



# The Rolling Stone

## Rollstone Congregational Church

January 2019

### HAPPY NEW YEAR

With the crystal ball dropping just before midnight on Monday evening we will bid adieu to the year 2018 and welcome the new year of 2019. We might stay up to see this and others may just quietly head to bed feeling that there will be nothing missed just because it is a replay of scenes experienced through the years with only the number of the year changing. How many times do we miss something just because we believe in our minds that it will be the same old thing without any changes?

The year of 2018 saw many things happen in the life of Rollstone Congregational Church that will never be replicated again. We saw the completion of the commercial kitchen in the lower level which will host many new opportunities to serve fundraising dinners and community dinners where we can reach out to the less fortunate of the community. We were blessed to have several familiar faces become part of our family and community when our sister church closed in June. In welcoming them into our presence they have breathed a breath of fresh air into our midst and have become vital pieces in our desire to serve the community. We are so blessed to have them here sharing in the journey to seeing Christ in many new and exciting ways.

We celebrated our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in 2018 and held a few special events to commemorate that significant milestone. The anniversary celebration gave us the chance to reconnect to members who have moved away or who had moved onto other faith communities. It was inspiring to see so many in worship on that Sunday, and it gave us a glimpse of what would begin to happen to us on a regular basis. We reached out to celebrate the anniversary by bringing 150 snack bags to the Memorial Middle School where they were distributed to students that might be facing food insufficiencies during the Christmas holiday break.

When the ball dropped to start 2018, we might not have imagined the changes that would touch us as the year progressed, but we dreamed and allowed those dreams to come to fruition. So, as we enter 2019 what dreams do you have for our church in 2019? They can range from the smallest thing to the largest imaginable. If we don't allow our imaginations to become alive and excited by the possibilities, then we are surely left to wither and die. Our faith is much like our imagination in that when and if we cease to believe in our purpose and ability then we will no longer be attractive to others. In 2019 we need to commit ourselves to believing that we can do all things through Christ who offers us strength and support.

May we live up to all the possibilities that 2019 will present us as we continually strive to serve Christ and this community.

Happy New Year

Pastor Dave

## Gift of the Magi

Homebound in the 1950s with four small children, my mother depended on Sears & Roebuck for all her Christmas shopping. At five, I still thought all Christmas gifts came from Santa Claus and I knew that he and I were on good terms. I already had my yearly meeting with Santa Claus at Woolworth's, and he let me know in no uncertain terms that I was special. I told him that I did not have a long list because I did not want to be greedy. There were other boys and girls who needed stuff more than I did. I wanted only one thing this Christmas – a doll house. I am sure my unselfishness impressed him. As I climbed off his knee, he winked at me and I knew it was a sure thing.

All those weeks leading up to Christmas, I dreamed of what I would do with my dollhouse. I would cook wonderful dinners for my little dolls in the kitchen, read to them in the children's room, and sing them to sleep each night in their little beds. Of course, the furniture that came with the house might seem a little plain at first, but over the years I would replace it with much fancier things like those at my Grandma's house. I couldn't wait.

Christmas Eve I could hardly eat dinner, I was so excited. Instead of going right to sleep, my brothers and I hid at the top of the stairs hoping to see Santa. (My sister was still a baby and did not know Santa from the Easter Bunny.) Somehow, someone must have put me back to bed because the next thing I knew one of my brothers was shaking my blankets and saying, "Santa's here! Santa's here! Get up!"

I tore down the stairs. The Christmas tree was up and lit and piles of gifts lay under it. I looked and looked and there was no dollhouse. I couldn't quite believe my eyes. There was no way that I could know that the demand for dollhouses that year had exceeded supply and my wish was on backorder. Mama put her arms around me and said "Santa sent a note. He could not fit your dollhouse onto his sleigh, so he gave it to the Three Kings to deliver."

"When will that be?" I asked. "January 6," Mama said. I was still shocked. I thought Santa and I were thick. "Why couldn't he have left some other kid's toy off the sleigh?" I protested. Why mine? I thought I was special."

"Of course, Santa thinks you're special. He heard what you said about other kids needing things more than you do. He knew you would be generous about this. Besides, he probably wanted the Three Kings to know what a good person you are."

And so, it came to pass, as they say in the Bible. When I woke up on the morning of January 6th, 1953, there at the foot of my bed was a most beautiful doll house... I could still smell the camels.

Eileen Berger

Celebrating our 150th anniversary . . . we donated 150 food packages to a local middle school.

Here is a posting the school system put up.



**Fitchburg Public Schools**  
Published by Chad Garner [?] · 2 hrs · 🌐

In celebrating its 150th anniversary, the Rollstone Congregational Church made sure to give back to its community. The church worked on a few missions – one was to assist Memorial Middle School students and families. Rollstone Church stocked Memorial's food pantry with over 150 food items, and also filled 150 snack bags with kid-friendly food for students to take home over winter break. The church members saw a need and stepped up to help out. Memorial students assisted in stocking the food pantry with the donations from Rollstone Church. Thank you so much for the generosity, Rollstone Church! Memorial Middle School Rollstone Congregational Church



A photograph showing four students in a school hallway. They are standing around a table and packing cardboard boxes. A decorated Christmas tree is visible on the left. In the background, a sign reads "Bonjour BAKERY".



Everyone at school was pleased to meet the "nice people from church" and said "they all seemed so happy to be helping". Thanks again everyone who pitched in in EVERY way.

*Beth*

I would like to share these Bible verses with the church:

For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son, that who so ever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. God sent not His son to this world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:16-17

Michael Erhagbai

## WAYSIDE PULPIT

### Unexpected

Professor Martin Gardner, popularizer of mathematics, in *"The Unexpected Hanging,"* wrote of a paradox of expectation. A judge, sentencing a multiple murderer, said "For you to be sentenced to be hanged at a given date and time would be too lenient. Your victims were taken unaware and had no time to prepare for their demise. So you, at a time and day not known to you, but not later than midnight on Friday next week, shall be taken to be hanged."

The prisoner reasoned, "If I am alive on Friday morning, I will know that Friday is the day, so the sentence will not be able to be carried out. Knowing that Friday cannot be the day, I will know that if I am alive on Thursday, that must be the day, and again my hanging cannot be done that day. Similarly, backward through the week, I will know that each day must be, but cannot be my last. This sentence cannot be enforced."

At one PM on Tuesday, totally unexpectedly, just as the judge had ordered, the murderer was hanged.

A grisly story, perhaps, but Christmas also entails for me a paradox of expectation. Each year we make elaborate preparations for Christmas to arrive precisely at midnight on December 25<sup>th</sup>. In the church we sing Advent carols and light Advent candles. We set up and decorate a tree. The secular world begins selling decorative materials and exchangeable gifts as early as Halloween. But it seems that none of these expectations and preparations have much effect on when Christmas truly arrives.

Christmas truly arrives not on a rooftop, nor even in a manger. Christmas arrives in the heart. Suddenly and unexpectedly, one's heart is overwhelmed with the newly awakened presence in the world of hope, joy, peace and love. This can happen as easily in June, with no preparation, as in December. December Christmases can even disappoint, if the experience falls short of a misguided expectation. When I was ten, becoming eleven, and rising from Cub Scout to Boy Scout, every gift for me at Christmas was a piece of Scout equipment. Nice things, but not a surprise among them. True Christmas always takes us by surprise.

There are some, many perhaps, who have never experienced a true Christmas. It is the mission of those who have had the experience to bring, to those who have not, unexpected, surprising gestures of hope, joy, peace and love. May you celebrate many a joyous Christmas throughout the year.

**Chuck Funk**

Dear Friends,

Your Christmas gift is so much appreciated...you made tears well up in my eyes. I have three rooms and they all need electrical work. Thank you for helping me 'see in the light'.

God bless you all,

*Lorna Chabot*

Hi Everyone!

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and Advent season. Rollstone Church was on the open house tour in December. The church was decorated as it would have been 150 years ago. Parishioners got together and made ornaments for the trees. The choir loft was decorated and candles were in all the windows. A large tree was in Cookman hall. The chapel had a beautiful creche in it. It was an outstanding job done by everyone. A caterer using our kitchen provided refreshments. Many people came and could not get over all the beautiful stained glass windows. The church never looked lovelier.

In Dec. 16th we had a cookie swap. People brought in cookies to swap with others so they would have different cookies to take home and enjoy. We had more than enough for everyone.

We will be getting devotionals probably the upper room for people to read.

Christmas Eve service was at 6:00. The choir sang and Pastor Dave sang two solos. We lit candles and sang Silent Night. It was lovely.

The Annual Meeting is on Jan. 27th after church. Don't forget to get your reports in.

It is a little way off, but on Feb. 10th we will have a Yankee swap after church in Cookman Hall. You bring a wrap gift not more than \$5 or so to swap. There will more on this later. This is to celebrate Valentine's Day. This a lot of fun.

I am looking forward to a new year with old and new friends. Happy New Year.

Linda Haas,  
Deacon chair

SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Meeting of the church will be on Sunday, Jan. 27 after the service.  
Please submit reports to Emily Funk by Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> if hand written or Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> if  
electronic.