



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

DECEMBER 1, 2021

Pastor's View

Christmas Traditions

Christmas is in the air, and it is a season of joy, laughter, and remembrance of traditions from when we were younger. It appears because of our varied ethnic backgrounds that we have had opportunities to celebrate the birth of Jesus in fun and exciting ways. So, as I look around the congregation I can see many who may have experienced Christmas differently than the person who may be sitting next to you. In that mindset let's take a quick trip around to various portions of the globe and remember how our parents or grandparents may have celebrated Christmas.

As we set sail our first stop is in Mexico where the focus is upon the continual building of the nativity. The culmination is on Christmas Eve when there is a great procession of people traveling from house to house pretending to find a warm place where they can stay. They are turned away like Mary and Joseph, but then when they find the perfect place the baby Jesus is placed into the Nativity. The atmosphere is filled with pinatas and sweets to add to the festive atmosphere.

In traveling further south we next arrive in Ecuador where they celebrate like their Mexican and Argentinean cousins. They celebrate by either baking cookies or more specifically bread. In most houses you will see a nativity scene or pesebres that has a couple of extra characters that have joined them. These characters are llamas and burros, these are not just any llamas or burros because they are made from bread. They people do not eat the bread themselves, but once Christmas has come and gone, they are then crumbled and it is fed to the aves

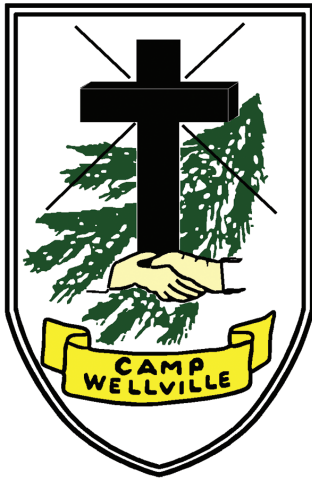
(birds). The journey continues as we travel a little further as we arrive in Argentina where the weather is warm. They decorate their homes with wreaths filled with gold, red, and white flowers. They place cotton balls on their trees to imitate snow. The pesebre or nativity is placed near the Christmas tree and becomes the focus of their celebration. Then on Christmas Eve they float globos, colored tissue balloons that are illuminated with lights from inside. It is so festive, especially when the time arrives for fireworks that illuminate the sky to announce the birthday of the Christ child.



Before we leave South America we make two more stops. The first stop is in Brazil and we observe the Christmas trees illuminated with bright lights and glistening with bright colored glass balls. The focus is still the presipio, Nativity, which can be found in every home, church, and all of the store front windows. Christmas is the greatest day of celebration that happens in their country. Then we make the final stop of South America as

we arrive in Venezuela. They start to celebrate their Christmas festivities on December 16th. They start each day from December 16th until Christmas Day with a special early morning church service. As the start of the service approaches you hear the sounds of firecrackers exploding and the church bells ringing. Before they go to bed in the evening many children and youngsters put on their roller skates and tie a long piece of string to the skate and hang the other end out the window where other skaters and passersby can give it a tug

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December 2021

Hello Campers!

As the cold and chill descends upon us, we wish for the solace of warmer days to come. Of course, that includes visions of Camp Wellville. The peace of being in nature with God's beautiful world energizes us for the year to come. We all need that visual of driving through those white gates that welcome us to Wellville. I know for me no matter how many times I do it, I always feel that lightening of the spirit. I nearly always give a sigh of relief – I'm back!

Good news! The bridge on Route #12 that has been under construction FOR EVER is open both ways...no stop lights! When I told my niece in South Carolina there was quiet on the phone. I thought the connection had failed. She was so surprised that she was speechless!

Our camp family is saddened by the passing of Adam Harris, dear son and brother and longtime camper. Our hearts go out to the Harris family. He will be missed by many folks.

It is nearly time for you to make plans for the summer of 2022! Please take a moment to jot down a few important dates for next year.

December – Reservations for caretakers and church members accepted.

Reservations by phone – **January 8** beginning at 9:00 am

Annual Meeting – Thursday, February 10 at 7:00 pm at Rollstone Church

Deposits due by **March 1**

Payments due in full **May 31**

Spring work weekends – **May 14 & 15** and **May 28 -30**

Day Camp – **June 27 – July 1**

Camp season – **July 2– August 27**

Fall work weekend –**September 3 - 5**

The Board of Directors is already beginning to plan for the coming summer. We are again working on possible programs and leaders for our summer season. As always, please contact someone on the Board if you have any suggestions or would like to volunteer for a program. We will be seeking help for some of our ongoing programs.

Enclosed are reservation forms. Mary Ann Fournier and I will begin taking reservations on January 8 starting at 9:00 am. Do not assume that you have a reservation unless you contact us! Please call first to find out availability and then mail a one-third deposit and reservation form to me (I am the collector.)

The Board of Directors wishes you a joyful Christmas and a New Year filled with the blessings of the Christ Child.

Sincerely,

Kathy Rowe

Strowe1@verizon.net | 978-827-5454

Bible Study

Our Bible Study is held on Wednesday mornings starting at 10:30. It is open to everyone to join us in a contemporary reading of the scriptures. We will discuss the Word of God as it applies to our world and lives today. Our discussions are intended to help each of us to see God in the world now and to help us deal with issues that surround us.



Topics are as follows for these dates:

December 1 – “Worth Waiting For” based on Ephesians 1:3-14

December 8 – “A Time for Deepening” based on Luke 1:68-79

December 15 – “God is Faithful” based on Luke 1:47-55

January 5 – “Anchor Yourself in God’s Love” based on Matthew 3:1-17

January 12 – “Know That You Are Welcome” based on Psalm 139



Relay for Life ROLLSTONE ROLLERS



**2022 Relay for Life will be on
June 10th and 11th**

**The theme will be
Tune Out Cancer...Tune In Hope**

If you would like to sign up to be on the team, go to Google Greater Gardner Relay for Life and find Rollstone Rollers and join the team or donate to the team or an individual person.

Here is the link to the team’s page.

https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR/RelayForLife/RFLCY22VirtualEvents?team_id=2596132&p-g=team&fr_id=101764a



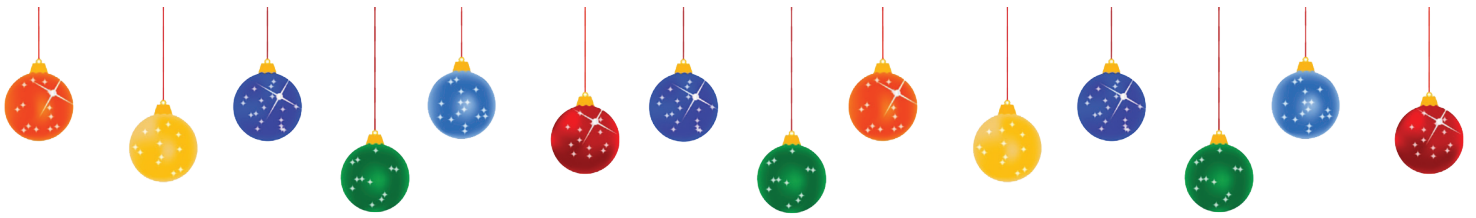
WHAT’S NEW



We had our Vendors Fair on November 20th. We had a good number of people visiting our fair. Shout out to all that helped and to our vendors. We managed to raise \$1,286.00 which will go to the American Cancer Society.

We are currently accepting coins for the coin drive. If you have change you would like to donate, we will have the bucket on the table each Sunday between now and June 10th, 2022. I have counted what we have collected so far, and we have raised \$64.38. Thank you to all that have donated this far.

**Mary Lyman & Kim Bourque
Co-Captain Rollstone Rollers**



EVENTS IN DECEMBER

| Date | Time | Event | Location |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| December 1 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 1 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study | Church Parlor |
| December 2 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 2 | 5:30 -8:30 PM | Fitchburg Scouting | Cookman Hall |
| December 5 | 10:00 AM | Worship with Communion | Sanctuary |
| December 5 | 2:00 PM | Christmas Concert | Sanctuary |
| December 6 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 6 | 7:00 PM | Church Council Meeting | on ZOOM |
| December 7 | 11:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 7 | 4:00 PM | Choir Rehearsal | Sanctuary |
| December 7 | 7:00 PM | Deacon's Meeting | on ZOOM |
| December 8 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 8 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study | Church Parlor |
| December 9 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 9 | 5:30-8:30 PM | Fitchburg Scouting | Cookman Hall |
| December 12 | 10:00 AM | Worship | Sanctuary |
| December 13 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 14 | 11:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 14 | 4:00 PM | Choir Rehearsal | Sanctuary |
| December 15 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 15 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study | Church Parlor |
| December 16 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 16 | 5:30-8:30 PM | Fitchburg Scouting | Cookman Hall |
| December 19 | 10:00 AM | Worship | Sanctuary |
| December 20 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 21 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 21 | 4:00 PM | Choir Rehearsal | Sanctuary |
| December 22 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 22 | 10:30 AM | Bible Study | Church Parlor |
| December 23 | 5:30 -8:30 PM | Fitchburg Scouting | Cookman Hall |
| December 24 | 6:00 PM | Christmas Eve Worship | Sanctuary |
| December 25 | All Day | Christmas Day – Office Closed | |
| December 26 | 10:00 AM | Worship | Sanctuary |
| December 27 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 28 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |
| December 29 | 9:00 AM | Office Hours begin | Office |

TRADITIONS

Continued from page 1

to let the sleeping person know that it is time to wake up and join in the service and celebration. After church has concluded they have fellowship consisting of tostados and coffee. Again every home has a nativity scene where they have added goats to join the sheep.

In passing through the Caribbean country of Haiti we find that they do many things similar to America, but their focus is upon the giant nativity scenes that fill every house.

Then on Christmas Eve they clean their shoes and stuff them with hay which is placed out on their porches in hope that Papa Noel will take the straw and

replace it presents placed near their shoes. On Christmas Eve they also go to church for midnight service, the launching of fireworks, and the singing of Christmas carols. They would then celebrate with a tradition called Réveillon that is a huge feast that will last until sunrise.

Crossing the ocean, we next arrive on the African continent and the country of Nigeria. The birth of Jesus is celebrated by joining in at any one of the pageants that tell the story of Jesus' birth. The pageant is beautiful and will last several hours long. As you are observing the pageant you will hear the drums being beaten throughout the night as they welcome the baby Jesus. Then as we depart from Nigeria we venture out over the reserves, plains, and forests to descend upon Kenya. Their tradition is to spend part of Christmas hurrying out to visit relatives that are outside the areas where they reside, much like the shepherds hurried to see the Christ child. The families gather together and prepare for a time of prayer and services and then celebrate by having a feast consisting of chicken, goat, lamb, and beef dishes.

The time has come for us to board an airplane as we are whisked away to the country of Australia. On Christmas Eve we gather in large groups where we will sit on blankets, light candles, and sing Christmas carols. Because we are in the middle of summer, we prepare a feast that is more like an American barbecue consisting of cooked chicken, fruit salad, and ice cream. It is so festive and fun with all the singing and celebrating.

Heading northward we then arrive in Japan. This country has very few Christians, and as a result it is not a religious holiday celebrated throughout the country. That however doesn't stop people from putting up Christmas trees or from decorating their homes. Their season doesn't focus upon the birth of Jesus, but rather is a time to celebrate and show love for each other. The next stop is in China where Jesus and Christmas are not really celebrated. For the few Christians in the country the churches will be filled on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Those observing Christmas will decorate a tree with lights and paper chains, paper flowers, and paper lanterns. It is a time of celebration for those that know Jesus and the story of his birth.



In Russia, they couldn't observe Christmas until the government lifted the ban against Christianity. Their celebrations are simple and are filled with the ritual of sprinkling special water to bless their homes. Afterwards they gather and eat a bowl of hot cereal from a common bowl to remind them of their family unity and oneness. They will attend a Christmas Eve service that usually last the whole night until sunrise. In the Ukraine they may celebrate Christmas Day on two different days because they use two different calendars. Their celebrations can happen on December 25th and others happen on January 7th. It is confusing, but their traditions are nice as they place a loaf of bread on the Christmas Eve dinner table that has a tall lit candle to announce that Christ is the light of the world. Also, they place stalks of wheat on the table to remind them of the hay where Jesus lay in the manger.

The Czech Republic begins their observance of Advent and Christmas by fasting or refraining from eating meat and eggs or from drinking milk. They use this time to be very serious as they confess their sins and make their hearts ready for the arrival of Jesus. Then on Christmas Day they have a tradition of putting their dinner plates on fish scales to bring themselves good luck. The government tried to outlaw Christmas and baby Jesus, but it didn't work so now they worship Jesus again on Christmas Eve. In the country of Poland, the people lead up to Christmas by fasting and having the mother clean and sweep the house clean of everything. The cleaning is a symbol of them wanting a clean heart, the fasting is a symbol of their desire to express their need for forgiveness of their sins. Then after the first star appears on Christmas Day they begin a feast of twelve different courses – one for

each of Jesus' disciples. When they set the table, they leave one empty chair just in case they should have a stranger stop by their house.

In Germany the Christmas season is celebrated by having an advent wreath in their homes starting with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and by having advent calendars that have tiny windows which they open each day starting on December 1st.



They do focus upon the idea that they need to be prepared for the arrival of Christ on Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve they gather to read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible, to sing Christmas carols, and then they open their presents.

In the towns and villages of Sweden the girls compete to see who will be given the privilege to wear the Saint Lucia crown. Lucia was a young woman who carried food to those who are in need. As the legend tells Lucia had so much in her arms that she had a crown on her head with lit candles. On the morning of December 13th, the youngest girl in each family puts on a white robe with a red sash and a crown of evergreens and the candles. Then they wake up their parents



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TRADITIONS

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and serve them coffee and Lucia buns. As they get ready for Christmas Day, they sing Christmas carols and make plans of who they will invite that is lonely to join them for Christmas dinner. On Christmas day itself they gather at church to sing before they return home to open presents and to share in the feast that has been prepared.

Sailing down from Sweden we stop in the Netherlands. Before we start the full Christmas celebration we see a special feast in honor of the patron saint of sailors, St. Nicholas. The children all believe that their wooden shoes will be filled with gifts. Most people however know that Christmas is really a celebration of Jesus' birth, so the churches are filled and overflowing on Christmas Day. Once the service is over, we return to our homes to share in a feast of salmon, fish, and eel for the Christmas meal. They celebrate the birth of Jesus and commemorate that we are a seafaring nation, so all our meals have some fish in the meal.

We then traveled to Spain to begin our Christmas preparation which starts on December 8th. The celebration is filled with Christmas trees, gifts, and feasting. We go to church on Christmas Day and then return to our homes to share the feast with family and friends. Before the celebration ends, we go outside where swings have been set up in the parks and courtyards to swing and sing Christmas carols. Christmas gifts are not opened until Epiphany on January 6th when we celebrate the arrival of the wise men who brought their gifts to the baby Jesus.

Our journey of traditions is almost at the end as we descend upon Greece and the Greek Isles. Their celebration is very traditional but different as they will take sprigs of basil that is wrapped around a wooden cross that is then dipped in water so that the house can be sprinkled to drive out evil

spirits from the house. They ask God to bless them throughout Advent and Christmas every day. They make some spicy golden bread called Christ bread which is molded into large loaves with a crispy crust. They focus on the life of Christ and the celebration of his birth.

In Iraq there are very few Christians because most of the people are Muslim. In 2008, the government began to allow Christmas celebrations and declared Christmas as an official holiday. On Christmas Eve the children gather and read the story of the Nativity from the Arabic Bible while the adults hold candles. When the service ends on Christmas Day the pastor leads the people in the touch of peace. The pastor touches one person who in turn touches another person, this continues until everyone has received the touch of peace. We pray for peace as we continue to search for lasting peace in our country and around the world.

We finally arrive at where the Christmas traditions all started so many years ago in the town of Bethlehem. The big celebration takes place on Christmas Eve in the Church of the Nativity at Manger Square. The church is located over the place where it is believed that Jesus was born, and Mary sang to her baby. Next door to the Church of the Nativity is the Saint Catherine's Church where many of the visitors visit and celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve and throughout the year. At these churches they pray for world peace.

As we celebrate this Christmas time with its many traditions may we remember that this is a time to celebrate and sing of the Jesus' birth. However, you celebrate may you never forget the story of what happened so long ago in the town of Bethlehem when Jesus was given to us a gift from God. For Christmas is a time of recalling the story of love, peace, and joy fulfilled in a tiny baby. We recall this story through traditions of worship, prayer, singing, and feasting. May this Christmas be a time to remember your old traditions and an opportunity to encompass new traditions as we learn from one another every day.

Merry Christmas!!!

Pastor Dave



Ladies Missionary Society



Edwina Olcott
Lorna Chabot
Marilyn Wales

Beth Capone Porell
Becky Capone Colwell

We have had our first two meetings this Fall. We worked on items for the Fair.

We put together a box of hats, scarves and heavy socks for Our Fathers House. We also added toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Our Fathers House also has a Food Pantry. We are planning to have a Food Drive during the month of December. We will be looking for a lot of help.

We will be meeting again after the Holidays.



Greetings from the Church School

Don't Miss Christmas!



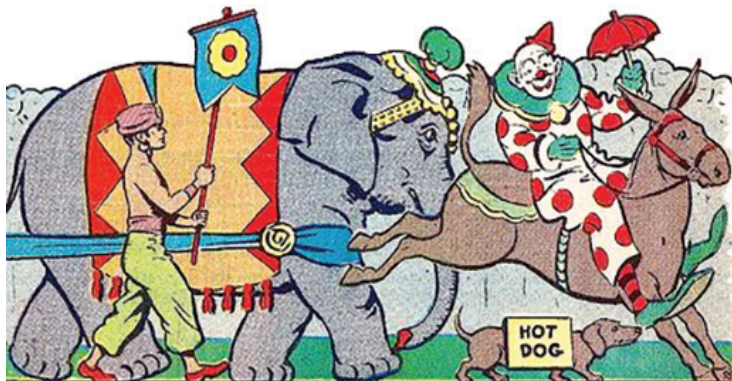
Theme: Don't mistake all the tinsel and lights for the real meaning of Christmas.

Scripture *Luke 2:11*
Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

I just love Christmas, don't you? What do you like best about Christmas? Is it the Christmas tree with its blinking lights? Maybe it's the beautiful music or the delicious Christmas goodies. For some it might be all of the parties or visiting with family and friends. For many people the best thing about Christmas is the presents — both the ones we give and the ones we receive.

Hmm. . . What did I leave out? Oh yes! It's someone's birthday, isn't it? That's right! It is Jesus' birthday. Some times we get so caught up in all of the decorations, lights, parties, and presents that we miss the real Christmas.

That reminds me of a very old story about a little boy who had always wanted to go to a circus. He asked his father for \$1.00 to go to the circus on Saturday. His father told him that if he could get all of his chores done, he could go to the circus. Saturday morning came and the boy got up early and did all of his chores.



The boy's father gave him a dollar and the boy headed into town filled with excitement about seeing wild animals, trapeze artists, and all of the things at the circus. He arrived in town early just as the circus arrived in town - like a parade down the main street. The boy was thrilled when the animals and other circus acts paraded by. At the end came the clowns followed by the ringmaster. Quickly the boy ran out into the street, took his folded dollar bill from his pocket, and handed

it to the ringmaster.

"Thanks," mister, said the boy, "that was a great circus." Then he turned around and walked home. He never knew what he had missed. He thought he had been to the circus, but he had only been to the parade.



If we are not careful, we can be like that little boy. We can get so caught up in the celebration, the decorations, and the gifts that we miss the real Christmas -- the birthday of Jesus.

Dear Jesus, it is your birthday. We pray that we won't get so caught up in the celebration that we miss the real meaning of Christmas. Amen.

Our Savior Lutheran Church in Westminster offers an amazing Living Nativity each year.

Dates: Dec. 4th (Sat) & 5th (Sun) 6-8:00 pm.

The Piazza and Porell families are planning to go.

If you would like to know more about it or join us there please see Beth or Krista

Note: We can choose the date best for those interested and of course be sure to enjoy the Christmas Music Concert featuring Gavin, our talented organist, on Sunday, Dec. 5th at 2:00 pm!

Christmas Blessings to all,



Krista, Hal and Beth

Rollstone's Halloween Sunday





Join us as we celebrate the
Christmas Season
with sacred music and song

Featured musician Gavin Klein

December 5, 2021

2:00 P.M.

Rollstone Congregational Church
199 Main Street, Fitchburg

Tickets are \$5.00 to benefit the Organ Restoration Fund



Lucas Gallo (left) and his friend Sam Piazzi (right) are pictured after playing in a high school soccer game and a fund raising event.

As seen in the Sentinel & Enterprise



Birthdays in December

3 Olney Shepard

31 Andy Lipasti

*Best
Wishes To
You All!*

LITURGIST and RECORDING SCHEDULE of WORSHIP SERVICES

| Liturgical Date | Liturgical Designation | Liturgist | Notes | Time |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 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.*

Beautify our Sanctuary for Christmas



We will be purchasing poinsettias, mums,
and other Christmas appropriate plants
to decorate the sanctuary this Christmas.

*If you would like to donate a plant,
the price is \$15 per plant.*

Christmas Plants - 2021



Given by _____

In Memory or Honor of _____

*Please make a separate slip for each plant and enclose payment to
Rollstone Congregational Church*

New this year – We will have a
variety, once the Christmas eve service
is concluded you may select from the
plants remaining in the sanctuary.

*All unclaimed plants following
the December 26th Service
will be donated to good homes.*



Deadline for Plant Orders is December 5th

ROLLSTONE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
199 MAIN STREET
FITCHBURG, MA 01420