

January, 2022



THE IN-SPIRE

The Rutland United Methodist Church Newsletter

In-person Worship at 60 Strongs Avenue at 9:30 am

Services will also be livestreamed on RUMC's Facebook page

Zoom Fellowship at 9:00 am

Link will be emailed to you with the bulletin or contact the office.

Warm Words from Pastor Shirley Oskamp

Dear Friends,

This week I read an interview in the New York Times with poet and educator Nikki Giovanni who said something that really struck home for me. When asked about group identity, that is, identifying yourself as a part of one group versus another, she likened it to meeting up with a Martian and being asked, "Who are you?" She said the only possible answer is, "*I am an Earthling.*" She explains: "*I realized ... that it would be illogical if I were to tell the Martian I'm a Black woman. That's because a Martian doesn't know what Black is, and they don't know what a woman is. So we know that race is illogical. It is a construct that is destructive.*" A construct is based on an idea we have in our minds rather than on something that exists or is provable on its own.

Reflecting on Nikki Giovanni's comments, I saw how easy it is to write someone off. She speaks about gender and race, but there are so many labels we use these days. Many of these seem innocuous enough, maybe even positive, such as calling ourselves *Christians*, and yet I wonder if there is at the heart of any label a barrier set up between us and people with whom we might otherwise enjoy a meaningful friendship?

Ms. Giovanni spoke about not wanting us to get trapped in what somebody else thinks is our gender and our race. I also see the danger of trapping *ourselves* in the labels we claim. When we claim to be a certain thing, it is often an attempt to say we are *not* something else. If we take these constructed identities too seriously, then we close ourselves off from deeper engagement with the interesting *and different* people around us.

As a church that reaches out to help people in our community who are affected by poverty, addiction and mental health challenges, it is important that we do not construct barriers between the people we serve and ourselves. As individuals who strive to live by the teachings of Jesus, it is important that we recognize the positive ties that bind us to one another. It can be helpful to see ourselves as just some of God's beloved children in a world absolutely filled with our sisters and brothers who are also beloved children of God.

In this New Year, my hope and my prayer is that the God of Love will guide us in creating a stronger, more resilient common unity with all of God's children. May we work together to ensure that each and every person is valued, and that all voices are heard and considered as decisions are made in our community, in our country and in the world.

Blessings in this New Year,
Pastor Shirley

“Mark Your Calendar”

Tuesdays at 5:15 pm at 60 Strongs Ave.: **Choir rehearsal**

Thursday, January 6 at 5 pm via Zoom: **Finance Team**

Monday, January 10 at 6 pm via Zoom: **Leadership Team**

Thank You for Successful Fund Raiser!

Member Tanya Derstine, “Scentsy” Consultant, organized a fund raiser for RUMC in November. We enjoyed all of the fun scents, and thanks to her generosity, \$220 was raised!

Your Facebook Donations Matter

Thank you to Nancy Hodgson who suggested a few years ago that we put a “DONATE” button on our Facebook page. Who would have dreamed that we would be faced with the pandemic, and it would end up being a convenient way for folks to give? Many have run special fundraisers for birthdays and other events with RUMC being the beneficiary of such generosity.

In 2021, we received \$5,902 in donations on FB!

The best part is that this does not involve a fee for the giver or for RUMC.

We are able to access giving records from FB at any time. They send periodic “payouts” directly to the Church’s checking account, and they have always been accurate. We are able to keep records of these gifts for purposes of your Annual Statements that are sent out by the Financial Secretary, Kristen Jarvi.

Once again, thank you to all who participate!

Comfort Zone/Breaking Bread

Wow! It’s hard to believe it’s a new year already! Hopefully, we will see an end to the pandemic in the new year. We are thankful for several new volunteers:

Martha Sirjane and son Emmett, and Maria
Nancy and Rick Luzer
Longtrail School students Kim and Lauren
Vermont Foodbank
Tracy and Jim from Grace Congregational Church
Kylie Rogers from Castleton University
Josh Lewis

Someone donated a turkey, which inspired staff to make a holiday meal to give out for Breaking Bread. Staff worked extremely hard and long hours making a Christmas dinner. 78 meals were given out on Thursday evening before Christmas. We received many expressions of thanks and appreciation, both written and verbal, from our guests for all we did during the holidays.

Happy New Year!

Marsha Johnson, Comfort Zone Coordinator

"Christmas Elves at work"

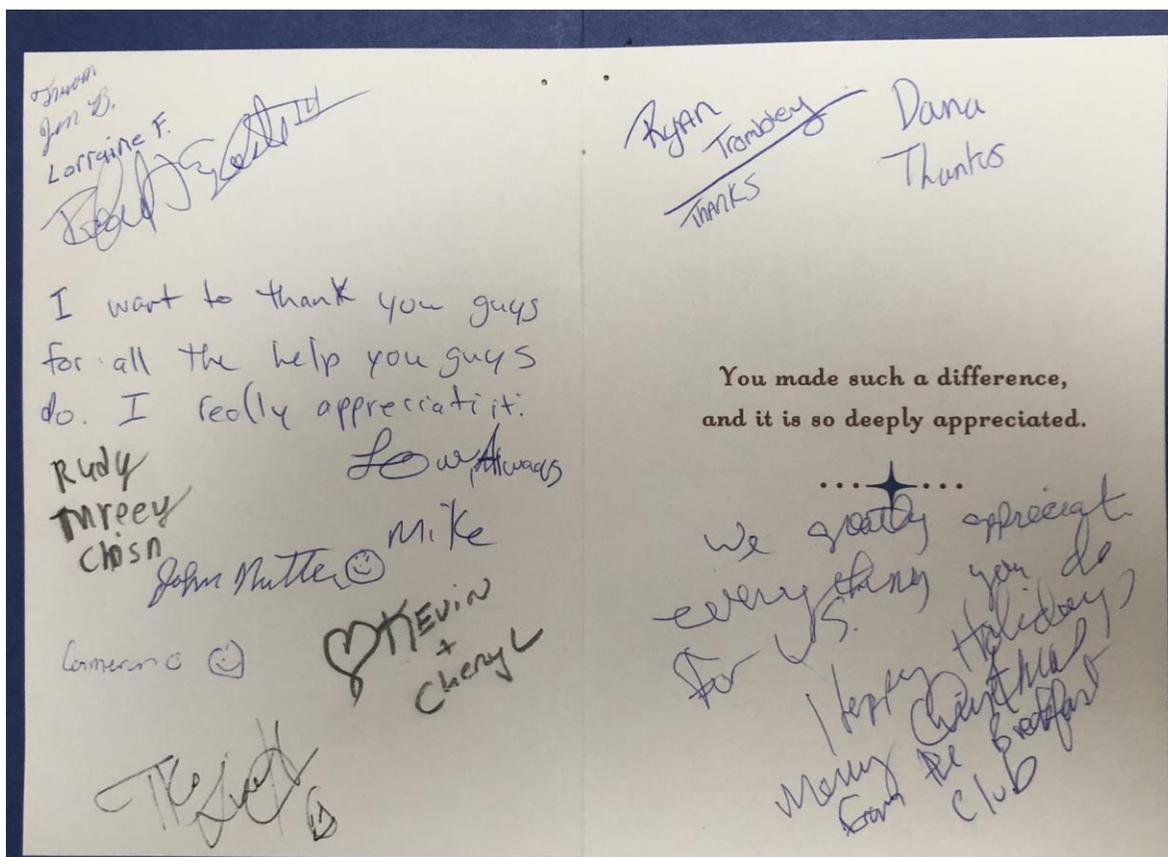
Imagine being the mom of a handful kids, knowing that Christmas is coming and that there are no gifts under the tree, none hidden in a closet somewhere, and that your kids will be looking at empty stockings on Christmas day. That's what several families here in our neighborhood knew was going to happen, and there was no fix for that.

Fortunately, we were able to 'adopt' 6 families, helping to put smiles on 11 children's faces. A group of Church members and someone from outside the church came together and purchased gifts for children ranging in age from 1 year to 18.

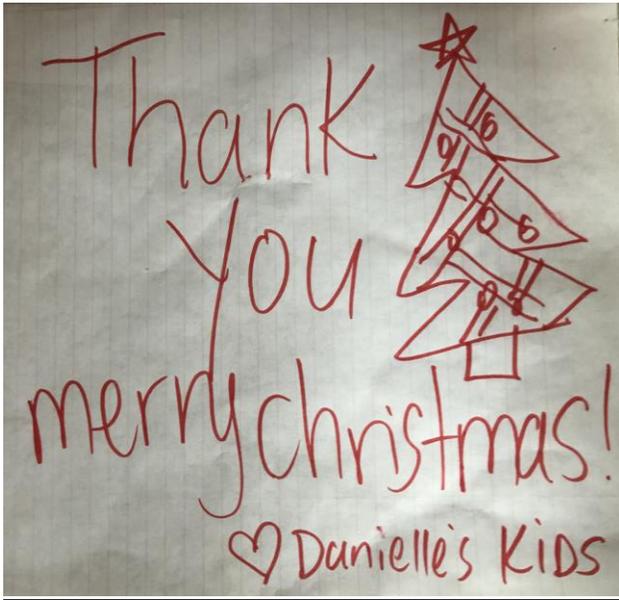
One mom had been sick with COVID, and as she recovered her children took turns being sick. By the time she could go back to work, she lost her job. Another mom, new to the area, came down with COVID and the whole family has been quarantined as she recovers. We helped a grandmother with gifts for a 15-month-old who has been very sick. A homeless family requested help getting items for their little girl. Each family chosen would have been without presents if the church had not helped.

All of the parents were very grateful for the help in making Christmas special for their children. Check out the bulletin board to see some of the thank you notes from the families and from our Comfort Zone visitors.

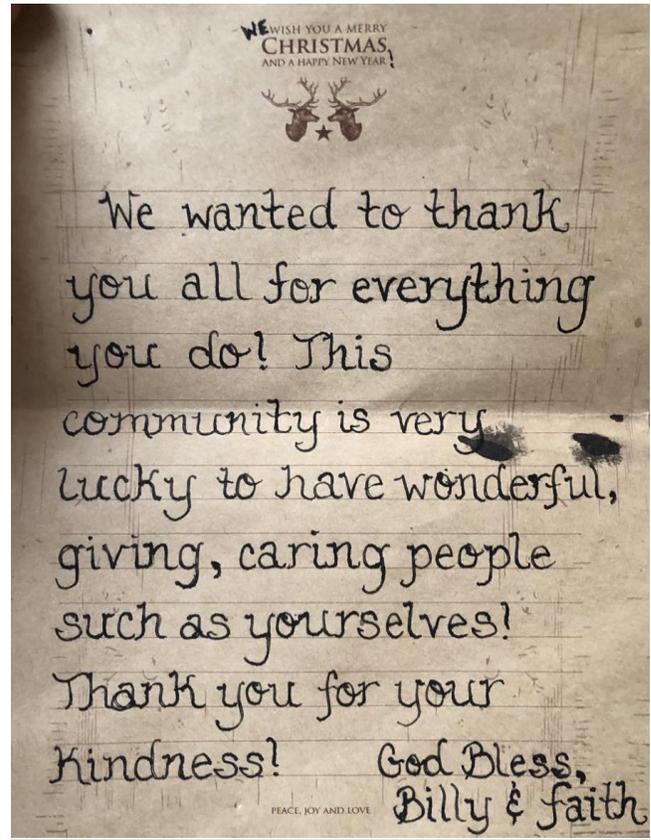
Linda Allen



Christmas Card signed by "The Breakfast Club"



Notes received from grateful
Comfort Zone visitors



Outreach

On the coldest days this year, our visitors shivered outside as they waited for breakfast. Some had on only sweatshirts or light jackets. We gave out lots of jackets, socks, gloves, scarves, hats, sleeping bags and other paraphernalia, depleting our supply of gloves for men, dwindling the supply of socks and warm jackets, sleeping bags, blankets and handwarmers. Our recipients were very grateful for warm items to wear. Thank you to all who donated items to our clothing closet.

Several of the chronically housing insecure in the group that we see each week have found apartments, and are looking for items to furnish their new homes. We have given out blankets and sheets, some dishes and kitchenware, small items of furniture and a toaster oven. We are in the process of giving out dining table and chairs, a recliner and another chair. Thanks again for all of the donations toward this year as we help those in need.

Linda Allen, Outreach Coordinator

Habitat for Humanity of Rutland County **Help for Homeowners in Need**

This winter Habitat of Rutland is promoting a program of home repairs known as *Brush With Kindness*. Board President, Eric Solsaa said, "We understand that there are times when keeping up with needed repairs can become overwhelming. Often age, health or a change in financial circumstances affects a home owner's ability to maintain their homes."

The types of repair projects they have completed in recent years include handicap ramps, smaller repairs of rot to siding and sills, repairs of doors and windows, weatherization projects and safety projects such as grab bars and other small projects that can be completed by unskilled volunteers.

Habitat would like to establish some core groups to do these smaller jobs that usually take 2-3 days to accomplish. So, if you are interested in helping out with short term jobs like this, please contact them at 802-747-7470.

If you need help making your home safer and more affordable and own your own home, have an income no higher than 80% of the median income, and have lived in Rutland County for at least a year, call 802-747-7470 for an application.

Sunday School

Sunday School will finish the unit on Christmas in mid-January, learning about Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt with Jesus. The children were given Christmas gifts, but were unable to have their usual Christmas party. I pray that next year they will be able to celebrate together in person.

The bulletin board on the wall in the kitchen between the end of the cupboard and the bathroom door will now be the Sunday School board. I will be posting work from the kids that they have done at home. Please take a few minutes to look at it and see what the kids are doing. Wishing a healthy, happy New Year to all!

Marsha Johnson, Co-Sunday School Superintendent

Stewardship & Finances

Thank you for your continued faithful stewardship to RUMC. You make our ministry possible by financially supporting our staff as well as all of the outreach we do as Christ's hands in this community.

Donations can be made by mail, in person, through Facebook, or by credit card Call Assistant Treasurer Kristen Jarvi (438-9805) or Lori in the office (773-2460).

Stewardship is more than finances, so we are deeply grateful for your prayers, the work of your hands, and your presence during worship and more. **In order to make our budget, an average of \$8,600 monthly** needs to be received in offerings and donations. Here are the offerings and donations for December:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| December 5 | 6,809 |
| December 12 | 4,920 |
| December 19 | 2,373 |
| December 24 to December 31 | 2,992 |
| Facebook donations in December | 355 |
| TOTAL | \$ 17,449 |

January and February Birthdays and Anniversaries

| JANUARY | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----|----------------------|
| | | 5 | Tanya Derstine |
| 3 | Steve Dotson | 8 | Judy Pidgeon |
| 6 | Gary Lindorff | 9 | Paul Whitney |
| 9 | Dottie LaFountain | | Russell Perry |
| | Joyce Robarge | 10 | Arlene O'Connor |
| 13 | Roberta 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 | | | |
| | | 19 | Alison Gauthier |
| 1 | Craig Cota | 26 | Bonnie Partridge |
| | Scott Sharrow | 28 | Jane Jepson |
| 3 | Linda Mackin | | Matt Fillioe |

Supplies Needed for Comfort Zone

(The food shelf became very depleted during the holiday time)

| JUICE BOXES or POUCHES! | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| LARGE BOTTLES OF JUICE! | |
| Shelf stable milk | Sweet cereal |
| Instant oatmeal | Chunky soup |
| Granola bars | Hormel "Compleats" meals |
| Canned chicken | Crackers |
| Pork and Beans or baked beans | |
| Toilet paper to give out to folks | |

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