
The Weathervane



RAYMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH, United Church of Christ Newsletter

March, 2021

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From the Pastor . . .

Dear members and friends of RVCC,

I thought this month, as your designated pastor, I would share some of the ways of how I have been spending my time when we don't see each other during worship service on Sundays.

Part of my duties include:

- Worship preparation which is about 10 -12 hours
- Researching and developing a Lenten series
- Pastoral Care via Zoom, e-mail, and phone calls
- Collaboratively working with the administrator and the pianist.
- Regular Office day at the church on Thursday mornings.
- Administration duties including, letters, newsletters, e-mails, phone calls for our church community and organizations including, "Be the Influence" on Health Empowerment and Maine Council of Churches. I also attend a monthly clergy community of practice as well as a local clergy group. Additionally, there are meetings with Council, Deacons, Missions, Pastoral Relations. Community events currently includes the knitting group and will be more once the weather is improving.

We are quite active in the life of the church and even though we might not meet in person, there are many things that are going on behind the scenes.

I would be remiss not to mention the gratitude I have for all of you—you know who you are - who make sure that we have an online presence when it comes to offering worship services on a social media platform. It has been a high learning curve for all of us, but you have made it possible. Last month even though I had practiced several times before Sunday's service to show a video during the Spiritual Spotlight Moment, it did not work. I am sure all of you have had technical glitches happen at home or at work. But what I want to emphasize is the quick offer of help that came immediately, and we were able to show the video after all. Thank you to each one of you who has

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The Weathervane is published monthly for distribution at the first of each month. Articles may be submitted as paper copy, electronically via disk or email by the 15th of each month preceding the issue for it to be included in. Computer files should be submitted as MSWord (.doc) or rich text format (.rtf). If you have any questions contact Debbie Feagans or Judy Munson. Articles can be dropped off at the church office, mailed or emailed to: Raymond Village Community Church, PO Box 285, Raymond, ME 04071- office@rvccme.org or to Judy Munson, 23 Lawn Ave., Gorham, ME 04038 - cmmunson24@yahoo.com - Thank you for reading our newsletter!

This Month at RVCC . . .

- March 7, 2021- 10:00 a.m. – Worship on Zoom
2:00 p.m. – Deacons meeting on Zoom
- March 8, 2021- 6:00 p.m. – Council meeting on Zoom
- March 14, 2021- 10:00 a.m. – Worship on Zoom
- March 21, 2021- 10:00 a.m. – Worship on Zoom
- March 27, 2021- Palms available to pick up
- March 28, 2021- 10:00 a.m. – Palm Sunday
Worship on Zoom

If you are unable to join live Worship on Zoom, services may be viewed on our YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc1hBkBTarnZF-H4O7YN5ew>

The Knitting Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

A meal is prepared in the Vestry for the food pantry on the second Thursday of the month.

AA meets in the Vestry every Friday at 7:00 p.m.

Children's Music Class with April Masse will be every Saturday from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.



Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Amanda, Betty Berdette, Jane Budlong, Michael Cadotte, Louise Doyle, Polly Dyer, Christine Eldridge, Linda Eldridge, Anne Hodgman, Craig Messinger, Katherine Beach Mithoefer, Bill N., Walt Read, Charlotte Rowe, Frank Sullivan, Dan Tibbetts, Penny Warrikoff, Adma Willis

From the Pastor, continued . . .

expressed appreciation for the hard work of the leadership making the service run as smoothly as possible. Thank you to each one of you who participates in worship. Participation is the key to harmony!

This is a busy season in the life of the Church, and I want to make you aware of the schedule for Holy Week:

Wednesday, March 31st - Last class for our Lenten study: "The cup of our Life" by Joyce Rupp

Thursday, April 1st - Maundy Thursday Service on Zoom at 6:00 pm

Sunday, April 4th - Easter Sunrise Service behind the Casco Village Church at 6:30 am

Sunday, April 4th - Easter Service on Zoom at 10:00 am

Blessings on your Lenten Season,

Pastor Petra

March Lectionary Lessons

March 7, 2021 - Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

March 14, 2021 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

March 21, 2021 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

ART -- PRAYER

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 51:1-12

or

Psalm 119:9-16

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-33

March 28, 2021 - Liturgy of the Palms

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Mark 11:1-11 **or** *John 12:12-16*

March 28, 2021 - Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 14:1-15:47 **or** *Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)*

Lenten Worship

The liturgical season of Lent started on Ash Wednesday, February 17. It is a 40-day journey of reflection and preparation for Easter. The Lenten journey is modeled after Jesus Christ's time in the desert on his own, praying in the desert for 40 days leading up to Holy Week with Palm Sunday, last supper, crucifixion, and resurrection on Easter.

Here is an outline of special activities this year, in addition to Sunday worship. All use the Sunday worship Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82211774347?pwd=bkZvL0lIT21ROXR2d1phaEhiZ2MzQT09>

- 6-week (Wednesday evening) **book study** starting Wednesday **February 24** at 6pm, using the Sunday worship link. The book is *The Cup of Life*. Every week we will focus on one aspect of the cup as a representation of our spiritual growth, starting with Chapter 1 on February 24.

- ***Palm Sunday*** - March 28.

YES! There will be palms for you to pick up on **Saturday March 27** in a bucket outside the vestry door. Then you will be ready to wave your palms during the traditional introit "The Palms" from YouTube.

- ***Maundy Thursday*** - April 1 at 6pm

There will be a brief worship service via Zoom using the Sunday worship line. The worship will focus on the crucifixion of Christ.

- ***Good Friday*** - April 2

There will be an opportunity for home devotional sent to you via email. Pastor Petra and the deacons are putting together appropriate Bible verses, readings and YouTube music.

- **Before Easter:** It would be great to be together in church and see the fabulous flower display that you all contribute to each year. However, we will be safely in our homes. That does not stop two traditions!
 - Having **Easter flowers** – we recommend you purchase what you'd like to have and have it in your home where we can see the flowers on Zoom.
 - **Remembering loved ones** – if you wish to offer up name(s) in celebration or remembrance, **by March 28**, please email Caryl Gilman at carylgilman@gmail.com and I will put together a remembrance sheet we will mail out on the Thursday before Easter.

- ***Easter Sunrise service*** - April 4 6:30 am behind the Casco Village Church

- ***Easter*** - April 4

Worship on Zoom will begin with "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" and end with the "Hallelujah Chorus" from YouTube. Keith will be playing a number of hymns as well. Let's celebrate together! And, we can "ooh" and "aah" at each other's flowers! 😊

Happy Birthday!

| | |
|----------|----------------|
| March 2 | Jeri Keane |
| March 12 | Frank Sullivan |
| March 14 | Vicki Gordan |
| March 29 | Jeff Morris |
| March 30 | Bob Yates |
| March 31 | Dick Putscher |

Missions Corner

As we wrap up our focus on Good Shepherd Food Bank in February, we will continue aiming to alleviate hunger with a focus on Feeding America in March.

Feeding America

The Feeding America network is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization. They believe that "Together with individuals, charities, businesses and government we can end hunger." They have use multiple approaches – from their website:

- **Food rescue:** An estimated 25 – 40 percent of food grown, processed and transported in the U.S. will never be consumed. And more food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other single material in municipal solid waste. We work with manufacturers, distributors, retailers, food service companies and farmers to gather food before it goes to waste.
- **Healthy Communities need Healthy Food:** "it's our mission to provide the most nutritious food possible to improve people's health and well-being. We know that for populations like children and seniors, a balanced diet can be particularly essential to succeeding in school, complementing medication and battling disease. Unfortunately, nutrition-related illnesses disproportionately affect food-insecure people." Here's how
 - *Produce Matchmaker* connects growers of highly perishable, fresh produce directly with food banks in the Feeding America network to quickly and efficiently rescue surplus food.
 - *Mobile food pantries* provide a critical lifeline to healthy foods for families in hard-to-reach and underserved areas. Our mobile pantries create access to healthy foods by meeting people where they are.
 - *MealConnect* makes safe and quick food donations possible by matching food businesses directly to the Feeding America network.
- **Ensuring Food Safety:** "We start with the same stringent requirements that govern U.S. grocery retailers, food manufacturers and restaurants. We also ensure that each food bank in the Feeding America network passes a specially designed, third-party audit based on a combination of food safety laws and industry best practices."
- **Leading the Movement to Solve Hunger:** "As the largest domestic hunger-relief organization, Feeding America is leading the fight against hunger in our nation. We do this by not only feeding people on the ground, but also by raising awareness of the issue across the country. Feeding America educates the public about the impact of hunger through investment in marketing and communications, advocacy and cutting-edge research."

I, Caryl, have seen Feeding America fund-raising efforts and I've read some of their research. It is impressive! I've also watched some reports on TV about people lining up for food in LONG lines and that Feeding America was sourcing much of the food. They reported that last year they provided **4 billion meals**. This is why we've chosen to focus on Feeding America in March.

At the end of the month, the Mission fund will send money to Feeding America. We would love to include your donations as well. Just mail your check to Raymond Village Community Church PO Box 285, Raymond, ME 04071 and note on the memo line of the check that it is for Feeding America.

Every dollar you give can help provide at least 10 meals to families in need through the Feeding America network of food banks.

If you would like to donate directly to Feeding America, please use this link:

https://secure.feedingamerica.org/site/Donation2?29411.donation=form1&df_id=29411&mfc_pref=T&&s_src=Y21XP4B1Y&s_subsrc=c&s_keyword=feeding%20america&msclkid=dd032119f6891d6852d14128db1a0d88

Raymond Food Pantry

Many thanks for the hot meals in January. I'm told the chicken and broccoli dinner was very tasty!

As a reminder, generally, attendance is down at the Raymond Food Pantry until April or May, so we will wait until they need us, then make the Raymond Food Pantry our mission for that month.

Moderator Musings



It's just a rock.

On Ash Wednesday Pastor Petra asked us to think of a quiet calming place and to take ourselves there in meditation for a few minutes.

Instantly my mind went to the big rock that I had spent many moments at. Some good times, some bad but always a place I felt at peace. This rock was lakeside at my family's camp, I have sat there many times.

While sitting there, you can watch the waves crash the shore on a windy day. You can look across towards the head of the lake and see Mt, Katahdin. If you look towards the right you could catch the old railroad bed which had been turned into a road. We could sit on that rock and watch the sunset and say our evening prayers. And of course, we could sit there and fish petty much night and day. You could sit there on the fourth of July and see all the fireworks around the lake.

Sitting on this rock I could also see my grandparents camp on the next point, I could always see if one of my nephews was there fishing as well. And in the fall, you could sit there and see all the autumn leaves changing colors to prepare for the coming of winter. That rock also served as the mounting point for the summer dock when I was very young.

Seems that rock had many functions and was very durable. To some, it may have just been a rock but to me it was a window to many worlds.

In the bible there are many references to rocks as being god's steadfast strength and love for us. Deuteronomy 32:4 tells us "He is the rock, his works are perfect, all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong and just is he." And it continues in verse 18 which says "You deserted the Rock, who fathered you. You forgot the God who gave you birth.

And we all know about the stone being rolled away during this time of year. . So, as we move through this Lenten season, *let's remember that to some it may just be a rock, but to others, it is so much more.*

Tom Wiley Moderator

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

This picture says it all. One of four special mission offerings of the UCC, One Great Hour of Sharing supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ. You can support OGHS this year by sending a check by mid March to RVCC, PO Box 285, Raymond, ME 04071. Please write OGHS on the memo line. Thank you for your support.



HANNAFORD GROCERY CARDS

We have Hannaford shopping cards available for purchase in denominations of \$100 and \$50. Every \$100 you purchase means RVCC gets \$5. You buy the card for \$100, you buy \$100 worth of groceries and RVCC gets \$5!!! How great is that? I am available to get cards to you. Just send me an e-mail (bolsen001@maine.rr.com) or give me a call (207-838-0123). Thanks! Brenda

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present."

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*
Reprinted with permission of Bil Keane

Summary of Tuesday, February 16, 2021 Coordinating Council & Deacons Meeting

A joint meeting of coordinating council and deacons was called to order via zoom, at 6:00 PM, on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. Present were Tom, Rolf, Brenda, Petra, Nancy, Caryl, Deb, and Judy.

Brenda offered the opening prayer, actually a trip down memory lane, of the Sweetheart Brunch, which we would be doing this time of year, were it not for Covid.

Tom reviewed the agenda and set an end time of 7:00 to 7:15 PM.

Nancy made a motion, seconded by Caryl and passed, to accept the minutes of January 11, 2021 meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Brenda presented the financial report for January, not much to report, being the first month of the year. In December, we had received some prepaid pledges for 2021, those were brought on the books in January. To date, we have \$44,820 in pledges, she is hoping for several thousand more. She will send gentle reminders to a few people. Total income of \$7,351 was over budget by \$1,642 for the month. Total expenses of \$8,464 were over budget by \$167, most of it due to 3 payroll periods in January. Nancy asked if we could see monthly budget break down on the monthly Income and Expense statements. Caryl made a motion, seconded by Nancy and approved to accept the treasurer's report subject to year-end review.

Reports of the Coordinators:

Clerk: Judy is starting to work on the year end reporting for the UCC Data Hub.

Trustees: Rolf thanked Bob and Nancy Yates for their help in removing old lights from the Sunday School room. The new lights are up, April has started her music class. Rolf had to replace a smoke detector in the parsonage. Rolf finally received back the microphones which he had sent in for repair. Included in the package with the two repaired microphones was a head set microphone. He is thinking that this will be good for Petra to use, once we are back in church. We will still have two mics left, one for deacon, one at the piano. Rolf had a problem with thermostat in the vestry, it has been replaced. We still have no one to shovel snow, Rolf will pay \$10 per hour.

Missions: Caryl reported that Good Shepherd Food Bank is our mission for February. Feeding America is our mission for March. We have budgeted \$250 for each.

Also, in March, we will collect the first of our special UCC offerings, One Great Hour of Sharing.

Christian Education: Petra reported that she has been going through a lot of old curriculum.

Stewardship: Brenda had nothing to report.

Deacons: Caryl reported that the deacons had met on Sunday. They had arranged deacon coverage for Sundays through Easter. She reported that there will be a brief remote Ash Wednesday service at 6:00 PM tomorrow. Palm Sunday will be a zoom service, Nancy Yates has ordered Palms for people to pick up. All the deacons are working on preparing Good Friday Devotionals. Easter will also be a zoom service. It will be suggested that people buy Easter flowers to enjoy in their homes. We will put together a list of flowers "in memory of", however. A recording of the hymn "Christ the Lord has Risen Today" will start the Easter service, a recording of the Hallelujah Chorus will close the service. Keith will play during the service. Lenten Book Series will start on Wednesday, February 24.

Moderator: Tom reported on his meeting with Keith. They went over a number of items. Rolf feels that the computer may do updates when Keith turns it on on Sunday mornings, that may explain the problem of him getting the computer up and running on Sundays. Suggestions as to how to work with this were made. We also need to make sure that Keith is getting all the music he needs in a timely fashion for the Sunday service. Tom will meet again with Keith on February 28.

Pastor: Petra reported that her Lenten Book Study will start on February 24. She will be away on Sundays, April 11 and 18. She will arrange pastoral emergency coverage for that period, the deacons/moderator will arrange pastoral supply for Sunday morning coverage.

Old Business: none

New Business: Weathervane will be printed on the 25th of February. Tom reported that Craig seems anxious to start the take-out Pot Roast Suppers, fairly soon, possibly in May. Tom will talk further with him. Our next meeting will be on March 8, at 6:00 PM, via zoom. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Munson, Clerk

Look How Far We've come!

Christmas Eve 2019 and our celebration of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" seems like a lifetime ago but it was only a little over a year.

Who among us on that evening could have imagined all that was coming just around the corner? At the January council meeting, Rev. Nancy announced she would be retiring on Easter, and shortly thereafter, Patrick would announce his departure.

And then, enter Covid 19. It was initially reported to the WHO on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. And just like that, in the blink of an eye, life as we knew it changed entirely.

From December 2019 through April 12, 2020, which was Easter, RVCC moved forward carefully as the Covid information, protocols, and restrictions developed. Nancy collaborated with Patrick, the deacons, and choir members to use the music of Godspell to guide us through Lent to Easter. Services were recorded and uploaded for viewing with all who were involved learning, and trying something completely new as we moved forward, but move forward, we did. Yet, with an air of apprehension as is often accompanied with things scary and unknown.

Then, Rev. Nancy and Patrick said goodbye and RVCC would need to adapt and change and yes, move forward. Guest Pastors were lined up, worship services continued amid lockdowns and stay at home orders, and the search for a new pastor began.

As a church family RVCC had, in four quick months experienced the retirement of its pastor and music director, the beginning of a global pandemic, and a statewide shutdown order. Any one of those would present a compelling challenge and here they were, all at once.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow and Pastor Petra Smyth was called! A huge step forward to be sure, but Petra sure was stepping into choppy waters. How does a new pastor meet and greet their congregation during a global health crisis? How does she meet church leadership, deacons, her gal Friday? Via Zoom of course! Zoom, what's that? We were all about to find out.

We were all about to find out just how flexible and resilient RVCC could be.

And so, spring turned into summer and for a few brief weeks some opportunities for safely masked, outdoor meet and greets, and even in person worship commenced. Amid growing concern of continued viral spread, and therefore the need for distance, we had just a

tiny bit of normalcy. In addition, Keith Neubert joined us and we once again had piano music at RVCC!

A brief respite only as change was coming again because Covid was not going away.

By fall, it was clear in person services would no longer be safe. Doors and windows would have to be closed and the reduction of proper ventilation would mean a need to go back to virtual services. Back to recorded and uploaded you tube videos. This effort was not familiar or comfortable to all. There is a learning curve, and one made more difficult when you must learn while doing, being the new pastor.

When Petra got the sad news of her father's passing, her need to travel to Germany amid Covid restrictions and quarantines presented another challenge both logistically and emotionally.

Plans were made, guest pastors once again called upon, and RVCC kept providing much needed Sunday worship.

Shortly thereafter, the decision was made to change to Zoom worship so we could all see each other's faces again. Even if only on screen. Yet another set of new techno. information to absorb, learn, and begin implementing.

All the while, Weathervanes remained constant, weekly church e-mails went out, mission efforts continued, including UCC offerings and meals for the food pantry, take out pot roast suppers during the summer and a pickup only Christmas cookie sale, our Annual Meeting was held, Petra has connected more and more with our congregation, and RVCC has persisted.

Clearing closets and rooms of clutter, and with more painting on the horizon, our space is being made more inviting. Slowly, and with CDC recommended procedures in place, groups like AA and the knitters are back to meeting in the building.

And here we are in March of 2021, still amid a global pandemic, but with light at the end of the tunnel. People are being vaccinated, warmer weather is right around the corner, and the joy of Easter will soon be upon us!

I dare say each and every one of us has had to learn at least one new skill in the past year.

Who is baking more than ever? Sourdough anybody? How many puzzles have you made? Are you practicing yoga now? How many home improvement projects have you done? Are you cutting your own hair or someone else's? Who never used Zoom until this began? Been to any virtual concerts?

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Raymond Village Community Church

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Look How Far We've Come, continued . . .

Look how far we've come, and against some pretty steep odds!

Dealing with 2020 has no doubt, been very different and yet very much the same for all of us. For some, isolation may be easy, even welcome. For others, oppressive and un-natural.

Many times, during the past year I've thought about these two quotes".

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." ~Thomas Paine

and

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ~Margaret Mead

Raymond Village Community Church may be a small church, but it absolutely does have a BIG heart! It has people who do not shrink from service, people who are thoughtful and committed, and people who are willing to go the extra mile.

We learn, we grow, we persist.

And so with joy, thankfulness, and an eye toward the future, just look how far we've come!

~Lori