

# The Beacon

## FEBRUARY 2017



**GOOD NEWS from**

**United Congregational Church of Westerly**

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

**Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am**

**FROM THE PASTOR ...**

*Love bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.*

1 Corinthians 13:7

February is here so I just put my Valentine's Day door decoration on my front door. It's the word "LOVE" carved from wood, painted various shades of pink and red and decorated with little hearts. Sort of schmaltzy and cliché, I know, but I like it. I like the idea of proclaiming "love" to all my neighbors. I like claiming my home as one where love rules, at least most of the time. Of course, not every day in my house is filled with love. Some days my family drives me crazy and other days the neighbors make me nuts. But, such is life, isn't it? We aspire to love and be loved. We aspire to respond to life around us as loving, kind people. We want to be loving, bearing with those things our loved ones do or say that make us crazy. We want to believe the best about people. We want to be able to keep on hoping everything will somehow work out when life feels upside down. We want to think we can endure whatever fate throws at us, but some days that's easier to do than others. The truth is that sometimes love seems an impossible dream, a romantic fairy tale with little grounding in everyday life.

Not so, says the Apostle Paul in the first of his letters to the church in Corinth. Love, Paul argues, is actually the very foundation on which life each day is built. Fancy words and profound pronouncements do not make love happen. Giving away your wealth and even your life, that doesn't prove you know how to love. What you do in your relationships with other people – those you know well and those who are strangers encountered in a moment – how you treat *all those* people is the only thing that reveals whether or not you know how to love. "Love is patient ... and kind," Paul says. "Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude ... does not insist on its own way... is not irritable or resentful ... does not rejoice in wrong-doing, but rejoices in truth." Admittedly Paul sets a pretty high bar here. None of us is always patient and kind. None of us escapes those moments of envy or arrogance. And there is no one who doesn't have the occasional moment of irritability and selfishness. Of course not, because we are all human. Paul gets this, and Paul wants us to realize that in spite of how imperfectly we love, that ability to love is still the most precious gift from God in our lives. He wants us to understand that we are able to love because God first loved us, so much that God sent Jesus to teach us how to love as God would have us love.

That's why I think it is no surprise whatsoever that one of the signature community events of this church is the Valentine Tea. Valentine's Day is about love, after all. This church understands love, living out Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians all the time through the actions of our members and friends as they care for each other and for the needs of our community at large. This church gets love. This church does love and soon we will broaden and deepen that love even more as we prepare to engage in the process which will lead us to become an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. Every week as worship begins the Deacon states, "no matter who you are or where you are on your journey of life you are welcome here." The ONA process and the act of becoming an official ONA church takes that statement from words to action, as we claim our call to be a radically welcoming church – one where everyone is welcome to worship and work together as best as they are able. ONA means, in essence, that we put no limits on love. We aspire to love as God loves us – freely and without reservation or restriction. Can we do this? I have no doubt since we are doing it already. Plus, as our good friend Paul

reminds us, "faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." We got this, no problem.

Your friend in Christ,  
*Rev. Ruth*

# Annual Ladies' Night Dinner

*sponsored by the Men's Club*

**Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**5:30 p.m.** at **StoneRidge** –  
Jerry Brown Rd in Mystic, CT

Tickets: \$35.00 each  
Maximum # of people: 25

Menu choices: *Beef Tenderloin, Salmon,  
or Chicken Parmesan.*

Please **sign up on the sign-up sheet** located on the bulletin board near Fellowship Hall to let us know you are coming and what your choice of meal is. Please make your check out to UCC Men's Club and give to Ed Stratton.



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

and our next gathering will be on **Tuesday, February 28** and we will be meeting at **Supreme Pizza** on Route 1 in Westerly at **6:00 pm**. The book we have chosen to read for this gathering is *The Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline. It should be available through the library or for purchase in local bookstores or online. Hope you'll join us!

# **OLD FASHIONED VALENTINE TEA**



**Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

*Come and enjoy  
Delicate Tea Sandwiches,  
Cookies, Fancy Pastries, Fresh Scones,  
and a variety of Beverages.*

**Price: \$12.00 each**

**Please call the folks listed below to be placed on our "Reservation List."**

You can call Linda Evans (860) 599-5066 or Carolyn LeRoy (401) 322-8812 or the office (860) 599-1226 for reservations. Then please mail in your check (payable to the United Congregational Church) and put "Tea" on the memo line. This will guarantee that you won't be waiting in line for a seat! Thank you.

Please **sign up** on the sign-up sheets on the table in Fellowship Hall. Volunteers will be needed to make pastries, donate chicken, tuna, ham, or eggs, be waitresses or waiters, work in the kitchen, help set-up for tea, and clean up on Sunday.

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## **Diaconate Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name &amp; Telephone</u>
Feb 5	Bethany Foster 401-539-4003
Feb 12	Lynn Murray 401-539-7578
Feb 19	Bethany Foster 401-539-4003
Feb 26	Claire Calabretta 860-536-3625

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***The Pollinator Garden  
& Labyrinth Working  
Group***

continues to meet  
regularly with our next  
gathering scheduled for

***Wednesday, February 1  
at 6:30 pm in the Parlor.***

All welcome to attend our meetings. We also plan to offer educational opportunities here at the church (one of them is listed below!) and off-site as well, so keep watching for the latest details on our progress on Facebook!

***YOU ARE INVITED!!***

***to a showing at UCC WESTERLY of  
HOMETOWN HABITAT:***

***Stories of Bringing Nature Home***

*A 90 minute environmental, educational  
documentary showing how and why native  
plants are critical to the survival and vitality of  
local ecosystems.*

***Sunday, February 26***

***2 – 4:30 pm.***

***Suggested donation: \$5***

***Famous UCC Westerly Dessert Buffet too!***



***ASH WEDNESDAY SERICE***

***Wednesday, March 1 @ 7 pm***

Join us for a unique service of prayer, meditation and the imposition of ashes as we begin Lent, the time in the Christian year when we consider intentionally who we are and who God needs us to be.

Rev. Ruth is compiling a Lenten Devotional Resource for our church and would love your input. Do you have a favorite bible verse, or poem, prayer or hymn? Kindly bring your suggestions to Rev. Ruth by mid-February and she will compile them. Thanks!



***February Birthdays***

- 1 – Andy Schilke
- 6 – Heidi Schilke
- 7 – Dorothy Oehrle
- 9 – Jimmy Cornell
- 12 – Alice Dessales
- 17 – Katharine Tarasuk
- 20 – Nick Comito

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

***THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE  
THIS PAST SUNDAY'S ANNUAL MEETING  
SUCH A SUCCESS!***

Some excellent conversations especially with regard to the re-allocation of some of our community missions funds to support the Jonnycake Center and their new domestic violence intervention initiative. Just a reminder that we are *still in need of a few people to round out our Board and Committee slates* for the coming year. We especially need Deacons and folks to support Christian Education for our children and youth. Do know that we now have the capability for folks to phone in to meetings if traveling to church for evening meetings is a concern! Talk with Jenny Brummund, Ed Stratton or Rev. Ruth if you are willing to lend a hand with these vitally important ministries.



**SAY YES!**

**To  
SUNDAY  
SCHOOL**

***Here's what's happening in February!***

Sunday, Feb 5 – Fun with Friends!

Sunday, Feb 12 – It's All About Love

Sunday, Feb 19 – Family Worship

Sunday, Feb 26 – Loving Mother Earth

For more information please speak with  
CE Contact Kathy Tarasuk, 401-364-9052.

Please be sure to check out *The Lighthouse*, UCC Westerly's unique newsletter for families with children and youth. Very special thanks to Elaine Budnick deCiutiis for serving as editor of this exciting new resource for our families!



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

Come and chat about anything! The hot drinks at the Savoy are awesome and don't get me started on the cookies...

**MISSION MOMENTS**



During the month of February we will be sponsoring a canned/boxed **soup and oatmeal** drive for the **PNC**. These are items that are very much needed during these cold winter months. Of course, we have an on-going collection of all types of non-perishable food and toiletry items for the PNC. Pet food and baby supplies are also always in demand.

Thanks to the Men's Club for sponsoring the February WARM meal.

***Get ready for our very own version of  
March Madness!!***



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

Let's get that competitive spirit flowing again!! During the month of March we will see which side of our congregation can fill the pews with the most visitors and non-perishable goods! The front pews will be reserved for non-perishable items for the PNC and the rest of the pews will be open for visitors that YOU will invite to join us!

Each non-perishable food item will earn your side of the church one point. Each guest will earn your side a whopping 20 points!!!! There will be 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!

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

### IN THE SPOTLIGHT!



Congratulations to our own *Jamie Foster* who will be volunteering once again to prepare taxes for folks in our community through the WARM Center. Jamie is very excited about being able to do this work she loves and sends the following information to her church family:

*I will be scheduled there on Fridays and occasionally on Saturdays, starting February 10<sup>th</sup>. This is a completely free service to anyone with household income of \$50,000 or less. However, I have bent the rules slightly over the previous years and prepared returns for people slightly over the threshold by discretion only (I am hoping the new site coordinator will be willing to work with me so I can provide as much service as possible). And, the more 'complicated' the return, the more fun I have. There is no intimidation at the WARM shelter. If anyone is interested, all they need to do is call the Warm Shelter, extension 108 and talk to Harlee the site coordinator to make an appointment! To my knowledge, there are two other volunteers, plus Harlee, and the service is available 5-6 days a week until April 15<sup>th</sup>.*

Jamie is a senior at Bryant University where she is majoring in Accounting and has already been accepted to complete her Master's degree there next year. Jamie's area of interest in accounting is taxes so she is not kidding when she says she loves doing them! Congratulations again Jamie and thanks for sharing your gifts with our church family and the community!



### WEEKLY WEEKDAY BIBLE STUDY

*to begin in Lent!*

*Watch the Weekly Email Update and The weekly Sunday bulletin for details.*

### Storm Closing Information



If we have a cancellation at the church due to severe weather, the cancellation will appear on **Channel 8 in Connecticut** and **Channels 6, 10, and 12 in Rhode Island**. You will also receive an emergency email from Pastor Ruth. You can also call the church office (860-599-1226) to hear a special recorded message announcing any cancellation plans.

## **Our Harvest Table Dinner Ministry Program**



*will be on winter hiatus the next few months.* It will resume in April celebrating our new church community garden plot at the Stonington Human Services Community Garden. Always intended as a part of our eco-justice ministry, we look forward to growing at least some of the food served at Harvest Table in our garden plot. We also hope those of you with extra abundance from your own gardens might also be willing to share! The Harvest Table planning group will be meeting to decide how we will be moving forward with this unique ministry so look for more information soon. In the meantime, we need a few folks willing to work on our community garden plot. Interested? Speak with Sandi Davis or Rev. Ruth anytime.



### **CONGRATULATIONS to our ALMOST IRON CHEF WINNERS for 2017!**

- Appetizer – **Trudy McClure**
- Salad – **Rev. Ruth**
- Main Course – **Joann Spurley**
- Dessert – **Dwayne Spurley**

### **ALMOST IRON CHEF 2017 – Dwayne Spurley!!**

*Thanks to everyone who came out and supported this unique and fun event. Deep appreciation to Shirin Platt and Becky Morrone without whom this event would never happen!*



*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.*

### **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**

*Mailing Address:* 9 Castle Hill Road  
 Pawcatuck, CT 06379  
*Telephone # & FAX:* 860-599-1226  
*E-mail:* [uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net)  
*Website:* [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org)  
*Office Hours:* Monday, Thursday, & Friday  
 from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.