



The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

December 2018

One Hundred and Fifty Years!

Season's Greetings

It is difficult to conceive that the Advent and Christmas Seasons are already knocking at our door. It seems like only a few weeks ago we were enjoying the warmth of the summer air. With the cycle of the seasons we have come to expect that the warmth of summer will turn to the coldness of winter. Many of us are native New Englanders and we have come to expect the four distinct seasons we celebrate throughout the year. The winter season can be difficult on many of us as we have to make hard decisions about venturing out whenever the weather is frightful and dangerous. I love seeing each of you whenever the opportunity arises, but please use caution when the roads are icy.

With the winter season we experience frigid and icy weather, roads become treacherous and difficult to maneuver. Today I would like to take a moment to look the positive side of the Christmas season. First Christmas is the fulfillment of God's promise to send to us a Savior. If we recall the very first Christmas, we are reminded that there was a sense of excitement in the air, for the hope of the world was born to a young poor couple in an obscure setting. When exploring the little nuances of the Christmas story we are reminded that God takes the seemingly unimportant things and uses them for fulfilling great and mighty things.

As we explore the story and the season, my wish for you is that you may continue to see the great possibilities that God has for us in this our small little corner of God's vast universe. I look forward to the opportunities to grow together stronger in our collective faith as we await the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. May the lessons of HOPE - PEACE - LOVE - JOY help us to celebrate the season of Christ's birth.

Pastor Dave

THANK YOU

I cannot say Thank You often enough to each of you for the special day and luncheon commemorating my 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Christian Ministry. Your love and support was so evident as you went the extra mile to create a celebratory time. I absolutely love the special stole and gift that you presented me. Every time I wear the stole it will be a reminder to me of each person that was there on that special day. Reaching this milestone takes more than just myself, but includes so many others who have supported and nurtured me in this journey through ministry. Thank you for your continued nurture, love, and support.

Peace,

Pastor Dave



Ladies Missionary Society

We have been meeting on Wednesday mornings to work on blankets and knitted goods for the boxes we give out. We hope to have them ready in December for Battered Women, Our Father's House and also some of the schools.

We had a table at the Relay for Life Fair. We were able to raise money to buy material that we need to make our blankets. We also have yarn if anyone likes to knit!

Warmest Christmas Wishes to all from
Edwina Olcott, Marilyn Wales and Becky Capone Colwell.



WAYSIDE PULPIT

Not a Museum

In each twenty-fifth anniversary year, we have looked back at Rollstone's history. But it is not useful to admire past accomplishments as museum pieces. The proper use of history is to shed light on the present, and when possible the future.

Twenty-five years ago, Rollstone was a significantly different place. Membership numbers were higher (but not growing), but there also seemed to be a tendency for differences of opinion, over even small matters, to grow into rancorous divisions. We were earning ourselves a reputation as being not loving and mutually supportive, but prideful and stubborn. People were leaving the church due to the animosities.

A red velvet rope had been stretched at the ends of a few back pews, to encourage the congregation to sit farther forward. I imagined this rope one day stretching all the way to the front, and bearing a sign: *“Welcome to the Rollstone Congregational Museum. This is not a simulation or reproduction, but a historic church once attended by actual Christians.”*

Okay, it wasn't really **that** bad (or we wouldn't still be here). But my point is that Rollstone seems very different today, and much more spiritually healthy and unified. We show ourselves to be a friendly community that it would be a pleasure to join. Our basic problems seem to be practical matters, and not interpersonal disputations, and we are tackling them in a united way.

We observe that we will be more successful when there are more of us. Just how to go about making this happen occupies a lot of our attention. Having an active program, and making its events known to outsiders, is a given. Being welcoming to all who come in is indispensable. Forming the newly-proposed Hospitality Committee is an excellent move.

To this must be added as energetic as possible a program of person-to person missions. Our membership will only rise dramatically if we succeed in becoming that which we are striving to be: a visible embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Main Street.

Chuck Funk

Local Toys for Local Kids

Again this year a local group of Marine & other service veterans led by Phil & Bea Jordan are collecting toys for kids who live in our area. They will be using Rollstone as their headquarters for collecting, sorting and distributing toys.

The vets leading this drive have spun off the “Toys for Tots” program so that the collected toys will stay in the local community instead of being sent to Worcester and other areas of the state. Sign up dates are posted on the back door of the church and in other areas. Pass the word to your relatives, friends & neighbors to stop by and sign up.

Paul Stansel

The Kitchen Done FINALLY!

After almost 5 years of dealing with it I'm please to report that the kitchen is complete & approved by the city's Health Inspector. In fact she has complemented us with having one of the best commercial kitchens in the city.

It has been only with the hard work and perseverance of many people that we have finally reached this point. Leading the charge for the last 5 years has been Amy Larsen. Her hard work dealing with the insurance company, the city inspectors and all the sub-contractors has been the key to getting the kitchen back up and running. Besides Amy many people helped. Amount these are:

- Paul Stansel – Design & supervision
- Rick Lane – all the oak wood work and trim
- Brian Burke – All the carpentry and masonry work
- Dave Hollaway – Assisted with the carpentry
- Dominic Baggio – Electrician
- Mike Bellabaro - Electrician
- Patrick Slattery – Architect
- Poske Plumbing – all the piping work
- Armstrong Sprinklers – modification to the sprinkler system
- SFC Engineering - Sprinkler Design Engineers
- Black Bear - Flooring
- Gillette Kitchen Equipment – all the appliances
- All-state Hood – Oven hood
- All-state Fire – Ansul System
- Mark Ramm – General contractor coverage
- John Staples – Additional help with the insurance adjusting

In addition to the contractors we have worked with the following inspectors to ensure that the kitchen meets all state and city requirements:

- Building Inspectors
- Health Inspectors
- Electrical Inspectors
- Plumbing Inspectors
- Fire Inspectors
- Sprinkler Inspectors

Besides the use of the kitchen by our kitchen crew led by Kim & Mary, we have rented it for the use of 2 local businesses, Amanda's Curbside Cupcakes and The Finicky Fork Catering Company. With all the activity of these 3 groups we do not plan to make it available for any other organizations. Be aware that much of the supplies you will see in the kitchen do not belong to the church but belong to the other two organizations using it.

To control the planning, scheduling and use of the kitchen the Trustees have appointed Amy Larsen as the "Kitchen Czar", responsible for all scheduling, inspections, repairs etc. that the kitchen may require. Please refer anyone with questions on the kitchen or its use to Amy.

Church Dinners

The kitchen committee has aggressive plans to return to serving spaghetti dinners and other events. Current plans include monthly spaghetti suppers on Wednesday evenings. In addition they are planning an additional dinners and a luncheon each month. Stay tuned for more information on the actual schedules. The first spaghetti supper is planned for Wednesday January 9th.

For these suppers, dinners & luncheons to be a success we will need the help of everyone who can. If you can't lend a hand in the kitchen or dining room help us by spreading the word.

December-

News from the Church School -

The season of Advent is upon us and excitement is all around.

Here are the 4 weeks of Advent for us...



Dec. 2- Winter's Gift – a Christmas Story of Hope

Dec. 9 - Great Joy – a Christmas Story of Caring

Dec. 16 - Pageant Sunday * (arrive at 9:30)

Dec. 23 – Christmas Sunday Service – A Family Service – no class

Dec. 30- 2018 - New Year's Service – A Family Service – no class

*We are not able to promise a Pageant unless we hear from enough interested families.

Parent's – Grandparents – Will your kiddos be able to participate? Please let us know by this **Sunday Dec.2nd**. Please tell Beth Porell at fellowship hour or by email if you have kiddos who would like to participate in the **pageant on Sun. Dec. 16** (children should arrive at 9:30 to dress).

Walk through practice and costume fittings on Dec 9th during fellowship hour. That's it!!

Email: beep@net1plus.com



JOY TO THE WORLD

"God Loves a Cheerful Giver"

I would like to thank everyone who has donated or plans to **bring in donations by Sun Dec.16th** for Memorial Middle School's food pantry to support families who are in need. There is still time to drop off one or more items. It takes a village and this Christmas our outreach is for these kids and their families.

Blessings from Beth and Hal

CHRISTMAS FLOWER ORDER FORM

This Christmas season we will once again adorn our sanctuary with an array of Christmas Flowers.

We will have Pointsettias, Mums, and Christmas Cacti available.

Price per plant is \$12.00

Please fill out one form per plant with payment.

(Following the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service please feel free to take the plant(s) that you have ordered.)

Given in Memory of:

Given by:

Plant Selection:

Plant order deadline is Sunday, December 16th.

I would like to share this Bible Chapter

Psalms 23:1-6

The LORD is my Shepard; I shall not want. He made me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me besides still waters, He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me In the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Michael Erhagbai

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st

11:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

Fitchburg Historical Society's Holiday House Tour

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2nd

10:00 AM

**First Sunday of Advent
Worship with Communion**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9th

10:00 AM

**Second Sunday of Advent
Worship**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16th

10:00 AM

**Third Sunday of Advent
Worship with Christmas Pageant**

**Receiving of the food supplies for the Memorial School Food Pantry
Deadline for Christmas Flowers**

Christmas Cookie Swap

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23rd

10:00 AM

**Fourth Sunday of Advent
Worship**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24th

6:00 PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30th

10:00 AM

**First Sunday after Christmas
Worship**

**Committee Meetings will be set and announced by the Chairpersons of the committee.
Please begin to prepare your reports for the Annual Meeting.**

Deacon Report

Hello everyone. It doesn't seem possible that fall is gone by and winter is almost here. I hope everyone had a nice Thanksgiving.

We had a wonderful 150th anniversary celebration. We had a great worship service followed with lunch at Il Forno. It was so nice to see old friends and catch up.

We also celebrated Pastor Dave's 25 years as an ordained minister. The congregation presented him with a blue stole at the worship service followed by a luncheon in Cookman Hall.

The Deacons once again this year gave fruit plates to the shut ins for Thanksgiving. They are always so pleased to receive them.

Every year in December the Historical Society has an open house tour of various houses and churches in the area. We were asked to have Rollstone church on the tour. We were very excited to accept. Pastor Dave and many parishioners have been making ornaments and other decorations. Amy Larsen will be speaking about our stained glass windows.

Christmas eve will be at 6 P.M. This year.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season.

Linda Haas, chairperson