

# The Beacon

## APRIL 2017



**GOOD NEWS from**

**United Congregational Church of Westerly**

**United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT**

***Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am***

**FROM THE PASTOR ...**

*After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden... John 18:1*

These words from the Gospel of John mark the beginning of John's version of the passion of Christ – those last few hours of Jesus' life spanning his arrest through his trials and finally his crucifixion. It differs from the other three Gospels in a few ways but the major details are all fairly consistent. Except one. Only John makes the point of saying Jesus' arrest took place in a garden where he went to pray following his last Passover meal with his disciples. Also, only John implies that the empty tomb of Easter morning is located in a garden. Matthew and Mark do not identify either the place of prayer at the beginning of the Passion or the location of Jesus' tomb as being in a garden. Luke too is equally vague. I find that very curious given the major role gardens play in our Easter celebrations. But that's something to ponder at another time. For today, I just want to say that I like that John has the Passion of Christ begin and end in a garden. I like the reminders of new life bursting forth around the empty tomb, just as it was when the world fell out from under Jesus' feet as he was

arrested. He had to have been afraid because he knew what would happen to him. But he did not surrender to that fear. He persevered through it and in so doing he brings us all to Easter morning. And it does matter that all this begins and ends in a garden – the very embodiment of new life always coming into being often times despite human intervention.

That's one thing we have learned in doing all the research underlying our Pollinator Garden project here at the church. God's creation – the beautiful world of nature all around us – really does not need our intervention in order to thrive and survive. It does not need lots of chemical pesticides that kill much more than weeds. It does not need perfectly manicured lawns and shrubs in order to burst with breath-taking beauty. It does not need tons of water when we plant what the local environment was destined to nurture in the way of plants and animals. BUT, God's spectacular Creation does need our protection, from unnecessary chemical interventions such as pesticides and fertilizers when natural alternatives work just as well, if not better. God's Creation does need our protection from air, water and soil pollution no matter how much more cost effective polluting may be for heavy industry. We must make the effort to note that a dead planet offers no employment for anyone.

All this is why I think our Pollinator Garden project has brought such a spark of new life to our already amazing church. This project is all about living into our role as care-takers of God's Creation in some ways that will feel new and strange as well as traditional ones we already know and love. I am so excited about this wonderful, innovative project which is bringing into sharper focus a whole new meaning of caring for the least of these – namely the bees and butterflies and tiny life forms more crucial to our own life cycle than we have ever realized before. God's sacred timing in all this is visible clearly in the reality that the first phase of our Pollinator Garden project will kick off on the first weekend of Eastertide, April 22 & 23. We will be celebrating Earth Day with the refreshing and renewal of the existing gardens of the church, a project we've already begun to publicize. I do hope you will find some time that weekend to come get your hands dirty as we reclaim the gift of God's Creation in our midst together. See the Earth Day weekend article elsewhere in this newsletter for details.

I also hope you've noticed the rainbow flags now flying in several places on our grounds and in the gardens. They symbolize our upcoming congregational vote after church on Sunday, April 9 to affirm the Open and Affirming statement drafted by our ONA Committee. This too is something I am hopeful you are aware of and we look forward to seeing you at the Forum to discuss the Statement on April 2 and the vote itself on April 9.

God's Spirit is truly alive and on the move here in this incredible church. And as always, no matter who you are or where you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here. I'll be looking for you on Sunday!

Your friend in Christ,  
*Rev. Ruth*



### *April Birthdays*

- 6 – Pam DelPozo-Waldron
- 16 – Barbara Johnson
- 25 – Dan McCrary
- 25 – Travis McCrary
- 26 – George Gray
- 28 – Emily Sineiro

*Happy Anniversary to:*

Rev. Ruth & Peter Hainsworth – April 23

Douglas & Jenny Brummund – April 25

*Please add in your special days by calling the church office!*

## **HOLY WEEK** at UCC Westerly



*Palm Sunday Symbols Service @ 9:30 am*  
on Sunday, April 9

*Maundy Thursday Service of Tenebrae*  
@ 7 pm on Thursday, April 13

*Good Friday Prayer Vigil at the Cross*  
12 noon to 3 pm in our Sanctuary  
on Friday, April 14

*Easter Sunrise Service @ 6 am,*  
Misquamicut Beach, Westerly  
on Sunday, April 16



*Easter Sunday Service of Celebration*  
@ 9:30 am on Sunday, April 16

The Deacons and Rev. Ruth are also looking for lay readers to participate in two Holy Week services: The Palm Sunday Symbols Service and the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service. Please **add your name to the sign-up sheet** outside Fellowship Hall by April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## CALL FOR SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

As voted by the Church Council at their meeting on March 12, a Special Congregational Meeting will be held on **April 9, 2017**, immediately following worship. The purpose of the meeting shall be to vote to approve the Open and Affirming (ONA) statement prepared by the ONA Committee and presented to the congregation at a special informational forum after worship on Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.



**Rev. Ruth's Community Office Hours!**  
**Thursdays from 2 – 4 pm at**  
***The Savoy Bookstore & Café***  
***in downtown Westerly***

Come and chat about whatever. Or come for the cookies and sit with me. The cookies are incredible! I'm just saying...

*Your friend and chatting partner, Rev. Ruth*

### **WEEKLY LENTEN BIBLE STUDY Continues...**



*Thursdays @ 11 am in the Parlor  
April 6 & 13*

Study Topic: Ecclesiastes

From the *Listen Up!* Bible Study series  
of the UCC

Can't make this time? Send Rev. Ruth an  
email and join the on-line version!



**SUNDAY  
SCHOOL**  
*Make the Connection*

**SAY YES!**

**To  
SUNDAY**

**SCHOOL**

### ***Here's what's happening in April!***

Sunday, Apr 2 – Communion followed by prep  
for Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt!

Sunday, Apr 9 – Palm Sunday Symbols  
Service (young readers welcome!)  
followed by Palms Processional &  
Fellowship time Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, Apr 16 – **EASTER SUNDAY  
WORSHIP @ 9:30 am**

Sunday, Apr 23 – Earth Day Activities outside  
(weather permitting)

Sunday, Apr 30 – **Bird houses!!!**



**YOU ARE INVITED  
to a FORUM on  
Sunday, April 2, 2017  
@ 11 am**

The Open and Affirming Committee of  
our church will be presenting their draft of the  
Open and Affirming Statement for the United  
Congregational Church of Westerly in  
Pawcatuck, UCC for review and conversation.

This statement will be the subject of a  
**Special Congregational Meeting** on **Sunday,  
April 9**, immediately following worship at which  
time we will be voting on whether or not to  
approve it.

Approval of this statement by our congregation  
is the first step in our becoming an official,  
registered ONA church of the United Church of  
Christ.

## MISSION MOMENTS



### The Second Annual Fill the Pews Competition!!

Many people “give up” particular things during the Lenten season. This year let’s “give away” some significant love to our neighbors in need of food and of a welcoming and accepting church.

Keep that competitive spirit flowing!! During this Lenten season we are competing to see which side of our congregation can fill the pews with the most visitors and non-perishable goods! The front pews are reserved for non-perishable items for the PNC while the rest of the pews are open for visitors that YOU invite to join us!

Each non-perishable food item earns your side of the church one point. Each guest earns your side a whopping 10 points!!!! There is a “Guest Basket” in each of the front pews where your guests should leave their visitor cards; and, you must also introduce them to Rev. Ruth!

The contest will run through Easter Sunday, April 16, but we are hoping that the spirit of filling our pews with new friends and our mission buckets with donations will continue indefinitely!!

The winning side of the church will be recipients of bragging rights for the next year and ribbons! This year’s **photo shoot** will take place immediately after worship on Earth Day Sunday, **April 23**. Before going off to beautify the gardens, please help FILL THE TRUCK with the goodies so that they can be delivered to the PNC on Monday. The more the merrier and the easier the task!

Don’t forget our four-legged friends! The PNC also supplies pet food to needy clients.

Thanks to the Pollinator Garden/Labyrinth Committee for providing the WARM meal for the month of April.

## LOOKING AHEAD

SUNDAY, APRIL 30



In 2016, the United Church of Christ received over \$2.2 million for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Every dollar was used to help people and communities living in critical situations worldwide: 63% of funds were used to fund projects related to health, education and agriculture; 13% of funds were used to respond to international disaster relief; 10% was used for refugee and immigration crises response; 9% was used for disaster response here in the US; 5% was used for administration. So be assured your ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING dollars go to where they are most needed – to help people in crisis of every kind all around the globe. We will be receiving the ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING offering on Sunday, **April 30**. Special envelopes will be provided in the pews that day. What we do, does make a real difference in the lives of real people.

### **Equal Exchange Fairly Traded items:**

Please remember our fairly traded and organic *teas, coffee, chocolate bars, baking chocolate, and fruit and nut bars*. They can be found in the cabinet when you first enter Fellowship Hall. Anything you would like to see or find missing? Please contact Melissa Stratton or any member of the Missions Committee. If you would like to see what else Fair Trade offers, please go to [equalexchange.org](http://equalexchange.org).

## MAY = BABY AND LADY MONTH



The month of May will be our Baby and Lady Collection for the PNC. Needed baby items include: all toiletries, larger sized diapers (sizes 3 and up), baby foods, and sunblock. They do **not** need the smaller sized diapers or formula. Lady needs include all feminine hygiene products. Start stocking up now for that collection in MAY.



## SEED GIVE-AWAY

Thanks to a generous donation from Ocean State Job Lot and the University of Rhode Island, the Pollinator Garden/Labyrinth Committee is delighted to offer *free seeds* to our congregation and friends. The selection includes annual and perennial flowers, herbs, and all types of veggies. Start them indoors now or wait until the weather turns warmer to plant the seeds directly into your garden soil. There are some helpful gardening hints and supplies on the table next to the seed shelves in Fellowship Hall. By planting flowers around your home you will be helping to feed the bees, and by planting vegetables in your gardens you will be feeding your families. Any extra vegetables that you grow can be donated to your neighbors, the local food banks, or to our church to help with our Harvest Table dinners. Any monetary donations received will be used

to help maintain our present gardens and to establish our Pollinator Garden and Labyrinth.



### *The Pollinator Garden Committee*

is excited to invite you to participate in **PHASE I** of the Pollinator Garden & Labyrinth Project on **Earth Day Weekend!**

Task: Renewing and refreshing the existing gardens of the church including:

- The Bell Courtyard Garden
- The Shadow Garden outside the Fellowship Hall exit door
- The Upper Parking Lot Welcome Garden by the sanctuary doors

One glance at any of those gardens will let you know there is a LOT of work to be done and everyone is invited to pitch in! Specific plans will be announced by the Pollinator Garden Committee mid-month but in the meantime, please reserve the following days and times in your calendar!



Saturday, April 22 –  
9 am to 12 noon and  
1 pm – 3 pm

Sunday, April 23 –  
10:30 am to 12:30 pm

followed by PICNIC LUNCH with hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks provided by the Trustees, AND OF COURSE THAT MEANS IT'S "WEAR YOUR GRUBBIES TO CHURCH" Sunday on April 23<sup>rd</sup>!

Come join the fun and help us kick off this exciting new chapter in the life of our church!

For more information please speak with Claire Calabretta, Sandi Davis, or Rev. Ruth.

## It's Scholarship Time



**Applications** for the **Barbara Murano Scholarship** are available on the narthex counter. Please note there is one form for first-time applicants, and a second form for returning applicants. Guidelines and deadlines are on the application. Please see the information below concerning the **Tacos and Sundaes Supper**. *The proceeds from this event are used to provide scholarships for our college students. A sign-up sheet for needed ingredients* is on the narthex bulletin board. **Please sign up!** Any help, as well as your attendance at the supper, will be greatly appreciated.

### ***"Make Your Own"***

### **Tacos & Sundaes Supper**

**Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 p.m.**

- *All proceeds benefit the Murano Scholarship Fund.*
- *Those interested in applying for the Barbara Murano scholarship are encouraged to help out before, during, or after the dinner if possible.*



**Adults: \$10.00**  
**Children under 10: \$5.00**  
**Family of 4 (2 kids under 10): \$25**

*Thanks for all your help.*

## Deacons' Notes:

Hello From the Deacons: Lynn Murray (chairperson), Claire Calabretta (secretary), Bethany Foster, Elvis Torres, Jenny Brummund, and Ed Stratton!

Feel free to talk with any deacon about our worship service. If you would ever like to *activate the Prayer Tree*, call the Deacon of the Week (or any deacon, if you are unsure). Our phone numbers are listed here for your convenience: Lynn: 401-539-7578, Claire: 860-536-3625, Bethany: 401-539-4003, Elvis: 860-599-5572, Jenny: 860-599-1719, Ed: 401-596-4740.

The deacons and Pastor Ruth would like to extend *an invitation to everyone to participate in the Sunday worship service* in any of the following ways:

- Giving the "Message for the Young and the Young at Heart."

Expect to address any age, as some Sundays, there are children in attendance and some Sundays, there are not.

#### Ideas for topics:

What is your passion in life?

What do you do to feel closer to God?

- Leading the "Offering of Our Gifts"  
Hand the offering plates to the ushers with a brief invitation to the congregation. Receive the offering and lead the unison "Prayer of Dedication."

- Writing and Sharing the "Message" (Sermon)

Pastor Ruth would love to feature "lay preachers" in the pulpit! There will be two or three opportunities available this summer, as well as other times during the year, which can be arranged with the minister.

Please speak with any deacon or Reverend Ruth if you would like to participate in these portions of the worship service!

**How About A  
Coffee Fellowship Committee?**



The deacons would like to raise the possibility of creating a Fellowship Hosts Committee. This group would be made up of folks who enjoy providing hospitality to the congregation and its visitors after worship, including set-up of coffee, tea, simple treats, greeting people, and cleaning up. Summertime is simpler- with lemonade!

The hosts would communicate amongst themselves to plan a monthly schedule, depending on everyone's availability. A Sunday could even be further broken up with different people doing different tasks: set-up, serving, clean-up, bringing in food, etc., which would accommodate those who need to attend meetings after church.

Novices would be welcome to join the group as well and could work with an experienced host the first couple of times to learn the routine. The committee could appeal to the wider congregation for help if they cannot host a certain week. Ultimately, the deacons would be responsible for filling any gaps in scheduling.

There will be a Fellowship Hosts Committee sign-up next to the existing weekly sign-up sheet. The deacons will monitor the list and, at the end of April, consult with anyone who has signed up. Together, they will decide whether there are enough volunteers to fairly spread the responsibilities and make the committee feasible. If not, we will continue with the open sign-up system.

*Maybe hospitality is your way of serving others! We all truly appreciate the time to relax, chat, and have a bit of refreshment. Thank you for giving consideration to this new possibility.*

**PRAYER TREE REVISIONS**

This is just a reminder that we are in the process of revising the Prayer Tree. If you would like to be a participant, forms are available in the office.



**Diaconate Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Apr 2	Elvis Torres	860-599-5572
Apr 9	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
Apr 16	Jenny Brummund	860-599-1719
Apr 23	Claire Calabretta	860-536-3625
Apr 30	Elvis Torres	860-599-5572



**Women's  
Fellowship  
Potluck Supper**



ALL THE LADIES OF ANY AGE ARE INVITED  
TO THE NEXT WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP  
GATHERING!

**Thursday, April 27 @ 5:30 pm**

Come join us for a fun evening of food, fellowship and plain old fashioned conversation about this and that! Bring whatever potluck dish suits your fancy and join us for a relaxed evening among friends.



***"BOOKS" Continues ...***

and our next gathering is planned for Tuesday, **April 11** and we will be meeting at **Church for a Potluck Supper at 6 pm**. The book we have chosen to read is *The Shack* by Wm. Paul Young. It should be available through the library or for purchase in local bookstores or online. AND, as you may know, this book has been made into a movie so there may be a movie outing coming...



## MUSIC NEWS

*The Hallelujah Chorus will be sung on Easter Sunday at the conclusion of the 9:30 am worship service IF we have enough singers to make it work!*

### Rehearsals for the Hallelujah Chorus:

**April 2 @ 10:30 am**  
**April 9 @ 10:45 am**

These rehearsals will take place in the sanctuary. ALL singers are invited to participate!

### The Harvest Table Dinner Ministry **Wednesday, April 19 @ 5:30 pm**



*This month will feature a second screening of **HOMETOWN HABITAT** with improved sound!*

Join us for an informal gathering to enjoy a simple soup supper as we gather to sing, pray and talk. All ages welcome! Special activities for children provided. Soups will be vegetarian/vegan. Gluten free bread will be available. Come as you are, assured of welcome, refreshment and renewal.

If you are unable to participate in this event but would like to support this important and growing new ministry of our church, kindly consider donating a homemade soup (enough for 8-10 people) for one of the gatherings. Please speak with Rev. Ruth for more information anytime.

## PRAYER LIST



*Please pray for the following members and friends of our church:*

Madelyn Stratton	Sandi Davis
Fred	Jeff
Catherine	Millie Silver
Carole Kus	Shirley Harrington
Lisa	Beverly & Family
Brian Madill	David Jones
Eugene Ravenelle	Jennifer Clancon
Karen & Bill	Kim Brown
Shirley M.	Hope
Gerry	Timothy Nugent
Scott & his parents	William Underhill III
Family of Gary Dobson	
Connie	Nicci & Jeff
Bob & Ann	Allie
Rae Drager	Family of Doris Whitehead
Mark Bottineau	

*If you would like anyone added or removed from this list for the next newsletter, please call the office or let one of our deacons know. Thank you.*

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### OUR STAFF

*Pastor:* The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth  
*Organist:* David Cranmer  
*YES Program Contact:* Kathy Tarasuk  
*Secretary:* Susan Perreault  
*Sexton:* JoAnn Spurley  
*Web Master:* Heather Stratton  
*Lighthouse Editor:* Elaine deCiutiis

### CHURCH OFFICE SPECIFICS

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*Website:* **www.uccwesterly.org**  
*Office Hours:* Monday, Thursday, & Friday  
from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.