

Opequon Presbyterian Church

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THE OPEQUON SPIRIT

"Prayerfully equipping disciples of all generations to be Christ's hand's, heart, and feet in the world!

NOVEMBER 2026

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

November 1 – All Saints' Sunday
† Revelation 7:9-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Sermon: "Remembering the People"
* *Communion*
* *Remembering Those Who Have Died*
* *Celebrating the Great Cloud of Witnesses*

1:**30 PM Spring Arbor Worship**

Wednesday, November 4
6:30 PM WOW - "Worship on Wednesday"
† Psalm 100; Philippians 4:4-7
Reflection: "Give Thanks!"
* *All LOGOS Young People Participating*

November 8 – Stewardship Dedication & Pledge Sunday
† Joshua 24:1-3, 14-25; Matthew 25:1-13
Sermon: "We Will Serve the Lord!"
* *Veterans' Day Recognition*
* *"Fudge Festival" Fellowship Time*

November 15
† Psalm 90:1-12; Matthew 25:14-30
Sermon: "Enter into the Joy!"
* *"The Feast" Thanksgiving Meal (12:15 PM)*

November 22 – Christ the King Sunday
† Psalm 100; Matthew 25:31-46
Sermon: "Room at the Table"
* *Four Cents A Meal*

6:00 PM Thanksgiving Eve Service
(Opequon Church Memorial Sanctuary)
† Psalm 133:1-3; Ephesians 4:1-6
Sermon: One Table, One Lord, One Thanksgiving
* *Pastor Victor Gomez, Kernstown UMC*
* *Communion; Special Music*

November 29 – The First Sunday of Advent
† Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7,17-19; Mark 13:24-37
Sermon: "Until the Dawn: Cry Out!"
* *Habitat for Humanity Paint Can Offering*
* *GIFT Event*

RESCHEDULED: CAR VACUUMING FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT YOUTH MISSION TRIPS & CONFERENCES

Sunday, November 1 (8:00 AM - 1:00 PM)

Sand, mud, and other debris quickly make their way into cars over the summer, but fall is here, and we all want our vehicles to be clean once again! Hopefully the weather will cooperate on the rescheduled date! Pull up to the church parking lot curb on Sunday, November 1 from 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 Youth Mission Trips & Camps/Conferences. Thank you!

REMEMBER TO VOTE!

Tuesday, November 3

It's our privilege and responsibility!

THE FEAST THANKSGIVING MEAL & BUILDING CELEBRATION

November 15th (12:15 PM)

Enjoy your first Thanksgiving Meal of the year with your Opequon Church Family! The Youth will serve the food while you sit back to enjoy fellowship with one another. This is the Youth's fundraiser for their Christmas Service Project during their Midnight Gladness event in December. Monetary donations will gladly be accepted as they support families with gifts around the holidays. Get to know the Youth as they welcome you. No reservations required. We look forward to seeing you there! Questions? Ask Rebekah Witt!

We will also CELEBRATE and recognize three substantial unexpected, unpledged, bequests to the Capital Campaign and recent developments from the Architectural Review Team on the building expansion.

STEWARDSHIP DEDICATION & PLEDGE SUNDAY

Sunday, November 8 (8:30 & 11:00 AM)

Renew & Re-dedicate Your Commitment
to Christ and his Church at Opequon!

Special Veterans' Recognition
4th Annual "Fudge Festival"

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR: "Welcome"

Dear Friends in Christ,

Many of us probably have a "welcome mat" at the front, side, or back door of our homes. Various personalized messages may be conveyed on those mats, along with colorful signs and symbols. The mats also sit ready with the practical purpose of wiping one's feet before entering. They are useful and could be the first sign of hospitality for a home that is grateful for loved ones and guests. In addition to a welcome mat, you and I also might provide hospitality in other ways: clearing the path to the front door; adding a greeting touch; offering a coat or shoe drop; offering a drink and snack; and creating a warm atmosphere. At Opequon Church, we seek to provide both a figurative and real "welcome mat" as we embrace our visionary pillar/priority of "radical hospitality." That priority grows out of our two Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) surveys (2018 and 2025), when Opequon Church scored in the 90th+ percentile in hospitality and landed in the high energy, high satisfaction quadrant. As the Vision Team weighed and evaluated those results, radical hospitality became one of the five pillars for our future vision and ministry. We often receive questions about radical hospitality from newcomers and long-timers at Opequon. And what is radical hospitality, you may ask? As an aspirational endeavor, it is taking the next steps and going the extra mile in offering and providing hospitality to our church. And it hopefully becomes radical as we move beyond the initial greeting and friendliness, although that is where it all begins, to extend hospitality to one another on our continuing journey together.

Opequon's welcome began long before the pillars, long before hospitality greeters, and long before it was officially entrusted to a committee. Carole and I experienced it almost thirty years ago when we met the Pastor Nominating Committee for the first time and were then introduced to the congregation within months. Sometimes, people call it "the Opequon personality." But realizing that some organization needed to be added to this entire facet of welcome ministry, the session did establish the Evangelism Committee (2002), later the Evangelism Team, and now the Welcome Team, as renamed by the session in September to realign the identification of the team with the various tasks it fulfills. "Welcome" is a positive label, a hospitable label, a "y'all come" label. The Welcome Team focuses on the nametag ministry, hospitality greeters, follow-up visitor teams, advertising/promotions, newcomers' classes, and communication and collaboration with the Congregational Care and Discipleship Teams. Currently chaired by Elder Ben Brooks, the team is working on "refreshing its membership and ministry." Wouldn't you like to be a part of providing welcome and hospitality? Can't you see yourself fulfilling a role that says "y'all come" and helping us all to live it out? We need you! If you are interested in being a team player, reach out to Ben Brooks today so we can all say, "Welcome!"

With a Grateful Heart, *David*

PASTOR TRACIE'S JUST THINKIN'

On my way to the church the other day, I saw something I did not understand. The wind was blowing fiercely at High Point. Just past the top, I saw what looked like many, many black grocery bags blowing across a field. They were moving as a group and seemed to be scooting along at a good pace. I stopped the car to try to see what was going on. It was a flock of wild turkeys moving from one wooded area to another. What a hoot!

When I was a child, wild turkeys were scarce; one hardly ever saw them. As time passed, they would be listed on the endangered species list. I lived in a rural New York village where hunting was most often done for food. Being prohibited from harvesting wild turkeys did not go over well at all. I remember my Great-Uncle Chet sneaking several into Grandma's kitchen late at night because he just could not go abide the idea of a domestic Thanksgiving turkey dinner.

According to Wikipedia, "In what is now the United States, there were an estimated 10 million wild turkeys in the 17th century. By the 1930s, only 30,000 remained. In the 1960s and 1970s, biologists started trapping wild turkeys from the few places they remained (including the Ozarks and New York), and re-introducing them into other states, including Minnesota and Vermont." This process was successful; by the time Bill and I lived in Wellsville, NY, hunting was again permitted.

If you have only seen Thanksgiving pictures of wild turkey males with their tails spread, you have not seen wild turkeys. When I was at Robinson Memorial Presbyterian in Syracuse, I often drove past a home where corn was put out for wild birds. The wild turkeys gathered there in droves. Spring weather brought out the "frisky" in all of them and it was not unusual to see three or more males strutting for attention. They were always surrounded by admiring hens. The colors were brighter than any picture I have ever seen. What a contrast to the dirty white of domestic turkeys.

Turkeys can be frightening. They are often aggressive towards pets and children. Wild turkeys can fly a bit to avoid danger, but domestic turkeys will simply charge, flapping their wings and hissing. They bite! Gathering turkey eggs is not a task for the weak. "Being aggressive toward wild turkeys is not recommended by State wildlife officials". (Sweeney, Emily (28 September 2017). "Brookline backs down: Don't tussle with the turkeys". The Boston Globe. Archived from the original on 28 September 2017. Retrieved 22 June 2022.)

Why write about turkeys in a church newsletter? Their recovery from the brink of extinction shows what can happen when people work with nature. Wild turkeys are more than a potential Thanksgiving meal; as ecosystem engineers, they support environmental health by eating insects, dispersing seeds, fertilizing the soil, and sustaining predator-prey relationships. God put them here for more than our Thanksgiving feast. However, please do pass the cranberry sauce.

- Tracie

OCTOBER 2026 SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Session met with seven newcomers and welcomed them into the fellowship of Opequon Presbyterian Church. New members Karen and Tim Adams, Sunday Coté, Lisa Crudele, and David Pelfrey will be recognized in worship on Sunday, November 8, at the 11:00 AM service and Diane and Davis Hewett on Sunday, November 15, at the 11:00 AM service.
- Welcome Team Ministry (formerly Evangelism) is seeking to call new members to expand the team serving as Hospitality Greeters.
- Fellowship Ministry is busy planning November/ December events, including the Thanksgiving Service Reception (November 22), and Annual Cookie Reception (December 6).
- Buildings & Grounds Team welcomed Sheyenne Ervin and Doug Joyner as Building Stewards. An unexpected boiler problem was quickly fixed without issues or expense.
- Stewardship & Finance Team: Session approved the September Financial Report as submitted. Opequon's proposed 2027 Annual Giving Events Calendar is under Session review.
- Technology & Communications Team: Three new computers will be ordered to replace old computers for the Church Office Administrator (Rachel Lesink), Livestream Area, and Facilities Coordinator (Robert Sydnor); a repurposed computer will be made available for the Music Director (Susan Homan).
- Personnel Team & Administration Ministry: Elders, Deacons and staff will complete the 90-minute Healthy Boundaries training session, led by Doug Joyner and Ann Smith, in October. In accordance with policy, Session sought and received approval from Shenandoah Presbytery's Committee on Ministry in October to move forward in electing an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC).
- Worship Ministry: Plans are underway to prepare for Advent, which begins on November 29.
- Christian Education Ministry: Share your holiday story for our annual Advent devotional, "Advent Inspirations!" Members are invited to submit personal reflections on meaningful holiday memories, traditions, or encouraging seasonal wisdom. Submissions are due to Carole Witt by November 15.
- Deacons & Congregational Care Ministry: The Transportation Team plans to restart church rides on the Opequon bus from Spring Arbor and Orchard Ridge for special events and the first Sunday of each month for 11:00 AM communion service. While it is still in the planning stages, the team hopes to begin offering rides on December 6.
- Vision Ministry: The final design drawings for the building expansion project were received from the architect and will be submitted to the construction company shortly for final pricing. This is a major development and reason to celebrate as we watch the "Steps to Groundbreaking" timeline move forward. Check out the bulletin board timeline in Gathering Area west hall entrance area!
- Mission Ministry: Based on the successful 2nd Annual Graham Taylor Concert & Meal Fundraiser Event, the Mission Team voted to grant/donate $1,000 to both WATTS and Winchester Rescue Mission from the net proceeds. Thanksgiving banana boxes, made available to the congregation on October 11, are due back by Sunday, November 15. Presbytery's 2027 Per Capita request is under discussion by Session.
- Session unanimously approved the staff nominated 2026 Volunteer of the Year.
- Session voted to call a Congregational Meeting between services for Sunday November 8, 2026, to hear the Nominating Committee's report and elect new officers (four Ruling Elders, four Deacons, and one Trustee).
- Session elected Jack Marquis to serve as Commissioner to attend the Shenandoah Presbytery meeting at Augusta Stone Church on Tuesday, November 17, 2026.

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

A NEW LOOK IS ON THE WAY!

We are currently in the process of redesigning our church newsletter! While we work on the new format, things may look a little different than usual. Thank you for your patience and grace as we make this transition. We look foward to sharing our new design with you.

EXTENDING OUR CHRISTIAN LOVE & EMPATHY TO…

- Jodi Deck and family, upon the death of her mother, Jolissa Matthews, on September 23.
- Ben Barnes and family, upon the death of his grandmother, Kathie Latimer, on Octoer 11.
- Norma Windle Albanese and family, upon the death of her mother and Opequon member, June Windle, on October 18.

"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 11:26-26)

MARRIAGE BLESSINGS

Congratulations to Kyeara Nowlin and Cole Owens, who were married on October 10 in the Roots & Shoots Garden by Pastor David Witt. May the Lord bless and abide with Kyeara and Cole in their married life.

MINISTRY TEAM NIGHT

Tuesday, November 3

6:00 PM Meal: Parmesan Crusted Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Rolls, Fruit, & Dessert (provided by Carole Witt)

6:45 PM Devotions & Team Meetings

THANKSGIVING BOXES ARE HERE!

Many banana boxes have gone out, but a bounty of empty boxes is still waiting for adoption in the hallways of Opequon Church. It's time for our annual Thanksgiving food drive for CCAP and Orchard View Elementary School. Each box contains a list of needed items, including the need for disposable roasting pans this year. Filled banana boxes may be dropped off any Sunday morning or on the following special drop-off days:

Monday, November 9 (5:00 - 6:00 PM)

Friday, November 13 (12:00 - 1:00 PM)

ALL BOXES ARE DUE BACK AT CHURCH BY SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15. Our goal is to fill 130 boxes this year as we share and care for those in need within our community.

MUSIC RECITAL WATCH PARTY

Will Schwantes is hosting his Senior Degree Recital on Friday, November 6, at 8:00 PM at the University of Delaware's Gore Recital Hall. This is a culmination of his experiences and time spent at the University of Delaware, and he is eager to share it with you all.

Will is double-majoring in Choral/General Music Education and Computer Science. He has been a member of the award-winning University of Delaware Chorale, the Delaware Choral Scholars, and the University of Delaware Concert and Chamber Orchestras. He has had the opportunity to perform with these groups in the U.S. and Europe. He also is a member of the UD Harrington Theatre Arts Company, where he has acted in and served as Pit Director for several student-run musicals. Will has been a member of OPC for over 10 years and loves to sing with the choir and share his talents on the piano or violin when he is home.

We are so excited to be able to share this livestreamed concert with you at a watch party in the Opequon Fellowship Hall on Friday, November 6. Doors will open at 7:30 PM and livestream of the concert will begin at 8:00 PM. If you have any questions, contact Susan Homan (shoman@opequonchurch.org).

If you are unable to attend the watch party, you may view the livestream here: https://www.youtube.com/live/kAsZNQ_VNLg?is=TDdJ9ydYbT5aY2xa

PREPARING FOR ADVENT!

You probably don't want to think about Advent yet. Of course, we haven't even had Thanksgiving! However, in preparation for Advent, we need to begin some things now. For the 23rd year, we will again produce and author our own Advent Devotional. We cannot do it without YOU. We need writers! The theme of our Advent Devotional is "ADVENT INSPIRATIONS". Would you be willing to share your thoughts on meaningful Advent memories, traditions, seasonal wisdom or encouragement? Your reflections will help make our annual Advent Devotional a treasured possession. You are invited to be a writer and contribute to this year's Advent Devotional. Let Carole Witt know you are willing to write something. (dce@opequonchurch.org) **All submissions are due to Carole by November 15.**

LIFE GOES ON

We will gather in Fellowship Hall on November 16 at noon. The main dish will be a stew. Please plan to bring a dish to pass or chip in a couple of bucks toward expenses.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA REHEARSALS

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 are on Wednesday evenings 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. Got questions? Contact Susan Homan (shoman@opequonchurch.org).

'GIFT' EVENT - Generations in Faith Together

We have the GIFT of being with all ages for an educational experience on Sunday, November 29, at 9:45 AM in the Fellowship Hall. The theme is "The Pumpkin Patch Parable" which is a story of how a simple pumpkin can turn into a glorious sight. In the same way, God's transforming love can fill each of our hearts with joy and light. 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.

CONFIRMATION CONNECTION

Our 2026-27 Confirmation students are a terrific group and they are working hard. They help make learning fun! During recent classes they have learned about 'Extravagant Love' and who Jesus is, 'The Holy Spirit', and 'Prayer'. We are blessed by these 9 students who meet on Wednesdays, 6:15 - 7:15 PM for class time. We are also thankful for those adults who are serving as their Covenant Partners/Mentors: Laurel Hathaway, Mitch Orndorff, Terry Hartman, Mike Wygant, Kevin Reed, Debbie Bender, Rebekah Witt, Joanne Berson, and Ben Brooks. These adults will be instrumental in their Confirmation experience. Questions about Confirmation, ask Carole Witt (dce@opequonchurch.org)

FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB

We are on hiatus for the holidays (**no meetings in November or December**), but are currently 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.

OPIE'S PLAYHOUSE MAKES CONNECTIONS

Opie's Playhouse is a monthly gathering specially planned by Christian Education 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 meet on the first Sunday of every month from 9:45 AM to 10:45 AM in the Memorial Sanctuary. Our next playgroup is November 1.

Since we began meeting in 2023, we have watched Opie's turn into a treasured event in the lives of our youngest children. They greet each other with shouts of joy and great big hugs, and are excited to see what toys are waiting for them. We have gotten to watch the original attendees turn into elementary school kids (and they are still coming!) and welcome a new group of toddlers.

But it doesn't end there. We have seen our caregivers lift each other up, offer advice, and bond over shared experiences. We watch the children learn to trust other adults in the room and we have the privilege of playing and sharing smiles with the most adorable little ones. We even have regular guests who come when in town visiting their families. We are so grateful that we can offer this time of fellowship that connects children, adults and visitors to each other and to Opequon.

THE LATEST IN LOGOS

The Logos year is well underway and going smoothly. We had a successful Fire Drill last month along with a super FAMILY NIGHT. Our annual Bring a Friend night was held in conjunction with "Tables and Treats" Night. It was a great celebration and always so nice to have more friends with us.

This month bring more great themes such as "Choc-o-lot Night", "American Spirit with Grateful Hearts Night", and our annual Teacher night with the theme 'School Spirit'. We look forward to our first WOW night, November 4 with a worship service at 6:30 - 7:15 PM in the sanctuary with all our Logos young people. Logos families, staff, and congregation members are invited to join us for this informal Worship on Wednesday. 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 (dce@opequonchurch.org).

YOUTH: GRADES 6-12

November 1 (8:00 AM - 1:00 PM):
Car Vacuuming Fundraiser

November 15 (10:30 AM - 2:30 PM):
Thanksgiving Feast Meal Serving

November 20-22:
Keep Awake Youth Retreat at Massanetta Springs

MEN OF OPEQUON THIS MONTH: DINNER & GAME NIGHT WITH GLOW

The Men of Opequon (MOO) will gather for dinner with our God-Loving Opequon Women (GLOW) for the fourth year in a row on Monday, November 9 (please note the different day for GLOW!) at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. The women will provide lasagna, bread, and salad. Men: please bring a dessert to share, as we'll be providing all the dessert. We'll share a devotion on gratitude and then have fun with a rousing game of "Pictionary," the guys against the gals. Join us for a fun evening!

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 unique Pumpkin Decorating evening and a perfect seasonal devotion. This month Opequon women will meet WITH MOO on Monday, November 9, at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall for Dinner and some healthy competition as we play PICTIONARY. The main course for dinner is Lasagna provided by the GLOW planning team. Women are to bring a salad or bread. The men are providing dessert and drinks. An evening devotion will ground us before the game competition between the men and women. All Opequon Women are invited.

SENIOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

Senior Outreach Ministry will gather on Sunday, November 8, 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.

OLDER ADULT HAPPENINGS

It is time to give thanks with a grateful heart! OPC is ever so thankful for all older adults who make Opequon such a special place!

This month begins with the Older Adult Planning Team meeting on Monday, November 2, 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, November 11 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 our own Bill Bender who will share about MEDICARE. All older adults are welcome. Come enjoy this nourishing and informative time.

ROOTS & SHOOTS IS GROWING MORE THAN JUST VEGETABLES: Nearly 700 Pounds of Giving!

As the growing season continues, we have so much to be thankful for! This year, the Opequon garden has donated nearly 700 pounds of fresh produce to Highland Food Pantry and Sherando Food Pantry, helping bring fresh food to families in our community. This incredible milestone reflects the care, dedication, and hard work that go into every growing season. From planting and tending to harvesting and delivering, each step plays a part in making the garden's mission possible. What begins as a small seed grows into something much greater: an opportunity to serve our neighbors and make a meaningful difference in our community.

We are grateful for the volunteers, church members, and community partners who help make this work possible. As we reflect on the season, we are reminded that the garden is about more than what we grow, it is about what we give. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this year's harvest such a success. We look forward to another season of growing, serving, and giving back together in the spring!

There's still time to help out at the garden for the remainder of this season! If you're interested, please contact Sheyenne Ervin (sheyenneervin@gmail.com).

"STRONGER TOGETHER" TAKES FLIGHT…



As many of you are aware, the Visioning Team hosted a panel discussion on May 21st entitled "Stronger Together: How Schools and Churches Can Partner to Meet Student Needs."

Our objectives were clear:

- To identify the most urgent needs within the school community
- To hear how those needs show up across different school roles
- To explore appropriate, ethical, and impactful ways churches can help
- To generate realistic partnership ideas that benefit students and families

We are excited that though our collaborative and collective "Stronger Together" efforts we have identified a number of outstanding opportunities to fulfill our OPC mission of being Christ's hands, heart and feet in our school communities. We identified the following action items as being realistic for near term follow-up:

- **"Undies Sunday"** - Underwear is one of the number one items needed – gather and collect underwear and other clothing for distribution in both school systems through Bright Futures.
- **Show caring** for school teachers, staff and administrators:
  - **Pray for Schools** on a regular basis.
  - **Share notes of encouragement** to teachers and staff
  - **Donate school supplies** to include tissues
  - **Provide Coffee and Donuts** for staff and teachers on Teacher Work Days
  - **Reach out to help** and volunteer at Bright Futures and schools

Here's a progress report on the actions taken thus far:

- **"Undies Sundays"** - We launched Undies Sundays in August and have had an overwhelming response from our congregation to include undies, leggings, socks, etc., and have delivered them to Bright Futures at the beginning of the new school year. In addition, two of our members have volunteered to help out as needed.
- **"Pray for Schools"** – We decided to highlight a school for prayers each week beginning in August featuring Handley High. We recognize graduates, students, faculty and staff who are members of our congregation.
- **"Notes of Encouragement"** – We learned that simple notes of encouragement were greatly valued by local school staff. We have organized an outreach effort to write such notes to all of the Principals, Asst. Principals, Counselors and Nurses for all of the public schools in Winchester City and Frederick County. We enlisted many of our dedicated note/card writers to assist and they jump on them enthusiastically.

We are still flushing out details on the efforts to Donate school supplies; Provide Coffee and Donuts and Reach out to help (volunteer). Obviously we would welcome your thoughts on all of these actions as well as any suggestions on other realistic actions we can take.

We are also reaching out to you to see ***if you would like to get involved in any of these activities***. In particular we have heard from some of you that you would like to do a ***"shout out"*** to a Winchester or Frederick County schools staff member based on what you have personally observed or experienced through your interaction with the school staff. The feedback we have already received from the ones sent to the school staffs have been very positive.

If you are interested in helping out with this initiative, please contact Robin Cooke (rlcooke55@yahoo.com) or Bill Thomasson (wthomasson@verizon.net), co-chairs of the Visioning Team.

SCHOOLS OF THE MONTH FOR PRAYER & APPRECIATION

- November 1 – Apple Pie Ridge Elementary School in Frederick County, VA
- November 8 – Bass-Hoover Elementary School in Frederick County, VA
- November 15 – Armel Elementary School in Frederick County, VA
- November 22 – Frederick Douglas Elementary School in Winchester, VA
- November 29 – Garland R. Quarles Elementary School in Winchester, VA

GENEROSITY MOMENT

(From Pastor Tracie Martin & the Generosity Team)

Our 2026-2027 stewardship outreach will end with Pledge Sunday, November 8, 2026. As always there will be fudge.

I was recently asked about why we end stewardship with fudge every year. There are several reasons. I like to make fudge; the congregation likes to eat fudge. It is important to thank the congregation for consistently giving so generously of its time, talent, and treasure. Many churches forget this important step. OPC does not.

There is, however, a story behind the fudge. It starts at Robinson Memorial Presbyterian Church in Syracuse, NY. RMPC, as some of you know, is an intentional older adult congregation with programming, worship, and most aspects of church life based on the needs of older adults. Oddly enough, however, RMPC has a healthy population of children who worship with their grandparents. It is a great church, full of fun. I retired from there in 2016.

I thoroughly enjoyed children's time. The children were energetic and outspoken, and several had special needs. The congregation's welcoming, flexible approach ensured those needs were thoughtfully addressed, making my pastorate especially rewarding.

At RMPC, we used hands-on activities to help children grasp and experience concepts of faith. When a three-year-old girl developed leukemia, we blew the church full of soap bubbles and sang songs to show her that we were praying for her. She understood.

I wanted the children to understand that a relationship with God is real and tangible, not imaginary - a difficult concept at any age. I turned to my longtime mentor, Kate Filer, and together we developed a story.

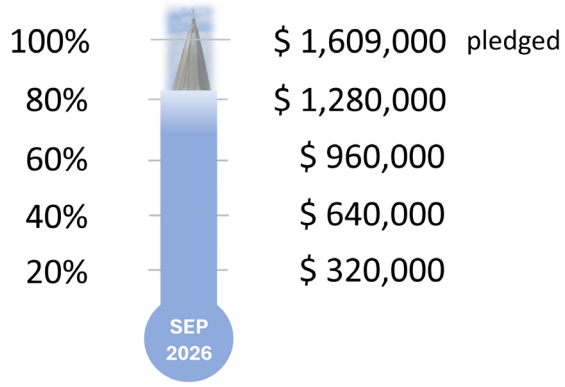
I invited the children to the front of the church, where a small plate held three pieces of fudge. After eating the first, I explained that pastors use words to help people understand. I ate the second while enthusiastically describing its rich flavor and smooth texture. Then I picked up the largest piece, took a bite, rolled my eyes with delight, and told them how much the fudge added to our time together. At last, one boy protested, "We can't taste it! How are we supposed to know if it's good?" I said they could trust me, but another child replied, "I want to taste it for myself!" I paused and asked, "You mean you can't taste the fudge through my experience?" "No!" they shouted. I gave each child a piece and explained that both fudge and faith are best experienced personally. The children agreed.

Someone in the front row photographed the children's reactions, capturing priceless images. For weeks afterward, children and adults asked for another taste of "faith fudge." Fudge had become a meaningful symbol for many.

For me, fudge came to symbolize making faith and its many dimensions an integral part of Christian life. Whenever we make it, I remember those children, who are now adults - one was married just last month. Although the story cannot fully carry from one congregation to another, making OPC fudge renews my energy and guides me from one stewardship year to the next. Remember this as you enjoy chocolate, peanut butter, and whatever other flavors appear. Taste and see for yourself that these things are good.

BUILDING CAMPAIGN RECEIPTS

Building campaign receipts now total $1,341k through September 2026, which is 83% 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.



INVITATION TO JOIN OUR "OPC PRAYS" TEAM

Did you know that our Congregational Care Ministry has an email group dedicated to praying for those on our weekly prayer list, as well as lifting up time-sensitive prayer requests that come in throughout the week?

If you would like to participate in our email prayer chain, OPC Prays, to support the prayer concerns of our congregation, please reach out to Winter Brooks or email opcprays@gmail.com to have your email address added to the group list.

END OF YEAR GIVING

We can - and do - make a difference in the world! Opequon supports an active outreach program that makes a difference in people's lives. As 2026 comes to a close, please consider your year-end giving: Is your General Fund pledge up to date? Did you get a Christmas bonus from your employer and wish to make a special donation to Opequon? Did you have a wonderful year, and now realize that when we give, others are blessed and God is glorified? God blesses us when we give generously (2 Corinthians 9:6). Simply write "General Fund" or "Capital Campaign" on your check. Checks can always be left during the week in the church office.

To receive credit on your 2026 year-end giving statement, please note the following deadlines for receipt of gifts...

Online Giving:
must be made online by December 24, 2026.

Cash, Checks, & Bank Bill Pay Payments:
must be received by December 31, 2026.



AGE 70½ + TAX BENEFIT OF GIFTING FROM AN IRA TO OPC

If you don't itemize your taxes anymore, but you take the standard deduction, you can still get a tax break by using your IRA for charitable giving! These provisions of the Federal tax laws allow individuals age 70½ or older to make tax-free gifts totaling up to $111,000 from a traditional IRA account directly to qualified charities (called a Qualified Charitable Distribution or QCD) such as Opequon Presbyterian Church. If your spouse has an IRA account, they may also make a gift of up to $111,000 from that account.

For IRA gifts directly given to a charity (like Opequon Presbyterian Church), any distribution from your IRA to charity up to $111,000 also counts towards your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), which seniors over 73 must take and does NOT trigger income tax for you. Yes, you can make a tax-free transfer from your IRA to OPC and not have to pay any tax on it. This is a great way for seniors to pay their pledge to the General Fund as well as the Capital Campaign; many OPCers are doing just that. Contact your IRA administrator to have a qualified charitable distribution sent directly to Opequon Presbyterian Church. QCDs are an area that requires careful planning and should involve your tax and financial advisors for specific advice for your situation.

Got questions about giving? Please contact Stewardship & Finance Team Member Tim Hoffman (703-618-2304 / thoffman2009@gmail.com) or OPC Treasurer Ron Smith (703-216-9588 / rsmith@opequonchurch.org).

REMEMBER OPC IN YOUR WILL!

To ensure that our church community continues to thrive, please consider making a legacy gift to the church. To help explain legacy giving options, the Stewardship & Finance Team has created a new section of the Giving page on the church website located here: www.opequonchurch.org/giving

If you have any questions about legacy/planned giving or would like to know more about including Opequon Church in your estate planning, please reach out to our OPC Treasurer, Ron Smith by phone (703-216-9588) or email (rsmith@opequonchurch.org).

Thank you for your generous support of the mission and ministries of OPC!

WATTS VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS

Opequon will be hosting WATTS every day from December 26—January 2, 7:00 PM—7:00 AM.

Beginning this month, the WATTS Volunteer "Blue Sheets" will be available in the Gathering Area. Links to the volunteer sign-up and Amazon wish list will also be shared in the November bulletins and church emails.

Opequon Presbyterian Church
Financial Summary for the period ended
September 30, 2026

	Annual Budget 2026	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Annual Budget Used
Income					
410000 Offering Income	961,041	42,783	734,503	226,538	76.4%
420000 Other Income	2,100	178	2,233	(133)	106.3%
Total 400000 Income	963,141	42,961	736,736	226,405	76.5%
Expenses					
500000 Personnel Costs					
510000 Installed Pastors	160,114	13,027	117,710	42,404	73.5%
520000 Other Ministerial Staff	259,866	17,823	159,902	99,964	61.5%
530000 Administrative Staff	167,195	14,120	122,073	45,122	73.0%
Total 500000 Personnel Costs	587,175	44,970	399,685	187,490	68.1%
600000 Other Ministries					
610000 Christian Education	15,650	1,086	10,334	5,316	66.0%
620000 Congregational Care	2,800	117	1,957	843	69.9%
630000 Evangelism	6,050	(20)	1,059	4,991	17.5%
640000 Fellowship	4,250	376	2,648	1,602	62.3%
650000 Mission	79,219	4,162	58,058	21,161	73.3%
660000 Worship	8,000	959	5,362	2,638	67.0%
Total 600000 Other Ministries	115,969	6,679	79,418	36,551	68.5%
Total 700000 Church Administration	160,200	8,589	123,651	36,549	77.2%
Total Expenses	863,344	60,238	602,754	260,590	69.8%
Net Operating Income (Expense)	99,797	(17,277)	133,983	(34,186)	134.3%
920000 Other Income	18,650	1,648	15,976	2,674	85.7%
930000 Other Expenses	118,447	9,957	89,598	28,849	75.6%
Net Other Income (Expense)	(99,797)	(8,309)	(73,622)	(26,175)	73.8%
Income Greater Than (Less Than) Expenses	0	(25,587)	60,361		

	9/30/26
Cash	$ 126,957
Sanctuary Mortgage Principal Balance	$ 202,280

NURSE NOTES: FOODS THAT MAKE YOU GO "Zzzz..."

Thanksgiving is on its way and so is a great nap. Falling asleep after a healthy portion of Thanksgiving turkey seems almost inevitable. Post-turkey sleepy-time could be because of the amino acid tryptophan found in some foods. Your body converts tryptophan into melatonin and serotonin, which are thought to induce sleep. Why not use foods like this to your advantage on other days (and nights) of the calendar? If you experience the occasional sleepless night, the Mayo Clinic offers some insight on how certain foods can help you sleep.

Common Foods That Contain Tryptophan:

Dairy
Oats
Bananas
Poultry
Peanuts

The One-Two Punch

Try a light bedtime snack that is mostly carbohydrates with a little protein to improve your chances of a better night's sleep. This carb-protein combo may increase the availability of tryptophan to your brain.

To Avoid Before Bedtime

- Too much protein (protein-rich foods also contain the amino acid tyrosine that stimulates brain activity)
- Heavy or spicy foods (causes heartburn)
- Lots of fluids (leads to lots of bathroom breaks)
- Alcohol (causes less than restful sleep and frequent awakenings)
- Caffeine which stimulates the nervous system

Keep in mind, this tactic can help with the occasional sleepless night, but make sure you visit your doctor if you are experiencing sleep problems on a more regular or frequent basis.

Prayer

Lord of days and nights, I lift my heart to You at the end of this day.
May you grant me rest as I surrender myself to your nightly care. Amen.

For more info, search for "food and sleep" on the following sites: www.mayoclinic.com or www.medlineplus.gov

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Dear Opequon Church Family,

Thank you for your prayers, cards, food, and care package during my mother's passing. We appreciate your sympathy and the support you showed our family. Your kindness is sincerely appreciated and will always be remembered.

Bill & Jodi Deck & Family

Thank you for all the prayers, visits, and food. We appreciate your kindness and thoughtfulness.

Peace to all.

Clayton & Brenda Carbaugh

Dear Opequon Family,

Thank you for the 80th birthday card shower. It was a joy to hear from so many of our church family. The balloons are still holding a special place in our living room. Trish and I both appreciate all the prayers you've given us and all the other support. Thank you again.

Mike Crawford

THANK YOU to everyone who ate, drank, baked cookies, helped organize, came out to enjoy, and donated to our 2nd Annual Graham Taylor Memorial Fundraiser Event to benefit those living with housing insecurity in Winchester.

Thanks to your generosity, the OPC Mission Team will be making donations of $1,000 to WATTS and the Winchester Rescue Mission, in addition to sustaining support for our annual commitment to host WATTS for a week at Opequon every winter.

If you have feedback or suggestions for next year, please reach out to Nancy Picklap. We are grateful for all that your compassionate giving enables us to do for our neighbors.

The OPC Mission Team

To the Mission Team & OPC Family,

On behalf of the Stephens City Out of the Darkness Walk and the AFSP Virginia Chapter Board, we are so grateful for your wonderful support of our mission to save lives and bring hope to everyone affected by suicide.

Your kind donations from the Missions Team and congregation help us share vital resources and education across our local counties. It truly means the world to Ben and me to have our Opequon family walking alongside us for mental health!

With heartfelt thanks,
Ben & Winter Brooks

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

NOVEMBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 All Saints' Sunday Communion Daylight Saving Time ends 8am - Car Vacuuming Fundraiser 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 9:45am - Opie's Playhouse @ 11am - Worship & Live Stream @ 1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship @	2 9:30am - Older Adult Planning 12:30pm - Visitation - June Windle 1pm - June Windle Memorial 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial	3 Election Day 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 5pm - Tech Team Meeting @ 6pm - Ministry Team Night @	4 9:30am - Staff Meeting @ Bageant 4:30pm - Logos 6:30pm - Worship on Wednesday 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary 8pm - Cantata Rehearsal @	5 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry @	6 7:30pm - Will Schwantes Senior	7
8 Stewardship Dedication & Fudge 8:30am - Worship & Baptism @ 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 10:45am - Congregational Meeting 11am - Worship, Baptism, New 12:15pm - Senior Outreach 1:30pm - Scouting "God + Me" @	9 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial 6pm - MOO & GLOW @ Fellowship	10 9:30am - Tuesday Morning Mission 11:30am - Retired Teachers @ 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 5pm - Logos Leadership Team @ 7pm - Vision Team @ Bageant	11 Veterans Day 12pm - Happy Days @ Fellowship 4:30pm - Logos 6:15pm - Confirmation Class @ 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary 8pm - Cantata Rehearsal @	12 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial	13	14
15 Blood Pressure Checks NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 11am - Worship & Live Stream @ 12:15pm - Thanksgiving Feast @	16 12pm - Life Goes On @ Fellowship 4:30pm - Discipleship Team @ 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial 6pm - Safety Team Meeting @	17 Shenandoah Presbytery Meeting @ 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 6:30pm - Session Meeting @	18 9:30am - Staff Meeting 4:30pm - Logos (Teacher Night) 6:15pm - Confirmation Class @ 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary 8pm - Cantata Rehearsal @	19 9am - WANC Tea @ Youth Spot 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 10:30am - WANC Meeting @ 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry	20 Fellowship Hall Set-Survivor Day @ Fellowship Hall High School Youth Retreat-Keep Awake (Church Van In Use) @	21 10am - Survivor Day @ Fellowship
22 High School Youth Retreat-Keep 4 Cents a Meal Offering 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - Faith Formation @ 11am - Worship & Live Stream @ 12:30pm - Church Retreat Planning 6pm - Thanksgiving Worship @ 7pm - Thanksgiving Reception @	23 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial 7pm - Astronomy Club @ Assembly	24 3pm - TVOR Gathering 5:30pm - Highland Food Pantry @	25	26 Church Office Closed Thanksgiving Day	27 Black Friday	28
29 First Sunday of Advent 8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary 9:45am - GIFT Event @ Fellowship 11am - Worship & Live Stream @	30 5:30pm - Windsong @ Memorial	1 1pm - Disciple Faith Formation 5pm - Tech Team Meeting @ 6pm - Ministry Team Night @	2 Older Adult Trip (Church Bus In 9:30am - Staff Meeting @ Bageant 4:30pm - Logos 6:30pm - Worship on Wednesday 7:15pm - Choir @ Sanctuary 7:45pm - Cantata Rehearsal @	3 10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial 6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry @	4 6pm - Youth Midnight Gladness @	5

DECKING THE HALLS IN DECEMBER – CIRCLE THE DATES!!!

Tuesday, December 1
December Ministry Team Night

Wednesday, December 2 (6:30 PM)
WOW Advent Service

Friday, December 4
Youth "Midnight Gladness"

Sunday, December 6 - 2nd Sunday in Advent
Communion (8:30 & 11:00 AM)

Sunday, December 6
Christmas Cookie Fellowship Reception

Monday, December 7
MOO Christmas Dinner

Tuesday, December 8
GLOW Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 9
Happy Days Christmas Luncheon

Wednesday, December 16
Neighborhood Christmas Caroling with Logos

Sunday, December 20
Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 20
Christmas Breakfast

Tuesday, December 22
Set-up for WATTS (9:00 AM)

Wednesday, December 23
Church Staff Christmas Breakfast (9:30 AM)

Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services
Family (5:00 PM) & Traditional (7:00 PM)

Saturday, December 26 – Saturday, January 2
Opequon Hosts WATTS

Sunday, December 27
Annual Service of Lessons & Carols (10:00 AM)



THE ALL-CHURCH RETREAT IS FOUR MONTHS AWAY!

What is a CHURCH RETREAT?
The church retreat is an event beyond worship, bible studies, meetings, small groups and other events that will bring us all together as a church community.

WHY are we planning a CHURCH RETREAT?
The purpose is to establish meaningful relationships within the congregation and to support each other in deepening our faith. AND we have not had an event like this in 15 years!

WHO IS THE CHURCH RETREAT FOR?
The church retreat is for YOU, all of YOU, everyone at Opequon!

WHERE WILL THE CHURCH RETREAT TAKE PLACE?
The church retreat will take place HERE AT OPC- within the building and outside the building in our wonderful church setting.

WHEN IS THE CHURCH RETREAT?
The church retreat is in 4 months- March 12-14, 2027. The retreat will begin with dinner on Friday evening, March 12, and end on Sunday morning, March 14.

HOW WILL THE RETREAT BE PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT?
There is a retreat planning team of 13 people who meet regularly to consider every aspect of planning for this marvelous experience. 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.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO TELL US NOW ABOUT THIS EVENT?
There is going to be SO MUCH to share with you as time moves on. The theme for the retreat is "A TIME FOR EVERYTHING"(Ecclesiastes 3:1-11) which seems so fitting at OPC. There will be registration time for the retreat. There will be activities for all ages. There will be games, music, loads of laughter, and nourishing food.

In looking back at the evaluation comments from the last retreat, a few quotes were:

"I felt so excited at the end,
I need to go and TELL others."

"I was a little apprehensive about going,
but I would go back in a heartbeat."

"I felt close in spirit with church people."

** **The LAST DAY to send newsletter submissions to the church office is the 15th of each month.** **

Opequon Presbyterian Church
217 Opequon Church Lane
Winchester, VA 22602

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

130th ANNUAL KERNSTOWN COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

Sunday, November 22 @ 6:00 PM
Opequon Presbyterian Church

Sermon: *"One Table, One Lord, One Thanksgiving"*



Kernstown UMC & Opequon Presbyterian Church will worship together in Opequon's Memorial Sanctuary with: Pastor Victor Gomez Preaching; Communion; Special Music; & Evening Offering for WATTS



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 Adult Ministries	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