

# RCOFC NEWSLETTER

## Let Me Just Say This by Walker Gauling



My column today is uncharacteristically short. At least for ME it's short. August of 2018 marks 40 years for Rappahannock Church of Christ. And this month marks 1 year in our new digs. I'd like for you to think about the people we need to thank.

First, a tiny handful of families started a church in Warsaw, Virginia, in 1978 because they believed that evangelism and growing and spreading the Word in a meaningful way was becoming a lost art. I believe it was just 12 adults, but they believed the church could grow and reach out better than most were doing. I am so grateful for their vision for lost people. What a great reason to start a church!

Personally, I have another "thank you" to send. Just 9 years later, those 12 individuals, plus about 8 more, gave a young, wet-behind-the-ears minister a chance. That was me at 27 years old. Thirty people were in the congregation including children. I wasn't just inexperienced . . . I was dangerous. Because not only I didn't know . . . I didn't KNOW that I didn't know! And I didn't know WHAT I didn't know.

Thank you for taking a big risk with me.

In the many years since then, we need to thank those who taught our Sunday School classes, led worship, and served in leadership. You laid the groundwork for what is here today.

In 1997 Kenny France built a large, beautiful addition to our tiny church house that had been designed on a napkin! Thus, a group of faithful that had been stuck, due to limited space at about 100 people, were allowed to bloom and blossom, and eventually triple in size to over 300 at that location.

A few years later, we had to really upset the applecart and change by going to two services. It was uncomfortable, and not everybody was happy about it. But I'm so glad that you hung in there, and took the ride with us. While I've been here, we've had staff members who all did an admirable job. I am grateful for them, including Christian Walker, Mike Lease (deceased), Phillip Murdock, Jake Follis, Matt Smith, Penny Barton, Jim Ward, Kent Childers, Karen Davis, and Keith Peyton.

The journey to get where we are today is filled with names that should be thanked. Ten years' worth of shopping

for land, buying land, selling land, raising funds, straining at the bit, charging ahead, retreating at times—what a ride it's been. And you, our faithful congregation, have given SO much. So much time, SO much money.

Do you remember the "buy a brick" campaign? How many thousands were raised? Special "Miracle Day" offerings saw unbelievable amounts dropped into offering plates and wheelbarrows. Yes, wheelbarrows. The largest single, 1-day offering I believe we ever received was over \$200,000. Let that sink in. And it wasn't promises or pledges, it was CASH. I wouldn't believe it had I not seen it. Handmade quilts were auctioned; we once gave money AWAY and asked people to take the money and find a way to multiply it. You did. And who remembers the "Bring Your Stuff" campaign? People brought expensive jewelry, rare baseball cards, collectable coins, rifles, shotguns and pistols, musical instruments, a car, and two motorcycles! How much more could we ask of you?

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**I am the way,  
the truth, and  
the life.**

**John 14:6**

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## Hey Keith, I have a question about...

Q. How does the cleaning get handled for the church?

A. I'm so glad you asked. God has richly blessed us with the use of this incredible location and the nearly 32,000 square feet of space we are currently utilizing for the ministry work of RCofC. Along with that blessing, we also became God's "steward" or caretaker for the facilities that include 25 toilets, 27 sinks, and nearly 200 door handles that need cleaning each week! When we first moved here in March of last year, all the custodial work was contracted to a local company that specialized in

commercial buildings such as ours. That arrangement worked well, but we felt there was a better way to manage and control the cleanliness of the facilities if we hired our own part-time custodian. With the approval of the elders, we approached someone from within our congregation who we thought could help us achieve those results.

We are delighted to introduce Patricia Withers as the newest addition to the church staff. Patricia recently retired after a long and successful career with Union Bank & Trust, and was open to God's calling

for the next chapter of her life. I'm sure she never dreamed that chapter would begin with taking on the custodial care for her church, but we are so excited she accepted the opportunity.

Patricia started her new position on February 1, and has already made a huge improvement in the appearance and cleanliness of our facilities. Please join us in welcoming her to our staff and thank her for the excellent job she is doing.

Serving Christ by Serving His Church,

*Keith Peyton*



## From the heart...

"God knew how to express His love to me, He did it through you." I am so grateful for the expression of love shown to me during the recovery of my recent

back surgery. Thank you to the church for the beautiful fruit basket and to my RCofC family for your prayers, phone calls, and the many cards received.

Your thoughtfulness is a blessing and greatly appreciated!

With Love, *Tommy Beatley*

### Reminders...

#### Mid-Week Meals

There will be meals before mid-week services on February 7th and March 7th at 6:00 p.m. Both meals will be covered dish. Everyone is asked to bring their favorite main dish, side dishes, and a dessert to share. The Fellowship Ministry will provide the drinks, and will be there to help with serving. We hope you will join us for a time of fellowship before our mid-week classes!



#### Family Reunion Meeting

The Family Reunion meeting is to inform the congregation on a twice-a-year basis as to what RCofC elders and staff are currently doing and planning to meet the needs of the church and the community. This meeting will be held on March 18th at 3:30 p.m. A covered dish meal to follow the meeting. Bring your favorite covered main dish, sides, and a dessert to share for a time of fellowship. The church will provide drinks.



#### Attention Ministry Heads

All ministry leaders are requested to attend a brief meeting on March 25th at 10:20 a.m. in the church office.

Thank you,

*The Elders*



## Let Me Just Say This Cont. from p. 1

And finally, I'd like to thank you for stepping away from all that was comfortable to come here. To leave a beautiful, comfortable building to come to what was then a big unknown. All we knew was that we had a pretty church. And that we were going to move into a defunct, derelict former grocery store. You took a deep breath and said, "OK, I'm in." I think

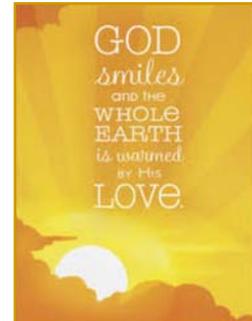
I'm most thankful for that, because it was probably the hardest part of the whole process. So just thank you. Your many "leaps of faith" over the years have brought astounding results for the Kingdom.

There is a wall backstage here that contains the signatures of all the people who have been baptized here since we moved in. It

is moving to look at and read the names. We are averaging around 200 people more than we did a year ago. I believe God smiles about that. Thank you.

And that's all I've got to say about that.

*Walker*



## Grace and Peace by Jim Ward



I struggle with my tongue. I talk when I should listen, and I remain silent when I should encourage. Why is that?

James tells us that "if anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless." Ouch! He also says the tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

Personally, I think the tongue is just an extension of the heart. How we view ourselves and others is expressed through our tongue. I guess that's why I struggle so much with my tongue—I have not yet won the struggle with my prideful heart.

I really identify with another passage in James (3:9 & 10) that says, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's like-

ness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. *My brothers, this should not be!*" I will say with Isaiah "Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips." Why am I like this? Why can't I treat others the way God treats me? When someone hurts me or says unkind things to me or about me, why can't I say first in my heart and then with my tongue for all to hear, "That's alright, I forgive you and I love you just the same?"

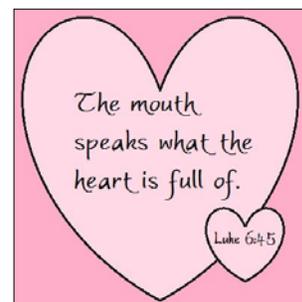
James continues on in verse 17, "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness." Why can't I do that—sow in peace?

Elsewhere in Ephesians I read, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, **but only what is helpful for building others up** according to

their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

I'm still struggling. Pray for me, and I will pray for you—Father, forgive us. "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise." Proverbs 10:19

*Jim*



## Did You Know?

Last time we debunked some myths concerning the “unpardonable sin.” Let’s review them. The unpardonable sin is not committing suicide. That view comes from a false conclusion of Scripture. Some believe that if you don’t ask forgiveness for every single sin (as you commit the sins), you will not be forgiven. The logic then follows that if you commit suicide, you are not conscious to ask forgiveness, and cannot be forgiven. Therefore, suicide is thought to be unpardonable. The Bible does not support that thought process.

Another sin thought to be unpardonable is remarriage after divorce. This, too, is without Biblical support. **Take note: The only sin that is unpardonable is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.** Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a delib-

erate rejection of the Holy Spirit’s supernatural evidence for Christ in an attempt to keep others from believing in Christ.

I think you will agree that as long as you are rejecting Christ and keeping others from believing in him as well, you cannot receive forgiveness of sin and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The Pharisees had this same problem. They did not deny that Jesus could do miracles, but they refused to respond to the truth they could see, and tried to prevent others from doing so.

There are also myths concerning blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not wrestling with feelings of doubt regarding God and Christ. It is not demanding good evidence for the claims of Christianity. Neither is rejecting

the gospel message because you have not been persuaded.

One of the biggest myths concerning blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (and many of us have dealt with it) is falling away from our commitment to Christ.

Many people feel that if you stop reading your Bible, stop praying, and stop going to church on a regular basis, you are somehow unforgiven, and God doesn’t love you anymore. That is simply not true. You cannot lose your salvation by misplacing your priorities in life. Romans 8:35-39 tells us that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

However, let me be clear, you can reject what you know to be true regarding God and Christ while trying to destroy the



faith of others as well, and you will not be forgiven! This sin is unpardonable, and it is called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because it knowingly labels the work of the Holy Spirit as satanic.

The good news in all this is that if a person is worried that he or she may have committed this “unpardonable sin,” he or she should be repentant and be encouraged to once again trust in the grace of God. God will not reject anyone who trusts in him, which brings us to the issue of the Holy Spirit convicting us of sin. This conviction is the primary work of the Holy Spirit—convicting sinners of sin, and we will pick up there next time.

*Jim Ward*

## Standing Against Satan

Except taken from *Hope for Each Day* by Billy Graham

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.*

*I Peter 5: 8 & 9*

No Christian is exempt from the attacks of Satan. Our adversary is personal, aggressive, intelligent, cunning, and destructive, and every day Satan must be resisted.

The earthly weapons we might try to use in spiritual warfare against the devil have no power against his cunning schemes and fierce attacks. Instead, the greatest hindrance to Satan’s destructive efforts is our standing strong in the

knowledge and fear of the Lord. The greatest roadblock to Satan’s work is the Christian who, above all else, lives for God, walks with integrity, is filled with the Spirit, and obeys God’s law.

Your greatest contribution to God’s Kingdom work—and to defeating the Enemy’s efforts against this Kingdom—is to keep up your daily devotions; live a clean, honest, humble, Spirit-filled life; trust God to



guard and protect you morally, physically, and spiritually; and openly witness for Jesus Christ. Don’t be a pawn of the devil, but a servant of Christ.

# DECEPTION

## The Deadliest American Hoax

Last month, we introduced you to Dr. Bernard Nathanson. Nathanson was co-founder and architect of a plan to trick America into the moral and legal acceptance of abortion. Now some might say that this is a vast Right-Wing conspiracy theory. While it was a conspiracy, it is no theory. In fact, Dr. Nathanson has stated it outright that he and his colleagues devised a plan to make abortion legal and socially acceptable in America through emotional manipulation, misleading information, and outright lies.

At the time, a truthful poll of opinion would have found that most Americans were against permissive abortion. Yet within 5 years, Nathanson and his cronies had convinced the Supreme Court to issue the decision that legalized abortion throughout America in 1973 and produced abortion on demand up to birth. In Dr. Nathanson's own words:

"How did we do this? It is important to understand the tactics involved because these tactics have been used throughout the western world with one variation or another, in order to change abortion law.

**The First Key Tactic was to capture the media.** We persuaded the media that the cause of permissive abortion was a liberal enlightened, sophisticated one. Knowing that if a true poll were taken, we would be soundly defeated, we simply fabricated the results of fictional polls. We announced to the media that we had taken polls and that 60% of Americans were in favor of

permissive abortion. This is the tactic of the self-fulfilling lie. Few people care to be in the minority. We aroused enough sympathy to sell our program of permissive abortion by fabricating the number of illegal abortions done annually in the U.S. These false figures took root in the consciousness of Americans convincing many that we needed to crack the abortion law.

**The Second Key Tactic was to Play the Catholic Card.** We systematically vilified the Catholic Church and its "socially backward ideas" and picked on the Catholic hierarchy as the villain in opposing abortion. This theme was played endlessly. We fed the media such lies as "we all know that opposition to abortion comes from the hierarchy and not from most Catholics," and "Polls prove time and again that most Catholics want abortion law reform." And the media drum-fired all this into the American people, persuading them that anyone opposing permissive abortion must be under the influence of the Catholic hierarchy and that Catholics in favor of abortion are enlightened and forward-looking. An inference of this tactic was that there were no non-Catholic groups opposing abortion. The fact that other Christian as well as non-Christian religions were (and still are) monolithically opposed to abortion was constantly suppressed, along with pro-life atheists' opinions.

**The Third Key Tactic was the Denigration and Suppression of all Scientific Evidence that Life Begins at Conception.** A favorite

pro-abortion tactic is to insist that the definition of when life begins is impossible; that the question is a theological or moral or philosophical one, anything but a scientific one. However, today, Fetology makes it undeniably evident that life begins at conception and requires all the protection and safeguards that any of us enjoy. Why, you may well ask, do some American doctors who are privy to the findings of fetology, discredit themselves by carrying out abortions? Simple arithmetic: at \$300.00 times 1.55 million abortions means an industry generating \$500,000,000 annually, of which most goes into the pocket of the physician doing the abortion. It is clear that permissive abortion is purposeful destruction of what is undeniably human life. It is an impermissible act of deadly violence. One must concede that unplanned pregnancy is a wrenchingly difficult dilemma. But to look for its solution in a deliberate act of destruction is to trash the vast resourcefulness of human ingenuity, and to surrender the public weal to the classic utilitarian answer to social problems. As a scientist I know, not believe, know that human life begins at conception. Although I am not a formal religious, I believe with all my heart that there is a divinity of existence which commands us to declare a final and irreversible halt to this infinitely sad and shameful crime against humanity."

Next time we will discover why Dr. Nathanson came to this conclusion.



### Deadline Reminder:

Contributions for the April newsletter should be provided by Friday, March 23, to [ahbell@me.com](mailto:ahbell@me.com).



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**Mission Statement:** Our mission and purpose as a congregation of believers is to lead people to Christ, by helping them to mature in their relationship in Him, teaching and enabling them to minister to others both inside and outside of the family of God, and providing opportunities to share and fellowship together that in all things we might bring glory to God.

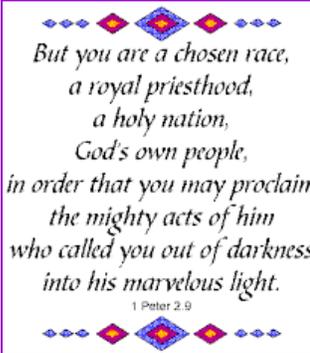
**Love IN Action: A Ministry**  
**Bridgett Landess, Desi, Harley, & Meri Rosser**

## Called Out of Darkness & Into His Marvelous Light!

Do you ever ask the Lord about small things that may be concerning you to have Him answer you in a powerful and perfect way? Well, that recently happened to me. I had been thinking that perhaps I could have chosen a better verse other than 1 Peter 2:9 to highlight the Love IN Action ministry group's primary focus, which is to help you find your place of service here at RCofC! The reason I had concern was because I believe that this ministry and all that is done through it belongs to the Lord. So, I wanted to be sure that even the verse was the best it could be.

I am in a *wonderful* Wednesday night Bible study class led by Liz Patton called "No Other Gods" by Kelly Minter, and was reading through one of the lessons in the study guide one evening. There it was on pages 43-45--an exercise to complete on 1 Peter 2:9-12. The instructions said to read the verses and then briefly write how each one of the descriptions in those verses affect our identity.

One of the descriptions listed was that we have been called out of darkness and into His marvelous light! What an amazing and exciting truth! It was one of the main reasons I had chosen 1 Peter 2:9 for Love IN Action. I wrote in my study guide that as I focus on this truth, it affects my identity by filling my heart with JOY and my mind with GLADNESS. It encourages me to reach out to others and

  
*But you are a chosen race,  
a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation,  
God's own people,  
in order that you may proclaim  
the mighty acts of him  
who called you out of darkness  
into his marvelous light.*  
1 Peter 2:9

minister to them in His marvelous light! There were an additional six descriptions needing answers, as well as several other questions and requests for personal responses in this particular exercise.

Through this time spent in God's Word, the Lord did more than answer my small concern. He answered me in a way that was so powerful and perfect to me that He not only removed the concern, but encouraged me to know that I am serving Him right where He wants me to be and that the Love IN Action ministry group needs to continue to reach out and encourage others to find their best place to serve Him here at RCofC!

In the month of March, come over and visit the Children's Check-In areas where you will find Desi and I serving ORANGE juice! This is to promote awareness of our awesome Preschool - Think ORANGE - First Look Program where we teach our preschoolers three simple but powerful truths.

God Made Me!, God Loves Me!, and Jesus wants to be my Friend Forever! We will be signing up people for a 1-month commitment to help in the Birth to 2-Year-Old classroom, and we will also be looking for a new Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup> Grade Small Group Leader! We would love to see you, and LOVE it even more if you would sign up to help out!

In April we will be featuring the Sound & Audio-Visual Ministry at the Love IN Action table in the sanctuary. This group is responsible for overseeing the lights, sounds, and all the technical aspects during our 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> worship services. If you are interested in finding out more on how to get involved, please come by in April. We will be prepared to help you explore more about this ministry group.

Feel free to contact us anytime at 804-727-9831 (Bridgett) [blandess@excite.com](mailto:blandess@excite.com) or 804-214-5039 (Desi) [desilillian@gmail.com](mailto:desilillian@gmail.com) to find out more about these and other ministry opportunities we currently have here at RCofC! We are prepared to share an overview of the expectations, time commitments, training that may be needed, and answer any questions you may have!