

THE NEW BRANCH



Mountain Rise United Church of Christ
 2 Mountain Rise
 Fairport, NY 14450
 Phone: (585) 223-2433
 Website: mtriseucc.org
 email office@mtriseucc.org



In this Issue:

- Council Updates
- Hearing Loop Info
- On-line Directory
- Prayer List

Calendar

- Knitting, Tuesdays at 10:00AM
- ROMEOS, Fridays, 12:00PM
- First Monday Dinner & Discussion, March 3, 6:00 PM
- Game Night, March 8, 6:30-8:30PM
- Council Meeting, March 10, 3:00PM
- Open & Affirming Group, March 11, 7:00PM
- Service & Advocacy Meeting, March 16, 11:30AM
- Book Group, March 17, 7:30PM
- *****
- Spiritual Growth Group I, March 24, 7:15PM
- Spiritual Growth Group II, March 11, 7:15PM
- Spiritual Growth Group IV, March 5, 2:00 PM

The church office is staffed on Tuesdays 10:00am-3:00pm and Thursdays 12:30-3:00pm. If you need to contact staff or access to the building at an alternative time, please email or call: office@mtriseucc.org or 585-223-2433. Please don't hesitate to leave a telephone message.

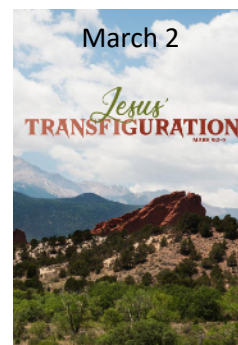
Mountain Rise Website Launch Party

March 2 at 11:30

In the Sanctuary

Join us after worship to see the roll-out of the new website and its features. Bring your cell phone or tablet if you would like to follow along with us.

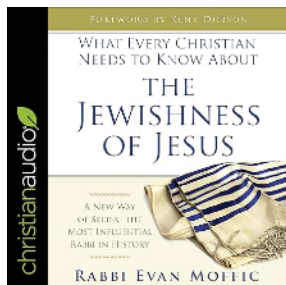
Light snacks will be provided.



Thank you for your prayers, the numerous cards, and messages you shared with me after my recent surgery. I'm feeling well and my recovery is progressing ahead of schedule, but I've been advised to exercise caution and avoid overexertion. I'm deeply grateful for the leadership provided by the Rev. Judith Medeiros, the Rev. Dr. Jack Heister, the Rev. Sam Kinsman, the Spiritual Life and Worship committee, and the dedicated church staff at Mountain Rise. I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to lead worship on Sunday, March 2. Once again, I express my sincere gratitude for your thoughtful gestures and care.

Blessings and Peace,
 Kelly Sprinkle

“What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Jewishness of Jesus”



A Lenten Study Program

Mondays, March 10-April 14, 1-3pm

at Mountain Rise

Open to anyone wishing to study the Jewishness of Jesus.

First Class: Monday, March 10, Chapters 1 & 2 of book by same name authored by Rabbi Evan Moffic. Books available on Amazon new and used.

To Register: Email judithchristinem@gmail.com or sign up outside the church office.

First Monday meets on **March 3.**

Gather at 6:00, dinner at 6:30, speaker at 7:15

Clark Hochgraf - Positive Aspects and Constraints on AI.

Please sign up on the bulletin board if you plan to attend.

Questions: Rod Walters 315-986-3087.

JULIET's will meet Friday, **March 7 at 12:00pm**

Adelita's Mexican Restaurant, Pittsford Plaza. Questions:

Please contact Jane Stock 585-704-2630 or send an email to janestock1995@gmail.com.

SATURDAY FUN NIGHT!

Regardless of age, come join us for...

GAME NIGHT

Saturday, **March 8**

Second Saturdays of the Month

6:30-8:30 pm, Lower Fellowship Hall

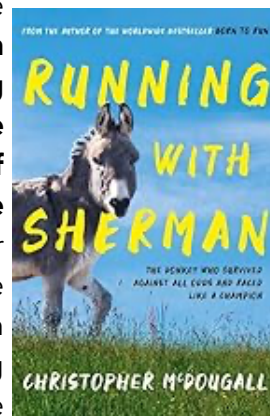
Please bring a snack or drink to share as well as games to play.

No Sign-up is necessary.

Questions? Contact Rob Stevens at 314-1938 or robertstevens11@gmail.com



The Mountain Rise Book Group will be meeting virtually via Zoom on **March 17 at 7:30 pm** to discuss **Running with Sherman: How a Rescue Donkey inspired a Rag-tag Gang of Runners to Enter the Craziest Race in America** by Christopher McDougall. Need we say more? We don't want to spoil the fun. Please join us for what promises to be an evening filled with laughs while at the same time showing the healing power of movement and the strength of the human-animal bond.



For a Zoom link RSVP to Rick Watkins (585)203-1629 or rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com.

Soulful Soup Wednesdays

The next Soulful Soup will be on Wednesday,

March 22 at 5:30pm.

Fellowship Hall, lower level

Questions: contact Elisabeth Hammer or Dave Ackroyd.
COME WARM YOUR HEART and SOUL!



everything [in] between

During Lent, we'll be guided by the Gospel of Luke. We'll revisit familiar stories like the Good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, and the woman anointing of Jesus' feet. These stories are well-known in both religious and secular circles and hold importance in pop culture, church history, politics, and more.

Our Lenten theme, "Everything In Between," encourages us to approach life's polarities with more faith, intention, and openness to transformation. During Lent, we'll try to go beyond easy answers and notice the dichotomies that define our lives. We'll imagine where God might be meeting us. This Lent, we'll discover that God shows up in shades of gray, rainbow hues, and everywhere in between.

Ash Wednesday, March 5

A Mountain Rise Ash Wednesday worship service will be posted on Facebook on the morning of March 5. This virtual Ash Wednesday worship service is designed as a time for meditation which includes poetry, scripture, art, and prayer. You are invited to set aside thirty minutes that is most convenient for you on Ash Wednesday to begin your Lenten journey toward Easter by tuning into Mountain Rise's Facebook page.

First Sunday in Lent, March 9

Stranger & Neighbor – Parable of the Good Samaritan

Second Sunday in Lent, March 16

Faith & Works – Mary and Martha host Jesus

Third Sunday in Lent, March 23

Rest & Growth – Parable of the Fig Tree

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 30

Lost & Found – Parable of the Lost Sheep

Fifth Sunday in Lent, April 6

Righteous & Mercy – A woman anoints Jesus' feet

Palm and Passion Sunday, April 13

Shouting, Remembering & Silence – Jesus enters Jerusalem

Maundy Thursday, April 17 at 7:00 pm

Shadows & Silence – Communion & Tenebrae

Good Friday, April 18, 12 noon until 7 pm

Dead & Living – Self-Guided Worship focusing upon contemporary renditions of the Stations of the Cross by the artist Lauren Wright Pittman.

Easter Sunday, April 20

Grief & Hope – The women grieve and Peter runs to the tomb



Daily Devotional Cards for Lent

Beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through the first few days of Easter, you are invited to enhance your spiritual journey by using the *Everything In Between* daily devotional cards for Lent. Each day, may these devotional cards and prayers serve as reminders that God is always present with you, accompanying you through your doubts, faith, and every aspect of your being.

Starting on Sunday, March 2, the *Everything In Between* devotional cards will be available on the Caring Connections and Welcome tables.

Property Committee at Work!

The following are a few more of the projects and tasks managed by the Property Committee during the past month with assistance from volunteers.

- Replace batteries in several emergency lights
- Assisted town inspector with annual fire safety inspection
- Replace battery in a thermostat
- Replace thermostat in Perinton Nursery School
- Had elevator switch repaired
- Purchase floor wax
- Purchase rock salt
- Review all heating equipment with new contractor
- Install shelf in gathering area
- Review and sign contract for security enhancements

Easter Flowers:



All who are interested in contributing donations to the Easter Flower Fund, please place this sheet and your donation (cash or checks payable to Mountain Rise) in the offering basket or mail to the church office.

Dedications may be made in memory of, in honor of, in celebration of loved ones or friends, or any dedication that you feel is appropriate.

This dedication is given by:
(Please Print Clearly)

In memory of/in honor of/in celebration of/other:
(circle one)

(Please Print Clearly)

Amount of Donation \$ _____

Deadline: Monday, April 14

A list of dedications will be available on Easter Sunday. Those contributing may take home a plant following the April 20, 10:00 AM Worship.



March 7

Thank you

*Dear Mountain Rise People,
We are sincerely grateful for your generosity in giving to the Christmas Purse. We are blessed to serve and be part of this wonderful community of faith!*

*With Warm Blessings for 2024,
Kelly Sprinkle, Elisabeth Hammer, Barbara Jackson,
James McDonald*

Mountain Rise New Branch

Church Council

A test of Optimism!!!! As I was chipping away the ice on my walkway and decks this morning in the rain, my thoughts centered around the subject of our spiritual meeting last night, "simple kind gestures from families, friends, and complete strangers that we have observed or experienced recently ". As a test for optimism for the future, everyone shared their recent positive kind experiences that brought smiles, a sense of gratitude, and a willingness to look forward to the future. It is easy to have depressing thoughts about the political rancor, the mental and physical challenges all around us and the weather. However ,it is extremely hard today to concentrate on these kind gestures as a symbol of the basic values that our population has grown up with. Helping a handicapped person load up her groceries in the Wegman's parking lot, plowing out a neighbor's driveway in a snowstorm, or observing a stranger balancing another stranger navigating ice on a sidewalk are perfect examples of my optimism for the future. Is it their growing-up influence from family, their DNA , or their belief in God's teachings that causes their spontaneous gestures? Who knows? Fortunately, Sue and I share the belief that we will survive life's challenges and we have the optimistic vision for the future.

Your Council Chair,
John Amrine

Council Monthly Meetings

You are welcome to attend Council meetings. The next meeting is **Monday, March 10, 3:00 pm.**

Your Council Members:

- John Amrine, Chair
- Jane Pierce, Vice-Chair
- Kathy Nixon, Council Secretary
- Jennifer Leger, At-Large
- Nancy Stark, At-Large
- Rick Watkins, At-Large
- Nicky McClain, Communications Committee Chair

The Council Procedure for Allocation of Annual Distribution from the Endowment Fund has been updated. The link attached to the newsletter email will provide you with the updated form. Anyone interested in applying for funding from the Endowment Fund Grant Process should contact the appropriate committee chair to submit a grant request. 4

Service and Advocacy

For Justice and Peace



Salem Nutrition Center Celebrates 40 Years!

Mountain Rise United Church of Christ has been supportive of this inner city ministry program since its inception, providing seed money to establish a soup kitchen in 1984. Mountain Rise volunteers and money have continued to contribute and currently also include lightly-used clothing, toiletries, and donations for Christmas gift bags. A team from Mountain Rise helps sort, mark, and distribute clothing each month for the Salem Nutrition Center guests.

For current information about the Salem Nutrition Center, please read the director's 2024 Annual Report:

SALEM NUTRITION CENTER ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Introduction

In September, the Salem Nutrition Center celebrated 40 years of providing nutritious lunches to the hungry of downtown Rochester. When our Founder Roger Abrey first provided sandwiches in 1984, little could he have envisioned the intensity of need that would develop over the next 40 years and how well we have responded to it.

Highlights of past year

1. Our guests

We prepared approximately **13,150 nutritious meals compared to last year's 12,700**, an increase of 450 meals. On some days, we serve as many as 200 lunches, while other days see 140. On average, we prepare about 275 meals per week, reflecting a significant increase in the number of individuals experiencing hunger and desperation in downtown Rochester.

2. Our Volunteers

We now have **30 active volunteers** serving on Monday and Tuesday. While some long-standing volunteers, like Fred Howe, our treasurer, and Ron Wagenhals, our guest greeter, have retired, we've welcomed some new faces. Christine Taillie is our new treasurer, Lucius Muldrow and Donte Santiago have joined us as guest greeters, and Phoebe Daniels has quickly embraced our mission in food service. Sharon Howey was awarded Volunteer of the Year at our Foodlink Conference. The loyalty and dedication of our volunteers remain a cornerstone of our operation.

3. Bible Study Class

Our weekly Bible Study Class led by Johnny Allen continues every Monday from **9:30 a.m. to 10:30 AM**. This time of reflection and spiritual growth has been a source of strength and encouragement for many.

4. Clothing Giveaway

The **Clothing Giveaway** ministry, led by Mountain Rise UCC with support from Salem UCC, remains a vital part of our outreach. In addition, they conduct a **monthly toiletry giveaway**, providing essential items to those in need.

5. Food Distribution

We continue to provide a **grab-and-go lunch** that includes a drink, fruit, pastries, snacks, and either two sandwiches or one sandwich with a hot dish like beefy chili, hammy mac and cheese or pizza. We also distribute bakery items and fresh food donated by **Tops Grocery Store** and **Panera**.

6. Christmas Gift Bag Distribution

During the holiday season, we distributed **162 Christmas bags** to our guests. An increase from last year's 140. These bags filled with food, hygiene products, and clothing, were made possible through donations from our volunteers, churches, and friends.

Conclusion

We owe our success this year to the incredible generosity of businesses like Tops Grocery Store, Wegman's, Freihofer's Bakery and Panera Bread, which provide pastries, bagels, bread and desserts. Special thanks go to Foodlink for the grant we received, and to our generous donors and volunteers, who consistently donate their time, energy, and resources to ensure no one goes without. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to serving every individual who walks through our door. With faith, community support, and hard work, we trust that all our needs will be met to continue this important mission.

Submitted by Joanne Piccirilli, Director



Open & Affirming Group Meeting
Tuesday, March 11
at 7:00 pm
at Mountain Rise
YOU are Welcome!



Habitat for Humanity Gala

Mountain Rise UCC and other local churches have been in partnership with Greater Rochester Habitat for Humanity for many years. We have volunteered our time and talent. Here is another opportunity to help!

On **April 4, 2025** Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring a gala event, called **Framing the Future**. Last year over \$200,000 was raised and is being used to provide affordable housing for low income people in Monroe and neighboring counties.

If you would like to join others from MRUCC at this event, please contact Len Leger at 360 216-3363 or lenleger45@gmail.com for further information.

Quick Facts:

Gala Location: Arbor Midtown, 183 East Main Street, Rochester

Cost: \$250.00 per person (\$175 tax deductible)

Complimentary Valet available

Dress: Cocktail attire, open bar at 6PM; dinner at 7:15PM



Although we alone cannot make a real difference to the many needs in our world, through the collective giving of One Great Hour of Sharing, **we at Mountain Rise United Church of Christ can be a Light!**

Our gifts help the UCC join forces with other denominations and organizations to work with established partners directly delivering clean water, food, education and health care. Partner organizations also offer small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency disaster relief and rehabilitation.

When we give to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), our congregation is the light that carries God’s message of love and hope to people in crisis.

Perinton Food Shelf Needs



An Emergency Food Relief Organization

Perinton Shelf Food Needs:

Listed below is what we really need. Please remember we do not accept expired food and jumbo size isn't always the best as they won't fit into our boxes or make them too heavy.

We need: juice boxes, bottled juice 64 oz., cookies, granola bars, pancake mix, pancake syrup, peanut butter, jelly, canned diced tomatoes, mustard, canned pears, canned mixed vegetables, canned beans, baked beans, beef stew, chili, hash, sloppy joes, chicken noodle soup, tomato soup, coffee, tea, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes (single packs).

Also needed: sturdy plastic reusable grocery bags like Wegmans, clean and in good shape, they would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your support.

Service and Advocacy Meeting Scheduled

Next meeting is on March 16, 11:30 am

Ministry Committee Chairs:

Faith Formation - Steven Grace

Fellowship - Dave Ackroyd

Caring Connections - Sherry Shaffer and Cheryl Pipkin (co-chairs)

Spiritual Life and Worship - Ted Nixon

Service and Advocacy - Gail McClain

Pastoral Search Committee:

Matt Deknatel, chair

Kathy Simpson, vice chair

Kirsten Erman, secretary

Ted Nixon, chaplain

Linda Boesl

Faye Eaton

Gary Schaefer

Children's Ministry

Happy Winter! Snow, snow and more snow (and wind) have greeted us many days in the last few weeks. We can be grateful for the warm homes, cozy fireplaces, comforting food and fellowship with friends and family to carry us through. The season of Lent is upon us, and time to reflect, restore, and resonate with God and our wider community, something we will explore in Sunday School.

Last month's cookie making and decorating will lead to sharing the goodies with the wider congregation, showing gratitude for each other, spending time together each week, and for the members and friends of the church.

The sun has been showing its face more often, reminding us to brighten someone else's day when we can.

LOCK IN DAY was postponed to a later date, and will be planned for later this month or early April. The fish and plants continue to flourish, as do the kids who gather each week. Hope, Gratitude, Sadness and Feeling Lost (the parables - The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son) will be part of our activities and sharing together. Feeling lost and alone is an experience that people feel more often than you think. Sharing experiences and talking about it, not only acknowledges the reality of what we may feel, but brings one a sense of community and sense of belonging. Each of our young people at Mountain Rise need a connection, a place to be and I think many of them have found it on Sunday mornings. They care for each other and readily show it by their actions and contributions.

In my affirmation and appreciation for them, I penned these words. A tribute and a thank you appropriate in this season of giving and receiving.



Ichthys (Greek for fish, a symbol of Christianity) Kids We gather round the candlelight almost every Sunday morning. We ponder the week before and share stories, so much interesting outpouring. We share a lesson together, while having fun and spending time: Exploring Faith, Hope and Love, and everything Divine. Thomas brings his pack of goodies and helpful things, Sampson sometimes has a Rubik's cube; with his skill he is quite the king. Stella and Smith have chickens and haven't been to church. But they offer love and care to each and maybe they even have a perch. Both young women really enjoy nature and camp in all different types of weather too. They play musical instruments and are very good. Beautiful notes heard by me and you. Brandon can't always be here but he is glad when he can come. He offers helpful comments and always makes things fun! James is quite the leader, always offering some aid. His musical talents never cease; the drums he often plays. Mary has energy that is delightful and her hair is very long. She shares her view on many things and shows that she is strong. Audrey is a bit soft-spoken but often has a point to make! Patience, time and a listening ear is all it really takes. Anthony, her brother, supports her without a doubt but he also shares his own thoughts too and sometimes even shouts. There may be others that join us, but this is the Ichthys Group. Together they are like a very special bowl of soup. They come each week during the year to share and learn something too. They even wait for each other to speak, sometimes that's really hard to do. Each gathering is a very special time. The gift they give me and to each other is truly one of a kind.

Elisabeth Hammer, Her/she/hers
Children's Ministry Coordinator

We pray especially for these members, friends, and loved ones of Mountain Rise:

Please advise the church office of any changes.

Jerry Kersting and family, on Sally's passing
 Marcia Mock and family, on John's passing
 Derek Ristau and family, on wife Lisa's passing
 Jane Stock and family on Harold's passing
 Janel Egli, health concerns
 HOPE and people of Borgne, Haiti
 Dorie Starks, health concerns
 Scott Parsons, health concerns
 Jonathan, support and comfort
 Fred Thorne, health concerns
 Deb Sponable, health concerns
 Pam Miller, health concerns
 Kersting's daughter, health concerns
 Matt O.



Available

Pronoun stickers are available and are a great way to raise awareness about gender inclusiveness. Wear these in support of inclusivity: a simple act toward a just world.



Mountain Rise has two updated assisted listening opportunities. One is a loop system to connect with individual hearing aids; the second is new headsets (located on the bench outside the sanctuary).

Anyone interested in learning how to connect hearing aids to the loop can contact Sherry Shaffer at sherks@rochester.rr.com.

VIEW OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE!
 FREE App for iPhone, iPad & Android

Our church directory is a great resource tool that allows you to get to know our church family better!

Simply go to the App Store, search for *Instant Church Directory* and download the FREE app to begin.

You will use your email address listed in the directory to CREATE A LOGIN the first time you use the directory app.

If you're not listed in the directory, OR if you have trouble logging into the app, please contact the church office.

Available on the App Store | Get it on Google play

Caring for Each Other

Are you facing a health challenge or other need for a caring connection? Do you know someone else at Mountain Rise in need? Our pastoral care team (Pastor Kelly Sprinkle, Sherry Shaffer, and Cheryl Pipkin) may not be aware of the situation or that contact would be welcomed. Please let us know how we can help by calling 585-223-2433 or sending an email to office@mtriseucc.org.

MOUNTAIN RISE

The UCC was founded in 1957 as the union of several different Christian traditions: from the beginning of our history, we were a church that affirmed the ideal that Christians did not always have to agree in order to live together in communion. The United Church of Christ is one of the most diverse Christian churches in the United States. To read stories about our history and future visit ucc.org.

- The United Church of Christ Seeks to...
- Be Inclusive, not Exclusive
 - Celebrate diverse membership & Christian belief
 - Be united and uniting, yet...
 - Affirm each congregation's autonomy
 - Be Committed to Justice & Peace

God is still speaking... life evolves. we evolve. faith must evolve...are we still listening?