



November/December 2024

THE IN-SPIRE

The Rutland United Methodist Church Newsletter

“Mark Your Calendar”

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

Monday, November 18 at 6 pm: **Leadership Team** Meeting

Sunday, November 17 and Sunday, December 15: **Bells of Joy** play during worship

Sunday, December 1: **First Sunday of Advent ~ Decorating the Church after worship**

Sunday, December 8 at 2 pm: **RUMC Annual Conference** with DS Jill Colley Robinson

Wednesday, December 18 at 7 pm: **Bells of Joy Concert** at Wallingford Town Hall



Message from Pastor Tom

So many things to write about this time of year! But with Thanksgiving coming in a few weeks, I think I will share an email I got early in October, and my response. I will not share who it came from. It was not a member or even a visitor to the church. It was from a person who is known by other groups and the newspaper for complaining on a variety of subjects. His email told me I should consider tossing out Companions in Wholeness as it would never prevent homelessness. He complained about “those people” hanging around the church and pointed out that they were disrespectful of the church. His emails were filled with inaccuracies and misconceptions.

He’s not the first to say such things to me in the few months I have been here. In this case, I was urged not to respond (known rabble-rouser, etc.) but I decided to write him back anyway. Gently. Non-confrontationally, but I have trouble letting things go with people tell me what to do, particularly people who have earned no say.

Here is what I wrote:

“Good afternoon. A quick note in response to your email.

No, we have not considered ending our involvement with Companions in Wholeness. It is a ministry that started here and it is part of who we are as a church.

One of the basic principles of Christianity has always been to feed and care for the poor. And it was and is a basic principle of the Jewish faith that we came from. From Deuteronomy to the Gospels, we are called to feed the poor. Over and over again the command is in our Bible. Our church has taken that command to heart.

I am new to pastoring this church, and in the back of my mind, I held some of the same misconceptions you wrote. But after being at Rutland Methodist for a few months, and spending real time watching, feeding, talking to and praying with many of those who come here, I have a far better understanding of homelessness, and the people who suffer it. The longer I am there, the more I believe in this ministry.

Helping the poor can be messy work. We are not trying to end homelessness. That is beyond us and is the work of other agencies and the Government. But we can feed people. We can give them a safe, warm place to be for a few hours. This is not enabling. This is helping them survive. And this is helping their health through good nutrition. We have rules of behavior and for the most part people follow them. A few do not, but we cannot watch everyone once they leave the building.

What we can do is what we do. Feed people who are hungry. Not in judgment, but in love and in obedience to God’s command.

So that’s the long answer. The short answer is where I started. No, we have not considered parting ways with Companions in Wholeness. It is good work. For all its messiness and struggle, it is Godly work.

Sincerely, Tom Atkins”

Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away. Like most of us, I will be sharing the day with my family, in a warm place, with too much food. But my heart will be here, in the work we do and help we offer. I am proud to be associated with this messy ministry. And all of you who give time and money to Companions. I am proud to be associated with you as well. In Romans 1:16, Paul tells the Christians in Rome that he is not ashamed of the Gospel and that they should not be either. Caring for others is our gospel put to work. Stand strong in your support and love for this ministry. As I told our complainer, “For all its messiness and struggle, it is Godly work.”

Be well. Travel wisely, **Pastor Tom**

Annual Conference

Please plan to attend Rutland UMC’s Annual Conference on **Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 2 pm** at the Church. District Superintendent Jill Colley Robinson will preside. The DS will be retiring at the end of June. She has been a beacon of goodwill, generosity and hope for RUMC. She has worked tirelessly to provide the church with several of our past and present Pastors.

Care and Connect Team

The Care and Connect Team invites all to help decorate our Church building and Christmas tree on December 1st after worship. We will have pizza or other snacks available.


On December 8th we will have our annual Church Conference with District Superintendent Jill Colley Robinson at 2 pm, preceded by lunch.

If you have ideas for future fellowship events or wish to join our team, contact a team member.

Irene Goebel, Care & Connect Team

Financial FYI

Our figures show that an **average income of \$1,800 per week** is necessary to balance the Budget. Income from tithes and offerings in 2024 to date totals **\$66,570**, which averages out to **\$1,548** per week. Thank you for your continuing support!

 <p>Give Thanks & Go Green</p> <p>TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP FIGHT HUNGER</p> <p>helps Fight Hunger</p> <p>hannaford.com Fight Hunger Bag Program</p>	<p>During November, Companions in Wholeness will receive \$1.00 for every reusable bag purchased at Hannaford for \$2.50.</p>
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**CIW November
Fundraiser**

Pie Sale

Pies are \$20 each and can be purchased online at www.companionsinwholeness.org or by calling the office (802.773.2460)

Pies must be purchased by November 17 Pick up on either November 26 or 27





COMPANIONS IN WHOLENESS
Feeding our Neighbors

It's busy. Changes to the State motel voucher program have had a direct impact on the work of Companions in Wholeness. In the month of September, there was an average of 132 breakfasts and 107 lunches served per day. We are in line to exceed those numbers for the month of October. The food pantry continues to be popular, as are personal care and hygiene products. It's incredibly tough for many of our neighbors right now and the support they receive each day is truly a lifeline. There are new people stopping in each day.

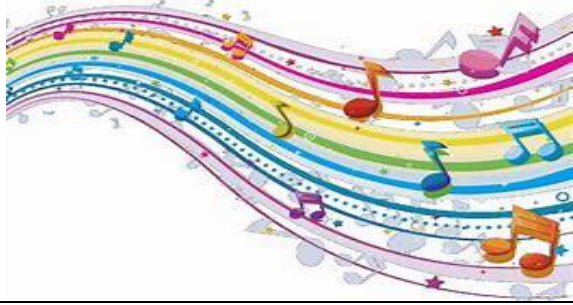
The requests for items are sleeping bags, tents, blankets, tarps, and winter clothing continue. So many of our neighbors are street homeless and struggling to find a safe, warm, dry place to sleep. Linda Allen recently shared this feedback from one of our neighbors "thank you for all you do, I mean really, thank you for what you all do. Most people don't care but that isn't the way it is here... I know you all care. Really, thanks very much." As winter approaches 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.

We thank everyone for their continued support! To those who helped to make Chocolate Fest a great success, we thank you. Over \$13,000 was raised. We also thank those to donated food pantry items during the month of October. Over 1,500 items were received, and we are now eligible to receive \$1,500 from Thrivent. Our next fundraiser is a Pie Sale. Pies are \$20 each and can be purchased online at www.companionsinwholeness.org or by calling the office. Pies must be purchased by November 17 and be picked up on either November 26 or 27.

Book group continues to meet every Friday. The next book being read and discussed is "Neighbors With No Doors - The Truth About Homelessness and How you Can Make a Difference" by Josiah Haken. Please join if you'd like!

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.

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



Music Notes and Worship Team Update

It's hard to believe that it is already November! The Joy Choir is preparing music for Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas. Our rehearsal time is before church at 9:15 a.m. If necessary, we may have one or two evening practices in November or December. Please let Ann Reed know if you are interested in joining the choir.

The Bells of Joy are practicing weekly to prepare music for Sunday worship on November 17 and December 15. Mark your calendars for the Bells of Joy Concert at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18 at the Rutland Town Hall. We are preparing some new, exciting new music!

Our opening song for the month of November will be Be Still and Know That I am God and our closing song will be The Lord Now Sends Us Forth. We are still in the process of planning for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. We will let you know more information in a few weeks.

Ann Reed, Music Director

Your Photos of God Sightings

God appears to us every day, but we don't see it because we don't look for God. By looking for God every day, we learn to see through new eyes of faith. Take time to look and watch how God works in your life. Feel free to share a photo and tell us about your experience!

Lori and Scott McVeigh ask, "how beautiful is this sunset?" Thank you, Lord, for the beauty that surrounds us. It reminds us that you also surround us with your love.



November & December Birthdays & Anniversaries

NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
5	Ellen Wakker	2	Sue Hardman-Zimmerman
9	Jack Mackin	8	Erika Wakker
12	Tyler & Ashley Somers ♥	9	Kevin Stone
13	Beth Fernandes	11	Mark Allen
14	Ava-Grace Mackin	12	Lori McVeigh
15	Doug Allen	15	Cathy Fleming
16	Sofia Villano Betts	16	Julia Reynolds
17	Ely Abuel	18	Lexi Moore
23	Rose Wetherby	19	Carol Marold
25	Sharon Whitney	19	Ann Reed
27	Diane Sharrow	20	Glenda O'Connor
27	Betty Corey	21	Mike Gauthier
		24	Terry O'Connor

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

Companions in Wholeness – “CIW”

“Companions in Wholeness shares meals and provides safe space, assistance, and companionship for people in need.”

Companions in Wholeness President: Jennifer Yakunovich

Companions in Wholeness Director: Eloise McGarry

Outreach Coordinator: Linda Allen

