

THE NEW BRANCH



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Mountain Rise Church community: **Alive and Active!**



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 at Shooter's
Birthday Celebration, third Sunday of the month
Sundae Sunday, last Sunday of the month
- Bibles & Books, October 12 & 26, 10AM .
 - Council meeting, October 12, 7PM.
 - Stephen Ministry Group I, October 12 & 26, 4PM
 - Stephen Ministry Group II, October 7 & 21, 7PM
 - Service & Advocacy meeting, October 13, 3PM.
 - Book Group, October 19, 7:30PM virtual meeting; contact Rick Watkins for Zoom link.
 - Spiritual Growth Group I, October 26, 7:15PM
 - Newsletter Info needed, week of October 25.
 - Spiritual Life & Worship, October 20, 4:00PM



Due to increasing Covid-19 infections, all are respectfully required to wear a mask while in the church building, regardless of vaccination status.

CDC Recommendation



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

Men's Group - October 4, 6:00pm. The program speaker is from Golisano Institute for Sustainability at RIT. Sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Contact Rod Walters for more information.

Art: The Mountain Rise artists have updated the display in the Library. Please check it out.

From Our Pastor



"Ecclesiastes Reboot"

To everything... Turn, turn, turn,
There is a season... Turn, turn, turn,
And a time for every purpose under heaven.

(*Book of Ecclesiastes*, adapt. by Pete Seeger, 1959)

Even seeing that Seeger adapted this ancient passage in 1959 makes Autumn seem to turn more clearly! *The Byrds* rendition that topped the pop music charts has been a sound-track not just for films, but also for parts of our lives, it seems. The seasons *do* turn!

Autumn falls upon us, change is in the wind, and leaves are on the front porch – reminders that there is truth in these ancient words of wisdom. Of course, I am feeling this more strongly now after discerning that it is time for me to retire from full-time ministry, and to leave Mountain Rise at the end of next June. It is unsettling for me to even read those words, but they underscore truths other than just Ecclesiastes.

Yes, change *is* ever constant in our lives and world, but constant too is Divine love we have known to move among us as a community of faith. This love will endure and adapt to meet new needs and opportunities, as it has before. New needs and new purposes will reveal themselves to Mountain Rise. Persist to embrace the possibilities!

With an unknowable future looming, it may be tempting to gaze only backward at best memories, and we are wise to count blessings and give thanks. But, we must not stop there. Already, leaders of Mountain Rise Church are working to discern the best path forward to carry on the mission and vision that shape this unique church.

As one who has seen so many of you combine your gifts and live out the Mountain Rise mission statement, I have confidence in you. You will live your "purpose under heaven" with joy, creativity, and love.

Blessings and peace,

The Rev. Dr. Greg Osterberg, Senior Minister

Scripture Readings

October 3

Communion Sunday

Job 1:1, 2:1-10

Psalm 26

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Mark 10:2-16

October 10

House Band Sunday

Job 23:1-9, 16-17

Psalm 22:1-15

Hebrews 4:12-16

Mark 10:17-31

October 17

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)

Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c

Hebrews 5:1-10

Mark 10:34-45

October 24

Job 43:1-6, 10-17

Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 10:46-52

October 31

All Soul's Day

Ruth 1:1-18

Psalm 146

Hebrews 9:11-14

Mark 12:28-34

New Chairs Hold Hymnals: Those of you who have joined us for in-person worship have likely noticed that we have new chairs! They have a new feature, a shelf for our hymnals!

Although hymns are usually projected, if you prefer having a hymnal it will be located on the shelf beneath the chair seat. .

Church Council

By now everyone has heard the news and run through a myriad of reactions. Yes, Greg is planning to retire next year after faithfully serving Mountain Rise Church for more than 17 years. We all knew it was inevitable but had hopes it wouldn't be for another 2 or 3 or 5 years! However, we who are already retired, or aspire to be, would never begrudge Greg and Deborah much-deserved time together to do those bucket list things. We are very grateful for all of their gifts generously shared with Mountain Rise over the years. And even though we will all be together on the anticipatory grieving path these next few months, we are Mountain Rise resilient and will carry on through this transition with the help of God's guidance.

The new Church Council drew upon that guidance during its retreat on September 18th. During our morning session we gathered in the outdoor sanctuary spending time analyzing where Mountain Rise is right now. We determined that Mountain Rise Church is at a crossroads with many opportunities before us and much strength supporting us. We asked some big questions about Mountain Rise, the wider church and society, the future of the church, etc. We agreed to keep asking questions; to become more comfortable "sitting" with those questions. This is just the beginning of thinking about what's next for Mountain Rise. Don't worry – we will be asking for your questions and asking you questions as well in the coming months!

In addition to determining our current status and beginning to ask questions, Council began to outline how to facilitate implementation of the new bylaws. Communication between church committees and Council has been highlighted as a concern, so we will be trying a way of connecting by Council members occasionally attending different committee meetings and connecting with committee chairs.

Council was also updated about the process for finding and hiring an Intentional Interim Pastor. The Rev. Ryan Henderson has been invited to Council's October 12th meeting to provide an overview about the entire process, including the Search and Call process for our next pastor. And, we are preparing to establish a 3-person ad hoc committee to work on the Intentional Interim Pastor hire.

Finally, I want to emphasize that Council meetings are open to all Mountain Risers. Meetings are being held in person at church on the second Tuesday each month at 7:00 pm. Approved minutes of each meeting will be available in digital format by contacting Barbara Jackson in the church office.

We continue to seek your prayers and support.

Peace,
Gail McClain
Council Chair

Book Group

Considers Humanity's Future in October Selection

The Mountain Rise book group will meet on ZOOM on Tuesday, October 19 at 7:30 to discuss *Falter: has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?* by Bill McKibben. In his latest book, McKibben, who was one of the first to alert the world to global warming, now warns that the consequences of global warming plus advances in technology may in the end define what it means to be human. Fortunately McKibben offers some ways to escape his dire prediction if we will only act now.

Please RSVP to Rick Watkins at rwatkins12@rochester.rr.com or (585) 203-1629 for a ZOOM link if you want to join our discussion about the ways that climate change can affect the human race in ways we may never have considered before.

Directory update: If you have had any changes to your address or phone, please let the office know.

Reminder: you can have direct access to the most up-to-date directory by downloading Instant Church Directory. Please see the directions.

If you would like a printed copy, please request from Barbara Jackson.

VIEW OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE!

iOS 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 have been listed in the directory, OR if you have trouble logging into the app, please contact the church office.

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

Service and Advocacy

For Justice and Peace



Mountain Rise and Afghan Resettlement

Sept 16, 2021 Democrat & Chronicle



"As many as 1,143 Afghan nationals could settle in New York communities in the coming months after being evacuated from Afghanistan following this summer's Taliban takeover," Gov. Kathy Hochul announced Thursday.

The individuals, some of whom have already arrived, are expected to settle in their new communities between now and March 31.

Up to 100 people are expected to settle in Albany, with another 335 settling in Buffalo, 240 in the New York City area, 200 in Rochester, 248 in Syracuse and 20 in Utica, according to Hochul's office.

There are about 7,500 Afghans now living in New York state, and that figure is expected to grow significantly as more humanitarian evacuees, Special Immigrant Visa recipients and refugees arrive.

Mountain Rise has always been a church to step forward when people need help. So, how can we help?

Service and Advocacy is currently looking at options. If you are interested in being a part of a Mountain Rise Team to help with this new initiative please contact Nick McClain (nickymcclain@gmail.com).



The Children's Agenda Mental Health March occurred on September 23. Several Mountain Rise members and friends marched in support of unity for children's physical and mental health.

Greetings from The Green CATs (a.k.a. Climate Action Team)

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us after worship on **Sunday, November 14**, for a presentation, brought to you by the Green CATs, on socially-responsible investing, including divestment of fossil fuels from your, or your organization's portfolio.

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 October 13.



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



The Witness Palestine Film Festival is back in its traditional format: in-person screenings, each followed by discussion with an expert panelist. Giving thanks to its loyal festival audience over ten years, organizers are not charging admission for any of the five different screenings, which take place between October 13 & 24, 2021. The festival requires mask wearing during all programs.



Objector

Wednesday, October 13, 6:30pm
St John Fisher College
Skalny room 141

Like all Israeli youth, Atalya is obligated to become a soldier. Unlike most, she questions her family's legacy and seeks the truth about her government's practices. Despite her family's political disagreements and personal concerns, she refuses military duty and is imprisoned for her dissent. Her concern for Palestinian human rights disqualifies her for status as an official conscientious objector, but her actions sweep her family and community into a journey of political transformation.

Solidarity: Five Largely Unknown Truths about Israel, Palestine and the Occupied Territories

Saturday, October 16, 4:30 p.m.
The Little Theatre, Little 5



This is our annual overview program for all who seek background information. Through six primary interviews and more than two dozen other individuals quoted, director Bob Peck steps through the titular truths. e.g., "More Palestinians have been killed by Israelis than vice versa."

Gaza Fights for Freedom

Sunday, October 17, 2:30 p.m. The Little Theatre, Little 5



Filmed during the height of the Great March Of Return protests, this documentary tells the story of Gaza past and present, showing rare archival footage that explains the history never acknowledged by mass media.



Imprisoning a Generation

Saturday, October 23, 4:30 p.m.
The Little Theatre, Little 5

Director Zelda Edmunds and narrator Hala Gores guide us through the stories of Palestinian children (three boys and one girl) detained by Israeli forces. For example, Motaz Baraqa was arrested at age 13 and held for a month after more than 50 soldiers entered his home in Bethlehem.



The Present and Occupation & De Facto Annexation

Sunday, October 24, 2:30 P.M.
The Little Theatre, Little 5

On his wedding anniversary, Yusef and his young daughter set out in the West Bank to buy his wife *The Present*. Between soldiers, segregated roads, and checkpoints, how easy would it be to go shopping?

Leading Israeli human rights lawyer Michael Sfard explains the Israeli government's decades-long project to settle Palestinian land on the West Bank, entrench permanent Israeli control, and prevent Palestinian self-determination and statehood. He chooses "four clusters of policies and practices that Israel has applied to the West Bank" to prove his point that the result is *Occupation & De Facto Annexation*.

TIME TO SIGN UP FOR DINNER GROUPS

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 starting this Sunday for 3 weeks, ending October 17th. The new groups will be announced after church on Sunday, October 24th. You can meet your new dinner companions at that time.

New members, long time Mountain Risers, singles, couples and families are welcome. Join the fun!!! Questions - call Sharon Heister at (585) 451-1404 or Julie Losee at (585) 704-8452.

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

Please advise the church office of any changes.

Health

Courtney & Joe Germain
 Julie & family
 Tristen
 Jean
 Sue
 Tim
 Madi
 Tristen
 Conor
 Lisa, Sharon & Jack
 Ted
 Michelle
 Kelly
 Jessica

Esther Hammer
 Bill & Betty
 Peyton
 Rene
 Kay Uthman
 Dorie Starks.

Bereavement

Tyler Family
 Hacker Family
 Gutman Family
 Hammer Family

Challenges

Jackie Barker
 Rick & Julie Peet
 Erik
 Jonathan True



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 revgreg@mtriseucc.org.

MOUNTAIN RISE

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

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

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