



January/February, 2025

THE IN-SPIRE

The Rutland United Methodist Church Newsletter

“Mark Your Calendar”

Sundays at 9:15 am: **Joy Choir** rehearsal

Sundays at 11:15 am: **Worship** (in person, by Zoom and live on Facebook)

Monday, January 13 at 6 pm: **Leadership Team** Meeting

Wednesdays at 7 pm: **Bible Study** via Zoom. Contact the office or Pastor Tom for the link



Message from Pastor Tom

Road Trip!

For that first Christmas, Jesus and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to fulfill all God promised through his prophets. That was a distance of about 90 miles. It likely took them about a week. Last week we celebrated Epiphany, and the wise men who traveled to bring gifts to the Christ Child. We are not certain where they came from, but if you assume they came from a major city in the Middle East (who would be most likely to support Magi) then estimates are between 800 and 1,200 miles, and several weeks. The shepherds had it easy – they only had to come down off the hill to see Christ.

The same is true for us. We all come to Christ from different places. Depending on where we come from, it can take each of us more or less time to come to him, much less to allow him in to transform our lives. I don't know where each of us are in our journeys, but I do know we are all in a different place. And I know this, we are all still traveling.

Part of Methodist theology is the concept of Christian Perfection. Christian Perfection is not being perfect. It is instead the act of reaching towards that perfection. It is the journey.

We come to church to help us on that journey. It's where we find support. It's where we find safety to be and ask as we make the journey. I don't have to tell you that. It is part of why we come, so the music can lift us up. The prayers can draw us together. And the Word of God can speak to us. It is where we find community and where we come together to serve. All that is part of the journey.

Churches have their journeys as well. Our church has gone from starting up, to the big church downtown that many of us remember, to the building we are in today. Our mission and service to the community has changed.

And it will be changing again. Our journey is still ahead of us as Companions in Wholeness continues in their journey and transformation, becoming their own independent agency and eventually moving to a new facility. And we will be left to think about the next step in our church's journey.

Certainly, we will continue in our support for Companions. But now we will have a space, and time, to look at, not "What's next?" but "What else?" What else do we want to do for our congregation that we cannot do now. What else might we add to reaching out to the community. What else might we consider to help ourselves and others become closer to God?

In the next month or so we will have a gathering where I am going to pick your brains. I want to hear about life in our old church building. About what led us to leave there and move here. I want to hear about past preachers and what you liked about each one. I want to hear about your dreams of what we might become. No, we won't become all those things, but knowing where your hearts are will help us as we move forward.

Because we are not a church in place. We are a church on a journey. And the key thing about a journey is that you never end up where you started. The bible is full of journeys. And so are we.

Be well. Travel wisely,

Tom

Annual Conference

Annual Conference was a success. Thanks to all who attended by Zoom to accommodate District Superintendent Jill Colley Robinson's very busy schedule. The following team reports were presented and accepted: Trustee Report; Accessibility Audit; Safer Sanctuaries Policy; Pastoral Compensation Report; Fund Balance Audit Report; Finance Team Report; 2025 Budget. Leadership positions for various teams were approved. RUMC's four Lay Servants were approved for another year. Pastor Tom presented a Clergy Narrative Report and commented that he has enjoyed the past six months at RUMC, and he particularly enjoys interacting with our neighbors who come into the Comfort Zone. Membership Report was presented, and we acknowledged those we lost in 2024: Ronald Colomb, Shirley Burr, Douglas Trude and Cynthia Cahill. Also, we recognized a very special event that took place in 2024 with the baptism of Carter Thomas Yakunovich.

Financial FYI

In 2024, we received \$80,971 in identified and unidentified tithes and offerings. (Averaging @\$1,600 per week.) This is right on track for our budgeted amount to allow us to continue to do God's work here at RUMC. Thank you!! We look forward to your continued support in 2025.

RUMC recently received a generous anonymous donation of \$1,000 in honor and memory of **Scott Sharrow**, with a message attached that said "Scott was small in stature, but great in his humanity." Scott was indeed a very special member of our congregation, and he gave so much of his time and talents. He went through a lot and was taken too soon, having passed away two years ago on New Year's Eve. He was a true man of God. We are grateful for this donation.



The Church was decked out for Christmas. Many thanks to all who donated for poinsettias and vigil candles in memory of loved ones. The candlelight service on Christmas Eve was a lovely event.

Care and Connect Team

The Care and Connect committee coordinated snack food for workers who decorated our sanctuary for Christmas at the beginning of Advent. We decided to take a break in January and resume our after-worship potluck meals in February, date TBD, probably serving chili and cornbread.

If you have ideas for future congregational events, or would like to join our select group, talk to one of our committee members.

Irene Goebel, Care & Connect Team



COMPANIONS IN WHOLENESS
Feeding our Neighbors

In the month of November, there was an average of 135 breakfasts and 122 lunches served per day. December saw similar numbers. Our neighbors are very appreciative of the warm meals they are receiving, along with the safe space to relax. For many, it's a lifeline, especially after a spending a night out in the elements. The cold winter weather has been incredibly tough for many of our neighbors, and this is just the beginning of a rough season.

The requests for items such as sleeping bags, tents, blankets, tarps, and winter clothing continue. So many of our neighbors are street homeless and struggling to find a safe, warm, dry place to sleep. As winter continues our neighbors will need **battery packs, hand warmers and foot warmers, thermal items, tarps, tents, extreme weather sleeping bags, and sturdy but lightweight duffle bags or backpacks.** If you're able to help, please let us know.

Companions in Wholeness celebrated the holiday season with our neighbors. A delicious Thanksgiving meal was shared in November. In December, Kelly, our incredible kitchen manager, offered a yummy cookie decorating session. She also made a special holiday dinner that consisted of ham, tasty side dishes, and sweet desserts. Staff and volunteers also handed out 180 holiday bags filled with extra food to get our neighbors through the days when CIW was closed for the Christmas holiday.

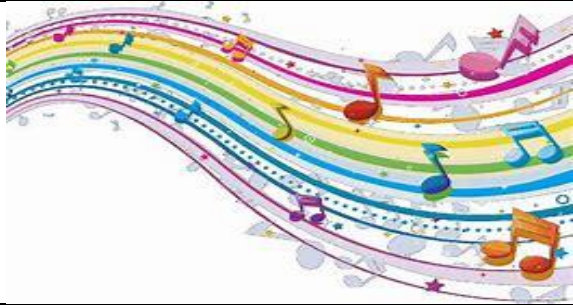
CIW is so incredibly grateful to the many volunteers who generously give their time. It simply could not happen without their support. We continue to need volunteers to come in later on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday around 10:45 to assist with serving lunch and cleaning up. Any help is truly appreciated. This is great opportunity to get to know our neighbors.

Book group continues to meet every Friday at 10:00 a.m. Please join if you'd like!

Jennifer Yakunovich, President, CIW and **Ellie McGarry**, Director, CIW
companionsinwholeness@gmail.com or 802-236-3136



CIW Director Ellie McGarry, along with Kitchen Manager Kelly Major and several devoted volunteers filling holiday bags to help our neighbors.



Music Notes and Worship Team Update

The Bells of Joy and Joy Choir have been very busy during Advent and Christmas season. The Bells of Joy had a wonderful concert at the Wallingford Town Hall on December 18. The concert was enjoyed by all and is available for viewing PEG TV which can be found on YouTube.

The Joy Choir provided music for Advent season, and the Christmas eve Service. Thank you to both choirs and all musicians for your hard work. The Bells of Joy will take a break during the winter and will resume practice in the Spring. The Joy Choir will continue to meet at 9:30 to practice before church. New members are welcome. Please see Ann Reed if you are interested.

The opening songs for January and February will be *He Is Born* and *Rise and Shine*. Closing songs will be *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *This Little Light of Mine*.

Ann Reed, Music Director



Sunday School

The children have been studying about Advent. They presented a Christmas skit called "Camel Tales" for the congregation on the Sunday before Christmas. Afterwards they had their Christmas party with pizza, Christmas cake, and presents for each student.

We will be completing this study on January 5th with "Little Christmas" – learning about the Wise Men visiting baby Jesus.

We welcome any and all children to join us in Sunday School. Please invite your kids, grandkids, neighbors, or any other kids you might know to come to Sunday School. Happy New Year!

Marsha Johnson, Sunday School Co-Supt.

January & February Birthdays & Anniversaries

JANUARY		FEBRUARY	
3	Steve Dotson	9	Russell Perry
9	Joyce Robarge	10	Arlene O'Connor
13	Robertta Hemmer	11	Norman Desjardins
16	Natalia Mendoza Betts	13	Emily Pettus
18	Amy Mackin Mills	14	Karen Cartier
28	Stephanie McMahon	17	Linda & Mark Allen ♥
		18	Toban Crosby
FEBRUARY			
1	Craig Cota	19	Alison Gauthier
3	Linda Mackin	26	Bonnie Partridge
8	Judy Pidgeon	28	Jane Jepson
9	Paul Whitney	28	Matt Fillioe

Did we forget anyone? Please email the office if you wish to add someone to the list!

Rutland United Methodist Church

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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tom Atkins ~ 802.645.0499 ~ tom@quarryhouse.us

NOT s0 BORING BIBLE

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT (39 BOOKS)

NEW TESTAMENT (27 BOOKS)

<p>The Law / Beginning (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy 	<p>Wisdom / Poetry (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs 	<p>Minor Prophets (12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi
<p>History (12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther 	<p>Major Prophets (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel 	<p>Gospels / Jesus' Life (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matthew Mark Luke John
		<p>Church History (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts
		<p>Paul's Letters to Churches (9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
		<p>Paul's Letters to Friends (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon
		<p>General Letters (9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude Revelation

Passages from the Bible are referenced
[Book] [Chapter]:[Verse]
John 3:16 is found in the book
John, chapter 3, verse 16

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