

# 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](http://www.rollstone.org)

APRIL, 2023

### Pastor's REFLECTION

## Singing, A Method of Praise and Worship

Every week when preparing our service of worship I run into many different struggles to create a complete package that includes the scripture, hymns, and a message. When I set about to do this I am called to draw also from my vast theological and worship background, plus the comments I receive from you who are willing to share in loving manner. The challenge is not always as simple as you might believe as your opinions are as diverse and unpredictable as the weather of a New England winter. There are some weeks that I strike a tone of approval with a few parishioners, who ultimately are angry the following week. So, before I go much further, I will ask two questions, "What is worship?" and "What do I like about worship?"

Worship is the act of gathering to praise God and Jesus Christ. Worship can take place in a church, aka a house of worship, or anywhere that God is praised. There are many different components to worship which vary from church to church and denomination to denomination. Some of the components may include, but are not limited to, liturgy, prayer, singing/music, hearing of scripture, and a message. Some churches may include a time

of sharing or witness to God's working in their lives. I have found that through my many years in ministry that each person places different emphasis upon the various components of worship, so it is important to realize that not everything will satisfy each person equally. In our worship we come to offer our praise and there are many ways in which to accomplish this, but how can I do this so that everyone is satisfied and happy? The simple answer to that is, "I cannot please everyone, every time." All that I can do is to listen and learn from your loving comments. It is in the creating of the praise experience that an effort is put forth to create an experience that is both positive and uplifting.

"What do you like about worship?" There are times when the experience of worship is loved and other instances where the whole experience just misses the mark. As I recently heard there was a mixed reaction to the Mardi Gras worship service. The comments ranged from it was wrong to have dancing in the sanctuary, but the music and singing was great. We hear in the 150th Psalm of the many ways in which we can praise God. Among them listed are the playing of instruments, cymbals,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

# CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

— APRIL 2023 —

Easter is a very happy day, isn't it? It's the day we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. It's interesting to think about what Jesus' friends might've been feeling on that day.

We know our faces show the way WE feel.

## THE EMOJI EASTER STORY



**Easter is about Jesus coming to pay for our sins because He loves us so much! John 3:16**



**Jesus had to die on the day we now call good Friday to pay for all the times we sin and disobey God. Mark 15:37-38**



**After Jesus died he was in the tomb for 3 days before something amazing happened. Mark 15:42-47**



**About the time sun was coming up on the third day, some of Jesus' friends went to the tomb not knowing what they would find. Luke 24:1**



**When Jesus' friends got to the tomb they found an angel who told them Jesus was alive! Luke 24:2-7**



**All of Jesus' friends were surprised and happy when they found out he was alive and saw him for the first time! John 20:14-17**



**Soon after Jesus came back to life, He went back to heaven and His disciples watched him go. Luke 24:50-53**



**Before Jesus went back to heaven He told His disciples to tell everyone the good news that anyone who believes in Jesus as their Savior can live with Him forever in heaven. Matthew 28:16-20**

We sure do have reason to be happy on Easter. We're happy because we know that Jesus rose from the tomb and that He lives forever. But we're also happy knowing that the Bible says "Whoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have everlasting life." Now that is something to be happy about, isn't it?

*Beth*

# A METHOD OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Continued from page 1

lyres, dancing, and singing. There are many ways that we can praise God and hopefully we can explore the different ways to enrich our own personal preferences. Hopefully when we have an experience that fails to touch us that we don't allow that singular experience to sour our attitude towards the church or its time of worship.

The greatest concern I continually hear about are the hymns that are sung or used in worship. In our tradition there is a belief that a congregation should sing, as was even suggested by John Wesley that our singing should be courageous. In our singing we are experiencing through the words (lyrics) and even through the hymn tunes to which the lyrics are set. Any time a new hymn is introduced there is a sense of apprehension from the congregation that may lead to fear because we are singing something that has either unfamiliar words or a tune, leading us to refrain from singing with courage. So, what is worship? It is singing out with joy and gladness, not necessarily with perfection. Worship is singing to praise God.

I remember many instances in worship that I have not had everything turn out perfect in the singing, especially when the tune set to the lyrics was not what I was expecting. During a time of sabbatical learning I travelled to various church, denominations, and cultures studying worship styles and practices. There were many ways of singing from acapella to full praise bands or orchestration. I have experienced singing with a folk guitarist to singing with a full organ. The styles too have varied from traditional to contemporary to praise to gospel and beyond. Was each style right or wrong? When singing I discovered that if you are coming with a heart open to experience the presence of God, then you can sing almost anything and take something uplifting from

the experience.

What we take away from worship is reflective or what we are bringing too the experience. While some churches come with a full orchestra or praise band and everything projected upon a large screen, the bottom line is that it is worship. The tunes we hear that are new might be foreign at first, but if we allow the power of the Holy Spirit to move through the music our own lives may be enriched. I remember when I was directing a large choir and they were learning new music they struggled at first, but once they became more familiar with the music they confessed they loved it even to the extent they found themselves singing the music throughout the week. When this transformation happens, we are truly worshipping and praising God because the music has flowed into our hearts. Our challenge in worship is to keep an open mind and an open heart to the full experience, realizing that God may move our spirits when we are least prepared for where it is taking us.

Music, praise, and worship are experiences intended to lift our souls to be closer to God. My sincerest desire is to create opportunities to engage God. It is not always going to be easy or successful with the small number of voices which we have, but God will applaud us for our sincerity and effort.

In closing may our singing be praise where we can lift our voices to worship God. I recognize that it is easy to complain about things we do not especially like or embrace about the worship experience, but may we equally share that which we like and feel and inspirational boost. I will continue to listen to your comments as we worship and praise God.

*Pastor Dave*

## Psalm 150

1 Praise the Lord!  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
praise him in his mighty firmament!  
2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;  
praise him according to his surpassing  
greatness!  
3 Praise him with trumpet sound;  
praise him with lute and harp!  
4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;  
praise him with strings and pipe!  
5 Praise him with clanging cymbals;  
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!  
6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord!





“Lord, we lift our hearts to you.

As the dawn breaks, may we carry the unity we share into every moment knowing that we are one with the risen Christ.

Lord, we lift our eyes to you. As the sun rises, may this moment stay with us, reminding us to look for the beautiful colors of promise in your word.

Lord, we lift our prayers to you. As the dew air falls, may we breathe this morning in and know that like earth, you sustain us, keep us and work within us always.

And so, we lift our voices to you.

We celebrate the greatest day in history, when Jesus rose from death, defeated darkness and bathed the world in stunning resurrection light. May we ever live to praise you!

Amen.”



## Service Recordings

The following services will be recorded and placed up on the church’s YouTube channel or the church’s website.

**Palm Sunday – April 2nd**  
and  
**Easter Sunday – April 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Maundy Thursday** service from a previous year will be reposted for you spiritual journey.

*A reminder that we will only be recording special services and advance notice will be posted in the bulletin and the website.*

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## Organ Concert

We will be hosting our former organist Gavin Klein on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:00 PM, as he presents a program of sacred and secular music. He may even share some of his experiences from his first year at Holy Cross College. There will be a freewill offering received at this concert.

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## Happy Birthday “Zeke” Finch

On April 10<sup>th</sup> “Zeke” will be celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. His family has advised us that they are planning a celebration open house on April 15<sup>th</sup>. For more details see Pastor Dave.

# 100 Years Old!

On April 10, 2023, our dad, Zeke Finch, turns 100 years old! If you would like to send Zeke a card, his address is 612 Rindge Road, Fitchburg, MA 01420. We know he would love to hear from you.



We will be having an informal drop-in gathering at his house between 1:00 and 5:00 on the afternoon of April 15. We realize that many of you live too far away to stop by, but if you are in the area or in the mood to travel and would like to give Zeke

birthday wishes in person, know that you are very welcome.

You may wish to visit at a different time, and you can call him at 978-343-9271 to arrange a time or just to wish him a happy birthday. Be aware, though, that he has difficulty hearing.

If you do plan to come on the 15th, please let us know. Also, if possible, indicate the approximate time you might be arriving or tell us if your schedule is flexible. Parking is limited, and we would like to spread visitors out over the course of the afternoon.

*Sincerely,*  
Bill Finch  
Joanne Tulonen  
Debbie Finch  
David Finch  
Patty Kelly

## April

By Sarah Kee

April has Palm Sunday,  
That month has Easter, too.  
Those are Christian holidays.  
We celebrate them through.

April also is a spring month!  
The weather's warmer, too.  
That's when multi-flowers bloom.  
The sky can be deep blue.

## Survey 3 Results

### SURVEY #3

#### How to support the budget

	Total Points	Total Responses
Find additional rental resources	64	13
Increase Fundraising	49	14
Use Chapel rather than Sanctuary	37	10
Find smaller facility	33	9
Encourage planned giving	28	11
Ask for more support	27	7
Lower heat settings	12	4
Reduce staff and employee expenses	9	3
Other - Increase membership	7	4
Other - Upgrade heating to be efficient	5	1
Other - Upgrade facility to be inviting	3	1
Other - Increase publicity	2	1
Stop building maintenance	0	0



 **Palm Sunday**

Sunday April 2nd — 10:00 AM

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 **Maundy Thursday**

Thursday April 6th — 6:00 PM

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 **Easter Sunday**

Sunday April 2nd — 10:00 AM

*Family Sunday - No Church School*

*David Stansel grew up at Rollstone & Camp Wellville. He now lives north of Seattle and is working for the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce as a media specialist. He is a founding member of the Non-Profit Eastside EDS and wrote the following article for their blog.*



## What is EDS?

Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) is a heritable connective tissue disorder that causes a person's collagen to be more like a flexible rope and less like a steel cable. Connective tissue is found all throughout your body, leading to EDS patients with joint & muscle pain as well as a host of co-morbidities like Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia (POTs) & dysautonomia. There is no cure for EDS, patients must learn how it affects the body, and what stimuli makes them worse or better.

## How do we go out of business?

Mar 4

Written By David Stansel-Garner

How to put ourselves out of business seems like an odd question for a brand-new nonprofit startup. Maybe not so, a nonprofit aims to fix a problem, and when that problem is fixed, there is no need for the nonprofit.

So what does a world without Eastside EDS look like?

It has educated primary care doctors who can spot the signs early, leading to specialists who understand our unique needs. PTs and OTs account for our unique physiology and help us navigate the world without hurting our bodies to do it.

Local support groups can help when life gets crazy, as it always does. Educational opportunities to learn more about our bodies. Access to the support we need from our doctors without insurance getting in the way.

Resources to help families navigate a loved one's disability. Accessibility options in our day-to-day lives, and more.

How do we get there?

It won't be an easy road, but we start by educating. We will be distributing packets to doctors versed in diagnosing Ehlers-Danlos so that they can provide the patient with some immediate, accessible information about EDS.

At the same time, Doctors who are less versed in diagnosing EDS will get packets of information to help them diagnose patients or provide referrals to medical professionals that can diagnose. Experts

will compile this information on EDS and its comorbidities.

In-person training will be developed for Continuing Education (CE) Credits for professional development. PTs will be instructed on seeing the signs of EDS and treating us with the appropriate care.

Support groups will be expanded or formed for the education and advocacy of patients and families. These satellite chapters will be able to provide support to a broader population.

We've begun building each packet that will go to the patients and have the first CE class scheduled with a team of PTs. Our board is expanding, and we've started an advisory committee to help review new and emerging treatments.

A new chapter is being formed in Marysville to help support the population further north. The new branch will help us expand our reach and help even more patients, families, and doctors.

Eastside EDS is poised to do some real good on the way to going out of business. But we need your help.

We will need the help of insurance agents, lawyers, and other professionals on our journey. We will have costs associated with the patient packages and promotional items to spread the word about our services. And we will need resources to reach out and educate as many providers as possible.

You can help. A small donation to Eastside EDS will make a big difference. If you are a provider, consider sponsoring Eastside EDS—contact us for more information.



# Saturday Mornings with the Least of My Brethren

By Eileen Berger

*In January of this year Rollstone Church opened its Cookman Hall for three winter months of Saturday mornings to Hands of Hope, a homeless support ministry. I agreed to be there with them, unlocking the doors at 9 am and cleaning up after everyone departed. In this retelling of my experiences with this special audience, all names of clients and support group members have been obscured.*

Billy is usually the first one in the door. He is a young man, maybe in his 30s, and technically not homeless. Years before, Hands of Hope had helped him quit drugs and alcohol, find subsidized housing, and get a job. He always accepts one of the bag lunches, which have been carefully packed by volunteers, and occasionally requests clothing. He seems to come primarily for the conversation and stays with us laughing and chatting until we close at noon.

James always strolls in the door at the stroke of 11 am. He is very smart but seems emotionally closed and quirky – perhaps “on the Spectrum”. Sometimes he brings Maureen with him. Elderly like James, she rolls in on a walker and usually leaves with three or more lunch bags “for friends” and a blanket or piece of clothing. “No, James isn’t my boyfriend,” she insists. “I have a real boyfriend.”

Saquon, an older black man, does not consider himself “homeless”. A well-spoken man with a big smile, he says he is a “camper” and lives in a tent in a nearby wooded area with his girlfriend, Molly, a younger woman. Molly is pretty with wavy black hair, pale skin, and a face that seems older than her years. When she smiles, she exhibits missing teeth, a fact of life for many of our visitors.

During the fierce early March snowstorm, Saquon and Molly sought shelter in a local motel with the help of a city-issued voucher. The city seems able to find the street people and give them a place to stay in inclement

weather. When Saquon and Molly returned to their woodland home, they discovered that their tent and many of their possessions had been destroyed in the heavy snow. Hands of Hope was able to replace their tent and some of their other belongings.

Don, an older man, asserts that he only wants to die. With some encouragement, he will talk about his many maladies, which cause him physical and emotional pain and constant fatigue. Last year, when he had been sleeping in the doorways of our church and of the former Faith United Church, he had a heart attack. He woke up in a hospital and spent the next months of 2022 in rehabilitation. He says that he is happy to be out on the street again, but that he is in constant pain and longs for death.

On Saturday mornings, these people are among our regular visitors although we see many more. Some just walk in, say hello, pick up their lunch bags and go. Others seem to enjoy the friendly conversation. Their lives, on the face of it, might seem depressing but our time together is not. On these mornings, we laugh and tell stories and keep the tone light. Mid-morning, when there is a group around our table, we all join together in prayer.

Five volunteers from Hands of Hope regularly attend these Saturday morning events. They are conservative Christians from different area churches as far away as Gardner and Concord. They carry their bibles with them and frequently reference them for moral support.

They are literal bible believers. I mentioned I had a problem conceiving of Hell in the same way that I question capital punishment. They whipped out their bibles and Daniel, their leader, began reading about Judgement Day when an Angel would sound a horn bringing the deserving individuals to heaven while the others would be left behind to burn with the weeds. Afterwards, seeing the effect this had on me, they all



came around the table and gave me a warm hug.

In addition to Daniel, a factory worker whose wife is a teacher, the Hands of Hope group includes Colin, a retired engineer who traveled the world during his career with a large international company. Jacob is older, black and a pastor. He and his wife, Mildred, minister to an online congregation. Sharon is an active member of a Christian Church in Concord, and Anne, is a nurse.

They have been meeting like this for ten years and consider themselves an outdoor ministry. When the weather is better, they meet in a nearby parking lot to attend to the needs of the street people. They are paying our church \$50 a week against our heating bill for the privilege of meeting in a warm, dry place during the

extreme cold. They will go back to the streets after Easter when the weather has improved.

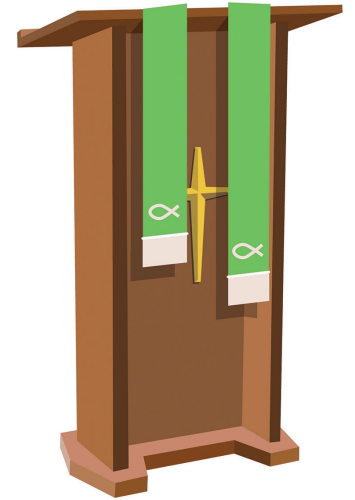
Saturday morning is a quiet time at our church. One morning, church members Linda Gallant and Mary Anne Smith visited and spent some time talking with the group. Linda signed up to make the bag lunches on two weekends. Hers was a fabulous spread: ham and cheese sandwiches, granola bars, cookies, fresh fruit, and chips. Word on the street got out about Linda's lunch and our visitors more than doubled the next week.

I am grateful for the time spent with this wonderful group of volunteers and their clients. I congratulate our church for providing the space, and I hope we will do so again next year.

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## Liturgists Schedule for April and May

April 2nd	Palm Sunday	Jean Suomala
April 6th	Maundy Thursday	The Deacons
April 9th	Easter Sunday	Lois Schrader
April 16th	Second Sunday of Easter	Kathy Rowe
April 23rd	Third Sunday of Easter	Andy Lipasti
April 30th	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Dianne Sammet
May 7th	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Jean Suomala
May 14th	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Beth Porell
May 21st	Seventh Sunday of Easter	Lois Schrader
May 28th	Pentecost Sunday	Andy Lipasti



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## Birthdays in April

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