

THE NEW BRANCH



Mountain Rise United Church of Christ
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September

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 12:00PM

- Men's Group, resumes in October
- Game Night, September 9, 6:30-8:30PM
- Council Meeting, September 10, 4:00PM
- Service & Advocacy Meeting, September 10, 11:30AM
- Book Group September 18, 6:30PM
- Spiritual Growth Group I, September 25, 7:15PM
- Spiritual Growth Group II, September ?, 7:15PM
- Spiritual Growth Group III, September 12, 7:15PM

Note New Time



SATURDAY FUN NIGHT!

Regardless of age, come join us for...

GAME NIGHT

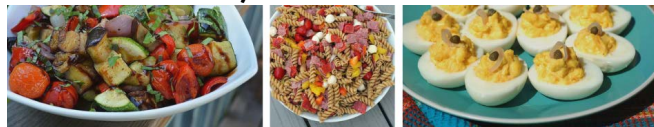
Saturday, **September 9**
Second Saturdays of the Month
6:30-8:30 pm, Lower Fellowship Hall

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

MOUNTAIN RISE CHURCH PICNIC SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

ALL ARE WELCOME!
THE MORE, THE MERRIER!



Please join us immediately following worship!

• Food • Games • Fun! •
Gluten-free & vegan options will be available.



Please sign up to bring a potluck item or games.

To sign up online, either scan the QR Code (to the right) -or- click [here](#). You can also sign up on the clipboard on Sunday.

Questions?

Text/email Trisch at 585.749.4235 or trisch14564@gmail.com





As John Dorhauer was preparing to return to the airport for trip home, he said two things, "Mountain Rise is a gem of a congregation" and "the Mountain Rise story is one that I will tell other churches."

I have heard many times that Mountain Rise is one of the best kept secrets around. When people discover Mountain Rise's commitment to inclusivity, service, advocacy, and creative worship, they are often surprised that such a church exists. The same holds true for the United Church of Christ as a denomination, too. The challenge of being the best kept secret is simply that our story goes untold. The Mountain Rise story is one that definitely should be told.

During these days of transition, we will be telling and hearing stories from the past and present but the story doesn't end there. Mountain Rise will tell the story of its bright future. I firmly believe the story is not one of demise, but one of great of hope and possibilities. The transition team will be engaging with the congregation to dream and tell its future story.

Let us commit to one another to tell the Mountain Rise story rather keeping it a secret and work together to dream the story of its future.

—Kelly Sprinkle

August 26, 2023 Dorhauer Presentation

Congregational Offering from your Council...

Healthy Boundary training is mandatory in the United Church of Christ for clergy. Mountain Rise will have the opportunity to experience Healthy Boundary training for a congregation. Council has secured Penny Cannon, a New York Conference UCC educator, for an after worship presentation on **Sunday, September 24th**. Why has Council created this learning opportunity for the congregation? Simply put, we are a church in transition and we are a church that will be searching for a new pastor very soon. Healthy Boundary training is intended to help attendees understand healthy boundaries in ministry relationships. Healthy and vital ministries rely on trust and mutual support to create spaces of welcome and safety for all. We hope that you mark your calendars to stay after worship on September 24th to experience this wonderful opportunity.

Book Group

What Kind of Church is Mountain Rise?

The Book Group will meet on Zoom on Monday, September 18 at 7:30 pm to discuss **Beyond Resistance: The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World** by John Dorhauer, whom we were privileged to have as our guest at Mountain Rise the weekend of August 26-27.

As the Mountain Rise congregation considers its own future during this time of interim ministry, please join us for this important discussion. To receive a Zoom link to the meeting RSVP to Rick Watkins at rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com

Property Committee at Work!

- Cleaned and waxed the floors
- Back-wash inspection performed



While some of our groups and committees are well known to most Mountain Risers, there are many others about which less is known, such as their purpose, how one becomes a member, what talents may be helpful, how often they meet, etc.

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.

In our newsletter this month we are spotlighting two of our groups that focus on interpreting and applying the stories and teachings of the Bible or related materials to our lives today.

Bibles and Books

The Tuesday morning "Bibles and Books" group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month. Roger James is the facilitator for the group and describes its activities. "We meet Tuesday morning at 10:15 and plan to stay until 11:30, although some of us stay longer when we have more to say. This is a very informal group. Come every meeting, once in a while, or whatever. The materials we have studied over the years have included multiple versions of the Bible, whole books over a period of months, some shorter readings, and a series of short videos that were modern-day parables that we then discussed for the rest of the session. Whatever the material, we engage in a fun and interesting conversation every time. There are usually 3 to ten participants. Not sure this is for you? As it says several places in the Bible, "Come and see."

Sunday Morning Bible Reflection

The Sunday morning bible reflection (slightly different from study) meets at 8:30 AM every Sunday morning in the church library for one hour from the Sunday after Labor Day until outdoor services start in June. John Zabel is the facilitator and provides this description of the program. "The program is based on the common lectionary readings for the week. We are using supplementary material from the United Church of Canada that I provide to participants prior to Sunday. The material includes the readings and commentary. At our session I have comments on the readings supplied by the supplement along with questions for the

participants. The idea is to discuss how the readings are understood and can be used in modern society. **Anyone can join us any Sunday Morning.** If casual attendees would like each Sunday's reading material, they give me their email address and I send it to them during the week. During the session I let the discussion go in any direction the group sets but I try to stay close to the readings and commentary."



Grandparents Day, September 10

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

Church Council

"Let's give 'em something to talk about..." Bonnie Raitt
Dear Mountain Rise family,

Can you hear it? Can you hear the buzz around the church?
People are talking...talking about the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer!

The last weekend of August Mountain Rise was blessed with a visit from the Rev. Dorhauer, the ninth General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. Pastor Kelly and the Mountain Rise Transition Team (Kathy Simpson, Liz Webb, Ted Nixon, Matt Deknatel and Roger James) created a two-day event in which Rev. Dorhauer shared his presentation "Exploring Vitality in a Postmodern World and a Pandemic Informed Church" on Saturday night (after an amazing potluck dinner) and then was the guest preacher for our Sunday worship service. (If you missed either of these events, they are available for streaming on the Mountain Rise Facebook page.) Rev. Dorhauer was also able to set aside extra time to talk to Transition Team members and a few Council members during his visit. In addition, Rev. Dorhauer's book, **Beyond Resistance: The Institutional Church Meets the Postmodern World**, has become an almost "all church read" for Mountain Rise: the Transition Team and Council have read the book as part of their church work, the book is now the September selection for the Mountain Rise book club, and copies of the book have been available in the church office for borrowing during the summer.

Rev. Dorhauer's visit to our church and his wisdom shared in his book have given our congregation much to contemplate and to discuss. Our congregation can look forward to our Transition Team channeling these discussions in a meaningful and productive way in the coming months. This engagement is exactly what our intentional interim period calls for. Let's all begin to acknowledge what questions come to mind after experiencing Rev. Dorhauer's presentation and/or the reading of his book. The following questions came to my mind after listening to Rev. Dorhauer's presentation; maybe you have some of the same questions:

Who are we as a church?

Who do we want to be as a church?

What are Mountain Rise's "non-negotiables"? (as referenced by Rev. John Dorhauer)

Does Mountain Rise have a clear sense of its mission? Do we all know what it is?

How is the Spirit speaking to Mountain Rise in this Postmodern period? What is being said?

What pathways to the Sacred does Mountain Rise provide?

How do we assist the "birthing" of a 3.0 church, as described by Rev. Dorhauer?

Rev. Dorhauer asserts, "Change is inevitable. You either change by default, with no intentionality or creativity or purpose, or you do so with a clear sense of passion for your mission and a willingness to do whatever it takes to remain healthy and vital for the sake of that mission." I am confident that here at Mountain Rise the desire to remain healthy and vital is very much alive. I know this because Mountain Rise carefully chose to enter intentional interim ministry to create an opportunity for our faith community to see spiritual and organizational renewal, to rediscover its identity, and to revitalize its mission. Rev. Dorhauer has shared his guiding light with us to use on this path of transition that we are walking together. Let it guide us now to adapt this church we love so.

Blessings and Peace, Faye Eaton
Council Chair

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

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 (please note, new time)** at church; next scheduled meeting is **September 11**.

Children & Youth

MRUCC Tee Shirts

Now Available In All Sizes And Styles

The MRUCC tee shirts are currently available in both long and short sleeves in sizes from Small to 3X, as well as children's S, M and L. The cost of a shirt is \$20 (\$15 for kid's shirts) or whatever you can afford to pay. They were a hit at the Pride Parade and continue to express a strong message and attract attention wherever they are worn. Shirts are located in the church office, but please contact Kathy Nixon or Nicky McClain if you would like to add one or two to your wardrobe. Delivery is available as needed.



Welcome Back from your summertime adventures!

The classroom is ready and waiting for you to come in and learn, share, make friends and maybe have a bit of fun too! It will be a space that with a warm and welcoming environment, children, youth, families and all who enter are welcome!

You, your parents and the entire church are welcome to come to the **Church School Classroom Open House September 10**. Classroom will be open before and after church for people to visit before the church picnic. Come and see where the children and youth discover and share ideas, are given creative ways to learn about their Faith, Spirituality, and Life.

A Teacher Orientation-September 17 - after church in the classroom will happen for anyone interested (this means people who have taught or want to teach or support the Sunday school in any way (or maybe you are just curious)... YOU are welcome!). We will go over some basic guidelines, do an icebreaker activity and talk about curriculum ideas and other possibilities for the next Sunday school season/year. Bring your thoughts and ideas! Light lunch will be provided.

In October we will be having a Safety Sunday to empower and remind children and their families how to stay safe, and learn to ask and have courage to ask for help if needed...more next month about this. 😊

The Fall season beckons us back...to come together, to listen to each other, and to set out on another journey together.

A road that explores our faith, considers other faith journeys, discovers the joy in a story, gives a chance to create something special, a place where we can listen to music, maybe even sing along.....this is just a beginning.

Welcome again! Children, Youth, Young Adults...You are a gift to me, a gift to the Mountain Rise community. We can walk the road together... and what a pleasure it will be.

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

New Signage Planned for MRUCC on Rt. 31

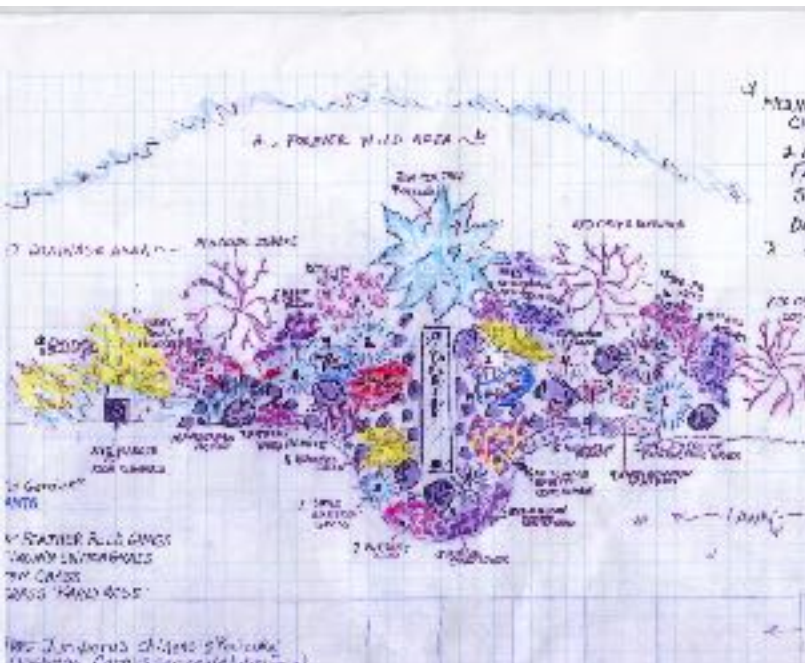
Plans are wrapping up to place a new Mountain Rise UCC sign on Rt. 31. The sign will be surrounded by a colorful pollinator garden and placed a short distance east of where the trees that for years have held our church’s banners. The design will include sections that can be swapped in and out to advertise our Jazz, Easter, Christmas and outdoor worship services as well as the names and logos of Etz Chaim and Perinton Nursery School.

Renderings of the sign and garden are attached to this newsletter and on display in the lobby of the church building. **We are asking for feedback from the congregation on the design.** We welcome your questions. A generous grant from the estate of Julie Francis is helping make this project possible.

A variance from the Town of Perinton will be necessary to place the new sign close enough to Rt. 31 to be visible to traffic traveling east and west

The current sign on the corner of Mountain Rise and Rt. 31 has served us well, but is in pretty rough shape. Additionally, the sign is only slightly visible from the east. Many a guest has mentioned they have driven by the church 2 or 3 times before finding it. We look forward to letting more people know where MRUCC is housed and welcome them to join us.

Nicky McClain, Kathy Nixon, Wally Hazelton





Service and Advocacy

For Justice and Peace

The Service and Advocacy committee addresses a multitude of mission efforts by many parishioners. We are concerned that the congregation as a whole is not well enough informed about them and with many members uninvolved.

In order to enhance our mission efforts the committee wants to do the following.

1. Increase and update the pictures of missions shown at Sunday morning indoor worship.
2. Provide moments for mission more often in Sunday worship.
3. Have a Service and Advocacy Fair part of the Mountain Rise Mission on October 8 with each mission team represented at an after-worship coffee time with information provided for people to access.

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.

Mountain Rise work team for Habitat for Humanity has scheduled a "work day" on Thursday, September 21st. The foundation is done and the wall raising is planned for this week. We would like to gather interested people from our church family to support this build.

The new owner, Tatyana grew up in the Beechwood area and will be moving into her new home (108 Ackerman Street) in February. Please contact Bill Holliday (585 755 - 2775) or Nicky McClain for more info.



Service and Advocacy Meeting Scheduled

Next meeting is September 10, 11:30am after worship.

Thoughts on Migration

The Universal Justice Team wrote a very in-depth article for the July/August 2023 Mountain Rise newsletter on immigration at the Southern border. The article explains some of the actions that the current federal government is taking to try and alleviate the overwhelming number of people trying to cross into the United States. At the end of the article the team raises a very important question: "The challenges to providing humane, compassionate treatment are real. The question remains: How can we help?" The following article is another perspective and explains how Mountain Rise is currently helping.

This past year Jack Heister and Linda Boesl both visited Phoenix, Arizona and the Welcome Center where migrants are welcomed to the U.S. This center sponsored by the International Rescue Committee offers them food, clothing, medical assistance and helps them move on to host families. First Church UCC in Phoenix is part of this hospitality and with Mountain Rise's financial support we are helping feed the migrants as they seek a place to live.

The reasons people leave their home country and seek a better place to live are complicated. There is poverty, unemployment, climate change affecting homelands, political unrest, gang violence, and fear for one's life for starters. The solutions are also complicated. We should feel blessed to live in a country that is, although not perfect, a place that refugees from so many different parts of the world want to come. **WHY?**

Mountain Rise has a meaningful relationship with Viviendo en Amor y Fe (VAF) church in Flor del Campo, Honduras. This is a very poor neighborhood in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. In 2017 Mountain Rise invited leaders from VAF to visit us. On one occasion in our sanctuary we had a time of conversation about our churches and our relationship. One question asked by a person from Mountain Rise was "How can we help you?" After a few moments David Gradiz quietly answered, "You can solve your drug problem." There is no easy solution to that. But it highlights an important issue. Honduras is part of the major trade route for drugs in the US market. Without this market gangs,

crime and many more social ills could be lessened. His answer highlights that the problem is partially of our making and not easily solved by Hondurans alone.

Other causes for migration are unemployment and poverty. The following report from Lynn and Mark Baker shows how micro loans administered by the Social Action Commission of the Honduran Mennonite Church can also help. Lynn and Mark Baker are the founders of a nonprofit organization, Vida en Shalom which has very close ties to VAF and Honduras.

The following is a portion of their newsletter as it relates to one recipient and migration.

"Fruit of Seed Capital Given"

After receiving an update on the holistic program to aid deported/returned migrants, workers from the Social Action Commission of the Honduran Mennonite Church (CASM) took us to visit five people who had received seed capital. Donations from Vida en Shalom provided funds for them to start the businesses.

One day, well into the program, "Edgar" asked a CASM worker if they were really going to receive funding to help start a business. He said, "If not, I am going to leave and try to make it to the United States again." The worker replied honestly that she did not know if there would be funding or not. Shortly after that, however, we found out about the program and the need for seed capital. The money we sent enabled the CASM worker to tell him, "Yes, there would be funds." "Edgar" stayed. He and his brother used the funds to buy seeds and fertilizer. They showed us the watermelon plants they had nursed to life through watering by hand during the prolonged dry season, and excitedly told us the price of watermelons in the market.



"Fruit of Edgar's work and Vida en Shalom's seed capital"

There are no easy answers for many of the world's problems. However, without questioning and learning, no solution will ever be found. If you are interested in this topic, please contact Nicky

McClain or come to a Service and Advocacy meeting.

Ongoing Violence in Palestine

The recent events in the West Bank, especially the attack on Jenin, have increased the unfolding tragedy of Israel's mistreatment toward the Palestinians. Underlying this increase in violence is the new leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu and the ultra-orthodox views of him and his party.

Early in July, over 2000 Israeli troops with bulldozers, armored vehicles, and Apache helicopters invaded the town of Jenin in retaliation for the deaths of two Israelis. The goal was to root out "militants". We use quotation marks to raise a question: Are the Palestinians courageous people defending their homes and way of life or are they militants? 447 Palestinian structures have been demolished this year.

In the attack described above, 12 Palestinians were killed and one Israeli; 3,000 more Palestinians were displaced. In the refugee camp of Jenin, sewers, entire streets, electrical grids, and water sources were destroyed. Ambulances were prevented from reaching the wounded, and three hospitals were severely damaged, including the destruction of one emergency room. Hundreds were arrested. The use of Apache helicopters was in direct contravention to the US-Israeli agreement that weapons purchased from the US and with US aid money may not be used against the Palestinians.

In another recent event and in retaliation for the death of an Israeli, 400 Jewish settlers invaded the town of Turmus Ayla. While the Israeli army stood by and watched, the settlers decimated the village.

One of our ongoing concerns is that there is no accountability. None. There is no entity now preventing Israel from doing whatever it wants to the Palestinian people.

We were going to recruit additional church members to travel to the Holy Land, but we agree that it is now too dangerous to implement those plans.

Team for Universal Justice

Sources Consulted:

Doctors Without Borders. <<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/msf-condemns-denial-of-medical-access-during-military-raid-in-jenin>>.

"Four Palestinian Children Killed in Israeli Military Offensive on Jenin." Defense for Children International - Palestine. <https://www.dci-palestine.org>. Friedman, Tom. "Opinion:Netanyahu-Israel-Judiciary." New York Times. 11 July 2023.

"Jenin Invasion Day 2: Israeli Forces Attack Hospitals." Mondoweiss. 2023/07. <<https://mondoweiss.net/2023/07/jenin-invasion-day-2-israeli-forces-attack-hospitals>>.

"Ongoing Military Raids in Jenin." Churches for Middle East Peace. July 2023. <<https://cmep.salsalabs.org>>.



September 23, First Day of Autumn

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.



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.

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

Please advise the church office of any changes.

- Cal Dickerson, on the passing of his sister Carol Willer
- Mike Tiss, health concerns
- Jonathan Jackson, hip surgery
- Koehler Family, on the passing of Joan Powers Family, on the passing of Bryan Matthew, Faye Eaton's nephew, health concerns
- Bill Shaffer, health concerns & Sherry as caregiver
- Deb Sponable, health concerns
- Family & Friends of Marilyn Williams on her passing
- Pam Miller, health concerns
- Dorie Starks, health concerns
- Barbara Ackroyd, 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



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.

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?



AN INTERLUDE

- What is Modernity?
- What is Post-Modernity?
- What is Meta-Modernity?

DISCOVERY

- People Showed up
- People Gave
- New People Showed up
- New Behaviors Learned
- New Technologies Discovered
- New Communities Formed
- New Normal

AN INTERLUDE

- What is Modernity?
- What is Post-Modernity?
- What is Meta-Modernity?

MISSION THE KEY TO IT ALL



SIX KEYS TO THRIVING

- Create an Authentic Encounter with the Sacred
- Crowd-Source Leadership/Expertise
- Engage leaders in action that matters
- Maintain a Safe Space for all
- Grow comfortable with polygamy
- Adapt/Play

CREATE AN AUTHENTIC ENCOUNTER WITH THE SACRED



CROWD-SOURCE LEADERSHIP/EXPERTISE



Photo: <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/34488146>

ENGAGE LEADERS IN ACTION THAT MATTERS



MAINTAIN A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL



