



The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

January 2020

Happy New Year

It doesn't seem possible that we are saying goodbye to the year 2019 and welcoming in 2020.

We have done this so many times in our lives with some more memorable than others. I do not know how 2019 was to each of you individually, for some it has been a year that is filled with happy memories while others have only memories that you want to put behind you. For most of us the year was a mixture of good and difficult times. This is the nature of life, a mixture of highs and lows, ups and downs. We have made it through the year with the support of family, friends, and extended relationships.

Whatever your thoughts are about 2019 we need to move forward with renewed hope for what the future holds for us. We are on a journey and adventure. When we are preparing to do some travel there is always an element of anticipation and excitement. We always hope that we will come away from our adventure with fun, exciting, and everlasting memories. My hope and prayer for each of you is that you will experience many and great times as you build memories in the year 2020.

In closing I am sharing something that I received from a friend. These are beautiful words and puts into perspective what we look forward to as we embark upon the journey of 2020.

Blessings,
Pastor Dave

Hello, welcome to Flight #2020. We are prepared to take off into the New Year. Please make sure your Attitude and Blessings are secured and locked in an upright position. All self-destructive devices should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt and discouragement should be put away. Should we lose Altitude under pressure, during the flight, reach up and pull down a Prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated you can assist other passengers. There will be NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight. The Captain (GOD) has cleared us for takeoff. Destination GREATNESS.

Our flight will be taking off shortly, relax and enjoy this flight #2020. We will soon be at our destination.

Deacon News

Hi everyone, well the holiday season is almost over and the New Year will soon be here!

December has been a busy month. We collected food and hygiene products for the food pantry at Memorial school. Everyone was very generous. The congregation decided to do this as our mission project for Christmas.

The sanctuary was decorated with flowers, candles, and small lighted trees for the season. It looked lovely.

Members of the congregation took part in the lighting of the Advent wreath. It is so nice when everyone takes part.

On Dec. 29th Pastor Dave took a vacation day and he and Don went to Maine. The Deacons and two of the parishioners did the worship service which was based around hymns. Chuck Funk did the message which was about the background of some of the hymns. We even had to guess when some of the hymns were written. Great fun. Chuck did a great job.

I cannot forget the Christmas eve service. It started at 6pm. The service was very meaningful. Pastor Dave sang two hymns and the choir along with Lorna did a nice job. At the end we sang Silent Night with everyone having a lighted candle; it was so inspirational. I can't forget the lighting of the Christ candle so moving.

Soon we will be getting ready to welcome in the New Year. I know this will be a great year for Rollstone as we continue to do God's work. I wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

Until next time,

Linda Haas

The New Year will kick off with some fine meals at the church!!

Saturday, January 4th, 2020

Chicken Pot Pie with Salad

Peach Cobbler for Dessert

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Wednesday, January 8th, 2020

Spaghetti Supper

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Church School News - January 2020

From Sermons 4 Kids - "Happy New Year!"

We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future... "Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come?" Ecclesiastes 8:7

There is nothing wrong in planning for the future, but we need to remember that no matter what our plans may be, we can't know for sure what is in the future. The Bible says, "Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come?" We can put appointments on the calendar from now to next December, but the only day that we can be sure of is today!

Some people become worried because they can't be sure of the future, but we don't need to worry, because even though we don't know what the future holds, **we know who holds the future.** The future is in God's hands, so we can rest easy in the plans that He has made for us. We can't be sure of tomorrow, but **we have today, so we need to try to live it the way God planned it!**



Dear Rollstone Church Members,

On behalf of all of us at Memorial Middle School we would like to extend a sincere thank you to the congregation of Rollstone Congregational Church. We're blessed to have such thoughtful and generous community members to help support our children and families during this holiday season. We cannot thank you enough for your support year after year.

Merry Christmas and God Bless,
Brittney Lavoie

Principal
Memorial Middle School

Church School will resume on Sunday January 5, 2020. Beth and Hal

WAYSIDE PULPIT

Any Silent Night

How silently, how silently the precious gift is given!

Christmas has come and gone, and once again have I missed it? The tree was up; the lights were on; the family feast was served. But where was the Christmas magic? What happened to the special event that justified all the work?

Amid the jingling and the bustling, it is easy to miss the spiritual miracle of Christmas. In all the preparation and the celebration, it is all too easy to be unprepared for the main event, the birth of new life in the world and in ourselves.

This most essential part of Christmas comes not heralded by shouted *Glorias* and blaring trumpets, but arrives silently, and wholly unexpectedly. It is never too late. The miracle of Christmas does not depend upon a date in the calendar, nor on a ritualized agenda of activities, but upon a spiritual state of longing and expectation.

Now that the tinsel and tissue paper have been swept away, it is a perfect time to meditate, and to experience the Christmas miracle without distraction. Become silent, and find within yourself the growing edges of your spirit, awaiting new birth and rebirth. This is the Child of God, born into the world. Accept the gifts of gold, incense and immortality.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, be born in us TODAY!

Chuck Funk

I GO TO CHURCH ...

Not because a sermon is preached, though it can be helpful;

Not because good music is provided, though I obtain much benefit from the musical part of the service;

Not because other people go, though following the crowd is all right when the crowd is going the right way;

Not because I have the habit, though I consider the custom of church attendance valuable;

Not because I am afraid God will punish me if I am absent, though neglect of church attendance brings moral and spiritual poverty;

Not because at church I wear my best clothes, though, like most people, I enjoy being well-dressed;

Not because there I am in the best society, though the company of Christian people is very attractive to me;

Not because I agree with all the religious ideas and lifestyles of everyone who goes. I don't; it's impossible.

I go because Jesus went even when he could not agree with the scribes and Pharisees, nor the congregation.

I go because God is my creator and friend, the source of all that is worthwhile in my life and in my world.

First United Methodist Church, Upland, California, 1999

Submitted by Pat Goguen

ROLLSTONE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Warrant for the Annual Meeting – 2020

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Worcester County

To: Kathleen Ann Rowe, Clerk of Rollstone Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Greetings: You are hereby directed to notify and warn the members of Rollstone Congregational Church in Fitchburg to meet in Cookman Hall, Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 11:30 am to act on the following articles:

Article I: To receive the reports of the officers and committees for the preceding year except nominations and to act on anything thereon.

Article II: To see what amount of money the church will vote to raise and appropriate for salaries of the staff, for music, for other expenses, for benevolences for the ensuing year and to act on anything thereon.

Article III: To choose and elect such officers, committees and any others needed to carry on the work of the church, and to fill any vacancy or vacancies that may exist.

Article IV: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

From: Charles Funk, Chair
Amy Larsen, Vice Chair
Andrew Lipasti, Secretary
Amy Lane, Treasurer
Paul Stansel, Facilities Coordinator
David B. Hanks, Pastor

Kathleen Ann Rowe

Kathleen Ann Rowe, Clerk

Dear Members and Friends,

Where do we want to be in 2020?

It's that time of the year again. Our annual meeting is at the end of January and the Trustees are working on developing a budget for the upcoming year. 2019 has been a decent year for Rollstone. We have increased our membership, done more things, have the kitchen back in operation and financially are in reasonably good condition. As the Trustees have worked on the budget the question that faces us is where and how do we go on from here.

Instead of our small group making decisions for the congregation we have decided to solicit input from the congregation on issues that face us in 2020. Among these are:

- What level of coverage do we want from the pastor, the existing half time or should we increase his service? If so, how do we want it structured?
- What should we do with the music program, in particular, the organist/choir director position?
- How can we continue to grow our church and make it better to fill the needs of our community & our members?
- How can we get more people involved in the life of the church?

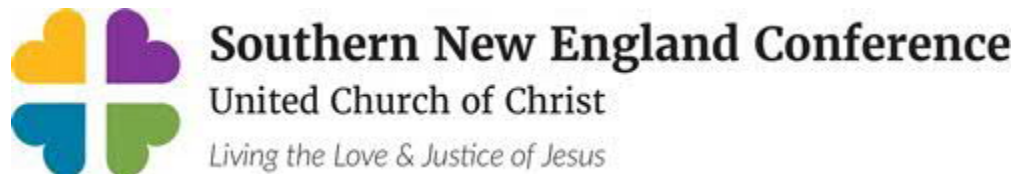
To address these issues & give your church's leadership ideas on how to go forward in 2020 we would like to create a focus group to discuss these issues and any others that come up. We envision this being an informal group that would meet 2 or 3 times in January to discuss how they see Rollstone moving forward. If you would be interested in participating, or have ideas you would like to see brought up, please contact me at paul.mpssys@gmail.com or (978) 337-1608.

Wishing you & Rollstone a happy and successful 2020!

Paul Stansel

Moderator & member of the Trustees

New Logo for New UCC Conference



The new Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ has a new logo designed to symbolize the Conference's vision: *"Living the Love and Justice of Jesus."* The new conference, officially beginning on Jan. 1, 2020, joins together the three states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

The logo features four hearts arranged to form a cross. Each of the hearts represents one of the four main values of the Conference: *Making Disciples of Jesus, Making God's Love and Justice Real, Bringing New Life as Agents of Change, and Forming Covenant Partnerships.* Each heart is in a different color and those colors will be used on the Conference website and in other

publications to draw connections between various ministries and the part of the vision to which they relate.

The logo was designed by Erin Murphy, who attends the South Congregational Church UCC in Pittsfield, MA, and is a part-time Marketing Coordinator/Graphic Designer. The logo and guidelines for its use will be made available to churches early in the new year.

It was at the UCC General Synod on June 24, 2019 that the attending delegates approved replacing the three state conferences with the one new Southern New England Conference.

"I believe that the Holy Spirit is doing a new thing in our midst – provoking us into new forms of church for such a time as this," said the Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Conn., and moderator of the newly forming conference.

"Building this new institution is an opportunity to reexamine the patterns and practices that hold us back from fully embodying the gospel. We are shifting from independence to interdependence, from ownership to stewardship, from competition to collaboration," Gardner Spencer said.

Rollstone Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, will belong to this new Southern New England Conference. We will continue to be a part of the Central MA Association of the UCC as it also aligns with this new Conference. The Central MA area office provides us with help and support.

Andy Lipasti