



THE ROLLING STONE

Rollstone Congregational Church

United Church of Christ
199 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA

Pastor: Rev. David B. Hanks 978-821-9571
www.rollstone.org

MAY 1, 2021

Pastor's View

Being the Pastor in the 21st Century

I recently had one of those days that invariably happen to all of those who are in ministry. You know, the kind of day that makes you wonder whether working in a salt mine or working as a sanitation worker would be a much more pleasant profession. It was filled with contentious meetings, building issues, a difficult committee member, a nasty e-mail, an infuriating phone call, and the surfacing of a couple of maddening rumors ... you know what I'm talking about. Truth be told, clergy tend to have a lot of days like this. After such a day is over and you're driving home way too late in the evening, thoughts begin to creep in. After this particular day, the scandalous and potentially sacrilegious thought occurred to me: Could Jesus himself do this job?

Think about all the things Jesus didn't have to do in his ministry: Jesus never had to work with a building committee, for example, or run a stewardship campaign or sit in endless, often pointless and unproductive meetings. He didn't have to attend seminary, pay off student loans or go through ordination exams. He didn't have to file annual reports with the denomination and the church. He never had a performance review. He didn't have to return e-mails, carry a cell phone or update a Web site. He walked on water, but nobody expected him to. He fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, but never had to hear people complain that the potluck ran out of food.

And then there's the preaching thing. Jesus seemed to always be thumping away at one message: the kingdom of God. He was always on the move, which meant he could repeat his sermons as he took the show on the road. He didn't have a congregation of the same people who showed up every week expecting something new and fresh, with enough biblical insight to make it interesting, enough humor to make it entertaining and enough heart-string tugging to elicit a few sentimental tears. Jesus didn't seem to have to study much, nor did he seem to spend any time writing things down. He certainly didn't worry about his computer crashing late on Saturday night.

Really now, do you think Jesus could do everything we're expected to do? Oh sure, he has the whole "Son of God," fully human, fully divine thing going for him, but we're expected

to do more than he did without that advantage. He had only 12 clueless people to deal with on a regular basis, and we can have hundreds, not to mention the fact that, much of the time, we're pretty clueless ourselves. How could Jesus have handled all this? These are the thoughts that run through my mind in a dark and silent car as it leaves the church parking lot.

But then another thought creeps in. Maybe it isn't a question of could Jesus do what pastors do, but would he? The only answer I could come up with is "probably not." At least not the way I feel I have to do it. Jesus was driven by a singular mission, which no amount of conflict, complaint or even crucifixion could derail. He refused to be too busy, heading into the hills to pray by himself even as people pressed in around him with their demands. His preaching didn't emerge from a desire to hold onto a congregation but from a passion to orient people and their worldview toward God's kingdom. The more Jesus preached, in fact, the fewer the people who hung around. He ran a mission instead of an organization. He didn't pander to be popular but invested his life in the broken, the poor and the clueless. He built lives instead of buildings.

Truth is that Jesus probably wouldn't do this job. Maybe today's pastor shouldn't either, at least not in the ways pastors seem to be intent on doing it. Instead, pastor's ought to be asking, "What would pastoral ministry in the 21st century look like if those involved in ministry today did it as Jesus did?"

As your pastor, I attempt to do everything that is expected of me, but there are times that isn't enough. When Jesus ministered, he did everything that he could and then called upon his followers to do the rest, maybe it is the right time to call upon each of you to do those things that I cannot personally accomplish, not to help me but rather to build up the church. So, if I call upon you to become a doer, considerate it a compliment as I see the great potential that is in you.

Faithfully yours,

Pastor Dave

Abolitionist Park in Fitchburg



There is a new Abolitionist Park in Fitchburg at 42-50 Snow St. and it will be opening on Saturday, June 19, 2021, a day known as “Juneteenth.” This park is just up the street on Snow St. from our Church’s parking lot. The park has been created by Fitchburg State University, Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), and the group “Friends of Fitchburg Abolitionist Park.”

The idea of the park originated in 2017 by David Thibault-Muñoz and his students at MWCC. They were inspired after learning about the rich abolitionist history in Fitchburg and surrounding communities, and wanted to honor the history of the people that worked towards abolishing slavery. After some hard work and determination the Friends of Fitchburg Abolitionist Park was born in 2019. The group consists of students, community members, leaders, teachers, and historians hoping to bring a green, historically, and culturally significant space to the city of Fitchburg. ¹

Background History

Beginning in the 1830s, Fitchburg residents, and other local area residents, participated in local, regional, and national antislavery movements. Multiple homes were stations or depots on the Underground Railroad, including the estate of

Benjamin Farwell Snow, Jr. (1813-1892), a prominent figure in the anti-slavery movement, on Day and Waverly streets in Fitchburg. Benjamin Snow also hosted prominent abolitionists in Fitchburg including Frederick Douglass, Lucy Stone, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, and Wendell Phillips.

Other Fitchburg homes on the Underground Railroad include the Crocker home in West Fitchburg, the Marshall home on Grove Street, the Palmer home on Main Street, and the Hosmer’s home on Mount Elam Road. ¹

Church Activity during the Antislavery Movement

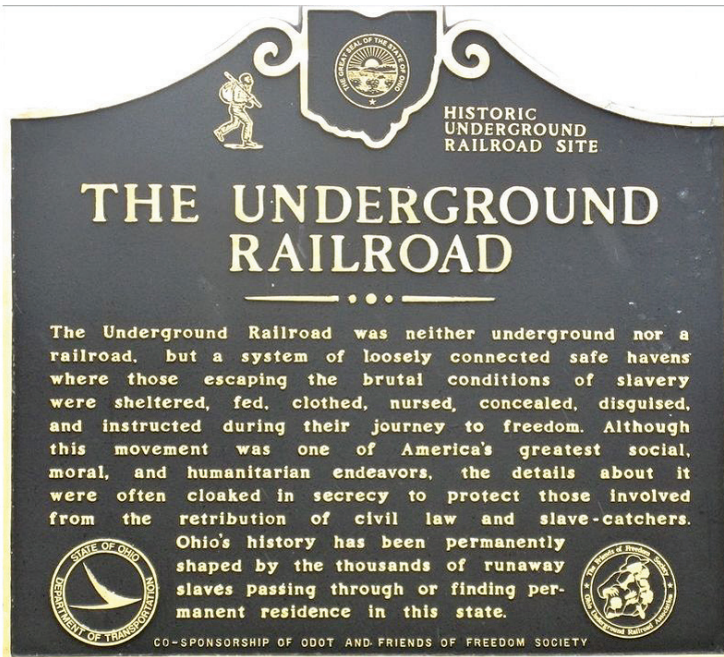
The Trinitarian Congregational Church in Fitchburg, MA, at the corner of Main and Church Streets (now Wallace Way) was established as a chapter of William Lloyd-Garrison’s anti-slavery society. In 1843, Snow, Abel Thurston and Alpheus Kimball and others withdrew from the Calvinistic Congregational Church in protest of the church’s stance on slavery, and organized the Trinitarian Church which became a local center for the anti-slavery cause. The Church had a famous 800-pound bell from a Mississippi plantation that was used to call 125 slaves to their daily labor. It hung in the Trinitarian Church steeple, with Snow vowing it would not ring until the slaves in the South were set free. In 1863 the huge bronze bell at the Church was rung to mark the end of slavery and the freedom of all slaves.

The Trinitarian Church closed in 1871 with its building being sold at that time. Many members of the Church joined the Rollstone Congregational Church that had just recently been organized. ²

For more information on the Abolitionist Park visit the website: www.abolitionistpark.org.

Donations for the park are welcome and can be done on the website or through their Go-Fund-Me Page.

Andy Lipasti



1. Excerpts taken from text from Simone Blake, Chair, Abolitionist Board Historical Accuracy Committee.

2. Excerpts taken from Sentinel & Enterprise article by Alana Melanson: A Fitchburg Connection To '12 Years a Slave'.

Building the future for Rollstone Congregational Church

In a recent speech to support the proposed national infrastructure program, President Biden said it is not enough to fix what we have. We must build to prepare for a better future. That is just what some of us have been thinking lately about Rollstone Congregational Church. We need to prepare our church and build our congregation for the future.

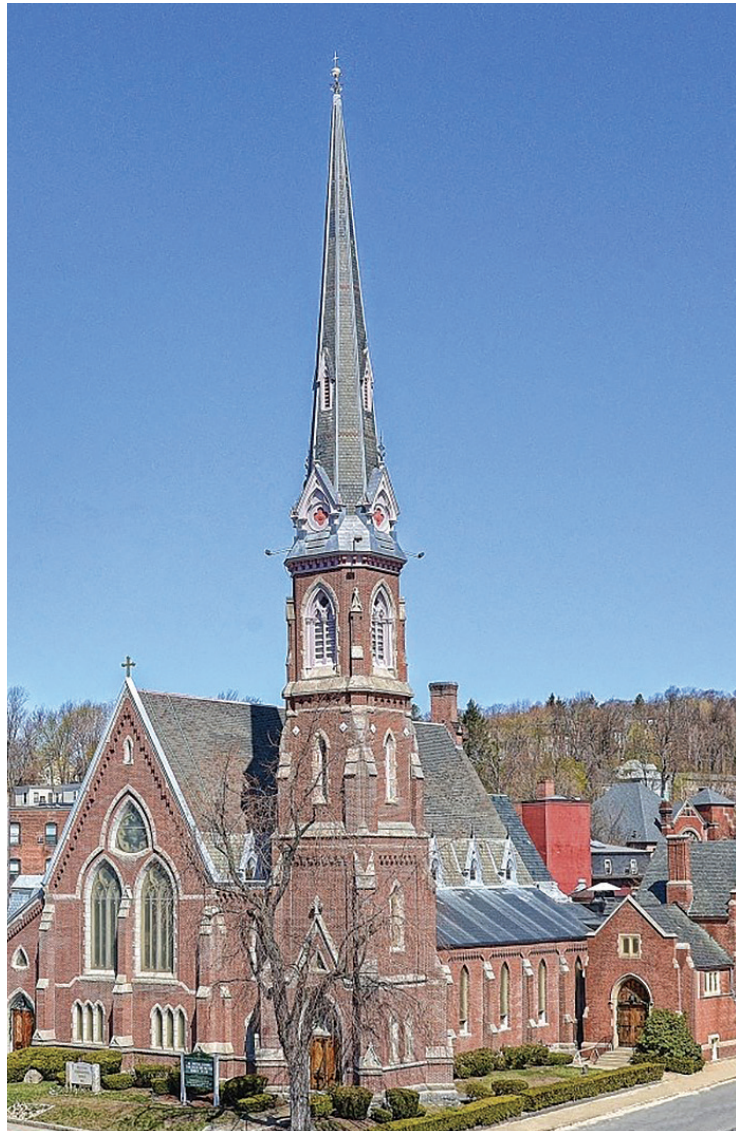
We need to come up with reasons to expose more of our neighbors and acquaintances to Rollstone's beauty and the friendliness and kindness of our assembly. We need to catalogue our capital needs and build a plan and a timeline to fulfill them. There is plenty of state and federal money for rebuilding, refining and rewarding cultural organizations, including churches, that help to build and engage community. We need to earn some of that money.

Let's put our heads together (when things are safer of course) and share our best ideas on how we can make Rollstone's goodness more visible to the greater community. Let's make plans for the next, two, five, 10, 15 years that will help us attract and sustain more individuals, couples and families to our church. Let's become a visible player in Fitchburg's ongoing program to rebuild its center-city, which, after all, is our neighborhood.

I am envisioning a charrette* in the fall, in which we will host a meeting to collect people's ideas on staging events to draw people to come to our church. Some examples that have come forward recently include Sunday afternoon organ recitals; a lecture by specialists on the history of our stained-glass windows; dinner theater or other cultural performances in our meeting room catered by local chefs. It would be great to hear even more from people who can help flesh out these ideas.

This charrette will also include the ideas of builders, designers and dreamers, who can not only help us envision a Rollstone Church in the year 2035 but lead us in protecting and securing our estimable resources for a future -- a future when we see families coming to our church for fellowship and religious training for their children; special daytime programs for the elderly; civic meetings where all the town will assemble; and, as a place where newcomers can build their faith while making friends.

Several weeks ago, I was standing in the front of the Church, facing the narthex and practicing with the choir for Easter Sunday. It was the first time



I had been inside the church in a year – and the first time I had the opportunity to really look at the lovely stained-glass windows throughout. I could feel my heart swell at the beauty of those priceless windows, soaring ceiling, gleaming woodwork and the magnificent golden pipe organ conveying its music to heaven. And, I thought, “We cannot allow our doors to close.”

Anyone who is interested in being involved in a discussion about “Building the Future of Rollstone Congregational Church, please contact me and let me know if you have any specific areas of interest.

Eileen Berger

eileen47@gmail.com



*A charrette is an intensive planning session where citizens, designers and others collaborate on a vision for development. It allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan.

From the Organ Bench

Hey Everybody!

I hope you all are doing well, and spending some good time outdoors these days as the weather proceeds to get much better! It's so nice to be able to enjoy the outdoors as the pandemic still persists!

As always, there is not much new in the musical side of everything at the moment. As the church leaders look to reopen the church in June, you'll see that the online services leading up to the opening date will include only instrumental hymns in preparation for the Sunday people return. This is mainly just to get everyone accustomed to no singing, which sadly seems to continue to persist even a year after the beginning of the pandemic! But, every day that passes is one less day of COVID-19, and before we know it, singing will be allowed once again!

The Carillon will be playing Easter hymns up until Pentecost Sunday, and will be playing patriotic tunes when it gets closer to Memorial Day. After that, the plan is to have them ringing hymns for the general season. My plan is to have them programmed to ring 15 minutes before each Sunday service begins when we return to call everyone to worship!

With that, I hope everyone is doing well, and let's not give up hope! As each day passes, it's one less day we have to suffer under the threat of COVID-19. Let us continue to look to Our Lord for guidance, strength, and especially wisdom during these days of uncertainty, and hardship.



See you all soon, and until we meet again, may God be with you!

Gavin



SPECIAL MUSIC SERVICE

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song!

Psalm 95:1-2

Join us as we gather together in worshiping God through music. This service will be led by our Organist and Church Musician Gavin Klein with a special guest musician.

Sunday June 20, 2021

10:00 A.M.

Rollstone Congregational Church Sanctuary

Please bring a friend as we worship God

LITURGIST and RECORDING SCHEDULE of WORSHIP SERVICES

LITURGICAL DATE	LITURGICAL DESIGNATION	LITURGIST	RECORDING DATE	TIME
Sun, May 2, 21	Easter 5	Lois Schrader	Wed, Apr 21, 21	6:00 PM
Sun, May 9, 21	Easter 6	Ron Smith	Wed, Apr 28, 21	6:00 PM
Sun, May 16, 21	Easter 7	Ruth Carpentier	Wed, May 5, 21	6:00 PM
Sun, May 23, 21	Pentecost	Kathy Rowe	Wed, May 12, 21	6:00 PM
Sun, May 30, 21	Trinity Sunday	Paul Stansel	Wed, May 19, 21	6:00 PM
Sun, June 6, 21	2nd Sunday After Pentecost	Lois Schrader	live during worship	10:00 AM
Sun, June 13, 21	3rd Sunday After Pentecost	Ruth Carpentier	live during worship	10:00 AM
Sun, June 20, 21	4th Sunday After Pentecost	Deacons	live during worship	10:00 AM
Sun, June 27, 21	5th Sunday After Pentecost	Donald Cloutier	live during worship	10:00 AM
Sun, July 4, 21	6th Sunday After Pentecost	Anne Westerman	live during worship	10:00 AM
Sun, July 11, 21	7th Sunday After Pentecost	Amy Larsen	live during worship	10:00 AM

News from the Church School - May

What's next for the Church School folks!

This has been a VERY different year! Last summer it was not safe to hold Day Camp and we have also missed seeing everyone at church each week. But, it seems things are improving and we may be able to carefully and thoughtfully begin to hold gatherings.



Day Camp Staff, with the blessing of the Church and Wellville leadership, plans to hold a “**mini-camp week**”. It will include MANY added requirements to offer 3 days of camp with the safest possible setting. It may look and feel very different but we are still excited to include friends, fresh air, frolicking, and fun.



MINI-Day Camp week is June 29, 30 & July 1*
and, we are desperately hoping for sunshine each day to be outdoors.

How can each of you help? PLEASE PRAY DAILY for the best weather ever so we can be OUTSIDE in the safest surroundings!

**Subject to change if the heath climate or restrictions should be updated.*

Sending Springtime Blessings,

Beth, Hal, and our Day Camp Director Jane Powers



Notes from the Moderator

Re-Openings . . .

CHURCH SERVICES - The church leadership have been having ongoing discussions on when and how to return to services in the sanctuary. The current plan is to have the first service in the sanctuary June 6th. To follow the state's COVID guidelines the services will be a little different. There will be plenty of music, but no singing. There will be specific traffic and seating arrangements and coffee hour will be suspended until the fall. We plan to video tape the services and they will be on the website & YouTube later in the week.

CHURCH OFFICE - Pastor Dave is now operating out of the church office. While he was on vacation Rick Lane repainted parts of the office and Dave & Mary Anne Smith have been working on cleaning, sorting and re-arranging the office.

DAY CAMP - Beth is actively planning for this years Wellville Day Camp. She is currently planning on about 30 campers. Also it is going to be shorter, Tuesday thru Thursday, with the campers and a staff orientation day on Monday. There will be swimming and most of the program will be outdoors.

CAMP WELLVILLE - Camp is expected to be open this year with a somewhat modified operation. There will not be any kitchen related activities and the use of Pow-Wow will be somewhat restricted. We will have a lifeguard but waterfront activities will be done in accordance with the latest COVID requirements, i.e. masks, social distancing, no boats or toys that you don't bring with you, etc.

As you can imagine all the above is subject to change depending on the latest guidelines from local, state & federal governments!

The Nursery Project

Even though we haven't been having services in the sanctuary there are still many things happening at the church.



The major project this winter has been the reworking of the nursery on the second floor. The ceiling has been completely replaced to eliminate an old sky light and install new lighting in the section nearer the Parlor. The ceiling and walls have been re-painted and the floor has been refinished, replacing some of the floor boards and then sanding, staining and urethaning the entire floor.

Rick Lane worked on this project for at least a month. He was assisted by Ron Smith, Andy Lipasti and Paul Stansel. When you are at the church stop up and admire Rick's work! Now we are looking for donations of new furniture and supplies to finish it up.

The video taping process

It has been about a year that we have been video taping the Sunday Services at Rollstone and putting them up on both the church's website (www.Rollstone.org) and our YouTube channel. They are all still available if you missed one! In addition to the Sunday services there are a number of music videos featuring our young organist, Gavin Klein, and a variety of singers. There are also several special services done during the Advent & Lenten seasons.

About 2 weeks before the service Pastor Dave writes out the entire service including the sermon. Typically the Wednesday evening, 10 days before it will air, we tape the service. After it has been recorded it takes about 3 to 6 hours to edit it which adds all the text, eliminates the screw-ups, and adds any additional content including the prayer list. (This is why the prayer list often seems outdated.) Once the editing is complete it takes about 1.5 hours to compile it into a file format that is viewable and another 1.5 hours to up load it to YouTube. While all this video editing is happening Don Cloutier turns Pastor Dave's program into a bulletin that we mail to all who don't have internet access and for those that do it is uploaded to the church's website along with the video of the service.

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Please read and reflect as we prepare to re-open for in person worship

What's Next for Virtual Worship?

March 14, 2021 | Rob Apgar-Taylor

It's the new buzzword in Christianity and I hate it: Virtual Worship. Virtual can mean "online" in a modern context, but in its more traditional sense it means "almost" or "kind of like." I buy a used car and say "It's virtually brand new!" It's not, but it could be. And so, I refuse to use the term virtual worship. What we are celebrating is real, authentic worship of a real, authentic God. We are doing it in diaspora, but that makes it no less heartfelt nor our sacraments less valid. We are not virtually anything! The church is gathered in the safest way it can be and we are being the Body of Christ!

But there is a problem: We have new folks joining us online! People from other states and even a few from other countries, mainly those who are drawn to an affirming, progressive message and don't have that where they live. And these new folks are not just worshipping on Sundays ... they're joining book clubs and Bible studies, too. They are even sending financial support! These are indeed good problems to have, but they present us with a new challenge: As vaccines roll out and our hopes of coming together again move closer to reality, what will it look like to move "virtual worship" (still hating that term, by the way) back into authentic community?

We cannot simply go back to in-house worship as it was before. There are people who will now be left behind, and that is not acceptable. We must think about creating a new community that includes those who can't be with us physically. That means merging live stream with in-person gatherings in whatever way we can. For us, we bought a video camera and table mic and the needed hardware so that we can incorporate Zoom into all our church activities. It's not perfect, but we are working now to figure it out so we'll be ready when gathering becomes feasible again. Every small group, every committee meeting will be open to those who can only participate online.

But that's the simple part. It's also going to mean rethinking our understanding of the Holy Spirit with regard to our sac-

ramental theology. I'm not entirely comfortable with people gathering around a computer with their own bread and cup for communion. I guess I'm just old school. But do I expect someone who worships online to live a spiritual life devoid of sacramental grace? I have a young mother who has rediscovered her faith with us but lives in another state. She wants to baptize her two young children. Even though the ordinary minister of baptism is the ordained clergy, technically, any baptized Christian can baptize. Can this be done on a Sunday morning in worship via Zoom with the gathered community praying the prayers and the mother administering the water on behalf of the gathered community? What about confirmations? What will it look like to receive new members on a Sunday morning with three people at the altar rail and one person on a screen from their living room? At the core of our exploration is this question: Can the Holy Spirit be bigger than our traditional understanding of community?

I don't have the answers and I'm not a fan of "loosey goosey" sacramental theology that throws out all serious consideration of tradition and ritual. But what I am realizing is that I have to wrestle with these questions now, while there is still time. God is calling me to stretch my comfort zone in new ways for the good of my people. What will authentic community look like post-Covid? I admit I do not know. But I do know that it can't look the same as it did before. This can be a devastating time in our church's story, or it can be a new reformation if we allow it to be. Let's listen to the Spirit speaking to the church and find new ways to move into a fuller and more inclusive sense of what it means to be authentic community.

Rev. Dr. Rob Apgar-Taylor is senior pastor at Grace United Church of Christ in Frederick, MD. He has a Master of Divinity from Wesley Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Princeton Seminary with a concentration in spiritual practices. Rob is recognized as a UCC church planter, and taught religion and German at the high school, college and graduate school levels.

Moderator

Continued from previous page

We hope that you have had the opportunity to view these services and enjoyed them. We would love to hear your reaction to them. They will remain available on the church's website and YouTube channel indefinitely. If you would like a DVD of any specific service just talk to us about it.

THE LAST WORD

Probably this should have been the FIRST WORD, but

just a remainder and plea for you to send in your pledges and contributions for the support of Rollstone Church. As we work on getting the church back to whatever the "new normal" will be we are incurring costs that we couldn't have predicted a year ago. Please review your support of the church and send in what you can. We sincerely appreciate the support of all the members of the Rollstone community as we work to reopen the church.

Paul Stansel

Moderator



The Planning Never Ends

Have you ever wondered how everything gets done? Are you one who never gives it a thought? We are talking about **PLANNING**, Merriam-Webster defines it as: - the act or process of making and carrying out plans. Specifically, it is the establishment of goals, policies, and procedures for a social or economic purpose.

Everything that we do as a church requires planning, otherwise we are inviting chaos to join us.

So what are we **PLANNING** at this given time and place?

GOAL: Re-opening of the church facility for the purpose of worship, fellowship, and conducting the business of the church.

WHEN: *Our target dates are as follows.*
Worship – Sunday June 6th
Fellowship – Sunday September 12th
Business - Tuesday September 7th

WHO: Every person who is a part of our community

WHY: The Government data suggests that the pandemic is moving towards being under control due to the vaccines available and the continued diligence by individuals and organizations to minimize the risk of exposure through observing the sanitation and social distancing recommendations/protocols.

HOW: By following the most current advisories and protocols available to us from several resources: the CDC, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the United Church of Christ, and the input from our leadership team.

REQUIREMENTS and EXPECTATIONS:

FACE MASKS – these will be required whenever in the church building for worship, fellowship, study, or business. We will continue to follow this as it is currently mandated by the Commonwealth. We may choose to continue this practice if it makes sense while we determine who is still at risk. Our efforts are to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID, even if you have been vaccinated.

SOCIAL DISTANCING – the data being released indicates that socially distancing helps to curtail the spread of the virus, while inconvenient it allows us to gather together once again as a faith community.

DIFFERENCES TO EXPECT – worship will look and feel different in many ways. This is because we are attempting to maximize our efforts to keep each of you safe and protected from infection from the virus. We will do the following until we become more comfortable and believe that we are not putting anyone in harms way. You will see:

- Patterns on the floor set up for you to follow when entering and exiting the building.
- Seating will be designed to maintain the six-foot social distancing requirements, you may sit with your family as a unit provided you have consistently been in close contact with each other.
- Singing of hymns nor singing by the choir until choral and performing groups are allowed to do so under the governors re-opening plan.
- Receiving of Tithes and Offerings will be done by having you drop your contributions into a large basket as you enter or leave the service.
- Serving Communion will be led in the service and then you will receive a small package as you leave that will contain the juice and wafer/cracker. This will allow you to partake in communion without many hands touching the elements.
- Touching is frowned upon so there will be NO sharing of the peace.
- Sharing in fellowship, once started, will be limited and we ask that you sit in small groups of no more than six (6) at the tables we have spaced for you. Once sitting to eat or drink you are welcome to remove your mask, but please put it back on when you get up from the table. Sharing of food during fellowship will look different as you will be served to minimize touching of the snacks.

HOW LONG WILL THIS BE IN EFFECT? - We will continue to follow state guidelines and will review our practice of the protocols regularly. Things may become more lenient when allowed to do so. Everything we are doing is done with regard to protecting you first.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS? - We do this out of LOVE for each of you and our desire to protect you.

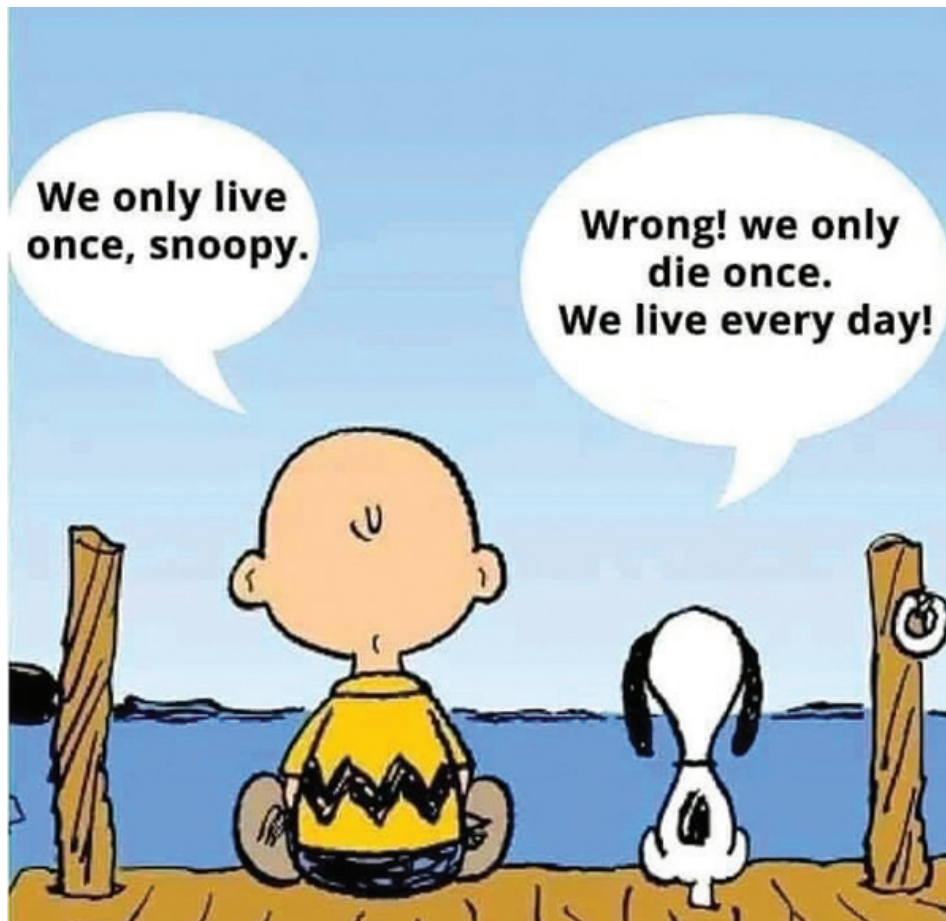
***PLEASE HELP US TO DO THIS, WE MISS YOU, WE CANNOT WAIT
TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN AS WE WORSHIP AND PRAISE GOD.***



May Birthdays:

Sue Harris	May 12	Barbara Berry	May 17
Janet Lane	May 14	Doris Lane	May 19
George Sammet	May 14	Mary Lyman	May 27

On The Lighter Side



Rollstone Congregational Church

May 2021

Pastor's Office Hours:
Monday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Wednesday 12:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 10:30 AM Virtual Coffee Hour	26 9:00 AM Office Hours	27 7:00 PM By-Law Revision Committee	28 12:00 PM Office Hours 6:00 PM Worship Recording	29	30	1
2  10:30 AM Virtual Coffee Hour	3 9:00 AM Office Hours	4 7:00 PM Deacon's Meeting	5 12:00 PM Office Hours 6:00 PM Worship Recording	6	7	8
9  10:30 AM Virtual Coffee Hour	10 9:00 AM Office Hours	11 7:00 PM Camp Wellville BOD	12 Sue Harris's Birthday 12:00 PM Office Hours 6:00 PM Worship Recording	13	14 Janet Lane's Birthday George Sammet's Birthday	15
16 10:30 AM Virtual Coffee Hour	17 Barbara Berry's Birthday 9:00 AM Office Hours	18 7:00 PM Trustee's Meeting	19 Doris Lane's Birthday 12:00 PM Office Hours 6:00 PM Worship Recording	20	21	22
23 Pentacost 10:30 AM Virtual Coffee Hour 	24 The Rolling Stone Deadline 9:00 AM Office Hours	25 7:00 PM By-Law Revision Committee	26 Setting the Sanctuary for Re-Opening 12:00 PM Office Hours	27 Mary Lyman's Birthday	28	29
30  10:30 AM Virtual Coffee Hour	31 Memorial Day No Office Hours	1 7:00 PM Deacon's Meeting	2 12:00 PM Office Hours	3	4	5

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