



The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

May 2020

Hope during Difficult Situations

During difficult and trying situations we often begin to search for signs of hope to lift our spirits. In the scriptures, the Psalms in particular, we have words of encouragement to sustain us everyday and in times like we are experiencing. Take a moment daily and turn to the scriptures for hope and reassurance that we will come out stronger when we emerge on the other side of this pandemic.

Psalms 138 New International Version (NIV)

1 I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; before the “gods” I will sing your praise.

*2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness, for you have so exalted your solemn decree
that it surpasses your fame.*

3 When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me.

4 May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord, when they hear what you have decreed.

5 May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great.

6 Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life.

You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me.

8 The Lord will vindicate me; your love, Lord, endures forever— do not abandon the works of your hands.

We hear the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. which speak of seeing something good by observing in the night. He said, “*Only in the darkness can you see the stars.*”

They still tell the story at William and Mary College of daffy, magnificent President Ewell. For a century and a half, this prestigious Virginia school had been a leader among American universities. Then came the Civil War. In the hard days of reconstruction that followed, William and Mary went bankrupt. Soon it had a deserted campus, decaying buildings and no student

As with so many Southern schools after that tragic war, everyone wrote it off as dead. Everyone, except its president. He had given his best years to advancing the liberal arts through that school. He refused to give up now. So, every morning, President Ewell went to the deserted campus, climbed the tower of its main building, and rang the bells, calling the school to class.

He behaved as though the school was still there.

People thought he was crazy. Nevertheless, every day for seven years, President Ewell rang the bells at William and Mary, in defiance of the despair and hopelessness that would destroy everything he held valuable.

Eventually and miraculously, it worked. Others caught his vision. Students, teachers and money returned. Today, America's second oldest university thrives again, because of the hope of a single man.

Today, people suffer all around the world. Churches are shuttered by the threat of disease and uncertainty and scattered by the fear of disease and uncertainty.

Many people are shut up in their homes or apartments having no else to go: no work, no restaurants, nor entertainment venues. It's such a different atmosphere from the bustle and high-energy life we're used to.

But we persist, wherever we are.

We worship God in our homes and online with a virtual community of believers. We read the Bible. We pray on bended knee. We give thanks. We help others in their time of need. We walk humbly with God.

We're ringing the bells of hope.

And someday, we shall have our reward where we will be stronger and more diverse in the methods we utilize to reach our congregation and the world. Previously if the words were uttered that we should create a virtual/online ministry, there would have been laughs and sneers believing it was impossible. Remember the words of scripture when we hear, "All things are possible through Jesus Christ Our Lord." Those are words of hope that can sustain us until we all gather together again. Until then, be safe, be healthy, and lift your voice in praise to God.

Pastor Dave

Prayer: God of grace and mercy, you are our hope. We cast ourselves upon you in utter faith and confidence. There is none besides you! In Jesus' name. Amen.

A NOTE FROM ECUADOR FROM VIKKI POLLICE

We flew home from New Zealand just before everything exploded arriving in Ecuador on March 9th. We flew from Auckland, NZ to Santiago, Chile. We spent the night in Santiago at the airport before catching a plane the next morning to Lima, Peru and then back to Guayaquil, Ecuador. Since we were staying overnight in Santiago, we needed to fill out health forms and we had temperature scans before we really even entered the terminal. Nothing else was done except when we turned in our health forms, we were given a slip with our flight number, the date and instructions to call a phone number if we started to show any symptoms. In Peru, since we were just changing planes we didn't even have that precaution taken. When we arrived in Guayaquil we were again required to turn in a health certificate and were scanned for fever. Then we were pointed to a hand sanitizer dispenser. After going through customs and before entering the open section of the terminal we had to sanitize the soles of our shoes. The taxi driver who took us to the office of the buseta (or minibus) line made us use more hand sanitizer and he would not touch our luggage except with a towel. The buseta line didn't bother with anything.

It was so good to get home. Gary contacted our cleaning lady to tell her that we had decided to self-isolate for 2 weeks to be sure we didn't bring anything with us but our luggage. He told her it was her choice as to whether or no she wanted to come over to clean. She did, but it was the last time she was able to come. Ecuador didn't get off to as good a start as they could have. There was a woman who lived in or near Guayaquil who came back from Spain and brought the virus with her. Guayas province went from 1 case to around 15 almost in a heartbeat.

Ecuador closed its borders at midnight on March 15th. At least to air traffic. Within a couple of days they closed the borders to land and sea as well. On March 14th there were 28 confirmed cases in Ecuador and only 2 in Azuay province where Cuenca is located. By the 16th (the last time I've been out of our place) people were truly in panic mode. Down here it wasn't toilet paper, it was hand sanitizer, alcohol and disinfecting cleaners. The restrictions said that if you were out for other than necessities you would

receive a warning, then a \$100 fine for the first offense. For the second, the fine was \$400 (that is considered the minimum monthly income) and the third offense was 1 to 3 years in jail.

I went out shopping with my neighbor, Cathy, since she has a car. The country had already been asked to observe social distancing and the people were told that they could only be out for necessities: food, cleaning products, medicines and medical services. The conditions at the 2 stores Cathy and I went to were so busy and no one was observing any social distancing, that's for sure.

The first store was a small one specializing in commercial cleaning and such. I left there with 2 liters of alcohol, a gallon of Lysol and a gallon of bleach. I probably won't finish the Lysol in my lifetime. Actually, I prefer an alcohol and vinegar blend. The second store was a supermarket and we had to wait about 10 minutes just to get into the parking lot to park the car. When we entered the store, they offered hand sanitizer and were also using it on the handles of the carts. I have never seen such a disordered mess at the checkout and I worked at Market Basket on John Fitch for 20 years. We made it home ok.

On the 17th a national curfew was in place from 9PM to 5AM. Here in Cuenca they were arresting about 6 to 8 people every evening. Other restrictions included not being able to drive except on certain days determined by the last digit of your license plate unless you had a "safe conduct" pass which was for essential personnel and truck drivers and vehicles bring in food, etc. Food delivery vehicles fell into this category. There was to be no interprovincial buses running and parks were supposed to be closed. Only gatherings of 50 people or less were allowed - that included the number of people in a grocery store at one time as well.

On the 19th the curfew in Guayas province was moved from 5PM to 2PM until 5AM. They're having real problems containing it there. By the 23rd there were 700 (+/-) cases there. Here in Cuenca about 22 and in Quito around 60. By the 24th we had a 2PM to 5AM curfew in Cuenca. While most people are following the restrictions of "Quedate en Casa", or remain in the house there are those who don't seem to feel it applies to them. That goes for driving on days you are not supposed to, being out for non-essential reasons, and making sure you are in before curfew starts. What's been really lovely is that since around the 17th there were no buses running in the city. Just taxis. It's made things so much quieter.

Our neighbor downstairs, a gringo named David, came up to ask us to be contacts for him in case he got sick. He's alone. It must be really hard to be by yourself with no one to reach out too. Of course, we're doing that for him. He WhatsApps Gary every few days. They're even talking about teaching each other geek stuff online. Gary keeps busy with his online classes for WPI. At least a couple of days a week he spend the whole morning on the computer with students and sometimes it goes into the afternoons as well.

On the 31st in the afternoon (after curfew was in place) there was a convoy of 2 tanker trucks with police before and after that came down the street next to our building. They were spraying the sidewalks and walls and fences of the houses. Disinfecting. It was announced that the fire department would be going through the entire city disinfecting the sidewalks and gutters. Haven't seen them since but Cuenca is fairly large.

On the first of April, the newspaper reported that the air in the Cajas National Park (that's the mountains west of Cuenca) has cleaner air that it's had in years. Also, the water is cleaner which is very good for Cuenca because the Cajas are our watershed. The rangers also said that they are seeing more birds and large mammals than have been around for about 20 years. It's almost like the earth is forcing us into quarantine so it can restore itself from our mistreatment.

On the 2nd, it was announced that Guayaquil has a problem disposing of its dead. There are about 120 funeral homes and only 20 still open and coffins are almost non-existent. The Army is starting to collect the dead and put them in temporary morgues. It turns out that the authorities have found a source of cardboard coffins for the bodies. While things were and still are bad in Guayas, the press up in the States and the UK have sensationalized the problems.

On the 3rd. Gary went to SuperMaxi with Cathy. They went early, before the mall had even opened. You are now required to wear a mask and gloves whenever you go out. The supermarket staff made you sanitize the soles of your shoes, sprayed you down then offered hand sanitizer. I don't think any virus could make it into the store. If they are taking as good care of their stock as their customers there should be very little chance of picking up anything unwanted there.

So while there are certainly restrictions in place here, we are not that much impacted. Sure, Gary misses his walks around the city, but I'm kept quite busy with first the deep cleaning of the apartment and now just keeping up with it and cooking. I refuse to do any real baking because we don't need the extra calories. I also miss my Spanish classes. Lucia, my tutor has offered to do them on Skype, but I'm not really comfortable with that. Also, I'm worried about how to pay her since we won't be meeting face to face.

So right now the situation is this: there is a 2PM to 5AM nationwide curfew with the weekends being a 24 hour ban on traffic. Cars are only allowed on the roads 1 day a week according to their license plates. You are only allowed out of your house for food, cleaning products, medicines and medical services. You are also allowed out if your job is deemed essential. The fact that the mercados are being closed and that "informal" vendors are not allowed to sell presents a major problem for the vendors and day workers. They feed their families pretty much from daily earnings and certainly don't have savings. I am happy to say that both the city of Cuenca and the province of Azuay have stepped up to make food baskets available to the very poor free of charge and that those who can afford to buy, but don't want to go near the stores can purchase baskets for home delivery. The crops are in the fields and doing this enables the farmer to earn an income and not have his crops go to waste and to get those crops to the people that really need them. We tried to order from one of the big chains here, but they need credit or debit payment before authorizing the order. Unfortunately, the card must be on an Ecuadorian bank. We have an account down here, but did not realize that our cards expired over a year ago. We're not going out to the bank under these conditions so Gary will continue to go shopping once a week and get his exercise while doing it.

We have no idea how long this will last of course, but the number of confirmed cases in Cuenca is 99 right now. That's a gain of 97 cases since we got home a month ago. On the other hand, Cuenca has a population of 650,000 so that makes it look a lot better. We feel if we keep social distancing and sanitizing well, all will be just fine.

To all of you at Rollstone, we say take care and be well. Many blessings,

Vikki Pollice

WAYSIDE PULPIT

Follow What Leader?

It has been nearly ten years since I lost my brother Rich, who was my guru in all things technical, from childhood until his death. To all technical questions he gave an answer which was useful and correct, and an explanation that was instructive.

I asked if I should connect a constant voltage transformer to the generator at our summer cottage, to keep the lights from dimming if the generator speed fluctuated, and he explained that that would be disastrous, because CV transformers use the steady sixty cycle pulse of the current as a reference value to regulate the voltage.

When we moved into the house we are about to move out of, there was no cable television on our street, so we installed a roof antenna, I doing the climbing, and Rich giving directions from below. "In which direction should I point this thing?" "Look at the roof antennas around the neighborhood. They are all getting signal. Point yours in the average direction of the others."

We installed a fluorescent light in my pantry. "Where should I mount the wall switch?" "Take this pen and reach in as if to turn on the light, and mark the wall there." Of all the wall switches in my house, it's the only one I never have to fumble for; it's always right where I put my hand.

There would be a lot less strife in the world, and a lot more pleasure, if we all would be able to discern when to follow a capable leader, when to fall in with the collective experience of the crowd, and when to make our own mark, following ourselves as a standard.

Chuck Funk

Hi Everyone!

This is my little “blurb” from the organ bench, and I hope it brings a little bit of comfort to all of you. I hope you all are well during these crazy times! I continue to pray for you all during this time, and hope that with every week that goes by, we get closer to meeting once again in our beautiful church together!

To start, I just want to make a little shoutout to all of the people helping run our online services! I hope that you are able to find some comfort in them, and that it helps bring you back into Rollstone even if it is over a screen of some sort, and we can't be right next to each other.

With this, I'd like to offer everyone the opportunity to request some music! Every week the organ will have a little interlude somewhere within the service for a few minutes, in which case I have been playing short meditative type pieces based on hymns. So if you have a certain hymn that you might want to hear at that time, I would gladly try to accommodate that! Please feel free to email me with any requests at: thefifeingorganist@gmail.com

Remember that during this time, prayer is a powerful thing! And though we cannot gather in our church together, that doesn't mean we can't pray! God gave us this world, and despite all of the “bad's” that surround us, prayer is one thing that unites us as one. Prayer has no boundaries!

So you might be thinking now, “Where on Earth is he going with this?”

Well music is a great form of prayer, especially hymns! The famed Roman Catholic patron of theologians, St. Augustine of Hippo once said, “Who sings well prays twice.” So following these words, during this time, I encourage all of you to pick a hymn you might like, or just find a religious song that speaks to you, and maybe sing it to yourself (maybe even out loud!), listen to a recording of it, or just read the lyrics. There is so much religious music out there, and so much of it is deep in theological meaning, and sacredness, and it is a great way of finding comfort in our Lord during these times. I've been recently listening to “Be Not Afraid” by Bob Dufford. Some of you might know it, but for those who don't, the lyrics are absolutely beautiful!

In the meantime, I will be praying for all of you and hoping that we can meet together in our church very soon. I can't wait for the day to hear all of your voices again and to see all your faces in the pews! Take care of yourselves, and stay safe.

Until we meet again, God be with you!

Christus est in pace (Peace in Christ),

Gavin Klein

Smiling

Smiling is infectious,
You catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
And someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
Then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
Could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
Don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
And get the world infected!

Spike Milligan

DEAR INTERNET: A LOVE STORY DURING THE AGE OF THE VIRUS

Dear Internet:

Our affair has been a long and winding road. In the early days, I loved the idea of you, but there seemed to be no practical way of making our romance a reality. In those days, the price of buying a home computer for our first date was nearly \$10,000. Later, I got your address from an early dating link (aol.com) and as your following grew, I found many friends through you. But other forces kept us apart. For years my employers regarded you as a flirt, who would lure us away from our work. They were right, of course, you are a beautiful distraction.

But you proved you could also be a time saver – expediting mail, and memos, faster than bicycle deliveries – cheaper than Fed Ex - and more personal and private than fax machines. You were the best. Then, you wiled your way into my phone. I could take photos and send them anywhere. So many photos were on my phone that I never bought a scrap book again. You replaced library research with encyclopedic material of your own. While Google may be derided by academics, it is still my go-to for quick answers as well as research guidance.

Then social media kicked in. There was Six Degrees, My Space, Linked-in, Photobook, Flickr, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Spotify, Four Square, Pinterest... it goes on and on. Many of these social media engines were hiding places for bandits who threatened to steal one's identity, money and more. Advertisements began to pop up on my computer like weeds. How could you do this to me? I didn't recognize you anymore. We went our separate ways.

I aged and you seem ageless. My grandchildren spend all their time tapping on their phones. "How are you ever going to learn to talk to real people?" I ask them. They just smile at me and go back to tapping on their phones. I felt old and unloved.

Then you came back to me in the time of Covid-19, when we all had to leave our offices not to return until the scare was over. Your Virtual Private Network (VPN) got me right into my office files from home. "Google Hangout" allows me to talk with my mother, who is isolated in a skilled nursing home, as well as my brothers and sisters in a weekly family meeting. Using "Go to Meeting" and "Zoom," I can meet with friends and colleagues without leaving home. At first, I worried that I wouldn't catch on to this technology quickly enough, but you, Sweet Internet, are as easy as ever. It's been a great romance.

Virtually yours,

Eileen Berger



Peace, Be Still

Theme: Jesus calms the storms of life

Scripture: *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Mark 4:39 (NIV)*

Seeing this ship might remind us that we are entering into springtime when many people enjoy getting into a boat to go fishing or simply a peaceful ride on the waters. No matter why you enjoy boating, it is important to know some things about boating safety. At the very top of the list is...always wear your life jacket! *Right Kathy?*

The boating season is also the season for thunderstorms. It is wise to check the weather report before going out in a boat, but the weather can change very quickly. A storm can come up suddenly and you may need to get safely to shore. *(We may feel like this illness today is like a huge storm in everyone's life).*

Be still and feel calm by remembering this Bible story... One day, Jesus and some of his disciples were out on a lake in a boat. Suddenly, without warning, a storm came up. The wind blew so hard, and the waves were so high, that water was coming into the boat and the boat was about to be turned over.



While the winds and waves tossed the little boat about, Jesus slept peacefully at one end of the boat. Some of the disciples became upset that Jesus was sleeping. They went and woke Jesus, and asked him, "Master, don't you even care that we are about to drown?"

Jesus got up and spoke to the winds and the waves. "Peace, be still," he said. Right away, the winds stopped and the sea became calm. Jesus' disciples were amazed! They said, "Who is this man that even the winds and the waves obey him?" *How wonderful and safe they must have felt with Jesus!*

We know who Jesus is, don't we? And we know that Jesus can still calm storms today. Sometimes, there are sudden storms in our lives. Perhaps it is an illness, *much like we are experiencing now in the world*, a family problem, or the loss of a friend or loved one. During these times, Jesus can calm the storms of doubt and fear in our life. He doesn't take away every problem, but if we will trust in him, he will give us peace in our hearts even in the middle of a storm.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for those times when you calm the storms that come up in our daily lives. We also thank you for those times when you give us peace even though we are in the middle of a storm. We ask you to watch over us and keep us safe. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



May this short lesson bring peace, hope and less fear to each who reads the message! We are all looking forward to being together again. Blessings to ALL, Beth and Hal

Peace! Be Still

When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. Mark 4:39 (NLT)



The puzzle is based on Mark 4:35-41

D I S C I P L E S W C A Q K K
 D C X J Q J L L M A Q T F E Y
 J R A O S Y T C J V W I N D H
 X E O L Z T E S L E E P I N G
 K Y S W M C I Q I S X W O K E
 O A L U N T S L B P C B D R J
 L A K E S Z D N L O C H E S V
 T A L L I I V Z Z Z A T E W S
 S I K Z A Y T I M W K T B A W
 S B P R S C C U S H I O N T D
 X L F G T J D W F A I T H E F
 T A H O O E O P X O T B L R U
 Z W J Q R D B T Q Q A F T Q Y
 S L J L M J E V E N I N G S Q
 W W N Y D L Y T D L Y D J Q C

DISCIPLES	SILENCE	WOKE	EVENING	FAITH
WATER	AFRAID	LAKE	BOAT	OBEY
JESUS	CALM	CUSHION	WAVES	WIND
DROWN	HEAD	SLEEPING	STORM	STILL