

# THE NEW BRANCH



Mountain Rise United Church of Christ  
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## October

### In this Issue:

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

### Calendar

Knitting, Tuesdays at 10:00AM  
ROMEOS, Fridays, 12:00PM  
JULIETs, Last Friday of the month usually 12:00PM

- Men's Group, October 2, 6:00PM
- Game Night, October 14, 6:30-8:30PM
- Council Meeting, October 9, 4:00PM
- Service & Advocacy Meeting, October 11, 3:00PM
- Book Group October 16, 7:30PM
- Spiritual Growth Group I, October 23, 7:15PM
- Spiritual Growth Group II, October 10, 7:15PM

Note New Time

### SATURDAY FUN NIGHT!

Regardless of age, come join us for...



### GAME NIGHT

Saturday, **October 14**  
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](mailto:robertstevens11@gmail.com)

Thanks everyone for the generous support of paper rolls donations, we have an abundance and no longer need donations.



There is new art in the Library. Artists are Bill Holliday, Smith Schaefer, Mike Tiss, Doug Bloom, Lynn Hazelton, Linda Marzano, Rick Watkins, Bev Logan, and Jack Heister.



The Men's Group meeting is on Monday, October 2. Gather at 6:00 PM, dinner at 6:30 and the program around 7:15.

The program for the evening will be FBI 101. An agent from the local Federal Bureau of Investigation will educate us on the operations of the FBI.



In this and future newsletters we will be placing in the spotlight various groups and activities

that bring fellowship, joy and creativity to Mountain Rise. If you would like your group or committee to be highlighted in the Spotlight, please contact Rick Watkins.

**Come Join "The Knitters!"**

The Knitting Mission Project began during our interim with the Rev. Lynn Carmen Bodden to provide a "hands-on" mission opportunity for our church family. Nancy Lebda\* and Judie Till recruited folks and Nancy provided the knitting leadership for the group as an "expert knitter". We welcome expert knitters, beginners, and those who wish to learn to knit. Our project is hats and mittens for both children and adults.

You can join the group on Tuesdays from 10 am - 12 noon, knit from home at your leisure, or do a little of both. The group members represent a variety of religious traditions, and at the present time we donate hats and mittens to our Angel Christmas Project, Jewish Outreach Center, and Saints Place at St. Louis Church but are open to missions with a need.

We have lots of yarn, needles, and simple patterns available and folks to guide if needed. If you need more information, please contact Sue Amrine, Shirley DeMartinis, or any member of the group. You are welcome to join at any time.

Submitted by Shirley DeMartinis

\*Sadly, Nancy recently passed away, but the Knitters group which she helped found continues in its mission to make needed hats and mittens.



October 9 - Office Closed

**Dinner Groups Being Formed**

Would you like to get to know a few more Mountain Rise folks better in a relaxed setting over the next year? Then sign up for a dinner group. Groups of up to 8 adults are assigned and asked to meet over dinner, either at their home or in a restaurant, at least four times during the year. If at home, the host(s) provides the entree and participants bring the other parts of the meal. The location will be on a rotating basis.

Family dinner groups work the same way. Three or four families will make up each group. Adults without children can participate in these groups as well. They are not mutually exclusive.

The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board for 3 weeks, ending October 15. The new groups will be provided through email. You can then contact your new dinner companions at that time to plan your first gathering.

New members, long-time Mountain Risers, singles, couples and families are welcome. Join the fun!!! Questions? Call Sharon Heister at (585) 451-1404.



October 1

**Planning a meeting/event?** Please contact Barbara in the Mountain Rise office to schedule your meeting/event and avoid calendar conflicts!

### **Painful news about Haiti's HOPE hospital, a recipient of support from MRUCC**

You may remember an impactful presentation in June by Dr. Thony, the director of Hope hospital in Haiti. MRUCC provided funds for solar panels to power the facility's operations. A few weeks ago, a group of about 50 masked men surrounded the hospital and then half entered and roughed up the staff, ransacked offices and Dr. Thony's residence. Fortunately, Thony was tipped off before the raid and fled to Denver, where his brothers live. Four or five staff members were injured. The group threatened to return and threatened staff with their lives. HOPE has suspended operations to keep the staff safe and the hospital has remained closed since the raid.

HOPE is working to get a number of staff to safe havens either in Rochester or Florida or wherever they have family. HOPE has been in communication with the Ministry of Health who shares the sadness and dismay at what has been done but seems to be unable to undo it. HOPE is trying to figure out next steps if there are any. It is devastating for HOPE and the staff who have dedicated their lives for the past couple of decades to improving the lives of those in Borgne, Haiti. But most troubling, it is not clear how the people of Borgne will get healthcare and live in peace with the increased political violence.

Please keep HOPE and the Borgne community in your prayers.



October 8

## **Book Group**

### **Join the Book Group for a Wild Ride in October**

The Mountain Rise Book Group will meet on Zoom at 7:30 October 16 to discuss **West with Giraffes** A Novel by Lynda Rutledge. It's 1938, and the world will soon be at war. Woodrow Wilson Nickel, now 105, remembers decades ago when he was an amazing Dust Bowl rowdy with a truly unbelievable job to do: drive two giraffes in a custom truck to Southern California from the east coast where they will be the first giraffes in the San Diego Zoo. These were not your average giraffes: they had already survived a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. The story is based on a true event but includes both real life and fictional characters, and generates lots of laughs for the reader.

To laugh along with us, RSVP to Rick Watkins at [rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com) or call him at (585)203-1629. We look forward to an evening filled with fun and the tale of a great adventure.

### **Your Council Members:**

Faye Eaton, Chair  
*Position Vacant*, Vice-Chair  
 Gail McClain, Council Secretary  
 Jennifer Leger, At-Large  
 Len Leger, At-Large  
 Nancy Stark, At-Large  
 Kathy Nixon, Communications Committee Chair

### **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 - Jack Heister

# Church Council

It was as I was leaving the upper church parking lot after a Monday night Spiritual Growth Group that I had a strange urge to park my car in the lower level parking lot and check the lower level doors. Our group hadn't met or parked on the lower level that evening and we were the sole occupants of the building that night yet something nagged at me. Well, that nagging sense was correct. The lower level doors were open and may have stayed that way until morning at minimum. My first encounter with a security need...

Fast forward to this summer: an after-worship visit from an individual who objected to our inclusive message of love and welcome to all, a broken window framing a sign portraying the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (cause unknown but disconcerting for many), a cyber hack message sent to congregants "from" Pastor Kelly asking for money/gift cards, and an emailed bomb threat targeting our Etz Chaim friends and our shared house of worship. Not to forget, the early spring incident of our rainbow Mountain Rise banner set on route 31 being dislodged and relocated a distance away from the church. More security encounters...

We are not alone in concern for safety. According to the UCC.org, these past few years, UCC local churches have been targeted by extremist groups and other groups and individuals that attack the churches' theological positions on anti-racism, the inclusion and affirmation of LBGQTQIA+ people, and the churches' other justice ministries. "Preparing our church to protect itself from violence and harassment is good ministry," the UCC says on its website, "Time and attention spent on safeguarding the church's resources now may avoid damage to critical infrastructure, including people and property, that will disrupt the church's essential ministries."

As I continue to think about safeguarding our Mountain Rise family members I wonder about our "people preparedness". When was the last time you participated in a fire drill at Mountain Rise? As a 20+ year member, I can't recall one time. I look at our youngest worshippers and I know for a fact that if they attend public schools, they participate in not only fire drills but numerous other safety drills every year. As a public school teacher, my students and I participated in no less than 8 fire drills, 2 emergency exit bus drills, 2 "hold in place" drills, 2 "lockdown" drills, 1 evacuation drill (leave the school grounds), and 4 active shooter drills EACH year. Public schools have to examine and review their safety plans yearly. When was the last

time our church did the same? Better yet, what are our safety protocols here at Mountain Rise? Is there consistency among all of us using our building as to safety expectations and procedures?

At our September Council meeting we discussed Mountain Rise's safety and security vulnerabilities. As a result, Council approved the creation of an ad Hoc Safety and Security Team to conduct research and make long and short term recommendations for action. A team was formed and on Monday, September 25th, Averil Riley, Rod Walters, Pastor Kelly and I met for our first meeting (Doug Bloom was out of town but will be joining the team upon return). Plans are set in motion to work with Walt Hazelton, Property Chair, local law and fire resources, UCC resource people, as well as Federal Homeland Security resources. The team will also be reaching out to Perinton Nursery School and Etz Chaim to assist in completing a full safety and security review. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the Safety and Security Team members with your thoughts and concerns.

Here at Mountain Rise we fully embody the UCC's adage that "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here". Your Council is committed to the safety of our congregants, staff and pastor while making sure Mountain Rise acts on our religious belief about welcoming all, and creating a just world for all.

Blessings and Peace,

Faye Eaton  
Council Chair

## Council Monthly Meetings

You are welcome to attend Council meetings. At present they are scheduled to be held on the second **Monday** of each month at **4:00 pm** at church; next scheduled meeting is **October 9**.

## October Guest Preachers



Sunday, October 8

**The Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams** serves as the Transitional Conference Minister of New York Conference of the United Church of Christ. In her 30 years of pastoral ministry, she has served churches in

Indiana, Washington state and the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. She is a certified mediator for New York and member of the Board of Directors of the United Church of Christ nationally. In 2015, Dr. Williams joined the New York Conference of the UCC as the Associate Conference Minister for Authorized Ministry Concerns and in 2022 she was called to serve as the Transitional Conference Minister.

Sunday, October 22  
**The Rev. Judith Medeiros**



The Rev. Judith Medeiros most recently served as Protestant Pastor at Brooksby Village Retirement Community in Peabody, Massachusetts. After retiring earlier this year, Judith moved to Fairport to be closer to family. Judith began worshipping with Mountain Rise and is one of our newest choir members.

A graduate of Andover-Newton Theological School, she has served churches in MA and CT. She is delighted to be among us and to offer her gifts in our shared call to love the world.



The Rev. Dr. Kelly Sprinkle will be away October 18-22 attending continuing education.

## Children & Youth

What a wonderful start to the Church School season! The open house was a success! For those who could not attend, the classroom is always a welcoming place for anyone to visit at your leisure. We also had a wonderful Teacher Orientation on September 24th! A group of 15 people gathered for a little over an hour. We enjoyed a simple lunch, an icebreaker activity, talked about safety (one being the need for 2 adults in the classroom- so if a teacher is in a pinch you might be approached on a Sunday morning to just be in the classroom)... and some basic teaching guidelines. It was also a chance to explore possible curriculum options (Seasons of the Spirit being the main one at this time). I also included the opportunity for us to speak about other resources, and ideas that could be brought to the classroom experience. It was a very productive and fun time together. Thank you to each of you who came, and I can't wait to see each of you bring your gifts each Sunday you are involved. Those who could not be present, reach out to me, and you can be included in the team!

FYI: The contributions that are shared each week during the children's moment are now supporting The Heifer International Project. The children picked out the farm animals (chickens, pigs, water buffalo, bees), as a part of helping deal with the issues involving hunger, poverty and the needed sustainable living in more than 125 countries around the world. Funds will be collected over time, and given to Heifer International as one larger contribution.

Next Month, October 29th will be Safety Sunday. Children will have a special program in the classroom, and parents are welcome to attend if you wish. This is an opportunity to help our children and youth stay safe in a world that can at times make that a challenge. Children and youth will be empowered with some skills and tools they will have for a lifetime.

Joy can be found just around the corner. Find that corner for yourself... take a look, and you just might find yourself smiling.

Elisabeth Hammer  
Child and Youth Ministry Coordinator  
ehammer@mtriseucc.org  
585-244-9690 (cell)

# Service and Advocacy

## For Justice and Peace



The Witness Palestine Film Festival  
Presents Keynote Speaker

Ahmad Abuznaid  
Executive Director, U.S. Campaign for  
Palestinian Rights

Friday, October 13, 2023 6:00-8:00pm  
Islamic Center of Rochester  
727 Westfall Road  
Dinner will be provided  
Suggested donation: \$25

REGISTER AT [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) Search: *Witness Palestine*

Or visit [www.wpff.us/keynote](http://www.wpff.us/keynote) for more information

Ahmad Abuznaid is a Palestinian-American lawyer and organizer. Prior to joining USCPR, Ahmad co-founded the Florida-based Dream Defenders after the killing of Trayvon Martin, serving as Legal & Policy Director and COO during his time there. Ahmad went on to lead the National Network for Arab American Communities as the Executive Director from 2017 to 2019.

This is the 75<sup>th</sup> year of the Nakba and its implications for the lived experiences of Palestinians around the world. Don't miss out on this opportunity to hear from a remarkable individual who is making a difference.

Please join our team for an evening of mid-Eastern food, fellowship, and education at the Islamic Center of Rochester. Ahmad Abuznaid, attorney and activist, will update our knowledge about the status of Palestinian life in Israel. For additional information, contact Jack Heister (732-3393) or Linda Boesl (385-6436). Hope to see you there!

### Service and Advocacy Meeting Scheduled

Next meeting is October 11, 11:30am after worship.



Bill Holliday (center) helping at wall raising for the newest Habitat for Humanity home in Rochester.

After worship on Sunday, **October 8** the Service and Advocacy team will host a mission fair at the coffee hour. There will be tables providing information about our many missions. Please stay and visit and learn about the missions of our church. If possible, sign up to join in our endeavors.

### Perinton Food Shelf Needs

#### An Emergency Food Relief Organization

Needed: tea, bottled juice, juice boxes, oatmeal, frosting, baking mixes (not cake or brownies), stuffing, gravy, pasta sides, spaghetti sauce, mustard, dried potatoes, canned beef stew, chili, hash and sloppy joes, tomato soup, large soups.

Thank you so much for your support. You can always check the website to find the current Food Shelf needs. It is [www.perintonfoodshelf.org](http://www.perintonfoodshelf.org).



On Friday September 15, Elizabeth Hammer and Bill Bross took part in the Rochester Climate March. The march began with a rally at 3:00pm at City Hall. The march was in solidarity with global mobilizations organized by [Fridays for Future](#) and demanding an [end to the era of fossil fuels](#). The goal of the march was to build local engagement on this global issue and mobilize residents to engage in climate action that organizations are already taking. The march concluded at Washington Square Park for a second rally where climate-concerned organizations provided information about their work and how people can get involved.

This event was a collaboration between the Sunrise Movement, Rochester Youth Climate Leaders, the Climate Solutions Accelerator, and other climate-concerned organizations and individuals. Pictures including young children marching and carrying signs will be part of a display the Green CATs will have for the Mission Fair on October 8.



**SAVE THE DATES**

Enjoy an evening out. Go to their website, [IMAGEOUT.ORG](http://IMAGEOUT.ORG), for full listing. Mountain Rise is a sponsor of the Fall Film Festival.



**BE THE CHURCH**  
*Protect the environment. Care for the poor.*  
**Forgive often. Reject Racism.**  
**Fight for the powerless.**  
*Share earthly and spiritual resources.*  
*Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.*



**Marvin Mich Memorial Lecture**

**Rev. Jim Antal**  
**“Living in a Climate Crisis World:  
 A Call to Hope and Action”**

Thursday, October 19, 2023  
 St. John Fisher University  
 Hermance Family Chapel  
 3690 East Ave, Rochester NY 14618  
 7:00 pm



Rev. Dr. Jim Antal is a denominational leader, climate activist, author, public theologian, and the author of “Climate Church, Climate World”. Jim has preached on climate change since 1988 in over 300 settings and has engaged in non-violent civil disobedience on numerous occasions. He currently serves as Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ.



To REGISTER for in person attendance, OR to watch via Zoom, Click this link: <https://forms.gle/r9Luxxt5jmojPcRB8> or use the QR Code:

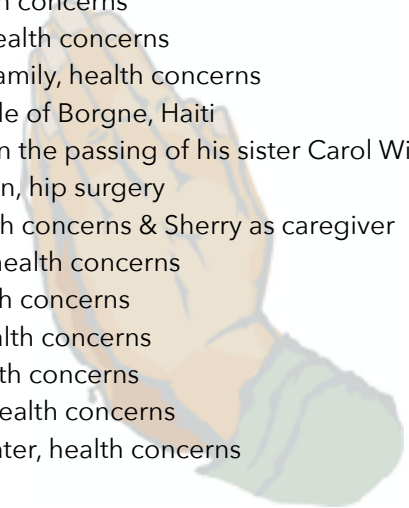


Happy Halloween - October 31

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

**Please advise the church office of any changes.**

- Joe Lebda and family, on the passing of Nancy Lebda
- Fran Stiles, health concerns
- Barb Ackroyd, health concerns
- Rob Eaton and family, health concerns
- HOPE and people of Borgne, Haiti
- Cal Dickerson, on the passing of his sister Carol Willer
- Jonathan Jackson, hip surgery
- Bill Shaffer, health concerns & Sherry as caregiver
- Deb Sponable, health concerns
- Pam Miller, health concerns
- Dorie Starks, health concerns
- Lisa Lydum, health concerns
- Phoebe Coats, health concerns
- Kersting's daughter, health concerns
- Matt O.
- John Meyer
- Gary Bresnahan
- Wilan Uthman
- Kay Uthman



**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.

**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 **Mount Church Directory** and download the FREE app to begin.

You will use your email address listed in the directory to **CREATE** an account 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 and Google Play.

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](mailto:sherks@rochester.rr.com).

**Pastoral Care**

If you feel a need for pastoral care or know of someone who does, and would like to meet with the on-call pastor, please contact the office by phone or e-mail. Respecting your need for privacy, our pastoral care team will not automatically call, or may not be aware of your need. Please let us know how we can help. Call 223-2433.

# 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](http://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?*