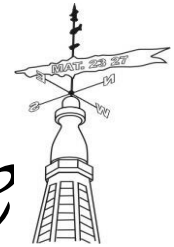


# The Weathervane



RAYMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH, United Church of Christ Newsletter

March, 2024

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## *From the Pastor . . .*

*“For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven”*

- *Ecclesiastes 3:1*

### *“Bird songs for a new season”*

I woke up this morning and stepped outside to experience an amazing sight. As the snow drifted to the ground in the early hour of dawn, I heard a melody of birds starting to sing. Their tune carried dawn - no spring - on the drifting flakes. Their hope made me remember this verse from the Bible: “For everything there is a season...”

The part we forget to share is that we cannot stop that season from coming. Oh, it is implied, hinted at even; but never outright said that we cannot stop the season from changing. Just like the drifting snow of this morning could not stop the birds from bursting forth in song. Just like, we cannot stop Monday morning from coming or a life from ending. This unsaid truth may seem morbid, but I offer you another way to consider this truth: “For everything there is a season...” Everything has a time and when this season ends - which we cannot stop - a new thing will begin. That is where hope is found.

The hope that God reveals to us in the very changing of seasons. That even though the trees die in the winter. New life is born again in the spring. Neither the trees - nor the birds can stop the winter from coming but neither can the winter stop the birds, or the trees come springtide. Human beings are not above this basic truth of God’s Creation. Therefore, the only question is how do we embrace the changing of seasons which we find ourselves in? Do we ignore the birds and keep letting snow fill our lives? In other words, do we resist the change? Or do we stop busying ourselves by making winter, to stop and listen for the birds. Do we stop and see what great thing God is creating in us for this next season?

I pray you say we stop and listen - move into the next season - do not resist the changing seasons around us. And the seasons do change many times throughout our lives. We go from being a child to teenager to adult to

*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 15<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:office@rvccme.org) or to Judy Munson, 23 Lawn Ave., Gorham, ME 04038 - [cmmunson24@yahoo.com](mailto:cmmunson24@yahoo.com) - Thank you for reading our newsletter!

### *This Month at RVCC . . .*

- March 3, 2024- 11:00 a.m. – Worship with Rev. Brian Donovan  
12:00 p.m. – Informal congregational update and corned beef lunch
- March 4, 2024- 5:00 p.m. – Deacons meeting in person
- March 10, 2024- **No worship at RVCC.**  
Worship wherever you feel called.
- March 11, 2024 5:00 p.m. – Council Meeting via Zoom.
- March 17, 2024- 11:00 a.m. – Worship with Rev. Brian Donovan.
- March 24, 2024- 11:00 a.m. – Palm Sunday  
Worship with Rev. Brian Donovan
- March 28, 2024- 6:30 p.m. – Maundy Thursday service at RVCC
- March 29, 2024- Noon – 3pm – RVCC open Sanctuary and Stations of the Cross
- March 31, 2024- 11:00 a.m. – Easter Sunday  
Worship with Rev. Brian Donovan

Worship videos will be available on the RVCC  
YouTube Channel:

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

#### **Please join us for Coffee Hour after Worship!**

Alzheimer's Support Group will meet on March 3 and  
March 17, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

The Knitting Group will meet on March 12 and March  
26, 2024 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Line Dancing – will be every Friday at 10:00 a.m.

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

AA meets every Friday at 7:00 p.m.

### *From the Pastor, continued . . .*

senior adult with many steps along the way - single to married and maybe back to single - unemployed to working. And so on and so on and so on... What makes us think the life of a church is any different?

In fact, we have seen the cacophony of birds singing in our choir lofts as well as the squalls of snow falling upon empty pews. We have seen these things in our churches. Sadly, we humans often tend to focus on the snow - the death - the things we have lost. But the snow has been here for some time and the birds are now starting to sing as well. The season is changing- again. Thanks be to God.

Lent is both things. It is the time of transition. It is both when Jesus went into the wilderness before beginning his ministry and that remembrance of his last days as a human before his new life through the resurrection. Why do we focus on the death - on the snow of winter which is receding? Let us instead choose life and the new season which God is creating in all people today - a new kin-dom in the resurrection - a new faithful people who embrace whatever the new church will become. The church God is creating for us today in this new season being born.

All we must do to embrace this new season is stop and listen to the bird songs as we let the snow drift away...

**God help us to all witness the Resurrection of our Christ - our churches - our very faith in this beautiful changing season. Let us remember what happened in the winters of our faith and grow into the kin-dom You wish us to become. In the name of Christ Jesus who reveals the Way, we pray. Amen.**

### **Knitting & Crocheting Group**

The knitting & crocheting group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 2:00 p.m. in the classroom at the top of the stairs. Everyone is welcome whether you knit or crochet, or want to learn. We are usually working on projects for donations and we have plenty of yarn. Please join us and share your favorite project or a donation that you would like to be involved in. Whether you join us or not you are always welcome to make donations. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks! Brenda ([bolsen001@maine.rr.com](mailto:bolsen001@maine.rr.com)) or 207-838-0123

### **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](mailto:bolsen001@maine.rr.com)) or give me a call (207-838-0123).



Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Amanda, Angela's family & friends, Kathleen Bent, Michael Cadotte, Howdy Christiansen, Bill Downes, Louise Doyle, Polly Dyer, Christine Eldridge, Linda Eldridge, Rick Emery, Cassi Gordan, Scott Gordan, John & Linda Gregoire, Liz Kenaly, Shannon Lurvey, Ron Maker, The Messinger Family, The Morris family, Deb Rand, The family of Charlotte Rowe, The Shively Family, The Thayer family - Janice (in hospice), Hilda Wiley, and for the people of Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, and Maine

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

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



The United Church of Christ will collect their One Great Hour of Sharing offering on March 10th this year. The theme of this year's offering is: "It's 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, on March 3rd, 17th, or 24th. Or you may send a check to RVCC, P.O. Box 285, Raymond, ME, 04071. Please indicate OGHS on the memo line.

Thank you for your generosity.

MARCH LECTIONARY LESSONS

March 3, 2024 - Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 20:1-17
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22

March 10, 2024 - Fourth Sunday in Lent

Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3:14-21

March 17, 2024 - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16
Hebrews 5:5-10
John 12:20-33

March 24, 2024 - Palm Sunday

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16

March 31, 2024 - Easter Day

Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43
John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8

Sebago Lakes Region Fuller Housing

It is the time of year when Bangor Savings Bank aims to recognize non-profits in their program "Community Matters More" People are asked to go to their website and vote for a non-profit (just one per person) for Bangor Savings Bank to recognize.

I hope you will support Sebago Fuller Housing by going to the following link, then enter your name and email (to ensure only one vote per person), then choose Cumberland County and go to "Other" and start typing.. Sebago Fuller Housing. It will come up as others have voted too.

https://www.bangor.com/the-bangor-savings-bank-foundation/community-matters-more/

Thank you!

Caryl Gilman, RVCC rep. to Sebago Fuller Housing

Line Dancing News!

Line dancing is continuing to be offered on Friday mornings at 10:00 am with Maggie Holnaider as our instructor. This class is a beginner low impact class. If you have any questions, you may continue to contact Rachel at 232-1172.

## Summary of Tuesday, February 6, 2024 Coordinating Council Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 PM by Tom Wiley. Present were Tom, Brenda, Rolf, Caryl, Judy, Deb, and Pastor Brian.

Rolf offered the opening prayer. With some help from ee cummings and Robert Frost, Rolf shared a prayer he had written for help on our current journey as a church.

**Financial Report:** Brenda presented the financial report for January, not much to report so early in the year.

Contributions are a little less than budget, we are still missing a few pledges. Brenda is working on that. Sale of the parsonage is not in the January numbers. She reported that insurance settlement to repair the steeple came in. The parsonage is now off our insurance, which will save us some money. In addition, the insurance on the church building has been reduced to 80% of replacement value. Again, a saving, and adequate insurance at this point for the church.

**Pastoral Report:** much of Brian's report will come later in the meeting. He did comment, however, that he is feeling a lot of energy in this church right now.

### Reports of Coordinators:

**Clerk:** Judy raised the issue of whether minutes of annual meeting can be approved at any congregational meeting or only at another annual meeting. It was clarified that those minutes can be approved at any "appropriately called" congregational meeting, not just at the annual meeting.

**Deacons:** It was reported that new members will be welcomed into the church on February 25. Brian and Angel Donovan, as well as Polly Dyer will join the church on that day. We will also have installation of officers at that time. Caryl presented Lent and Easter dates. Ash Wednesday, we are invited to Casco. Palm Sunday, as usual in our sanctuary. Maundy Thursday, in our sanctuary, Casco is invited to join us. Good Friday, our sanctuary will be open from noon to 3:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m., with invitation to Casco to join us. In the evening of Good Friday, we are invited to service of the last seven words of Christ in Casco, with combined choir. Easter Sunrise Service in Casco, our regular service at 11:00. Also we are invited to Windham Hill Ash Wednesday, and Good Friday afternoon in Gray. Gray has Lenten Soup and Study on Tuesday evenings, and we will have RVCC Lenten Remembrances, writing the autobiography of our church together, via zoom on Thursday evenings.

**Missions:** Judy had nothing to report.

**Moderator:** nothing to report at this time.

**Trustees:** Rolf reported that the closing on the parsonage happened on February 5. Brenda added that the proceeds are in a CD with 5% return, she is pleased with that. Rolf has also received the settlement from the insurance company to repair the Weathervane on the building. He now needs to

work with contractor to get that project going. It was reported that problems with Microsoft have not yet been resolved. It was suggested that we get a gmail account and put the mailing list on that. It is critical that we be able to get information out this week. Caryl reported that the Deacons have an email list which they use in case of canceling church due to bad weather. It is not as complete as Lori's list, but does have the people who attend church on a regular basis on it. Deb used it last week for the ACE. Posting the ACE on facebook is not adequate.

**Old Business:** Discussion about annual meeting, it went well. There was discussion about doing Sweetheart Brunch or St. Patrick's Day dinner. Talked about doing corned beef meal at the follow up to the annual meeting which is scheduled for after church on March 3.

### New Business: Status report from Pastor Brian:

Casco Village/Raymond Chapel: Joyce had prepped their church for this discussion before she retired. Amy is talking with her council, Brian hopes to hear from her soon with a time to meet with a small team from each church.

Gray: we have an invitation to meet with their council (governance team) to make a presentation and answer questions.

Windham Hill: Brian and Sharon have a meeting scheduled on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss possibilities. Sharon has discussed this idea with their trustees, and it seems positive.

Brian has been unable to reach anyone at Highland Lake and New Gloucester churches. North Windham Church is aware of our intentions, but they are a much bigger church. North Gorham church seems far away at this point.

Expected questions from other church: who are we as a church? what type of church are we? Questions about missions, ministries, how do we feel about ONA and A2A? What are their deal breakers?

Questions for us to think about: what do we hope for, what are we unwilling to think about, what would be a deal breaker for us, what do we want to know about their church, what would be the least acceptable agreement, what would be the mission of a combined church?

Caryl reminded us that our people are wrestling with 2 choices, merging with another church, or Option 5 which was to become basically an online church. Our vote at our annual meeting had these two very close.

Our next all church meeting will be after church on March 3. We will serve a corned beef dinner. Brian will report on what has happened to date. We will start to discuss what we hope for in a merger. Our next council meeting will be on March 11, at 5:00 PM, on zoom.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judith Munson, Clerk



**Minutes of 2024 Annual Congregational Meeting  
January 21, 2024**

*Note: These minutes are not official until adopted at the next appropriately called congregational meeting.*

Moderator Tom Wiley called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 PM. There were approximately 20 people in attendance, all in person, in the vestry,

Opening Remarks: Tom thanked people for attending the meeting. He reflected on the past year. We did have talks about merging with another church during the year. After three years with us, Petra Smythe resigned. We created a profile of what we were looking for in a new minister. We had a lot of summer preachers. Chan Roach was thanked for providing us with stability during the time of change. A search committee was formed, Brian Donovan was hired to lead us through a transition period. Tom's 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. Bonnie Wiley made a motion to accept the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting as printed. The motion was seconded by Caryl Gilman 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 Caryl Gilman and approved.

**Agenda Article 2:** Brenda Olsen presented the Treasurer's Report for 2023, and the Budget for 2024. Brenda mentioned that she had omitted the interest which we will earn from the sale of the Parsonage from the 2024 budget. Final report for 2023 shows a year end loss of \$12,406, versus budgeted loss of \$14,220. PP & E big expense this year was the organ repair. Missions is showing a year end balance of \$24,229. We no longer ask for pledges for Missions, we only ask for donations for special offerings. We have \$53,000 left in American Funds. At this point, those funds are all in bonds, there is less risk involved. Caryl asked Brenda for her concerns about year end figures and next years budget. Brenda is happy we came closer to budget than expected for 2023. Going forward, we will have lower pledges and a bigger loss, actually our highest budgeted loss ever. We will have expense of a Pastor for a full year. Over half of our expenses for 2024 is for Pastor. The interest from sale of Parsonage will offset the rental income we have had. The Parsonage is under contract, should close in early February. It is a cash sale, they are not asking for any inspections. This should allow us to continue as RVCC through year 2028. Sarah Allen made a motion, seconded by Caryl Gilman to adopt the budget as presented. The motion was approved.

**Agenda Article 3:** to elect a slate of officers and deacons for 2024:

Slate of Deacons: Caryl Gilman, Deb Feagans, Cora Sullivan, Tom Wiley and Craig Messinger.

Slate of Officers: Moderator-Tom Wiley, Treasurer-Brenda Olsen, Clerk-Judith Munson, Trustee-Rolf Olsen, Missions-Judith Munson.

Tom called attention to changes in the slate of officers. We no longer have a Financial Secretary, since Nancy and Bob Yates

moved out of the area. Caryl Gilman is no longer serving as Chair of Missions. She is also no longer serving as head deacon, there is no head deacon. There is burnout among leadership, and no new leadership stepping forward. Tom clarified that Andy Morrison still works with finances, but his is not an elected position. A motion from the floor by Bonnie Wiley, seconded by Lynn Gagne, and approved, to add Craig Messinger to the slate of Deacons. Tom reiterated that with fewer people, there will be some changes made, we can not do everything. Brenda thanked Caryl for her work in Missions. A motion was made by Lori Lambert, and seconded by Caryl Gilman to allow the council to fill any vacancies during the year. The motion was approved. A motion was made by Caryl Gilman and seconded by Bonnie Wiley to approve the slates of Officers and Deacons, including Craig Messinger as a Deacon. The motion was approved.

**Article 4:** We are a church in transition. Tom assured us that Brian Donovan is committed to this process, and is the right person to lead us through this. Brian spoke to where we are now. We continue to operate at a loss, we continue to see burnout. We have 36 members on the books, but only about 18 to 20 who consistently attend church. Last year, we did a survey and a majority of members committed to a merger. At that time, however, we were not clear on what a merger really entails. We need to revisit our options, and recommit to one.

1. "Hail Mary", a miracle could happen and could we continue as RVCC? There are nine UCC churches in a 15 mile radius, this is not a likely possibility.
2. Shared Ministry: this might be what some people would think of as a merger, but it is not. We would keep both buildings, and could share worship, but we would continue with many of the expenses we have now. This is not a long term solution.
3. Merging: a true merger means both churches sell their buildings, and build a new one. We come together equally, one church does not consume the other. A true merger is hard to achieve and can take time.
4. Farewell: We would plan to close the doors, to do it properly, also takes time. RVCC would no longer exist except in our hearts.
5. Church in a new way, predominantly online. There would be no physical boundaries to who may become involved.

A vote was taken, 13 votes for merger, 7 for new online church, 2 for shared ministry, 1 for Hail Mary, 0 for farewell/closing, and 2 undecided. Tom suggested a follow up meeting, set for March 3, after church.

There was discussion on having a Sweetheart Brunch, no decision was made.

Pastor Brian offered the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Judith Munson, Clerk



*Raymond Village Community Church*

*27 Main Street, P.O. Box 285,  
Raymond, ME 04071  
(207) 655-7749*

### *LENTEN AND EASTER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES*

- March 3-** 11:00 a.m. - Rev. Brian Donovan will lead worship and communion. Following worship will be an unofficial time of conversation and updates over a corned beef lunch.
- March 10-** Worship is “Wherever you feel called” to worship. Please share the church’s bulletin with Brian on the following Sunday with any thoughts about what you like or do not like in their worship. This important feedback will help our leadership prepare for our future. **No worship at RVCC.**
- March 17-** 11:00 a.m. - Rev. Brian Donovan will lead worship
- March 24-** 11:00 a.m. - **Palm Sunday** service led by Rev. Brian Donovan (watch for any special updates in the ACE)
- March 28-** **Maundy Thursday** – tentatively scheduled for 6:30 p.m. - Rev. Brian Donovan will lead worship at RVCC with an invitation to Casco Village Church to join and participate. No recording at this service.
- March 29-** **Good Friday** – 12:00p.m. – 3:00 p.m. - Open Sanctuary and Stations of the Cross at RVCC  
Time TBD - Rev. Dr. Amy Lignitz Harken will lead worship at Casco Village Church with an invitation to RVCC to join and participate.
- March 31-** **Easter Sunday**  
-Easter Sunrise – time TBD - Rev. Dr. Amy Lignitz Harken will lead worship at Casco Village Church with an invitation to RVCC to join and participate.  
-Easter morning – 11:00 a.m. - Rev. Brian Donovan will lead worship at RVCC with some special music.

**Please check your weekly ACE for regular updates about worship throughout Lent and Easter.**