The Opequon Spirit

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

October 2026

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

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

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

October 4—World Communion Sunday
Join your church family & world around the Table!
† Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Philippians 3:4-14
Sermon: "Laying Aside Our Selfishness"
∗ *Communion*
∗ *World Communion Offering*
∗ *Bread Basket Buffet*

October 11—Pastor Appreciation Sunday
† Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:1-9
Sermon: "A Mindset of Love and Gratitude"
∗ *Banana Boxes Are Out!*

1:30 PM Spring Arbor Worship

October 18
† Exodus 33:12-23; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Sermon: "Life as the Example of Faith"
∗ *Blood Pressure Checks*

October 25—Reformation Sunday & Volunteer Appreciation Sunday
† Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17; Matthew 22:34-46
Sermon: "Got Love?"
∗ *"Volunteer of the Year"*
∗ *4 Cents A Meal*
∗ *GIFT Event*
∗ *Chili Cook-Off*

WORLD COMMUNION FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 4

8:30 AM & 11:00 AM Worship

9:30 AM Bread Basket Buffet

Don't miss this annual celebration of languages, loaves, prayer, and praise as we gather with the world around the Table of Our Lord!

WORLD COMMUNION SPECIAL OFFERING

The first World Communion Offering (replacing the former "Peace & Global Witness Offering") will be received and dedicated during worship on World Communion Sunday, October 4.

All of God's people gather around the Table to celebrate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Part of the atonement that happens around this Table is reconciliation, which is the focus of the World Communion Offering. Experience the grace that comes from reconciling all peoples from all nations around the corner and around the globe through the ministry of this offering.

You may use the envelopes provided or you may go to the "GIVE NOW" button on our website and designate your gift for this special offering.

Celebrating Pastor David & Pastor Tracie!

Every so often, it's good to slow down and say thank you—and this month, that's exactly what we want to do for Pastor David Witt and Pastor Tracie Martin. Their faithful leadership, wise counsel, and constant care for our Opequon family are remarkable. We see it in the time they give, the prayers they lift, and the love they pour into this church. Mark your calendar for Pastor Appreciation Sunday, October 11, when we'll come together to celebrate them and everything they mean to our congregation.

Pastor David and Pastor Tracie—thank you for shepherding us so faithfully. Your wisdom has guided us, your honesty has challenged us, and your example of faith has encouraged us more than words can say. May God continue to pour out His grace on you, your families, and the ministry He's entrusted to you. We are so grateful for you both!

NOTES FROM PASTOR DAVID:

Dear Friends in Christ,

I imagine you are familiar with "Chicken in a Biskit" crackers. They were introduced in 1964 (they're younger than me!) by Nabisco within a line of crackers called "Flavor Originals." In the United States, Chicken in a Biskit crackers are flavored with dehydrated cooked chicken. On our recent adult excursion to the Virginia Safari Park in Natural Bridge, Carole packed goodie bags for each of us and appropriately tucked within the bag was a small bag of animal crackers and another small bag of Chicken in a Bisket crackers! As I slowly savored them while driving the church bus, those crackers brought forward memories of time spent at my grandparents' house. We never had Chicken in a Biskit at our house, but my grandmother always had them in her kitchen cupboard. I loved them. She also had a full cookie jar (it was a special cookie jar that I can still picture) and some kind of pudding in the refrigerator (vanilla, chocolate, rice, lemon, tapioca). I became a "pudding lover" at her kitchen table! I have been holding onto some of these precious memories recently. They lift my spirit. They warm my heart. Maybe it's because I'm celebrating another birthday. Maybe it's because I'm nostalgic as we move from one season to another. Maybe it's because we have celebrated lives well-lived and the memories they have created for us within our on-going grief, from folks we knew so well to Dolly Parton, who touched our lives with her music, her generosity, her faith, and her love. I want to hold up those memories as a part of my journey of life and faith, as I think Dolly would encourage us to do, for she never forgot her past but was rooted and launched by it. Yet, sensing she was anointed by God and called for a purpose, Dolly also seized each day as a gift and with gratitude in her heart, ministered, served, and gave and gave and gave. What a legacy Dolly has left in communities near and far, in the hearts of family, friends, and fans, touching lives from her beginnings in little Pittman Center, Tennessee.

What about you? What pulls forth your precious memories? What helps you seize each day and provides you with gratitude in your heart? How will you minister, serve, and give in this season of thanksgiving and thanks-living? Maybe we can figure it out together as we prayerfully consider God's word to us and God's gifts to us. And something as simple as a little Chicken in a Biskit cracker can launch our thinking!

With a Grateful Heart,

PASTOR TRACIE'S JUST THINKIN'…

When I was in kindergarten, Miss Heath, soon to become Mrs. Harpel to the delight of all the girls and disinterest to all the boys, had the class write a song for Halloween. We all worked on this project in small groups and as a class.

First, we wrote a poem. It went like this:

Witches flying in the night,
Ghost and goblins eating,
Pumpkins with a spooky eye,
Watch us Trick or Treating.

Today I realize that we were well prompted by our teacher, but at that time, we were convinced that we had created this song with our own enthusiasm. We were excited! I remember singing it over and over again. It says something that I can still sing it at 79 years old. It was an important creation.

Remembering this song makes me wonder what we might be creating or teaching our children and how long such things might last for them. Bill and I often arrive early for choir on Wednesdays because we enjoy watching the Logos kids learn songs, some with motions, some without. We make a point to attend Wednesday WOW Worship because there is so much energy as the children participate. What will they carry into adulthood? What are they learning about themselves?

I learned from Mrs. Harpel that I could be creative. I learned that it is fun to create something new or different. I learned that creating can be an individual experience, but it is more fun with a group. I'll bet there is a lot of that being understood by children at Logos.

Every Sunday, our children are called up to the chancel for a Time for All Ages. The willingness of our children to come forward shows that they are engaged and know they are safe. I find it important that they seem to make their own decision whether to come forward or not. There is no pushing by adults. Adults do, however, bring babies forward.

I love the addition of our babies to the mix. A baby may be too young to understand the story, but they surely understand that this is a time that matters. They smile and chatter; we all laugh with them.

As the children walk up, older children shepherd the younger ones. It is interesting to see who grabs whose hand for security or just for companionship. The older children take time with the young ones. Clearly, someone took time with them when it was needed or wanted, as well.

OPC young people are valued. Their participation in the life of the church is important. They work with our youth and adults as Ushers or Greeters. They handle the offering plates. They bring the offering forward along with the adults. When they are an Acolyte, an adult is a Beadle and, again, different ages work together.

One of my best moments as a pastor was when a child of the church I was serving joined the Marines and was able to lead his fellow recruits in prayer because he learned to do that in his home church. He told me that he was often asked to do this because so many others had no idea how to proceed. He was proud of himself. I was and am thankful for a church family that would give their children this gift.

—Tracie

SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

- Mission Ministry: Mission Team unanimously voted to send $500 to International Red Cross and $500 to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, earmarked for disaster relief in Nepal. Six individuals expressed interest in joining the Dominican Republic Medical Mission Trip (March 6-20, 2027).
- Evangelism Ministry: Session approved the recommendation to change the team's name to The Welcome Team to better define the team's duties, (name tags, hospitality greeting, home visits, and newspaper advertising) and work the team does with welcoming people to Opequon.
- Fellowship Ministry: Looking to join a FEAST Group, please contact:
  - 4th Friday Lunch— *(acting)* Marj Praml (540-327-2667)
  - 4th Monday Dinner— *(acting)* Patty Klinefelter (540-869-6080)
  - 1st Thursday Dinner— Joelle Cafaro (540-999-5541)
  - 3rd Thursday Dinner— Marj Praml (540-327-2667)
  - Eclectic Palate— Diana Hecht (diana.hecht@pawpawtracks.com)
- Don't forget the Chili Cook-Off on Sunday, October 25, after 11:00 AM service. Volunteers are needed for set-up and clean-up, plus 10 chili makers! Look for sign-ups in the Gathering Area.
- Buildings & Grounds Ministry: Manse improvements (installation of cellar steps hand railing and exterior grounds work) in response to insurance inspection are now complete. Routine September maintenance repairs included: right-side door sweep replacement in Gathering Area (thank you Robert for installing), new batteries installed for the Assembly Room wireless thermostat sensor (temperature control restored!), and the Opequon Bus.
- Finance Ministry: Session approved August finance report as submitted. The website's Giving Page has a revised look thanks to Ken Smiy and Rebekah Witt. Check it out at: www.opequonchurch.org/giving
- Personnel/Administration Ministry: Boundary Training for Session and staff will be conducted this fall. Get ready for Pastor Appreciation Sunday (October 11, 2026).
- Worship Ministry: Session approved the recommendation to hold one service at 10:00 AM on December 27, 2026.
- Christian Education Ministry is sponsoring the Bread Basket Buffet on World Communion Sunday October 4, 2026 (9:30 AM) and providing homemade soft pretzels.
- Youth & Young Adults Programs: Appreciation to Rebekah Witt and Carole Witt for coordinating a summer of fun games, car trips, and special programs supporting families with children and youth. Watch for the "Bedtime Blessings" booklet of prayers coming this fall.
- Vision Ministry: "Stronger Together," the new and well-received community/school program, continues to grow by expanding "Undie Sunday" to include donations of socks and shoes, Kleenex/tissues for backpacks in September; and adding a campaign of written encouragement notes to the weekly prayers for schools, teachers, and administrators.
- Session approved the following dates requested by Pastor David Witt for vacation (December 29 -31, 2026; May 8-15, 2027) and Continuing Education (January 25-31, 2027).
- Session approved the baptism request for Clara Jane Carlone (born 11/7/2025), infant daughter to Tom and Meagan Leonard Carlone, on Sunday, November 8, at 8:30 AM worship.
- Ben Brooks reported to Session as Commissioner attending the August 22, 2026, Presbytery Meeting.
- Session approved two building use requests: 1) Sanctuary use by Susan Ticknor for a Christmas piano recital on Sunday, December 13, 2026; and 2) Memorial Sanctuary use by Windsong for an evening concert on Sunday, December 20, 2026.

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

CHURCH EMAIL ADDRESS UPDATES

Please take note of the email addresses below which you should use going forward to communicate with the Opequon Staff and Treasurer Ron Smith. Some emails have been added, others have changed. It would be helpful to the staff for you to update your address book. Thank you!

Pastor, David Witt
pastor@opequonchurch.org

Parish Associate, Tracie Martin
tmartin@opequonchurch.org

Church Office / Office Administrator, Rachel Lesink
office@opequonchurch.org

Treasurer, Ron Smith
rsmith@opequonchurch.org

Finance Administrator, Ken Smiy
ksmiy@opequonchurch.org

Director of Christian Education, Carole Witt
dce@opequonchurch.org

Director for Youth & Young Adult Ministries, Rebekah Witt
rwitt@opequonchurch.org

Director of Music, Susan Homan
shoman@opequonchurch.org

Organist/Pianist, Garrett Jones
gjones@opequonchurch.org

Facilities Coordinator, Robert Sydnor
rsydnor@opequonchurch.org

If you email a staff member and do not hear back within a timely manner, please check to make sure it was sent to the correct email address.

REMINDER: Congregational messages (ex/ OPC's Tuesday/Friday Messages) are sent using an outgoing-only address. **Please do NOT send any messages to the notifications@onrealmmail.org address—we cannot receive them!**

MINISTRY TEAM NIGHT
Tuesday, October 6

6:00 PM "Comfort Food" Meal: Brisket, Costco Pot-Pie, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable Beef Soup, Ham & Cheese Quiche, Warm Bread, & Eclectic Desserts *(provided by the Fellowship & Personnel Teams)*

6:45 PM Devotions & Team Meetings

CONTACT INFO

Have you moved recently?
Do you have a new email address?
Do you have a new home or cell phone number?
Have you cancelled an old landline or cell phone number?

Please contact the church office at 540-662-1843 or office@opequonchurch.org to ensure we have your accurate contact info.

Thank you for helping us stay connected!

COOKBOOK RECIPES

Do you have any recipes be added to the new OPC cookbook? Please put your handwritten or typed recipes in Marj Praml's mailbox near the church office or email them to Cindy Sousa (casousa260@gmail.com).

THE THANKSGIVING BOXES ARE COMING THIS MONTH!

Very soon, a bounty of empty banana boxes will reappear in the hallways and on the porch of Opequon Church. It's time for our annual Thanksgiving food drive for CCAP and Orchard View Elementary School. Our goal is to surpass 115 boxes this year as we share and care for those in need within our community.

Banana boxes will be available at church beginning Sunday, October 11, many inside the building, some readily accessible on the front porch/Sanctuary entrance. Each box will contain a list of items needed. Besides Sunday mornings, we anticipate scheduling two drop off days in the first half of November for those who would like assistance unloading.

ALL BOXES ARE DUE BACK TO THE CHURCH BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15.

CAR VACUUMING FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT YOUTH MISSION TRIPS & CONFERENCES

Sand, mud, and other debris quickly made their way into cars over the summer, but fall is here, and we all want our vehicles to be clean once again! Pull up to the church parking lot curb on Sunday, October 11, 8:00 AM—1:00 PM. The Youth will have shop vacs, and you'll see the satisfaction that comes from a freshly vacuumed carpet. Please remove small objects from the floor of your vehicle. Donations will support our Youth Mission Trips and Camps/Conferences. Thank you!

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION & REFORMATION SUNDAY

Sunday, October 25

"God is our refuge and strength,
a present help in times of trouble…"
(Psalm 46:1)

Celebrate the Priesthood of ALL Believers Reformed and Always Being Reformed!

You are invited to wear red, the color of reformation!

CHILI COOK-OFF

October 25
12:15 PM
(Fellowship Hall)

It's that time of year!
Our annual Chili Cook-Off is right around the corner!

Sign-up in the Gathering Area if you would like to make a pot of chili for the Cook-Off Contest. We could also use some pans of cornbread! Please consider being part of this fun event!

If you have any questions, contact Marj Praml (pramlmarjory550@gmail.com).

Dear OPiE,
Is there anything new on the addition?
— Wondering

Dear Wondering,

I am glad you asked. It is so frustrating that there have been no big meetings or lunches with cookies and crumbs. So much of what has happened is done between just a few people and they have had no concern for a hungry mouse at all! If it were not for Happy Days and GLOW, I'd be starving. After all, the summer fellowship time is over.

I do understand that our architect was here to meet with Greg Eisenhauer recently. Plans are expected soon, I hear. Once the plans are finalized, they will still need to go to Kee Construction for pricing. That will take time, but not a ton of time. While all this is progressing, the finance people are continuing to do what they can to be ready to move quickly. No one knows just what the interest situation will be when we are finally ready to finish working with the banks. It's a time of wait and see, hope and pray, but once we get really going, we will be able to MOVE! The good part of all this waiting is that many people are paying ahead on their pledges. This is so important because every penny we get is one penny less to borrow. I know we say this a lot… but it is true. Every dollar we get now does not cost us a dollar-plus-interest later.

Right now is a tough time to predict costs and interest. I have suggested to several of our better bakers that a huge bake sale might be in order. Think of the crumbs! This does not seem to be in the works, no matter how much it would make my life better. Thanks be that Logos will start soon with Wednesday suppers. I do hear, however, that breaking ground in the spring is still on the calendar. There had better be a celebration then. I want a huge cake, cookies, and salty snacks! It should be held outdoors so there is no reason not to let things drop on the grass. I also want there to be a lot of messy children invited. We have altogether too many tidy children here at OPC. Sometimes even the Logos pickings are slim. I hate to fuss, but this church family does need a few more slobs. Don't tell Robert I said that.

— Your Friend, OPiE

TABLES & TREATS NIGHT

(formerly known as "Trunk & Treat")

You are likely familiar with "TRUNK & TREAT" and how that is a safe alternative for Halloween celebrations. We have had Trunk & Treat built into our Logos evening for a couple years now and it has worked very well. Last year, inclement weather prevented us from having the event outdoors with actual TRUNKS, BUT what we discovered is that each person who had committed to being a 'TRUNKER' adapted their plans well as we held the event indoors—each Trunker setting up on a Table. IT WORKED FABULOUSLY! There was no wind to worry with, no outdoor safety issues to be concerned with and we held the event with no worry of kids being cold and wet.

SO THIS YEAR, WE ARE CALLING IT **TABLES & TREATS**. It is the same idea as Trunk & Treat, only it will be held indoors with each volunteer having a TABLE to set up on rather than in their car trunk. This great event will be held on Wednesday, October 28. More details and event time coming soon!

We need volunteers to do displays/games/treats from tabletops that will all be set up in the Gathering Area and back hallway. All our Logos children will rotate around to all the displays as well as other families and children that may come for this fun event. It is open to all.

Ready to claim a table? If you are willing to do a tabletop display with treats, please contact: Wendy Wygant (wygant766@yahoo.com) or Susan Homan (shoman@opequonchurch.org).

THE LATEST IN LOGOS

Logos began on September 23 as we excitedly welcomed children and youth on Wednesday afternoons. October holds many fun events for our Logos children and staff. We will be celebrating with FAMILY NIGHT on October 14. Families of Logos young people are invited to dinner at 5:30 PM. Following dinner, families will spend special time around the tables with one another doing some creative fun activities. It will be such valuable time! More great themes such as "October Olympics", "Under the Sea", and Bring a Friend to 'Tables & Treats' night await us this month. We look forward to welcoming many friends on the annual Bring-A-Friend night which is October 28. Logos is a midweek ministry for Preschool through High School age young people held on Wednesdays (4:30—7:15 PM) from September through March. The focus of Logos is loving God and loving one another. We are so thankful for the young people that brighten our Wednesday evenings. If you have any questions about our Logos ministry, reach out to Carole Witt at dce@opequonchurch.org.

CONFIRMATION CONNECTION

Our 2026-27 Confirmation Class has gotten off to a great start with some lively class lessons. They have learned about 'Belonging to God', 'Wearing Christ', and 'How do you Spell Presbyterian?'. You can 'meet' our Confirmation students by viewing the bulletin board outside the bathrooms near the Gathering Area. They are all pictured there along with an insightful statement they each shared. We are blessed by these 9 students who meet on Wednesdays, 6:15-7:15 PM, for class time. The students are Aubrey Astorino, Tucker Birchenough, Shiloh Ervin, Flynn Hall, Hudson Homan, Aubrey McGunnigle, Cam Riley, Emily Russell, and Bo Weber. The class leaders are Michelle Hammer, Bill Bender and Carole Witt. The students are also being paired with a mentor who will offer additional support and encouragement to these students on this journey. Questions about Confirmation, ask Carole Witt (dce@opequonchurch.org).

OPIE'S PLAYHOUSE IS MOVING BACK INSIDE!

It's October and that means Opie's Playhouse will once again be meeting in the Memorial Sanctuary. Please join us for playtime on Sunday, October 4, 9:45—10:45 AM! Opie's Playhouse is a monthly gathering specially planned for children and caregivers. There are toys, snacks and juice for our little ones, and coffee and conversation for our adults. We roll out the carpets, bring in the toys, and the fun begins. We hope to see you there!

YOUTH: GRADES 6-12

October 11 (8:00 AM—1:00 PM):
Car Vacuuming Fundraiser

October 16-18:
Youth Retreat (Massanetta Springs)

YOUNG ADULTS: AGES 18-35

October 18 (5:00 PM): Bonfire

GIFT EVENT—
"Generations In Faith Together"

We have the GIFT of being with all ages for an educational experience on Sunday, October 25 at 9:45 AM in the Memorial Sanctuary. The theme is "GOD'S DREAM" which is a story of empathy, forgiveness and caring. There is ALWAYS good food, good company, and GIFT is ALWAYS a GOOD EXPERIENCE! GIFT events are for everyone. The atmosphere is pleasant, welcoming, and uplifting. The best part of it all is YOU! There is much in store as we enjoy a relaxed, enjoyable and positive time together.

FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB

Book Club will meet on October 22 at 6:00 PM in the Bageant Room to discuss the book *Whistler* by Ann Patchett.

We will then be "on hiatus for the holidays," with no meetings in November or December. During the break, we will be reading *The Calamity Club* by Kathryn Stockett. Since it's a longer book, the holiday break will give everyone plenty of time to read it before our January meeting.

MEN OF OPEQUON THIS MONTH

What a beautiful evening we enjoyed at West Virginia's Capon Springs Resort in September! We are so grateful to them for hosting us and to Mitch Orndorff making all the arrangements for an outstanding excursion.

This month, the Men of Opequon (MOO) will gather on Monday, October 12, at 6:00 PM at the Pleasant Valley Road Chick-fil-A in Winchester. Then, we will return to church at 7:00 PM to hear Pastor Jonathan Boynton of Grace Lutheran Church take on the role of a Revolutionary War chaplain in costume and in dialogue. Pastor Boynton is an amateur historian with a lifelong interest in the Revolutionary War. For all 42 years of his life, he has participated in Revolutionary War reenacting, initially approaching the period from the British and Hessian armies. Since coming to Grace, he has broadened that perspective of the colonial experience, particularly the life and ministry of clergy during the Revolutionary era. This gathering is another one of our special America 250 celebrations. Please join us for this unique experience.

MOO will co-host the December Ministry Team Night dinner on December 1. All men are invited, wanted, and needed to help with this effort! Please meet at the church that night to set up at 4:30 PM. Circle the date on your calendar NOW!

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. Last month, Opequon women enjoyed a great BUNCO NIGHT with lots of prizes awarded, and much laughter.

This month Opequon women will meet on Tuesday, October 13 at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall for a Pumpkin Decorating Night. Ladies are asked to bring their own pumpkin (5–6-inch size works well). All decorating supplies will be provided. You may want to carve your pumpkin, draw a face on it or decorate it with fall decorations. The choice is yours! Many options available. Devotions and refreshments will also be part of the evening. All Opequon Women are invited. Bring your pumpkin and come join Opequon women for this fun evening.

COLLECTIONS FOR CCAP

We will be collecting soup and crackers in the Dell Room for CCAP this month. Thank you for your contributions and supporting our community!

OLDER ADULT HAPPENINGS

Slow down and enjoy this beautiful season. October offers optimum occasions for outstanding overlook views!

This month begins with the Older Adult Planning team meeting on Monday, October 5 at 9:30 AM in the Bageant Room. Older Adult planning meetings are for discussing and planning programs for Happy Days and other special events. The meeting is open to any older adult who would like to attend. You are welcome to come join in. Some morning goodies and coffee are provided.

The monthly older adult fellowship time known as 'Happy Days' will be held on Wednesday, October 14 at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall beginning with a covered dish lunch. Chicken and drinks are provided. Please bring a covered dish item to share. Our guest speaker for Happy Days is Melissa Wolfe-Burke from Shenandoah University who will share about "Move U Therapy". All older adults are welcome. Come enjoy this nourishing and informative time.

LIFE GOES ON

Life Goes On is a gathering of people who have lost a spouse or significant other. This month, we will meet for lunch in Fellowship Hall at noon on October 19. The main dish will be TBA. Please bring a dish to pass or to chip in a dollar or two toward expense. The discussions are good; we laugh a lot. No reservations needed!

SENIOR OUTREACH

Senior Outreach Ministry will gather on Sunday, October 11, at 12:15 PM, by the church office door to load up the totes for the Shenandoah Senior Apartments in Winchester. Donations of paper towels or bath tissue are always welcome.

THANK YOU

Nice things just seem to bloom from you!

Thanks so much! We would like to thank Opequon for all the prayers, visits, and food. Your kindness and thoughtfulness is truly amazing. Thank you very much.

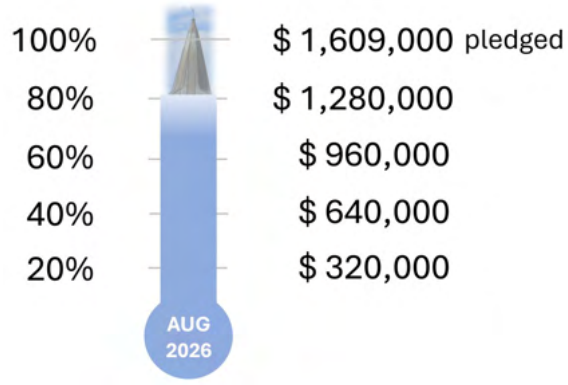
Sincerely,
Brenda & Kraig Hawkins

THANKSGIVING FEAST FOOD DONATIONS

The annual Thanksgiving Feast will be on Sunday, November 15, at 12:15 PM for our whole congregation. Our Opequon Youth will be hosting this event and appreciate your help in donating items needed for a Thanksgiving meal. Please visit the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area. As the Youth serve you a full turkey dinner on the day of the Feast, they appreciate your monetary donations that will go completely towards their Christmas service project, Midnight Gladness. Plan to come and be a part of this great time of gratitude. No need to make a reservation. Questions? Let Rebekah Witt know at rwitt@opequonchurch.org. Thanks!

BUILDING CAMPAIGN RECEIPTS

Building campaign receipts now total $1,306k through August 2026, which is 81% of the total amount pledged. Note that some pledged gifts have been received in full and will not be evenly spread over the 3-year giving period. The total also includes gifts that were not pledged.



THANK YOU

In moments of Sorrow, it's Family & Friends who bring Love & Peace. Thank you Sincerely.
—The Family of Gary Walter McDowell

Opequon Presbyterian Church &
Congregational Care,

Thank you for your prayers, cards, and support during Gary's illness and passing. The Congregational Care Tote filled with everyday goodies was a true delight and much appreciated. We are so very grateful for your kindness and thoughtfulness.

—Janet McDowell

ROOTS & SHOOTS GARDEN:
Growing, Giving, & Serving

What a season it has been in the garden! Our Roots & Shoots Garden continues to flourish, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to grow fresh produce and share it with our community. So far this year, we have officially donated over 300 pounds of fresh produce to Highland and Sherando Food Pantries!

We've grown all kinds of delicious produce this season, but our cucumbers have been a particular highlight! From the first harvest to the overflowing baskets we've been able to share, they have certainly kept us busy and we couldn't be more proud of how well they've grown.

And the garden isn't just producing food—it's beautiful, too! Our garden is overflowing with gorgeous flowers, bringing color, pollinators, and plenty of joy to the space. We've even caught some bumblebees taking naps in our flowers!

We were also excited to participate in the United Way Day of Caring, welcoming volunteers into the garden to lend a hand. It was a wonderful opportunity to work alongside others in our community, care for the garden, and see what can happen when people come together with a shared purpose.

None of this would be possible without our amazing volunteers. Whether you've planted, watered, weeded, harvested, hauled produce, or simply stopped by to help when you could, thank you! Every helping hand has made a difference.

Want to get involved? There is always something to do in the garden, and we'd love to have you join us! No gardening expertise is required—just a willingness to lend a hand. If you're interested in volunteering with Roots & Shoots, please reach out to Sheyenne Ervin (540-447-6063 / sheyenneervin@gmail.com). We'd love to have you be part of what's growing here!

"OUT OF THE DARKNESS" Stephens City Community Walk for Suicide Prevention
Saturday, October 10

Join us for the annual family-friendly "Out of the Darkness" Community Walk for Suicide Prevention event on October 10 at Sherando High School. Our Mission Team is sponsoring a team to walk and help raise money for suicide awareness and prevention. *(see info flyers in Gathering Area)*

To join or support Team OPC, visit:
https://afspwalks.donordrive.com/teams/398416

Or contact our Team OPC Captain:
Sheyenne Ervin (sheyenneervin@gmail.com)

Thank you for all the donations of new underwear and socks that have been donated so far. We delivered four boxes to the Bright Futures warehouse and they were so thankful for the items.

We will continue collecting items throughout the school year for the different needs identified at the meeting for elementary school through high school. The collection tote will remain in the Gathering Area for the items you wish to donate.

During October, we will be collecting donations of sweatshirts (children's and adult sizes). These can be gently used, so check the thrift stores.

Remember, each week a different school will be selected to be held up with prayer. Notes of encouragement to the schools are also always welcome. If you would like some notecards and addresses for the schools and teachers, please reach out to Pastor Tracie Martin.

Thank you to everyone who has seen the need and put items in the tote so far. These are just some of the many, simple ways we can help to make life better for the teachers, staff and children.

We will intentionally be praying for the teachers and students at the following local schools this month:

- October 4: Robert E. Aylor Middle School
- October 11: James Wood Middle School
- October 18: Admiral Richard E. Byrd Middle School
- October 25: Daniel Morgan Intermediate School

REMEMBER OPC IN YOUR WILL!

We can and do make an ongoing difference in people's lives…

Thank you for your generous support of our missions and ministries!

Got questions? Contact our Treasurer, Ron Smith by phone (703-216-9588) or you may send a message to his new OPC email (rsmith@opequonchurch.org).

Opequon Presbyterian Church
Financial Summary for the period ended
August 31, 2026

	Annual Budget 2026	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Annual Budget Used
Income					
410000 Offering Income	961,041	127,635	691,720	269,321	72.0%
420000 Other Income	2,100	155	2,055	45	97.9%
Total 400000 Income	963,141	127,789	693,775	269,366	72.0%
Expenses					
500000 Personnel Costs					
510000 Installed Pastors	160,114	13,053	104,683	55,431	65.4%
520000 Other Ministerial Staff	259,866	17,645	142,079	117,787	54.7%
530000 Administrative Staff	167,195	13,238	107,953	59,242	64.6%
Total 500000 Personnel Costs	587,175	43,936	354,715	232,460	60.4%
600000 Other Ministries					
610000 Christian Education	15,650	1,009	9,248	6,402	59.1%
620000 Congregational Care	2,800	167	1,840	960	65.7%
630000 Evangelism	6,050	(19)	1,079	4,971	17.8%
640000 Fellowship	4,250	95	2,272	1,978	53.5%
650000 Mission	79,219	8,162	53,896	25,323	68.0%
660000 Worship	8,000	1,092	4,403	3,597	55.0%
Total 600000 Other Ministries	115,969	10,505	72,738	43,231	62.7%
Total 700000 Church Administration	160,200	2,457	115,062	45,138	71.8%
Total Expenses	863,344	56,899	542,515	320,829	62.8%
Net Operating Income (Expense)	99,797	70,891	151,260	(51,463)	151.6%
920000 Other Income	18,650	1,652	14,328	4,322	76.8%
930000 Other Expenses	118,447	9,768	79,640	38,807	67.2%
Net Other Income (Expense)	(99,797)	(8,115)	(65,312)	(34,485)	65.4%
Income Greater Than (Less Than) Expenses	0	62,775	85,948		

	8/31/26
Cash	$ 108,632
Sanctuary Mortgage Principal Balance	$ 211,178

GREAT THINGS ARE POPPING AT OPEQUON!

(From Pastor Tracie Martin & the Generosity Team)

Opequon Presbyterian is popping into October. Using popcorn to publicize stewardship may sound odd for a church, but popcorn and religious practices have a long history. I went on the internet and found some interesting info. Eatingmeals.com told me a lot.

Popcorn's spiritual role dates back thousands of years. Archaeological evidence shows that the earliest popcorn kernels date to about 7,600 years ago in the Peruvian Andes, with further finds in New Mexico's Bat Cave (~6,500 years old). In Mesoamerica, corn was domesticated over 9,000 years ago, and popcorn likely emerged as a byproduct of cooking before it was cultivated intentionally.

Among the Aztecs (14th—16th centuries), popcorn was far more than a snack. It was used in ceremonies dedicated to Tlaloc, the rain god, and Chalchiuhtlicue, the goddess of water. The popping process—transforming a hard kernel into a fluffy white bloom—was seen as a symbol of transformation, rebirth, and divine power. Priests wore popcorn garlands made from popped kernels, which were symbolic offerings representing the bounty of the earth and the connection between people and the gods.

Historical accounts, such as those of Bernardino de Sahagún, describe priests scattering popcorn as offerings to the gods. In some myths, the feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl is credited with bringing corn and popcorn to humanity as a divine gift. The sound of corn popping was considered to be the breath of certain gods and a blessing.

Take time to listen at the finish of Sunday worship. We will sample a different flavor of popcorn each week, which should make OPiE happy. You might even hear the mystical popping of your own spirit. What can popcorn tell us about our Five Pillars? How can it inform our personal stewardship and generosity? Come and see… taste and see… we'll be popping with fun!

From Our Faith Community Nurses:

Second Stop: Make a Nutrition Plan for Healthier Eating

Winning Habits: Make over your meals with a plan, the right ingredients, and life hacks.

Make a plan. You've probably noticed that someone who follows a popular diet plan might quickly lose weight, but has a hard time keeping it off long term. This is common and discouraging, so let's design a plan that you can follow for life. It doesn't need to be popular or have a name.

Your plan only needs two key ingredients to work:

1. **It should be based on healthy eating.**
2. **It should be something you can keep doing.**

People often need to try different things to create a plan that works for them. Some may cut back on sugar and eat more protein to stay fuller longer. Others may focus on crowding out unhealthy food with extra fruits and vegetables. Still others take the guesswork and temptation out of life by sticking to just a few breakfast and lunch choices that they know are nutritious. The details will depend on what you like and what fits in best with your life.

Eat well. Good food in the right amounts does so much more for you than just helping you lose the pounds; it helps you feel better and even think better. **All good things!**

Some basics to get started:

Choose these foods and drinks **more often:**

Non-starchy vegetables such as peppers, mushrooms, asparagus, broccoli, and spinach

Fruits

Lean protein such as fish, chicken, turkey, tofu, eggs, and yogurt

Whole grains such as quinoa, brown rice, and steel cut oatmeal

Healthy fats in foods like olive oil and avocado, that replace unhealthy ones

Water and unsweetened beverages

Choose these foods and drinks **less often:**

Processed foods such as packaged snacks, packaged meat, chips, granola bars, sweets, and fast foods

Trans fat, found in things such as margarine, snack food, packaged baked goods, and many fried foods

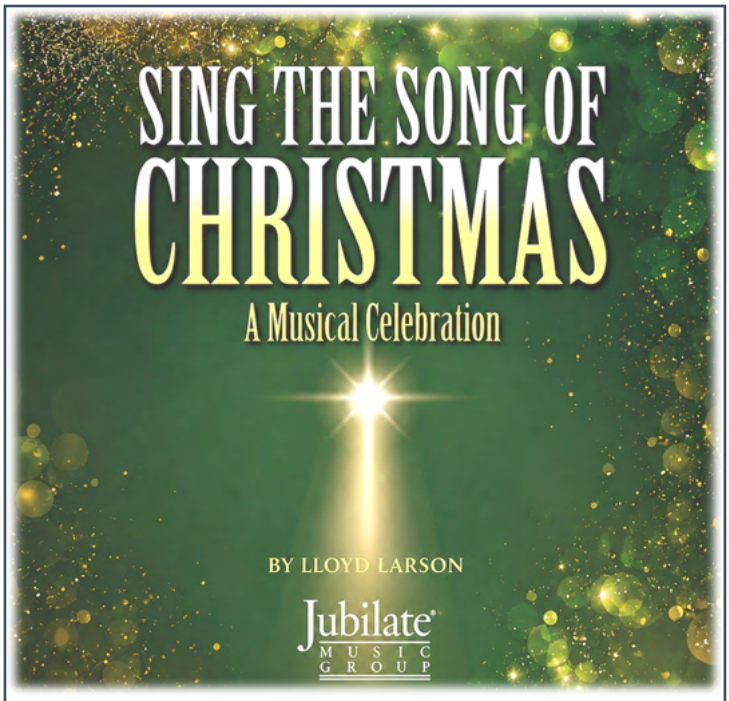
Sugary drinks such as fruit juice, sports drinks, and soda

Alcohol

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *On Your Way to Preventing Type 2 Diabetes* (2019), p. 6. Public-domain material. Reproduced for informational and educational purposes. This use does not imply endorsement by the CDC, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the U.S. Government. The original material is available from CDC at no charge at: www.cdc.gov/index.html

This calendar is subject to change. The most current schedule is on the OPC website here: www.opequonchurch.org/get-inolved **OCTOBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry @	2	3
4 Communion World Communion Sunday 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:30am - Bread Basket Buffet @ 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 9:45am - Opie's Playhouse @ 11am - Worship & Live Stream @	5 9:30am - Older Adult Planning 5pm - Logos Leadership Team @ 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial	6 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 5pm - Tech Team Meeting @ 6pm - Ministry Team Night @	7 9:30am - Staff Meeting @ Bageant 4:30pm - Logos 6:15pm - Confirmation Class @ 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	8 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial	9 5:30pm - Nowlin/Owens Wedding 6pm - Windsong Drop-Off (baked	10 10am - AFSP Walk @ Sherando 3:30pm - Nowlin/Owens Wedding
11 Pastor Appreciation Day 8am - Car Vacuuming Fundraiser 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 11am - Worship & Live Stream @ 12:15pm - Senior Outreach 1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship @ 3pm - Windsong Rehearsal @	12 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial 6pm - MOO Meal @ Chick-fil-A 7pm - MOO in FH @ Fellowship	13 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Mission 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 6pm - GLOW @ Fellowship Hall 7pm - Vision Team @ Bageant	14 12pm - Happy Days @ Fellowship 4:30pm - Logos 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 9am - WANC Tea @ Youth Spot 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 10:30am - WANC Meeting @ 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry	16 Shen Pres Youth Retreat (Church Van In Use) @ Massanetta Springs	17
18 Shen Pres Youth Retreat (Church Blood Pressure Checks 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 11am - Worship & Live Stream @ 12:30pm - Retreat Planning Team 5pm - Young Adult Bonfire	19 12pm - Life Goes On @ Fellowship 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial	20 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 6pm - Windsong Rehearsal @ 6:30pm - Session Meeting @	21 9:30am - Staff Meeting 4:30pm - Logos 6:15pm - Confirmation Class @ 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	22 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 10:30am - WANC Lunch @ 6pm - Fellowship Book Club @	23	24
25 4 Cents a Meal Offering Reformation Sunday Volunteer Appreciation Sunday 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - GIFT Event @ Memorial 11am - Worship & Live Stream @ 12:15pm - Chili Cook-Off @	26 5:30pm - Windsong Party & 6pm - Boundary Training @ 7pm - Astronomy Club @ Assembly	27 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 3pm - TVOR Gathering 5:30pm - Highland Food Pantry @	28 4:30pm - Logos 5pm - Tables & Treats @ Gathering 6:15pm - Confirmation Class @ 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary	29 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial	30	31 Halloween 10am - Jubilee Kitchen - Opequon



ALL ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA CHOIR!

The Christmas season is just around the corner and we are excited to begin preparing our Christmas Cantata, which will be sung during both worship services on December 20.

If you love to sing or have always wanted to give Choir a try, we would love to have you join us! Cantata rehearsals will begin Wednesday, October 28, at 8:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

You don't have to be a seasoned singer or a regular choir member. Come be a part of the music, fellowship, and joy of the season.

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Homan (shoman@opequonchurch.org).

NOVEMBER DATES TO NOTE:

- All Saints' Sunday with Communion— Sunday, November 1
- November Ministry Team Night— Tuesday, November 3
- Election Day— Tuesday, November 3
- Worship on Wednesday (WOW)— Wednesday, November 4
- Veterans' Recognition— Sunday, November 8
- Pledge & Stewardship Dedication— Sunday, November 8
- "The Feast" Thanksgiving Meal— Sunday, November 15
- 130th Annual Thanksgiving Service— Sunday, November 22 (6:00 PM) (Memorial Sanctuary)
- Thanksgiving Day— Thursday, November 26
- Christ the King Sunday— Sunday, November 29
- November GIFT Event— Sunday, November 29

A BIG SAVE THE DATE ANNOUNCEMENT!

This is the THIRD announcement of this SAVE THE DATE event. Maybe the third time will be the charm! There are big plans for a wonderful CHURCH RETREAT EVENT. The dates are March 12-14, 2027, to be held right here at Opequon Church. The retreat will begin with dinner on Friday evening, March 12, and end on Sunday morning, March 14. The theme for the retreat is "A TIME FOR EVERYTHING' and our guest speakers at the retreat will be Scott and Laura Stolte. The Stolte's were members of OPC, Scott serving as an Elder. Scott is now a Pastor in NJ. Laura is an educator working at the University level. They are excited to return to OPC for this event. The Church Retreat is open to all ages and stages of life. You will be hearing much more about this grand event as the planning team gets into the nitty gritty of all that will take place. You can attend during the daytime hours and then you get to sleep in your own bed each night. It is the participants at the retreat that will make it so special. We hope you will be able to attend. Our last CHURCH RETREAT was in 2011! How great that we are going to offer this experience some 15 years later!

**** 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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CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	David R. Witt
Parish Associate	Tracie Martin
Church Office Administrator	Rachel Lesink
Church Finance Administrator	Ken Smiy
Director of Christian Education	Carole Witt
Director of Youth & Young Adults	Rebekah Witt
Director of Music	Susan Homan
Organist/Pianist	Garrett Jones
Facilities Coordinator	Robert Sydnor
Nursery Supervisor	Laurie Carver
Faith Community Nurses	Bill Martin, Patty Klinefelter, Mike Nutry, Pat Williams

OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN 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

Sunday Worship Services:
8:30 AM & 11:00 AM