This month I have become interested in exploring the dualism in our world - the good and the bad, the light and the dark, even to the point of opening a book I have owned and never opened in five years entitled Deliverance From Evil Spirits- a Practical Manual. Don't worry I am not being called into the ministry of exorcism. The idea is actually terrifying.

Many of you may be rolling your eyes right now- our worldview here in America generally does not think about demonic forces or of Satan being a real and sentient being. In an article by Barna back in 2009 it said '4/10 Christians strongly agreed that Satan is "not a living being but is a symbol of evil" (Most American Christians Do Not Believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit Exist- Barna Group) As the title of the article suggests "most Christians do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a living force, either. 38 percent strongly agreed and 20 percent agreed that the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God's power but is not a living entity"

I am not sure what to do with this information other than ask this- " The established wisdom of mainline theologians and Scripture commentators is that demon possession and exorcism come out of a primitive, superstitious worldview that we have fortunately escaped, but which Jesus, a man of His day, accepted. In this , either He did not realize that evil spirits were a superstitious fiction of the naive people of the day, or He simply went along with these fictions." (Deliverance from Evil Spirits, Francis Mac Nutt, p 48)

Deliverance from demons was a prominent part of Christ's work on earth. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that we continue to wrestle against the cosmic powers over this present darkness. The goal of Satan and his dominion is to deceive, to lie, to have us believe that God does not care for us, does not love us and that our salvation belongs to us alone.

All of this is untrue. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, our sins- the sins that Satan wants to convict us of- are nailed to the cross. We are forgiven and wiped clean.

Never forget it.

The book of James 4:7 tells us "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you"- as in all things when we allow evil to work in the dark, evil gains power.

Do I understand all of this? Of course not. However I believe by naming Satan and evil as actual actors in our world we are also reminded that Christ has already won the battle.

We, as beloved children of God, are empowered to go out and spread the light, to name the evil which has already lost the battle, and to have hope that this sinful world- with all the politics, the greed, and the suffering is not all there is. Praise God!

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5  Amen and Amen*

**Pastor Inger**
August Birthdays

Mary Hopkins 03
Al Gale 04
Glenda MacNeil 04
Sandy Gallagher 08
Shirley Alpers 09
Mary Gurr 12
Ann Iverson 14
Nan Varnadoe 14
Harris Luscomb 16
John Pace 18
Ed Misker 21
Rob Ogilvie 24
Ross Simmons 24
Gayle Ernst 26
Jeanne Lawson 26
Carolyn Frahm 27
Nancy Small 28
Martha Misker 30
Pam Grammer 31

Inger’s Inklings

Boy am I ready for a vacation! It is amazing how we can truly enjoy our work and yet be ready to grab a book, hit the beach and do absolutely nothing. Lee and I aren't doing that- although it does sound soooo good! Instead we are heading to Ireland for a week of meandering around the countryside. Pray for us as Lee drives on the "other" side of narrow roads! I am sure I will handle it well because I am so laid back.... ha ha

The summer is going so fast. Fall planning is underway and it looks great! Already so many events- check out the rest of the newsletter for a heads up and mark your calendars. Fall festivals, children's choir starting up, lots of great adult education opportunities, and of course, our planning for our trip to Israel. I look forward to celebrating our Lord with each of you in so many ways.

In Christ,

~Pastor Inger

STW NEWSLETTER: The deadline for submitting articles electronically for the September newsletter is Thursday, August 24th.

Jamie Heard
Email: rockfishpcus@gmail.com Phone: (434) 361-1221
**Opportunities for Growth**

**Adult Sunday School** - Join in as the 9am class continues reading John White’s book *Parables: The Greatest Stories Ever Told.* This series, with a little reading but lots of personal reflection and sharing, will continue into September 17th. There will be no Sunday School on September 3rd (Labor Day weekend).

We are happy to welcome Christy Ruta to lead the **Children’s Sunday School** team during the 10am service. If you would like to help as a volunteer, please look for the sign-up sheet in the narthex.

**Inger’s Wednesday Lectionary Study** continues each week from 11:30 to 12:30. Between Inger’s terrific notes and questions, and the spirited discussion among attendees, this has consistently been a fascinating and in-depth opportunity to study the Scriptural basis of Inger’s upcoming sermon each week. Join us in the library each Wednesday.

**The Chosen** series continues on Wednesdays at 5:30 with a simple potluck supper. Season 2 will conclude in late August, with Season 3 to begin after Labor Day. It’s never too late to join in!

The **RPC Book Club** meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the home of a club member. If you are interested in joining, contact Leslie Buchanan.

Watch for the new brochure on the **Holy Land Pilgrimage**, coming soon!

**Susan Luscomb**, Chair, Christian Education Ministry Team

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**Wood Ministry:** You may have noticed that our good log pile has been overtaken by the Wild Weed Wonderland given the ample rainfall and sunshine we’ve had this Summer. As a result, there will be a challenge to see who can whack the most weeds into oblivion sometime in mid- to late August. My money is on Jim Clark with his bush hogging tractor or zero-turn mower…but he will take care of the area he cleared last Spring and the rest of us will be relegated to getting the vegetation between the logs and piles. Big clippers will be needed for the larger diameter plants! If you are new and interested in joining in with our Woodchuck Coterie, please email Ken at ken.engebretson@verizon.net and he will add you to our merry band! The date for decimating the weed patch will be announced in church, the Sunday bulletin, and Jamie’s weekly “Reminder” email.

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**Hurricane Ian Aid**

**September 30-October 7, 2023**

Continuing their efforts to help west Florida recover from Hurricane Ian, POJ’s Disaster Relief Ministry will be conducting a fourth trip to the area in October. Their efforts will be centered again in the town of Wauchula (marked with the red pin). The first two trips were to the area marked by the yellow pin. Volunteers of all skill levels are needed to help with home repairs. A cook also would be helpful. During the trip in May, volunteers installed trim and painted walls, updated a bathroom with new fixtures, and replaced a water heater.

To volunteer for this trip or ask questions, email ministry leader Brown Pearson or call him at 804-347-8895.
Personnel Committee News

The personnel committee is pleased to let you all know that we have hired a child care assistant for our children's Sunday School. Christy Ruta started in July with the children. She is excited about being here from 9:30-11:00 each Sunday to be with the children. In addition, she is an RN. Please all welcome Christy when you see her attending church. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for the congregation to volunteer to be with Christy during the school time. Please consider signing up so we can continue having this important part of our church. A confidential background check is required before you are able to volunteer.

Submitted by
Sally Bryant, Personnel Committee Chair

Playground Refurbishment: The playground area has been mainly used by rainstorms and wind over the past several years and they have put a lot of wear and tear on it. We will be applying corrective actions on it in early to mid-August in anticipation of actually having children become the main travelers on it's boards and slide! If you would like to help, stay tuned for the work dates announcement in church, the Sunday bulletin, and Jamie’s weekly “Reminder” email. We will have the lumber, nails, screws, and tools in place for our work. But if you have a favorite hammer or screwdriver/drill that needs employment, please bring it! When that work is completed we will pressure wash the area and put in suitable ground cover.

Mission Ministry

Rockfish Presbyterian Church was pleased to donate backpacks, school supplies and a personal book for every child in the 2023-24 Nelson County Head Start Program, VPI Program, and Preschool Development Program. The Mission Committee thanks the congregation for fully supporting this program with your donations. We packed 87 backpacks with love from you all and delivered them to the Tye River and Rockfish River elementary schools in July. They were displayed at the July 9th service where Pastor Inger sent them off with a prayerful blessing.

Our next meeting will be at 4 PM on Monday, August 7, and anyone interested in helping or learning more about our work is welcome to attend.

Sharon Gress and Linda Smyser

Outreach Ministry News

We at RPC are excited at the possibility of Meals on Wheels, Charlottesville, will be opening up for us here in Nelson County. We will need volunteers to help with pick-up once-a-week of meals in Crozet and delivery to RVCC for distribution. It could also include delivering a few meals to those off Route 151 on the way back from Crozet to those eligible persons. This will be an important service to many in need in our area so do consider volunteering. We will all appreciate your time and effort. Please contact Sandy Gallagher (sunnylongley88@gmail.com) if you are interested !!!

Saturday, September 16, from 10 to 12 noon - Book and Puzzle Giveaway for RPC members and the community; save your books and puzzles for this fun event !!! You will find a large box, or two, under the table in the Narthex for you to place your books/puzzles prior to the event.

Saturday, October 7, from 3 to 5 pm, Fall Festival for Hope’s Legacy, come and hear wonderful music !!!

Saturday, November 11, Veteran’s Day, from 4 to 6 pm, RPC Talent Show, followed by a Potluck Supper. Surprise us and let us all see what you can do !!!

…and the next Outreach Ministry meeting: Tuesday, August 8, 9:30 am, Sandy Gallagher’s home.
Recycle—Don’t Toss—Your Unused Computer!

We all have them—perfectly good computers that we no longer use because we upgraded to newer ones. Consider donating that unused computer to a deserving family in Nelson County.

Ready to help is your neighbor, Joe Steele, a former member of the nonprofit Nelson County Community Fund, who accepts pre-owned Windows computers, monitors, and printers. Joe refurbishes, repairs, and updates (with additional memory, larger hard drives, etc.) donated computer equipment. The hard drives are wiped clean, and a new operating system and software targeted to school-age children are installed.

Complete, updated computer systems, including the PC, monitor, speakers, printer, are given to the Monticello Area Community Action Agency. MACAA distributes the systems to Head-Start families, and families with school-age children who use computers in school but do not have their own computer at home. Joe has donated more than 215 computer systems to deserving families through this program.

To schedule a pick up/drop off of your used computer system, contact Joe Steele at 434-361-1597 or jasteele@att.net.

Youth News

The children and youth continue to fill 75 food bags for distribution at the Nelson County Food Pantry. For July, Ann Mische's grandchildren and David Embrey helped fill the food bags. For July, Ella Manthey (youth alumni) and friends helped fill the bags. Thank you to everyone who helped this summer!!

The bags will be filled on the second Sunday of the month, August 13 and September 10, during the children's Sunday School time. Mark your calendars!!

Knitting News

The knitters have made a commitment to the Magnolia Rose store in Waynesboro to donate beautiful baby sweaters for them to sell. The first delivery was July 13! Read more about Magnolia Rose (below and page 6).

Magnolia Rose and the New Underground Railroad

She looks much younger than her 20 years, more like a 14 or 15 year old, slight and graceful, politely calling me “Miss Linda.” Sexually trafficked from the age of 17, Shelli reached out for help (done by calling 911 or the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888.373.7888). The response was quick and effective.

On a Saturday in mid March, the Virginia State Police contacted staff at Magnolia Rose, a faith based charity in Waynesboro that offers direct help to human trafficking survivors, and told them about Shelli. Hours later, five police officers and two Magnolia Rose staff met in one of Richmond's most blighted neighborhoods. They entered a “heroin house” to rescue her. A dozen people lay prone inside, clearly overdosed on drugs, unresponsive to nudges and verbal cues. One man broke through an upstairs window, ran along the porch roof, jumped and disappeared into the neighborhood. Shelli was upstairs, curled up, waiting. She was taken to Augusta Health where she tested positive for: heroin, cocaine, meth, PCP, fentanyl.
Magnolia Rose and the New Underground Railroad (Cont’d)

Tucked away in one of Magnolia Rose’s two “safe apartments” that night, Shelli began to experience the agony of withdrawal. She was given suboxone to help medically. Six volunteers spent all night with her as she went through her suffering. These women sat around her on the bed, laid hands on her and prayed, held and rocked her, assured her of God’s love and of theirs, hour after hour. Nurses from Augusta Health were in and out.

I met Shelli the next day, on Sunday evening and then spent 5 hours with her Monday morning, as she rested from her detoxing episode. She listened to musician Jelly Roll’s song “Save Me” with the refrain playing over and over: “I’m a lost cause/ Baby, don’t waste your time on me/ I’m so damaged beyond repair/ Life has shattered my hopes and my dreams.”

Periodically she would call out “Miss Linda, could you get me a trash bag please? I’m going to be sick again.” I sat beside her and rubbed her back. She dozed and the music shifted: “She’s somebody’s daughter/She’s somebody’s little girl.”

Although Shelli knows who her mother is as well as her stepmother, almost all of her growing up was done in foster homes. Twice she was molested by members of her foster families and rapidly moved to a new place. Then she was in group homes for foster kids. She did not finish high school, though she has a GED. Shelli has never had a birthday party. She has never had a birthday cake. When I spoke about Easter baskets, she had no idea what that might be (but soon she will).

Ten days later Shelli was back at Augusta Health with pancreatitis and preparing for gall bladder surgery. She had been clean (without opioids) for 11 days, and wanted to avoid fentanyl or any other opium based pain killer. Magnolia Rose volunteers were with her around the clock for comfort and support. The surgeon and nurses were kind and very accommodating. They knew about Magnolia Rose and the work being done with women who have been freed from trafficking. “I want to only do ibuprofen,” this big eyed child-woman tells her surprised surgeon, “I know I can do this.” He is supportive and reassuring and tells her that he respects her wishes but does not want her to suffer. “God has already saved my life,” she says, “I’m not worried about a little more pain.”

I spend two long mornings at the hospital, before and after surgery. A Magnolia Rose staff person guides her through a phone conversation with Medicaid. To identify herself over the phone, she has to give her correct address, as listed on their form. She goes through six different addresses in Roanoke from the past year and none of them are correct. The staff person from Magnolia Rose goes to the nurse's station and comes back with a patient ID number. That works and Shelli is updated in their system. Now she can have an eye exam. The woman from Medicaid was patient and encouraging. “I’ll be rooting for you,” she tells Shelli.

In her hospital bed, Shelli is in many ways a very young person enjoying extra attention, video games (Minecraft! Mario Brothers!) given by a volunteer, a fleece blanket and her stuffed unicorn. She’s tired of laying in bed in the typical way and lies with her head at the foot. “I wondered where you were,” says her surgeon, teasing. At other moments she is an old soul. She has her surgery. She only accepts ibuprofen. She goes home the next day.

Meanwhile, Magnolia Rose staff have had multiple calls from police officers. There is a trafficking house in Winchester, where four women have been removed. There are women from Harrisonburg and Richmond and a woman who speaks only Spanish. Without a residential house of their own (which is a front and center goal for Magnolia Rose), referrals to other shelters in other cities must suffice. Sometimes every shelter is full and there are no good options for survivors who need to detox and have a path forward provided.

Meanwhile, Shelli is back in one of the safe apartments. She enrolled at Blue Ridge Community College and is beginning classes online. She spends five long mornings a week at an intense addiction treatment program. A volunteer takes her to ride horses some afternoons. She has a new circle of love around her (and hopefully enough distance from Roanoke) to begin a new chapter of life.

Being a faith based organization, Magnolia Rose, does not receive government funding and relies entirely on contributions. All staff are volunteers. Their lovely store in downtown Waynesboro (417 W. Main Street) pays for itself and supports a drop in center. One apartment is donated for free by the owner, the other costs about $1200/month with utilities. The need for a house with 4 or 5 bedrooms is clear and a top priority, as are funders to help with the cost. God provides from month to month.

I want to highlight the mission of Magnolia Rose and appeal to the generosity of faith communities. Please pray for them and for all the women like Shelli who can be delivered from slavery, loved, served and guided into a new chapter of life.

Linda Kusse-Wolfe
Volunteer
Moderator Rev. Inger Manchester called the Session Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. with prayer. Elder Sue Fulton had devotions and prayer. Prayers were asked for Charlie and Carol Kingsley and Ken’s former Assistant Pastor’s wife, Clara, with metastasized cancer.

PASTOR’S REPORT: Rev. Inger Manchester reported that the Israel Trip is moving forward for 12/2024 with EO. They are the most convenient to work with, have a great reputation, have been in business 50 years, and have the best price. Brochures are coming with pertinent information. Three of Morgan’s boys William, Philip, and Charlie, will be baptized 8/13/23 with grandfather Carl presiding. The Manchester’s granddaughter Ava will be baptized 11/22/23. That organization brings hope and healing to survivors of human trafficking. There will be one service that morning.

CLERK’S REPORT:
Approved minutes of Stated Meeting 6/20/23.

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE: Elder Mac Lumpkin presented a positive Stewardship Committee Report. He also presented the Annual Review prepared by Wendy Culberson, Rick Winter, and Harris Luscomb. He brought two motions which Session approved: 1) The Stewardship Committee moves that Session approves the Annual Financial Review, including its seven suggestions. 2) The Stewardship Committee moves that Session approve an overspending of up to $700 by the Worship Committee in 2023.

MINISTRY TEAM AND COMMITTEE REPORTS/MOTIONS:

- Elder Mary Hopkins (Worship Ministry Team) brought a motion: Inger has proposed a single Service for Sept 10th in light of planned guest, Kristen (co-founder of Waynesboro’s Magnolia Rose – bringing hope and healing to survivors of human trafficking). Session approved this. Also, Rockfish Ringers need three additional ringers for fall. Rehearsals begin on Thursday, 9/7/23 (3:30-4:30).
- Elder Susan Luscomb (Christian Education Ministry Team) reported that Adult Sunday School continues its study of the Parables through 9/17/23. “The Chosen *continues on Wednesday evenings (5:30-7:00) and Inger’s Bible Study continues on Wednesdays (11:30-12:30). Dana Ogilvie will head the Youth Committee. Plans continue for the Holy Land trip, with a monthly series of classes on a variety of issues for the whole congregation beginning in the fall.
- Elder Ken Engebretson (Facilities Management Team) reported that Blue Ride Home Safety LLC (BRHS) has installed (for testing the Wi-Fi coverage) several smoke sensors and water leak detectors, which were purchased from SimpliSafe during a 50% off sale. The Wi-Fi coverage was determined to be fine so the remainder of the sensors will be installed on Wednesday, July 19th. The monthly SimpliSafe professional monitoring will alert me or an alternate person (tbd) if a sensor is activated prior to having the Wintergreen Fire and Rescue Department respond. Further, the playground behind the church will be up and running by 9/7/23.
- Elder Sally Bryant (Personnel Ministry Team Liaison) reported The Personnel Committee is pleased to announce that we have hired a child care assistant. Christy Ruta will assist with childcare during the 10 am church service. She is an RN and has gone thru the training required, security check, and the protection policy. She started Sunday July 16th. Please see the signup sheet on our table to sign up to be the third person in the nursery.
- Elder Sandy Gallagher (Outreach Ministry Team) reported that on Saturday, 9/16/23, from 10 to 12 noon, we will hold a Book and Puzzle Give-Away for church members and the community in RPC’s front yard. On Saturday, 10/7/23, from 3 to 5 pm we will have our Fall Festival for Hope’s Legacy, and on Saturday, 11/11/23 (Veteran’s Day), from 4 to 6 pm, we will host an RPC Talent Show followed by a Potluck Supper.

We give thanks for:
1. The outpouring of love for Charlie and Carol Kingsley in the form of a recent gathering of musicians to surround them.
2. Hank, the very healthy dog, who has eaten all of Mary Hopkins’ tomatoes and most of the yellow squash.
3. Ken’s very successful 1st cousins’ reunion.
4. The tremendous work recently finished ~ the hiring of Christy, the successful Annual Financial Review conducted by Wendy Culberson, Rick Winter, and Harris Luscomb, and the very necessary work of installing and testing smoke sensor and water leak detectors! Thank you, Ken!

Rev. Inger Manchester closed the meeting in prayer at 7:50 PM.

Next Stated Session Meeting: Tuesday, 8/15/23 at 7:00 PM, in the Library. Elder Mac Lumpkin will have Devotions and Opening Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Fulton, Clerk
Goodness Grows, your RPC vegetable garden, is having a wonderfully productive year. We have had outstanding crops of greens, cucumbers, beets, beans, zucchini, onions, garlic, carrots and peppers so far. Our tomatoes have been threatened by a squirrel and now by the excess of rain, but we are still hoping that some of the big green ones turn that beautiful red that we all look forward to. Please come up the hill and pick some flowers; and help yourselves to all that we have picked for the week each Sunday.