



# THE ROLLING STONE

## Rollstone Congregational Church

United Church of Christ  
199 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA

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APRIL 1, 2021

### Pastor's View

## Surprises

**“Surprise!”** - That is a term that most of us hate for many different reasons. We don't fully understand why, but people generally dislike them. Have you ever found yourself walking into the darkened room or going into a place where you did not plan to enter and have people scream out “surprise”? You have been caught off guard on many different levels and yet you try to keep your composure at what is happening. We may have been party to doing such a thing and rather than the person being surprised reacting with gratitude they might react with anger. Everyone is different and we all have different coping mechanisms for when we are surprised. Have you ever watched a family pet's reaction when they are surprised? Some get all happy, some will jump in the air, some will quiver, and even some will turn unpredictably aggressive.

Whenever someone gets surprised there will be some sort of reaction. Reflect upon the reaction of a child on Christmas morning when they run down the stairs and they see all of the special gifts, especially a larger gift that they have wanted, and which couldn't be wrapped and is sitting there with a big bow. They get even more excited than they already were. I remember when I pulled off the big surprise for my family of a vacation to Florida to see family and bring them to Disney for the very first time. Everybody in both families and several friends worked with me to create the surprise. Nobody spilled the beans, and the fun began as my wife and daughter then realized that everybody was in on the planning. They were profoundly grateful and happy, but also became of leery of what surprises I might plan in the future. Not all surprises work out the way that they were intended, and the damage can become too much to overcome because just sometimes the surprise is nothing that the person wants.

In the church there have been surprises, some good and some not so good. In this first week of April, we remember one surprise that we all have heard about

through the scriptures in Luke 24:1-7.

*24 Early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women went to the grave taking the spices they had made ready. 2 They found the stone had been pushed away from the grave. 3 They went in, but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they wondered about what had happened, they saw two men standing by them in shining clothes. 5 They were very much afraid and got down with their faces to the ground. The men said to them, “Why do you look for the living One among those who are dead? 6 He is not here. He is risen. Do you not remember what He said to you when He was yet in Galilee? 7 He said, ‘The Son of Man must be given over into the hands of sinful men. He must be nailed to a cross. He will rise again three days later.’”*

There are so many words that describe what the women experienced, words that we too may have had when we first heard the story of that first Easter morning. The events are not easily explained without faith. We are people of a resurrection faith which is central to our understanding of the Easter story. Without this faith it is just another story of something that has happened long ago, for some it becomes a fable. I remind you that Easter is central to all that we believe and hope for in a world that often hurting and struggling. Our belief in the power of God to have the final say gives us the hope to believe that God will make a correction when this life is over. God brings the hope that no matter how this life has been that God will grant to us something better when we are all gathered with all the saints in glory. Since Jesus died and rose, we can hold onto this promise found in Mark 14:62.

***From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.***

**Happy Easter to each of you and to your families!**

*Pastor Dave*

# The Wayside Pulpit

## Where?

“Where’s the butter?” “The refrigerator.” “Where?” “Top shelf, right, halfway back.” It requires three facts to know where something is: high or low, left or right, front or back. This is because we experience the universe as three-dimensional, and we give names to distance in each of these dimensions: height, width and depth. The three make up a three-dimensional coordinate system.

As such, the three dimensions define not just the space inside the refrigerator, but all of space throughout the cosmos. You can describe the location of the flame of the torch of the Statue of Liberty as being a certain distance below, to the left and behind your refrigerator. “Left” and “behind” will vary with the orientation of your refrigerator. (Why

“below”? Because of the curvature of the earth.)

On a curved body like the earth, it is inconvenient to locate points by a distance along three mutually perpendicular linear directions, but rather by two angles and one distance: longitude, latitude and altitude. As was the case for the refrigerator, this coordinate system likewise describes all the space in the cosmos. (Including the space inside your refrigerator! Calculate for a moment the longitude, latitude and altitude of your lettuce.)

An earth-based system of latitude, longitude and altitude is singularly inconvenient for describing locations far from the earth, which made describing the paths of celestial bodies so difficult for the ancients. The structure of the

universe is a single and constant thing, but understanding the complexity of its workings can be made vastly easier or more difficult by a well- or badly-suited coordinate system.

What is the appropriate coordinate system for understanding the spiritual universe? First of all, the spiritual universe is a space of an unknowable number of dimensions. It is an element of my belief system that a sufficient number of the coordinates of the spiritual universe are revealed in the scriptures and the teachings of the Christian Church to enable us continue to navigate this universe until further dimensions are revealed.

**Chuck Funk**

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## From the Organ Bench

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*Hi Everyone!*

Happy Spring! I hope you all are doing well these days. The weather is finally getting nicer, and the world seems to be shifting in a more positive direction finally. What more can we ask for?!

First and foremost, I can’t stress enough thanks to everyone “behind the scenes” that have been keeping the church running, and on “four wheels.” I’d also like to shoutout Don for completely redesigning the monthly Rolling Stone! It looks amazing!

It’s hard to believe how much has

changed in pretty much a year since the beginning of the pandemic. It seems the world turned “upside down”! But I look back, and everything adapted to being upside down. The “new normal” on top of being away from friends and family have been so hard for many of us. However, just think of the amazing things that happened! It’s almost as people came together and pushed through as a family. Amazing, right? Of course, there were some intense “obstacles” along the way but think that every day we are closer to an end! Let’s keep on pushing through this together!

There isn’t much new in the musical

department of the church, but as always, it’s always nice to hear any feedback you may have about the music! As always, if you have any requests, feel free to send them to Pastor Dave, or Paul Stansel.

All in all, I hope everyone enjoys the upcoming Easter season! Remember, the Easter season is a time to be joyful. So spread the word, spread the good news! Christ is risen, Alleluia!

And ‘til we meet again, may God be with you!

**Gavin**



# Church School News for April and ...

**Spring** has arrived and new life is sprouting up all around, and warmer weather brings the urge to head up to **Wellville** for many of us. Perhaps this year many more of us will **visit camp!**

**DAY CAMP EARLY PLANS:** After meeting with the Wellville Board, the news on Day Camp is that we are “cautiously optimistic” in our early planning. Jane and I have sent a survey to parents, and will keep in contact with the Wellville Board as well as watch for continued updates on Camp permissions by town and state. As we find out more definite details we will share with all. Perhaps a story that reminds us that having faith can help to get us through these challenging days...



## On the Sea of life, there are floaters and sinkers – which are you?



**Scripture:** *And beginning to sink, Peter cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”*

Matthew 14:28-31

### Are you a floater or a sinker?

**Don’t worry; I think  
we can find the answer  
in the Bible...**

Do you remember the story in the Bible when Jesus fed five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two fish? After that, Jesus told his disciples to get into their boat and go to the other side of the lake while he went up into the mountains to be alone and to pray.

While the disciples were going to the other side of the lake in their boat, the wind came up and the water began to get rough. The disciples were afraid that their boat would sink and they would be drowned. Then they looked, and they

saw Jesus coming toward them and he was walking on the water. When Peter saw Jesus, he became excited and he said to him, “Lord, if that’s really you, let me walk to you on the water. Jesus answered Peter and said, “Come.”

Well Peter climbed over the side of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus. He began to look around, he felt the strong winds and saw the waves and he became afraid and started to sink. He cried out to Jesus, “Help, save me!” Jesus reached out his hand and saved Peter and he said to him, “Oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he was walking on the water, but when he took his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink. As we go through life,

there will be some storms. We will encounter some pretty rough water. **As long as we keep our eyes upon Jesus and put our trust in him, we will be okay.** But when we take our eyes off of Jesus and put our confidence in our own ability, we will surely sink!

*Dear Jesus, when the storms of life come against us, just like this Pandemic year, help us to keep our eyes on you and to put our trust in you. Show us the way to have faith in you that will make us Floaters and not Sinkers! Amen*

**Sending Springtime Blessings,**

**Beth and Hal**







# A Cruise of the Galapagos

Vikki Police

We left our home in Cuenca, Ecuador on Friday morning for the 3 to 4 hour drive down to Guayaquil. It was foggy and cloudy all the way down, so I can't show you any photos. I can tell you that because we have been having so much rain there were several small waterfalls that I have never seen before as well as many more landslides than usual. Once we reach the coastal plain the fog was gone, but not the clouds. Our driver (we had a driver rather than chance the time in a closed van with others whom we did not know) took us to the hotel we use right next to the airport where we spent the night.

Saturday morning about 9:30 we headed to the terminal. Our flight wasn't until 12:30, and we thought we were being overcautious, but we only had about an hour to spare. Between showing our papers (we needed negative PCR tests not more than 72 hours old), going through the process of buying our park entry cards and having our luggage scanned before getting our boarding passes and checking our luggage, there were 2 hours gone!

The flight was full, but fully masked and the crew didn't hesitate to remind us that masks were mandatory. It was about 1 hour or a little longer until we landed at the Baltra Island airport.

The island is very arid as are most of the islands and we were there when it was still the dry season. The airport is small and efficient getting people thru verification of their PCR test results and checking their park entry. The entire archipelago is a national park. For Ecuadorians and permanent residents the entry is \$6. For foreigners, the entry is \$100. Sorry!

We were met on the other side of the airport by our guide, Luis, and a bus to take us to the landing for the zodiac boats that would ferry us to our ship



Our reception committee as we headed to the Alya (right).



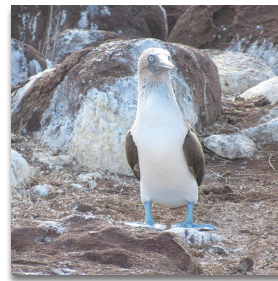
After lunch and time to settle into our cabins, we took the zodiacs to Seymour Island for our afternoon walk. This was truly a walk since Seymour is fairly flat and quite bare of vegetation at this time of the year. We were greeted by sea lions and red crabs at the waterline. Then climbed up to the island's elevation-about 10'. Most of the trees were bare, but we were assured that they are not dead—merely waiting for the rains to begin.

Amongst the trees and huge prickly pear cactus there were a myriad of frigate birds and some Galapagos gulls as well. The frigates are day-fishers and the gulls hunt at night. We also saw our first land iguanas here. Further back on the island we saw our first blue-footed booby colony. The dry season is the mating season for the birds and so the boobies were almost ready to do their dance. Some of them were stamping down the dirt that would serve as nests when they found a mate. The frigate males showed their bright red inflated pouches as a signal to the females that they were ready to mate. Most of the gulls seemed to be paired already and to have chicks or immature young. There were iguanas scattered across the island and were very inactive at this time. Then we saw a pair of iguanas gulping down a leaf of prickly pear cactus. It seems that many times the iguanas have to go without food and water for the majority of the dry season. They cannot climb the cactus and so must wait for a fruit or leaf to fall. There is a low growing succulent type ground cover, but it is not the best for them. They also do not drink and must get their liquid from the plants they eat. I saw a small marine iguana here also.

On the far side of the island we saw sea lions coming up over the rocks between the sea and the land. It seems there are always quite a few of them hanging around the "beaches". Where there are several, they are predominantly female with adolescents and pups

After our afternoon to sunset walk we returned to the ship. The Alya can accommodate 16 passengers. On our cruise there were 14. Beside Gary and I there was a couple from





From left to right: male frigate, Galapagos gull, blue-footed boobie, land iguanas.

Tampa, a Swiss/South African couple and their grown daughter and her partner, a woman who works for the U.S. State Department in Azerbaijan and her 10-year-old son, a French couple living in Guayaquil, a Canadian man who lost his job in Brazil and was at loose ends, and a Polish Brit woman. Interesting cross-section! And, of course, there were Luis the captain and the crew. We were told to wear masks in the common areas of the ship except while eating. We could use masks or not on the walks.

We found out when we started to sail that the machinery for raising and lowering the anchor was under our cabin. As a result of this we had several very early mornings and some broken night's sleep. Still, it was no worse than a Windjammer cruise we took many years ago when the main mast enclosure went through the bathroom for our cabin and we readily heard the sail being raised every morning.

The second day we went to the South Plazas Island for a walk right after breakfast. We made our landing in the sea lion nursery area. So many moms and pups! On this island the prickly pear cacti are as tall as trees. We were greeted by many sea lions, crabs, several Galapagos gulls, a few land iguanas and, compared to yesterday, very few frigates. We hiked up and over to the other side of the island is an area of fairly high cliffs. From the top of the cliffs we saw lots of different birds (gulls, frigates, shearwaters, tropicbirds, Nazca boobies). We even saw a peregrine falcon – a rare occurrence for the Galapagos.

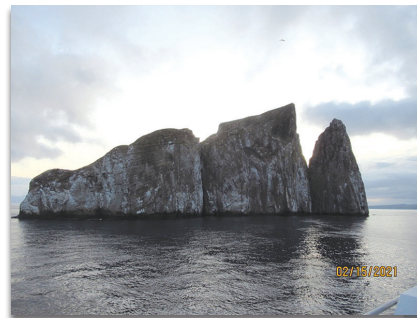


Sea lion moms and pups, and views of the South Plazas Island.



After our morning walk, we returned to the ship for lunch and siesta until 3PM. We sailed to Santa Fe Island to snorkel in the afternoon. The siesta was to allow time for the strongest sun to pass, and to let us rest as well. Santa Fe is another small island where we snorkeled in the afternoon. There were fish of various kinds and sea lions. Gary saw a ray on the ocean floor. I was just amazed to be swimming with sea lions. They seemed as curious about us as we were about them. Unfortunately, my mask leaked like a sieve. I had to keep surfacing to empty the water.

Next day, the crew raised anchor at 5AM to sail to Kicker Rock. It is the remains of a volcanic cone. We arrived at just about dawn. There is little snorkeling done there because the currents are very strong, but there are the ever-present sea lions (or lobitos) and quite a few sharks. We saw some from the ship, but the Rock is so impressive that I didn't spend much time looking into the water. There is also a fairly large colony of Nazca boobies and a few blue-footed ones as well.



Kicker Rock and a female frigate enjoying the ride on our ship's navigation gear as a young one hovers over her.



Any time we were under way during the day we were accompanied by several frigate birds. The one above took up residence on the ship's radar and wouldn't give up her perch. It is amazing to watch how they use the ship's slipstream to augment their travels. We went from Kicker Rock along the side of San Cristobal Is. to the port of Puerto Banquerizo Moreno which is a small town and I think the capital of the Galapagos. Here there is a really nice museum that is an interpretation center of the development of the islands. This is more for the children of the Galapagos so they understand where they live and what they have, since most inhabitants of the islands don't have the money to travel. The trip here is usually a school trip. Outside the museum there is a park for swimming and walking/hiking. These are some of the best



trails I've been on in Ecuador. The group walked to the top of a hill except for our youngest member and one of the other women and I. (My knee was bothering me a good bit because of the unusual use I was making of it.) Oh, and Gary, who lagged behind and only caught up to us just about as the main group came down from the mountain. Then we followed the trail to a couple of lookouts and back to the interpretation center. On the way we saw several Darwin's finches.

Then we caught our bus back into town. We sat in the shade and had ice cream before heading back to the ship. Gary tried to invade a sea lion's bench.



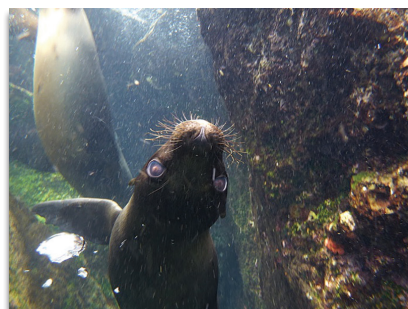
Darwin finch



Sea lion: 1, Gary: 0

After our usual noon to 3 siesta, we sailed back up the coast to a small bay for the afternoon snorkel. It was only a sort time and since I had decided to pass on the afternoon walk, I did snorkel. I wish I had joined the walk, but our shipmates confirmed that it was all uneven rock and hard on the knees. These photos were taken by our guide who had a wonderful camera.

On the fourth day there was a short morning walk on the beach and a short snorkel. I bypassed the snorkeling since our afternoon walk was supposed to be strenuous and I really wanted to go on that one. This was the day we spent at Española, the southernmost of the Galapagos islands. The morning was on a gorgeous white sand beach with only the 15 of



us, sea lions, crabs and mockingbirds. I've rarely seen such a beautiful, unspoiled beach. This is Gardner Bay. Luis said that if it weren't for the pandemic, it would probably have 3 or more groups wandering the beach. As it was, we got to see the wildlife without them being disturbed.



White coral sand at Gardner Bay; sea lions, mocking birds, and crabs

Our afternoon was well worth missing the snorkeling session. Our afternoon walk was still on Española, but at Punta Suárez. The landing was at the tip of the island where the waters from the western Pacific meet up with the waves that have traveled up the coast of South America from Antarctica. These are very turbulent waters that I certainly wouldn't want to swim in. We had a "dry" landing on a stone jetty near the light on the point. The crew really were very good at handling the zodiacs here. I don't know how they avoided being flipped by the waves that hit the side of the boats.

On both sides of the jetty were sea lions enjoying the crashing waves. On the first little beach we came to they were actually surfing the waves! It was definitely a hard walk because of the rocks that made it necessary to turn your knees and ankles in opposite directions. Oh, but it was so worth it! Here we saw sea lions, marine iguanas (in mating season colors), a couple of pelicans, Galapagos doves, a huge colony of Nazca boobies on top of and in an area that went from the clifftops down to the sea, and another rare occurrence, a Galapagos hawk and a few turtles among other species. We also took a rest overlooking a blowhole which was neat. When we went back to the zodiacs, it was definitely not a dry landing. The waves were crashing over the top of the jetty and we had to walk in a couple of inches of water.





Sea lion  
reception committee



Colorful marine iguana



Sea lions love the sand.



Galapagos dove



King of the rock; the iguana  
outlasted the boobie



Mom and pup



Nazca boobie mother and  
fuzzy chick



Nazca boobies everywhere

On the fifth day we visited the island of Floreana. I passed on the early walk because my knee wasn't happy from the rocky walk the day before on Española. When our compatriots came back they said there wasn't much to see, although they did see Galapagos flamingos. Then came the snorkeling at the Devil's Crown. I passed on this as well because Luis said that the currents were quite strong. I decided to ride in one of the zodiacs. Oh, how I wished I had snorkeled!

The Devil's Crown is another remains of a volcano. The snorkelers started at the far side of one half of the crown on the outside. While they were in the water they saw several kinds of fish and quite a few whitetip sharks. Then climbed back into the zodiacs to be taken to the other side of the crown. On the way, someone in the zodiac from a different cruise spotted a dolphin.

Plans were immediately changed to try to see the dolphins while snorkeling. Everyone went back into the water and the dolphins moved away. At this point, Gary decided to come back aboard. While the snorkelers were trying to approach the dolphins in the water, our



Sea turtle in the surf



Devil's Crown



Blow hole on Española



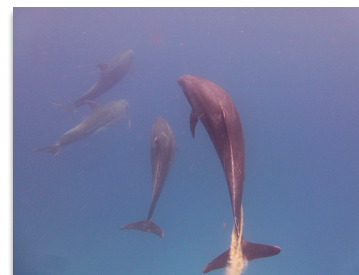
Luis dove to this cave and this  
whitetip greeted him.

2 zodiacs were circling and chasing the dolphins from above. We ended up getting pictures of the dolphins from the top and once the dolphins realized everything was ok with us, they came back to check out the snorkelers.

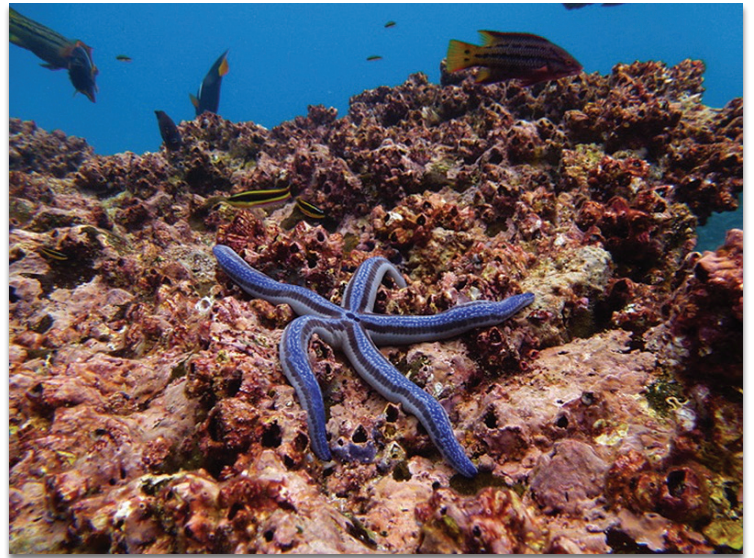
Luis was ecstatic! He said that usually dolphins are only seen in pods of 5 to 10, but this day there must have been close to 100. Seeing dolphins in the Galapagos is rare and this congregation is even rarer. Luis said that the last time he had seen something like this was probably more than 5 years ago. It was just a happy occurrence of being in the right place at the right time. What a thrill!

In the afternoon we went for a walk on the island. We walked from the beach to a lava tube cave. I didn't go down into the lava tube, but Gary went down the steps until he reached the bottom and saw that the tube required stooping in order to be in it. He then decided not to enter and came back up. Before reaching the lava tube cave we passed thru the foundation of a planned house built by Norwegians. They abandoned it when they discovered that there was no source of fresh water on the island.

We also passed by a "post office" that has been in existence since the time







of the whaling ships. During that time ships all seemed to frequent the island for R&R and someone set up a barrel and left letters in it to family back home. When another ship would arrive, they would leave their own letters and check to see what was there. If there were letters going to their city of origin and if their ship was headed home, they would take



Seafarer's post office

the letter(s) and hand deliver them. This tradition is still in operation and the people of different cruises will leave postcards. If someone on another cruise finds a card addressed to someone in their city or country, that person will take the item and either hand deliver it



or mail it when they get home. We found several pieces of mail for Cuenca, but they were only 2 days old. Others found similar letters for their home countries. I don't think anyone from our group took any mail.

We walked back to the beach for another snorkeling session. Since my mask wouldn't seal, I had to sit this out on the beach. Gary got a few good shots, but they are

videos. There were quite a few turtles among the various fish.

That evening was our farewell dinner. It started with a demonstration on how canelazo is made. Canzlaso is a primarily an aperitif of several spices and whatever the local alcohol is. There is was a rum, up in Cuenca it is a cane alcohol. Then the crew farewell toasted us and we went up to the back of the second deck to dine al fresco. It was also a birthday party for one of the group who was having her birthday the day after we left. And since it was Carnaval weekend,

the crew served dinner in costume and threw streamers and popped balloons. It was a nice end to the time aboard.

Then it was time to scurry down to our cabins and finish packing everything possible since the following morning they were going to give us a 5AM wakeup call for breakfast at 5:30 and the crew was going to start collecting out luggage for transfer to land at 6AM. It was about that time everyone boarded the zodiacs to take us to Santa Cruz Island. Santa Cruz must have been getting hit by more showers than most of the other islands we visited because it was much greener. Then again, it does have sources of fresh water which most of the others didn't have.

At the dock, we transferred to a bus which took us up to pretty much the center of the island to a tortoise refuge. We saw only a couple of tortoises roaming the fields. Luis said that it appeared that most of the females had finished migrating to lower elevations where they could find warmer areas to lay their eggs. We did see several males, most relaxing in the small ponds



Darwin's finch



The mouth of the lava tube cave





on the property. They were truly very large. By the way, for those of you who may not know the difference, tortoises are land animals while turtles are aquatic. Turtles only come to land when they are either exhausted or to lay eggs. While the tortoises may love to lay in water or mud, they don't spend any of their long lives under water. After we had visited the reserve, we headed down to catch the ferry across to Baltra Island and the bus to the airport and our flight back to the mainland. The amazing week was over.



Sunrise over Santa Cruz Island





## April Birthdays:

Kris Bingham	April 7	Adeline Sicard	April 12
Kayla Rameau	April 9	Janet Aveyard	April 24
Zeke Finch	April 10	Carolyn Barney	April 26
Paul Cormier	April 11	Sami Piazza	April 27

## On The Lighter Side

### CLASSIC PEANUTS

Charles Schulz



### Frank & Ernest

