

The Beacon

JANUARY 2017



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

"...beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Philippians 8:4

Some of you may recognize in the above words a benediction that I offer from time to time, giving full credit to its author the Apostle Paul. These beautiful, inspiring words seem to me to be the best possible framework for us to use as we continue the life, work and ministry of this church and ourselves in a new year. I must admit though that the notion that 2017 is about to begin is mind-boggling. Wasn't it just 2016? How is it possible that another year is ending, a new one beginning? Time is relentless.

"Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame, from everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same." So goes the third verse of one of my favorite hymns – *O God Our Help in Ages Past*. This hymn gives voice to the eternal nature of the passage of time, reminding

everyone who sings it that though time passes and life changes, God is ever the same. God is timeless. God's dreams for the great human endeavor are in time and beyond time, needing only our hands and feet to become the reality God envisioned. Such is our challenge in the church in the year ahead. How do we continue to grow into becoming the church God needs us to be in this place and time? How do we embody the teachings of Jesus? How do we open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit blowing through our lives in surprising ways? How do we know what God needs us to do in our everyday lives, as individuals and as God's church in our own community?

Enter our good friend Paul with the same wisdom he shared with the ancient church in Philippi: "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable" makes plain the path through life God would have us follow. So too does "any excellence and ... anything worthy of praise." In other words, God needs us to be the best we can possibly be – the best you, the best me, the best us – for that is the only way God's plans, God's dreams for us can have any hope of becoming reality. This is not easy! It takes real effort and hard work. None of this just falls in our laps. It requires vigilance and perseverance, commitment and dedication.

This is the role and purpose of the church. The church is where we come to learn about God and God's expectations of us and hopes for us. The church is where we come to experience the new life possible in Jesus. The church is where we gather to celebrate the incredible new possibilities revealed by the Holy Spirit in our midst. The church is where we come to discover together how to be the best "us" we can be as God's Beloved Community of the faithful. We already know this. We already do this. That's why I am so excited for 2017 to begin. It's going to be a great year in the life of our church, I know. So, what are you hoping we can accomplish in our church in 2017? How are you willing to work to make it happen? Let's talk!!! At church on Sunday. At the Savoy on Thursdays. On the phone. By email. Over coffee. It's time to get going again!

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth

JOIN US AT
The Harvest Table Dinner Ministry
Wednesday, January 18
5:30 – 7:00 pm



This month's theme: "The 'isms' we live with"

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.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT!



CONGRATULATIONS GEORGE GRAY,
COACH OF THE YEAR
for CT Cross Country!

At a special ceremony earlier in December George Gray was honored as Coach of the Year by the CT Board of Education. George teaches woodworking and coaches several sports teams, including boys and girls cross country, at Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon, CT. Congratulations, George!



Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
Jan 1	Claire Calabretta 860-536-3625
Jan 8	Bethany Foster 401-539-4003
Jan 15	Lynn Murray 401-539-7578
Jan 22	<i>to be determined</i>
Jan 29	<i>to be determined</i>



The Pollinator Garden & Labyrinth Working Group

continues to meet regularly with our next gathering scheduled for

Wednesday, January 11
at 6:30 pm in the Parlor.

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

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **January 15th** 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 26th to help you make out your report.



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

US

WELCOME New Members

UCC Westerly is very pleased to have welcomed eight new members into our church family on December 18th. They are:

- Bill & Carol Budnik**
- Elaine Budnik deCiutiis**
- Alfred (Ace) & Andrea Dizon**
- Eileen Rawnsley**
- Dwayne Spurley & Kevin Dows**

We are so glad to have you with us!

Happy Anniversary to:

Dan & Jan McCrary – 1-7

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



Very special birthday wishes to **LAURA DAWLEY** who will be having her 105th birthday on January 12, 2017. She still has great compassion for her church and church family!



SAY YES!

To SUNDAY

SCHOOL

Here's what's happening in January!

Sunday, Jan 1 – STAR SUNDAY!

Sunday, Jan 8 – “Tell Me About Jesus!”

Saturday, Jan 14 – Sun, Jan 15 – **Homeless Awareness Sleepout**

Sunday, Jan 22 – “Jesus’ First Miracle”

Sunday, Jan 29 – “The Woman at the Well”

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!

CALL FOR THE 53rd ANNUAL MEETING

UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERLY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Annual Meeting shall be held on
Sunday, January 29, 2017
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 9th, 2017

and can be submitted (to Susan) as early as possible!

The reports will be ready for distribution on
Sunday, January 22nd, 2017.

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.*



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...

NO Community Office Hours on
January 5th!

UPDATES FROM OUR MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee urges you to support the **Homeless Awareness Sleepout** on January 14-15 in one of several ways:

- Stop by to offer your moral support!
- Stop by with a donation of coats, blankets or socks.
- Offer to assist with meals for our Sleep-out participants for dinner on Saturday or breakfast on Sunday.
- Come to worship on Sunday morning as we reflect on the realities of homelessness together.



Please don't forget our on-going non-perishables collection for the PNC. The red bins are at both entrances.

Thanks to Elaine DeCiutiis and donations received in the Hospitality Room at our Christmas Bazaar for the December WARM meal.



ALMOST IRON CHEF

returns on

***Saturday, January 28th,
2017***

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 HONEY! The categories for dishes are Appetizer, Main Course, Salad or Dessert.

Registration for chef competitors and ticket sales for tasters opened December 5th.

Registration forms for chef competitors are available in Fellowship Hall, through the church office or can be downloaded through the church's website. Please note the number of chef 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, chefs, to encourage your friends and family to attend to stuff the ballot boxes for you that evening!!! Tickets for chef 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!

HELP NEEDED!



For a first of its kind event in our church – a **Homeless Awareness Sleepout!** Rev. Ruth has wanted to organize one since she became our pastor and now's the time!! The Sleep-out will happen Saturday, **January 14** – Sunday, **January 15**, noon to noon. Here's what we need at this point:

- Large empty card board boxes (think large appliances)
- Portable outdoor fireplace
- Folks willing to lend a hand with preparing three meals, soup kitchen style
- Folks willing to participate in shifts!!!

This event will be anchored by our youth and we will be inviting youth from other UCC churches in the area to participate as well but we need lots of adult assistance! Details still being finalized but if this is something you're interested in, please speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.

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.



*Lessons learned from
this year's Bazaar:*

- The most commonly used word (by us AND our guests): *Amazing!*
- We need to order up the same weather each year!
- Many hands make light work. Just kidding. There was heavy work done for weeks and months by many hands, but look what we accomplished together!
- If guests get cranky because of long lines, is that an entirely bad thing??
- Baked beans sold as well as fudge...go figure.
- Holly does not like the heat! Maybe holly wreaths need to live outdoors when complete.
- A couple bazaar areas have moved to different parts of the building and still survived. Change CAN be good.
- Many of us are already thinking. "Next year...."

Speaking of next year:

- We need more of certain ingredients for the Tea because of the number we served! Yay!
- Children missed having the Children's Shopping room. Can we try to resurrect this? Think of an item that can be made or donated that kids would like to buy to give to their families. Maybe some pre-bazaar workshops could jump start a few ideas. Yard sales are great, too. Providing packaging to accompany donated items (gift bags, wrapping paper, bows, tape, small boxes) would make the job easier for our workers.

- Lynn Murray



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



“BOOKS” Continues ...

and our next gathering is planned for Tuesday, **January 17th**. We will be meeting at Carolyn LeRoy’s home in Westerly at **6 pm** for a soup supper. Our next book is *Look Again* by Lisa Scottoline. Read all of the book, part of it, or none of it – you’re still welcome to join us! Please let Carolyn know if you will be attending.



The **BIBLE STUDY** group is considering some changes for the New Year. Your input on the questions below would be appreciated:

The best time for me to attend Bible Study would be:

- ___ Tuesday morning @ 11 am
- ___ Wednesday @ noon
- ___ Thursday morning @ 10 am
- ___ Thursday afternoon @ 5 pm

My preferred format for a one hour Bible Study would be:

- ___ A specific curriculum focusing on one book of the Bible at a time
- ___ A structured format for reading the entire Bible over a period of time
- ___ Topic specific or story based Bible Study (for example, healing stories of Jesus, Noah’s ark, the Kings of the Old Testament, etc.)

Watch the Sunday bulletin and the Weekly Email Update for information on the next Bible Study gathering!

Please return the above to the office as soon as possible.



I am deeply touched and profoundly grateful for the lovely and very generous Christmas gifts the congregation presented to me this year. The gift certificates are always wonderful and much appreciated. My “Pastor Ruth” Mug is in my office – with its excellent reminder that God is handling all my problems! And the unbelievably gorgeous “Bee House” is hanging up in the Parlor until such time as we are ready to install it in the Pollinator Garden, hopefully sometime this spring or summer! Know how much it means to me that you have honored me with these gifts but most of all with the blessing of being your Pastor.

Fondly, Rev. Ruth