



The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

December 2019

Holiday and Christmas Greetings

On this night so cold and crisp I look to the star filled heavens and have yet to locate the star that we so eagerly anticipate to find. It must be out there somewhere, yet I cannot find it. Have you ever found yourself looking, searching, and anticipating, but to no avail you cannot find it. This experience is so typical within the world today, even with the faithful we tend to be blinded for many reasons.

I selected a special devotional to help guide us through the advent season. The devotional is based upon reflections of Charles Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*. We have all heard the story set in Victorian England, but have you experienced the deeper meanings of this story about Ebenezer Scrooge? The story recalls the life and transformation of Mr. Scrooge in ways that can help us to find new life through Christ. This classic along with many other classic stories are filled with deeper meaning than can change us when we allow our hearts, minds, and souls to be moved. We have a tendency to gloss over the deeper meaning in stories and life, thus missing out on the true transformative power that is within our grasp.

The stories, like *A Christmas Carol*, are rich and filled with lessons that can bring about transformation in difficult and trying situations in life. I give thanks and praise to God for the gifts we can receive through these classic stories and hymns as they lead us to spritual growth.

I encourage you to look at this story, the story told in *A Wonderful Life*, the hymns we will sing, and the liturgies we will recite, that they might lead you to finding Hope – Peace – Joy – Love throughout this Advent season and the coming year.

Christmas Blessings,

Pastor Dave

Church School News for December 2019 !



The first Sunday of Advent is Dec 1st.

Advent season is about expectation and anticipation of Christ's birth in this season leading up to Christmas.

We are hoping to present a Youth Pageant on the fourth Sunday of Advent,
Sunday December 22nd - Christmas Sunday - as part of the morning service.

Please contact Beth or Hal if you know you have youth interested in participating. It is **IMPORTANT** to let us know **ASAP** so that we know we have enough interest to go forth. We have costumes for all and will save you one even if you can only join us on the 22nd. We can try a walk through rehearsal the Sunday before (12/15) if folks are available. **On Christmas Sunday we ask that all participants arrive at church by 9:30** - parents can help get kids dressed and ready to join the service. And also help with hanging up costumes during fellowship time.

Beth and Hal

Cell Phone vs. The Bible

I wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phones?

What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?

What if we flipped through it several times a day?

What if when we forgot it – we turned back to go get it?

What if we used it to receive messages from the text?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to Kids as gifts?

What if we never traveled without it?

What if we always referred our friends and acquaintances to it?

What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go...."Hmm – where is my Bible?

Oh, and one more thing:

Unlike our cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected; because Jesus already paid the bill.

Makes you stop and think "where are my priorities?"

Submitted by Pat Goguen

Advent: Preparing for New Beginnings, Accepting Endings.

Recently a dear friend called to tell me that she had been diagnosed with late stage pancreatic cancer and had only two months to live. This came as a special shock. I had just visited with her two months ago in Syracuse, N.Y. and she was the picture of health.

“Is there anything you can do?” I asked. She replied that she could request chemotherapy and it might extend her life, but there were no promises. “Why should I spend my last days in misery?” she asked. No, she was taking pain killers; making plans with hospice; and striving for closure by using her time left for her husband and large, loving family – coming from as far away as Sweden. I was at work when she called. Afterward, I locked myself in a bathroom stall so no one would see me crying.

I don't think often enough about death, although it has touched me very deeply all my life. My oldest brother, Edward, was murdered. He was 21, a college senior in Philadelphia working a part-time job in a drugstore. Some kids came in with a gun, took the cash from his register, and gratuitously shot him. I was told by one of his friends, who had been waiting in the store for him to get off work, that his final words were the Humphrey Bogart meme “I think they got me, pal.” I doubt he realized he was dying.

Our youngest daughter, Katie, drowned in my sister's swimming pool when she was five. She was born with Down syndrome and an intense need to have her own way. The day before it happened we were playing in the shallow end of the pool, but I saw her watching her cousins jump off the diving board in the deep end. Time and again she would try to break away from me to get to that diving board. That night, while we were all asleep, she got out of bed and somehow got out the back door. I found her in the morning floating with the inflatable toys in the pool. Tragically, she got that free swim.

My sister, Ellen, died of breast cancer six years ago. She was an attorney and fought the disease tooth and nail. She tried to sue Dana Farber, where she had annual mammograms for years. They never told her that because she had dense breast tissue those mammograms meant nothing. She discovered the lump herself three months after her last mammogram. With some of her friends, they went to the state legislature to make things right. Shortly after she died, a law passed in Massachusetts requiring hospitals and clinics to tell you if your mammogram may not provide the whole picture. It is called Ellen's Law. <https://www.areyoudense.org/blog/early-detection-denied-cindy-ellen-and-hope-died-and-never-missed-their-yearly-mammogram/>

My father, a very good man, was 83 when he suffered a massive heart attack one Sunday morning while making coffee before Mass. My mother heard the thump and came running down the stairs. “As soon as I saw him, I knew he was gone,” she said. “So, I got down on my hands and knees. I kissed him and kissed him and told him I loved him.” My sister, Mary got there before the medics. She said Dad seemed to have a smile on his face. They say the last senses to leave you are touch and hearing.

I don't think it is morbid to reflect on death. Particularly at this time of year. Christians and pagans alike have viewed winter as a time of endings, but also as a time of renewal. The season of Advent is about preparation for what is to come. So, in this Advent my prayers are about death; the deaths of those who have gone before me, I hope they have found peace; the upcoming death of my dear, brave friend who is facing it with courage and love. And of course, I think about my own death, whenever that happens, and pray that I will face it with hope for new beginnings.

- Eileen Berger

Deacon Report

Hi everyone. I believe winter has arrived. We have had some really cold days lately.

We celebrated the dedication of the sound system given by the Schrader family. We had a nice worship service where Pastor Dave presented a plaque in memory of Walter and Norma. A nice fellowship was served afterwards. I will always remember Walter (Chick) standing at the back of the church greeting parishioners and handing out programs. He loved doing it. They are missed.

Now we will begin decorating the church for the Christmas season and the celebration of our savior Jesus Christ's Birth.

The advent season will start and we once again will have the Christmas pageant presented by the children. It is such a joy to see all the children walk down to the manger.

This is a season of giving. Once again we will be giving food and hygiene supplies to the children at Memorial school. This will help supply their pantry for children who otherwise would have to go without.

Some of our memorial money is going to warmer winters to supply them with yarn to make hats, mittens, and scarves for those who would go without.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas season with friends and family.

Then as Tiny Tim said, "God bless you one and all."

Until next time, Linda Haas

WAYSIDE PULPIT

Getting What I Deserve

My mother had a strict principle that since she loved her four children equally, we would all receive equal treatment from her. When we were young, there were the same number of packages under the Christmas tree for each of us. Once we grew to know the value of a dollar, she kept track of what had been spent on gifts for each of us, and made up the difference with a gift of cash. One year little Tommy was short a package, so she wrapped a bright new shirt for him. When he opened it, he said "Oh, a shirt," and set it aside. Mom said, "But isn't it a *nice* shirt?" Dad gave her a look that meant the loudest "I told you so!" that ever went unspoken. Sameness in treatment doesn't ensure sameness in results. Even when we were balanced with cash, some of us had earnings from neighborhood chores, and had less need for a cash gift than another. But we learned that in principle we were entitled to what everyone else got.

But what do we really deserve? Am I entitled to be able to see, more than so many who are blind? Entitled to walk, more than a paraplegic? To live, more than my stillborn brother or sister? It is foolishness to base my happiness upon believing that I have received all that I deserve to receive. Instead, my happiness depends upon cultivating and practicing thankfulness for the (undeserved) gifts I have received, and still receive, from our Creator. "Yes, mom, it is a very nice shirt."

Chuck Funk

**Food Donations for Memorial Middle School
- most requested and picked up by kids or families-**

-Collection until Sunday - Dec, 8th , 2019

Please ✓ check off the items you are planning to bring so that we have a variety.

- _____, _____, _____, _____ **White Rice** - bags or boxes
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Pasta** - any shape
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Pasta Sauce** - cans "Hunts" or plastic jars suggested
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Chef-Boyardee** - meals like pasta w/meatballs / ravioli etc.
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Mac & Cheese** - Boxes or Individual microwave cups
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Pop-Tarts** - any flavor
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Boxes of Cereal** - kid friendly kinds
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Hot Oatmeal** - Boxes of Instant packets
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Ritz Crackers**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Peanut Butter**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Jelly**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Soups** (Chicken Noodle / Tomato / kid friendly choices)
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Granola Bars**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Peanut butter / cracker Packs**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Oodles of Noodles**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Graham Crackers**
- _____, _____, _____, _____ **Instant Pudding** - (lg. boxes for pie with Graham crackers)

Personal Hygiene - Items also needed

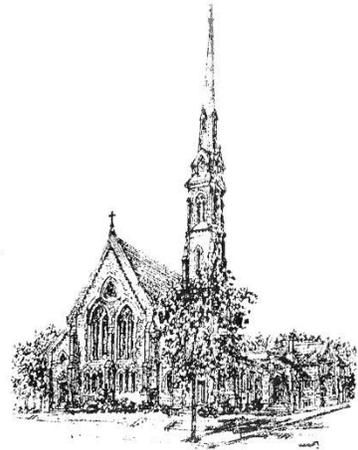
- _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ **Soap** - Bars of
- _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ **Shampoo**
- _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ **Deodorant**
- _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ **Toothbrushes**
- _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ **Toothpaste**
- _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____ **Sanitary Napkins**

Thank You from all who benefit from your kindness !!

My 2020 Pledge to support the mission and life of
Rollstone Congregational Church

199 Main St., Fitchburg, MA 01420

Rollstone Congregational Church, UCC, is a growing welcoming community empowered by the Holy Spirit, discerning the will of God, and living by example the teachings of Jesus Christ.



Believing in the work of the Lord during the year 2020, I plan to give as follows to support Rollstone Congregational Church:

Current Expenses and Benevolences \$ _____ per week per month

Total Yearly Amount \$ _____

Please circle your choice.

In addition, I plan to give \$ _____ this year to the Building Fund

*Note: Benevolences are no longer pledged separately from other donations.
Benevolences are now a line item in our budget*

Name _____

Address _____

Since this is an estimate of what I plan to give to the church for next year,
if my financial circumstances change, I can change this estimate by notifying
the Church Collector _____

God, you give good gifts to me,
Thus, I live so gratefully
You enrich me all my days,
Now I come to sing your praise.
Praise for life and friends and food,
Praise for giving all that's good.
Praise for Jesus Christ your son,
Praise for loving everyone.
Now I come to give myself,
Give my time and give my wealth.

Celebrate the beauty of the Christmas Season



**Your memorial donation can help us
decorate our Sanctuary with floral decorations
this Christmas Season.**

***Flowers are
\$10 each***

**Poinsettias • Cyclamen
Christmas Cactus**

***Deadline for donations is
Sunday, December 8 2019***

2019 Memorial Christmas Flowers

In Memory of / or in honor of:

Donor's Name: _____

Amount: _____

Right, we've picked up the gold and
the myrrh...what on earth is THAT?!

