



# The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

September 2018

One Hundred and Fifty Years!

## Changing Seasons

Every season has its own particular splendor, and with that, downsides, too. Summer has so much to commend it that there's no need to state the obvious. But there are negatives that deserve mention. In the summer, wrote the Bard, "*sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, And often is his gold complexion dimmed.*" Moreover, the mosquitos are pesky. Humidity is awful in places. Unlike Shakespeare, we would not compare a lover to a summer's day.

Winter is often lovely because a landscape covered with freshly fallen snow is a breathtaking thing of beauty. Many people love the winter because of sporting activities such as ice skating, skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and everyone's favorite, curling (the ice sport or by the fireside with a blanket).

Winter, however, is cold. Sometimes, it is cold *and* damp. In snowy regions, winter means that sidewalks need to be shoveled. The heat bill is huge. Generally, we spend more time inside than outside — beginning a season of social hibernation. We hate winter for all the reasons we love summer. In short, we don't like winter because it is not summer.

Because of the winter blahs and the mind-numbing boredom, we rejoice at the slightest notice that spring is about to arrive. When April shows up, we are so ready for spring we can hardly wait to get to church on Easter Sunday and shout, "Hallelujah!"

We're hard-pressed to think of anything negative about spring. The temperature is rising. We can get outside. The trees are budding and flowers are blooming. Creation has awakened from its slumber. What's not to like? The baseball season has started, and Congress will soon adjourn for the summer — which many people think is always a good thing.

Although we love summer, we always leave spring behind with a sense of regret. In our hearts, we wish it could always be springtime.

Then there's fall. This is the most interesting season of all. It is the only season known by two names, fall and autumn — the latter being preferred if for no other reason than it allows us to use the delightful adjectival form of the noun: *autumnal*.

No season introduces as much change with so much anticipation as autumn! Meteorologically speaking, after a long hot summer, we are ready for change! We are longing for cooler temperatures.

Fall also signals the beginning of the football season! This is huge! It means eating pizza, tailgating, cheering for the home team and wondering who is going to protest what.

But the changes are not just climatic and athletic. There are fashion considerations as well. After Labor Day, we put away white and can wear black again, a fashion rule that, if observed, will help preserve civilization as we know it. And then there's the *sweater factor*. We can slip on a cardigan, make ourselves a cup of hot chocolate, grab a book and snuggle in for a good read.

“Cozy” is the word that comes to mind. In the autumn, we change our settings to “cozy.”

So, in the fall, almost every sphere of life is in a quite radical process of transition, development or change. School has started and returning students are a grade level higher — an unfamiliar world of more rigorous academic discipline than hitherto experienced. School sports are resuming. Vacations are over and people return to their jobs with no holiday prospects (except Labor Day) until the Thanksgiving weekend in November.

Churches likewise are ramping up activities and programming after a summer of lower attendance, fewer activities and a pastor who's been *episcopus absconditus*, *pastor incognito* or something else that can only be explained in Latin. He has wrangled well-deserved study time and combined it with accumulated vacation leave. Seminarians, or perhaps a lay preacher or two, have filled the pulpit.

Now, however, the pastor is back. The people are back. The pews, benches or chairs are fuller. The people lift up their heads and their hearts are filled with expectation, wondering to what heights the pastor, freshly filled with the Spirit after season of renewal, will take them. They await with renewed interest what their newly inspired pastor will announce about a new season of refreshing.

No season comes close to producing as much change as autumn. Nature begins to collapse its tent. Trees drop their leaves and stand before us naked and unembarrassed. And the colors! Fall goes out in a burst of glory.

We love the fall. It's our favorite season. Americans agree. No season has as many followers as autumn. Poll after poll reveals that about 40-45 percent of Americans claim fall as their favorite season, with spring considerably behind at about 25 percent, closely followed by summer at 23 percent. Winter is dead last with only about 6 percent saying winter is their favorite season.

But why do so many people call fall their favorite season of the year?

I believe it is linked to the fact that during the fall there are so many changes and transitions. We get bored with summer. We don't want summer to drag on. We don't agree with Shakespeare, “But thy eternal summer shall not fade, / Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st.” We want summer to fade. We want to get back to work. We want to start studying again. We want to get back to church again. We are eager to watch football again, and say goodbye to the World Series

champions who are not crowned, it seems, until the frost is on the infield grass and children are carving pumpkins.

We love autumn because most of us like a change of scenery every once in a while. And as fall arrives, everything changes, and we love it.

So we take special note of autumn. Our congregation is happy and experiencing change, and for a pastor, it is a fresh opportunity to tap into the happiness, the openness to change, widespread optimism and to reap the harvest.

Winter is only weeks away.

Pastor Dave

### **Deacon's Report**

Hi everyone, I can't believe summer is almost over. I hope everyone had a great time this summer!

The deacons took most of the summer off and had few meetings. Rev. Becky Tornblom filled in for Rev. Dave while he took some time off for vacation and study time. She was here for 4 Sundays.

We have been working on planning the celebration for our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in October. Postcards to save the date have been mailed and invitations will go out soon.

Homecoming Sunday is Sept 9<sup>th</sup> and it will be good to see everyone back at church.

The deacons will be soon hard at work planning the fall schedule. If anyone has any ideas of fun things we might do please speak to one of the deacons.

Linda Haas

### **Up Date on Katherine Dodd**

I received a message from Suzanne Tattan, Katherine's daughter, that her mother has recently moved to a senior assisted living facility in Leominster called Sunrise on 6 Beth Avenue, Unit number 302. She misses us all and would like to get involved with the church again. Visits and calls would be much appreciated. Her phone number will stay the same 978-724-3373 after Labor Day.

Kathy Rowe

## Sunday School News - September 2018

### REGATHERING SUNDAY - September 9<sup>th</sup> - the first Sunday of the new Church School Year !

We look forward to regathering with our church family after a summer of travel and fun. We will get back to our youth lessons and fellowship with all.

How was DAY CAMP you ask?

### Under the Sun

Frisbee Fun for Everyone!



Just out of this world...



Rebecca's Memorial Rock Garden created with love by campers and staff.

For 50 years of leadership at the waterfront we Honor Kathy Rowe!!



Thank you to EVERYONE who helped to make our week a special time for our campers.

Beth ...and Hal



## WAYSIDE PULPIT

### Grabbing the Brass Ring

To “grab the brass ring” has been a metaphor for finding financial success in a free market. It comes from an old-time carnival carousel practice of placing a ring dispenser outside the periphery of the ride. Whoever grabbed a brass ring from the dispenser won a free ride. Supposedly, in the free market, the brass ring is there equally for everyone, and whoever has enough pluck, reach and grasp grabs it and gets a free ride, i.e. security for life.

But it is a flawed metaphor. Free markets don’t work like that. If there are brass rings, they are certainly not equally available to all. And it’s not even an accurate depiction of how carousel brass ring dispensers worked. Perhaps a clearer picture makes the grabbing of a brass ring a suitable metaphor for living a Christian life.

The reason dispensers came to be placed outside carousels was to encourage riders to accept outside seats. These were inherently less desirable, because in the early carousels they were fixed-height seats, lacking the mechanism to provide the pleasant up-and-down motion of the seats further inside.

But not every time you came around to the dispenser would there be a brass ring for the taking. Most of the rings in the dispenser were simple iron rings, not worth a free ride or anything else. A brass ring became available only when the last iron ring before it was removed. And at the moment you removed an iron one and revealed a brass, you would be unlikely to have enough time to get the brass one for yourself. So, most of the time, you would be extending effort for which the reward would fall to someone else.

So, as a metaphor for Christian life, the carousel is a place where one forgoes a seat of greater pleasure, and takes a position of service, the benefit of which goes to the community, and not just to the self. One works for what one wants to have, in the hope that others might have it.

*Chuck Funk*