



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

Pastor's View

OCTOBER 1, 2021

Notes From The Pastor

As we begin to return to our regular schedule and programs, I want to first say Welcome Back! It has been a long time since we could all sit together in worship and fellowship, the memory of seeing each other's face is still a distant memory as we observe the local masking ordinance, but we are together once again. I will not rehash all of the requirements placed upon us by COVID, all I will ask is that we use common sense and practice social distancing. While we have the tools to utilize digital, conference calls, and zoom meetings, our hope is to continue providing the opportunity to meet in person.

So here is what you need to know as we move onward:

Meetings are on these evenings as follows:

Leadership – First Monday of the month
starting at 7:00 P.M.

Deacons – First Tuesday of the month
starting at 7:00 P.M.

Trustees – Third Tuesday of the month
starting at 7:00 P.M.

All other meetings are called at the discretion of the chairperson of the specific board.

Choir – will begin singing and rehearsing
to prepare for services and Christmas.

Rehearsals are Tuesday's at 4:00 to 5:30 PM
and 9:00 AM on the Sunday's we are singing.

Bible Study – it is held on Wednesday morning
starting at 10:30. (We are exploring ways to connect those who are homebound with Zoom so they can participate.)

Topics are as follows for these dates:

October 6 – “The Freedom of the Children of God”
based on Romans 8:31-39

October 13 – “Joy” based on Psalm 126 and
Revelation 21:1-5



October 20 – “In Solitude We Meet Our Loving
God” based upon Matthew 14:22-33

October 27 – “Acknowledging Our Own Mortality”
based upon Matthew 11:25-30

November 3 – “Listen to God” based on
John 5:19-29

Adult Fellowship – We are having adult fellowship on one Saturday afternoon or evening based upon the activity that is prepared for the day. In October we are planning to meet at the church on Saturday October 16th at 3:45 PM to head to Il Forno Restaurant for dinner. This is ‘dutch treat’ and you should advise the pastor of your intent to join us for that evening by Wednesday, October 13.

An additional midweek fellowship will be held on Wednesday afternoons beginning approximately 30 minutes following Bible Study. The intent of this fellowship is to prepare items for events like the Christmas Fair. When we aren't making something, we will utilize the time to have fellowship through card games, board games, puzzle building, and if we run out of things to do we might even explore going to a movie. Please join us and friends are always welcome.

As we begin new activities, please join in as you are able.

Pastor Dave



Happy Fall

Welcome Back! It is hard to believe that summer is behind us, and that autumn has descended upon us. The signs of autumn are all around us with the changing of the foliage, the numerous pumpkin and apple picking opportunities, and the crisp air.

With autumn comes the restarting of the church programs and the planning of the church year. Planning is a critical element for a church because it helps us to set priorities for our ministry to the community. When planning is done properly it provides the leadership with an opportunity to prepare utilizing all aspects of Stewardship.

When we talk about stewardship we focus upon our allocation of Time, Treasures, and Talents. In doing this the result is a responsible budget that addresses the expenses associated with all of our programs. Like a business there are expenses which are allocated against everything that we do; we must look at heating, lighting, insurance, maintenance, personnel expenses, materials for the programs, support of the mission work, etc.

Our expenses are many and require the support of many volunteers through the sharing of their time, treasures, and talents. Over the next two months you will be hearing more about this as the Trustees and the Leadership Team work to put a budget together. Rather than wait to ask for you to be considering your giving for the coming year, I am asking you now to reflect upon two things; 1) How can I support the mission of the church through the sharing of my time and talents? 2) What can I give to the church to support its financial commitments?

In November, it is our hope to present a budget proposal for the church to consider for the fiscal year 2022. We would welcome your questions and comments as we prepare for the upcoming year.

ROLLSTONE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Warrant for the Annual Meeting – 2021

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Worcester County

To: The active members and all other persons having an interest in Rollstone Congregational Church.

Greetings: You are hereby notified of, and encouraged to attend, the annual meeting of Rollstone Congregational Church in Fitchburg to meet in the Sanctuary, Sunday, October 17, 2021 at 11:00 am to act on the following articles:

Article I: To receive the reports of the officers and committees for the preceding year and approve the 2020 Annual Report, accept nominations and to act on anything thereon.

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

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

Article IV: To confirm the revised pastoral call with Rev. David Hanks.

Article V: Hear the report of the By-Law Review Committee

Article VI: Vote on the proposal presented by the By-Law Committee

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

Kathleen Ann Rowe

Kathleen Ann Rowe, Clerk

A Church Dialogue

Good morning, as we gather let us take a moment and reflect upon a question that many of us have asked in the past and may still be asking even today.

The question is this “How are we doing as church and faith community?”

How are we supposed to answer that without the Pastor here?

You know he does have a pulse on what we are doing here and might be able to provide some insight.

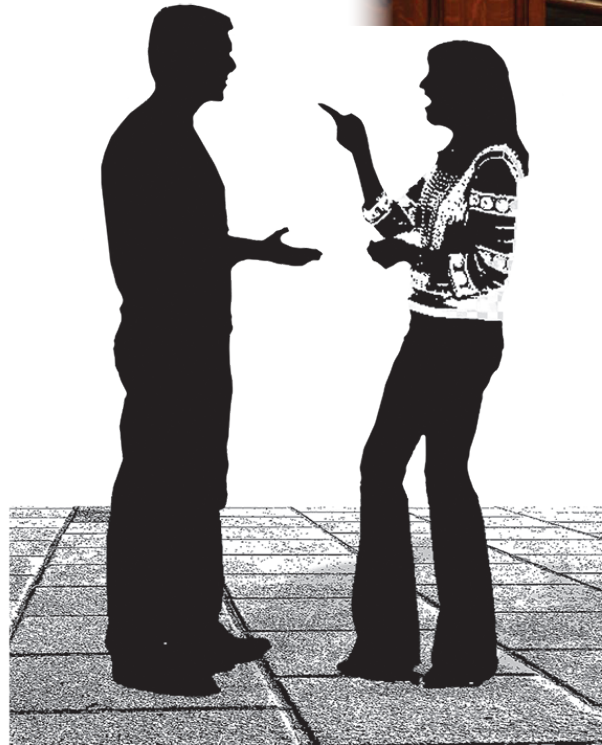
I know that he is not here today, but maybe, we can turn to some real experts to shed a little light on this question. These experts have been here multiple times and maybe, just maybe, they might be able to answer the question.

Who are these experts? And just how are you going to get them here this morning?

Well you see these experts are those First-Time Visitors, some of those who stayed and some of those who moved onto other churches, who were in search of a church home..... You know some of us are those experts, but unfortunately, we are viewed in that light because we don't have degrees in the bible or even in theology. We can learn from peoples experiences, and that might make us stronger.

So these First-Time Visitors could actually help us grow? But if they stay doesn't that mean our little close-knit family might get shaken up? You know I am all for the church being stronger and larger, but don't expect me to share my pew with anyone. You know that my family has sat in this pew for the last 50 years, and we have chased away anyone who dared to sit in our seats.

You see The First-Time visitor as someone trying to take something away from you. Why don't we try looking at them for what they bring and give us? You know that visitors are not a threat to us unless they pull up with a couple buses full of people. If that happens, I am sure the pastor will be thrilled, and dancing especially if they can sing in the choir.



So, I wonder why people become First-Time Visitors and just what are they looking for?

That is a great question..... What are they looking for?

Well, apparently there are some reasons why people visit us in the first place. I heard some visitors say that they are here because they have moved into the city, or that their church recently closed, and they are looking for a new church. I also heard someone say that they need a new church because their new pastor is horrible, so they are looking around.

You do know that there are some factors as to why people come back after visiting for the first time.

I would think that anyone that came here would just love us..... and want to keep coming here.

Slow down, I am serious when I wonder and when I am asking about why people do return after their first visit. According to studies that the pastor has seen, there are actually five different factors which play a role in visitors wanting to return.

Like what? We are good people, and everyone seems to like us.

Are you ready to learn about the different factors?

Not really, but if I don't let you finish, we are never going to be able to go home today!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

DIALOGUE

Continued from page 4

If you don't stop with the wise remarks, next time we are asked to do a dialogue I am going to let you do the hard part.

The first factor is: The Friendliness and Warmth of the Church

A study by the United Methodist Church found: When both unchurched and church people are asked what they are looking for in a church, all agree on one factor - the climate of the congregation. They are looking for a church in which they feel at home, where the people are friendly, and where there is a warm and comfortable atmosphere. This attitude is primarily conveyed 1) when visitors first enter the building, and 2) when the formal service is over, and people begin to leave.

So, you mean that we need to approach and welcome those we don't recognize or who appear to be alone?

Yes, you are getting this.

The second factor is: The Character of the Worship Service

The issues reflecting on the character of the worship are:

What people are looking for is that the service experience is authentic.

People want to experience the presence of God.

They are looking for clarity and guidance to know what is right, and power to do it.

Does it echo with the notes of grace? People already know they are sinners. They don't need to be convinced of that. What they need is affirmation of the reality and depth of God's love for them.

Is the worship celebrative? Worship is meant to be an uplifting experience that enables people to leave the service strengthened and equipped for life.

I think we try to do that.

The third factor is an attitude and reception of children – you know are they welcome!

Recent studies show that visitors perceive the needs of their children as a major factor in a decision to find a church. Churches that provide opportunities for children will be effective in attracting these people.

Ok, let's stop right there! We are all older and don't have any children at home, so how do children fit into our church?

Children fit, but we need to work at having things that are inviting to families so that they want to come and worship

and let the children go to Church School.

But if we focus on children where does that put us?

We need to focus on children as they are our future, but we are here and now. Every generation is important.

The fourth factor is what do we offer for adults, you know, that senior citizen fellowship program.

Now that we are focusing our commitment on adults, we have to do things that will get them involved. One way to involve unchurched adults is to offer opportunities and programs in which they can participate. Those things that the pastor has mentioned in the meetings that we need to be doing but haven't, like bible study, classes that teach us to do simple things like crafts for the church fair, musical or fitness groups, social gatherings like playing cards can be designed to include unchurched people. Who knows once this pandemic finally blows over we can do luncheons? We need to do more to let the community be involved in our church and our community.

Are you done yet?

I will be done in a moment. The fifth factor is the actual church building.

Our location and structure are fixed and, thus, is not a factor that we can change in our visitor attraction strategy. True?Only partially.

We must be aware that every facility has things that attracts or deters visitors. So the four key questions are:

Is the church visible? - Yes, with that huge steeple who could miss it.

Is the church accessible? - Yes, but maybe we need to have better signage about the entrances and parking.

Is the property in good condition? - Yes, some areas need some work..... If we have more people, there are more helpers.

Is there adequate space? - Yes, hopefully we can utilize it all in the best way possible.

So, if we have all of these visitors become a part of the church, where does that leave us?

Hopefully it means we can move onto the sidelines as we have been good and faithful disciples that have found our replacements who will keep our heritage and legacy going for years to come.

Scenes from the Artist's Showcase



held in Cookman Hall



Church School Messages



Playing Favorites

Here is a clip from our church school lesson to welcome our kids back...

I have many crayons here, and they're all different sizes and colors. Some are sharp and some are dull. Some have strange-sounding names. Some are like-new and others have been used quite a bit. The wrappers are fresh on some, while others are torn or missing. **We can learn a lot from these crayons!** Even though they have differences, they all fit very nicely in the same box.

That's a good picture of the way the church should be. The people that make up the church are special and individual - We must

be careful not to show favoritism in our church or anywhere else. We are all God's children and he loves each of us just as we are and we should follow his teachings and do the same.

Dear God, please help us to love one another as You have loved us--showing us how every person is adored by You. We don't want to play favorites with Your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

James 2: 1-10 (NCV)

(8) This royal law is found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." If you obey this law, you are doing right. (9) But if you treat one person as being more important than another, you are guilty of breaking God's law.

We are looking for BUTTONS!

All sizes and colors of course, like our lesson suggests! Do you have jars or containers of buttons you just don't need? Please consider donating them to the church school! We can use them to help with the fair craft table that Rev Hanks is working on. The kids love crafts and also love to help out!

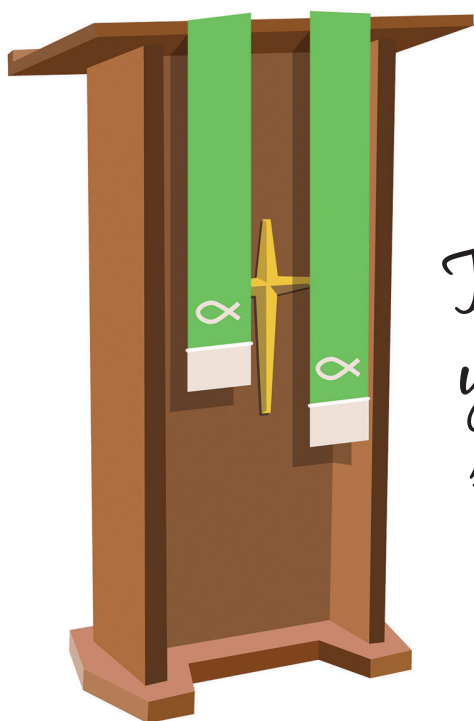


See Hal or Beth



LITURGIST and RECORDING SCHEDULE of WORSHIP SERVICES

Liturgical Date	Liturgical Designation	Liturgist	Notes	Time
Sun, Oct 3, 21	19th Sunday After Pentecost	Lois Schrader		10:00 AM
Sun, Oct 10, 21	20th Sunday After Pentecost	Ruth Carpentier		10:00 AM
Sun, Oct 17, 21	21st Sunday After Pentecost	Kathy Rowe		10:00 AM
Sun, Oct 24, 21	22nd Sunday After Pentecost	Anne Westerman		10:00 AM
Sun, Oct 31, 21	23rd Sunday After Pentecost	Amy Larsen		10:00 AM
Sun, Nov 7, 21	24th Sunday After Pentecost	Linda Haas		10:00 AM
Sun, Nov 14, 21	25th Sunday After Pentecost	Andy Lipasti		10:00 AM
Sun, Nov 21, 21	Reign of Christ Sunday	Ron Smith	Thanksgiving Sunday	10:00 AM
Sun, Nov 28, 21	1st Sunday of Advent	Marie Stansel		10:00 AM
Sun, Dec 5, 21	2nd Sunday of Advent	Lois Schrader		10:00 AM
Sun, Dec 12, 21	3rd Sunday of Advent	Janet Lane		10:00 AM
Sun, Dec 19, 21	4th Sunday of Advent	Ruth Carpentier		10:00 AM
Fri, Dec 24, 21	Christmas Eve	Deacons		6:00 P.M.
Sun, Dec 26, 21	1st Sunday After Christmas	Andy Lipasti		10:00 AM
Sun, Jan 2, 22	2nd Sunday After Christmas	Kathy Rowe		10:00 AM
Sun, Jan 9, 22	1st Sunday After Epiphany	Jackie Reiss	Baptism of Christ	10:00 AM
Sun, Jan 16, 22	2nd Sunday After Epiphany	Jean Suomala	MLK Jr. Sunday	10:00 AM

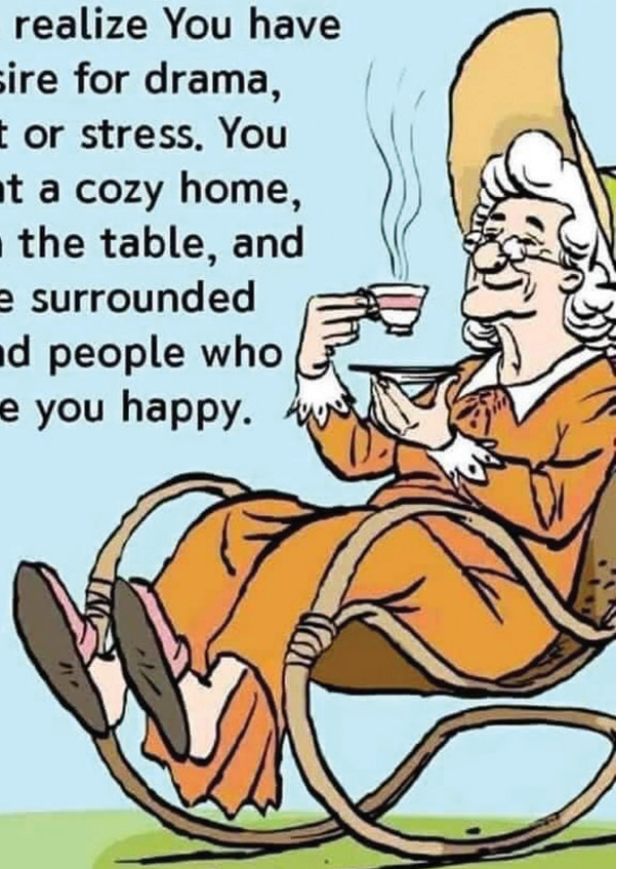


*Thank you for
your time and
service.*



A Little Humor

The older you get the more you realize You have no desire for drama, conflict or stress. You just want a cozy home, food on the table, and to be surrounded by kind people who make you happy.



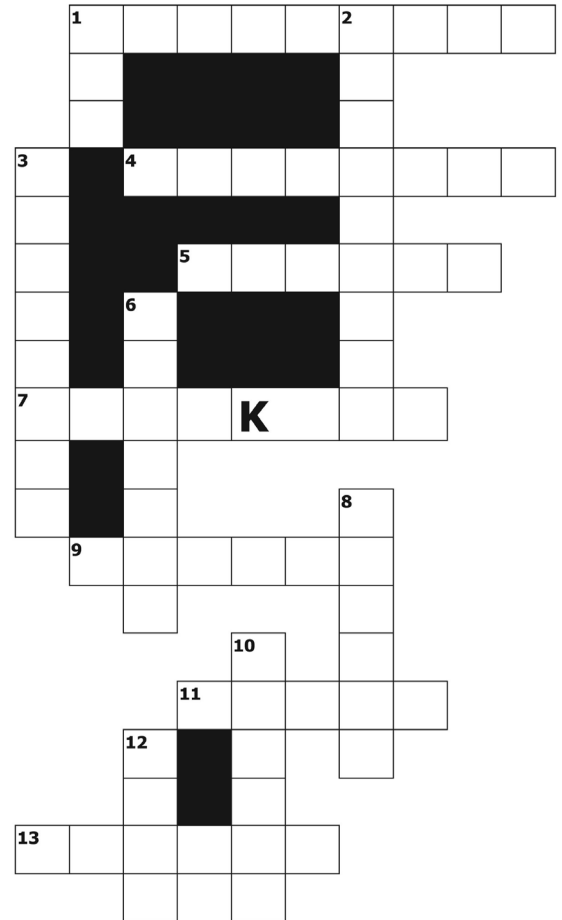
Women of the Bible:
1 (across) Elizabeth
1 (down) Eve
2 Bathsheba
3 Zipporah
4 Sapphira
5 Esther
6 Deborah
7 Rebekah
8 Rachel
9 Martha
10 Dorcas
11 Gomer
12 Mary
13 Miriam

Harvest Hunt: Peace Weary Fields


Puzzle Answers

Puzzle!

Use the clues to complete this crossword about women in the Bible.




1. (across) Cousin of Mary (Luke 1:36)
1. (down) Mother of Abel (Genesis 4:1-2)
2. Mother of Solomon (2 Samuel 12:24)
3. Moses' wife (Exodus 2:21)
4. Lied about her giving to the church (Acts 5:1)
5. Saved her people from destruction in Persia (also a Bible book name)
6. A judge in Israel (Judges 4)
7. Mother of Esau (Genesis 25:21, 25)
8. The wife Jacob loved (Genesis 29:20)
9. Sister of Mary (John 11:1)
10. Sewed clothes (Acts 9:39)
11. Hosea's wife (Hosea 1:3)
12. Sat at Jesus' feet in conversation (Luke 10:39)
13. Sister of Moses and Aaron (Exodus 15:20)




Harvest hunt


Directions: After unscrambling each leaf's word, follow the vine to complete the Bible verse.



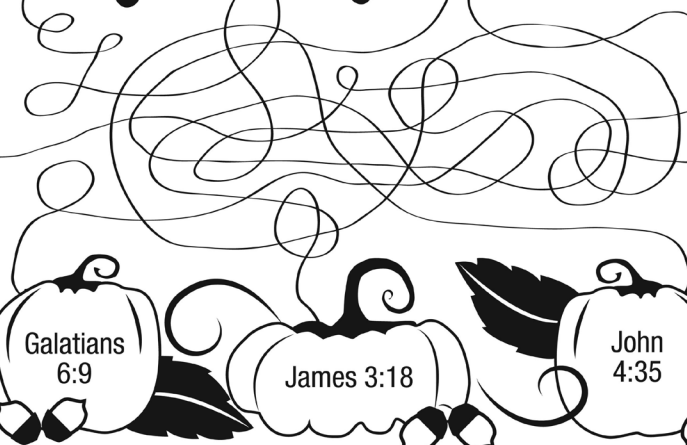
caepe




reway




delfis






Galatians
6:9



James 3:18



John
4:35

Peacemakers who sow in _____ reap a harvest of righteousness. James 3:18, NIV

Let us not become _____ in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9, NIV

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the _____!
They are ripe for harvest. John 4:35, NIV

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