

The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

JUNE 2020

May 22, 2020

To: Members & Friends of Rollstone Congregational Church

Now that the State of Massachusetts has begun to reopen, the church's leadership have met and discussed our plans for re-starting church services in the sanctuary. We have reviewed the guidance from the federal & state governments as well as the UCC Conference. We have had in depth discussions on how to best proceed. Both the Deacons and the Trustees have participated in these discussions.

Because the majority of our parishioners are over 60 years old and therefore in the most exposed group to the virus, the consensus of both boards is that for the safety of our congregation we should continue with our on-line services thru the summer. We will periodically review the situation but as of now we plan on reopening the building in September.

Stay safe, stay in touch.

Rev David Hanks, Pastor

Paul Stansel, Moderator

Linda Haas, Chair of the Deacons

Amy Larsen, Chair of the Trustees

Thoughts from the Pastor

The year 2020 will go down in the history books as a time when society has argued over the topics of Freedoms and Rights. Living in a democratic society we often confuse the difference between the two topics because we automatically believe or interpret them to be the same. They are not the same no matter how you look at them.

What is a freedom versus a right? In simplified terms a freedom is something that has been fought for and won, on the other hand, a right is something that has been granted through a legislative process. For instance, when the colonial army fought a war against the rule of Britain, they won freedom to be an independent nation whose objective was to treat its citizenry as equals without regard to their birthright. By the winning of the War of Independence the colonials were free to select and elect those whom they chose through the election process. This newfound freedom also required the colonial citizens to accept that they had certain responsibilities. We as a Society appear to be losing sight that freedom comes with a price that has to be paid over and over again. When we claim that we are free to make a choice, that is true, provided our choice does not put others in peril or harm's way. That is where responsibility becomes critical, hence the reason that certain laws are in effect to protect others from malicious intent by some who are not respecting the safety, well-being, or life of their fellow human beings. If we believe the concept of "all men/beings are created equal" then our focus needs to shift upon the wellbeing of the greater society rather than focusing upon what benefits us or myself the most.

This country was created utilizing two great documents that are the foundation of who we are as the American people. They are the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. They are different but equally important in defining us as a great democracy. Churches are given their rights to practice their faith without interference by the government, nor does the church have a right to expect the government to show preference to one church's set of faith beliefs over another. The only role that the church should have in government is to provide moral guidance to the leadership. This relationship is constantly being eroded because of the loss of respect for the other and the desire to focus upon "I". Our founding fathers and those that followed them strove to take the moral guidance and teachings that the church inspired in them to create a society that focused upon "we the people."

I am beginning to sense that the church has lost sight of its purpose in society which is to be a moral compass to the governmental leaders. The church has been important throughout history and needs to take its place in teaching and offering guidance within our society. As Christians and consequently followers of Jesus Christ, we must be more committed in witnessing to the words and works of Jesus Christ. We are not being called to be vigilantes for Christ, but rather we are to speak the word in truth, love, and compassion. When we see a brother or sister being wronged, we need to speak out in love and compassion.

This recent pandemic has borne out the reality that our society has become more self-centered than Christ centered. Some individuals are more concerned with their own personal rights than the rights of the community as a whole. People proclaim that "I don't like wearing a mask" or "My rights are being trampled upon because I have been advised to remain at home." Our rights don't give us the privilege to put others at risk because the requests may be inconvenient to me. We have responsibilities that come with having freedom, be mindful of others.

Pastor Dave

Merging the Bubbles

On March 16, everyone in my office was advised to pack up their important files and work from home for the foreseeable future. I had never worked from home before, but it seemed like a new adventure. My husband, Jay, and my cat, Dolly, were glad to have me.

Now, 10 weeks later with COVID-19 still raging around us, it seems like a total drag. My agency and my job have been very busy. There hasn't been the time to smell the roses, or have a nap, or take a break to clean out the closets that I imagined would come with working from home.

Other than my husband and the cat, all communications are electronic. I *Zoom* with colleagues at work. I *VPN* to get access to my files. Church is on *YouTube*. I facetime or telephone with our children and grandchildren. I *Google Hangout* with my mother, who is in a nursing home, and my siblings. I long to hug them all, but, except for my husband and the cat, there is no sense of touch. I wonder how people who live alone can stand it.

Our son, Karl, who lives in Littleton, calls us the "bubble people." He and his family have their bubble and we have ours. We talk several times a week by phone or through face time. One nice day, Jay and I drove to their house and stood out on the lawn and spoke with them through their glass storm door. Karl's wife, Bernadette, made us masks and delivered them, gingerly handing them through our door. On Mother's Day the four of them, Karl, Bernadette, Ella and Tommy paid us a visit. They were wearing masks and bearing gifts. We invited them in and stood on either side of our living room, talking through masks for about 15 minutes. It was awkward.

Part of the problem has been that Bernadette and Karl are essential workers so they trade off days of child care with days of office time. Thousands of personnel come and go from their office buildings, so they worry about passing the virus on to us.

Last week I called Karl and asked "Isn't it about time we merged the bubbles?" I explained that whole states were opening up, neither of our families had been sick, let's get together without masks and without social distancing. He said he would talk with Bernadette and get back to me. Later that evening he invited us to his house on Saturday for dinner.

On Saturday, I felt sick. I told Jay I had better not go. There didn't seem to be anything physically wrong with me. I think it was classic agoraphobia. I had been in my house so long that I was afraid to go into another's. Jay talked me out of it, though, and I am glad he did.

As soon as we pulled up to their house, Bernadette came running out the door to give hugs. The children were jumping up and down. "Can you stay the night? Can you stay the weekend?" they asked. Karl jokingly gave me an elbow bump. We played dominoes with the kids all afternoon; had a lovely dinner and drove home. I felt better than I had in weeks.

As more things begin to open, I look forward to merging more bubbles. I start back to office work one day a week in June. And, hey, I will have my first hair appointment in three months on June 5. Things are looking up.

Eileen Berger

THERE ARE SOME POSITIVES

If there is a single word that I had to use to describe my thoughts and feelings on coronavirus and life in quarantine I believe that "lonely" would be the most accurate word. Sure there may be quite a bit to do indoors, but things like television, video games, and books get old rather fast. Not to mention that all there really is for me to do is take a walk which is relaxing but there are so many things that I would rather do but I can't. For instance, my mom and I enjoy going out to dinner at a local restaurant. It's not only a good way to try new things and support small local businesses as opposed to large chains, but it's also a good way to spend time with my mom. But now because of coronavirus my mom and I can no longer do that. Now that I think about it, that might be the one thing I miss most. However, despite the fact I can't do many things that I enjoy, quarantine has honestly given me a few opportunities.

One opportunity that quarantine has given me is that, because I have plenty of free time these days, I decided to cook more and even write more. I've learned a lot in both cooking and writing, but I believe the most important lesson I've learned ties into cooking, writing, and other things. That a lot of the time it pays to move out of your comfort zone and get a little experimental. Whether you're trying to cook a delicious meal, writing a book, or maybe something else, it never hurts to try something new. If you succeed you just might have made something fresh, even possibly innovative. If you failed, you can learn from your mistakes, and take another crack at it knowing what to do and what not to do. Either way, you gain something important. You gain experience and that is what life is all about isn't it? To learn from your experiences whether you succeed or fail.

When I started writing this, I said I'd describe quarantine as "lonely". Now, I still think it to be an accurate word for how I feel. However, I feel now that quarantine itself can be best described as "insightful" because it made me realize what's important to me and what about daily life that I love. I value experience, and I love and I miss spending time with those I care for in fun ways. It honestly does make me wonder; Have I changed? Or maybe I'm rediscovering what makes me Roland Larsen. I don't think it's all because of quarantine, but I believe that quarantine and other past experiences are beginning to work in tandem to change me for the better. Is it corny? Yes. But is it true? You can bet your bottom dollar it's true.

Roland Larsen

WAYSIDE PULPIT

What is Indigo?

In grade school, we learned that the colors of the rainbow are Roy G. Biv (red, orange yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet). When I look at white light separated by a prism, as in a rainbow, I see bands of red and green and all the other colors, but not a band of indigo. Beyond blue is just violet. Of course, it must be there; there is a continuum of wavelengths between blue and violet to account for it, but I do not perceive it as a separate band of color like the others. Am I failing to see a distinction which exists, or, in the case of yellow and green, for example, am I there “seeing” a clear distinction which does not in fact exist? If so, is this something I have learned over time, or is it innate in my visual system?

The words “big” and “pig” are what linguists call a “minimal pair.” They differ in only a single feature: whether the initial consonant is “voiced” or “voiceless.” They are formed in the same way, by opening closed lips while breathing out through them. When saying “b,” the vocal folds begin vibrating as soon as (or before) the lips are parted. For “p,” the voice begins a short time after, but must begin in time to form the vowel (or voiced consonant) which follows it. The interval has been termed “voice onset time.” Naturally, this time can vary continuously from a few milliseconds to many milliseconds. It has been shown by experiment that even infants too young to have developed any language skills, draw the distinction between “b” and “p” at a consistent point in the range of voice onset times, and at the same point, in general, as do adults.

Is there for color also an internally “wired” point of distinction between the wavelengths I see as yellow and those I see as green? And am I lacking such a set point between blue and indigo? Some animals perceive more colors in a rainbow than we do. Some significant number of people are red green colorblind and cannot differentiate these colors. How does the rainbow look to them?

The point I take from all of this is that what we know about the equivalences and differences in the world are not inherent in the world but colored by our own senses. What we see, is not always what is out there to be seen, this should give us pause when forming opinions about new (and even familiar) people, things, and circumstances.

Chuck Funk

Hi Everyone!

I hope you are all doing well! I miss hearing your singing. I think we all can agree that it's really difficult not knowing when we will be allowed to worship together in our beautiful church. But take solace in knowing that we will be back together in person at some point.

So, spring is finally here in its beauty and splendor, and summer is just for around the corner! So, if any of you are like me, I'm taking the opportunity to get outside! Whether it's mowing the lawn, raking up dead leaves, or kicking a ball around, just to be outside is a great way to relieve some "cabin fever." And a few days ago, weeding of all tasks, stood out to me- in a spiritual way!

Now some of you might be thinking "weeds?" And I hope you are thinking just that!

Think of a huge flower garden that you are left to maintain all by yourself. There might be areas that you give a lot of attention to and that part of the garden might have the most beautiful flowers. Then there might be other areas that you tend to a little bit, but that area can use some more attention. And then there may be some areas that receive no attention and the flowers in that area might be dying and weeds might start to grow.

Life can be the same way! We give attention to the things we like the best and that are easiest to us. Then there might be some things we care about and show a little bit of attention too. But then there can be areas of our lives that we try to forget or ignore. This could be anything from the most simple worry like burning cookies in the oven, or something as hard as saying goodbye to a loved one. These are all the "weeds" in our garden.

So sometimes as hard as it might be, we sometimes have to rid our lives of "weeds" to help make it into something beautiful or continue to make it even more beautiful. And sometimes this can be difficult. Sometimes these "weeds" can be rooted deep in the ground and hard to pull out- like a worry we have for a long time that is keeping us up at night.

But your helping hand to pull these tough "weeds" out, could just be the very presence of God.

We might not see God walking down the street. We might not see him eating dinner at a restaurant. And we certainly don't see God in the Lawn and Garden section of the hardware store! But God truly is everywhere. His presence is all around us. It's in the air we breathe, the sun that shines, it's even in the love we show to one another. And these are the things we need to remember in especially hard times.

We are all dealing with a massive weed right now that we are all trying to pull out together, even from six-feet apart, and separated to worship on electronic devices. But look to God to guide us through all of this. And remember this is just a weed in our gardens that we need some help pulling out. And why not have that help be from God?

So with this, I leave you with a hymn to meditate on, and I'm sure you are familiar with it. "I Come to the Garden Alone." The lyrics are especially comforting during these times and I hope it can provide you all with a sense of peace.

May the light of Christ shine upon each and every one of you during these times. And until we meet again, may God be with you!

Christus est in pace (Peace in Christ),

Gavin Klein

Kia Ora a [Aotearoa](#) (Hello from New Zealand)

From our foreign correspondent, Vikki Police

As a few of you know Gary and I spent 2 months in Wellington (or in Maori, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, New Zealand. Gary was there as an advisor for the WPI project center, and I was there to fulfill a long-time dream to see the land where The Lord of the Rings and the Hobbit were filmed. I fell in love with the scenery in the movies and wanted to see if it was actually as beautiful as it seemed. It definitely is. Even though some of the scenes were composites of more than one place.

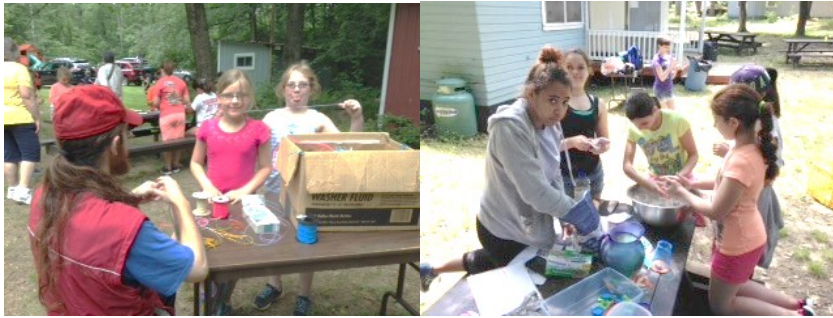


Editor's note: Vikki's submission is absolutely beautiful. It has many photos. As a result, it is too much to put the entire piece into the newsletter. She suggested that I split it up but with all the uncertainty we are all going through I thought we could use a change of scenery. (Pun intended). With her permission, Paul Stansel is going to put the entire piece on the Rollstone website. You will enjoy reading and seeing this and I am sure want to visit yourself. Thank you Vikki!

Church School News -- Presents Day Camp Memories - A few snippets of past summers!

We plan to focus on making many more memories – “Think SUMMER” 2021! And beyond>>>

A # 1 Gimp station with the “gimp masters” aka Smith Family. Making playdough with Ari adding Kool-Aid powder for color and sniff-ability! And leather work headache day!!!



Ball field for Frisbee talents and games can be found everywhere around the camp.



Flag ceremony to Open & Close each day - together - all participate and learn. BUS!



The beach is the ultimate! Wellville is a slice of Heaven.

Our kids and volunteers are enriched just by being present.

I wish I had a million snapshots of our times together. But more important we have rich

Memories!

We send you blessings for a healthy and happy summer to all, Beth and Hal