As I write this I am sitting on my deck watching the hummingbirds, shushing the dogs as they bark at our visiting deer and feeling the cool breeze. My son and his wife have just left and have proclaimed more than once how happy they are to have us closer and how beautiful this area is. Our house is now in order - furniture in, boxes mostly unpacked and pictures on walls. We even had a baby snake visitor this morning to greet my daughter-in-law. The snake, not Eileen, was relocated.

Now I begin to ponder when will this house become our home? After living in our NC house for over 23 years I still feel like I am on vacation and will be returning “home”. I know this must be a normal feeling but it leads me to have so much more compassion for those who have been uprooted due to famine, war, conflict or, for financial reasons, have to move - those who do not choose to move, those who are not able to settle somewhere and begin the journey to creating a new place to be called home.

I am reminded of the Biblical people complaining about their time wandering in the desert, about Paul and his missionary journeys, even today about our men and women who serve our country and move time after time to new posts. And of course, the people of Ukraine.

What, after all, is a home? It is a hard question to answer. Perhaps the answer is different for all of us. Some quotes that spoke to me -

“Home is where love resides, memories are created, friends and family belong, and laughter never ends.” Unknown

“Home is where my habits have a habitat.” Fiona Apple

“You can have more than one home. You can carry your roots with you, and decide where they grow.” Henning Mankell

“A house is made of brick and mortar, but home is made by the people who live there.” M. K. Soni

I know that one day I will consider this house my home. I certainly recognize how completely blessed we are to have a house and a community as wonderful as this one to form into our home.

Soon I will have memories of laughter and stories here. Soon I will be hosting friends and family in our home. Soon when I think of home I will think of this place. I may even befriend the bears.

Perhaps Proverbs 24:3-4 says it best - By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

May all our homes be filled with precious and pleasant riches that money can not buy. May we also remember those who do not have homes, those who have been torn from their homes and those who long to return to their war torn homes again.

Finally I thank so many of you for inviting me into your homes. So much gracious hospitality. It is my greatest joy to visit and I look forward to doing more of it in the months to come.

Blessings,

Inger
Greetings Everyone

THANK YOU for your welcoming spirit. I am excited about beginning our music ministry. After only two weeks of serving as your Minister of Music, I have met many of you and heard terrific stories about the legacy of your music ministry. Together, I hope we can continue this tradition and grow our ministries to include our community children as well as additional vocal (vocal duets/trios/quartets) and instrumental (folk, hand chimes) ensembles.

This past Sunday, our children chimed the hour to open our worship service. In mid-September, RPC will begin a community children ministry that will include songs, chimes, and drumming in addition to bible stories, creativity, and snacks.

After a long, pandemic break, we are finally able to ease into singing praises to God. I want to offer a special thank you to all of the musicians who worked, served, and sang during this transitional time. Your service is greatly appreciated.

Our adult choir will begin our fall season with ‘Songs and Snacks’, a music reading session on Thursday September 1st. All are welcomed to attend. If you are interested in participating in choir, singing solos/duets/trios, or playing an instrument please contact me, Dr. Cynthia B. Ramsey (email – ramsey.c@lynchburg.edu) or by phone (434) 851-9191.

I feel that God is blessing this church and all its varied ministries. Together, with Inger’s leadership, I believe that we can continue to be a light in the valley.

I look forward to meeting each of you.

Blessings,

Cynthia
Be sure to put **September 7th at 6pm** on your calendar for a chili supper provided by RPC (not potluck - just come) and a film to kick off **Wednesday evening Kirk Night programs**. Regular mid-week get-togethers will resume that night, beginning with an amazing 8-part film series called ‘The Chosen’ which follows Jesus’ ministry. Plan to come on September 7th to break bread together, watch the film and join in the facilitated discussion led by Pastor Inger.

On **September 11th**, the **Adult Sunday School class** will begin our series on Christianity and World Religions by having a wonderful guest speaker, Elona Prroj, from Albania. She became a Christian in a country that forced everyone to become Moslem. Those who stayed Christian needed to worship “underground.” In Albania there is a culture called, “blood revenge.” If a relative murders a person, every male in the family is liable for that murder. In 2005, Elona’s pastor husband’s uncle murdered a man in a restaurant. From that time on, every male in her family was under house arrest, including their 4 year old son. In 2010, while Pastor Prroj risked going to his church, he was gunned down by a man seeking the “blood revenge.”

Elona Prroj forgave the killer and is now the founder of the **No to Blood Feud - Yes to Life Foundation**, a foundation that is active in the fight against blood feud and provides holistic help for families who suffer from the this phenomenon in the north of Albania. Please join us on September 11th during Sunday School at 9:00 to hear her moving story.

Plans are also underway to begin a **Children’s Sunday School** during the 10am service. If you have any interest in helping with the children, please email me at sluscomb5@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
*Susan Luscomb, Chair*

**A Word on our Facility Usage**

Beginning in September, we were hoping to see a much increased use of RPC on Fridays from 11am to 3pm! The Nelson County 4-H Homeschool Co-op, a non-profit group, sought us out as a potential site for their classes during the majority of the school year. They had outgrown their previous site and will have up to 75 youth of varying age groups who will use multiple meeting areas in our building. They are not a drop-off program and all children have at least one parent on-site at all times. These volunteers make up the backbone of their group, teaching classes, serving as assistants, working the nursery, cleaning, monitoring playgrounds and outdoor activities, planning programs, and organizing social events and service activities. This model is what makes their group a true cooperative of people willing to give their time and talents for their children’s education and development.

Our Session elders had considerable discussion and incorporated several changes to our Facility Use Policy (located on the RPC website [http://rockfishpresbyterian.org/index.php/about/policies/]), and initiated a new comprehensive Facility Use Agreement that is appropriate for larger, more intensive uses of RPC by groups. The 4-H group will be complying with all of our policies, especially concerning COVID.

We unanimously agreed that RPC would be a wonderful fit for their group this year, but we need to ensure that proper liability insurance is in place to protect RPC as well as the 4-H Homeschool Co-op in case of accidents or damage occurring to anyone or the property itself.

We are in the process of having an independent legal review of the arrangement and all paperwork prior to beginning this new activity at RPC. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. Stay tuned for updates as we proceed!

Submitted by
*Ken Engebretson,*
Chairman of the Facilities Management Team
A big thank you to Cheryl Borgman, Dana & Sophie Ogilvie and Kerrie, Nate and Zack Manthey for filling the bags for the Children’s Food Pantry for the month of August. We will fill the food bags for September on Sunday, Sept 18 at 9:00. Let Dana Ogilvie know if that date does not work so we can reschedule.

Save the date - Saturday, October 22 We will help with a benefit concert for Hope’s Legacy. We are hoping to host a bake sale to help raise money to support this horse rescue program.

Remember if you are interested in a youth mission trip the summer of 2023, please let Dana or Olivia know so we can work on plans and funding for the trip. We need to set this up this fall for the following summer.

Help the youth filling food bags for the children of Nelson County. Bring a box or two of Kraft macaroni to the donation box set up in the fellowship hall. Each month the youth fill at least 75 bags of healthy food chosen specifically for the children of Nelson County. Show the youth that you support this project the youth have been committed to since 2008. Thank you.

Submitted by,
Dana Ogilvie

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**Missions Committee News**

Under the leadership of Ann Mischie and generous help of the congregation a record 88 back-packs were delivered to Nelson County Head Start Programs in July.

Many donations of clothing and bedding for Afghan refugees from our RPC congregation were also transferred in July with the help of Jamie Heard and were appreciated.

*Bill Iverson,*
Mission Committee Chair
Session Highlights 8/16/22

Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the Session Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Elder Lee Goodrich presented the Opening Prayer and Devotions. Joys and Concerns were shared. Prayers were asked for Kelley Alexander, Al Gale, Elizabeth Hopkins, Allison Bell and Kathy Kristiansen, Hank Gibb, and John Stuart.

Clerk’s Report:
Ratified email votes (all Session approved):

- 6/24/22 ~ (2 votes) Worship Ministry Team recommends: Create a service from 8:00-8:45 a.m. under the pavilion, as an experiment to see if additional people will feel safe to come to worship. Inger would be pleased if the number attending is only just a handful. See the order of worship for this serviced printed below. It is proposed to get Session email approval and begin this schedule; Shift Sunday School to 9:00-9:45 a.m. The Adult Education chair is amenable; and continue the 10:00-11:00 a.m. service with no changes. Also, Communion will be served at all 8:00 a.m. services.

- 7/11/22 ~ The Christian Education Ministry Team and Pastor Inger Manchester jointly recommend to session that regular Wednesday evening Kirk Night programs be resumed, commencing on 9/7/22.

- 7/11/22 ~ The Stewardship Committee recommends to Session that we establish a salary range from $32,000 to $45,000 annually (total employment compensation package for the music minister position).

- 7/15/22 (2 votes) ~ The 2025 Trustee-Elect is Judy Smythers. Please review Sophie Ogilvie’s written Statement of Faith for approval by Session.

- 7/18/22 ~ Vacation days for Inger: 7/26/22, 8/9/22, 8/10/22, and 8/11/22.

- 7/27/22 ~ Facilities Management Team recommends Motion 1: Recommend approving the Facilities Use Agreement as the appropriate document for RPC to use when a request is made that exceeds the fairly simple, general use stated in the existing Facility Use Policy. The Agreement may also be simplified (especially the liability insurance clause limits) for non-church small organization requests for using limited church resources. and Motion 2: Recommend approving the use of RPC facilities for the Nelson County 4-H Homeschool Co-op for the fee of $10 per session for this school year, with the option of continuing this arrangement in the future, pending satisfactory execution of the Agreement, to include all pertinent attachments.

- (MOTION) approved minutes of Stated Meeting 6/21/22.

- (MOTION) approved minutes of Congregational Meeting 7/31/22.

Pastor’s Report: Rev. Inger Manchester reported that the life of the church has been very busy! She sees folks getting out and participating as they feel safe. She hears the call for programs for children, delights in the many avenues for discussions, fellowship, missions, upgrading of the building and grounds, new educational pursuits, a Kirk Night program, a new Minister of Music, an Outreach Ministry Team (to include a fundraiser concert for Hope Legacy, which Session approved), and more! Thanks be to God.

Ministry Team and Committee Reports/Motions:

Elder Ken Engebretson (Facilities Management Team) presented an updated Facilities Use Form, effective immediately, which Session approved; see http://rockfishpresbyterian.org/index.php/about/policies/. He also made a motion to purchase a new piano bench for Cynthia Ramsey, which was approved. He thanked the Nelson County Orchestra for their gift of new lights in the parking lot.
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS 8/16/22 (Cont’d)

- Elder Susan Luscomb (Christian Ministry Team) brought the following motions that were all approved:
  The Christian Education Ministry Team recommends (1) that Session approve the creation of an ad hoc committee to address all manner of issues concerning RPC’s Protection Policy, which shall report directly to Pastor Inger, who will keep Session apprised of its progress, (2) requests Session approval for said committee to sign a contract with the company Praesidium for the purpose of securing background checks for appropriate employees, leaders and volunteers, and to pay for such services as needed, (3) requests Session approval of the hiring of an individual to lead Children’s Sunday School on Sunday mornings from 8:45 to 11:15.

- Elder Bill Iverson (Mission Ministry Team) reported that RPC donated 88 backpacks to Nelson County students, and a large amount of clothing, bedding and gift cards to Charlottesville Afghan refugees. He also reported that an excellent speaker in NOVA, who is herself an Afghan refugee, will come to speak, details to follow.

- Elder Kate Humphrey Chambers (Worship Ministry Team) has begun work on a checklist entitled, “General Guidelines for Indoor Memorial Services” that will better coordinate all the ‘moving parts’ of those events. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to allow Adult Choir to begin again in September when Cynthia is ready.

- Elder Lee Goodrich (Personnel Ministry Team) brought the following motion, which Session approved:
  - The Personnel/ad hoc Committee recommends that Session approve hiring Dr. Cynthia Ramsey as Minister of Music, effective August 18, 2022, at a salary of $2,666.66 per month ($32,000/yr). Initially the arrangement will be on a month-to-month basis with either party free to terminate the arrangement on 30 days’ notice. Additional terms of employment will include:
    - Performance of the responsibilities outlined in our position description, copy of which is attached;
    - Four Sundays off each year, with commitment to make sure the Advent and Lenten seasons are covered.
    - A letter agreement, which Dr. Ramsey has signed, is attached for Session approval.

- Elder Mike Smythers (Grounds Ministry Team) reported that Arboristry is lined up to do tree work in the fall before the leaves are down; to include removing dead limbs from and raising the canopy of 3 large oaks on the pulpit side of the building and trimming pin oaks near the parking area.

Celebration and Gratitude:
We give thanks for:
- The enthusiasm and hard work of our new Elders (Sally Bryant, Sandy Gallagher, Susan Luscomb, Sophie Ogilvie, and Joe Steele). They have definitely hit the grounds running!
- Susan Luscomb’s expression of much gratitude to Amelia McCulley, Ann Mische and Marilyn Pace, who have offered to serve in connection with the new children’s programs and/or on the newly formed RPC Protection Policy Committee.
- Our new Outreach Ministry Team chaired by Elder Sandy Gallagher.
- The hard work by Elders Lee Goodrich and Susan Luscomb in negotiating the use of RPC by the community.
- Sending to RPC a new Minister of Music, Dr. Cynthia Ramsey, who began her employment on 8/18/22.
- The hand of God in blessing RPC with a revitalization of faith, purpose, and joy in so many ways and through so many folks!

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 7:55 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting: Tuesday, 9/20/22 at 7 P.M., location Fellowship Hall. Devotional and Opening Prayer: Elder Lynne Hess.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Fulton, Clerk
The new harvest banners in the Sanctuary are in celebration of the life of Frances-Wright Johnson, Nancy Johnson’s mother. They are a gift to the church from Nancy’s garden sisters. Nancy is the primary source for the beginning of our church garden so it is fitting that we commemorate her mother’s life by celebrating the garden and Nelson County’s fruit of the harvest.

The Congregational Life Committee would like to have regularly planned fellowship time after the 10:00 worship. We would like to extend the opportunity to sign up on the board outside the kitchen to provide coffee and a light snack. If anyone is interested but would like a lesson in running the coffee machine, please let Lynne Hess know and she would be happy to assist you.