

The Opequon Spirit

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



April 2025

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

www.opequonchurch.org

540-662-1843

office@opequonchurch.org

WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

Sunday, April 6

Fifth Sunday in Lent

† Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Luke 19:1-10

Sermon: "Right Relationship"

- **Confirmation Sunday**
- Communion
- CCAP

Sunday, April 13

Palm/Passion Sunday

† Isaiah 50:4-9; Luke 19:29-40

Sermon: "Between Shouting and Silence"

- New Members Received
- Blood Pressure Checks

1:30 PM - Spring Arbor Worship

Sunday, April 20

The Day of Resurrection, Easter Sunday

† Luke 24:1-12

Sermon: "Hope Amidst the Mourning"

- Communion; Special Music
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- **Family Easter Event** (9:45 AM)

Sunday, April 27

† John 20:19-31; Revelation 1:4-8

Sermon: "Here's My Hand"

- 4 Cents A Meal

SPECIAL LENT & HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Mid-Week Lenten Worship Service

April 2, 9, & 16 - 8:30 AM (Memorial Sanctuary)

- Brief Service of Prayer & Reflection

Maundy Thursday Communion Service

April 17 - 7:00 PM (Memorial Sanctuary)

† Luke 22:1-27

Meditation: "Power & Humility"

Good Friday Reflections

April 18 - Noon (Sanctuary)

- Reflection & Meditation, with Music & Readings
- Come at Any Time

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

April 18 - 7:00 PM (Sanctuary)

† Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Luke 23:1-49

Meditation: "Crucify! Crucify Him!"

- Recessional with the Cross

Easter Sunrise Service

April 20 - 6:00 AM (Pitcock Memorial Picnic Shelter)

† John 20:1-18

- Disciples at the Tomb
- Sharing Worship with Our Neighbors from Kernstown United Methodist Church
- Special Music; Flowering Cross
- **Easter Breakfast** (6:45 AM)

FLOWERS FOR EASTER CROSSES

We will have two "flowering crosses" outside for Easter: the traditional one at the Pitcock Picnic Shelter for the Sunrise Service and the newer one, in the island outside the porch entrance to the Gathering Area. We added this newer one during the pandemic as a welcoming sign of new life. So, we invite you to bring fresh flowers to decorate one or both of the crosses by bringing flowers to the 6:00 AM Sunrise Service and/or to the 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM services.





**NOTES FROM
PASTOR DAVID:**

"Journeying Toward New Life"

Dear Friends in Christ,

Despite the wind, I enjoy the month of March. The days lengthen and the time changes. Carole and I celebrate our wedding anniversary. The promise of spring begins to take shape as crocuses burst through the hard ground, daffodils bloom, and the stark wintry-looking landscape starts to grow green.

Yesterday (yesterday as I write this), our anniversary, Carole was cleaning inside while I enjoyed a sunny Saturday afternoon by getting outside. I restacked our wood pile, closer to the house, readying it for next winter. And I raked some leaves out of the garden beds and then mulched them. It was a great day!

While the groundhog predicted six more weeks of winter on February 2, it seems like spring has come earlier than that. Of course, with March, a month of transition, things can change in a hurry, and the winds will surely blow. But we are now moving into April and March has prepared us, not only for the new life of spring, but also for resurrection. The in-between messy middle that we have been living in and talking about this Lent will soon usher us toward Holy Week and Easter. Our discipleship—to see our Lord more clearly, to love our Lord more dearly, to follow our Lord more nearly—will especially come into sharp focus as we remember and walk with Christ through the last week of our Savior's life. In-between the extremes of shouting and silence, power and humility, acceptance and resistance, and grief and hope, we know our Lord will show up to speak with us just as Jesus showed up in all his engaging encounters on his earthly journey.

So keep on keepin' on this Lent, this season, seizing opportunities to grow closer to our Lord and to our neighbors, spending time in prayer, reflection, worship, and serving, giving up and taking up. Then, when we come to the Day of Resurrection, Easter Sunday on April 20, we will be ready to receive and celebrate the hope, joy, and incredible new life that will emerge with the gift of an empty tomb following a season of preparation.

Together in Christ's Service,

David

PASTOR JULIA'S MUSINGS

Friends in Christ,

I'm going to throw out a very 'pastoral' word here, but it's one that has been in my mind as we walk through this season of Lent. "Liminal." Liminal space is the "in-between," it's the space right when you are standing in a doorway, when you're not quite inside nor not quite outside, but in this place of in-between.

As many of y'all know, at the beginning of this season, I sat with my grammy in that liminal space as we held her hand in hospice. I know many of you all are going through similar situations with your own loved ones, and trust me, I know how exhausting that in-between is. It's held breaths, it's "What is happening?" moments, it's staying up late, and laughing and crying at the same time.

There are other types of liminal spaces of course: waiting for a baby to be born, the times between life stages, sunrise, sunset, and so many more. There are so many "in-betweens" in our lives.

What do those in-between moments feel like to you? Are they tiring? Exciting? Anxiety-inducing? Joyful? Or maybe the emotions are so complicated that you can't possibly name it in words.

Lent is also a liminal space in many ways. It's this moment of waiting for the end and the new beginning at the same time. It's this walking on a journey in a set aside time as we move with God.

To me, as hard or weird or uncomfortable or exciting liminal spaces can be, they are also incredibly sacred. It's in these moments where we get to move closer to God in powerful and unexpected ways.

So this is my call for you during this season of Lent: be open to God in this in-between. Seek God's presence and have a holy and beautiful Lent.

Blessings,

Julia

PASTOR TRACIE'S JUST THINKIN'

When I was a child, Easter was especially exciting. At my grandparents' greenhouse the mini carnations were in full bloom and needed daily tending. The lilies were in bud and needed to have their stamens removed as these buds opened. I used to do this with my tiny hands and was paid five cents for every stamen I collected. On a good day, I could make twenty-five cents! What I especially remember well, however, is the long

rows of King Alfred daffodils that ran along the side of the greenhouse. This strip of yellow made the difference between profit and disaster for the season.

When my grandfather planted the bulbs, he made sure there were only perfect King Arthurs. Any bulbs that looked odd were discarded. He needed to replant part of the bed each fall because bulb plants do not bloom well after a few years and we needed those flowers for arrangements. The culls were tossed into the compost bin behind the garage.

As a very young child, I was sure that I would one day become a grower like Grandpa. I paid close attention to his choices and discards, his ideas and their changes, his careful tending to only the very best. Because I was young and I wanted to learn how to grow crops, I quietly took the discarded bulbs and plants to see what I could do. I planted the daffodils around my playhouse, a small log cabin in our backyard, and in the "woods," a small area full of trees and bushes that separated our chicken house from the neighbor's garden.

Of course, the discards and any spent bulbs were all discarded in the same compost bin. It took a few years for me to learn which would bloom again and which would not. This was not a serious concern; no one was paying attention to my efforts anyway. Still, I persevered, encouraged by my family and dreaming of my own future crops.

Then came the year when, for reasons still unknown to me, some of the perfect King Arthurs failed to bloom. While these flowers cost the greenhouse very little, losing the profit from not adding them to Easter arrangements was a blow. Small businesses, especially greenhouses, often disappear completely because of failures like this. The family tried to work out the loss, but things were tense.

Oddly enough, my tightly packed playhouse garden was in full bloom. While there were not enough blossoms to cover all the loss, my garden truly helped. What was especially exciting was that some of my mistakes, the cull bulbs, had blindly rested and now had bloomed again. Some of the daffodils were small and some were less than perfect, but they all fit into one arrangement or another. I cannot say that they saved the holiday, but my childish efforts did help.

It feels important to remember those daffodils when things are not quite right in my world. I sometimes wonder if God must look in odd places to find what is needed... whether that might come from culls, discards, perfection, or the compost bins.

Happy Easter!

—Tracie

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION ON FEBRUARY 23, 2025

- ✦ Pastor David Witt shared a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the gift of the lives and love of Opequon members and friends who died in 2024: John Martin Cornwell, May Louise Walker Galvach, Fred C. Johnston, Ramona Carlene Lemasters, Keith McMurdo, Parker Ernest Plumb, Dr. George Thomas "Tom" Rader, Walter Elsworth Rinehart, Wanda Good Royston, Wilton Graham Taylor, Ann Shiffer Tufts, and Edgar H. Tufts.
- ✦ The Annual Statistical Report reflects an active membership, as of January 1, 2024, of 535. Over the year, there were 19 gains and 24 losses, resulting in an active membership of 530 as of December 31, 2024.
- ✦ Those officers who have completed their recent terms were thanked and honored: Elders Steve Bock, Fran Jeffries, Mike Wygant, and Ron Smith, who is now serving a new term; Deacons Betty Chicklo, June Malone, Winter Brooks, and Mike Nutry, with Winter and Mike now serving an additional term; and Trustee Travis Morgan, who is now serving a second term.
- ✦ We ended 2024 with a financial surplus of \$35,478.
- ✦ Treasurer/Elder Ron Smith presented the 2024 church budget, totaling \$884,218.
- ✦ Beth Barr, Laverne Cooper, Bill Heavner, and Paula Marquis were elected as Congregational Representatives to the 2025 Church Nominating Committee.
- ✦ Mitch Orndorff, Chair of the Capital Campaign Team, gave a report on the ongoing Capital Campaign and updated plans for the Architectural Review Team (ART).
- ✦ A celebration of Opequon's Ministry in 2024 video, prepared by Debbie Bender with photos from Debbie, Alyce Callahan, and Rebekah Witt, was shown.
- ✦ Travis Morgan, Chair of the Trustees and President of Opequon Presbyterian Church Inc., reviewed the investments and presented the slate of corporate officers who were then re-elected: Travis Morgan, President; Laverne Cooper, Vice President; Bill Bayliss, Secretary; and Ron Smith, Treasurer.
- ✦ The congregation encircled the Sanctuary and sang the Doxology.

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

SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARCH 2025

- ✂ Session received and approved nine Newcomers to become members of Opequon Presbyterian Church: Kim McDonald, Cathy Plumb, H. Murray Shantz, Izzy and Pauline Cruz, Bruce and Kathi Lehnhard, and Thom and Kay Picciuto. Welcome!
- ✂ The Capital Campaign is completing the Leadership Gifts phase and is preparing for the April 4, 2025, celebration at West Oaks Farm Market. Small group meetings will begin in April. Doug Joyner will be leading a Naming Opportunities sub-committee for the Capital Campaign.
- ✂ Session approved Carole Witt to work 30 hours per week, beginning April 1, to allow for continuity of Opequon's LOGOS Ministry.
- ✂ Worship Team recommended, and Session approved, 10:00 AM Worship only for June, July, and August 2025.
- ✂ The Christian Education and VBS Teams are getting ready for Vacation Bible School, set for June 16-19, 2025.
- ✂ Congregational Care is coordinating transportation to medical appointments through locally available services or members of the Congregational Care Team. Those in need are urged to plan ahead whenever possible.
- ✂ Rick Ours of the Vision Team has created 40 video stories from Opequon Church members, which will be consolidated into one video.
- ✂ The Mission Team is planning a WATTS fundraiser picnic and music event for September 20, 2025, from 5:00-7:00 PM. If the weather permits, this will be at the Pitcock Shelter; if not, the Sanctuary. This event will feature bluegrass music.
- ✂ The Evangelism Team reminds us to look for and share Holy Week and Easter Service invitations in the Winchester Star.
- ✂ The Building & Grounds Team has been very busy constructing the audio/visual livestreaming booth in the Sanctuary. Mulch Madness is scheduled for April 5 at 9:00 AM.
- ✂ Ken Smiy presented the February Financial Reports. February income exceeded expenses. Session approved the reports. The rent on the Manse property will increase by 4.5% in June.
- ✂ Technology Team installed a new Sanctuary livestream camera. The new audio/visual booth is helping the team see what they are doing, and they appreciate the congregation's patience

with the construction process. This team is figuring out the new phone system and helping the staff adjust to its features.

- ✂ Session approved time off for Pastor Julia Burkley on Tuesday, April 1, 2025.
- ✂ The 2024 Opequon Presbyterian Church minutes were audited and approved by Presbytery on March 15, 2025.
- ✂ Session approved a recommendation from the Safety Team that if emergency medical services are called to the building, the ill individual will be assessed by the EMS personnel.
- ✂ The Discipleship Team welcomed 25 Newcomers to the recent Newcomers' Social.
- ✂ Pastor David Witt recommended, and Session approved, that in the future, congregational representatives to the Nominating Committee be nominated at the Annual Meeting by the previous year's Nominating Committee. Nominations can always be made from the floor.
- ✂ Session approved moving the April Session meeting to April 22 from April 15 (during Holy Week). The June 17 meeting can stay on June 17, but will move to 7:30 PM due to Vacation Bible School ending at 7:30 PM that day.

*Susan Ritter, Acting Clerk of Session for
Ann C.M. Smith, Clerk of Session, Opequon Presbyterian Church*

EXTENDING OUR EMPATHY & CHRISTIAN LOVE TO...



- ☞ Julia Burkley and family upon the death of her grandmother, Martha Burkley, on February 24.
- ☞ Jack and Tracy Drumheller upon the death of Jack's sister, Jan Geiser, on March 7.
- ☞ Heather and Mark Leonard and family upon the death of Heather's father, Bob Campbell, on March 16.
- ☞ Betty Chicklo and family upon the death of her husband and OPC member, Matthew Buddy Chicko, on March 20.
- ☞ Larry and Judy McKay and family upon the death of Larry's mother and OPC member, Mary McKay, on March 22.
- ☞ Angela and Tom Eberle and family upon the death of Angela's mother, Dawn Baer, on March 23.

*"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord.
"Those who believe in me shall live,
even though they die, and whoever lives
and believes in me shall never die."*

—John 11:25-26

CELEBRATING A NEW ARRIVAL

We rejoice in celebration of the precious gift of new life and pray God's blessing upon our growing families!



- ✧ We celebrate the birth of Camille Hartley Orndorff, daughter of Casey and Kieran Orndorff, on February 6.
- ✧ We celebrate the birth of Lorenzo Alexander Agbayani, son of Rebecca and Max Agbayani, on March 8!
- ✧ We celebrate the birth of Laura Ellen Ritter, daughter of George and Lakelyn Ritter, granddaughter of Susan and Philip Ritter, and great granddaughter of Martha Fulton, on March 10.
- ✧ We celebrate the birth of Josie Ryan Pearce, daughter of Lance and Kristen Pearce and great granddaughter of Lance and Julie Pearce, on March 10.

MUSIC AT NOON: April Notes

Since April's Music at Noon would fall during Holy Week, we are skipping the usual Wednesday gathering. Instead, you are invited to join us at noon on April 18 for "Good Friday Reflections," a time of lessons, reflections, and musical meditation.



MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!

Do you like to sing? All are welcome to join the Sanctuary Choir to sing on Easter Sunday during the 8:30 AM and/or 11:00 AM worship. This month, Choir rehearsals will be on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. Contact Susan Homan (540-664-8781 or srh1305@verizon.net) with any questions.



Dear OPiE,

What is with this special dinner on April 4th? Why at West Oaks and why did I need to RSVP? —Curious

Dear Curious,

There are several good reasons for this April 4th gathering. First and foremost, the Opequon Presbyterian Church is based on relationships. We begin with our relationship with God in Jesus Christ, but also quite important is our relationship with the congregation and church family. Our relationship with the local and worldwide communities comes next.

This entire project is called for by our willingness to work to increase relationships with people who may not even have visited OPC as yet. Think about the people who came to us during COVID. Several became members of our church without ever having worshiped in our Sanctuary. I think they joined because they were able to form relationships through livestreaming and our outreach. It would be sad to see our ability to encourage these and other relationships weaken because of a lack of infrastructure.

This dinner will strengthen interpersonal relationships through relaxing together, sharing information, and good music. The energy will overflow even to those who cannot attend.

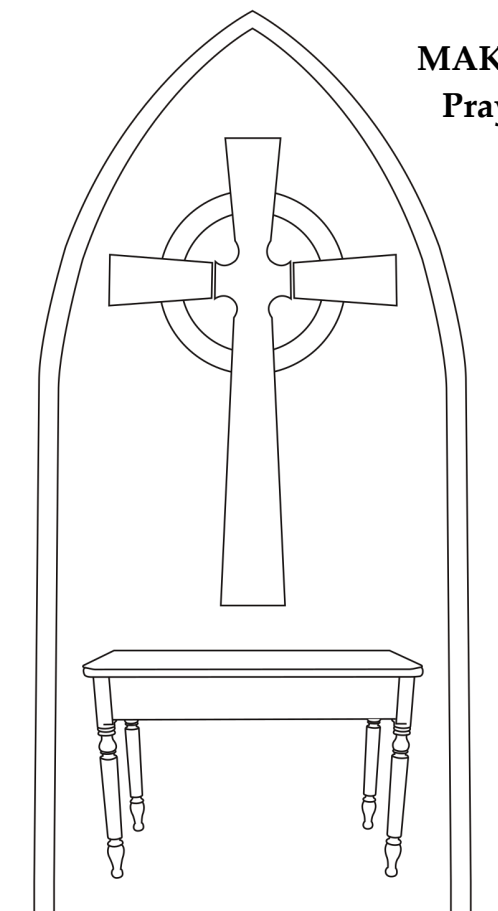
Speaking of attending—thank you to all who RSVP'd with either a "yes" or "no." Sadly, Winchester does not have a lot of large venues for meals like this one. Even with the size of the West Oaks banquet room, which holds a lot of people, we still ended up having a need for a waiting list. A lot of that pressure will be relieved for us, and for the community, after we build our new Fellowship Hall.

Of course, you could just do what I always do and move into the next field when your rooms get too crowded. I had to move my nest several times because of squirrels and other critters who were growing too close. Fortunately, the church building has several nooks that you all have not discovered yet, so I have plenty of room where I'm at now. I guess it is easier being a mouse — especially a church mouse!

MAKING A PLACE AT THE TABLE:

Prayers for Our Capital Campaign

(Written by: Maureen Wellman)



A Place at the Table

Creator God,

Thank you for placing me at Opequon Presbyterian Church. Who knew that moving to Winchester would change our lives in such wonderful ways. We have been blessed with meeting new friends, who are kindred spirits.

Thank you for showing me the Backpack Committee, which helps so many children who would not otherwise have food for the weekends. This brings me such pleasure to know that I am making a difference in a child's life.

Thank you for showing me the Congregational Community Action Program (CCAP). I have gained new friendships while working at the CCAP House and helping those families who are in need of clothing and diapers for their little ones. There is a great need, Lord, for families with children.

Please Lord, open the hearts of those who have much to give of their time, talent, and resources to make this dream of additional space come true.

I pray this, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

OPC MULCH MADNESS

Roll up your sleeves for the "Mulch Madness" Work Day on Saturday, April 5, at 9:00 AM! Enjoy some fresh air while helping beautify the grounds and having fun together. For details, reach out to Jack Marquis (lorsoe53@gmail.com).

DRIVERS NEEDED

Congregational Care and the Deacons are reaching out to ask for volunteers who would be willing to drive members to medical appointments on an as-needed basis, with at least several days notice. If you are willing to add your name to the contact list Congregational Care is compiling, please reach out to Robin Cooke (980-328-5131 or robincooke67@gmail.com).

MINISTRY TEAM NIGHT

Tuesday, April 1

6:00 PM Meal: Roast Turkey, Baked Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Vegetable Blend, Rolls, & Assorted Desserts

6:45 PM Devotions & Team Meetings

NOMINATE AN OLDER ADULT FOR OPC'S 2025 OLDER ADULT OF THE YEAR

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

It is time to share nominations for this year's Older Adult of the Year. Who would you like to nominate? Forms are now available in the Gathering Area. Share who you nominate and WHY.

Nominations are due by May 11 and they may come from anyone in the congregation. Forms may be returned to Carole Witt or dropped in the box provided on the table. The Session will review the nominations and make the selection. The 2025 Older Adult of the Year will be announced at the Older Adult Luncheon on May 28.

LENT COLORING POSTER PROJECT

During Lent last year, our congregational challenge was to complete the Lent Jigsaw Puzzle by Easter. This year, our challenge is to completely color the LENT POSTER that focuses on LISTENING. The poster table is set-up in the Gathering Area with markers available. Everyone is invited to work on it and add some color by filling in any un-colored spaces. Let's make this poster burst with color. We will watch the picture come alive through the weeks of Lent. Surely, we can complete it by Easter Sunday. Please remember to leave all the markers on the table for others to use as well.

RACHEL BAYLISS SCHOLARSHIP TAKING APPLICATIONS



The Claytor and Bayliss families established the Rachel Bayliss Scholarship Fund more than twenty-five years ago to support our Opequon youth in their college or vocational endeavors. This fund has been supplemented by additional contributions and through regular donations by Happy Days in memory of older adults after their death. Thousands of dollars have been awarded through the years to well-deserving young people. Scholarship applications are available to our graduating high school seniors. To request an application, please contact the church office (office@opequonchurch.org or 540-662-1843).

***All applications must be returned to the church office by WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30.**

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2025

Registration Starts April 20!

Winter has led to Spring, which means Summer is coming, and that means Vacation Bible School time! We are planning a super time for those warm evenings of summer and VBS fun.

Our fun-filled week of Vacation Bible School is scheduled to happen **June 16—19** (Monday—Thursday), 5:00 PM—7:30 PM. This year's exciting theme is **"COMPASSION CAMP: CHANGING THE WORLD WITH LOVING KINDNESS!"** Vacation Bible School is for 4-year-olds through 8th grade, with an adult class as well. Registration will be available beginning April 20 and running through June 9. Look for the display to appear in the Gathering Area soon, as well as information available online.

FAMILY EASTER EVENT

Sunday, April 20
9:45 AM



Easter Sunday brings the annual Family Easter Event, which will be held on April 20, at 9:45 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

Children and families are invited to come and enjoy a breakfast of Hardboiled Eggs, a variety of Breads, Fruit Cups, and Cereals, followed by the telling of The Easter Story through a progressive art project.

And, of course, there will be the **COLORFUL EGG HUNT** for children of all ages to collect eggs. Children are asked to bring a basket or bag to collect their eggs. A goodie bag will be given to each child at the end of this fun event.

LET'S SUPPORT OUR KIDS & YOUTH

Did you know that our young people are involved in all sorts of activities outside of the church building? We have amazing artists, athletes, writers, musicians, and more! Rebekah Witt is collecting activity schedules so that we can show up and support our families in all that they do. Let Rebekah know if you would like to nurture relationships with our families outside of the church walls by attending their events! If your child or youth has a schedule that you'd like to share, please reach out to Rebekah (540-686-0752 or rwitt@opequonchurch.org).

OPIE'S PLAYHOUSE

Opie's Playhouse is a time of fun and fellowship planned especially for our families with young children. We fill the room with toys for children elementary age and under, and provide snacks, juice, and coffee. You are also welcome to drop-off your children at during this hour of supervised playtime while you attend Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation Class.

Since Confirmation will be on the first Sunday this month, the Opie's Playhouse gathering has shifted to April 13, 9:45 AM—10:45 AM, in the Memorial Sanctuary. We hope you will come play with us!





THE LATEST IN LOGOS

It is so hard to believe that we have now completed our 27th LOGOS year at Opequon. Did you know that LOGOS at Opequon began in 1998 after a group of 7 women attended a 3-day training event in Akron, Ohio? In the span of the years since then, there have been 13 additional times that over 60 OPC members have attended LOGOS training events. We are always working to maintain and strengthen our LOGOS ministry. We are so very thankful for everyone that has played a part in our 27-year history.

We also express our sincere thanks to Joanne Berson, who has served as our LOGOS Director for the past 2 years. She has been a marvelous leader of this vibrant ministry. Unfortunately, Joanne has had to step out of that role. Carole Witt will step back into serving as LOGOS Director.

We concluded our LOGOS year with LOGOS Sunday, followed by dinner and movie night with our LOGOS families joining us. We celebrated our third graders with new Bible presentations, we honored those young people who will be moving up to new age groups next year, and we enjoyed our end-of-the-year slide show. We are ever so thankful for the LOGOS staff and LOGOS families. Wednesdays won't feel complete without you all. We are so privileged for the time we have with one another. The LOGOS Leadership Team will continue working as LOGOS ends and we begin to look ahead to a new LOGOS year.

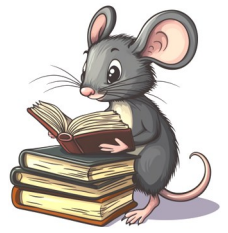
For more info about LOGOS, contact Carole Witt (540-662-1843 or dce@opequonchurch.org).

CONFIRMATION INFORMATION

Our Confirmation Class students recently visited Beth El Synagogue for worship and a tour. As their Confirmation time draws to a close, they will be meeting with the Session and Mentors to share their final projects. Confirmation Day is April 6 and our students will be Confirmed at 11:00 AM worship. A reception in their honor will be held following the worship service. Please continue to pray for our Confirmation students: Adelyn Astorino, Malayna Bates, Virginia Barr, Joshua Batcha, MacKenna Bell, Caleb Garcia, Jaxson Hughes, Paige Littman, Jackson Russell, and Camden Saunders.

CHURCH LIBRARY CART

There will be a special selection of library books on display in the Gathering Area between Palm Sunday and Easter. Take a look and see if there is something you would like to borrow and enjoy the wonderful messages the authors bring your way!



YOUTH: GRADES 6-12

April 6: Confirmation Sunday!

April 15 (10:00 AM—12:30 PM): Bowling

YOUNG ADULTS

April 22 (6:30 PM): Bowling

APRIL GATHERING WITH THE MEN OF OPEQUON

The Men of Opequon's (MOO) April gathering on Monday, April 14, will begin at 6:00 PM with dinner at Chick-fil-A. We will then travel to the church for our meeting at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall, where our own Jack Marquis will share about his work with the Federal Bureau of Prisons and we will also share Holy Week devotions. We hope you will join us. All men are invited.

Also, All Men: Please join the prep/cooking/ serving team for Ministry Team Night on Tuesday, April 1, NO FOOLIN'. Be in the Fellowship Hall at 4:30 PM!

We'll also help with the Easter Sunrise Breakfast—please plan on being a part of the set-up/serving crew at 5:45 AM on Easter morning!

GLOW: God-loving Opequon Women

GLOW is Opequon's multi-aged women's group that meets monthly to build friendships and enjoy heart-warming activities together. GLOW resumed gathering last month for a fun SPRING FLING after the winter break.

GLOW will meet this month on Tuesday, April 8, at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Our theme will be "BREAKFAST AT NIGHT" WITH SOME LIGHT CHAIR YOGA. All OPC women are invited. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share with others. Drinks will be provided. Come enjoy some good food along with a host of great fun! Make plans to grace us with your presence.

OLDER ADULT HAPPENINGS

It is SPRINGTIME! We can see the beautiful changes all around us. We are grateful to God for the change of seasons. Throughout each season, there are exciting things going on at Opequon. On Monday, April 7, there will be an Adult Trip to the Botanical Gardens in DC, with lunch afterwards at Metro 29 Diner. The cost is \$12 plus lunch. This trip is currently full. If you have any questions, contact Carole Witt (dce@opequonchurch.org).



Our regular monthly meeting of the Older Adult Team would normally be on April 7; however, the team will not be meeting this month due to the Botanical Garden Trip on that date.

The monthly older adult fellowship time known as 'Happy Days' will be held on Wednesday, April 9, at NOON in the Fellowship Hall. We will have a covered dish lunch with Rotisserie Chicken and drinks provided. You are invited to bring a covered dish for the luncheon. Following lunch, the guest speaker will be our own Mike Nutry, who is OPC's BEE KEEPER! It is sure to be a fascinating presentation. All older adults are welcome. Come enjoy the friendships and the delicious food.

LIFE GOES ON

Life Goes On will gather a week later than usual this month and will meet in Fellowship Hall on April 28 at noon. The main dish provided this month will be a surprise. We ask that you bring a side to pass or chip in a couple of dollars toward the main dish. If you need a ride, contact the church office or Pastor Tracie Martin.

FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB

Book Club will meet on April 24, at 6:00 PM in the Bageant Room. Wendy Wygant will lead the discussion on *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi.



JAVA WITH JULIA

Swing by Hopscotch Café for Java with Julia on Friday, April 25, any time between 11:00 AM—1:00 PM!

GENEROSITY MOMENT

(From Pastor Tracie Martin & the Generosity Team)

I have been asked by several people how they should balance their giving between stewardship for the general church fund and the capital campaign fund. This is a good question and one that can have several responses—most quite valid. Before you decide just how and when you will give to anything, however, you absolutely must do one thing. Talk with "The Boss."

No, I am not talking about your spouse or your accountant, although they both can be important. I am talking about God. It is my experience that talking any decision over with God will help me center, look at facts, and make a sound decision. I call God "The Boss." God gets me; God gets Opequon Church; God gets the overall picture.

Should you cut your stewardship giving to support the capital fund? My feeling is, no. This congregation's overall response to its members and its outreach depends on annual stewardship giving. Any decision that hinders our response to the situations God puts before us will hurt the church.

Should you cut giving to non-church entities? Will giving in both cases require too much sacrifice? Is there such a thing as a good balance? Where is it to be found? These are questions to take up with God, because God knows, better than we ever will, where resources are most needed. While your prayed questions will not be answered with a gold lettered note from "The Boss" giving all sides of the question and a definitive "yes" or "no," God does let us know what is best in many ways.

Often the most difficult aspect of listening for God's response is just that... listening. In my case, my own opinions and prejudices keep echoing loudly in my mind, keeping out other voices. When I finally stop getting in my own way, however, God's voice feels clear. God's choice for my actions just shines a bit brighter than alternatives. And YES! God is very bossy.

The support we give to God's world through OPC matters. Our outreach tells the local community that God is present here and now. When we begin to build, the community will follow what God is doing through us. Until we build, our outreach tells the story. While we build, both will draw interest. When we open the new areas, the stories will grow and flourish. Each development will profit us as Christians and as a church as well as God's world. Each stage is deeply needed. Talk with "The Boss" to discover your part.

"OPC PRAYS"

If you would like to participate in our emailed prayer chain, "OPC Prays", as prayer concerns of our congregation are mentioned during the week, please email Winter Brooks (winterbrooks@comcast.net) to be added to the group.



APRIL MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Sherando Food Pantry: April 3 & 17 (6:30 PM)
- ▶ Senior Outreach: April 13 (12:15 PM)
- ▶ Highland Food Pantry: April 22 (5:30 PM)



MONTHLY MISSION HIGHLIGHT

This month's Mission Highlight comes from Bill Burslem and focuses on our **Ethiopian Partnership**. Please join us in supporting this important mission:

Our partners in Ethiopia have been very busy. The Kolokorma Congregation (OPC's partner church) continues to grow, necessitating additional seating capacity and is building a new sanctuary, as well as spinning-off new churches. Illubabor Bethel Synod (IBS) is also growing, spinning-off two new synods as well as adding new congregations and preaching points. IBS and Terfa Jarso Seminary (a part of IBS) are building a desperately needed new dormitory for the seminary.

Terfa Jarso (TJ) Seminary has seventeen women in programs which train eligible women to be ordained as pastors. The calling church supports the transportation to TJ Seminary and employs the women during the summers. IBS pays half of the tuition, room, and board, with donors from Shenandoah Presbytery supplying the other half. Thus, all three organizations have a stake in their education.

OPC is a large contributor to scholarships for these women and we anticipate four additional new students will be added in the coming school year. Additional scholarship donors will be needed and we invite you to contribute.

The Shenandoah Presbytery Partnership Committee will meet on April 10 at Massanutten PC. All who are interested are invited and carpooling can be arranged.

For more information, please contact Bill Burslem (wburslem331@gmail.com).

SENIOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Senior Outreach Ministry will meet Sunday, April 13, at 12:15 PM, by the church office door to load up the totes which will be brought to the Shenandoah Senior Apartments on Wilson Blvd, in Winchester. Donations of paper towels or bath tissue would be helpful.

MONTHLY CCAP COLLECTION

Our Mission Ministry is collecting cans of peanut butter for CCAP throughout the month of April. Donations should be placed in the CCAP collection box in the Dell Room.

FRIENDS OF THE GORE HOME IN ETHIOPIA

We are seeking scholarship donors for the students at The Gore Home. The Gore Home is an outreach of our partner synod in Ethiopia. It supplies dormitory style housing, complete with house mothers, three meals a day, supervised study hall time, medical care, and tutors. It primarily serves orphans, whose remaining family cannot support them. The students attend public school in the town of Gore, Ethiopia.

The cost of a full scholarship is \$1,550 per year; however, we are asking for \$1,450 for the coming school year. Partial scholarships will be combined as appropriate. We want to collect the funds by early summer so that the Home may plan appropriately for the coming school year.

The Gore Home can easily house 60 students and there are currently only about 40 there. OPC is the largest source of funds for the Home in the Shenandoah Presbytery, with sponsoring over 40% of the current students.

Please thoughtfully and prayerfully consider helping to sponsor a student at the Gore Home. Please direct any questions about this program to Bill Burslem (wburslem331@gmail.com).

OPC NURSE NOTES:

Pack & Transport Food Safely (Part 1)

To protect yourself, your family, and friends from foodborne illness during warm-weather months, safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical. Read on for simple food safety guidelines for transporting your food to the picnic site, and preparing and serving it safely once you've arrived.

Keep your food safe: from the refrigerator/freezer — all the way to the picnic table.

- ◆ Keep cold food cold. Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at 40 °F or below to prevent bacterial growth. Meat, poultry, and seafood may be packed while still frozen so that they stay colder longer.
- ◆ Organize cooler contents. Consider packing beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another. That way, as picnickers open and reopen the beverage cooler to replenish their drinks, the perishable foods won't be exposed to warm outdoor air temperatures.
- ◆ Keep coolers closed: Once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cooler is opened as much as you can. This helps to keep the contents cold longer.
- ◆ Don't cross-contaminate. Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry, and seafood securely wrapped. This keeps their juices from contaminating prepared/cooked foods or foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Clean your produce. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water before packing them in the cooler — including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth towel or paper towel. Packaged fruits and vegetables that are labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" need not be washed.

Quick Tips for Picnic Site Preparation

Food safety begins with proper hand cleaning — including in outdoor settings. Before you begin setting out your picnic feast, make sure hands and surfaces are clean.

- ◆ **Outdoor Hand Cleaning:** If you don't have access to running water, use a water jug, some soap, and paper towels. Or, consider using moist disposable towelettes for cleaning your hands.
- ◆ **Utensils and Serving Dishes:** Take care to keep all utensils and platters clean when preparing food.
- ◆ **Wash hands and surfaces often!**
- ◆ Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- ◆ Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.
- ◆ Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, launder them often in the hot cycle.
- ◆ Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush.
- ◆ With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.

Repairing the breach

ISAIAH 58

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is one of four church-wide special offerings sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (USA). It is highlighted during Lent, received, and dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 20. This year marks the **76th Anniversary** of the first OGHS, begun as American Christians recognized the need to respond to the worldwide devastation caused by World War II. In March 1949, a national broadcast on a Saturday

evening asked Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches; a remarkable assembly of national leaders and celebrities gave their efforts to the broadcast, and more than 75,000 churches responded the next day. Today, our contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing are divided equally among the **Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and Self-Development of People**. When it comes to Easter Sunday, let there be no mistake about our commitment to feed the poor and help the afflicted as we respond to the new life received in and through Christ. We encourage everyone to give to OGHS. Special envelopes will be available beginning April 13.

Opequon Presbyterian Church
Financial Summary for the period ended
February 28, 2025

	Annual Budget 2025	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Annual Budget Used
Income					
410000 Offering Income	882,418	94,340	164,095	718,323	18.6%
420000 Other Income	1,800	158	220	1,580	12.2%
Total 400000 Income	884,218	94,498	164,315	719,903	18.6%
Expenses					
500000 Personnel Costs					
510000 Installed Pastors	228,422	20,189	38,011	190,411	16.6%
520000 Other Ministerial Staff	143,633	10,997	21,839	121,794	15.2%
530000 Administrative Staff	155,104	12,667	25,455	129,649	16.4%
Total 500000 Personnel Costs	527,159	43,853	85,305	441,854	16.2%
600000 Other Ministries					
610000 Christian Education	15,050	1,125	1,570	13,480	10.4%
620000 Congregational Care	2,800	105	139	2,661	4.9%
630000 Evangelism	2,250	63	149	2,101	6.6%
640000 Fellowship	3,800	501	657	3,143	17.3%
650000 Mission	77,000	13,567	16,383	60,617	21.3%
660000 Worship	8,000	111	488	7,512	6.1%
Total 600000 Other Ministries	108,900	15,472	19,386	89,514	17.8%
Total 700000 Church Administration	148,385	9,941	20,964	127,421	14.1%
Total Expenses	784,444	69,266	125,654	658,790	16.0%
Net Operating Income (Expense)	99,774	25,232	38,661	61,113	38.7%
920000 Other Income	18,675	1,670	4,424	14,251	23.7%
930000 Other Expenses	118,449	9,743	19,983	98,466	16.9%
Net Other Income (Expense)	(99,774)	(8,073)	(15,559)	(84,215)	15.6%
Income Greater Than (Less Than) Expenses	0	17,159	23,102		

	<u>2/28/25</u>
Cash	<u>\$ 100,794</u>
Sanctuary Mortgage Principal Balance	<u>\$ 366,389</u>

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		<p>Julia Away</p> <p>1:30pm - Faith Formation @</p> <p>5pm - Tech Team Meeting @</p> <p>6pm - Ministry Team Night @</p>	<p>8:30am - Mid-Week Lenten</p> <p>9am - Backpack Program</p> <p>9:30am - Staff Meeting @ Bageant</p> <p>1pm - Flower Group @ Bageant</p> <p>5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial</p> <p>6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry @</p>	<p>6pm - Celebration Dinner Capital</p>	<p>David & Carole Away</p> <p>9am - Mulch Madness</p>
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<p>Communion</p> <p>Confirmation Day</p> <p>8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p> <p>9:30am - Session Meeting @</p> <p>9:45am - Faith Formation @</p> <p>11am - Worship & Live Stream @</p>	<p>8:30am - Adult Trip (Bus In Use)</p> <p>5pm - LOGOS Leadership Team @</p> <p>5:30pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary &</p>	<p>9:30am - Tuesday Morning</p> <p>1:30pm - Faith Formation @</p> <p>6pm - GLOW Fellowship Hall @</p> <p>7pm - ART @ Assembly Room</p> <p>7pm - Vision Team @ Bageant</p>	<p>8:30am - Mid-Week Lenten</p> <p>12pm - Happy Days @ Fellowship</p> <p>5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial</p> <p>4pm - VBS Team Meeting @</p>		<p>WRT Family Away</p>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p>Blood Pressure Checks</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p> <p>8:30am - Worship & Live Stream</p> <p>9:45am - Faith Formation @</p> <p>9:45am - Opie's Playhouse @</p> <p>11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p> <p>12:15pm - Senior Outreach</p> <p>1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship @</p>	<p>5:30pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary &</p> <p>6pm - MOO @ Chick-fil-A</p> <p>7pm - MOO in FH @ Fellowship</p>	<p>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p> <p>10am - Youth Bowling-Church Van</p>	<p>8:30am - Mid-Week Lenten</p> <p>9:30am - Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>9am - WANC Tea @ Youth Spot</p> <p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial</p> <p>10:30am - WANC Meeting @</p> <p>11:15am - Piano Tuner - Eric</p> <p>6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry</p> <p>7pm - Maundy Thursday Worship</p>	<p>12pm - Good Friday Reflections @</p> <p>7pm - Good Friday Worship @</p> <p>7pm - Kernstown UMC at Picnic</p>	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<p>Easter Sunday</p> <p>6am - Easter Sunrise Worship @</p> <p>6:45am - Easter Sunrise Breakfast</p> <p>8:30am - Worship & Live Stream</p> <p>9:45am - Family Easter Event @</p> <p>11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p> <p>Easter Monday</p>	<p>3pm - TVOR Gathering</p> <p>5:30pm - Highland Food Pantry @</p> <p>6:30pm - Young Adult Bowling @</p> <p>7pm - Session Mtg @ Bageant</p>	<p>2:30pm - Staff CPR Training @</p> <p>5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension</p> <p>6:30pm - Choir @ Sanctuary</p>	<p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial</p> <p>10:30am - WANC Lunch @</p> <p>6pm - Fellowship Book Club @</p>	<p>David and Carole Vacation</p> <p>Rachel Away</p> <p>11am - Java With Julia @</p>	
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
<p>David and Carole Vacation</p> <p>4 Cents a Meal Offering</p> <p>8:30am - Worship & Live Stream</p> <p>9:45am - Faith Formation @</p> <p>11am - Worship @ Sanctuary</p> <p>4:30pm - Youth Mission Trip</p>	<p>12pm - Life Goes On @ Fellowship</p> <p>5:30pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary &</p>	<p>Julia Continuing Ed</p> <p>9am - Backpack Program @</p> <p>4pm - Older Adult Choir Practice</p> <p>5:30pm - LOGOS Youth Extension</p>		<p>Bill Away</p> <p>10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial</p> <p>6:30pm - Sherando Food Pantry @</p>	<p>Church Office Closed</p>	



CHURCH OFFICE STAFF EMAIL ADDRESSES

To reach a pastor or staff member, you may contact the church office (**540-662-1843** or **office@opequonchurch.org**) or reach out to the staff member directly. If you email us and do not hear back within a couple business days, please double-check that it was sent to the correct email address (see below) or call us to verify the message was received.

Pastor, David Witt-----	pastor@opequonchurch.org
Associate Pastor, Julia Burkley-----	pastorjulia@opequonchurch.org
Parish Associate, Tracie Martin -----	assocopc@gmail.com
Church Office / Office Administrator, Rachel Lesink-----	office@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-----	srh1305@verizon.net
Organist, Bill Heavner-----	heavner@comcast.net
Facilities Coordinator, Robert Sydnor -----	sexton@opequonchurch.org

IMPORTANT: Messages sent via our church database (ex/ OPC's Tuesday/Friday Messages) use an outgoing-only "notifications@onrealmmail.org" address. **Please do NOT send any messages to notifications@onrealmmail.org — we cannot receive them!** Also, please note that the sender's name appearing next to that notifications address does change depending on who is sending the message.

SOME NOTES OF THANKS...

From Bill & Tracie Martin:

The cards, prayers, and wonderful support we received from our church family made the waiting , eventual surgery and recovery period for Tracie so much easier. Thank you all!

From Bill Robinson:

Many thanks for all the wonderful cards, delicious meals, and lovely visits while I was in rehab and since I have been home. The outpouring of love has been overwhelming!

STAFF SCHEDULE NOTES

- April 1: Julia Burkley - away
- April 5: David & Carole Witt - away
- April 12: David, Carole & Rebekah Witt - away
- April 21: Church Office Closed (Easter Monday)
- April 25—May 3: David & Carole Witt - vacation
- April 25: Rachel Lesink - away
- April 30—May 3: Julia Burkley - continuing ed
- May 2: Church Office Closed (Apple Blossom)

Note: If a pastoral concern arises, please note who is away and contact Pastors David Witt, Julia Burkley, or Tracie Martin directly as needed.



MAY DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

- Friday, May 2 Church Office Closed (Happy Apple Blossom!)
- Sunday, May 4 Older Adult Sunday / Apple Blossom Sunday Communion; Opie's Playhouse
- Tuesday, May 6 Ministry Team Night
- Saturday, May 10 Roots & Shoots Planting Day
- Sunday, May 11 Mother's Day / Christian Family Sunday
- Sunday, May 18 "A Place at the Table" Celebration / Dedication Sunday
- Monday, May 26 Church Office Closed (Memorial Day)
- Wednesday, May 28 Annual Older Adult Luncheon (11:30 AM)

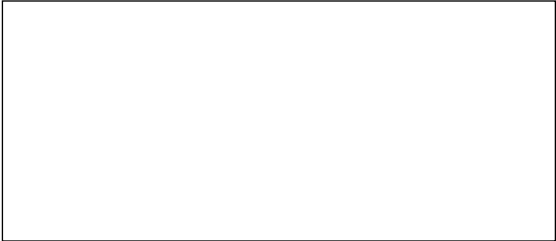
**** The deadline to send newsletter submissions to the church office the 15th of each month. ****

OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

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

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Website:
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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