



The Weathervane

RAYMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH, United Church of Christ Newsletter

March, 2023

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From the Pastor . . .

Dear RVCC members and friends,

We will already be one week into our Lenten season when you receive this newsletter. With Easter arriving this year, April 9th, does it mean spring will also be early? One can only hope!

Our Lenten study group is reading "Final Words from the Cross" by Adam Hamilton. The author devotes six chapters to Jesus' last words as he hung dying on the cross. Adam Hamilton writes: "A word about the order of the last statements of Jesus: Because no one Gospel includes more than three of the final seven phrases Jesus spoke, we do not know the exact order in which Jesus said these words during the six hours on the cross. I have in this book the traditional ordering of these statements:

"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

"Today, you will be with me in Paradise."

"Behold your son....Behold your mother."

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

"I thirst."

"It is finished."

"Into your hands, I commit my spirit."

Our Lenten study group will explore the meaning of Jesus' dying words for our lives today.

Since we are in winter, I want to share this well-known poem by Robert Frost:

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are, I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

Continued next page . . .

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 5, 2023-	10:00 a.m. – In Person Worship – Communion Sunday 11:15 a.m. – Congregational Meeting (in person with Zoom available.)
March 6, 2023-	5:00 p.m. – In Person Deacons Meeting
March 11, 2023-	4:30 – 6:00 p.m. – March Social Gathering – Corned Beef dinner.
March 12, 2023-	10:00 a.m. – Worship on Zoom
March 13, 2023-	5:00 p.m. – Council meeting on Zoom
March 19, 2023-	10:00 a.m. – Worship on Zoom
March 26, 2023-	10:00 a.m. - Worship in person

Worship videos are available on the RVCC YouTube Channel:

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

Please join us for Coffee Hour after In Person Worship!

Lenten Book Study is every Wednesday in March from 6:30-7:30 p.m. on Zoom.

The Knitting Group will meet on March 14 & 28, 2023 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Line Dancing is every Friday at 10:00 a.m.

Scouts, BSA Troop 800 meets every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Knitting & Crocheting Group

The knitting & crocheting group is back to making hats & mittens for the next few months. These are usually easy and fast and a good way to use some of our donated yarn! We have some new patterns and have some supplies to get you started and a group with lots of knowledge. We would love to share our knitting and crocheting experience with young or old, boy or girl! You are welcome to join us for our group meeting for some instruction or assistance. We are meeting inside in the Sunday School room next to the furnace room. For those of you who are comfortable in doing so, please join us on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks! Brenda (bolsen001@maine.rr.com) or 207-838-0123

From the Pastor, continued . . .

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

During this Season of Lent, may we throw away what is standing in our way of being fully alive. Instead, I encourage you to find something that will help you feel closer to God and share what has been life-giving for you.

Lenten Blessings,

Pastor Petra

Worship in March

- March 5 – in person worship with communion
- March 12 – Zoom worship
- March 19 – Zoom worship
- March 26 and beyond – In person

The Zoom will open at 9:45 a.m. Please join before 10:00 a.m. when the worship and recording will begin. Just click the following link then “Open Zoom Meeting”, then “join with video” and “join with computer audio”.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82211774347?pwd=bkZvL0lIT2lROXR2d1phaEhiZ2MzQT09>

There is a waiting room so the host will admit you. The host receives a message that you are there as soon as you “join with video”. We are using the same link every Sunday.

Note: Our storm policy this year will be to “change to “remote” = Zoom” rather than cancel worship. The two TV stations that allow the option of reporting something like “change to remote” are WCSH and WGME.



Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Amanda, Kathleen Bent, Michael Cadotte,
Louise Doyle, Polly Dyer, Christine Eldridge,
Linda Eldridge, Rick Emery, Vicki Gordan,
Linda & John Gregoire, Bill Holmquist,
Christine Horwath, Lisa Lambert, Charlotte Rowe.

March Birthdays

March 2	Jeri Keane
March 14	Vicki Gordan
March 29	Jeff Morris
March 30	Bob Yates

LINE DANCING UPDATE:

The Friday, Beginner/Low Impact class, will continue through the winter at the same time, 10:00 - 11:30.

FMI: Contact Rachel Knights,
rachelscountryhearts@yahoo.com or cell phone 207-232-1172.

MARCH LECTONARY LESSONS

March 5, 2023 - Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
John 3:1-17

or

Matthew 17:1-9

March 12, 2023 - Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

March 19, 2023 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

March 26, 2023 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

Vitality Events

This spring, Maine Conference Minister Marisa (Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola, P.h.D.) will be offering a vitality workshop, *Alive & Thrive at Any Size*, at four locations around the state. The workshops focus on church vitality for the 21st century, including the topics of:

- Becoming a mission church: reaching out into the greater community
- Engaging community partners for mission
- “Right sizing” governance to prevent burn out as numbers in the pews decrease
- Creative ways for pastors and lay leaders to work together
- Reaching the unchurched and inviting them into the life of the church

Marisa has presented these workshops many times as ACM in Penn Central Conference. Typically, they are geared toward smaller churches that are struggling to consider their future in the 21st century.

All churches and church members are invited because all of us are struggling with this question, no matter the size.

Please register for one of the following events by clicking on the appropriate link below:

[Second Christian Church in Kittery - March 18](#)

[Winthrop Congregational Church - April 22](#)

[West Parish in Bethel - May 6](#)

[Hammond St. Congregational Church in Bangor - June 10](#)

All workshops are 9am to 3pm, bring your own lunch. Morning coffee and drinks for lunch are provided

Hybrid options are available at the April 22 and June 10 meetings.

Questions? Contact Marisa mlaviola@maineucc.org

Summary of February 9, 2023 Coordinating Council/Deacons Meeting

The meeting of Coordinating Council/Deacons was called to order at 6:10 PM on Thursday, February 9, 2023, by Tom Wiley. Present were Brenda, Rolf, Tom, Caryl, Deb and Judy.

Brenda offered the opening prayer. Tom reviewed the agenda.

Treasurer Report: Brenda reported that income was on target for the month of January, expenses were up slightly, possibly due to December bill being paid in January. There were no new pledges that came in, we have received a total of 24 pledges, two of those have been prepaid.

Clerk: nothing to report

Trustees: Rolf reported that we made it through the deep freeze weather with no major problems. But we ran out of oil again, our oil company did not put us on auto delivery as requested. We are now on auto delivery for sure. There were also no problems in the parsonage.

Missions: Caryl reported that \$250 had been given to Feed America, \$150 had gone to assist a local resident, \$250 had gone to Good Shepherd Food Bank, and \$250 had been sent to the UCC for disaster relief in Turkey and Syria. Caryl noted that she always pays processing fees when making a donation, if it is requested. Both the UCC and Good Shepherd did that. During February, we will be collecting personal items for the Raymond Food Pantry

Christian Education: Petra has picked a book for the Lenten Book Study, it is "Final Words from the Cross", by Adam Hamilton. The class starts on February 22, at 6:30 PM. Please let Petra know if you are interested, so she can order books.

Deacons: The Deacons are working on the service for this coming Sunday. It includes a pre recorded Spirit Spotlight and Sermon by Petra, plus recorded music from Michael. We will not have an Ash Wednesday service, Caryl will make available a list of services at other local churches.

Old Business: Tom reviewed the events of the Annual Meeting. He reminded us of a follow up meeting on March 5, in person, immediately following worship. In the meantime, on February 21, at 6:00 PM, we will have a zoom brain storming meeting with our Maine Conference Minister, Marisa Laviola, to discuss our options for after Petra leaves. At their meeting next

week, Caryl and the Deacons will work on an agenda for the meeting.

New Business: The subject of having a formal farewell service/reception for Petra was discussed. This is something we definitely want to do, possible dates were discussed. Caryl will follow up on this by speaking with Marcia Charles, who is the head of the Cumberland Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ. Caryl presented material which she has put together on possible supply pastors. We will also need someone for emergency pastoral coverage. It was felt that it should not be the same person. The deacons will discuss the list of supply pastors at their meeting on February 13. We will need someone for approximately 4 months, June through September. We discussed asking Chan Roach, Alice Oldford, and Bob Yates to be a committee to follow through with the process of selecting supply pastor. Council members were reminded about the zoom meeting on February 21 with Rev. Marisa Laviola. There was brief discussion about agenda for meeting with the congregation on March 5. Rolf expressed concern about discussing church rental potential. He feels we could advertise that we have rooms to rent for short term use, but has concerns about considering long term rentals to businesses for example.

Weathervane deadline is February 19, we will print on the 23rd. On Saturday, 2/25, at 3:00 PM, on zoom, we will have brief meeting to plan agenda for the March 5 meeting with the congregation. Our next regular council meeting will be Monday, March 13, on zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Judith Munson, Clerk

Missions: February continues through March 5

While the Pantry provides food on a regular basis, they generally provide personal care products when they are donated. The supply of personal products is low now, so this is our opportunity to help! In the month of February, please bring in any of the following:

Tooth brush	Disposable razor	Q tips
Tooth paste	Shaving cream – men's & women's	Deodorant
Dental floss	Bar bath soap	Mouth Wash
Rota points	Shampoo	Room air freshener
Small & medium size Band-Aids		

Please no nail polish or cosmetics or hairbrush/comb - the Pantry cannot accept these.

Minutes of 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting January 22, 2023

Note: These minutes are not official until adopted at the 2024 Annual Meeting

Moderator Tom Wiley called the meeting to order at approximately 11:15 PM. There were approximately nineteen people in attendance, two via zoom, the rest in person in the church.

Opening Remarks: Tom reflected on the challenges of the past year. We have a good team of council members and deacons, but it has not changed in a number of years. We need more help with the challenges that lie ahead. His opening prayer was from our Mission Statement. We pray that God will guide our deliberations. Ephesians 4:2 reminds us that we own and are responsible for our own thoughts. Caryl Gilman made a motion to accept the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting as printed. The motion was seconded by Bonnie Wiley and approved.

Agenda Article 1: Rolf Olsen made a motion to waive the reading of the reports of the coordinators, and to accept those reports. The motion was seconded by Nancy Yates and approved. Rolf Olsen also made a motion to take Article 3 out of order, seconded by Nancy Yates and approved.

Agenda Article 3: to elect a slate of officers and deacons for 2023:

Slate of Deacons for 2023: Caryl Gilman, Deb Feagans, Cora Sullivan, Tom Wiley and Nancy Yates.

Slate of Coordinators for 2023: Moderator-Tom Wiley, Treasurer-Brenda Olsen, Clerk-Judith Munson, Financial Secretary-Nancy Yates, Missions-Caryl Gilman, Christian Education-vacant, Trustees-Rolf Olsen, Stewardship-vacant. Tom Wiley asked for any nominations from the floor, there were none. Rolf Olsen made a motion, seconded by Caryl Gilman to accept the slate as moved, and to allow the council to fill any vacancies during the year. The motion was approved.

Agenda Article 2: Brenda Olsen presented the Treasurer's Report for 2022, and the Budget for 2023. The past year showed us with expenses under budget, mostly due to less spending for our pastor, although we also showed a big increase in utilities. Decrease in income was mostly due to losses in our invested funds. We lost \$15,659 in our American Funds, and withdrew \$39,484 from the American Funds. Missions remains one of our biggest funds, although we spent \$16,889 of Missions this year, we still show a balance of \$29,270 in that account. In the general fund we have \$33,000 left to

spend. The proposed budget for 2023 is similar to that of 2022, although there is an increase for utilities. For the Pastor expenses, we continue with expenses for Petra until June 1. We are then budgeting \$175 per Sunday for Supply Pastors for June through September, and then for a new Pastor at Petra's current rate for October through the end of the year. At the rate of spending in this proposed budget, we will have used our surplus by the end of 2024. There were a number of questions about the budget, but in order to move forward we need to pass this budget. Caryl Gilman made a motion, seconded by Bonnie Wiley to adopt the budget for 2023, as presented. The motion was approved.

Agenda Article 4: How to move forward knowing that our funds are limited is the big question. Council members and Deacons have identified 4 possibilities.

Option A: Continue much the same as we are now, Petra is pastor until 6/1, then supply pastors until we hire a new pastor at same hours as Petra. **Option B:** Explore merging with another church after Petra retires on 6/1. Again, we would need supply pastors for a period of time while we explore details of a merger, and a congregational vote would be required. **Option C: Go out with a bang, plan an ending for RVCC, on or after 6/1/2023.**

There is work to pull together celebrations and to plan what to do with RVCC assets. **Option D:** After Petra retires on 6/1, hire supply pastors, and arrange for ongoing pastoral care. Another possibility (**Option E**) would be to use a combination of supply pastors and lay leadership. In either case, we would need to guide Church Secretary and Pianist considering ever changing leadership. There were a number of questions and suggestions. Craig asked if we have to vote today, there is too much to take in and too many questions. Bonnie answered that we were looking for people's preferences today, not a binding vote, but an idea of the direction we would like to pursue. Anita asked about possibility of renting out part of the building to bring in income. Alice Oldford expressed her concern that having supply pastors for 4 months, from June through September is putting us on hold. Brenda pointed out once again that we need new and additional leadership. Cherie expressed concern that it might be hard to find a new pastor willing to take us on for only a short term. Petra reminded us that a Church is not about the building, it is about the people. Caryl's vision for us is to become a mission church, putting all our time and energy into helping others, not into the building. People were asked to fill out form

Continued next page . . .

Annual Meeting Minutes, continued . . .

indicating their first, second and third choices. Of the 15 returns, 13 people indicated that B, merging with another church would be their first choice. It was decided to hold another meeting on March 5, after church, in person, that is not a zoom Sunday. The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Judith Munson, Clerk

Post Script: not a part of the minutes: Tally of votes taken at meeting for Options of going forward:

Of the 15 returns, 13 of them had B for first choice
A had the highest number for second choice, with 6 votes
Only 4 votes for C, all as 3rd choice
Options D and E seemed similar to me, there were 15 votes for D and E, 7 of them for 2nd choice, 8 of them for 3rd choice.

Looking to the future, this year...

As Petra wrote in last month's Weathervane, her contract ends on 6/1 and she will not be able to continue with us beyond that date. We discussed this at annual meeting, along with discussing our current financial situation.

Four+ options for our future were presented and attendees put them in priority order- first to thirds. The highest number of votes for first went to "explore merging with another church". The next highest number went to "hire another pastor and continue as today". Then we agreed to meet again after church on March 5th to discuss further. Lunch will be served.

After annual meeting, our conference minister Rev Dr Marisa Laviola offered to talk with us as she would like to help us. That meeting will be held February 21 via Zoom. The discussions at that meeting will be brought forward to the March 5th meeting.

Meanwhile, we decided to pursue pulpit supply for the summer, June 4th through September 3rd (14 Sundays). Four people are working on this: Caryl Gilman, Alice Oldford, Chan Roach and Bob Yates. The pulpit supply pastor will be asked to:

- Prepare Sunday worship service, including sermon, and deliver on Sunday.
- Sunday – stay for coffee hour after worship (approx. 30 min)
- Provide content for worship bulletin to Church Secretary in a manner agreeable to both.

Chan Roach has already agreed to cover pastoral emergencies during this period of time. THANK YOU, Chan!

**REMINDER -
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday March 5, 2023**

We will have an important Congregational Meeting on March 5, 2023 after worship. During the meeting we will further discuss options for our future and present additional information gathered during our Zoom meeting with Conference Minister Rev. Doctor Marisa LaViola.

Please plan on attending! There is much work to be done and your Council and Deacons cannot do it all!

Lunch will be served following the meeting!

Missions – One Great Hour of Sharing

The United Church of Christ will collect their One Great Hour of Sharing offering on March 19 this year. The theme of this year's offering is "Its Time to Share." One Great Hour of Sharing supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ. You may make a donation when we are in church, in person, on March 5, March 26 and April 2. You may also send a check by mail to RVCC, P.O. Box 285, Raymond, ME, 04071

Thank you for your generosity.

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

LENTEN BOOK STUDY

Lenten Book Study "Final Words from the Cross" by Adam Hamilton will be on Zoom every Wednesday in March from 6:30pm – 7:30 pm.

March Social Gathering

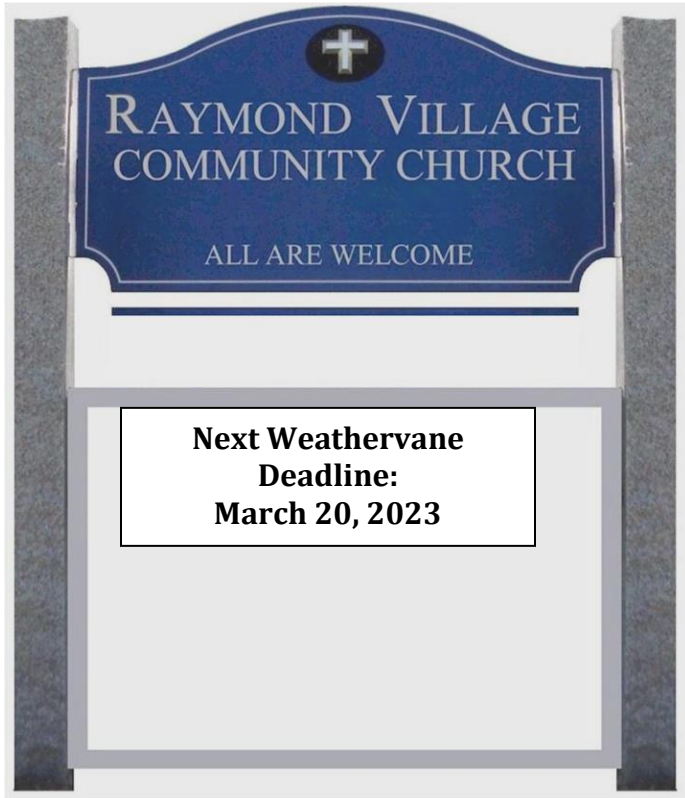


Join us for a corned beef dinner on Saturday, March 11th
from 4:30 – 6:00 P.M.

Come in out of the cold and join us for a traditional corned
beef and cabbage dinner with Irish bread and good old-
fashioned friendship.

Cost will be \$5/person and we invite you to bring a dessert to
share.

Please call the office to reserve a spot - 655-7749.



Raymond Village Community Church

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