



# **The Rocktonian**

**Newsletter of  
Rockton United Methodist Church**

**July 2023**



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Rev. Carolyn Lukasick, Pastor

**Worship With Us Sundays at 9:30 a.m.**





The new denomination of the Global Methodist Church was launched fifteen months ago. Congregations who discerned that their theology aligns with an interpretation of scripture which does not affirm same sex relationships or gender fluidity have undergone a process called disaffiliation with The United Methodist Church.

Six congregations in the Northern IL Conference were approved for disaffiliation in our annual meeting last month.

For decades, United Methodists have celebrated what we call a theologically "big tent," which means we have managed to include a wide variety of theologies. We believe that the faithful interpretation of scriptures will not always come to the same conclusions. That idea is a good one, but the reality was more like a household of children with very different personalities who were constantly squabbling.

The creation of the new traditionally focused denomination means we expect that the language prohibiting same sex marriages in our Book of Discipline will be removed at next year's General Conference, the worldwide meeting

which happens every four years and which is the only body of The United Methodist Church that has authority to formally change our policies.

We will still have a variety of opinions on a variety of topics, and I hope our congregation in Rockton will make efforts to identify and celebrate our diversity instead of expecting everyone to have the same opinions.

The recent protests in Rockton over a library event made me wonder about whether we are willing to have a vocal role in supporting marginalized voices. In this case, I think our library's youth advisory board recommended a Q&A event with a drag queen. Drag Story Hours are becoming more popular in libraries as a way of hosting storytellers using the art of drag to read books to kids. These are opportunities for children to see people who do not conform to gender restrictions.

Often those who are different are ostracized or demonized. Some cultures (Polynesia) have a long history of embracing diverse gender identities.

If you have been raised thinking that gay people or trans people or drag queens are a threat to the

safety of children, or a threat to your traditional, I want you to know that the scientific community and folks within the LGBTQ community would strongly disagree.

*Sexual orientation is about who a person is attracted to.* I do not know of anyone who is trying to convince or lead people in a direction that is unnatural for them. For many years, the majority culture believed that being gay was somehow wrong, and we expected people to try to conform to society's expectations instead of listening to their own heart. These expectations contributed heavily to the high suicide rates in the LGBT community. I find it interesting that the fear people seem to have around the gay community when they do not have access to people within the community is they are afraid the "gay agenda" will somehow corrupt or influence people. This is certainly what straight people did to gay people for many years, but the only "gay agenda" I have witnessed is a desire to live peacefully and not be discriminated against. My own sexuality has never been impacted by another person's orientation.

*Gender identity is about identity.* Some people feel their understanding of who they really are does not align with their physical bodies. This group is historically at an even higher risk for suicide, because being honest about who they are has been attacked or demonized.

*Drag queens* are usually males who use drag clothing and makeup to imitate and often exaggerate female characteristics and gender roles for entertainment.

I have never seen evidence of anyone trying to recruit children to become gay. However, children who know they are different might find the world a safer, less scary place if they are exposed to a wider variety of people in the LGBTQ community participating peacefully in our world as productive citizens.

Today, girls and boys alike are much more often encouraged to play with whatever toys interest them. I am grateful that my parents allowed me to buy a toy dump truck with my birthday money. Of all the toys in my childhood, the dump truck for me represented independence and strength, and it is one of the few I have kept.

One of my biggest concerns is the recent wave of attempts at censorship. I am a fierce supporter of our freedoms and our first amendment rights. Those rights are not only for me—they are for everyone, even those with whom I disagree.

One of the saddest parts of the recent protests is that for many in the LGBTQ community, "The Church" is the loudest, meanest antagonist. People who claim to follow Jesus are the loudest protesters, and are the people making our vulnerable sisters and brothers feel unsafe. I want every person to feel safe and to know that God loves them. As I have mentioned before, that will not happen for many people today if we do not intentionally bring God's love into our world.

Blessings,



## **What's Up with the Buildings?**

*Submitted by John Carleton, Trustee Chair*

There is a lot of building work that can best be described as “mid-project”. By that I mean, contractors are being sought or have made their inspections and we’re waiting for a quote. Also, we may have quotes and now we have to look at the big picture and decide when (and if) we can pay for whatever it is. Some projects in progress are the replacement of the windows at the parsonage; at the church the list includes sealing the lower-level walls where they have leaked, some additional down-spout work, and re-positioning some of the fire extinguisher signs just to name a few.

One project that got re-done, and we didn’t have to pay for it, were the parking lots. Thanks to Brenda noticing that last Fall’s seal-coating was flaking off already, we were able to contact Premiere and, to their credit, they were willing to re-seal and re-stripe at no cost to us. I think both lots look great again.

One major topic that was just mentioned last month is room usage. Margo and a group of volunteers have been doing a great job going through the rooms and organizing what they’ve found there. Some things have been donated, others trashed, and the rest collected in common places. This process, along with the excess heat problem we had in the Office (which really has been a problem for a long time), and the memorial project for new shelves has caused a re-thinking of how our rooms are used on the upper level. After much discussion, the Trustees will present the following to Ad Board:

- Move the Office from over the Boiler Room into what was the library as you want a room that’s upstairs and near the front.
- Leave Pastor’s Office and the office supplies un-changed.
- Establish the library/meeting room be where it is now, in the former nursery. The memorial bookcase project could fit in either the “new” office or in the “new” library/meeting room.

None of this is “cast-in-stone” at this point but we want to let everyone know what Trustees are recommending.

So, what do you think about how we use our “upper” rooms?

## **Tidbits of Our History** —Rockton Herald, Edson Carr, Editor—



### **Some local news from the fall of 1889...**

*The following items appeared in The Herald in the late summer of 1889:*

\*“There is liable to be trouble at Ridott next Monday at the opening of their school, as two principals have been engaged it is said, and a law suit is the only way out of it.”

\*“Abe Manny had the boss watermelon at his place yesterday. It was a monster, weighing 44 pounds, and if the quality was equal to the one Abe left at this office, it was a dandy. Abe has the thanks of the News force.”

\*“Lost – A tiger-eye watch charm, in shape of a druggist’s mortar, with two gold bands around it. The finder will confer a favor by leaving at the news office.”

\*“Frank Johnson and Alfred Lindquist of this place went to Joliet last Tuesday on the excursion and visited the State penitentiary, returning Wednesday morning. We had thought all along that when Frank got into the ‘pen’ he would be given a striped suit and remain there for some time, but they were easy with him and allowed him to escape.”

\*“An interesting breach of promise suit will be tried in the circuit court at Freeport next month, the plaintiff being Miss Anna Dubs and George Wents the defendant.

The Democrat paper of that city says: ‘It will be remembered that the young people were to be married a few months ago. The groom arrived here from Iowa, made no denial of his intentions, but within an hour or two of the wedding ceremony, he weakened and fled for his Iowa home. It is the prevailing opinion that he ought to pay well for his duplicity.’”

\*“Rockford is now happy for she is to have the long talked of and much needed new bridge across the river at that place, the Board of Supervisors in session at Rockford this week having voted the appropriation of \$25,000 in aid of the scheme. It is proposed that the old city bridge be removed either up or down the river and a new bridge 60 feet wide erected on State Street. The vote on the appropriation stood 19 to 4.”



# July 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Worship 9:30am	3	4 <b>Church Office Closed</b> 	5	6	7	8
9 Worship 9:30am	10	11 10 a.m. Small Group Prayer Team	12	13	14	15
16 Worship 9:30am	17	18	19 4 p.m. Trustees	20 August Newsletter Articles Due 7p.m. Ad Board	21	22
23 Worship 9:30 a.m. Food on the 4th	24	25 10 a.m. Small Group Prayer Team  7 p.m. Finance	26	27	28	29
30 Worship 9:30 a.m.	31					