



The Rolling Stone

Rollstone Congregational Church

November 2020

CHURCH vs STATE

The views and opinions stated in this editorial are not necessarily those of the Congregation or the Denomination. This is written to create dialogue and an interaction concerning what are we called to do as individual Christians and as a faith-based community.

On what premises was the Christian Church created and what were the ideals that they were being called to teach and exemplify? Those are not easily answered questions because your own particular response is predicated upon your own experiences and your understandings of the scriptures.

As I write this opinion we need to reflect upon our experiences as followers of Jesus Christ living in a land of freedom, a.k.a. - The United States. Living in this country that was founded upon individual freedoms granted by the Constitution of the United States, we have been given the right to live our lives with the ability to choose within the restrictions of the laws of the land. Many of the laws were written under the influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition which helped to establish boundaries to create a sense of law and order. While the laws were established with the influence of Judeo-Christian tradition, they have been separated to create a situation whereby we do not have a national religion or government ruled by a particular church. This has served our country well for over 200 years, even when there was conflict in the interpretation of the scriptures and understanding of morality.

So, what has changed? Why? Does this have implications for the country and church moving forward? During these past many years, we have seen a particular mindset working to seize and manipulate the government, the laws, and the courts. Our system of government calls for the government to act on behalf of the all the people. Our government has failed in its duty to act in the best interest of the people because they have more often governed on the behalf of special interest groups. The government of today ignores the will of the people as is evident with the rule happening in our nations and state capitols. Should our government continue to follow its current path, we as a church and denomination could be closed by a minority that has a strangle hold on the government.

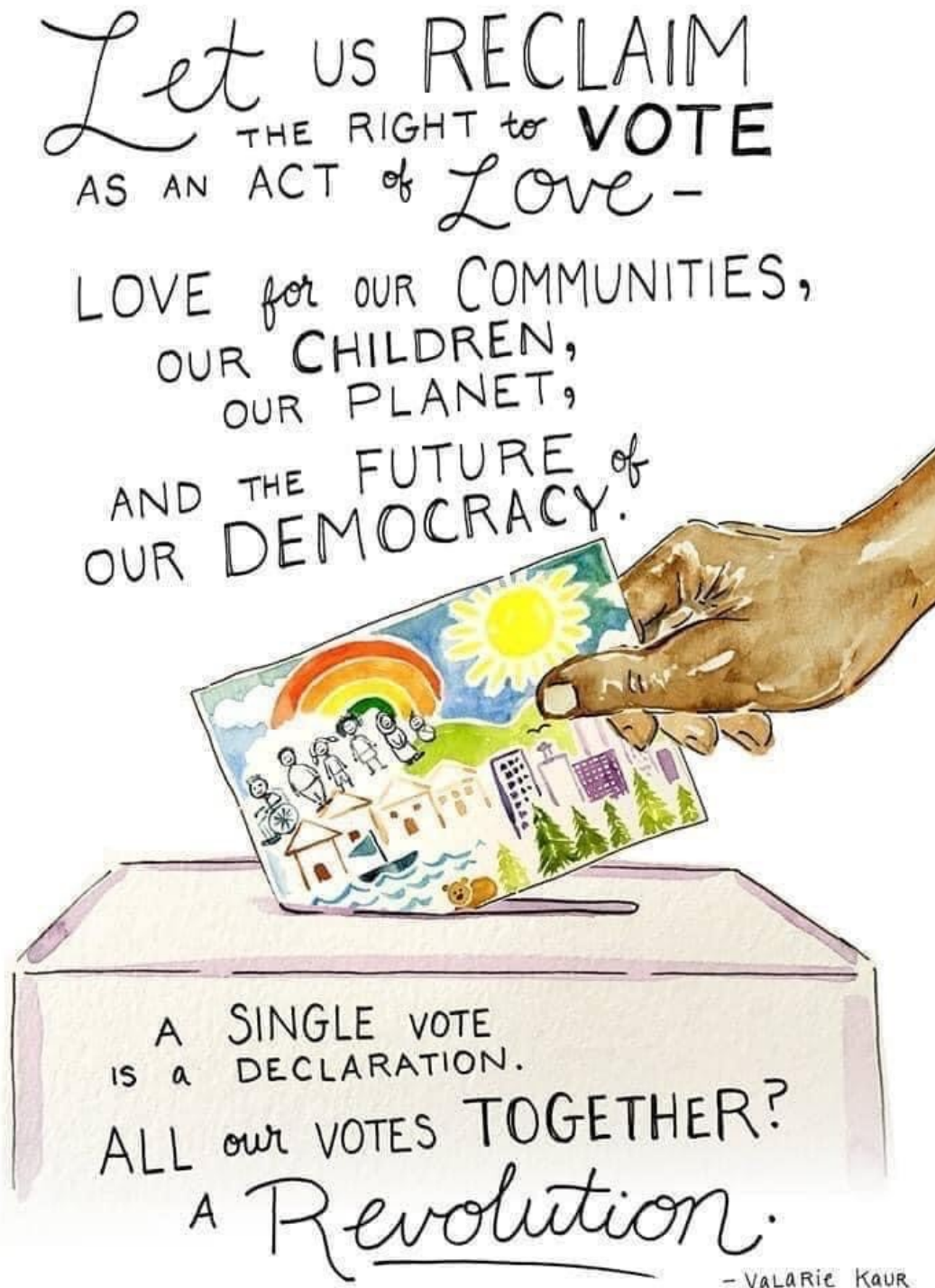
What can we do? There are several things we must and can do. First, PRAY for God to give you guidance and strength. Secondly, commit yourself to live a life modeled after Jesus Christ in living out the greatest commandment to LOVE. When we have no care and compassion for our neighbors then we are living a hate filled existence. As Christ's followers we are called to love and serve our neighbors, the less fortunate, and those who are unable to care for themselves. During the past several years we have seen the middle class eroded with more and more people being pushed to brink of poverty. As individuals and a church, we need to stand up and say, "enough is enough".

Finally, the last thing we can do is to exercise our rights given us by the constitution to VOTE.

In voting we can assure that our voices are heard and are not silenced by the special interest groups that represent the minority who want to regulate life so that they can prosper and divide society further. We are a democracy and not a dictatorship. We are a country governed by the people for the people. SO get out there on November 3rd and VOTE.

As we vote it is a moratorium about our desire to maintain a separation between Church and State. I never want to have one specific interpretation or understanding of the scriptures on any one particular faith dictating my life, my beliefs, or the way in which I live out my faith. This particular election has implications that will impact our lives, our children's lives, and the lives of our grandchildren and potentially the lives of all generations to come after us.

In conclusion head these words:



Blessings,

Mary ...The Handmaid of the Lord

Mary was a simple girl from a small town – someone of whom few would take notice. Yet in that simplicity and lowliness, she represented an entire class of people in Israel: the Anawim, or poor of Yahweh.

These poor, uneducated people were despised by the rich and powerful, but because they had no pretensions and depended totally on God, they were beloved by the Lord.

It was for this reason (total trust in God) that Mary was chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. The story of the birth of Jesus is told in the first two chapters of the books of Matthew and Luke.

An angel announced to Mary that she would bear a son. Not being married (for she was only engaged to Joseph), she was confused.

The angel explained to her that the Spirit of the Lord would work this marvel through her. Her response to this call was one of total acceptance, total willingness to serve the Lord. Rather than becoming proud because of the great honor shown her, Mary's first thought was to serve others. She went to help her cousin Elizabeth, who was also pregnant.

When it came time for Mary to give birth, she and Joseph found themselves in Bethlehem (they had gone there for a census). She bore the child in a manger, for there was no room in the inns for them. The first to honor her child were the simple people, the shepherds of Bethlehem. Next, three kings, pagans, came to honor him.

The aged Simeon directed to Mary words of joy and sorrow concerning Jesus. The rich and powerful of her own land tried to kill the child (for their riches and power had blinded them to the ways of God). So Joseph took the family to Egypt for safety. When all was clear, the holy family returned from Egypt and settled in Nazareth.

When Jesus was twelve, the holy family went to the temple at Jerusalem. Mary was accidentally separated from her Son for three days and finally found Him amid the doctors in the temple.

Mary is not mentioned often after these chapters. She was at the wedding feast of Cana where she showed her faith in the power of her son.

Mary also visited Him once when Jesus told His disciples that the bonds of faith are more important than the bonds of blood.

This pronouncement certainly did not exclude Mary, for she was a woman of great faith. That faith is displayed by her heroic stance at the foot of the cross, watching her beloved son die.

That same faith received the seal of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day, for she was with the apostles in the upper room when the Holy Spirit descended upon them.

John the Apostle adopted Mary as his mother at the cross, and he cared for her for the rest of her life on earth (until she was taken body and soul into heaven).

1. Excerpt from the book: "Great People of the Bible" by Rev. Jude Winkler

Andy Lipasti

WAYSIDE PULPIT

Looking Out

One big advantage of our new home over the old one is the number and placement of windows. Where we were, the windows were smaller, with no sight lines through them from any of the convenient seating. Here there are five big windows with views of the street, and good views from two other sides of the house.

When I awaken, and sit on my bed to dress myself, there is a large window in front of me with a view of the woods beside our house, and of the sky beyond. Lately I have been struck by the daily changes in how much woods I see, and how much sky. As the trees shed their leaves, my view is changing from green to blue.

I grew up on the shore of Lake Erie. Because the Great Lakes contribute so much moisture to the air, during cool weather there are always clouds. I got used to seeing no bright sunshine from October through March. One of my delights upon relocating to New England has been to be dazzled by brilliant winter sunshine from a cloudless blue sky on a field of fresh snow.

So, as the leaves fall, I can't lament the ending of the growing season; I am too thrilled by the anticipation of winter brightness. Thank you, trees, for giving up your dominance of the view to let the sky show through. Great plan, God!

Chuck Funk

From the Moderator:

As I sit here this fall watching the leaves change I wonder where the year went and, frankly, being glad it's almost over! Like all of us, Rollstone Church has struggled to keep engaged with its members this year. We hope you have been able to follow us either by our website, emailings & mailings, ZOOM get-togethers or our Sunday Services on YouTube. I know we all miss our Sunday mornings at church & conversations at the coffee hours. The church's leadership is doing our best to ascertain what is the best, safest route to navigate the Covid-19 pandemic.

At this time we are hoping to open for in person services on Sunday November 22nd with a communion service. We are actively planning for the Advent Season whether it be in person or by video.

Other items in the life of Rollstone:

- The deacons & Trustees have been meeting regularly by ZOOM conference
- The church again will be the polling place for wards 5 A&B at this years elections
- The Roof of Cookman Hall is being replaced by Rockwell Roofing starting shortly
- The Snow Street doors are being refinished to improve their looks and protect them
- A By-Law review committee is meeting working on having a proposed By_law revision for the Annual Meeting.
- The Sunday services are being recorded every Wednesday evening

Finally, this is the season for stewardship. Even though we haven't been meeting in person the life of the church, including it's expenses goes on. Please keep an eye out for a stewardship mailing or fill in the pledge form below and send it back to the church. Your support is vital to keep Rollstone alive & well.

Stay safe & I look forward to seeing you all in person (even if behind a Mask!) in the near future.



PS: Don't forget to VOTE! If you need a ride to the polls give us a cal

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.

Rollstone Congregational Church

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 2021, I plan to give as follows to support
Rollstone Congregational Church:*

Current Expenses and Benevolences \$_____ per week/per month

Total Yearly Amount \$_____

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._

A Christmas Visit to Germany

In 2018, on our way to Bangkok where Gary would be advising for WPI, we spent a couple of weeks in Germany. We went to enjoy the fun of a few of the Christkindlesmarkts or Christmas Markets. We visited Nuremberg, Rothenberg ob Tauber and Munich and enjoyed their markets. After Christmas we drove from Munich to Fussen (the location of Neuschawinstein and Hohenschwangau castles), Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Lake Chiemsee but this is going to be about the Christkindlemarkets.

We landed in Munich. When we walked out of the terminal we were confronted with a small, but impressive area of Christmas trees and stalls surrounding a skating rink.



We drove to Nuremberg and in the morning headed to their market. It fills the square in front of the Frauenkirche. The stalls sell baked goods, ornaments, decorations and of course, bratwurst in brotchen and glühwein. The glühwein is the best way to keep warm! On the stairs of the church there were choirs of children singing during the day and adults at night. There are all kinds of food and treats to eat and so many Christmas things to buy.



We spent 2 nights and 1½ days in Nuremberg then spent part of the day driving to Rothenberg ob Tauber. It is a delightful city with the center of the city completely surrounded by walls. The second day we were there, we walked the walls in the morning. Of course, there was another Christkindlesmarkt there as well. This one was much smaller, but almost all the stores in the old city were decorated and sold Christmas items. Glühwein is usually made with red wine, but here we had a glühwein made with white. Gary also had an eggnog that seemed to be mostly alcohol. One of the big attractions was the Kathe Wohlfahrt Christmas store. These stores are in most big cities. There was another treat here that we hadn't seen before – snowballs. They come in a couple of sizes and they are like doughnut balls that are decorated for Christmas. Quite sweet!



Again, after just 2 nights and 1½ days we were on to Munich. Munich is so large that there are several markets there. We got to two of them – one in pouring rain which was no fun. The main Christkindlesmarkt is in the Marienplatz. This is just in front of the Rathauskeller or town hall. The food and decoration stalls fill the square and also go up a few of the pedestrian streets. Of course, there are the stalls that sell wurst, glühwein and all kinds of decorations.



By the afternoon of the 24th the stalls were being disassembled and the fair was pretty much over. At least we got to spend 1 full day there. The picture on the upper right is the City Hall and the market from the steeple of a nearby church.

If you are thinking of traveling at Christmas, I can think of no place that is more quintessentially Christmas. I have shown you part the secular side of the German Christmas celebration, but we did attend midnight mass in an overflowing church. It was a great experience. The only thing missing was snow.

In the next month or two I will show you what it's like to celebrate Christmas in Cuenca!

Vikki Pollice Cuenca, Ecuador (our foreign correspondent)

From the Organ Bench.....

Hey Everyone!

I hope you have all been staying safe, happy, hopeful, and healthy!

We are so close to reopening, and I am super excited to be able to see you! It's going to be weird for all of us since we can't sing and must maintain the proper protocols to keep one another safe- but it's something we've got to get used to for the time being. Still, I urge you all, to keep on singing! I need you guys to keep practicing because once the CDC gives singing the green light again, I am expecting everyone to be singing their hearts out! We've got to "raise the roof" of the church with a joyful noise!

I just want to say a huge bit of thanks to the continued effort of our new Video Ministry team (Paul, Andy, Don, and Ron), as well as Pastor Dave, our Lay Liturgists, all our trustees and deacons, and anyone else who I may be missing (I am still learning names, and the various groups in the church, so please forgive me if you are not named!) I cannot stress enough how much these people have helped keep us going as a church family. There is so much going on behind the scenes that is many times overlooked, that could not have happened without them.

So as far as musical news, there is nothing new to report as of now. However, if any of you are on SoundCloud, I have produced a few recordings, and I have a few on the way featuring the organ at Rollstone. If any of you want to listen to them, just shoot me an email. As always, please feel free to send any musical requests (songs, hymns, etc.) to either Paul Stansel, Pastor Dave, or myself.

And as always, I'll throw in a quick fact about the organ!

Our organ, Hook and Hastings Opus 2539 (builder of the organ, and the organ equivalent of a serial number) contains 41 ranks of pipes. This means that our organ has 41 sets of different pipes. That comes out to about a ballpark of around 2,269 pipes (assuming I calculated that right), plus the dummy pipes in the facade. Kind of crazy, ain't it? The largest of them is 16 feet tall, and the smallest is about the size of your pinky finger.

Alright, now I'll give you something a little bit serious to think about, like I always do! This time though, there's a twist!

As we head into the month of November, we approach Thanksgiving- a great time to give thanks for what God has given us, and spend time with our friends and family. This year, I know in many cases, a typical Thanksgiving might not happen. We might celebrate Thanksgiving, but it might be with only a select group of people, with your spouse, or nobody at all in some cases. This can be super difficult, as we might be missing something we love so much.

So, what are we going to do about it?

Regardless of what your Thanksgiving plans are, (here's where that twist comes in!) I am going to dare all of you to do something crazy. I dare everyone to reach out to someone! Now, this could be someone you talk to all the time, a family member, those annoying in-laws who drive you absolutely

crazy, someone you might not like a lot, or someone you haven't talked to in a long time- it can be literally anyone. You can reach out by calling them, sending an email, sending a letter, a text, virtually anything works. All I want you to say to them is that you're thankful for them. That you are grateful to know them, and you are most thankful that God has brought them into your life. Well, it can be a simple check in too. Nevertheless, by reaching out to someone we are showing that person that we care for them and love them. Just like Jesus said at the last supper, "...love one another, as I have loved you", so by reaching out, we can emulate those very words our Savior said by simply saying "Hello". So spread the love, spread the joy, and spread the happiness that so many of us need from one another these days!

Alrighty folks, that's my blurb for this month. Please don't ever hesitate to reach out if you ever need anything. I am looking forward to seeing you all very soon! In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, stay faithful, and stay singing!

Till we meet again, may God be with you!

Gavin

WAYSIDE PULPIT

Looking Back on It

Surely you have had the experience of going somewhere for the first time, and it seems to take forever to get there. You know that the minutes-to-destination numbers on the GPS must be getting smaller, but it doesn't feel as if they are. But then on the way back home, the miles seem to fly by, and you are home before you would have believed possible. It is the anxiety over the lack of knowledge of the route before you, and the uncertainty that you are even on the right path, that make the trip out seem so prolonged.

Something similar is at work in cases of historical perspective. Consider, for example, the bombing of London and other English cities during World War II. To the residents of those places, the nightly and sometimes daytime appearance of the bombers, and the destruction they caused, must have seemed interminable. But once the blitz had been shut down, and the war ended, the outcome was known, and the anxiety of uncertainty disappeared. Now, seventy-five years later, those endless days and nights of anxiety are a blip in time, an eyeblink.

Could it be possible, through the gifts of faith and hope, to view our present anxieties as if they have already been resolved, and will then be only history? If we try that, maybe our days of suffering with restrictions, dangers and losses might seem to pass more quickly.

Chuck Funk



with thanks to Donald Cloutier