

We spent the major portion of the meeting discussing the phased opening plan drafted by Pastors Lawrence and his team of worship leaders and staff. We made several suggestions that have been incorporated into the plan that Session will consider at the May meeting. The committee will survey the congregation regarding potential worship attendance under Covid-19 restrictions.

The final decision taken by the committee, after much discussion, was to inform the Trustees of Hopewell Church that we would not be going there for worship this year due to the conditions imposed by Covid-19 pandemic. This was a painful decision and one that was not taken lightly. We fully expect to return next year.

Pastors Marc and Lawrence investigated the possibility of doing a live stream service from the Hopewell site but discovered that the cell signal at that location was too weak.

## **STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE**

**Take Five:** The need at TOPPS and the children's Backpack program is desperate. S&F encourages our membership to give to them directly or through OPC. Bill King is preparing an article regarding an updated Wish List for the June newsletter. Our finances remain on target consistent with our budget. One reason is that online giving has increased since Covid has forced us into streaming Sunday worship services. We have 27 new online givers in 2020, and the average age is over 60. Who says an old dog can't learn new tricks?

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Pastor Marc announced that he received word that the summer Youth Mission Trip to Chicago has been cancelled. It was a difficult decision but, for the safety of all amid the coronavirus pandemic, it was felt that this was the wisest thing to do. The week will be May 24 will see the end of Elliott Jones Boyle's service as Youth Intern. We will continue to provide weekly videos to OPC children through the month of June.

## **TRUSTEES**

Construction of the handicapped-accessible bathroom in the Memorial should conclude by June 1. A recent water supply line break on the west side of the Memorial was fixed temporarily but will need a permanent replacement. The temporary work revealed the presence of a 6,000-gallon fuel tank buried in the same area. It hasn't been used for decades but its location makes routing the new water line difficult. While we are told we have no legal obligation to remove the tank, the potential for environmental damage must be weighed

against the cost of removal. Keith and Nick will obtain the necessary mulch and with volunteer help place it on Saturday May 9.

## **MISSION AND OUTREACH**

Take Five: Met with Alexander Steffanel, who represents our Colombia partnership, via Zoom, in lieu of his planned visit. Alexander updated us on our sister church in Barranquilla, the Seventh Church, which “is still being a church in spite of lockdown.” He spoke movingly about what our church means to him beginning with Mary Dodd Hunter’s vision in the 1990s for a Colombian connection. He spoke, in particular, of what Melanie Ziegler and Sue Wilson have meant to him and his family and said “I haven’t ever found a church like your church and I’m in the Bible belt.” Alexander and his family live in Cleveland, Tennessee where he is associate professor of Spanish at Lee University. \$1000 is being wired to our sister church in Barranquilla. In addition to the first grant of \$30,000 OPC received to pursue our congregational calls of Eradicating Systemic Poverty and Caring for Creation, our congregation was given another extraordinary opportunity. OPC was asked to refer community organizations that partner with us in responding to our congregational call for direct grants from the Myrtle Collaboration. FRC, TOPSS, Oxford Seniors and the Backpack Program submitted applications and were each awarded \$5000 grants!