

— April 2026 —

Spreading the Word

Welcome as you are, where you are.

Volume 27, Issue 4



Holy Week

Apr 2, 5:30 PM
Maundy Thursday

Apr 3, 5:30 PM
Good Friday

Apr 5
6:30 AM **Easter sunrise outdoors**
9:00 AM **Easter worship**
10:00 AM **Easter Fellowship**
11:00 AM **Easter Worship & Children's Play**

Following Service
Children's Egg Hunt
Bring flowers to flower the cross!

NOTE time changes for Easter services from our regular Sunday Worship Service schedule.



Rockfish Presbyterian Church

Worshipping other gods?

by Pastor Inger

As I wrote in my last newsletter, I have been taking a course called *Leading with Spirit*. Let me begin by saying I felt called to take this course, but honestly I don't think I knew what I was getting into.

It is on Zoom, and there are ministers and others from all over the country enrolled. One particular class was called *Reconnecting with the Female Divine*. I thought it would be about how the patriarchal movement has diminished the female voice in scripture and in the Church overall.

For example there is great discussion about whether Junia was a female apostle. This is the scripture—"Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was." (Rom 16:7 NIV) Here is an interesting article on this in case you are interested, [Junia, a Female Apostle: An Examination of the Historical Record - CBE International](#)

However, that is not where the class went. The teacher spoke about Asherah. The worship of Asherah is throughout the Bible. She was a fertility goddess. When Asa reigned in Judah, "He banished

Continued...

Worshipping other gods, continued...

the male and female shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his ancestors had made. He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made an obscene Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley.” (1 Kings 15:12–13, NLT; see also 2 Chronicles 15:16).

The Jews had been commanded by the Lord to tear down and completely destroy all the high places and sacred sites throughout the territory. But Israel disobeyed God and worshipped idols anyway, even bringing Asherah worship into the Temple in Jerusalem.

Ahab introduced his wife Jezebel’s pagan gods into Jewish worship by importing 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah (1 Kings 18:1–46). A famous Asherah pole stood in Samaria in the days of King Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:6).
Who Is Asherah in the Bible?

The Bible is very clear that there is only ONE GOD to worship. So imagine my surprise when the class leader made her point that when the Patriarchy threw out Asherah, “who was the first to be worshiped in the temple, it was an error and females lost something of value.” What? The leader spoke incorrectly! She was misleading people who did not know their scriptures or history. The leader made it sound as if worship of one God was a mistake. I went back and relistened, and it was indeed the message.



📷 Gideon swings an axe at an Asherah pole.
Peter Dennis / Getty Images

I will say that other things in this class were of value, but I have to admit I learned a big lesson. I think God wanted me to open my mind and recognize that there are many, many people—smart and caring people—who do not know all that our Lord has to offer.

For example, in our class break out there was a wonderful woman—so kind and doing great things in this world. She said she had given up on Christianity because Christians in her experience do not represent Christ. She is now exploring other ways of worship. Again, it made me sad that as Christians we can push people away. We come across as judgmental, unloving and critical.

We need to know that worship of other gods is a very real option and being presented in this world in a very inviting way. As Christ followers we represent Christ. We do not call people to Christ, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. However, how we speak and act is very important.

I believe we are each made to worship and will search until our heart finds rest. I do not think it is a surprise that my morning Bible reading the day after the class was this—“*If a prophet, or one who foretells*

Continued...

Worshipping other gods, continued...

by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, 2 and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him." (Deuteronomy 13:1-4 13)

Thank you Lord for opening my eyes to recognize that the allure of following other gods is real. Our call as your followers is to live lives that invite people to know you as you are. A God who loves mercy, loves justice, is forgiving and always faithful. We are not the judge, we are the inviter. You are the God above all gods (Deuteronomy 10:17) and the only God worth our worship and praise. May we always, in every way, remember this.

By God's grace, may we be a living light for others.

In the Lord's love, Pastor Inger

Celebration for Sue Nichols

Saturday, May 23, 4 PM



Sue Nichols is retiring from her volunteer job as Disbursing Treasurer. She has done this work for the church for over 20 years! WOW! We are going to celebrate this dedication to Rockfish at Inger and Lee's home on May 23 at 4 PM.

It will be a potluck, bring a chair, bring something to drink, celebration! We will have lawn games out and fun conversation. The door to Bessy and Pop Pops play room will be open to receive little visitors.

The whole church is invited - and as it gets closer we can set up a carpool situation so the neighbors don't freak out. If it rains we will be in the Fellowship Hall. Please join in the revelry as we celebrate Sue!

Education News

Jeri Engebretson
Christian Education

Tuesdays Together this Spring are in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the 200th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's death. Everyone is invited to join for potluck dinners and presentations by Louie Andrews, docent at Monticello and former pastor at RPC.

We will be meeting Tuesdays in May from 5:00 – 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall.

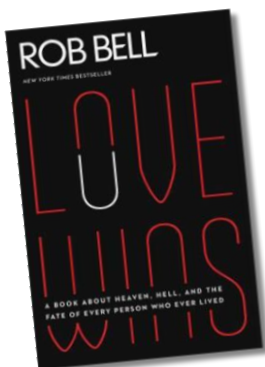
The Complexities of Thomas Jefferson will be discussed:

May 5 - The Declaration of Independence
May 12 - Jefferson's religious views
May 19 - Jefferson and slavery
May 26 - Jefferson's relationship with John and Abigail Adams.

Bring a dish to share and enjoy this educational presentation as we celebrate our country's 250th birthday!

The Adult Sunday School class will begin the book, *Love Wins* by Rob Bell.

The study will begin April 19. This is a discussion-oriented class and all are welcome to attend. We meet at 9:30 Sunday mornings downstairs in Class Room 5.



Vacation Bible School

Monday, June 29 – Thursday, July 2
9 AM – 12 PM

We are excited to offer a Vacation Bible School this year!

I AM WHO I AM:
Images of God in Scripture and the Arts

Calling all volunteers and campers!

From the opening verse of Genesis, we know God as one who creates. God speaks, “Light!” and creation has begun. By the time the writer of Genesis concludes the sixth day, we know ourselves to be made in God’s image. That means that we, too, are creators.

Art & the Bible Camp is a space where students explore creativity, both as a process and a product, through the visual arts in conversation with scripture. This four-day long arts experience introduces various media and techniques as ways to amplify and interpret scripture.

Art & the Bible Camp is intended for children who have completed K–6 grades. Older kids would be great helpers!

Bronwyn White
VBS Director

Mission Notes

Dana Ogilvie, Missions co-chair

The Mission Committee met in March to allocate the money this generous church gives us to donate. The list of groups to which you, through this committee, are donating is the following:

1) Global Contributions are going to CEDEPCA, Haiti Outreach Ministries, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Fund, the Presbyterian Hunger Fund, and World Central Kitchen.

2) Regional Contributions (Virginia) are going to Georgia's Friends, Hospice of the Piedmont, Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA), the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), and Camp Hanover.

3) Local Area Contributions (Nelson County and contiguous jurisdictions) are going to All Blessings Flow, Dogs Deserve Better, Habitat for Humanity Piedmont, Heritage Center Food Panty, Horizon House Day Support (Region Ten), Houses of Wood and Straw (for animals), Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA), Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA), Nature Foundation at Wintergreen Kids Camp, NC High School,

NC Middle School, NC Community Development Fund, Nelson County Food Pantry, Nelson Kid Care, Rockfish Elementary School, Tye River Elementary, BRR Nelson Respite Center, Unity in Community, Central VA Farm Workers Initiative, Building Goodness Foundation, the Gladstone Senior Center, the Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary, Camp Light, the Sheriff's Special Programs, Loaves and Fishes Charlottesville.

4) Direct Church Projects include Easter and Thanksgiving "Baskets," Goodness Grows church community garden, the Wool & Grace knitting group, the Light in the Valley Scholarship(s), and an MLK Scholarship.

5) The Committee has retained some funds which are intended to aid issues/projects not yet identified but that may come up in the future 2026.

On behalf of all those receiving these funds, thank you so much for your generosity!

Your Mission Committee

Yard Sale

The RPC Yard/Bake Sale has been rescheduled for **Saturday, October 31**. It will be called **The Halloween Fair** and will include the Yard & Bake Sale and will also be a great day for the kids with Trick or Treating, Costume Parade, games, etc! Mark your calendars for this special day...and keep adding to your items to sell!

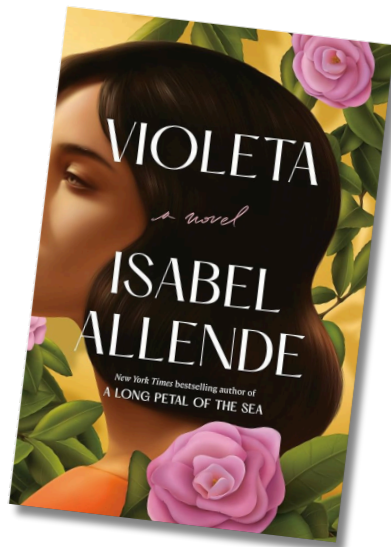
Sandy Gallagher, Outreach Chair



What we're reading in the RPC Book Club

Violeta by Isabel Allende

Told in the form of a letter to someone Violeta loves above all others, this is the story of a hundred-year life – of devastating heartbreak and passionate affairs, poverty and wealth, terrible loss and immense joy. Bearing witness to a century of history, it is a life shaped by the fight for women's rights, the rise and fall of tyrants and, ultimately, not one but two pandemics.



Food bags share Easter love with neighbors

Thanks to everyone who helped organize, shop, pack, and deliver Easter Bags to local families!



And thanks to the children for creating custom artwork for cards that accompanied the bags with Easter greetings.





Session Highlights



Rockfish Presbyterian Church (RPC) SESSION HIGHLIGHTS 3-17-26

Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the RPC Session Meeting to order at 4:00 PM with prayer. Elder Kathy Kristiansen opened with devotion and prayer. Prayers were asked for Harris Luscomb, Katie Luscomb and Connie Underwood's mother, Cordelia. All are dealing with medical issues.

New Business:

- Church Administrator, Trae Turner, recommended the following initiatives for 2026:
 - 1. Update RPC Website
 - 2. Update to online version of PowerChurch Plus, the church administration software package that would coordinate/merge outdated version of current PowerChurch Plus's CDs currently in use
 - 3. Consider an Online Member Directory in the future
 - More investigation and discussion to follow on these three items.
 - 4. Adapt Google Workspace to digitize church information/documents
- **[MOTION] to adapt Google Workspace to digitize church information/documents. It is free for nonprofit organizations. In-house training will be provided as needed. APPROVED**
- **[MOTION] to accept the RPC Nominating Committee's presentation of Elders-Elect for Class of 2029: Bronwyn White, Bill Muse, and Dave Lawson (returning for a second term). APPROVED**
- Elder Kathy Kristiansen reported on the Presbytery of the James Stated Meeting, virtually attended on 2.21.26.

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.

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



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

Newsletter Articles Due

for the May issue:

April 22

Max word count for
submissions is
400 words.

Session Highlights continued...

Pastor's Report:

- **[MOTION] to approve Stewardship Committee offer a gift on behalf of RPC to Sue Nichols for 20 years as dispersing treasurer for the Church (to be presented at a social event scheduled for 5.23.26, 4 PM at Pastor Inger's home, entire congregation invited). APPROVED**
- **[MOTION] to approve Rev. Manchester's request to attend a Spiritual Direction Program in 2026-2027. Cost will be covered under her Continuing Education Funding. Two substitute pastors will be required for the program's weekend retreats. APPROVED**

Clerk's Report:

- **[MOTION] approve minutes of Stated Session Meeting 2.17.26. APPROVED**
- **[MOTION] approve moving Kristen, Brady, Francesca and Ella Nicks from inactive to active membership. APPROVED**

Ministry Team Reports:

- Elder Phil Defusco (Liaison Missions Ministry Team) – Report

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 5 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 4 PM in the Library.
Elder Mary Hopkins will have Devotions and Opening Prayer.

Membership: 196 Active Members, 14 Affiliate Members

April Birthdays

SUSAN BROWN 02

JAMIE HEARD 03

LEE MANCHESTER 04

JENNIFER TUCKER 06

DEB ANDREWS 07

STUART ARMSTRONG 07

VALERIE GOODRICH 07

PHILLIP NEWSOME 08

BILL HOWARD 09

MARILYN PACE 10

JON RATHKE 20

BEN HOLMES 22

DOTTIE WINTER 22

MARCIA WINFIELD 24

IVAR DOWELL 25

BILL KAMPMEIER 25

JERI ENGEBRETSON 26

JOAN BONHEYO 27

SANDI AVERITT 29



Rockfish Presbyterian Church
Mail: P.O. Box 278
Visit: 5016 Rockfish Valley Hwy
Nellysford, VA 22958

434-361-1221
rockfishpcus@gmail.com
www.rockfishpresbyterian.org

Office Hours
Tue., Wed., Thu. 9 AM — 1 PM

Pastor Inger O. Manchester
704-252-0924
rpcimanchester@gmail.com

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

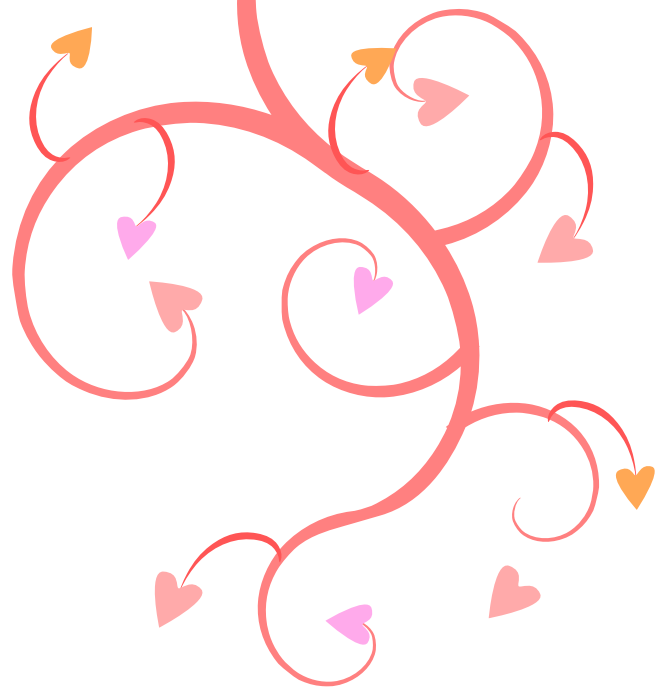
Worship services are recorded and
available via [YouTube](#).

Follow us on Facebook



Inger's Inklings

by Pastor Inger



Planting Gifts for Future You

I love to listen to KLOVE (88.3) when I drive. Listening to worship music is so uplifting, and often I find myself blaring it in the car. Which, for me, is amazing because I really dislike loud music.

In between songs they have little segments that relate to everyday life. This particular one hit me and I thought I would share. The topic was, **“doing favors for the future you.”**

The point is for you to think about doing something now that the future you would appreciate. **A gift to you from you, done with intention.**

An example is to iron and get ready your outfits for the next few days so all you have to do is put them on. Which, on those mornings, would make you smile. Or meal prep for the upcoming week so all you had to do was finish the meal. Or even plan out your exercise and have your clothes set up, or **maybe call a friend that will motivate you** that week so you don't skip out.

You get the point. A favor done for the future you.

I love looking at it that way. Galatians 6:7 reminds us that a person reaps what he or she sows. **So maybe let's all try to plant a few gifts for our future selves and then be grateful.** Love on ourselves a little bit so that it sets us up for joyful days.

Let me know how it works for you!
Pastor Inger