Lent is almost here!

An Ash Wednesday service will kick off our Lenten season on Feb 22 at 6 pm. Come and receive your ashes.

The receiving of ashes is a reminder for us to confess our sins and repent. During the Lenten season some people will give things up - as a reminder of all Jesus sacrificed for us- and some people might take something on - as a sacrifice of their time. Either way the point is that we each make an effort to keep the sacrifices of Jesus at our forefront as we march towards the celebration of Easter Sunday.

Some reflections on Lent from one of my favorite theologians—

“Self-denial is a necessary aspect of a Christian life; that the cross is central to human understanding; and that, without the atonement, every one of us would stand forever in the role of Judas.”

“Christ is not gloriously transported from earth into heaven. He must instead go to the cross. And precisely there, where the cross stands, the resurrection is near. Precisely here, where all lose faith in God, where all despair about the power of God, God is fully there, and Christ is alive and near.”
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God Is on the Cross: Reflections on Lent and Easter

In addition join us for the Sermon Lectionary Study beginning the same day- Feb 22 from 11:30 -12:30. We will discuss the upcoming scripture which I will be preaching on that following Sunday. After the study those who are interested will go out locally for lunch.

Finally, there are several members excited to create Lenten devotions so as the season continues you can expect to receive a weekly devotion or two with the Tuesday email. If you would like to write a devotion please contact Inger.

A note from Sue Fulton: At our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 22nd, the Congregation unanimously approved Inger’s Terms of Call with no discussion. Roger presented the Session-approved 2023 Budget, sharing that the budget surplus from 2022 will cover the unfunded $19,000 for 2023. As he said, the exciting momentum of RPC needs to be supported as we move forward. The Church’s finances are strong due to the support of the Congregation.

RPC is growing and folks are coming back after the pandemic. The average weekly attendance before the pandemic hovered around 120, while that number dropped to 81 in 2021. In 2022 we were back up to an average weekly attendance of 101 showing the excitement of new beginnings in preaching/teaching, music, Sunday School, programs, and events!

All praise be to God!
Inklings from Inger

I never know what to write here. I feel like I am much more of a doer than a writer, except on Mondays where I absolutely love thinking about scripture and writing my sermon. So I will just give you my thoughts for the upcoming month. We continue to follow the Spirit as we include more social events and more opportunities for learning. Once I was asked what I thought was the biggest problem plaguing our world (it was during my interviews to become a pastor). My answer was and still is—loneliness. Despite all the opportunities around us, people yearn for face to face quality time. The CDC actually has a lot to say about this-

“Loneliness and social isolation in older adults are serious public health risks affecting a significant number of people in the United States and putting them at risk for dementia and other serious medical conditions.

A report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) points out that more than one-third of adults aged 45 and older feel lonely, and nearly one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated. Older adults are at increased risk for loneliness and social isolation because they are more likely to face factors such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, chronic illness, and hearing loss.”


Well, this will not be the case under our Rockfish watch. We plan to continue to offer opportunities to gather together- to work, to study and to play. Our first Rockfish social was awesome and now we will have one each month. We also have monthly dinners at my home (yes- I will post more soon!) We had fun painting ornaments together for Dec 2023. The opportunity fair on 1/22 showed everyone all there is to do here and was well received. Seriously - invite your neighbors to Come and See what the Lord is up to here. It is pretty amazing.

See you all soon!

Inger
Knitting and Nurture

Five Wonderful Benefits of Knitting

1. Knitting produces happiness, increases self-confidence and helps create a sense of well being. It will feed your imagination and creative side.

2. Learning to knit can help you develop patience and a sense of self worth.

3. Knitting can help to reduce loneliness and isolation. Sharing this pastime connects people together.

4. Knitting has many health benefits. It can reduce blood pressure, slow down the effects of dementia, help to limit the symptoms of arthritis, and distract from chronic pain.

5. Knitting reduces stress, anxiety, and depression and can promote relaxation and concentration.

Please join us on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 in the church library. Bring your current project (knitting, crocheting, etc.) or we will be happy to teach you to knit. Materials will be provided.

Youth News

In December the youth met to shop for toiletries for the Clothing Closet at the Middle/High School. Thank you to the Mission Committee for donating the funds for this shopping trip. After shopping, the youth dropped by Irene Thompson’s home (retired nursery worker) to wish her a Merry Christmas and deliver some goodies for her family.

In January, the youth worked with the children to fill 75 food bags for the children of Nelson County. These snack bags will be handed out in February at the Nelson Food Pantry.

Please join the youth and children on Sunday, February 26 after the 10:00 service to help fill 20 first aid kits for refugees. The Afghan refugee who spoke at RVCC in the fall donated her speaking fee to this worthy cause. We will create 20 first aid kits to be distributed to the refugee communities in Charlottesville and Richmond. Mary Hopkins will be cooking her delicious sticky buns so join the effort and get a sweet treat!!! We will also be creating messages of support to go with each kit.
OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Adult Sunday School continues a six-week study called “Prepare the Way for the Lord,” by Adam Hamilton, a ‘sequel’ to our Advent study, before we turn to a Lenten study to be announced in February. Join us at 9 on Sunday mornings in the classroom downstairs.

Marilyn Pace is our new Children’s Sunday School Leader. We’re so grateful she was called to serve - she is highly enthusiastic and well-qualified, with a Masters in Christian Education. Marilyn is very excited about the new children’s curriculum and has begun implementing it in their lessons.

Thanks to everyone who has shown interest in new educational opportunities. For those of you who have already signed up to write a Lenten devotion, don’t miss Inger’s tutorial on January 29th. If you are interested in a more in-depth approach to the scripture behind Inger’s sermon each week, sign up for the Wednesday Lectionary Study from 11:30 to 12:30, beginning Ash Wednesday, February 22. Anyone who wishes to have lunch together afterwards will adjourn to a local eatery for fellowship.

We were thrilled to see how many of you visited the Education tables at the Community Fair on January 22 and showed interest in an Afternoon Book Group to explore different genres. If you missed it and are interested, look for the signup sheet in the narthex entitled “Gauging Interest In…” or contact Leslie Buchanan. This group is expected to begin meeting after Easter.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Luscomb, Chair
Christian Education Ministry Team

Missions Ministry

Your Committee is starting the planning for our first food project in 2023; Easter food baskets that will be delivered to needy people on April 1.

International Neighbors works with refugees in Charlottesville and has opportunities for people to help with grant writing, food deliveries and providing local transportation, guiding a resettling family as they acclimate to the US, and teaching English. They offer training and can be reached at: Katie.thach@internationalneighbors.org

CEDEPCA, an organization of the Presbyterian Church, will sponsor an adult mission trip to Guatemala in April and our congregation is invited to participate. There are flyers in the Narthex offering more information.

We are also seeking more members for our team. If you are interested, please attend our next meeting at 4 PM on February 6 or contact Bill Iverson.
Come and See What God Has Made
By Dave Lawson

An unearthed dinosaur skeleton standing in that building over there
Millions of galaxies spread across the immense universe
Glowing lava erupting from volcanic fissures on a Pacific island
Jagged snow-covered peaks standing thousands of feet into the sky

Tiny cellular structures providing chemical energy for movement and thought
Living tissues capable of generating memories and songs
Whole forests emerging from tiny seedlings
Massive storms spawning white hot lightning and crashing thunder

A blazing sunset illuminating red and gold cumulus clouds
The song of a meadowlark on a hot summer afternoon
Katydid’s and crickets chirping on a moon lit night
A gentle shower of rain landing on leaves and rocks alike

Laughing children playing in a schoolyard
Gifted choirs filling churches with song
Spirit filled preachers bringing the Gospel of Good News
A grandmother reading to little ones on her lap

So come and see what God has made
Come and listen!
Come and watch!
Come and join in!
Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the Session Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Bill Iverson had devotions and Inger opened the meeting in prayer. Prayers were asked for Sue Nichols, Charlie Kingsley, Alida Christinaz, Annie Mae and Bobby Rose, Ken and Jen’s daughter, Jamie, Kate and Mike Chambers’ 92-year-old mothers, and Kathie DeFusco’s daughter.

CLERK’S REPORT:
- Approved minutes of Stated Meeting 12/20/22.
- Elected Sue Fulton as Clerk of Session for 2023.
- Elected Roger Fulton and Sue Nichols as Co-Treasurers for 2023.
- Approved Elder Mac Lumpkin to chair and Elder Ken Engebretson to co-chair 2023 Nominating Committee.
- Approved 2022 Church Statistical Report.
- Elected Elders Susan Luscomb and Sue Fulton as Commissioners to the Zoom Presbytery of the James Stated Meeting 2/18/23.

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE: Elder Mac Lumpkin presented a positive Stewardship Committee Report. He also brought the following amended motion: The Stewardship Committee recommends that Session approve and adopt the 2023 amended budget. Session approved this.

MINISTRY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS/MOTIONS:
- Elder Kate Humphrey Chambers, Liaison (Worship Ministry Team). Mary Hopkins, Chair, brought a motion for communion dates in 2023: 42 days if no 8 AM Service during Summer months (Jun-Aug) including: Jan. 1, 8, 29; Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26; Mar. 5, 12, 19, 26; Apr. 2, 6, 9, 16, 23, 30; May 7, 14, 21, 28; June 4; July 2; Aug. 6; Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24; Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26; Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31.
- Elder Bill Iverson (Mission Ministry Team) reported that the Committee (1) will continue to advertise and promote the April Guatemala mission trip with our former interim pastor, Mary Jane Winters. Pastor Manchester has decided not to apply to attend this year, (2) will contact Piedmont Habitat for Humanity to see if our youth and members may be able to help with their 2023 work in Nelson County as they have several projects scheduled, and (3) is also preparing for our next food project which will be Easter food baskets scheduled to be distributed on April 1.
- Elder Ken Engebretson (Facilities Management Team) reported the need to replace the defibrillator outside the Sanctuary which is now a discontinued model with no battery or pads available and add another one for the office and classroom floor now that we are regularly using them. After consulting with the Wintergreen Fire & Rescue expert to get a recommendation, the appropriate model with Pediatric and adult paddles in a “church package” deal for two with a $400 discount will run $3,822.90.
- Elder Sandy Gallagher (Outreach Ministry Team) reported (1) there are still gift bags available for distribution to church guests, (2) John reported good turnouts and positive comments at the Pub Theology events, (3) plans for the Opportunity Fair 1/22/23 are finalized, (4) RPC outwear will be available for purchase as details are worked out, (5) folks are invited to help paint Christmas ornaments for distribution next December, and (6) Mike Fisher reported he and Al Simpson are willing to hold fly fishing classes during March or April. Church members will sign up at the Opportunity Fair or a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Mike suggested no more than 8 participants per class. He will bring fishing flies to pique interest at the Outreach Table on Jan. 22.
- Elder Sophie Ogilvie (Youth Ministry Team) reported the youth filled 75 food bags with the children during church on Sunday, 1/12/23. The youth plan to work with the children in filling food bags each month in the future. On Sunday, 2/26/23, following the late service the youth will prepare 20 first aid kits for refugees. We plan to ask for help from the congregation to prepare the kits and write notes of encouragement for refugee families. Mary Hopkins will be preparing sticky buns to share with the helpers. The kits will be shared with refugee families in Charlottesville and Richmond. Funds to stock the kits were supplied by Meena Abedi’s speaking fee from the Afghan refugee talk at RVCC. The youth met in December and bought $80 of toiletry supplies for the clothing closet at the high school for students in need. The funds for this project were donated from the Mission Committee.
- Elder Susan Luscomb (Christian Education Ministry Team) reported that Adult Sunday School has selected books for study through Lent with announcements regarding the books to appear regularly in Spreading the Word. A sign-up sheet will be available for those interested in a Lenten study offered by Inger at 11:30 on Wednesdays to discuss in-depth the scripture upon which her next sermon will be based. Kirk Night with ‘The Chosen’ will resume on the Wednesday following Easter. Additional educational opportunities for summer and fall of 2023 are being discussed, in order to offer programs for members of the congregation who may be interested in other topics and formats.

We give thanks for:
- Marilyn Pace and her willingness to begin a Sunday School program for our children on Sunday mornings. The curriculum has been purchased and the program will begin soon.
- The energy and joy of Oeida, Cynthia, Pat, and Linda in leading such spectacular music at worship.
- Inger on her upcoming birthday (January 26th). She’s 58 years young.
- Inger’s visits to folks, most recently Buddy Martin. She was dazzled by the log cabin he built on his property and the possibility of hosting the congregation at a picnic gathering in the spring on his property.
- Mike Chambers’ upcoming 70th birthday and their tradition of going to visit a ‘mystery destination’ to celebrate a birthday that ends with a zero. What fun! (Kate Humphrey Chambers)
- Ken Engebretson’s dad’s recent 92nd birthday. (Ken)

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 7:52 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting: Tuesday, 2/21/23 at 7:00 PM, in the Fellowship Hall. Elder Ken Engebretson will have Devotions and Opening Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Fulton, Clerk
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