

# THE NEW BRANCH



Mountain Rise United Church of Christ  
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## In this Issue:

- Council Updates
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## Calendar

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

- Next Men's Group March 6, 6:00PM
- Council Meeting, March 13, 7PM
- Stephen Ministry Group I, March 14 & 28, 4PM
- Stephen Ministry Group II, March 2 & 16, 7PM
- Service & Advocacy Meeting, March 12, 11:30AM
- Book Group, March 21, 7:30PM; for Zoom link contact Rick Watkins
- Spiritual Growth Group I, March 27, 7:15PM



**March 12, 2023**

## World Day of Prayer – March 3, 2023



## SATURDAY FUN NIGHT!

*Regardless of age, come join us for...*



## GAME NIGHT

Saturday, **March 4**

First 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)

The **Men's Group** meeting on **March 6**, 6:00PM. The speaker will be Deputy Todd Thurston, Monroe County Deputy Sheriff currently serving as a Community Engagement Deputy covering Penfield, Perinton and Pittsford. He has worked at the Monroe County jail, Road Patrol and background investigator.

**Grant Requests Invited to Distribute Income from Mountain Rise Endowment Fund**

The MRUCC Council has been notified by the Endowment Committee that there are funds available to be utilized in 2023-24 by church individuals and committees to meet current needs and to extend the mission of our church. Applications for these funds must go through an appropriate committee and be submitted to Council by **March 1, 2023**.

Please direct questions to Rob Stevens (robertstevens11@gmail.com) or Kathy Nixon (knixon326@gmail.com).

**Available Now**



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

**Book Group Looks at Good and Bad Decision Making in their March Reading Choice**

The Mountain Rise Book Group will meet Tuesday, March 21 at 7:30 pm on Zoom to discuss **Collective Illusions: Conformity, Complicity, and the Science of Why We Make Bad Decisions** by Todd Rose. The title spells out Rose’s main points. There will be plenty to discuss.

Please join us for a lively discussion. RSVP to Rick Watkins at [rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com) or (585) 203-1629.

**Juliet's** will be meeting on Friday, **March 24** at 12:00 at Mulconry’s Irish Pub, 17 Liftbridge Lane, Fairport. It’s on their second floor. Ladies will need to climb stairs . Please contact Sue Pixley at (585) 425-1414 or [susanbpixley@gmail.com](mailto:susanbpixley@gmail.com) to make your reservation or with questions.



**Property Committee at Work!**

- Repair walls in pastor’s office
- Replace defection ceiling light in office
- Replace defective ceiling light in social hall
- Oversee re-keying of exterior doors
- Purchased new paint
- Get vacuum cleaner repaired
- Get more salt for sidewalks



**Girl Scout Day – March 12, 2023**



**Doug and Eileen Bloom**

Retired in 2013 from Xerox and Orleans County/United Way.

In 2018, we sold our home of 40 years in Albion where we are from and raised our three children. Moved to East Rochester to live near our children and four granddaughters in Fairport, Penfield, and Macedon.

We enjoy traveling and the outdoors.

Past members of St Joseph’s Catholic Church in Albion. We explored several area churches before we started attending Mountain Rise one year ago.

We are enjoying the friendly and accepting Mountain Rise congregation and their commitment to fellowship and service.

**Niki & Matt Deknatel**

We came to Mountain Rise in search of a place of worship that is inclusive to all people, that focuses on faith, love and strength through God.

We genuinely enjoy attending services at Mountain Rise Church. Sunday services are peaceful and welcoming. We look forward to the hymns that are sung, listening to the choir, Pastor Sprinkle's sermons, and Children's Church (in no particular order). The parishioners are friendly and it's a nice way to spend time celebrating God's love.

Our hope is for our children to know and use their faith to learn, grow, and find peace.

**Rev. David Gregory**

As I contemplate retirement before too many more years, I really wanted to find a "home base." I am anticipating that the interim position at Webster will be about 24 months and after that I may seek another interim . . . or not, depending on life and the stock market. In any case I wanted to move my membership to a place that I'd like to be when I'm not serving elsewhere. My sons are in the Finger Lakes region and they both have families, and we have relocated to be near them at this stage in our lives.

I have been an ordained minister for 40 years, and received Privilege of Call with the GVA in 2007. Since then I have served a couple of settled ministries and four interims. Back in 2006 and 2007 I visited Mountain Rise and even filled in for Greg a time or two. In 2008 I moved to the Hudson Valley and served churches in the Hudson Mohawk and NY Metro Associations before heading to San Francisco Bay for the last five years as the minister at Tiburon. COVID changed my trajectory as well as some new grandchildren who were never going to know us if we didn't get back here.

I live with my husband, Tripp Hanson in Webster. He is a veteran of Broadway and is teaching voice and dance to young people these days.

I am a native of Ohio but haven't lived there in more than 40 years. Rochester is the closest thing I have to a hometown, so it's good to be back here.

Mountain Rise New Branch

**Sarah Douglas**

I have been living in Fairport for 14 years. I have three wonderful kids; Jack, Lilah, and Brandon. I grew up in Maine, went to college in Vermont and then settled here in Fairport, with family nearby.

I work as a custodian at another church and I often tell people: I clean one of God's houses, how could it be any better?!! In my free time I love to spend it outdoors with my kids. We love to travel, go to parks/beaches and hit the hiking trails.

My parents live in Maine and visit every few months. When they do, they attend Mountain Rise on Sunday mornings, I'm not sure how they found Mountain Rise, other than it's almost in our backyard. We live in the Blackwatch neighborhood, a very short drive. I attended another church then. After my divorce I wanted to attend a different church and when I spoke to my parents they immediately said; "come with us to Mountain Rise." I attended once and immediately felt like I was home. I feel so blessed to do the work I do and to have found Mountain Rise.

**Scott Fitzgerald**

In 2010 I was seeking some kind of spiritual direction in my life. Raised as a Catholic, I was pretty certain I was not looking to go back to Mass. I honestly didn't agree with much of the Catholic faith-at least socially. I wanted to "go to church" without going to church and I tried a few different congregations around town and I found Mountain Rise kind of by mistake. After my first time there I was really taken in by the welcoming personalities of Dave Ackroyd and Greg Osterberg. I immediately started helping out with the AV and Greg was very helpful in my filmmaking by allowing us to hold auditions and rehearsals at the church.

At this time my children were young and I have a child on the Autism spectrum-plus my wife worked on Sunday so it was difficult for me to get to church. Greg and I kept in touch and I helped out from time to time with technical questions he had. After the pandemic shutdown, Greg asked me to help live stream worship. It was then that I realized I really enjoyed coming to worship and running the AV side of things. I enjoyed the different personalities and also the way I felt after hearing the message of the week. Since then, Mountain Rise has become an important part of my professional and spiritual life and I am very grateful to everyone for being so accepting and friendly. This spiritual part of my life has also helped me maintain my sobriety and also my positive outlook in business and family. 3

**Save the Date:**

Mountain Rise has partnered with the Alzheimer’s Association Rochester and Finger Lakes Chapter to provide free education programs for Mountain Rise and our community.



at Mountain Rise United Church of Christ

2 Mountain Rise, Fairport, NY 14450

**10 Warning Signs**

This education program will help you recognize common signs of the disease in yourself and others and next steps to take, including how to talk to your doctor.

Thursday, April 13th  
7:00pm - 8:00pm

**Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia**

Learn basic information on the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia, stages, risk factors, research and FDA-approved treatments.

Thursday, April 20th  
7:00pm - 8:00pm

**Effective Communication Strategies**

Explore ways that Alzheimer's and other dementias affect an individual's ability to communicate across different stages, and get tips to better communicate with people living with the disease.

Thursday, April 27th  
7:00pm - 8:00pm

Call 1-800-272-3900  
or go to [alz.org/crf](http://alz.org/crf) to register

RocCCU presents

**MEETING THE THREAT OF RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM**

Journalist and author **Katherine Stewart** on:



- The aftermath of the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol
- The normalization of concepts like "spiritual warfare"
- The rise of rhetoric classifying certain Americans as "Other"
- The appointment of activist judges
- What people of faith can do to meet the threat of religious nationalism

**SUNDAY, MARCH 12, 5:00PM**

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 4 MEIGS ST, ROCHESTER, NY 14607

Registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/MeetingTheThreat>

Katherine Stewart is an investigative reporter who has covered religious liberty, politics, policy, and education for over a decade. She is the author of *The Power Worshipers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism* (2022) and *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children* (2012).

**SPONSORED BY**



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Interfaith Impact of Rochester  
Presents a Zoom Briefing

**Affordable Housing:  
A Human Right?  
How are we doing?**

**Sunday, March 19, 2023 2:00 pm**

**Panelists:**

- Jerome Underwood, CEO&President, Action for a Better Community, Inc
- Robin Wilt, Real Estate Broker and activist
- Ritti Singh, Communications Organizer, Housing Justice For All
- Demond Meeks, NYS Assemblymember, invited

To what extent is there a shortage of affordable housing in Monroe County? Is there unequal access? Will the legislature's or Governor Hochul's proposed New York Housing Compact have a meaningful impact here?

Join us on ZOOM to hear the presenters and participate in the Q & A afterward. Free, but registration is required at [IINYRoc@gmail.com](mailto:IINYRoc@gmail.com). The link will be emailed to you.

For more information call: 585.442.5111



**Daylight-Saving Time begins – March 12, 2023**

# Church Council

Mountain Rise Friends,

Welcome to Mountain Rise's Interim Time! Council's January slide presentation to the congregation highlighted that the purpose of our interim time was for our community of faith to take an intentional "time out" to see spiritual and organizational renewal, to rediscover our identity, and to revitalize our mission. How does all this get done? A Transition Team is a key component of the Intentional Interim Ministry process. This team has no other agenda than to assist Pastor Kelly and the congregation as we seek to use the time between settled pastors effectively. The Transition Team will steer the process of identifying "who we are, who is our neighbor, and who is God calling us to be" and then develop the Local Church Profile. The team coordinates and communicates: the team doesn't do all the work!

Our Transition Team will be a small group - about five members that make up a good cross-section of the congregation. The team will be chosen by the Council, after soliciting nominations from the congregation as to the makeup of the team (details about how to nominate individuals will be shared soon).

The following are qualities of potential Transition Team members:

- Trusted and respected
- Prayerful and spiritually wise
- Gentle truth-teller
- Regular attender
- Able to listen and hear all perspectives
- Able to handle anxiety and ambiguity
- Willing to commit time and energy
- Regular contributor to the life of the community

The Transition Team is not the governing body of the church. It is not the search committee for our next settled pastor. The Transition Team is the agent of change for our church. Please think and pray about who you think would best represent this team for Mountain Rise.

Blessings and Peace,

Faye Eaton  
Council Chairperson

## Your Council Members:

Faye Eaton, Chair  
*Position Vacant*, Vice-Chair  
 Carol James, Council Secretary  
 Gary Schaefer, At-Large  
 Linda Boesl, At-Large  
 Rob Stevens, 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 7:00 pm at church; next scheduled meeting is **March 13**.

## Perinton Food Shelf Needs

### An Emergency Food Relief Organization

Needed: Boxed plain potatoes, bottled juice, brownie mixes, frosting, beef stew, corned beef or roast beef hash, mustard, diced tomatoes, cereal, and tomato sauce (not pasta sauce).

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





Palm Sunday - April 2, 10:00 AM
Maundy Thursday - April 6, 5:00 PM
Followed by the opportunity to join Community Passover Seder Dinner
with Congregation Etz Chaim at 6pm
Easter Sunday- April 9, 10:00 AM

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)

Blank lines for name

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

(Please Print Clearly)

Blank lines for dedication details

Amount of Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

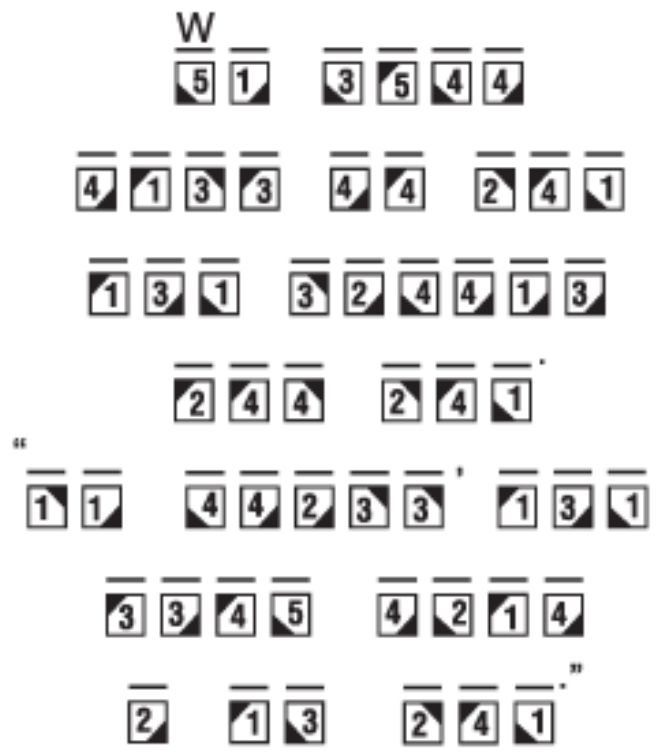
Deadline: Sunday, March 19

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

Mountain Rise New Branch

Puzzle!

Slow down and uncover this message and Bible verse, using the code below.



Answer: We must talk to God and listen for God. Be still, and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)

First Day of Spring – March 20, 2023





# Service and Advocacy

## For Justice and Peace

### Turkey and Syria Earthquake Response

The news continues to unfold about the devastating earthquake on the border of Turkey and Syria. The death toll continues to rise. In response, the United Church of Christ is issuing an appeal to support relief efforts.

From the N Y Conference UCC



*The wreckage of a collapsed building, Diyarbakir, Turkey. (Photo: VOA courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; public domain.)*

The Mountain Rise UCC Service and Advocacy Committee has agreed to be a part of this Recovery Effort by giving the **Mountain Rise Easter Offering** to the National UCC Disaster Relief for greater impact. The need is great and the need is now. Your donation will get to the people affected before Easter. Donations may be made by check to Mountain Rise, or online at [mtriseucc.org](http://mtriseucc.org). Please indicate it is for Earthquake Response / Easter Offering.

Thank you,

Mountain Rise Service and Advocacy Committee



### Service and Advocacy Meeting Scheduled

Next meeting is March 12, 11:30am after worship.

### Committee for Universal Justice

Next meeting is March 3, 9:30 AM at Jack Heister's home.

The Committee for Universal Justice

We are growing, growing in numbers, in concerns, in spirit. So we have decided to change our name in order to reflect those hopeful signs. Though we remain committed to understanding and supporting Palestinian rights, we will now be called The Committee for Universal Justice.

In an effort to be more inclusive and relevant to the mission of MRUCC, we want to expand our programs in order to address issues such as the mental health of young people in our country, the growing tensions of immigration at our southern border, and the rights of indigenous peoples who continue to be threatened with extinction or invisibility. We also want to increase our awareness of what our national church is already doing and then assist with those efforts.

To that end, two of our members will be in Arizona this winter and will visit a UCC church that needs and deserves help with feeding immigrants. This congregation provides food and emergency supplies to the people who cross the border, and they do so on a regular basis. Dr. Andrew Mietz, a child psychiatrist, addressed the mental health needs of young people in our culture at a recent Men's Group meeting. At a special after-church meeting on Feb. 19, two local academics who visited Palestine were invited to share their harrowing experiences delivering medical supplies and education to physicians in Gaza.

These efforts are just a few of the topics we're eager to explore in the name of universal justice, and we hope that you will continue to support our work and intentions. We thank you for your support in the past, and know that we couldn't have succeeded without you. Let's learn and do even more together.

Peace to all ---

The Committee for Universal Justice



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).

**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.




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

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

- Julie Francis, health concerns
- Julie Francis and family as they grieve the passing of Andi Frieda Family on the passing of Ron's father
- Janice McCutchan, health concerns
- Ann Walters, health concerns
- Harold Stock's son, health concerns
- Kersting's daughter, health concerns
- Matt O.
- Jane Stock's sister, health concerns
- Bill Stratton's father-in-law Bob, health concerns
- Hanley Family on the passing of Dan's mother, Mary
- Kathy Simpson's brother-in-law Jim in hospice
- Hammer family
- Judie Mietz, health concerns
- Allison Riley, health concerns
- Pam Miller, health concerns
- Harold Stock, health concerns
- Jim Hegley, recovering
- John Meyer
- Gary Bresnahan
- Wilan Uthman
- Kay Uthman
- Dorie Starks



**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?*