



Rockfish Presbyterian Church
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Pastor: Inger O. Manchester
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Office Hours 9-1 Tuesday through Thursday
Worship Service on Sunday Mornings at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.;
Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

Volume 24 Issue 12

Spreading the Word

December 2023

This is the time of the year when pastors begin to think about Advent - how to tell the story of the birth of Jesus in a new and exciting way. I am not sure why we need that. The story itself is pretty riveting on its own.

This comes from a person who loves to change things up. Just ask my kids and my husband. I am a bit bad about traditions - mostly because it always seems like the mom (me) is in charge of the work behind it. What's that all about? So I tend to do whatever the mood strikes me and change is not always well received by my tradition loving family. I am also the queen of shortcuts. For example, each Christmas we have rice pudding for dessert. My mother would have all the grandchildren come over and they would stir the rice for hours as she added milk. Wonderful memories were made. I have discovered that an instapot does the job in less than 30 minutes. My kids are not pleased. I also changed the recipe because I wanted more flavor. Again, my kids were not pleased. It really did taste better.

My mother was great about traditions. She made a wonderful 3 course dinner each Christmas Eve, a variety of home baked cookies - at least 7 kinds. We could count on it every year. Now that she has gone to her heavenly home, I am left with a longing for those wonderful days. But not the time investment it takes to pull it off. Maybe one day I will be retired and have the time. We shall see.

My point is that sometimes tradition is wonderful and sometimes we just do not have the energy to make it happen. Personally I think both are okay. Christmas will still be Christmas without all of the decorations, the cookies, the perfect rice pudding. And don't get me started on the tree....

May all of you have a wonderful Christmas celebrating our Lord's birth. What an incredible gift! What an incredible story! Giving thanks to God for Jesus is what really matters. As the Grinch so wonderfully put it "“Maybe Christmas (he thought) doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more.”"

We will celebrate at the 10 am service with a Children's Nativity and the 5 o'clock evening service- both on Christmas Eve day which falls on a Sunday this year. We will have Silent Night with the candles at both- because, you know, tradition.

Merry Christmas!

~Pastor Inger

PS- My adult kids have decided they are all making the Christmas Dinner this year... even the pudding. My mother is smiling in heaven.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sue Nichols	01
Al Simpson	04
Laura Thibault	07
Kathie DeFusco	11
Jane Elliott	12
Marlene Howard	13
Arlie Saunders	13
Jill Averitt	14
Ann Mische	14
Chuck Thornsvar	14
Jeff Wilk	14
Savannah Averitt	16
Bob Rose	17
Lizelle Jacobs	18
Nathan Manthey	18
Bill Iverson	20
Paula Corder	21
Shirley McGatha	21
Alice Murphy	21
Betty Wren	22
Bev Lacey	24
Peggy Watts Gup	25
Dale Smith	26
Corinne Morgan	27
John Stuart	27
Ron Culberson	28



Happy
Birthday!

Inger's Inklings

Many of you have Advent Wreaths at home so I wanted to offer the same prayers we will be using for our wreath at church. I found these at Biblestudytools.com and liked their simplicity. I look forward to celebrating the Christmas Season with all of you.

Advent Wreath Prayers (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/>)

- **Prayer for Lighting the First Candle - Hope:** "Loving God, as we light the first Advent candle of hope, we ask for your presence to fill our hearts and homes. May the hope of Christ's coming bring light to our darkness and renew our spirits. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
- **Prayer for Lighting the Second Candle - Peace:** "God of peace, as we light the second Advent candle of peace, may your peace fill our hearts and our world. Help us to be peacemakers in our relationships and communities. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
- **Prayer for Lighting the Third Candle - Joy:** "Gracious God, as we light the third Advent candle of joy, may the joy of your salvation fill us with gladness. Help us to share this joy with others, especially those in need. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
- **Prayer for Lighting the Fourth Candle - Love:** "Heavenly Father, as we light the fourth Advent candle of love, may your love inspire us to love one another as you have loved us. Let your love guide our actions and words. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

On December 10 after the 10 am service we will have our second annual wrapped sock exchange! BRING A WRAPPED PAIR OF SOCKS—FUNNY OR ELSEWISE—ONE FOR EACH PARTICIPANT (for example 2 for a couple)

Join us for a soup lunch and we will have a rollicking time exchanging the socks. Be prepared to have your fave sock gift "stolen". Truly a fun time! Sign-up sheet in the narthex so we know how much soup to prepare.

Reminder: The office is closed the last week in December. The January STW will not be published until the first week in January. Please send to the church office by December 20 any announcements for the first week in January.

STW NEWSLETTER :

JAMIE HEARD

The deadline for submitting articles **electronically** for the **January** newsletter is **Tuesday, December 19.**

Email: rockfishpcus@gmail.com **Phone:** (434) 361-1221

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH



Adult Sunday School

Beginning December 3rd, the Adult Class will begin our Advent study by Adam Hamilton, Prepare The Way For The Lord. This study will concentrate on John the Baptist and the role he had in the ministry and message of Jesus' life. Advent is a time of preparation and what better way to prepare for Jesus' birth than to study how his life and ministry was announced from the stirring in Elizabeth's womb, that came to be John the Baptist, when pregnant Mary visited her cousin. That was the beginning of this fabulous relationship between two cousins. As Adam Hamilton states, " No other figure in scripture is more closely associated with this idea of preparation, of making people ready for the coming of Christ, than John the Baptist. Please join us at 9 a.m. in the Adult SS classroom in the basement. We will not have Sunday School on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve so the study will continue through January 14th.

Children's Sunday School - AND THANK YOU, YOUTH!!

Thank you to everyone who donated toothpaste and toothbrushes for the Children's Food Pantry bags! The donations will be packed in the December bags. We have increased the number of bags each month to 100 due to a request from the Food Pantry. For November, we were thrilled to have some "veteran" bag fillers join to help fill the bags. Quinn Averitt, Nathan and Zachary Manthey were able to share their years of experience packing food bags with the children.



Inger's Wednesday Lectionary Study - Join us in the library each Wednesday from 11:30 to 12:30 for insights and discussion about the Scripture selection for the coming Sunday.

The **RPC Book Club** will not meet in December, but will meet on the 4th Tuesday of January. If you are interested in joining, contact Leslie Buchanan.

Susan Luscomb, Chair
Christian Education Ministry Team

Youth News

The Ogilvie Family went on a family visit and asked Olivia to be sure to take pictures. She mentioned to Jill to be sure to find some older Youth! Lo and behold the busiest Youth appeared out of their deepest dens: Quinn and Gabriel appeared from their graduate research labs at Duke, Nathan Manthey put his first place Drama Trophy away, left practice for the State Finals, and together with his younger brother and Mother Kerrie, joined the primary students at Rockfish Presbyterian Church. Above are photographs of that happy homecoming! Wish you could have been there.

Holiday Services

- Christmas Eve—We will have two services— 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- New Years Eve— There will be a single Worship service at 10 a.m.

Mission Ministry



Your Mission Committee met on November 6th and finalized plans for the organization, packing, and delivery of Thanksgiving baskets (really boxes) to feed 149 people in Nelson County. This was due to the great organization by Sharon Gress and Wendy Culberson, your support, and all the members who volunteered to help pack and load. Ann Mische purchased and carried >300 lbs. of poultry! All boxes were delivered by November 20.

Wendy Culberson did another outstanding job (as usual) and all Care Bear tags had already been claimed before Thanksgiving. Please return gift bags by December 10th.

The children's Christmas party will be on December 3 from 3:30-6 p.m. Sign-up sheets for cookies and helpers are in the Narthex. Mark cookies that contain nuts.

The missionary to Haiti, Cindy Corell, who we have supported for many years, will be speaking briefly in January during the service, and give a more extended presentation regarding her work in Haiti after the service. All are invited to attend.

Our next meeting will be at 4 PM on Monday, December 4th, and anyone interested in helping or learning more about our work is welcome to attend.

~**Bill Iverson**, Mission Chairperson



LOOKING AHEAD: The Grounds Ministry Team is planning a leaf clean-up day on Thursday, January 11th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please join us for what is always a good, productive time together. Aaron Harris will be the new grounds keeper, and we are waiting for a quote for snow removal. We were generously given several evergreen shrubs and trees by the Nelson Master Gardeners which will be planted by the same. Thank you, Mary Hopkins for coordinating this donation. Our plans for 2024 are to do more pruning to preserve our historic trees, tidy-up the existing beds, and expand on plantings keeping low maintenance in mind. If you have an interest in joining this Ministry Team, please let me know (cab9e@virginia.edu).

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Borgman

If you purchased a poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary, Thank You! Please pick up your poinsettia after the 5 p.m. Christmas Eve service or the week after.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS 11/28/2023

Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the Session Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. with prayer. Elder Bill Iverson presented devotions and prayer. Prayers were asked for Kate's mom celebrating her 93rd birthday, Sally Bryant looking at knee surgery, Ken and Jeri's daughter Jamie, Dave LeGrow's son, and Elizabeth Hopkins and family.

Christy Ruta shared her faith journey with Session and was unanimously approved for Active Membership.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Rev. Inger Manchester reported that she is still hopeful that the Israel trip scheduled for December 2024 will occur. She is also looking at a possible Iona Scotland trip in the summer of 2024.

CLERK'S REPORT:

- Session approved the minutes of the Stated Meeting 10/17/23; approved the minutes of the Congregational Meeting 11/5/23; and elected Cathy LeGrow to serve as Clerk of Session beginning 1/1/24.

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE: Elder Mac Lumpkin presented a positive Stewardship Committee Report and presented 3 motions that Session approved:

- The Ministry Team has approved a one-time \$10,000 allocation from the church's funds to support any legal or other costs the church might incur in dealing with the zoning/planning commission issue regarding the property adjacent to the church. I move the Session endorse this action by the Stewardship Ministry Team.
- The Ministry Team has established a new Fund called the Helping Hands Fund. I move the Session endorse this action by the Stewardship Ministry Team.
- The Stewardship Ministry Team has endorsed a document entitled *Governance Policy for the various funding streams at Rockfish Presbyterian Church*. This amended document describes and updates the various funding streams we currently have at our church and how they are to be governed starting 01 January 2024 (with the start of our new budget year). We believe this document will give us all a clearer understanding of our funding streams and greater transparency and consistency in how they are governed – all ultimately under the oversight of the Session. I move the Session endorse this document and the policies contained in it.

MINISTRY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS/MOTIONS:

- Elder Mary Hopkins (Worship Ministry Team) brought the following motion to approve the Proposal of a Music and Worship Internship for 2024 - under the supervision and mentorship of Minister of Music, to provide a training ground to those who serve God in the field of music and worship, developing musically gifted individuals. Intern candidate for 2024 identified (Alyssa Camejo – University of Lynchburg); included in proposed 2024 budget. Session approved this.
- Elder Sandy Gallagher (Outreach Ministry Team) outlined many of the activities being sponsored by Outreach and asked for permission from Session to ask the Congregation for volunteers for Habitat for Humanity, which Session approved. Note the date of the RPC Talent Show: 2/13/24.
- Elder Bill Iverson (Mission Ministry Team) reported that Cindy Corell, missionary to Haiti will speak at a 10:00 service, date TBD. He also brought a motion to place in the Narthex up to 10 pictures of Albanian children who need a sponsor for individual sponsorships by RPC members. Cost to support each child is \$49 a month. Session approved this.
- Elder Kathy Kristiansen (Liaison Grounds Ministry Team) reported for Cheryl Borgman, new Chair, that they are looking for more members of the Ministry Team; that a leaf clean-up day is scheduled for 1/11/24; and that budgeted tree work not completed in 2023 will be budgeted for 2024. See Spreading the Word for more information.
- Elder Susan Luscomb (Christian Education Ministry Team) reported that Adult Sunday School begins a new Advent study 'Prepare the Way for the Lord'. Children's Sunday School has increased the monthly number of food bags to 100, as requested by the Food Pantry and is looking for a new curriculum beginning in 2024. Inger's Wednesday class continues its study of the Scripture for the weekly sermon.
- Elder Sally Bryant (Personnel Ministry Team) presented an updated job description for the Minister of Music, which Session approved.

CELEBRATION AND GRATITUDE:

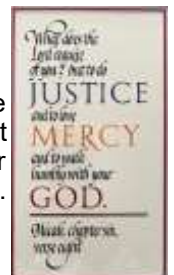
We give thanks for:

- Cathy LeGrow who will serve as RPC's next Clerk of Session beginning 1/1/24.
- From Sue: As I rotate off Session, I thank all of you who have supported and encouraged me for the past 7 years as Clerk. My time as Clerk have been a wonderful learning experience and a perfect avenue for me to serve both God and RPC. As I move to chairing Congregational Life, look to hear from me as together we provide meals, cards, fellowship hours, and fun activities for the church. Thank you also for the beautiful framed calligraphy of Micah 6:8, which now hangs in our dining room.

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 8:19 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting Tuesday, 1/16/24 at 7:00 PM, in the Library. Kate Humphrey Chambers will have Devotions and Opening Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Fulton, Clerk





December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 8:00 a.m. Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service 3:30-6 p.m. Children's Christmas Party Five Cents a Meal Offering	4 4:00 p.m. Mission Team Meeting	5 9:30 a.m. Outreach Ministry Meeting	6 10:00 a.m. Knitting and Nurture 11:30 Scripture Discussion	7 Noon—Men's Group Lunch	8	9
10 8:00 a.m. Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Pack Pantry Bags for Kids 11:00 Sock Exchange w/Soup Lunch 5:00 p.m. Pub Theology at Brewing Tree	11 5:00 p.m. Stewardship Meeting	12	13 10:00 a.m. Knitting and Nurture 11:30 Scripture Discussion	14 Noon—Men's Group Lunch 3:30 Rockfish Ringers 4:30 Rockfish Community Children's Choir	15	16
17 8:00 a.m. Worship Service 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service	18	19 Spreading The Word Articles Due	20 10:00 a.m. Knitting and Nurture 11:30 Scripture Discussion	21	22 Pantry Bag Packing	23 9:00 a.m. Distribution at Food Pantry
24 10:00 a.m. Christmas Eve Service Christmas Joy Offering and Emergency Relief Offering 5:00 p.m. Candlelight Service 31 10:00 a.m. Worship Service	25 	26	27	28	29	30