



# The Rocktonian

Newsletter of  
Rockton United Methodist Church

January 2021



## Rolland Hayag, Interim Pastor

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### Contact Us

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## Worship With Us on Sunday Morning

We are continuing to live-stream our service from the church  
on Sunday mornings.

Please visit our website for more information.



### Mission Statement

Grow FAITH in Jesus Christ.  
Share LOVE with others.  
Give SERVICE to our neighbors.

### Visit Our Website

[www.rocktonumc.org](http://www.rocktonumc.org)

***Pastor Howie left us  
with our best wishes  
and Pastor Rolland  
welcomed as our  
Interim Pastor***

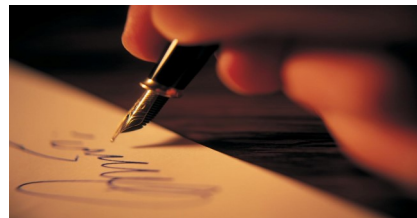
hello  
goodbye

A fond farewell to Pastor Howie and a big welcome to Interim Pastor Rolland took place Saturday afternoon, December 19, in the church parking lot.

Attendees followed CDC COVID guidelines. Due to this, the event could not be held inside but that did not stop people from thanking and saying goodbye to Pastor Howie or from welcoming Pastor Rolland, who is here to serve our church as we work to bring in a permanent pastor. ...and the weather cooperated!



# From the Pastor's Pen



January 2021

## What makes us unique as a Church?

By: Pastor Rolland B. Hayag

I'm always fascinated by the United Methodist Church love of having a feast after worship, of course, who would not love a portion of food? Anywhere around the world, you will see that food is a means for celebrating any occasion, like weddings, birthdays, and even after funeral services. When I was young, I felt happy when seeing United Methodist Women (UMW) gather at the kitchen preparing food while the pastor, liturgist, and lay leaders were preparing the sanctuary upstairs for worship Service.

I get excited because I know after worship service there will be a feast and fellowship. Then it gets better because it gives me time to play with my friends in the Church. Maybe many of you are excited to have this kind of fellowship again, and you have been missing those moments in which you can embrace your friends and have fellowship with everyone and see the smiles on their faces without the mask for the first time after many months of covering our faces!

I understand that most of us are anxious, for this pandemic to be over and some of you probably are saying "I am tired of this COVID." However, we cannot ignore that the virus is still here, and our reality is replaced with a new normal and, as a Church, we are to set an example for all the people around us to save lives. But I tell you that if there is one thing that is still normal, it is the love of God. *(Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.)*

What makes us unique as a Church? The Church is a family...a family that celebrates at the Lord's table and works together for the glory of our God. It is not only because of the food that we eat together at the table that makes us unique but also a time we set aside to do what we enjoy doing with our friends and family in the Church...a time for fellowship, a time to tell our stories, joys and happiness, a time we spend to pray, uplift each other, learn together, and do ministries in our communities and around the world.

With our relationship with Jesus and our fellowship with one another, it helps us to identify our purpose in life. And as your new pastor, and as a member of Christ's family, I am excited to have that fellowship with you. I am hoping to know you all and for you to also know me as well so that when we see each other repeatedly I will no longer be a stranger to you,

Until then, may God bless us all.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

## **THE HAYAG FAMILY**

*A short story of our journey*

My formative experience in Christian life took place in the Philippines when I joined the “Christmas Institute” in 1990. The Institute is a United Methodist Youth Assembly that is held yearly at a chosen campsite in the Philippines where youth stay for a week in order to study Scripture and to learn the fundamentals of United Methodist Church polity, along with developing skills in leadership and music.



The 1990 Youth Fellowship at that gathering was a testament of a faith that is alive and inviting and inspired me to follow Christ and accept him as my Savior. It was an unforgettable day that marked the beginning of my faith journey and in that same year, after the Christmas Institute, the young people at my home church elected me as their President. My task was to represent and be the voice of the youth for Church Administrative council meetings. I was also expected to lead the youth in bible study and lead them to participate in Outreach ministries of the Church.

It was at the church where I found my beloved half...Joy. She was 16 and still in high school. I was 17 years old when we started dating and we were both active members of the youth choir. After she graduated from high school, she attended Garret Memorial College for studies in Christian Education while I was still finishing my college degree in business management.

To make it short, we married two years after Joy graduated, and then we were blessed with our children: Kristine Julia, Frenz Joshua, and Samuel Seth. Our daughter Kristine is now serving in the United States Air Force, stationed at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas.

Our eldest son, Joshua, just obtained his Computer Science degree from Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, IL. Our youngest son Samuel, graduated from high school in 2020, and is currently pursuing studies in Mechanical Engineering at Olivet.

I came to the United States in 2001 under the GBGM “Cultural Exchange” sponsored by The United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries.

In 2009, the Northern Illinois Conference hired my wife as Children’s Day Camp Director. I was hired as the maintenance person at Camp Reynoldswood in Dixon, IL.

I am currently serving as local pastor for the Shirland United Methodist Church. Joy is the Children's and Families Director of Christ United Methodist Church in Rockford.

The story of my family’s journey is now more than 10 years in the making, I would need 200 or more pages to put all the details into writing, so I will end it here.

I thank you for reading this short story. Until then, continue to be safe and have faith in God.

My wife and Children came in 2009, Joy was hired by the Northern Illinois Conference (NIC). Thank you

***Pastor Rolland, Deaconess Joy, and kids.***



## **Come Join Us on Zoom** **for Sunday Morning Worship!**

**Sunday morning worship in our Rockton UMC  
is held at 9 a.m.**



### **Thank you from Lisa Schultz**

“I would like to say thank you to everyone that sent cards, thoughts and prayers for the death of my sister in November, Debi Wilson. It means so much to have you all as a second family.”



### **Sisters in Christ**

**From Phyllis DeGraff:** “In anticipation of being back in the church sometime this year please consider donating some of your crafts or goodies made during the pandemic to our Marketplace located off Fellowship Hall. We need to freshen it up with new stock and decorations. Thanks Sisters!”

### **Do We Have Your Latest E-mail Address?**

There are several things that have all come together to make communicating with you, the congregation, more difficult. Covid-19 has meant that we see each other less and we have to depend on email or bulletins to keep you up-to-date on the latest church events. Our church office has been closed and we have been without an administrative assistant for several months so keeping track of everything has been done by volunteers (bless them) when they can find time. During the early part of the office closure the office computer had a problem (storm or power surge) and had to have a new hard drive. As a result, the mail and email lists for contacting everyone had to be redone and we suspect that some emails may be old or missing.

**If you’ve been getting our Saturday Bulletins each week and the monthly Rocktonian by e-mail recently then you are fine and don’t need to do anything.**

But...if you used to receive those publications by email in the past and don’t receive them by email anymore, we would really appreciate it if you would let us know by just sending a simple email to [info@rocktonumc.org](mailto:info@rocktonumc.org) Also, if you are aware of anyone who might have mentioned they aren’t getting emails from us then please let us know so we can try to contact them or urge them to send us an email or call so we can update our records. If you have any questions, call the office (Margaret) at (815) 624-7591...normal hours, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## From: Greg and Margo Leden



“Thank you to everyone for your sympathy cards and the nice messages we received when Greg’s sister passed away. They all meant so much to us. Thank you to Sisters in Christ for the delivery of soup! That was so helpful, and of course, delicious. We have a wonderful church family. Thanks so much.”

## Wimpy’s Gifts

**From Margo Leden:** “Thank you to everybody who purchased and donated Christmas presents for the Wimpy’s Fund. We helped 20 children have presents under the tree. Thank you, also for all the wrapping and labeling of gifts...and for getting the packages to me on time! It was different doing all of the communication for this project online, but it worked quite well. And I enjoyed meeting all of you in my garage and chatting for a little bit! Thank you so much!”



## “Hello!” to Rockton United Methodist Church Members...



Thank you for letting me be here for you! *I do plan to stay for a while...* just want you all to know that!

I have already met some church members in person and do look forward to the day when I can meet all of the church members. Everyone has been very nice, very welcoming, helpful and pleasant. I know I am going to like it here very much (and already do!).

Also, I am very grateful to Pastor Howie, Donna Granath and others who were involved with my being brought in. As I said right at the start, “I would love this job!” I knew I would and I do. I am currently scheduled Tuesdays and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rockton is familiar to me, especially its history, as I wrote a history column for The Herald for about 15 years for Rock Valley Publishing. As I mentioned to Donna in regards to the UMC, “Your church has a fantastic history in Rockton,” and I meant that. I will be putting together some tidbits from my history columns where this church and other area topics were mentioned by Herald Editor, Edson Carr, going back to the 1800s, so you can be looking for some interesting items starting with this newsletter!

My background includes:

I basically grew up in Harvard, Illinois; retired from AT&T/Illinois Bell in Rockford after 27 years; administrative assistant at a Congregational Church in Beloit for 10 years; reporter (it has always been my “hobby Job” for the past 30 years); and I am a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals in South Beloit, where my husband and I currently live after living 25 years in Roscoe. We have two grown daughters, six grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter (and several cats).

Please know I am here for you, *you are all my boss!*

—Margaret Downing, Admin. Asst.

## What's Up With the Building? January 2021



All the professional work is done except for some cleaning, some of which will be done after things are more in place. So, it is now up to us to take things out of storage and set them up. If you feel comfortable going into the building with a couple of other folks to work, then there is plenty to be done. Remember, in all cases, to mask up and keep a safe distance and, now the snow is here, to clean your shoes when walking on the new carpeting in the Sanctuary/narthex and the newly cleaned carpeting in the Fellowship Hall. What's needed?

Ron Zoeller is working on the pews and already has some in place. **He could really use some muscle** to help him move them around so give Ron a call if you can help him out. Ron will be migrating soon so he could use the help sooner. Along that line, the organ and other furniture need to be placed so muscle is needed there as well. As mentioned above, we plan to have the Sanctuary/narthex cleaned by our regular cleaning service after the pews and furniture are in place. If Ron is unable to get it all done before he leaves, we will need someone to take his place to direct installing the pews left. We are not going to re-stall the communion railing so that will need to be stored and ideas for storage will be greatly appreciated.

Jerry Green and Jim Johnson will begin work on the sound and media equipment so that is a work soon to be in-progress.

Alan and Janet Bridgeland have already put out some of the tables and chairs in the Fellowship Hall but there may be some other furnishings that need to be found and put out down there.

Where we really need a lot of work is getting things out of storage for the Sanctuary, narthex and bell rooms. **We need someone who helped store all those things to volunteer to organize finding and putting it all back.** It doesn't mean they have to do it all or be there every time someone works, but hopefully, someone who has a good memory for where things were stored and can direct restoring things to their old home. They also can entertain new ideas should someone feel something else would look better in a different place. Gail Johnson directed the storage so if anyone remembers if Gail left any lists, it would be nice to have them.

For all of these tasks, I would greatly appreciate an email ([jcarle@charter.net](mailto:jcarle@charter.net)) or call to let me know what you have accomplished after work has been done. This way I can keep track of what's done and has yet to be accomplished. Photos, when appropriate, are also appreciated. Especially let me know if you're willing to direct getting things out of storage. Thanks to all those who have already worked hard to get us ready to worship again. We're getting close.

John Carleton  
Chair of the Building Committee

I have taken it upon myself to add a Rockton history page to the monthly newsletter. Due to the fact that I wrote a history column for the Herald for Rock Valley Publishing for 15 years, I have lots of historic little tidbits and hope you enjoy taking a trip back in time with me to the area and to old Rockton! Pictured is a Rockton home as it looked in this time period, titled "Washington Street looking north."



Thank you, Margaret Downing

## From The Rockton Herald, 1879, Editor Edson Carr

"The church ladies of Rockton have been taking the initiatory steps to petition the Legislature of the State for a recognition of their right to have a voice in deciding whether saloons shall be licensed to sell liquor in our town or not.

"Some of our citizens are severely criticizing the movement for fear the ladies are grasping for the ballot and for numerous other reasons. We are sorry to learn the fact that this opposition comes from the church as well as from the saloon. What is professedly a simple request to be allowed to vote on the license question, and no other, is raising a great howl of 'strong minded women,' 'women's rights,' and kindred sneering remarks.

"We do hope that the ladies will not be frightened by such discouraging obstacles, nor swerve one jot from their firm purpose to rescue their brothers, husbands, and sons from the degrading curses of the infernal liquor traffic. And our overzealous Christian friends should be very thoughtful lest they commit the greater sin by being stumbling blocks in the way of a more exalted state of society and increased usefulness in the world.

"We are glad to see the women of Illinois taking hold of this gigantic evil with a resolute hand and ask for a voice to decide if man shall be allowed to deal out deadly poison to degrade and ruin their loved ones. We firmly believe that at no distant day, their just and deserving prayer will be granted."

**From Editor Carr:** "There is talk of more saloons in town. Whiskey seems to be the 'big Injun.'"

**From Beloit:** "Beloit has fourteen establishments for making drunkards, and all running under the sanction of their laws."

**From Beloit:** "Mr. S.J. Goodwin of Beloit has a very pious hen that refuses to be comforted unless she is reposing on a copy of the bible which she has appropriated exclusively to her own use. Mr. Goodwin contemplates offering this hen to the American Bible Society as a rival to steam presses in the production of future editions."

**From Editor Carr:** "Two ministers of the Dunkard persuasion from Lanark will preach in the Rockton Methodist church next Wednesday evening, January 8."\*

*\*(Note: Members of this religious sect were called "Dunkers," "Dunkards," or "Brethren." The movement originated in Germany in 1708. Baptism through three face down immersions in a flowing stream was one of the sect's practices.)*

**From Editor Carr:** "To restrain our worthy city fathers from the luxury of broken legs, bruised shins, bloody noses or some other desirable physical enjoyment, some generous soul who is handy at the business, should bridge over a few of the holes in the sidewalk around the post office."



## January

Each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.  
—Worship via Zoom

- Sunday School meets every Sunday morning between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m.  
—Mark Alcorn facilitating

\*\*\*2021\*\*\*

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Kendra Wulf
- 3 Bruce Muench
- 11 Donna Chambers
- 11 Don Miller
- 17 Margo Leden
- 22 Matthew Tamar
- 23 Brenda Wulf
- 26 Jerry Schultz
- 30 Matthew Alcorn

**HAPPY JANUARY  
BIRTHDAYS!!!**

### JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 14 James and Gail Johnson
- 18 Jerry and Darlene Weaver

*Happy  
anniversary*