—18 in Harrisonburg, VA. Ten Opequon Youth went last year and it was a blast! Contact Rebekah Witt for details about registration, payment, or with any questions you may have.

**\*\*Registration is due by February 15.**

## CONFIRMATION INFORMATION

Our Confirmation Class students are involved in experiences outside of their class sessions, such as visiting Ministry Team meetings, interviewing mentors and parents, and they will also participate in a day retreat on Sunday, February 9, 9:00 AM—2:30 PM. All of these enhance what they have been learning and discussing. Please continue to pray for all our Confirmation students: Adelyn Astorino, Malayna Bates, Virginia Barr, Joshua Batcha, McKenna Bell, Caleb Garcia, Jaxson Hughes, Paige Littman, Jackson Russell, and Camden Saunders.

## YOUTH: GRADES 6-12

February 8 (1:00 PM): Snow Tubing  
February 9: Souper Bowl of Caring Can Collection  
February 22 (10:00 AM): Practice for Youth, Youth Families, & Young Adult Sunday  
February 23 (8:30 AM & 11:00 AM): Youth, Youth Families, & Young Adult Sunday

## YOUNG ADULTS

Date TBD: Escape Room

## OLDER ADULT HAPPENINGS

Too cold to be outside? Most days it certainly is! Come on inside at Opequon and enjoy the warmth of all the happenings. This month, the Older Adult Team will be meeting on Monday, February 3, at 9:30 AM in the Bageant Room. This team discusses plans for Happy Days programs, day outings, and other special events. Morning refreshments and coffee are provided. The meeting is open to any older adult who would like to join us.

The monthly older adult fellowship time known as 'Happy Days' will be held on Wednesday, February 12, at NOON in the Fellowship Hall. We will be having a SUPERBOWL-THEMED time. LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED. There will be Chicken Noodle Soup, Potato Chowder, Chili, Bread, Dessert, and Drinks. Happy Days participants do not need to bring any food, just a \$5.00 donation towards the meal. Following a 'souper' lunch, we will try our hand at a funny football quiz and have some fun with SUPERBOWL related games. All older adults are welcome. Come enjoy the warmth inside and the delicious food.

## MEN OF OPEQUON (MOO)

The Men of Opequon (MOO) will gather for dinner on Monday, February 10, at 6:00 PM at the Chick-fil-A on Pleasant Valley Road. We'll then return to the church for our monthly program at 7:00 PM. This month, it will be focused on our partnership with Ethiopia and the Illubabor Bethel Synod of the Church Mekane Jesus (EECMY). We support a child at the Gore Children's Home through our monthly offerings, so it is timely to learn more and get an update on our friends and their ministry. After a presentation, Bill Burslem will answer our questions. Join us to hear an amazing witness to God at work today. Dessert will be provided.

## GLOW: 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. GLOW continues on break during this winter month of February. We will be back together in March! Terrific plans are already in the making for a SPRING FLING NIGHT in March. The GLOW Planning Team is meeting on February 13 for further planning. Many more details will be shared as we inch closer to March. Stay warm, stay safe and enjoy the special beauty of winter.

## LIFE GOES ON

Life Goes On will gather in Fellowship Hall on February 17 at noon. The main dish provided this month will be soup. We ask that you bring a side to pass or chip in a couple of dollars toward the main dish. If you need a ride, contact the church office or Pastor Tracie Martin.



## JAVA WITH JULIA

Swing by Hopscotch Café for Java with Julia on Friday, February 28, any time between 11:00 AM—1:00 PM!

## FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB

Book Club will be meeting a week earlier than normal this month due to scheduling conflicts. We will meet on Thursday, February 20, at 6:00 PM. Our book selection is: *The Book of Charlie: Wisdom from the Remarkable American Life of a 109-Year-Old Man* by David Von Drehle.

## FEBRUARY COLLECTION

The Mission Ministry Team is collecting Cheerios for CCAP this month. Donations should be placed in the CCAP collection box in the Dell Room.

## ORCHARD VIEW BACKPACK PROGRAM

Our Mission Ministry's Orchard View Backpack Program ensures that children in need at Orchard View Elementary School have access to meals over the weekend. On the Wednesday before the first Friday of the month, volunteers gather in the Bageant Room to pack bags with two breakfasts, two lunches, milk, juice, peanut butter crackers, vegetables, and snacks—providing essential nourishment for the children. These bags are then delivered to the school by a church volunteer. We invite you to get involved—Many hands make light work! The remaining packing dates for this school year are: February 5, March 5, April 2, and April 30. Whether you're interested in helping pack the bags or would like to learn more about this important initiative, please reach out to our OPC Backpack Program Coordinator, Janet Murphy ([murphy.janet@comcast.net](mailto:murphy.janet@comcast.net)). You can also support this program through making donations to OPC and indicating "Mission Backpack Program."



## FEBRUARY MISSION SCHEDULE

- ▶ February 6 (6:30 PM): Sherando Food Pantry
- ▶ February 9 (12:15 PM): Senior Outreach
- ▶ February 20 (6:30 PM): Sherando Food Pantry
- ▶ February 25 (5:30 PM): Highland Food Pantry

## SENIOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Senior Outreach Ministry will meet on Sunday, February 9. We will meet at 12:15 PM by the church office door to load up the totes for the trip to the Shenandoah Senior Apartments on Wilson Blvd, in Winchester. Donations of paper towels or bath tissue would be helpful.

## MISSION HIGHLIGHT

This month, we are excited to highlight a story about **Rebecca Agbayani** and her experiences with **Medical Ministry International**. We hope that you will join us in supporting this important mission:

*Medical Ministry International (MMI) started in the Dominican Republic in the 1960's as Medical Group Missions. Their 2-week medical project model has continued as a sustainable way to allow volunteers to join local staff in providing surgical and medical healthcare services to communities who otherwise might not have access to such care. MMI now coordinates projects in over 20 countries, and there are multiple projects throughout the year in each country where they serve.*

*Rebecca Agbayani went on her first MMI trip to the Dominican Republic in 2012 as a premed college student and General Helper on the team. She was amazed at how an empty room was scrubbed down and transformed into a functional surgical operating room in a matter of hours, and she was inspired by the compassion her fellow project participants showed to each and every one of the patients and people they interacted with. Then, in following years, Rebecca also got to experience the medical clinic side of the team, serving in Integrated Health teaching children about the importance of water purification and dental hygiene. It was humbling to see God work in spite of language and cultural barriers, and to know that the impact of those health teachings would last long after she had returned home.*

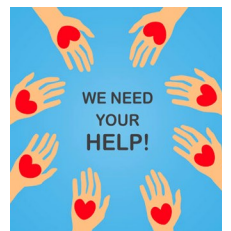
*In March 2024, a team from Opequon (Bill Bender, Nick Deptula, Mike Nutry, Carol Nutry, and Brendan Nutry) joined Rebecca and her husband, Max, on their annual MMI Trip. Watching how God put everyone's talents and passions to work during the week was incredibly rewarding, and everyone ended the week talking about how they can't wait to return the following year.*

*Having now served with MMI for more than 10 years, Rebecca looks forward each year to serving alongside familiar team members and friends, and is encouraged by the ways she has seen population health improve in the communities where they work.*

For Medical Ministry International in the Dominican Republic info, visit: [www.mmi.org/dominican-republic](http://www.mmi.org/dominican-republic)

### SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR 2025 MEDICAL MISSION TRIP

A team from OPC is going on a MEDICAL MISSION TRIP to the Dominican Republic in March, and they need your help collecting supplies to take with them! February 9—16, the team will be collecting donations of the supplies below in the black and yellow tubs in the Gathering Area. All donations must be received on or by February 16 so the team has time to pack before their trip.



#### Empty Liquid Medicine Bottles

- 30 ml / 60 ml

#### Glasses

- Readers or Prescription Strength

#### Small Toys

- such as: Hot Wheels / Stickers / etc.

#### Toothbrushes

- Adult / Children

#### Hair Ties / Clips

#### Hand Towels

#### Hats for Sun Protection

#### Hot Pads

#### Nail Files

#### Sandals

#### Socks

\*We are also so grateful for those who said that they would sew items (dresses, pharmacy bags, etc.) for the team to bring along and we will be collecting these items during this time as well. Please see a team member if you have questions.

If you would like to support the team with a financial donation, go to [www.mmi.org](http://www.mmi.org), click on the "DONATE NOW" button. Please put "Opequon Presbyterian Church March 2025 DR Team" in the message box.

# THE POWER OF FOUR CENTS



All those pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and dollars the people of Opequon collected during 2024 for Four Cents a Meal totaled \$4,124. Thank you for reaching new heights last year! Four Cents a Meal is our monthly offering for hunger that assists people in our community, state, nation, and world. Please give to Four Cents a Meal on the fourth Sunday of each month. (Next Four Cents a Meal = February 23)

Members also contributed to these mission causes through special offerings and individual donations:

\$58,862 – Gore Home	\$ 3,746 – One Great Hour of Sharing (PCUSA)
\$15,250 – Building Fund	\$ 3,020 – Pentecost (PCUSA)
\$ 9,655 – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	\$ 2,969 – Midnight Gladness
\$ 4,533 – WATTS	\$ 1,682 – Peace & Global Witness (PCUSA)
\$ 3,872 – Christmas Joy (PCUSA)	and 120 Thanksgiving Boxes!

Now, sadly, there were \$0 received to send Opie, our church mouse, to camp this year. He misbehaved last time and was asked not to come back for a while. The damage that he caused by eating through some of the camp wiring was extensive (especially to the lights in the outhouses), but we're thankful that Building & Grounds had enough budget remaining to cover the costs of repair. There were a few campers in the outhouses when the lights went out... Well, they became cross at the inconvenience (it was well after dark) and made the complaint against Opie. I can't say that he's remorseful. When he tells the story, there's a decidedly mischievous grin on his face. —Shared by: Ken Smiy, Opequon Finance Administrator

<b>Opequon Presbyterian Church</b>					
<b>Financial Summary for the period ended</b>					
<b>December 31, 2024</b>					
	Annual Budget 2024	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Annual Budget Used
<b>Income</b>					
410000 Offering Income	843,003	70,704	874,866	(31,863)	103.8%
420000 Other Income	1,600	739	2,817	(1,217)	176.0%
<b>Total 400000 Income</b>	<b>844,603</b>	<b>71,443</b>	<b>877,683</b>	<b>(33,080)</b>	<b>103.9%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
<b>500000 Personnel Costs</b>					
510000 Installed Pastors	219,432	19,453	218,391	1,041	99.5%
520000 Other Ministerial Staff	144,436	11,493	140,298	4,138	97.1%
530000 Administrative Staff	146,818	12,249	144,166	2,652	98.2%
<b>Total 500000 Personnel Costs</b>	<b>510,686</b>	<b>43,194</b>	<b>502,856</b>	<b>7,830</b>	<b>98.5%</b>
<b>600000 Other Ministries</b>					
610000 Christian Education	14,100	1,872	11,723	2,377	83.1%
620000 Congregational Care	2,800	203	1,664	1,136	59.4%
630000 Evangelism	1,900	175	1,597	303	84.1%
640000 Fellowship	3,800	46	3,344	456	88.0%
650000 Mission	73,575	7,008	74,400	(825)	101.1%
660000 Worship	7,000	1,035	5,950	1,050	85.0%
<b>Total 600000 Other Ministries</b>	<b>103,175</b>	<b>10,339</b>	<b>98,677</b>	<b>4,498</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
<b>Total 700000 Church Administration</b>	<b>129,632</b>	<b>15,393</b>	<b>142,734</b>	<b>(13,102)</b>	<b>110.1%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>743,493</b>	<b>68,926</b>	<b>744,267</b>	<b>(774)</b>	<b>100.1%</b>
<b>Net Operating Income (Expense)</b>	<b>101,110</b>	<b>2,517</b>	<b>133,416</b>	<b>(32,306)</b>	<b>132.0%</b>
920000 Other Income	17,625	1,662	20,954	(3,329)	118.9%
930000 Other Expenses	118,735	9,743	118,892	(157)	100.1%
<b>Net Other Income (Expense)</b>	<b>(101,110)</b>	<b>(8,081)</b>	<b>(97,938)</b>	<b>(3,172)</b>	<b>96.9%</b>
<b>Income Greater Than (Less Than) Expenses</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5,564)</b>	<b>35,478</b>		
<b>12/31/24</b>					
Cash	<u>\$ 182,101</u>				
Sanctuary Mortgage Principal Balance	<u>\$ 382,934</u>				

## GENEROSITY MOMENT

*(From Pastor Tracie Martin & the Generosity Team)*

Lately, I have been thinking about cookies. There is always an abundance of Christmas cookies during the holidays, but many of us shun sugar and frosting in January. Then comes February and BOOM! Valentine's Day candy and sweets abound again. My mom made wonderful sugar cookies for Valentine's Day with red frosting and red sugar on top. There was often an arrow of chocolate, too.

Cookies were a rare treat on non-holiday dates at our house. This made them extremely important. I learned to cherish every bite. When they were available, my brother, sister, and I would try to stash some for the future, but they seldom lasted for even a full day. Cookies had real value but there were never enough for us.

Bud Proctor, my Stewardship partner-in-crime, recently made another of his videos. It deals with cookies—treasure cookies and generosity cookies. His video offers another way to look at stewardship, generosity and serving God. Take a look—it's a good video! It stars some of our favorite people at OPC. It's 4 minutes and 58 seconds of very neat! Here is the link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ngu4hVCBjPXzd0SCrMpM1AuKqa3Zxao9/view?usp=sharing>

## NOTES OF THANKS

### *From the Roots & Shoots Garden Team:*

The annual Roots & Shoots Garden SeedMoney Fundraiser was a great success! Thanks to your generous support, we exceeded our goal and earned \$500 in grants from SeedMoney. The grand total of the campaign came to \$3,781, which will help pay for several larger garden maintenance projects scheduled for 2025. To all of our friends at OPC, we thank you very much! The Garden Team hopes everyone had a very Merry Christmas and for you to have abundant blessings in this new year!

### *Thank You For Caring And Wrapping The World In Blankets And Love!*

1,209 blankets (totaling \$6,047.00) were given through our annual blanket drive to **THE TY HEADLEY TREE OF WARMTH!** We thank you for your generosity. In its 17th year, our annual blanket drive has contributed more than \$80,000 (that's more than 16,000 blankets!) to Church World Service. Thank you for your generosity.

### *Spaghetti Dinner & Bake Sale Thanks:*

Thank you bakers, buyers, and Spaghetti Dinner attendees! We greatly appreciate everyone who provided homemade baked goods and bought items from the Bake Sale. Special thanks go out to Katie Jordan, Mary Riley, and Kirsta Weber for coordinating it. The Youth enjoyed serving spaghetti and we extend gratitude to all who helped set-up, cook, clean, shop, bake, donate, and eat!

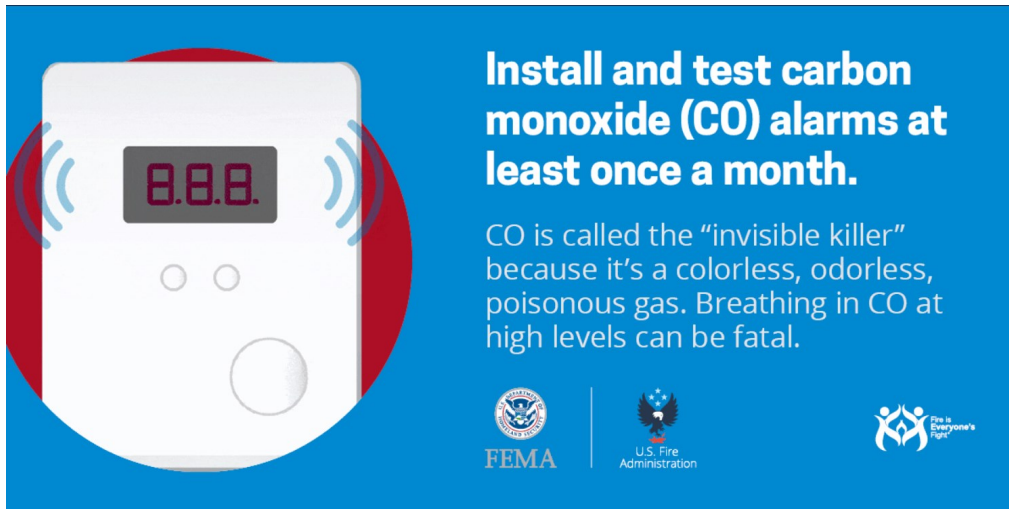
### *From Heather Burton:*

A huge thank you goes out to all who helped with WATTS from bus stop bouncers, searchers, elevator operators, bin runners, registration experts, coffee makers, watts up shop workers, medical caregivers, chefs, kitchen helpers, breakfast leaders and helpers, Amazon donors, New Year's party planners, those who hung out on New Year's Day, hairstylist finders, furniture movers, shelter setter-uppers, Robert Sydnor, all those who prayed for a successful week, and my family who jumped in wherever and whenever needed. We logged over 600 volunteer hours throughout the week! This valuable ministry takes a village and I'm truly thankful to be part of this one! Between OGs and new volunteers, we made our church a home for 37 homeless guests. What an amazing week!

### *From Heidi McMurdo and the Family:*

We love you all! Yes, we miss you more than you can imagine! Thank you for ALL the precious and loving cards! And prayers—we felt them—oh so many! Keith was held up by each of you and your love for him. Taylor and Colleen and I were his personal nurses. Such a sweet patient. We brought him home and he had the last 8 days here at his home, with family and his nurses (beside us). A loving patient. Taylor took off basically every day to give him great care. God was so good to him. Yes, he had that crazy sense of humor almost to the end! Thank you all! God bless each one of you at Opequon—we adore you one and all! Thank you all for Kourtney's prayers from the bottom of our ♥!





## Install and test carbon monoxide (CO) alarms at least once a month.

CO is called the “invisible killer” because it’s a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. Breathing in CO at high levels can be fatal.



## NURSE NOTES:

# Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

### Do you know that carbon monoxide (CO) is the most common cause of poisoning death in the US?

Unintentional CO poisonings are responsible for about 500 deaths and 15,000 visits to emergency rooms annually. Older adults over 65 years of age are especially vulnerable to unintentional CO poisoning due to their high frequency of pre-existing medical conditions. While CO alarms can save lives, fewer than one third of American homes have them installed.

### What Is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

CO is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause illness and death. It is produced whenever any fuel such as natural gas, propane, gasoline, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned.

Devices that produce CO include cars, boats, gasoline engines, stoves and heating systems. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. When people inhale CO, the toxic gas enters the bloodstream and blocks oxygen from being absorbed into the body, which can damage tissues and result in death.

### What Are the Symptoms of CO Poisoning?

For most people, the first signs of exposure to low concentrations of CO include mild headache and breathlessness upon moderate exercise. Continued or acute exposure can lead to flu-like symptoms including more severe headaches, dizziness, tiredness, nausea, confusion, irritability, and impaired judgment, memory and coordination.

**CO is called the "silent killer" because if these early signs are ignored, a person may lose consciousness and be unable to escape the danger.**

### To Prevent CO Poisoning, Remember: I CAN B

**I** **Install** CO alarms near sleeping areas.

**C** **Check** heating systems and fuel-burning appliances annually.

**A** **Avoid** the use of non-vented combustion appliances.

**N** **Never** burn fuels indoors except in devices such as stoves or furnaces that are made for safe use.

**B** **Be** Attentive to possible symptoms of CO poisoning.

Websites for more information and resources:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/>

U.S. Fire Administration: <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/life-safety-hazards/carbon-monoxide/>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
<b>Rebekah &amp; David Away-APCE Conference</b>						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Rebekah &amp; David Away-APCE</b> <b>Communion</b> 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - Faith Formation 9:45am - Ople's Playhouse 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary	9:30am - Older Adult Ministry 9:30am - Presbytery CCVT 6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary	5pm - Tech Team Meeting 6pm - Ministry Team Night	9am - Backpack Program 9:30am - Staff Meeting @ Bageant 4:30pm - LOGOS 6:30pm - Worship on Wednesday 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry	11am - Crafting with Becky 1pm - Youth-Snow Tubing	9am - Private Event @ Fellowship
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>Super Bowl of Caring</b> 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9am - Confirmation Retreat 9:45am - Faith Formation 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary 12:15pm - Senior Outreach 1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship	5pm - LOGOS Leadership Team 6pm - MOO @ Chick-fil-A 6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary 7pm - MOO in FH @ Fellowship	9:30am - Tuesday Morning 7pm - ART @ Assembly Room 7pm - Vision Team @ Bageant	12pm - Happy Days @ Fellowship 4:30pm - LOGOS 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 2:30pm - Planning for GLOW	<b>Valentine's Day</b> 9am - Deacon & Congregational	<b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>Blood Pressure Checks</b> 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:45am - Faith Formation 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary	<b>Presidents' Day</b> 12pm - Life Goes On @ Fellowship 6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary	7pm - Session Mtg @ Bageant	9:30am - Staff Meeting 12pm - Music at Noon 4:30pm - LOGOS 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	9am - WANC Tea @ Youth Spot 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 10:30am - WANC Meeting 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry	6pm - Talent Show & Potluck	
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
<b>4 Cents a Meal Offering</b> <b>Youth Families &amp; Young Adult</b> 8:30am - Worship & Live Stream 9:30am - Coffee Fellowship 10am - Annual Meeting 11am - Worship @ Sanctuary	6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary	3pm - TVOR Gathering 5:30pm - Highland Food Pantry	4:30pm - LOGOS 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 10:30am - WANC Lunch 6pm - Fellowship Book Club	11am - Java With Julia	<b>Snow Date: Deacon and</b>

## STAFF SCHEDULE NOTES

- February 1-2: David Witt – APCE Conference
- February 1-2: Rebekah Witt – APCE Conference

*Note: If a pastoral concern arises on any of these dates, please note who is away and call Pastors David, Julia, or Tracie directly as needed.*

## MARCH LENT PRAYER BREAKFAST EVENT



The Christian Education Team is hosting a Lent Prayer Breakfast Morning for everyone on Sunday, March 2, at 9:45 AM. An assortment of breakfast casseroles will be provided along with fruit, cereals, and danishes. After a warm breakfast, we will experience prayer through a special theme: PRAYER EVERYWHERE ANYTIME. Come enjoy this special Lent morning that will prove to nourish you in many ways. It may just be the perfect way to start your day.

## OPC SPRING CLEANING

Our Building and Grounds Ministry is organizing an Interior Spring Cleaning Day for Saturday, March 22 and needs your help! Volunteers are needed to help with some seasonal interior cleaning from 9:00 AM until about noon—the more hands we have, the quicker it will go!

## NEW CONTACT INFO?



Have you moved within the last year or two? Have you gotten a new home and/or cell phone number? Have you cancelled a landline or old cell phone number? Do you have a new email address?

Please help us ensure we have your accurate contact info before we print our next membership directory by contacting the church office ([office@opequonchurch.org](mailto:office@opequonchurch.org) or 540-662-1843)!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR VBS 2025!



It is cold outside right now, but we are planning for those warm evenings when summer will begin and we hold Vacation Bible School here at Opequon. Our fun-filled week of Vacation Bible School is scheduled to happen June 16—19 (Monday—Thursday), 5:00 PM—7:30 PM. Vacation Bible School will be available for 4-year-olds through 8th grade with an adult class as well. Stay tuned for more information. This year's exciting theme will be announced very soon!

## LOOKING AHEAD:

### MAGNIFICENT MARCH MEMORIES IN THE MAKING

- March Communion Sunday—March 2
- Jazz Sunday—Sunday, March 2 (8:30 AM & 11:00 AM Worship Services)
- Prayer Breakfast—Sunday, March 2 (9:45 AM)
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party—Tuesday, March 4
- March Ministry Team Night—Tuesday, March 4
- Ash Wednesday Service of Prayer & Praise—Wednesday, March 5
- First Sunday in Lent—Sunday, March 9
- "Spring Forward" (Set Clocks Ahead)—Sunday, March 9
- Newcomers' Social & Games—Sunday, March 9 (4:00 PM)
- Annual Potato Bake Lunch—Sunday, March 16
- Church Interior Spring Clean-Up—March 22
- LOGOS Sunday—Sunday, March 23 (11:00 AM)



**\*\* The deadline to send newsletter submissions to the church office the 15th of each month. \*\***

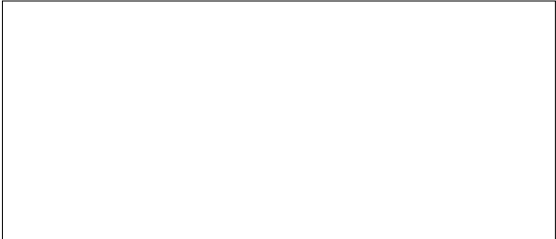


**OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

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**Phone:**  
540-662-1843  
**Office:**  
[office@opequonchurch.org](mailto:office@opequonchurch.org)  
**Church Office Hours:**  
Monday—Thursday,  
9:00 AM—2:00 PM  
Friday,  
9:00 AM—12:00 PM  
**Sunday Worship Services:**  
8:30 AM & 11:00 AM

**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