



The Rocktonian

Newsletter of Rockton United Methodist Church



February 2024

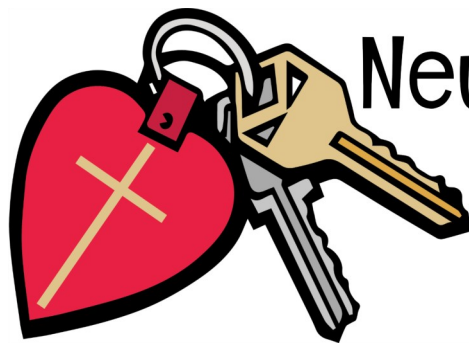


Rockton United Methodist Church
102 West Chapel Street
Rockton, IL 61072

E-mail: RocktonUMC@gmail.com
Website: www.rocktonumc.org
Office Hours Tues, Thurs 9am-noon
Office Phone: 815-624-7591

Rev. Carolyn Lukasick, Pastor
847-271-2733 (call or text) 9am-9pm

Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.



New Church Keys!

If you need access to the church building when it is not usually open, please contact the church office to be issued a new key.



This year, Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's day, February 14. Lent is a season of preparation; we take time to reflect and draw near to God.

Instead of having a traditional worship service on Ash Wednesday, the church will be open on Wednesday between noon-1pm and 6-7pm. There will be prayer stations in the sanctuary for people to visit at their own pace. If you would like to come but those times do not work for you, please reach out to me to arrange access for another time. Devotional booklets and cards will be available in physical form and via email.

This Lenten season we will focus on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most familiar disciples. "In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us."

This worship series emphasizes that faith is an ongoing journey, one with ups and downs, and sometimes detours. Peter continues to seek to be a faithful disciple through his many missteps and mistakes. Peter's story reminds us that God loves imperfect people. We see throughout scripture, those are the people God chooses to use again and again.

This series will help us reflect on the stages of our own faith journeys and the experiences which have formed us.

The hymn, "Come Thou Fount" reflects Peter's wandering heart. "His journey is not polished, or linear, or perfect, but he is always tethered to the love of God. May we rest in streams of mercy, never ceasing."

Blessings,



What's Up with the Building?

February 2024

by John Carleton, Trustee Chair

That was quite a cold and snowy spell we had in mid-January and it was good to know the building stayed nice and toasty warm. The heavy, slushy snow was tough for our sidewalk crew as the church snow blower wasn't quite up to the job. Many thanks for the hard work of the Hellinga family and to Lanes for doing the lots. We finally got a part for our tank-less water heater so there is hot water again. But, all in all, let's hope any building issues are minor ones.

As we move into the New Year, a look back at 2023 found us with some large building expenses that, thank the Lord, we were able to cover. While we may bemoan having to make major repairs to things like roofs, windows and parking lots, when all is said and done, we find ourselves with facilities that are in much better shape and will hopefully last us for many years.

By now, most of you are aware that we've set a budget for 2024 that is a reasonable one that will take us through the year. It attempts to take in rising costs in such things as our liability and building insurance. As the Trustees look ahead, however, there are other major building expenses that will require planning and preparation for the time when we can no longer put them off. Trustees will be coordinating with the Ad Council and Finance on these plans. Your leadership teams will be considering some fund-raising events, pledge drives etc. so that we can stay ahead of what we'll need to keep our facilities usable and safe in the coming years and support new and continuing programs. If we all work together, we can prepare for what's needed so it's not as big a burden as it might be if we put it off until we can wait no longer. We hope everyone will want to be involved in planning and preparing for the future of RUMC.



We are looking for fundraising ideas to help with our annual budget. It has been several years since the church has held a fundraiser. If you have ideas or experience with fundraisers which might be a good fit for our church, please speak with Pastor Carolyn or anyone on the Leadership Team.

Finance Update

February 2024

by Dan Davis, Finance Chair

I want to let our congregation know that our church's financial status is stable. We are a church with an impeccable track record for service and giving and I am glad and humbled to be a part of such a unique and dynamic congregation. I want to provide you with some background concerning our finances to help you see where we are and how we got here. All of us together will determine where we are going.

First, the church has an endowment fund, which is held in an investment fund through the United Methodist Conference. It is invested in stocks; you might think of it as a managed mutual fund. Currently, the value of this endowment is about \$85,000. Naturally, this amount fluctuates with the rise and fall of the stock market. Our hope and intention is to use a portion of this to support community outreach programs, missions, and other church programs. Since this endowment was made possible by a very generous donation, we feel this would be a most appropriate use to honor the donor.

Secondly, we currently have a savings reserve of just under \$25,000. We feel this is an appropriate amount for emergencies, unexpected needs, and/or as operational revenue reserve which could cover operational costs for about three months, if such a need were to ever arise.

Lastly, we have a fluid checking account of approximately \$22,000 (as of January 10, 2024), pending bill payments. There are both weekly and quarterly billings which impact the balance of the checking account, making the balance during the start of a new quarter lower until weekly deposits catch up.

In preparing the budget, we compare expenditures to our estimated income (revenues) generated from pledges and donations. The major expenditures we address are the necessary costs which are essential in allowing us to be an active church. The two main expenditures that account for a major portion of the budget are staffing and facilities. Estimated church income becomes the foundation for our budget planning process. The budget which was prepared and presented at our 2024 Conference is a very bare bones budget which does not have much flexibility for absorbing potential overspending caused by inflation and/or other unexpected price increases.

Staffing accounts for about 60-65% of the budget and facilities accounts for about 30%. Although we have a possible deficit in our budget, our end of year income exceeded the estimate on which our budget was

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

based. A shortfall is not something to panic about, but we must consider how a deficit could be covered from other income sources. This is an issue many churches must address. Increased income could come from increases in annual giving, fund-raising events, drawing from our reserves, and/or a combination of these sources. Ideally, we would like to avoid using the reserve funds and keep them for emergencies, facility improvements and repairs, and seeding future programs.

My 'star word' is renewal, which is fitting for what I am asking everyone to consider. We would ask that members consider a nominal increase in their annual giving or sharing in fund raising efforts. An example of the significance of someone increasing their giving can be seen in the depiction of a household increasing their giving by \$1.00 a

week, which would total \$52 more a year. If all households did the same or similar, there could be an increase of \$2,500 in church revenues. What an impact an amount like a dollar more per week can make when multiplied out. This is just something to think about and is only meant to put into perspective the possibilities of increasing ones giving. Each member needs to assess their own personal financial situation first and foremost and we truly appreciate all that everyone puts into our church in time, service and love.

God's love and blessings to all.



The church office is working on an updated church directory. Please let us know if you do NOT want parts (or all) of your contact information published. The information will not be posted online, but will be available to members actively involved in our church.

Please also let us know how you prefer to be notified if church or meetings are cancelled due to weather. Will you watch for the information on TV? Or do you prefer email, call, or text?

Food on the Fourth

We take a special collection every month on the Fourth Sunday. Every quarter, we send those collections to two area food pantries. Their most recent letters of thanks to the congregation are shared below. Thank you for your consistent support for our neighbors in need.

Hi All,

Your continued help with donations of food and money relieves needy families with no worries about putting food on their table! Thank you very much for being people we can consistently count on. You are appreciated for wanting to do something for the good of others.

- Old Stone Church Food Pantry



Dear Rockton Methodist Church Members,

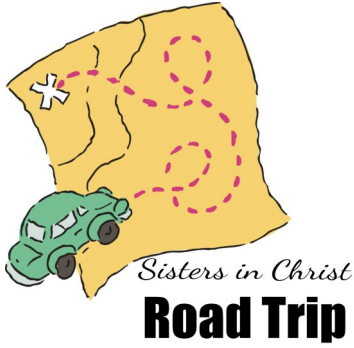
Your charitable contributions are appreciated. Caritas has accomplished much this year.

For the past few months Caritas has been serving record numbers of people each month. We have consistently averaged over 1,000 visits per month. This is a record for Caritas. In addition, we are providing food packages to 106 high school students who are homeless, to ensure that they have something to eat from Friday evening to Monday morning.

We have needed to create new food donation relationships due to a significant decline in food donations from traditional sources. We have been successful in developing those new sources.

Challenges do come with answers. Your support keeps us strong.

Thank you.



Sisters in Christ

Eight members braved the weather on January 20 for another fun road trip into Wisconsin. The day began in temperatures below zero but the day was sunny and bright!

Over 20 eagles were spotted in Prairie du Sac (pictured overlooking the river). The group visited Wollersheim Winery and in Madison made a stop at Clasen's Bakery. After enjoying lunch at Culvers (pictured), they made stops at the Shoe Box Outlet store and Duluth Trading Outlet on the way home.



New offering envelopes are available at the church. Old ones have a P.O. Box which we no longer use. **Please discard old envelopes**, especially if you mail your offering. The Post Office will not forward the old envelopes

Missions Team

Veterans Drop In Center Collection

The month of February we will be collecting Toiletries (deodorant, body wash/hair wash) for the Veterans at the Drop in Center in Rockford. There will be a container in the narthex and one also at the Sunday School entrance to put your donations in. Thank you in advance for your support of this mission project. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Schellenberger, Missions Chair



Soup Kitchen Dates

March 30

September 28



Our dates for preparing and serving a meal at the Jubilee Center in Rockford this year are in late March on Holy Saturday, (the day before Easter) and late September. Both dates are Saturdays. Please mark your calendars to save the dates!



Ash
WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 14

NOON-1PM

6PM-7PM

This year we will provide prayer stations in the sanctuary for members on Ash Wednesday.

The church will be open during the times listed above. If you need access to the church another time, please contact the pastor to make arrangements.

Rockton Christmas Walk

by Gail Terry, Fellowship and Congregational Care Chair

On December 2, we held our annual Craft and Bake Sale in Fellowship Hall. It was a beautiful day weather-wise so we had the opportunity to greet lots of shoppers from the community and our own members as well.

As always, it was fun to spend the day with fellow crafters and bakers. You can see from the photos that everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, provided items for sale, sold goods, or purchased them!





FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p><i>Personal Care Collection this month</i></p>				1	2	3
4 Worship 9:30am 	5	6 Office Hours 9am-noon	7	8 Church Office Closed (clergy meeting with Bishop)	9	10
11 Worship 9:30am	12	13 Office Hours 9am-noon 10am Small Group Prayer Team Sisters in Christ outing TBD	14 Valentine's Day 	15 Office Hours 9am-noon	16	17
18 Worship 9:30am Private event noon-3:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall	19 President's Day 4pm Trustees 5pm Finance	20 Office Hours 9am-10:15 a.m. Pastor leads worship at Highview 10:30 4:30 p.m. Admin Council	21 Newsletter articles due	22 Office Hours 9am-noon	23  5:30 p.m. Girl Scouts	24
25 Worship 9:30am Food on the 4th	26	27 Office Hours 9am-noon 10am Small Group Prayer Team	28	29 Office Hours 9am-noon		