

— December 2025 —

Spreading the Word

Welcome as you are, where you are.

Volume 26, Issue 12



INSIDE, WE ALSO TALK ABOUT:

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Seminar

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Rockfish Presbyterian Church

Preparing for the New Year

by Pastor Inger

This past year I have been reading through the Bible using a journal. The program I have been using is *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble, and I do recommend it.

Each day there is an assigned Bible reading, and you journal what you “hear” in the passage and what questions are raised for you. I have really enjoyed waking up each morning with purpose and, I plan to do it again this upcoming year.

There is also a *Bible Recap Guide*, and a podcast and probably a lot more. Personally, I liked just using the journal and my Bible, but I did occasionally wonder what the *Recap Guide* would say so it was nice to have.

There are other “read the Bible in a year” programs and I am sure they are good. I just used this one and liked it. So if you have never read the Bible or have tried and failed,

Continued...

New Year, continued...

or maybe haven't read it in a long time, this might be a good option for you. It really is a joy to be in God's Word every day before anything else gets started. For me it has become like church—if I miss a day I feel a bit discombobulated. The reading and thinking set my intentions for the day.

We are about to begin a New Year. Imagine if everyone in our world began their day in scripture? I believe hearts would soften and hope would rise to the forefront. We would remember to Whom we belong and Who is the judge. We would sense our own part in God's Story and feel the Presence of the Holy Spirit here to guide us.

***"to the one who knocks,
the door will be opened"***

So in 2026 will you join me in this endeavor? If you need help ordering this or something else I would be happy to help. <https://www.thebiblerecap.com/> It can also be found on Amazon and on Christian book distributors.

Oh, and one more thing. I did not "do" this perfectly. There were busy weeks where I missed a few days and then had to catch up. I had this idea of getting up at 5:30 AM, lighting a candle and spending time in scripture and with God. When I did it, it was fabulous.

However, life got in the way. I imperfectly moved forward anyway. One day at a time, one page at a time. And God blessed my endeavor. God will bless yours too—Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened".

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!
Pastor Inger

*Thank
you*

Thank you to everyone who helped shop, count, pack and deliver **Thanksgiving food bags!** RPC helped provide food for 68 families (close to 300 people) this year.



Five Wishes

End of Life Planning seminar

What would you do with five wishes? Does this story sound at all familiar?

“When my mother’s cancer had left her so weakened and confused that I had to step in to make decisions for her as her health care agent, all the medical decisions were difficult enough.

But when the time came to make a variety of end-of-life decisions, it became excruciating. I had information from the doctors, but I wasn’t sure what her choices would be.

She had **estate planning documents**, but we had never discussed death or—much more difficult—the dying process, and the weight of all these decisions tormented me, causing me tremendous distress.

Even once I had made the decisions which ended her life, I was haunted by guilt—all while realizing had I chosen differently, I might still have felt guilt about making the wrong decision and causing her pain to continue.

Although she had named me to make decisions, my siblings didn’t always agree. **I wish I had known what she wanted me to do.** It still bothers me.”

If you were critically or terminally ill, **what guidance would you want your loved ones to have about your wishes?** What quality of life would make it worth living, or how should your final months, weeks or days be spent? In a hospital or at home? Are you afraid of death? Or perhaps the dying process?



Naming a health care agent in your estate planning documents is a good start, but chances are you haven’t adequately addressed all the details if you are unable to make these crucial decisions yourself.

The Five Wishes booklet will help you decide and convey detailed information about your preferences. This booklet provides prompts and offers options for a wide variety of medical situations you may not have considered. The rapid increase in cases of dementia and Alzheimer’s alone make this document a critical part of your estate plan.

On January 11 and 18 following the 10:30 service, RPC will offer a two-part program to help you tackle this tough issue, for your benefit and most importantly for your loved ones who may be put in the position of making these decisions on your behalf.

Bonnie Fisher of Hospice of the Piedmont and Susan Luscomb, retired estate planning attorney who used this booklet with her clients, will be discussing these issues. Susan will also talk about near-death and related experiences and what you can learn from them to help you discern and clearly convey to your family your feelings and wishes about final stages of your care.

Please sign up on the Five Wishes sheet in the narthex so we have sufficient booklets and other handouts. If you have any questions about the program, contact Susan at sluscomb5@gmail.com.



Two Weeks with the Good Shepherd Ministry Team

A few years ago, the Wood Ministry, while delivering wood, noticed additional needs among the families we serve. Home repairs, cars that no longer worked, supplemental heat, food... we tried to help when we could.

To institutionalize this, the Wood Ministry morphed into the Good Shepherd Ministry, where we attempt to help families with multiple needs. As Robin would say, “Holy mission creep, Batman.”

To do some of this work, funds were needed. The needy person fund, which was created by one church family, was merged with the Emergency Relief fund, and supplemented with contributions from Missions, and we now have the “Helping Hands-Emergency Relief Fund.” Helping Hands and Emergency Relief funds are combined but Emergency Relief disbursements (e.g., paying power bills to keep the electricity on) only require one rapid response approval, and Helping Hands payments require three approvals and often take a few days.

Two Weeks of Service

Our church is well-known in the community for being the “go to” church for serving those in need, but Good Shepherd cards are also placed in schools and in the sheriff’s office.

To give you an idea of how this ministry works, the following is actual activity of just two weeks this November.

- 1 wheeled backpack provided to a middle school student
- 1 washer and dryer donated
- 12 woodchucks worked on the woodpile to de-brush in preparation for the new wood season
- 1 new refrigerator purchased and delivered
- \$950 power bill covered and \$100 Food Lion card donated
- \$186 rental payment covered
- \$160 car battery purchase covered
- 1 car repair covered and personal car lent for the duration of service work
- 5 loads of firewood delivered to local families
- 2 supplemental heaters delivered
- 1 continuous wood delivery supply started to a new family
- 2 additional Thanksgiving meals supplied for families who were unaware of our sign-up list
- 5 more firewood loads delivered
- 4 Loaves and Fishes in C’ville food baskets delivered, with more deliveries planned for the future
- 2 families’ children enrolled in Care Bears

Whew. This was definitely not a typical two weeks! And what if Rockfish Presbyterian was not there?

Continued...

Good Shepherd continued...

Throughout the Year

In addition to this two-week period, the following are some of the activities of the Good Shepherd Ministry for the past few years.

- Christmas hams to all Good Shepherd/Wood Ministry households, for past 8 or so years
- \$1,000 donation toward a new furnace/AC split system (balance from Nelson County Development)
- Oil furnace repair
- Afton Service Center heavily discounted for major car repairs
- Cell phone purchases
- 10 smoke alarms to wood households
- 6 supplemental heaters to wood households as back up
- Medical expense funds
- \$3,000 of mortgage loan help, \$1,500 paid back and loan forgiven
- Wiring to make a household safe
- Application of SNAP benefits and increased SSI income
- Refrigerator donation
- Television donation
- Microwave donation



This doesn't begin to tell the story throughout the church... quiet Good Shepherds helping families who you don't hear about, or Missions delivering Thanksgiving and Easter food baskets and helping to support the year-round missions of others who serve.

Nelson County is a county with dramatic contrasts. The Wintergreen, Stoney Creek, retired 401K-ers, and yes, the Rockfish Presbyterian Church, are contrasted with poverty elsewhere in the county.

One family of five that we serve, receives about \$1,500 of public assistance every month. They pay for rent, school expenses, clothes, food and toiletries, utilities (phone and power), gas for medical trips, insurance, property taxes, etc. These might add up to \$1,450 per month, and all is well unless something unexpected happens—car repair, cold/heat wave making utility costs soar, medical co-pays. They have no family help, and they turn to us because they are out of options.

This is the reality throughout Nelson County, and thanks to the people of RPC the Good Shepherd Ministry can respond to the needs in our community faithfully.

Rick Winter
Good Shepherd Ministry Chair



Session Highlights



Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the Session Meeting to order at 7:00 PM with prayer. Elder Jeri Engebretson opened with devotion and prayer. Prayers were asked for Valerie & Lee Goodrich, Lance & Karissa Torcum, Susan Canton, Amelia's friend who is having bunion surgery, all those alone this Thanksgiving holiday.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Discussion on changing meeting time of Session. **MOTION: Change the January 20, 2026 Session meeting to 4:00 PM. APPROVED.** Discussed future time changes.

CLERK'S REPORT:

- **Approved the minutes of the Stated Session Meeting of 10-21-25.**
- **Approved 2026 schedule for Session Mtgs., Called Membership Mtgs. and Devotions.**
- **Approved nomination of Rita Scott as Clerk of Session beginning Jan. 1, 2026.**
- **Approved Congregational Mtg. on Dec. 21 to elect Rita Scott as an Elder.**
- **Approved motion to schedule Annual Congregational Mtg. on January 25, 2026.**
- **Approved motion to hold Annual RPC, Inc. Mtg. on June 16, 2026, immediately following June Session Mtg.**

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE: Elder Dave Lawson reported the church remains in good financial condition.

NEW BUSINESS: Elders Jeri Engebretson and Kathy Kristiansen gave brief reports to Session on POJ meetings they attended via zoom.

MINISTRY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS/MOTIONS:

- Elder Mary Hopkins (Worship Ministry Team) reported the team will be reducing their face-to-face (in person) meetings to 4/year. Committee business will be conducted via email as needed. The team is still looking for new members. Elder Jeri Engebretson announced the Hanging of the Greens will take place Nov. 23. The decorations will be in the Library and each item will be marked as to where it goes.
- Elder Nancy Johnson (Facilities Management) – Elders Nancy & Ken Engebretson explained the long process of assessing the church's audio needs. After extensive research the team, along with the support of Stewardship, put forth the following **MOTION: To approve the complete audio system replacement for a price to not exceed \$27,000. APPROVED.**

Continued...

If you are interested in becoming a member of our church

we would love to speak with you! Here are the dates when the session will receive new members in 2026 following the 10:30 service.

Please let Inger know if you are interested, rpcimanchester@gmail.com.

Jan. 11, 2026 • Apr. 12, 2026 • Aug. 9, 2026 • Nov. 8, 2026



Fun and games at the Trick or Treat Trail party!



Session Highlights continued...

- Elder Amelia McCulley [Personnel] reported the committee developed and approved a Medical/Sick Leave Policy. Bonus checks will be distributed to the staff in December.
- Elder Phil DeFusco [Liaison Missions Ministry Team] reported the Missions Fair was a great success. Many of the organizations that participated made connections with other organizations and discussed ways they could work together. This was an unexpected benefit. RPC will be providing Thanksgiving food to 64 families (252) people. Gift cards will be provided to the families to purchase turkeys.
- Outreach Ministry Report – The “Where We Are” Support group is regularly attended by 5 or 6 people who greatly appreciate this meeting. Several people have felt the group helped them move on (Graduated). Thanks to Inger & Mike for their dedicated support. Blue Ridge Respite is looking for volunteers. Monthly meetings for RPC singles for fellowship, (not for dating), are being organized. Initial meeting will be held at Iron & Ale, Jan. 21 at 4:00 PM. Watch for more info in the church newsletter.

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 8:00 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting Tuesday, January 20 at 4:00 PM in the Library. Elder Phil DeFusco will have the Devotion and Opening Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy LeGrow, Clerk

Membership – Active Members – 193

Affiliate Members – 14

December Birthdays

AL SIMPSON	04
LAURA THIBAUT	07
JOANNE MUSE	08
KATHIE DEFUSCO	11
MARLENE HOWARD	13
ARLIE SAUNDERS	13
JILL AVERITT	14
ANN MISCHÉ	14
CHUCK THORNSVARD	14
JEFF WILK	14
TAYLOR MADISON	15
KARENA HELLER	16
AVA DOWELL	17
LIZELLE JACOBS	18
NATHAN MANTHEY	18
BILL IVERSON	20
PAULA CORDER	21
BETTY WRENN	22
BEV LACEY	24
BRIAN ROBERTS	25
JJ TOOMBS	25
PEGGY WATTS GUP	25
CORINNE MORGAN	27
JOHN STUART	27
RON CULBERSON	28
LYNETTE TULLY	30



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Tue., Wed., Thu. 9 AM — 1 PM

Pastor Inger O. Manchester
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Join us for worship

Sundays 8:30 and 10:30 AM

Adult Sunday School & Middle
School 9:30 AM

Children's Sunday School during
10:30 Service

Worship services are recorded and
available via [YouTube](#).

December Church Social

DECEMBER 19 at 4:30 PM
Bronwyn White's home

The **Mission Fair** was a wonderful success as we learned about all the groups our church supports and enjoyed a visual representation of God's work in our world!



NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE for the January issue: **Dec. 31**
Word count preferred for submissions: 400 words or less.



**Click here to view
a live version of
the current
[RPC Calendar.](#)**

Inger's Inklings

by Pastor Inger



My brain is about to explode. Do you know what I mean? There are so many thoughts to think, books to read, things to ponder, viewpoints to question, people to love on, anxieties to overcome, places to visit, boundaries to cross, sermons to write, and stuff to learn so I can talk about it with intelligence... It's a lot.

And the fact is, I am doing life from a place of privilege. I don't have to worry about my next meal, my heating costs, my current health status, or if I will have health insurance. Will border control come for me or my family? Or, or, or...

Yet my privileged head is still about to explode. I call it the "Christmas Season Fa-la-la-la-la" syndrome. Do you experience it, too? All of a sudden on TOP of regular life comes the Christmas whirlwind. Ho, ho, ho and all that stuff.

As a mom, a "Bessy" (grandmom), and a pastor, Christmas is supposed to be a time of peace, love and joyful laughter. Some pastors call it their favorite time of the year. I can't help but question their integrity... or maybe my own sanity?

Let's face it—it's a time of enormous stress for many people. All of a sudden everyone wants it to be "perfect" and "memorable" and make perfectly decorated sugar cookies.

My mom was the consummate Christmas deliverer—seven kinds of cookies, perfect Christmas Eve dinner, beautifully thoughtful gifts.

It is a fabulous memory, and I cannot live up to it. Is anyone vibing with me here? I really miss her, and wish I could say "Wow!" to her one more time.

I am not sure we appreciated how much it took for our mothers or grandmothers to do this year after year—although it sure is remembered with love—but also with a drop of anxiety that I can't even begin to duplicate it.

And into all of this—let's face it, manufactured stress—comes the still small voice of Jesus. Come, worship me. It is enough. You are enough. No one needs seven kinds of cookies...

Luke 2:4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

No decorated cookies, no Christmas tree, no twinkling lights... but LOVE and WONDER were there in abundance. Stillness, quiet, love. Stop and look for Jesus in those moments. The Spirit will guide you. Maybe we CAN keep it simple this year. Breathe in, breathe out.

Merry Christmas Season, everyone.

In Christ's Unfailing Love,
Pastor Inger

