

**A few years ago** a co-worker ran across an article on the internet about a rock in the fork of two roads in Iowa. This rock had been the target of much vandalism and graffiti. One day a young man named Ray "Bubba" Sorensen decided to paint the entire structure with his personal message of thanks to our nations' patriots and veterans. Ray's creation became known as the "*Freedom Rock*". **The idea was born.** Our pastor, Blane Smith, was an art major in college, so I asked him if I could find a rock, would he paint it. He said, "Yes!" From the first time I mentioned it to him I never had any doubt that he too believed a rock was possible for Dudley Christian Church.

When I began telling my church friends, I discovered every person was a veteran or had a close relative who was active duty or had been a veteran. Soon the pastor brought the idea before the church and asked me to stand up and answer questions about our plan. To my astonishment, there swelled up an outpouring of volunteerism like I'd never seen. One person volunteered flag poles, another shrubbery, and yet another gravel. The list went on and on. Everybody wanted to be a part of this memorial in some way. I can hardly describe my joy! It reminded me of the story of Stone Soup! I fell in love with my church family that day and the feeling still abides.

**On Sunday morning, November 11, 2011,** our finished Rock was dedicated to America. Folks from all around our community attended the service. It was the first time since becoming a member at Dudley Christian Church that I'd seen the church too full to seat everyone. Afterwards, the Rock was unveiled by our DCC Veterans. Cheers went up as Lee Greenwood blasted out God Bless the USA. —Jane Beaman