

The Beacon

JANUARY 2016



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

“For as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”
Romans 12:4

What a glorious Advent and Christmas season we have enjoyed in our church this year! Our worship services have been well attended, creating energy and excitement for us all as the Spirit grows tangibly in our midst. Our “Spontaneous Christmas Pageant” with a “real Holy Family” – Marc, Courtney and Eli Ainsworth – was a special gift for us all, as were the four new members we welcomed that same Sunday – Andrew Kenny, Joann Spurley, James Stott and Mary Wise. Joy overflowed evidenced by our annual collection drives for food and hats, gloves, mittens and scarves which enjoyed a phenomenal response, filling our collection boxes to overflowing not once, but twice! The decorations in the sanctuary and throughout the church were especially lovely this year with the addition of the lighted “Giving Tree” in the frosty windows and a new, larger tree in the sanctuary. And, miracle of miracles, the Advent Wreath does *not* appear to have dripped wax on the carpeting this year. Yay!

And we must celebrate that our Christmas Bazaar was a huge success again this year, thanks

to the efforts of so very many of you. The funds raised were in excess of \$11,000 – a remarkable achievement given the fact that our Bazaar was one of about a dozen in the area! Just as important, the Bazaar also brought hundreds of people into our wonderful church over the course of its five hour duration. Make no mistake, this is just as important as the funds raised because, for some people, visiting our church during the Bazaar is the closest they came to a church at all during the Christmas season. And maybe, just maybe, what they saw and experienced here in terms of warm welcomes and generous hospitality, will bring them back to us on a Sunday morning to see more of what “this church stuff” is all about. I do know we had many visitors at the Christmas Eve service and I am thinking at least some of them probably came for the first time during the Bazaar. How wonderful is that! This way of thinking about the Bazaar, and every event we sponsor, is a key piece of our plans as we turn our attention to specific church growth strategies during 2016, the second year of our Capital Campaign. We need to realize and capitalize on the fact that every time we open the church’s doors we create the possibility for growing our church. The great part of this is that this church already knows the most important church growth strategy – how to be truly welcoming of all who visit us for any reason.

Our Deacons say at the beginning of each worship service, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” Dear friends, lots of UCC churches say that at the beginning of their services too. But, YOU get it. And that will make all the difference as we move forward into this new year and God’s plans for us as a community of faith. We are members, one of another, as Paul describes the church in the above passage from his letter to the church in Rome. We know how to be church together. Our challenge now is to invite others to be church along with us in the days and weeks, months and years, ahead. I am so excited about this new chapter in our church’s life! I hope you are too and will take some time as the New Year begins to discern how you will be a part of our response to God’s call to love and work in our community in the year ahead. We have some open slots on boards and committees which we need to fill prior to our Annual Meeting later in January. I hope you will consider saying yes to your invitation to serve whether it comes from one of our leaders, or straight from God’s heart to yours. Paul was absolutely correct 2000 years ago in that letter he wrote to an ancient

church -- being church takes all of us. There are no shortcuts or substitutes. There are only the people of God here in this place, willing to do what they can when they can so we can be who God needs us to be at this moment in this place. May God guide our thinking and our doing, our planning and our acting, our hoping and our trusting, as we move forward into this new year together.

Your friend and companion in Christ,

Rev. Ruth



Kindly allow me to begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the lovely Christmas gift bag and note left for me on my desk the Sunday before Christmas. The generosity

of this church family for me is simply astounding. I will make good use of the Chamber of Commerce gift certificates and I love the additional plaques and painting which accompanied this thoughtful gift. Stop by and see them in my office anytime! Thanks too for all the delicious goodies, the lovely cards, notes and emails with your Christmas wishes to my family and me. All are so very much appreciated. I am truly blessed to be your pastor. *Rev. Ruth*

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **January 10th at 11:00 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by January 4th. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Susan will send you a form via email on December 28th to help you make out your report.

CALL FOR THE 52ND ANNUAL MEETING

UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERLY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**The Annual Meeting shall be held on
Sunday, January 24, 2016
*Immediately following worship.***

The purpose of the meeting shall be to receive the yearly reports of Officers, Boards, Committees, Organizations and Departments; to elect officers; adopt the annual budget; set up plans for the new year; and vote on any other business that may come before the congregation. The Treasurer's Report, duly audited, shall be presented.

Respectfully submitted, *Cathy Gray*, Clerk



ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE

on Monday, January 4th, 2016
and can be submitted (to Susan) as early as possible!

The reports will be ready for distribution on
Sunday, January 17th, 2016.

All groups, Boards, and organizations should submit an annual report as well as all Treasurers. Please *email* your report to Susan at uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net. Hard copies can be left on Susan's desk if email is not available to you.

If you need more time to complete your report, please contact the church office and let us know. *Thank you.*



January Birthdays

- 3 – Judy Bartlett
- 5 – Peter Hainsworth
- 9 – Douglas Brummund
- 11 – Carolyn LeRoy
- 15 – Liz Walker
- 18 – Lindsay Walker
- 23 – Nancy Schilke
- 26 – Sonya Johnson
- 28 – Jamie Foster
- 31 – Ben Macko
- 31 – Anna Tarasuk

Happy Anniversary to:

Dan & Jan McCrary – 1-7

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

2016 SUNDAY WORSHIP BULLETINS

This special ministry of the church includes the regular Sunday bulletins and also bulletins that are purchased for special times during the church year (Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, etc.) as well as funeral bulletins. Of course we also have the cost of paper for the regular bulletins and the toner and “wear & tear” on the copier machine to consider. For \$30.00 you can provide bulletins for an **entire month** for your church family. Please sign up on the sign-up sheet that has been posted near the Flower Chart in Fellowship Hall. Make a check out to the church for the bulletins. Thank you.

SOME EXCITING CAMPAIGN NEWS!

I am very pleased to announce that we have received a very generous gift to our Capital Campaign from former pastor, the Rev. Kathleen Crockford. Kathleen has pledged \$5000 to the Campaign as a matching gift to be paid in two installments. With the matching gift component of this, her gift will become \$10,000 bringing us very close to our hoped for \$100,000! The first matching gift drive will take place during Lent of this year so please watch for details on this in the February *Beacon*. And *thank you, Kathleen!!!*



CONFIRMATION REMINDERS

- We are participating in the **RI Conference UCC Confirmation Event** scheduled for Sunday, January 10 from 2 – 6 pm at the Barrington Congregational Church. Car pool will be leaving from the church parking lot at 1 pm sharp!
- A reminder that Confirmands are expected to attend the Annual Meeting of the congregation after church on January 24.
- Confirmation Class will take place on Sunday, **January 31 at 11 am** in the Parlor.
- A reminder that there will be a **Confirmation Retreat** at Irons Homestead on March 11 – 13. All Confirmands are expected to attend along with a parent and/or mentor.

Mission Memos

The Mission Committee would like to thank everyone for the overwhelming donations of hats, gloves, scarves, socks, etc. for our Polar Fleece Express Drive. We had a great time at our inaugural creative event in November when we shared our sewing skills, our desire to acquire sewing skills, and our tasty desserts to bring warmth to those who need it the most. We will share our bounty with Stonington Human Services, the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, the Mathewson Street Church, and in various spots in the area where the homeless congregate. Know that your gifts are appreciated by so many people.

Our focus for January will be two-fold. First, we are asking **the entire church** to *help sponsor the WARM meal for January 10 through the Deacon's Fund offering to be collected on January 3*. Second, we will be organizing a canned goods drive. Please stay tuned to announcements in the weekly emails and bulletins for the details. In the meantime, you can continue to add your donations to the Mission tub in the Narthex. The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center helps so many needy people in our area and they appreciate all that we do for them.

Thanks for all your help! Please speak to any member of the Missions Committee with your ideas and questions –*Melissa Stratton, Dixie Lufbery, Sandi Davis, Peter Hainsworth, Claire Calabretta, Darla Rines or Kathy Sugar.*

WELCOME New Members

UCC Westerly is very pleased to have welcomed **FOUR** new members into our church family on December 20th. They are:

Andrew A. Kenny, Jr.

R. Joann Spurley

James Stott

Mary Wise

We are so glad to have you with us!



ALMOST IRON CHEF **Returns on** **Saturday, January 23rd,** **2016**

We are excited to announce the return of the popular Almost Iron Chef event again this year! So get ready to enjoy the culinary talents of our members as well as folks from the community as our amateur chefs gear up to compete once again.

The Key Ingredient is coconut! The categories for dishes are Appetizer, Main Course, Side Dish and Dessert. And do realize coconut in any form is acceptable—coconut water, coconut milk, essence of coconut, etc. and of course, shredded coconut!

Registration for competitors and ticket sales for tasters is now open! Registration forms for competitors are available in Fellowship Hall, through the church office or can be downloaded through the church's website. Please note the number of competitors is limited to 25 again this year! You will also want to note that seating for tasters is limited to 75 again this year and only pre-paid tickets are guaranteed seating the night of the event. Remember, competitors, to encourage your friends and family to attend to stuff the ballot boxes for you that evening!!! Tickets for competitors and tasters will be \$10 again this year. And once again, one ticket = one official AIC ballot! No charge for children age 6 and under.

Watch for additional AIC details in the Weekly Email Update, the weekly Sunday morning bulletin and the Facebook page!



YES! *Makes its enthusiastic return in January with sessions scheduled for January 10, 24, and 31!*

Specific plans are still being formed so watch the Weekly Email and Facebook for exact details. Thanks!

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.

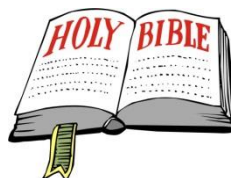
Please tune to one of these stations for more information about the cancellation of worship or other church events.

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
Jan 3	Gary Davis (860) 599-4279
Jan 10	Lynn Murray (401) 539-7578
Jan 17	Becky Morrone (401) 596-1070
Jan 24	Carole Kus (860) 822-3787
Jan 31	Bethany Foster (401) 539-4003

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Have you ever wondered if you could read the *WHOLE BIBLE?*

We're going to attempt to do just that in 2016, guided by the book *THE BIBLE CHALLENGE: Read the Bible in a Year* beginning in Lent this February. But, you'll also need a good, readable bible to participate as well. If you're interested in ordering a new bible for this ambitious endeavor, please speak with Rev. Ruth as soon as possible.

BOOKS IN THE PARLOR!



**Monday, February 22nd
@ 5:30 pm**

We are reading *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai. This is a best-selling book which is available for purchase online and in stores. It is also easily obtained through the library. Please plan now to join us for what promises to be a timely and important conversation. Rev. Ruth will supply the beverages and you are asked to bring a favorite finger food to share. See you then!



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

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

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

Sunday School Contact Persons: Tanya Sylvestre
and Susan Lanphere

Secretary: Susan Perreault

Sexton: Debby Johnson

CHURCH OFFICE SPECIFICS

Mailing Address: 9 Castle Hill Road
Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Telephone # & FAX: **860-599-1226**

E-mail: **uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net**

Website: **www.uccwesterly.org**

Office Hours: Monday, Thursday, & Friday
from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.