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In this Issue:

- Note from the Pastor
- Calendar Events either in-person, virtual or suspended for now
- Council Updates

Calendar

Knitting, Tuesdays at 10 AM ROMEOS, Fridays, 11:30 AM at Underpass Bar & Grill

- Bibles & Books, March 8 & 22, 10AM .
- Council meeting, March 8, 7PM.
- Stephen Ministry Group I, March 8 & 22, 4PM
- Stephen Ministry Group II, March 3 & 17 7PM
- Service & Advocacy meeting, March 9, 3PM.
- Spiritual Life & Worship, March 16, 4PM
- Book Group, March 15, 7:30PM virtual meeting; contact Rick Watkins for Zoom link.
- Spiritual Growth Group I, March 28, 7:15PM
- Newsletter Info needed, week of March 28



You and your child/ren are invited to the March 2, 6:30 PM Ash Wednesday worship. This is a meaningful time of beautiful music, reflection, and burning our mistakes to make ashes for use on that evening.











Men's Group - Monday, March 7, at 7:00 pm, in the sanctuary. All are invited. Dr. Navin Fisher, Nazareth College, will speak about life in China, relations between US and China and some history of China. He is not a political scientist, he will not address political questions.

From Our Pastor

Be Still

As Lent Begins

Be still, and know that I am God.* Be still, and know... Be still... Be...

*Psalm 46:10

The time between March 2 and Easter is "Lent." Although we are not a very traditional church, we begin Lent with an especially symbolic worship experience on Ash Wednesday. Ashes are touched to a hand or to forehead of worshippers as a symbol of "turning" / repenting from destructive or selfish parts of our lives, and turning toward God. With this mindset, we begin using the weeks before Easter to prepare ourselves for rebirth as our better selves.

The frenetic pace of our culture constantly buffets us with global news feeds, technology interrupting us constantly, and accelerating change from microscopic to climactic. We have "wearable tech," digital toothbrushes, and phones more powerful than the desktop computers just 5 years old! Even when we try to call a "time out!" for ourselves to catch our breath or get our bearings, this storm of information tugs at our sleeve, demanding attention.

I invite you this "Lent" to pause and "be still" a few minutes each day. Claim this space for yourself and your Maker apart from the din, so that you may begin to perceive the constant Presence we so easily ignore. Pick one reading from the "Daily Readings for Lent" and read it from a print Bible, as an act of "turning" for the moment from the digital drumbeat. If you can, take a few minutes, sit quietly after reading, focusing on a phrase that stood out to you. End by praying something like, "You walk with me. Help me walk with you."

If reading or praying are too much, take a minute and just sit.

Be still... Know... Be... May your spirit be renewed this season. Blessings & peace,

The Rev. Dr. Greg Osterberg, Senior Minister



DAILY READINGS FOR LENT

Ash Wednesday

Thurs. (3/2, 2017): Psalm 51; Jonah 3:1-10; Romans 1:1-7 Fri. (3/3, 2017): Psalm 51; Jonah 4:1-11; Romans 1:8-17 Sat. (3/4, 2017): Psalm 51; Isaiah 58:1-12; Matthew 18:1-7

First Sunday in Lent 3/5, 2017 Matthew 4:1-11

Mon. (3/6, 2017): Psalm 32; 1 Kings 19:1-8; Hebrews 2:10-18 Tues. (3/7, 2017): Psalm 32; Genesis 4:1-16; Hebrews 4:14-5:10 Wed. (3/8, 2017): Psalm 32; Exodus 34:1-9; Matthew 18:10-14 Thurs. (3/9, 2017): Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:3-7 Fri. (3/10, 2017): Psalm 121; Micah 7:18-20; Romans 3:21-31 Sat. (3/11, 2017): Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:4-8; Luke 7:1-10

Second Sunday in Lent 3/12, 2017 John 3:1-17

Mon. (3/13, 2017): Psalm 128; Numbers 21:4-9; Hebrews 3:1-6 Tues. (3/14, 2017): Psalm 128; Isaiah 65:17-25; Romans 4:6-13 Wed. (3/15, 2017): Psalm 128; Ezk. 36:22-32; John 7:53-8:11 Thurs. (3/16, 2017): Psalm 95; Exodus 16:1-8; Colossians 1:15-23 Fri. (3/17, 2017): Psalm 95; Exodus 16:9-21; Eph. 2:11-22 Sat. (3/18, 2017): Psalm 95; Exodus 16:27-35; John 4:1-6

Third Sunday in Lent, 3/19, 2017 John 4:5-42

Mon. (3/20, 2017): Psalm 81; Genesis 24:1-27; 2 John 1-13 Tues. (3/21, 2017): Psalm 81; Genesis 29:1-14; 1 Cor. 10:1-4 Wed. (3/22, 2017): Psalm 81; Jer. 2:4-13; John 7:14-31, 37-39 Thurs. (3/23, 2017): Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:10-21; Eph. 4:25-32 Fri. (3/24, 2017): Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:22-31; Eph. 5:1-9

Fourth Sunday in Lent, 3/26, 2017 John 9:1-41

Mon. (3/27, 2017): Psalm 146; Isaiah 59:9-19; Acts 9:1-20 Tues. (3/28, 2017): Psalm 146; Isaiah 42:14-21; Colossians 1:9-14 Wed. (3/29, 2017): Psalm 146; Isaiah 60:17-22; Matthew 9:27-34 Thurs. (3/30, 2017): Psalm 130; Ezk. 1:1-3; 2:8-3:3; Rev. 10:1-11 Fri. (3/ 31, 2017): Psalm 130; Ezk. 33:10-16; Rev. 11:15-19 Sat. (4/1, 2017): Psalm 130; Ezk. 36:8-15; Luke 24:44-53

Fifth Sunday in Lent, 4/2, 2017 John 11:1-45

Mon. (4/3, 2017): Psalm 143; 1 Kings 17:17-24; Acts 20:7-12 Tues. (4/4, 2017): Psalm 143; 2 Kings 4:18-37; Eph. 2:1-10 Wed. (4/5, 2017): Psalm 143; Jer. 32:1-9, 36-41; Matthew 22:23-33 Thurs. (4/6, 2017): Psalm 31:9-16; 1 Samuel 16:11-13; Phil. 1:1-11 Fri. (4/7, 2017): Psalm 31:9-16; Job 13:13-19; Phil. 1:21-30 Sat. (4/8, 2017): Psalm 31:9-16; Lam. 3:55-66; Mark 10:32-34

March 2022

Scripture Readings

March 2 Ash Wednesday Joel 2:1-2,12-17 Psalm 51:1-17 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

March 6 Communion Sunday Deuteronomy 26:1-8 Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 Romans 10:8-13 Luke 4:1-13

March 13 House Band Sunday Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 Psalm 27 Philippians 3:17–4:1 Luke 13:31-35

March 20 Isaiah 55:1-9 Psalm 63:1-8 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Luke 13:1-9

March 27 Joshua 5:9-12 Psalm 32 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32







All are respectfully required to wear a mask while in the church building, regardless of vaccination status.

CDC Recommendation



Friday, June 24, 6-9 pm at Mountain Rise to celebrate The Rev. Dr. Greg Osterberg's Retirement



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.

March 2022

A Story for Children and Adults

The story takes place during worship at Mountain Rise United Church of Christ the Sunday morning after the devastating fire at the Pines of Perinton. More specifically it takes place during the Children's Offering and Message. The wagon is brought in by a couple of rambunctious children. In the wagon is the BIG JAR. As the children's message is about to begin the children drop their offering into the BIG JAR and there is a prayer of thanksgiving.

Rev. Osterberg on this day was telling the story of the fire and how frightening it must have been for so many

families. How the families had lost almost everything and how they would have to find new homes, would need new clothes, furniture and so much more.

One child shot up his hand, and said, "Why don't we give them <u>this</u> money?"

Who are we to question the children?

That week a check for \$125.00 was sent for the Pines of Perinton Fund.



Bell Choir Open House



Sunday, March 6, after worship in classroom 4

Have you ever thought about joining the Mountain Rise Bell Choir, but weren't sure what it might be like?

Join us for a fun and

informal session of handbell ringing. It helps if you can read music but it's not a requirement. You do however need to be able to count.

We'll have an orientation to the handbell and basic techniques for ringing and then play through some simple exercises and maybe a song if there's time. You don't need to sign up ahead of time - just stop in.



Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children® Training

On Saturday, January 29th thirteen people gathered online for training with Amaris Hope about child sexual abuse prevention: 10 parents and adults from Mountain Rise Church who work with our children and youth were joined by 3 staff members from Teen Empowerment. This training was offered free by the **Bivona Child Advocacy Center** in Rochester which specializes in child abuse response, healing and prevention through collaborative service, awareness, education, and leadership.

Mountain Rise has had a long history of providing education for our adults and children and developing policy on this important issue in order to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Through this most recent training we heard the voices of several adult survivors of child sexual abuse and learned of the impact that abuse has had on their lives. We became aware of practical actions to prevent child sexual abuse or intervene if abuse is suspected.

We also learned that because NY State has new legislation for K-12 students regarding the teaching of child sexual abuse prevention, our children and youth will be receiving this vital instruction on an ongoing, developmentally-sensitive basis.

In addition to this new knowledge, our Mountain Rise attendees identified several points that may need adjustment in our policy and practices. As well, we hope to offer this type of training again so that more Mountain Risers can have the opportunity to become better informed about this important topic. It is a way for Mountain Rise to show it truly cares about our children and youth, as well as our adult survivors, and wants to keep them safe.

Book Group

Deacon King Kong by James McBride Book Group March Choice

The Mountain Rise Book Group will meet at 7:30 pm on Zoom on Tuesday, March 15 to discuss *Deacon King Kong* by James McBride, a novel that is beloved by thousands of readers. Set in a Brooklyn housing project in the 1960s, the story unwinds in complex and comic ways as it follows a shooter who kills a young neighborhood drug lord in broad daylight. Beneath the comedy is the story of race and religion and the grudges and alliances that shape and sustain the neighborhood. RSVP to Rick Watkins at rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com or (585) 203-1629 for a ZOOM link to our discussion.



PROPERTY COMMITTEE AT WORK!

The following are a few more of the projects and tasks managed by the Property Committee during the past few months with assistance from volunteers. Other tasks were identified in last month's Newsletter.

- Additional effort on WiFi effectiveness; main signal vs the sanctuary
- Walked with Safety inspector noting issues needing resolution from annual inspection
- Replaced one emergency exit light
- Arrange for maximum occupancy sign in sanctuary
- Installed cover on electric junction box
- Shared information with Bushnell fire department captain while attending fire in the wall heater
- Repaired wall where the heater caught fire
- Observe plumbing professional while he unsuccessfully tried to fix a leak in the back flow mechanism (may require an expensive overhaul)
- Cleared the ice from a frozen drain pipe

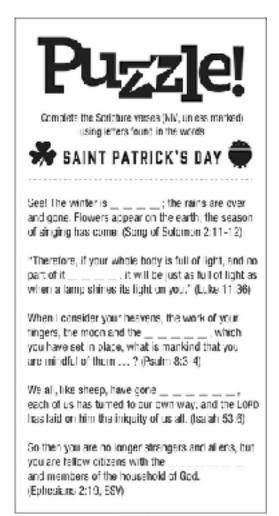
Save the Date

Friday, April 8, 7:00 pm

A Free Concert Live at Mountain Rise UCC and on Mountain Rise Facebook



with the The Striking Strings A Hammered Dulcimer Ensemble



smites gurner, entrie gand pewark, sainte

Church Council

In the midst of feeling, sometimes, that things are shifting and changing too much or too quickly, it is always good to look around and notice what is working well. At Mountain Rise our creative hybrid worship is providing us with excellent music and a strong spiritual focus and our caring outreach continues to sustain our community.

In our culture we learn to pivot in order to stay ahead of the curve at work (or with Covid) or take advantage of a great price on a new purchase. Goodness knows, our Church Council has been pivoting at whirlwind speed these past few months!

But what if we think about the word "pivot" not as a verb but as a noun. What if we consider the humble door pivot at a threshold that is the basic hinge allowing the door to swing in different directions with flexibility. Think of the kitchen door hinges in a restaurant, or the neck's pivot joint or the knee pivot joint (for all of you with bionic knees, I'm sure you can relate!).

A passage in Isaiah 6 tells of a weird dream that he had in which he saw a door pivot that did not break despite the threshold shaking. The pivot held fast and held the temple willingness to serve Mountain Rise Church on these together because that's what pivots do. "Their steadfastness keeps us from falling over or falling apart. Pivots let us change direction when the world changes around us. A steadfast pivot lets us adjust to new realities, yet still maintain our center." *

Mountain Rise Church, I wonder if God is our pivot. I believe so and remain watchful for signs of steadfastness, flexibility, and new realities as God is revealed among you.

Journeying with you, Gail McClain Council Chair

*Inspiration and quote from Talitha Arnold's Feb. 10th Daily Devotional, "A Steadfast Pivot."

March 13, 2022



Two key chair positions have been filled since the end of 2021 that complete the roster on the governance side of the church's leadership. Please thank Faye Eaton, Council Vice Chair, and her team on the Nominating Committee (Janice Hanson and Jennie Oberholtzer) for their efforts.

New members, Jerry and Sally Kersting, have agreed to co-chair the Nominating Committee and their candidacy was approved by Council at its December meeting. This committee's work will be gearing up soon to make sure that Mountain Rise's leadership remains strong going forward.

At Council's January meeting, it approved Bill Stratton as the chair of the Church & Pastor Committee. With committee members Trisch Axsmith-Tavolette and Sharon Heister, he will be updating the church's policies and procedures in the area of human resources and ministry evaluation to align with the new Mountain Rise bylaws.

Please thank these three new leaders for their critical committees as it evolves into its new future.



Children & Youth Ministry Coordinator Search Begins

With the 2022 budget passed by the congregation on February 6th and Council's charge to the ad hoc search committee in hand, the committee held its first official meeting on February 10th. Members of the committee include Steven Grace (chair), Katja Stevens, Scott Schaefer, and Rev. Greg Osterberg. Prayers of support will be most welcome.

Intentional Interim Pastor Search

Mountain Rise documents were sent to the Rev. Ryan Henderson on February 7th and the announcement was posted on February 8th to officially launch our search. Members of this search committee include Gail McClain (chair), Linda Boesl and Roger James. They will be working closely with the team that oversees interim pastoral searches at the NY UCC Conference. This committee also welcomes your prayers of support.

Mountain Rise New Branch

Service and Advocacy



For Justice and Peace

ACTION NEEDED:

The Service and Advocacy Committee is asking members and friends to sign letters to be sent to our local NYS Assembly and Senate representatives asking for support for caregivers. Specifically the letters ask for an increase in the minimum wage for caregivers as well as an increase in Medicaid reimbursements to employers of caregivers to allow for increased wages.

The letters will be available to sign after the church service for the next few Sundays and are attached for review. Anyone wishing to print their own letters can contact Nick McClain at nickymcclain@gmail.com for the name and address of their specific representatives.

<u>Senator</u> Assemblyme

<u>Assemblymember</u>



Is Universal Basic Income

a way to solve poverty in Rochester?

What form should it take?

Please register for this important discussion

Interfaith WAPACT of NYS Rochester Chapter presents a Virtual Briefing

Solving Poverty in Rochester: Universal Basic Income?

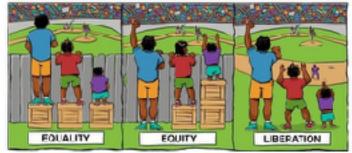


Image Condt: A collaboration between Center for Story-hand Strategy & Interaction Institute for Social Change

Sunday, March 13, 2022 2:00 PM

Featuring: Malik Evans, Mayor, City of Rochester

Panelists:

Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert, Minister Emeritus First Unitarian Church

Joel Elliot, Director of Development & Communication, St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center

Amit Batabyal, Professor of Economics, RIT

Pastor Matthew Martin Nickoloff, South Wedge Mission

Guaranteed Income/Universal Basic Iscome is guining support in many areas, with 57 Mayors across the U.S. participating in NAYORS for A GLAFANTEED INCOME. Various ways to fund and implement, the program exist. Is this a useful way to deal with poverty in Rochester, and what form should it take?

Join us on ZOOM to hear the presenters and participate in the Q & A Registration is required at <u>HNVSroc@gmail.com</u>. For more information call: 385.442.5111



Mountain Rise New Branch

March 2022

From the Mountain Rise Team for Just Peace in the Holy Land

Samud Story #1

Meet Adnan Massad, a 62-year-old farmer who lives in Faqqu'a, a Palestinian village in the West Bank. Massad owns thirty acres on which he cultivates wheat, peas, beans, almond and olive trees. His land has been in his family for at least six generations, and in addition to spending long hours working the land, he regularly and graciously receives visitors who want to see his tractor, one which runs on recycled vegetable oil.

As a child, he had worked this same land with his father and grandfather. After high school he worked in construction where he earned much more money than he would have as a farmer. Once his children were grown, however, he chose to return to farming.

In 1981 he bought a used Massey Ferguson 185 tractor that he rebuilt. He then sought help from the Center for Organic Research and Extension, "a local NGO that promotes organic farming and marketing of fruit, vegetables, and grains grown by small family farmers" (30). CORE helped to fund the conversion of his tractor from diesel to vegetable oil, and neighbors now refer to the red machine as an "eco-friendly" tractor. CORE also provided him with beehives and seedlings at a discount. In his own words: "Farming is instinctive, something that comes from inside, telling you that you have to maintain your land" (31).

A problem-free success story? Of course not. Land continues to be confiscated; water and electricity are withheld; permits are denied for digging wells, and access to their own fields blocked. Even their exports are often labeled "Made in Israel." Not Palestine. Not even the West Bank. Yet Massad and other Palestinian farmers continue to honor the sweat of their ancestors.

Nasser Abufarla, another Palestinian farmer, explains the effort this way: "In farming, every field has flowers and thorns...You can either see the thorns and put your hands up or see the flowers and weed your way through ... [Flowers] generate a lot of promise [and give] me hope - that we will still have a future" (49).

That is our hope as well.

Note: Quotations taken from Stories from Palestine: Narratives of Resistance by Marda Dunsky

From the Mountain Rise Team for Just Peace in the Holy Land

This monthly installment updating you on current events taking place in Israel/Palestine.

This article relates to actions from around the world with regard to Israel/Palestine.

https://israelpalestinenews.org/want-some-goodnews-here-are-the-top-bds-victories-of-2021

Thank You, Jack Heister

Needed: Warm clothing for Afghan Refugees and Pines of Perinton residents. Details below

MRUCC members can help to meet the urgent need for clothing and bedding items for both Afghan refugees and residents of Pines of Perinton who lost everything in the recent catastrophic fire. **This effort depends upon a small team of sorters.** Please sign up on the bulletin board by the office if you will help.

Items in most demand for men, women, and children:

Warm <u>washable</u> outerwear Boots and shoes Sweatpants and sweatshirts Warm hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves <u>New</u> socks and underwear Blankets, sheets and towels

All donated items must be clean and in very good condition. The collection area is in the hall by the door to the storage room on the lower level.

Questions: Fran Stiles or Kathy Nixon

Many thanks, and blessings!

From the Green CAT (a.k.a. Climate Action Team)

STRAWS and the Environment

Would you like to make a difference? Not a little or a lot, just a small change, that would really hit the spot.

The change itself won't change the drinks you enjoy each and every day, but it will start to help heal the planet in a small but important way.

Don't ask for a straw (or give them back), because you can have one and that's a fact.

They can be bright and bold or simple and plain, and even one with a personalized name.

Pick your style; glass, silicon, or steel, they are not expensive, use at any meal.

They are washable, recyclable, and can even be pretty, too.

Make this change for Mother Earth, and for your neighbor, and for you!

Elisabeth Hammer

How can you make a difference? Buy a reusable straw, and be part of the change!

The plastic drinking straw is not a bad idea- it's just bad for the planet- in more ways than just one. It starts out as a piece of garbage, but over time as it breaks down, becoming toxic. This breakdown leads to the release of chemicals that are harmful to plants, animals, people and the environment.

How did we get here? In 1880 a man by the name of Marvin Stone was enjoying a Mint Julip. On a whim, he reached down for a blade of rye grass to slurp up the delightful beverage. Because in time, it quickly disintegrated, he decided to try something. He wrapped paper around a pencil and secured it with glue. This was the first proto type of the straw, patented later in 1890. Over time the straw evolved and multiple modifications led to the types and varieties of straws we have available today.

Five hundred million plastic straws are used daily, and 8.3 million straws pollute the world's beaches and they are one of the largest pollutants in our oceans and waterways. Such figures have raised concerns from not only individuals and those concerned directly about the environment, but corporations, restaurants and other sorts of companies. The concern has become so great that businesses of all sorts, communities, states and even whole countries are taking a stand.

They are banning straws altogether (unless medically warranted), or beginning to phase them out, encouraging people to use alternatives. New York City, Seattle, Miami Beach, Vancouver, Hawaii, California, Great Britain, Scotland, Taiwan, Bali, Jamaica, to name a few have banned the use of plastic straws. Starbucks, Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Disney, Hyatt, Bon Appetit, Royal Caribbean, and others have either banned or will be phasing out their use completely.

The evidence has forced us to look at alternatives, ones that are earth and plant friendly. Established stores, restaurants, and larger corporations are making those alternatives available. The variety available is like a garden! All sorts of options to fit your fancy. Glass, steel, silicone, folding, flexible, plain, fancy, even personalized with your name. Time and patience will have to be our tools to make such change a reality everywhere, and hopefully plastic straws will soon be a thing of the past.

Keep watch for some alternatives that the Green CATs will be making available in the near future!

Elizabeth Hammer Green CATs



Next Service and Advocacy Meeting

Service & Advocacy committee meetings are held on the **second** Wednesday each month at 3:00 pm.

Meetings generally run until 4:30 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend all or part of the meeting.

Our next meeting is March 9.

Volume 36 Number 3 RAICA

Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action Announces a <u>Poetry/Poster Contest</u> in Honor of Earth Day 2022



Theme: Invest in Our Earth

Who: Students between the ages of 13 and 18 What: Submit a poem of any style (250 words or less) or a poster ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 11^{\circ}$)

When: Must be received by April 3, 2022

Submissions can be sent c/o Deborah Kornfeld, 25 Meredith Ave, Rochester, NY 14618 or via email to gkornfeld@gmail.com

Winners will be announced on Earth Day April 22, 2022. There will be cash prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Submissions may be displayed at an Earth Day Event. Submissions cannot be returned.

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

Please advise the church office of any changes.

Deni Mack Bob Ruth Tavolette, Donna, Laura & Nancy Steve Reynolds Pam Miller Harold Stock Bob Stock Family of Esther Hammer Family of Jim Fishbaugh Fred Thorne Julie Francis Gary Bresnahan Wilan Uthman Harold Stock Hilary T. Peggy Courtney & Joe Germain Julie Jean Sue Tim Tyler Madi Tristan

Conor Lisa, Sharon & Jack Ted Michelle Kelly Jessica Kay Uthman Dorie Starks

March 2022

Challenges

Jackie Barker Rick & Julie Peet Erik Jonathan True Matt O.

March 13, 2022



Pastoral Care

If you feel a need for pastoral care or know of someone who does, and would like to meet with the pastor, please contact him directly 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 or email Pastor Greg at <u>revgreg@mtriseucc.org</u>.

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 <u>ucc.org</u>.

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?