



# The Opequon Spirit

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



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

## WORSHIP AT-A-GLANCE

### ***Livestreaming Time Change:***

*Sunday worship services will be  
livestreamed at 11:00 AM this  
year unless otherwise noted.*

**Sunday, January 4—  
Epiphany Sunday**  
† Isaiah 60:1-6;  
Matthew 2:1-12  
Sermon: "Fear Doesn't Stop  
Us!"  
*Communion; Star Words;  
Celebrating Our Completed  
Capital Campaign &  
Thanking the CC Team!*

**Sunday, January 11—  
Baptism of the Lord**  
† Isaiah 42:1-9;  
Matthew 3:13-17  
Sermon: "A Light to the  
Nations"  
*Renewal of Baptism;  
Ordination, Installation, &  
Commissioning Sunday*  
**1:30 PM Spring Arbor  
Worship**

**Sunday, January 18**  
† Isaiah 49:1-7;  
John 1:29-42  
Sermon: "Following Jesus"

**Sunday, January 25**  
† Isaiah 9:1-4;  
Matthew 4:12-23  
Sermon: "Fishing for People"  
*4 Cents A Meal*

**Wednesday, January 28**  
**6:30 PM WOW Service**



## **STAR WORDS ARE COMING IN JANUARY... BUT WHAT ARE "STAR WORDS?"**

The use of star words, also called "star gifts," is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year. This will be the eighth year we have distributed "star words" at Opequon Church, prayerfully handed out as "God's word to you and for you." These intentional words, we pray, will guide you throughout the upcoming year. Typically, participants are encouraged to trust the word they have drawn, and not to replace the word. However, there is not a strong need to be the "star police" if an individual wants to trade. We encourage you to place your star word somewhere you will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word. We will hand out the star words on Sunday, January 4, at morning worship services, and then star words will be available for all! For those who can't be present on the 4th, we are seizing any opportunity to bring God's word to you. We can mail you one upon request or you can pick up a "star word" in the coming weeks.

## **RENEWAL OF BAPTISM SUNDAY IS JANUARY 11!**

Each January, on Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we participate as a congregation in a Renewal of Baptism service. The service culminates in the congregation coming forward and touching the waters within the baptismal bowl. On January 11, those worshiping in person will have their own opportunity that morning to consider the gift of water, the gift of baptism. For those who are livestreaming worship, we invite you to have water available to you at home as you participate in worship. A clear glass of water before you would be helpful.



## **ORDINATION, INSTALLATION, & COMMISSIONING OF NEW OFFICERS**

**Sunday, January 11, 2025 (11:00 AM)**

### **Ruling Elders:**

Robin Cooke, Douglas Joyner, Bill Thomasson, Jennie Wright

### **Deacons:**

Heather Burton, Kathy Hoffman, Trish Crawford, Paula Marquis

**Trustee: Bill Bayliss**



## NOTES FROM PASTOR DAVID

"Good News to Tell—

A Warm Welcome to Extend!"

Dear Friends in Christ,

We have completed another Advent journey and have traveled with hope to celebration of Christmas. We have heard the message of God proclaimed, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." We have joined the heavenly chorus of angels who praised God, singing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" We hurried with the shepherds to find Mary and Joseph and the Child lying in the manger. And, with the wise men, we knelt and paid him homage. It has been a good season of remembrance, reflection, and rejoicing. We have been invited into the Christmas story as a guest and discovered the wondrous Gift in the manger. And, in this "good news of great joy for all people," in this "to you is born Gift," we have been welcomed by God.

Now, the challenge is before us to respond! We have good news to tell the world and a warm welcome to extend to family, friends, neighbors, and even strangers as we invite them to share in the blessings of Christian community. Maybe we have taken for granted the gift of Christ's Church. Maybe we have forgotten that people need the Church. Maybe we have ignored an opportunity to talk with someone else about the importance of church within our lives. Maybe we have neglected to ask someone to join us in church. Years ago, I read a book entitled, *Welcome*, by an Episcopal layman, named Andy Weeks, who led over 250 conferences about outreach and welcome. Andy later came to Opequon Church to lead an evangelism workshop for our presbytery. I find the following excerpt to be both a timely challenge and a spiritual calling:

"A significant proportion of those in our communities have no religious affiliation. Although they may be materially comfortable, their spiritual poverty is genuine, even though it may not be very apparent. Many do not have the support, comfort, and care of a community. In times of joy or distress, they may have no faith. Often, they are so frantic with work and activities that they have no time to address the spiritual and ethical needs of their families. When something surprising happens, some say: 'Oh my God,' but it has no meaning. To me, that is a tragically empty and lonely way to try and cope

with life. We know the greatest story ever told, but if we do not tell it, it is dead. And, if we do not tell it now, who will? Are we willing to abdicate this responsibility to cults and sects, or are we going to accept the challenge?"

Our journey to Bethlehem teaches us that we have good news to tell and a warm welcome to extend because God has welcomed us! So, let's get going in meeting this challenge in this New Year of 2026!! I have a sense that if we do, it will be a Happy New Year in more ways than one, especially for ourselves and those we bless.

Together in Christ's Service,





### A PRAYER FOR A NEW YEAR

As we prepare to hang some new calendars and write the year 2026 on the top of our checks and letters, a year of promise awaits us. As God's people who begin each new week with worship on the Lord's Day, so we start the year 2026 celebrating God's gift of Jesus Christ and holding on to the hope contained in the promises of God. So, let us begin with this daily prayer...

*Dear Lord, as we enter 2026, we thank you for your constant presence and grace through the past year. We are grateful for your gifts and guidance. We ask for your Holy Spirit to direct our steps into this new year, filling us with faith over fear, peace over worry, love over hate, and joy over sadness. Renew our hopes and grant us wisdom to face the challenges ahead, trusting your unfailing love and provision. Help us to live each day with purpose, generosity, and a humble heart, surrendering our plans to your divine will and purpose. And empower us as we aspire to the chief end of humanity: to glorify you and enjoy you forever. In the power, strength, and humility of Christ, we pray. Amen.*

### PASTOR TRACIE'S JUST THINKIN'...

January always feels like a loooooong month to me. The holidays are over. Most of us are deeply tired. The weather is cold and windy. Christmas bills abound. Roads are tricky. Days are short. Still, I rather like January for its sense of hope and new opportunities.



Around the middle of November, things start to move rapidly. Turkey goes on sale; Christmas music begins to pop up. The holiday rush can become overwhelming. Life just becomes too much... way too much, but we need to stay the course through to the new year.

Now, in January, all the predictions have been predicted. Returns and holiday exchanges have all been made. Leftovers are completely gone. There are no more cookies stashed in zip-tops at the bottom of the freezer. It's time to just stop and pay attention. It's time to start over.

Down here, January offers the occasional weather day home. Ice, snowstorm, high wind, whatever it takes, these days are precious times for just stopping. They are better than school snow days. As an adult, I save tasks that cannot be fit in during the holidays for January weather days. I wash indoor windows, read books and articles I stashed in the bedroom, and organize closets. Often, I reclaim quiet time ignored at the end of the year for thinking..., praying..., just being.

Then, at the end of January or by the end of the first week of February at the latest, the forsythia buds show just a bit of yellow. Those first buds take a week or more to bloom inside, but they show growth within a day. I cut just a few branches every day or so to watch them bloom. This is hope. This is a promise of spring. This is the year's true beginning.

PS—You can force almost any woody bloom indoors by cutting the branch, pounding it with a hammer at the end, and putting it in lukewarm water. It should begin to show growth within a few days. Full bloom may take a week. The blossoms will be smaller and less colorful or fragrant than those allowed to develop outside, but they will bloom. Sometimes I add just a dash of Sprite to the water to feed the blossoms. Sometimes the branches even develop roots and can be planted outside in warmer weather.

—Tracie

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## SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM DECEMBER 2025

Session welcomed and examined newly elected officers at the December Session meeting: Elders-Elect Class of 2028: Robin Cooke, Doug Joyner, Bill Thomasson, and Jennie Wright; and Deacons-Elect Class of 2028: Kathy Hoffman, and Paula Marquis. Ordination and Installation of Officers and Commissioning will be Sunday, January, 11 at 11:00 AM, with a reception to follow.

- Buildings & Grounds: Thanks to Bud Proctor for the recent donation of an upright freezer.
- Stewardship & Finance Ministry: Session approved the December Financial Report, the 2026 Giving Events Calendar, and list of 2026 Offering Counters. Session reviewed the proposed 2026 budget (projected income/pledges and expenses). Approval of a budget was deferred to the January 2026 Session meeting in hopes that additional pledges will be received to balance the budget.
- Responding to Shenandoah Presbytery's per capita pledge request, Session approved the 2026 budgeted pledge (\$37,944), which was filed online by the Clerk of Session.
- Technology & Communications: Livestream will shift to the 11:00 AM service in 2026.
- Personnel & Administration: Session approved a plan to explore hiring a part-time Parish Associate or Lay Associate for Congregational Care after the first of the year to assist Pastors David and Tracie.
- Worship Ministry: Session approved the 2026 Communion Schedule.
- Christian Education Ministry recognized Rebekah Witt, Director of Youth & Young Adults leadership for the many diverse & exciting activities this fall. Get ready for the Spaghetti Dinner and Bake Sale on January 10, 2026.
- Congregational Care Ministry: Deacon Bill Bender was elected to serve with Winter Brooks as co-moderator of Board of Deacons in 2026. The team expressed sincere thanks to Robin Cooke as she begins a term as Elder-elect (Class 2028).
- Visioning Team: The Session expressed sincere thanks to David Schwantes for his Elder leadership as Chair over the last 6 years and is glad he will continue as a non-leadership member of the team.
- Mission Ministry: The Laurel Center was selected to receive the 25% local portion (\$389) of the 2026 Peace and Global Witness Offering. Watch for the Mission Corner of the newsletter in 2026.
- Fellowship Ministry: Upcoming 2026 events include January 11, 2026, Ordination & Installation of Officers Reception after the 11:00 AM service and February 28, 2026, Talent Show and potluck supper (5:00 PM).
- Session re-elected Ron Smith as Treasurer and Ann Smith as Clerk of Session for one-year terms.
- In 2026, Session will meet monthly (except in July) on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM with the exception that the January meeting was shifted to the fourth Tuesday (27th) at 6:30 PM with invited guest Associate General Presbyter Rev. Nancy Meehan Yao.

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

## 2026 GIVING ENVELOPES

2026 Giving Envelopes are available to be picked up in the Gathering Area. Please start using the 2026 envelopes in January and discontinue using your 2025 envelopes (some assigned giving numbers have changed!). If you would like offering envelopes and you do not find them in the Gathering Area, contact our Treasurer, Ron Smith ([ronaldfsmith1@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldfsmith1@gmail.com) / 703-216-9588). We will be happy to make sure you receive envelopes.

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



→ The Reed family upon the death of Kevin Reed's mother, Carolyn Reed, on December 11.

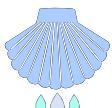
*"I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. Those who believe in me shall live, even though they die, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."*

—John 11:25-26

## NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED DECEMBER 7

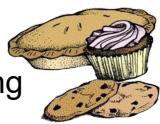
- ❖ Janice Hall, Re-Affirmation of Faith
- ❖ David Lake, Transfer of Membership from Highland Memorial Presbyterian Church in Winchester, VA
- ❖ Tim & Corene Roberts, Transfer of Membership from Grace United Methodist Church in Middletown, VA
- ❖ Michael & Linda Smyser, Transfer of Membership from Rockfish Presbyterian Church in Nellysford, VA

## WELCOMED THROUGH THE WATERS OF BAPTISM



We welcomed Liam Ellis Pingley-Guzman and Sophia Paula Pingley-Guzman, through the waters of baptism, into the baptized membership of Opequon Church on November 30, 2025. May they be blessed by the grace and steadfast love of God and may we, as their church family, remember and uphold the promises of nurture and care we have made to them and their family.

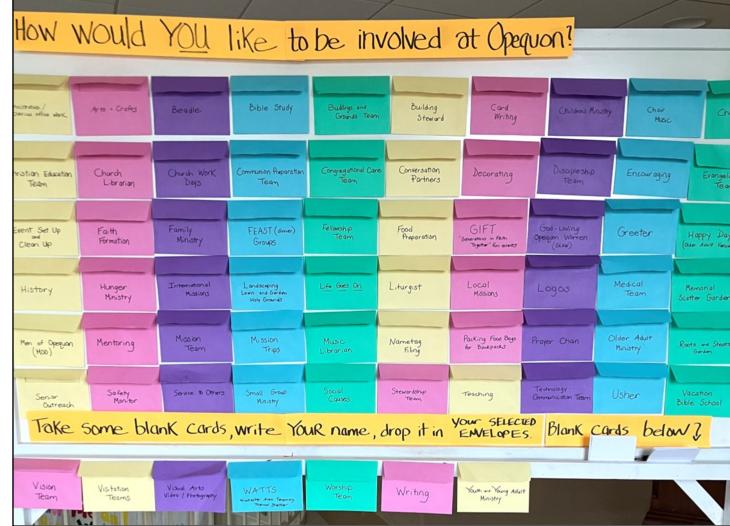
## BAKERS WANTED...



Do you like to bake?! We are looking for people to provide homemade baked goods for the January 10 Bake Sale at Opequon! Contact...

- Katie Jordan ([landikm@gmail.com](mailto:landikm@gmail.com))
- Kirsta Weber ([kirstawebber@gmail.com](mailto:kirstawebber@gmail.com))
- Vicky Astorino ([vastorino12@gmail.com](mailto:vastorino12@gmail.com))

to let them know what you can make. All proceeds will support Youth attending Conferences and Mission Trips. Thank you!



## Have You Noticed this BOARD in the Gathering Area?

You may have noticed it, but are not sure what it is all about. That is completely understandable! The board is full of colorful envelopes, each representing a part of Opequon's whole ministry. We are all invited to consider what we may want to know MORE about and how we would like to be involved in the whole ministry. There are 67 envelopes—67 opportunities to share with others as a family of faith. The question at the top of the board is an invitation to reflect on what your interests and gifts are. How can you offer them to Opequon's Ministry? The Discipleship Team hopes you can take a minute to jot your name on a white card(s) found on the bottom ledge of the board and then tuck it into the envelope(s) that you desire. We celebrate your willingness to share your name with us. We will follow up with people and aim to get you connected to the areas of your interest. We value everyone at OPC and want to help you feel connected in the ways that mean the most to you. Thank you!

## SANCTUARY CARE BEARS

It's a New Year and the Sanctuary Care Bears are back! These special bears will appear in the Sanctuary and around Opequon again soon. Many needed a checkup of those tags lovingly tied with ribbons that identify them for their specific mission. Unlike the puppets provided for children to play with and enjoy during our worship services, these bears have been given extra care preparing them to go out into the world with heartfelt love to those in need. Please give them the proper respect so they are looking their best to share God's love from Opequon.



Dear OPiE,  
What is going on with the addition?  
I see that meetings are continuing. What  
are they about? Anything new???

— Curious

Dear Curious,

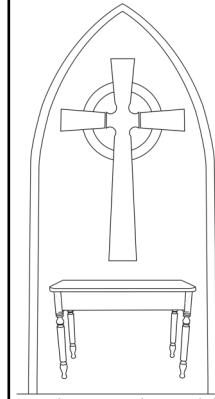
As I peek out from corners and hallways, I see a lot of people I do not know walking around the church building and talking about construction quotes, acoustics, cabinetry, wall coverings and such. Earlier this year, I snuck into a discussion of decorating ideas. That was great fun! I also listened to several discussions on the new kitchen. There were lots and lots of ideas floated.

Right now, what I overhear most often is how the ART Team is focusing on being good stewards. They are working diligently with the architectural firm and evaluating the construction budget. I have been impressed by the many ways the ART Team is listening and honoring so many ideas. I have heard that the ART Team has a big surprise, something called Finish Boards? They have been talking about how an Interior Design Team, led by Jennie Wright, Robin Eddy, Allison Blake, and Kay Caldwell, have picked out some beautiful and durable finishes. They've created some neat displays for all to see very soon! I just wish they'd display some crumbs along the way...

What I absolutely do not understand is why these faithful Christians continue to meet without cookies! WE ALL KNOW THE CHURCH RUNS ON ITS STOMACH! How can they hope to make good decisions without leaving crumbs? Really! It's not smart at all. They held one meeting with mission partners recently, but there were not a lot of leftovers. Those Vision folks clean up too well. For me, the planning process has been mostly tasteless so far. Scheesh!

Still, I live in hope. The recent Christmas Cookie Reception was very good, and several of our teams seem to be celebrating the holidays properly. I think there will be an increase in meetings as winter ends, and Carole Witt is still making occasional chocolate chip crumbs. The Fellowship Team has several celebrations coming up in the new year, too. Still, while I will not starve, I do wish the people planning the new addition were more engaged in making sure that those who attend long meetings and those of us who work the crumbs are treated well!

— Your Friend, OPiE



A Place at the Table

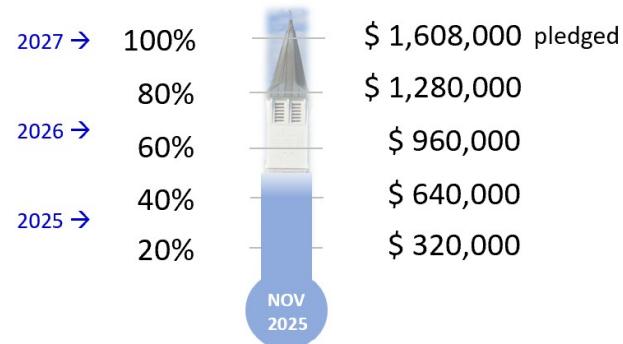
## MAKING A PLACE AT THE TABLE: Prayers for Our Capital Campaign

Our Father,

A new year brings new things to anticipate. Did we get a new toy at Christmas? Who will play

with us? Did we get a new sweater? At what event will we wear it? Are there changes where we work? How will my contributions propel the mission? Did we make New Year's resolutions? Where will we find support so that what we resolve we actually do? We pray that what is new to us becomes part of our lives that are faithful to you.

At Opequon Church, we have many new things coming into the life of the congregation because you continue to bless us and challenge us. We look forward to ground-breaking for the capital project and thank you for the resources to make it happen. We brace ourselves for the mud and inconvenience of the construction and ask for patience. We picture the ministries that will flourish in the new spaces and pray for imagination and courage to do your work. We ask for your blessing on all these new things.



## BUILDING CAMPAIGN NOTES

Building Campaign receipts now total \$806k (through November), which is 50% of the total amount pledged. On the thermometer, the years are listed as guides, dividing the pledge total evenly by 3. Many pledges, however, are not set on a regular giving schedule and will not be received evenly over the 3-year period.



OPEQUON  
CHURCH  
FELLOWSHIP  
HALL

**Saturday, January 10  
at 5:00pm**

217 Opequon  
Church Lane  
Winchester, VA  
22602



## **SPAGHETTI DINNER & BAKE SALE**

Enjoy spaghetti, bread, & salad. Sponsored by Opequon Youth. All donations will support Youth attending the Massanetta Middle School Conference & Mission Trip! Bake goods available for purchase!



**Monetary  
Donations  
Welcome!**

**NO RSVP NECESSARY**

### **SPAGHETTI DINNER & BAKE SALE TO SUPPORT YOUTH**

The Opequon Youth invite everyone to come enjoy a plate full of spaghetti, eat some bread, and purchase Bake Sale items on Saturday, January 10, at 5:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. The Bake Sale will continue into Sunday morning as well. No reservations required for the Spaghetti Dinner, but we greatly appreciate your monetary donations towards supporting Youth who will attend the Massanetta Middle School Conference and the High School Mission Trip during Summer 2026! Thank you for your generosity!

## SUNDAY MORNING STUDY RESUMES

The Sunday Morning Faith Formation Class returns on Sunday, January 4, both in-person and via Zoom, and will conclude the Advent/Christmas study "Finding Our Place at the Manger." Then, we will launch into a new study the following Sunday, January 11. The class meets at 9:45 AM each Sunday morning. Join us for a special time.

## MICAH 6:8 FAITH FORMATION CLASS

Beginning January 8, this 9-week class for adults, young adults, and youth will meet on Thursdays, 6:45 PM—7:45 PM, in the Bageant Room and be led by Beth Barr and Rebekah Witt. This topic will show how we, as followers of Jesus, are pushed, pulled, invited, and commanded by God to embrace the fullness of humanity. It focuses on four aspects of crossing borders: leave your comfort zone, embrace relationships, challenge exclusion, and speak God's language of love. Contact Rebekah Witt ([rwitt@opequonchurch.org](mailto:rwitt@opequonchurch.org)) to let us know you plan to attend or if you have any questions.

## "GIFT" EVENT— Sunday, January 25

### 9:45 AM (Fellowship Hall)

GIFT stands for "Generations in Faith Together," so GIFT Events are a time when all ages come together for an intentional experience of learning, sharing, and enjoying one another. GIFT events are held once a month at 9:45 AM, between the two morning worship services. You can count on there being food, loads of fun, and a very happy atmosphere. This month, the GIFT Event will be on Sunday, January 25 with the theme "LIKE ME." This is a story about disabilities and God's image in each of us. Come be a part of this heartwarming experience that always proves to be fun and inspiring. There is a place for You at the table!

## OPC COOKBOOK – "A Place at the Table"

Throughout January and February, a display will be set-up in the Gathering Area where you will be able to reserve your copy of the cookbook and also a box to collect recipes. All recipes must fit on half a page. Someone will also be available on Sundays to answer any questions you may have.

## YOUTH: GRADES 6-12

January 10: Serve the Opequon Spaghetti Dinner (4:00 PM—6:30 PM)

## YOUNG ADULTS: AGES 18-35

January 30: Escape Room (8:15 PM)

## OPIE'S PLAYHOUSE

As we look forward to another year of Opie's Playhouse, we are celebrating that we have new friends joining us each week. If you haven't tried us yet, please come! Opie's Playhouse is a Sunday morning playgroup for young families offering toys, snacks and drinks, space to play, and a chance to chat and get to know one another. Families with infants, toddlers, and elementary aged children are all welcome. Our first playgroup of the new year will be on January 4, 9:45 AM—10:45 AM, in the Memorial Sanctuary. Opie's Playhouse is hosted by the Christian Education Team the first Sunday of every month. Hope to see you there!

## THE LATEST IN LOGOS

We are halfway through this current Logos year! Can you believe it! There have been so many amazing things happening at Logos! One is, of course, the great number of young people that we get to see every Wednesday. And just before Christmas, we held a CANNED FOOD COLLECTION to benefit CCAP. We were able to build a Christmas tree out of all the donated cans of food. All this went to help feed hungry people in our community. We spread joy in the nearby neighborhoods as we caroled to our members in Woodbrook and Cross Creek.

We are excited to be back to Logos after a Christmas break and look forward to 'Icicles and Snowflakes Night,' 'Polar Bear & Panda Bear Night,' and 'Opposites Night.' The next WOW (Worship on Wednesday) service will be on January 28, with us all sharing in worship at 6:30 PM. Come worship with us!

Logos is held on Wednesdays, 4:30—7:15 PM, and open to all Pre-K—12 young people. The Logos Ministry truly puts a HUG around the church as so many ages come together to love God and one another.

For more information about Logos, contact Carole Witt (540-662-1843 or [dce@opequonchurch.org](mailto:dce@opequonchurch.org)).

## FELLOWSHIP BOOK CLUB

Book Club will meet on January 22 at 6:00 PM in the Youth Spot and discuss the fascinating historical novel, "Becoming Mrs. Lewis: The Improbable Love Story of Joy Davidman and C. S. Lewis" by Patti Callahan Henry. In this masterful exploration of one of the greatest love stories of modern times, we meet a brilliant writer, a fiercely independent mother, and a passionate woman who changed the life of this respected author and inspired books that still enchant us and change us.

## MEN OF OPEQUON

After a festive and Spirit-filled Christmas party in December, the Men of Opequon (MOO) will gather on Monday, January 12, at 6:00 PM at the Pleasant Valley Chick-fil-A. Then, we'll leave Chick-Fil-A and reconvene at 7:00 PM at the church in the Bageant Room. We'll enjoy a provided dessert and devotions and then dig into planning for the new year as we launch 2026! Happy New Year!

## 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. The women enjoyed their annual Christmas gathering last month and created beautiful Gingerbread Houses.

GLOW is on break during the winter months of January and February. We will be back together in March! Terrific plans are already in the making for a BACK TO GLOW Night in March. Many more details will be shared as we inch closer to March. Stay warm, stay safe and enjoy the special beauty of winter.

## OLDER ADULT HAPPENINGS

We are feeling the chill of these winter days. Come on inside Opequon Church and be warmed by all that is happening.

This month begins with the Older Adult Planning Team meeting on Monday, January 5, at 9:30 AM in the Bageant Room. This meeting is 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. Some morning goodies and coffee will be provided.

The monthly older adult fellowship time known as 'Happy Days' will be held on Wednesday, January 14 at NOON in the Fellowship Hall. A FULL MEAL WILL BE PROVIDED—BREAKFAST FOR LUNCH. No need to bring covered dish items this month. The menu includes Pancakes, Eggs, Bacon, Hash Brown Casserole, Bagels, Strawberries, and Fried Apples. Beverages provided too. Please bring \$5.00 to help cover the cost of the meal. After lunch, we will enjoy our guest speaker from Froggy's Closet. We will present our Coin Jar check from 2025 to our speaker. All older adults are welcome. Come enjoy the friendships, warmth around the tables and this interesting speaker.

## JANUARY COLLECTION FOR CCAP

This month, Mission Ministry is collecting oatmeal for CCAP. Thank you for your contributions and supporting our community!

## LIFE GOES ON

Life Goes On will gather at noon on January 19 in Fellowship Hall. The main dish will be soup of some sort. Life Goes On is a monthly lunch for people who have lost their significant other. We share a side-to-pass lunch (the main dish is provided), chat, and share resources and ideas. Some of us have been alone for a long time; others are new at all this. Those who prefer not to cook, chip in a couple of bucks toward expenses. We laugh a lot.

Whether being alone is new for you or not, this group is ready to welcome you. If you need a ride, we will find one. Drop in for lunch and whatever we have going on.

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

The Monday afternoon group will meet in Pastor Tracie Martin's office on January 12 at 1:30 PM.

The Tuesday evening group will meet in Pastor Tracie Martin's office on January 13 at 5:00 PM.

## SENIOR OUTREACH

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

## JANUARY COLLECTION FOR CCAP

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### NOTES OF THANKS...

From Pat Williams:

*Many, many thanks to all for the phone calls and cards that were blessed to me and your care and concerns during/after my recent surgery and the many more blessings that were sent to me from OPC members in the way of comfort food and visits. I thank all that cooked and served this generous gift. OPC has a wonderful love for caring and giving! Again, thank you!*

From Becky Myers:

*Thank you one and all for the prayers, calls, cards, texts, and visits as I navigated my recent emergency appendectomy, that was followed two weeks later with the dreaded virus going through the community. It's all behind me now. I am blessed to have you as a family. Much love and appreciation!*

## GENEROSITY / STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

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

2026 is going to be both busy and fulfilling for our church family. Before long we will begin to live the results of our Capital Campaign and decision to build an addition onto the church. This will be exciting. I understand OPiE can hardly wait. He loves to hoard the crusts from sandwiches left by construction workers.

I hope we all can remember that the excitement of our new construction is fed by the things we support all year long. Heat and cooling, staff and support groups: our teams and outreach groups, toilet paper, paper towels, bulletins, Wi-Fi... all these support and empower OPC as we serve our risen Lord. This year will be a time of building and growth, but it will also be a time of solidifying and re-committing ourselves to continue to be those who "prayerfully equip disciples of all generations to be Christ's hands, heart, and feet in the world."

It's not an "either/or," it's a "both/and." OPC needs to continue to grow. We absolutely must continue making space for newcomers and visitors. We need to reach out to our community and to groups who make a difference in God's world. We. Can. Not. Ignore. The diversity of ways this addition will help us and help them. Still, we also need to take care of our own business, pay our bills, and ensure that new ideas and hopes have a firm foundation from which to launch. This congregation is strong and generous. We have a long history of leadership among local churches and other mission agencies. We need to celebrate our future while ensuring our present. The very good news is—the OPC church family always comes through.

## MORE NOTES OF THANKS...

### THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

*We are so grateful for everyone who made the Advent/Christmas season special in its own way. The decorations were sooo beautiful, from Advent wreath to Christmas trees, to window trimmings. Our seasonal devotionals, "Offering Hope and Peace This Advent" for adults and "Peace and Hope" for children, were extraordinary. The music, the small gatherings, the outreach, and the contributions of time and talent were exceptional. The variety of worship services, from Sunday morning Advent to WOW, from Choir Cantata Sunday to in-person and livestreamed Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, were all unique experiences for preparing for the coming of Christ. We enjoyed the Christmas cookie reception and the Christmas Breakfast. We gathered for MOO, GLOW, Happy Days, and Logos, each with Christmas spirit. Caroling even happened in our adjacent neighborhoods. So, to one and all who led and shared and gave in countless ways, we say, "THANK YOU!"*

### Thank You, Church Family!

*We are incredibly grateful for the generous support shown toward our Roots & Shoots SeedMoney Campaign. Thanks to your kindness and encouragement! We raised \$3,100, exceeding our \$3,000 goal! Because of this, we will also be receiving an additional \$500 in grant funding. Your generosity is helping bring this project to life, and we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for being such a supportive and faithful community!*

### From Marj Praml:

*I personally want to thank my Ministry Team and Verna Saar for arriving early on December 7 to set up for the Cookie Reception. My team always goes above and beyond to move each event forward. I also send out thanks to Verna, who stepped up to assist us in preparing the cookies for display. Lastly, but hardly an afterthought, a huge THANK YOU to all of the OPC bakers for so unselfishly baking and sharing your delicious cookies. The leftover cookies were used for the Young Adults activity, Tuesday Morning Mission, and shared with some of our OPC friends who are shut-ins or at a medical care facility. Thank You!*

### From Trish Crawford:

*Many thanks for all the calls, cards, visits, and food for Mike Crawford and his family. The love of the church is all around us and we feel the prayers. Thank you so much.*

## SUMMER MISSION TRIP TO ROMANIA

NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children) is sponsoring an adult mission/work trip to Tulcea, Romania, June 25—July 7. The cost is approximately \$2,800/person, including airfare. This is a great opportunity to see and participate firsthand in the amazing ministry of NOROC, with work projects and lots of opportunities to interact with the children and young adults in the government's child protection system, as well as an opportunity to see some of the beauty of the country of Romania. Contact Rich Schempp ([rschempp2@gmail.com](mailto:rschempp2@gmail.com)) by January 15, 2026 if you are interested.



**A team from OPC is going on a MEDICAL MISSION TRIP to the Dominican Republic in March, and they need your help collecting supplies to take with them!**

JANUARY 4-18 they will be collecting OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICAL SUPPLIES in black & yellow tubs in the Gathering Place. Needed items are listed below, contributions of all quantities are appreciated! **Please note the expiration date of donated items must be AFTER 3/31/2027**, otherwise they will be rejected.

**30ml & 60ml medicine bottles (empty)**  
**Urinalysis test strips**  
**Glucometer with matching Test Strips**  
**Vitamins - NOT gummy**  
    Adult / Prenatal / Kids / Infant  
    With & Without iron  
**Calcium + Vitamin D**  
**Aspirin 81mg**  
**Excedrin Migraine**  
**Naproxen (Aleve)**  
**Lidocaine (or other) pain patches**  
**Saline eye drops (artificial tears)**  
**Debrox ear drops (for ear wax)**

**Sudafed (pseudoephedrine)**  
**Claritin / Zyrtec / Allegra**  
    Adult / Children's  
**Flonase / Nasacort**  
**Saline nasal spray**  
**Vick's Vapor Rub**  
**Famotidine**  
**Omeprazole / Lansoprazole**  
**Clotrimazole cream**  
**Voltaren gel / Icy Hot**  
**Triple antibiotic ointment**  
**Acne products**  
**Selsun blue / Dandruff shampoo**

If you would prefer to support the team with a financial donation, go to  
<https://mmiorg.app.neoncrm.com/OPC>

## STEWARDSHIP 2026 – A NEW YEAR! WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The active, thriving mission and ministry of Opequon Presbyterian Church has deepened and expanded over the past year, especially reaching out to our own community and around the world in faithful witness. We sincerely thank you for all you have done to encourage and empower the church to keep moving forward despite the challenges of unsettled times and changes and losses within our church family. Now, we need your promise of support through the dedication of your time, talents, and tithes. What treasure has God entrusted to you that you will dedicate to God and Christ's Church? As we envision a promising new year of 2026, your financial support is essential to what we hope to accomplish. We are so grateful to all who have submitted a pledge card for this new year, which helps the session plan accordingly. If you have not yet had this opportunity, please consider making your pledge today. **IT IS NOT TOO LATE!** Simply drop your pledge card in the Sunday offering, in the mail, or stop by the church this week, using the mail slot in the office door. And now, you can also pledge online! We appreciate you participating as we "taste and see that the Lord is good" and then respond through stewardship and service.

**Opequon Presbyterian Church**  
**Financial Summary for the period ended**  
**November 30, 2025**

	Annual Budget 2025	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Annual Budget Used
<b>Income</b>					
410000 Offering Income	882,418	63,643	780,797	101,621	88.5%
420000 Other Income	1,800	484	2,205	(405)	122.5%
<b>Total 400000 Income</b>	<b>884,218</b>	<b>64,127</b>	<b>783,002</b>	<b>101,216</b>	<b>88.6%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
500000 Personnel Costs					
510000 Installed Pastors	228,422	13,458	180,001	48,421	78.8%
520000 Other Ministerial Staff	143,633	15,575	147,524	(3,891)	102.7%
530000 Administrative Staff	155,104	13,124	140,642	14,462	90.7%
<b>Total 500000 Personnel Costs</b>	<b>527,159</b>	<b>42,157</b>	<b>468,167</b>	<b>58,992</b>	<b>88.8%</b>
600000 Other Ministries					
610000 Christian Education	15,050	1,824	11,166	3,884	74.2%
620000 Congregational Care	2,800	48	2,812	(12)	100.4%
630000 Evangelism	2,250	378	1,252	998	55.7%
640000 Fellowship	3,800	220	3,494	307	91.9%
650000 Mission	77,000	8,317	74,183	2,817	96.3%
660000 Worship	8,000	414	8,134	(134)	101.7%
<b>Total 600000 Other Ministries</b>	<b>108,900</b>	<b>11,201</b>	<b>101,042</b>	<b>7,858</b>	<b>92.8%</b>
<b>Total 700000 Church Administration</b>	<b>148,385</b>	<b>36,050</b>	<b>161,354</b>	<b>(12,969)</b>	<b>108.7%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>784,444</b>	<b>89,408</b>	<b>730,564</b>	<b>53,880</b>	<b>93.1%</b>
<b>Net Operating Income (Expense)</b>	<b>99,774</b>	<b>(25,281)</b>	<b>52,438</b>	<b>47,336</b>	<b>52.6%</b>
920000 Other Income	18,675	1,669	19,211	(536)	102.9%
930000 Other Expenses	118,449	9,766	107,902	10,547	91.1%
<b>Net Other Income (Expense)</b>	<b>(99,774)</b>	<b>(8,097)</b>	<b>(88,691)</b>	<b>(11,083)</b>	<b>88.9%</b>
<b>Income Greater Than (Less Than) Expenses</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(33,378)</b>	<b>(36,252)</b>		

11/30/25

Cash	\$ 189,493
Sanctuary Mortgage Principal Balance	\$ 289,904

## WELLNESS SKILLS

To practice daily and when you are bumped out of the Resilient Zone.



### TRACKING (reading the nervous system)

Tracking is paying attention to sensations in your body in the present moment.

- What do you notice happening inside?
- Are the sensations inside pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant?
- Bring your attention to the sensations that are pleasant or neutral.



### RESOURCING



A Resource is any person, place, thing, or memory (real or imagined) that provides you comfort, joy, peace, or happiness.

- What or who uplifts you?
- What or who gives you strength?
- What or who gets you through hard times?

### GROUNDING

- Grounding is the contact of the body or part of the body with something that provides support in the present moment.
- You can ground by sitting in a chair, standing against a wall, laying down, walking, or floating in water.



### iCHILL APP

- Download the iChill App to practice these skills and learn more skills. It's free and available in English and Spanish on iOS, Android, or at [ichillapp.com](http://ichillapp.com).

More information at [traumaresourceinstitute.com](http://traumaresourceinstitute.com)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
WATIS @ Fellowship Hall, Assembly Room, Youth Spot, Kitchen, Classrooms	28	29	30	31	1	2
4 Cents a Meal Offering	Rachel - out of the office					3
10am - Worship & Live Stream @	David - vacation	1:30pm - Grief Support @ Tracie's	5pm - Grief Support @ Tracie's			
4	Community	9:30am - Older Adult Planning	5pm - Tech Team Meeting @	10:30am - Tai Chi @ Memorial	9am - Officer Orientation @	
	Epiphany	6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary	6pm - Ministry Team Night @	6:45pm - Micah 6:8 Faith	5pm - Spaghetti Dinner & Bake	
	8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary					
	9:45am - Faith Formation @					
	9:45am - Opie's Playhouse @					
	11am - Worship & Live Stream @					
4	9:30am - Chick-fil-A					
	6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary					
	7pm - MOO in FH @ Fellowship					
	11am - Worship & Live Stream @					
	12:15pm - Senior Outreach					
	1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship @					
4	Orordination & Installation Sunday @					
	8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary					
	9:45am - Faith Formation @					
	11am - Worship & Live Stream @					
	12:15pm - Senior Outreach					
	1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship @					
4	Blood Pressure Checks	David & Rebekah Away/Continuing Ed				
	Martin Luther King Jr. Day					
	12pm - Life Goes On @ Fellowship					
	6pm - Safety Team @ Bageant					
	6pm - Windsong @ Sanctuary					
4	8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary					
	9:45am - Faith Formation @					
	11am - Worship & Live Stream @					
	12:15pm - Senior Outreach					
	1:30pm - Spring Arbor Worship @					
4	4 Cents a Meal Offering					
	Annual Reports Due					
	8:30am - Worship @ Sanctuary					
	9:45am - GIFT Event @ Fellowship					
	11am - Worship & Live Stream @					
4	WATIS @ Fellowship Hall, Assembly Room, Youth Spot, Kitchen, Classrooms					
	4 Cents a Meal Offering					
	Annual Reports Due					
	8:30am - Jubilee Kitchen - Opequon -					
	10am - Jubilee Kitchen - Opequon -					

## Respecting Our Pastor's Sabbath Day

As a church family, we deeply value the hard work, care, and dedication our pastors give throughout the week. They dedicate countless hours each week to serving our church family through teaching, prayer, and care. To help them rest, renew, recharge, and spend time with the Lord and their families, we ask that everyone respect their Sabbath day off. In the Spirit of all that goes on and with the seasons of the church we respectfully ask that you not contact them on the Pastors' day off. David Witt's day off is Friday, and Tracie Martin is off most Thursdays, occasionally depending on the schedule it could be a Monday. Please refrain from calling, emailing, or texting our pastors on their designated day of rest. This simple act of consideration allows them to return refreshed and ready to serve with joy and strength.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us care well for those who care for us.

—Regards, The Personnel Team

## STAFF SCHEDULES THIS MONTH

### January 1: CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

January 2: Rachel Lesink - Out of the Office

January 19-25: David Witt - Continuing Education

January 20-24: Rebekah Witt - Continuing Education

*If a pastoral concern arises during these times, please reach out to Pastor Tracie Martin ([assocopc@gmail.com](mailto:assocopc@gmail.com)) or the church office.*

## JANUARY MINISTRY TEAM NIGHT

**Tuesday, January 6**

6:00 PM Meal: Costco Pizza, Tossed Salad, Pudding, & Drinks

6:45 PM Devotions & Team Meetings



*It's time to play the music!*

*It's time to light the lights!*

Yes, it's time for our annual  
**TALENT SHOW**  
**& POTLUCK SUPPER!**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28,**  
**at 5:00 PM,**

the OPC Fellowship Hall  
will become the

**OPC THEATER & DINNER CLUB!**

Got a talent that you want to share?

Sign-up in the Gathering Area or  
contact Marj Praml (540-327-2667).

## LOOKING AHEAD: FABULOUS FEBRUARY DATES TO NOTE

- February Communion Sunday—February 1
- February Ministry Team Night—Tuesday, February 3
- Young Adult & Youth Family Sunday—Sunday, February 8
- "Souper Bowl Sunday"—February 8
- Annual Reports Distributed—Sunday, February 15
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper—Tuesday, February 17
- Ash Wednesday—Wednesday, February 18
  - \* "Ashes to Go"
  - \* Ash Wednesday Service
- Covered-Dish & Talent Show – Saturday, February 28



**\*\* 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](http://www.opequonchurch.org)

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# JANUARY 2026



### LIVESTREAM WORSHIP TIME CHANGE:

\*In 2026, we will begin livestreaming Sunday morning worship services at **11:00 AM**.

Unless otherwise indicated, livestreaming will occur at that time every Sunday moving forward. Thank you for worshiping with us and being flexible with our Livestream Team!

### CHURCH STAFF

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

### OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

217 Opequon Church Lane  
Winchester, VA 22602-2421

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

Phone:  
**540-662-1843**

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

Church Office Hours:  
**Monday—Thursday**  
**9:00 AM—2:00 PM**

**Friday**  
**9:00 AM—12:00 PM**

Sunday Worship Services:  
**8:30 AM (in-person)**  
**11:00 AM (in-person & livestream)**