

The Beacon

JUNE 2017



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

“Truly I tell you whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”
Luke 18:17

This Bible verse was posted on the door to my office throughout the twenty years of my ministry served as a Commissioned Minister of Education and Families at the church outside Providence. The connection of this text to my work with children, youth and their families is obvious. But it is just as connected, perhaps more so, to my work as a sole pastor here at our church. I love this sentence attributed to Jesus for its simple, direct instructions to all of us who seek a deeper relationship with God. Don't overthink it, Jesus is saying here. Be as a little child and receive the information as it is given to you. Receive the words of faith *on faith* and be open to being transformed by them. Be a child, Jesus is telling us, open and trusting. If you can do this, the pieces of your relationship with God will slip into place.

That Jesus did this consistently is beyond question. Jesus approached teaching the people as though they were little children, constantly using parables or stories to make his point. “The kingdom of heaven is like ...” a mustard seed, treasure hidden in a field, a net thrown into the sea ... and so on. Jesus taught about God in whatever

way he needed to in order to get his message about God's love for us and God's expectations of us across. We are no different than those first folks who came to hear and see Jesus as he told story after story after story. Jesus knew that stories are so powerful, so central to who we are as people, that they are a key piece of everyone's foundation of faith. Jesus' stories preached on hillsides and in synagogues brought God and God's vision for the Creation alive in ways never seen before or since.

Knowing God does make a difference in our lives, Jesus taught through all those wonderful stories, and those lessons still ring true today. Important to remember is that we are all story-tellers of our own lives. Each of us has our own stories, our own experiences of what it means *to us* to take the time and make the effort to connect personally with God. Unfortunately, we seldom slow down long enough to tell these stories to each other. And we all have stories! Memorable people we've had in our lives, special adventures planned and unplanned, even mundane moments as life unfolds – all of these comprise our library of stories just waiting to be told. It is in the telling of these stories that we gain understanding of who we are and how we came to be the person who looks back at us from the mirror each morning, a beloved child of God.

We're used to thinking about stories in church – Bible stories, reminiscences of past events and people in our history as a congregation, even those wonderful stories we celebrate together at memorial services. What we forget sometimes is that it is our stories, and taking the time to share them with each other, that reveal who we are as God's people. As we talk about ourselves and the experiences we've had, good and bad, we can see how God has fit together the puzzle pieces of our lives creating something far more wondrous than we could ever have done on our own. We've done a little of this story sharing in recent weeks, Mother's Day and Memorial Day with more to come on Family Blessing Sunday, Scholarship Sunday and Father's Day Sunday. But I hope we won't stop there and I hope we won't restrict ourselves to story sharing on Sundays. Truth is, you can share your stories about God alive in your life anytime you are brave enough to do so and that is my invitation to you for the days and weeks ahead. Think about the stories of God as a little child would. Explore them in your mind and heart, fitting words together as best you can to capture them. Then, dare to have a Jesus moment and tell it to

someone. You might just be surprised at what happens next.

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth

★ **HAPPY** ★
BIRTHDAY!

June Birthdays

- 5 – Eric Sadowski
- 7 – Tyler McCrary
- 20 – Victoria Tosti
- 23 – June Sicilian
- 28 – Emma Sugar

Happy Anniversary to:

Bobbie & Pam DelPozo-Waldron –
June 6, 1992
Ed & Judy Stratton –
June 6, 1970

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



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 a nice cold drink and sit with me. The iced chai lattes are my favorite but I understand the iced coffee is pretty good too. Join me some Thursday and find out!

Your friend and chatting partner, Rev. Ruth

HARVEST TABLE

Wednesday, June 21 @ 5:30 pm
in Fellowship Hall



Join us for a simple supper of soup, bread and salad in the midst of Table Fellowship of prayer and reflection. Gluten free options for the meal are always available!
Theme for the evening: Continue working on Phase 2 of the Pollinator Garden!

Come and learn about and plant local herbs in the Bell Courtyard gardens. *All are welcome!* **Volunteers** are needed to prepare soup, bread and salad. Please sign-up on the sheet outside Fellowship hall or call the church office.

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WATCH THE WEEKLY EMAIL AND SUNDAY BULLETINS FOR PLANS FOR A **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP SUMMER GATHERING!**

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If you are interested in receiving Rev. Ruth's weekly email to the congregation, please send the office an email to let us know that you are requesting to be added to this list. Each week Rev Ruth lets you know what is happening at the church on Sunday and during the upcoming week. She always starts it off with an interesting personal note!

Also if you are receiving our monthly newsletter, *The Beacon*, by mail and wish to have it sent by email, please either email me or call the office at #860-599-1226.

Thanks – Susan

MISSION NEWS

A big thank you to the entire congregation for all of the donations to our Babies and Ladies Collection for the month of May.



The summer months are almost here, and everyone knows what that means!!! Yes, that's right, our third annual **IN THE MIDDLE school supplies drive** for local middle schools!!

In conjunction with the Blessing of the Backpacks at the end of summer, we will be collecting school supplies to help children in need during the summer months. Thanks to local middle school teachers for their help in compiling this list of needed supplies:

- Pencils of good quality (like Ticonderoga) that sharpen well
- red and other colored pens and pencils for students to correct their work
- thin markers
- highlighters
- zippered "folio" type binders, 3-ring binders (1½ inch)
- 3-ring binder paper
- pencil cases that go in the 3-ring binders and small change purses
- one-subject notebooks
- cap erasers for pencils and regular erasers

- glue sticks
- backpacks
- And to help the teachers, boxes of tissues for the classroom

Since those back-to-school sales will be starting sooner than we'd like, our Mission buckets stand ready to receive our donations all summer long!

Please don't forget that our food collection for the PNC is on-going. *They have requested juice boxes and macaroni & cheese boxes as needed items now!* The need doesn't disappear when summer arrives.

The Barbara Murano Scholarship Dinner

MANY THANKS to those who donated ingredients, worked the kitchen (including our recipients), and attended the Barbara Murano Scholarship dinner. Despite the rainy night, we had a great turnout. Be sure to come to worship on June 11th, Scholarship Sunday, when we will hear from our recipients.

-- The Board of Deacons

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Jun 4	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
Jun 11	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
Jun 18	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
Jun 25	Claire Calabretta	860-536-3625

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SPECIAL SUNDAYS COMING UP
THIS MONTH!

AN INVITATION TO YOUR FAMILY
To join your UCC Westerly church family for



**A SPECIAL FAMILY
BLESSINGS SUNDAY**
Sunday, **June 4, 2017**
@ 9:30am

Our worship will be led by the children and youth of the church, including the morning message. We will celebrate some special folks who have worked with our children and youth this past year. We will celebrate our little ones with unique gifts, and our older ones too! We will present special blessing gifts for families!

PLUS an Ice Cream Sundae Social during Fellowship Time! Hope to see you then!

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Join us for **Scholarship Sunday** on

June 11 as we present three Barbara Murano Scholarships to our young people who will also be sharing some of what they've been up to with us.

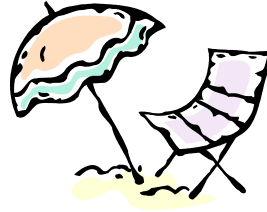
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Join us on Sunday, **June 18** for a special celebration of **Father's Day**

PLUS

We hope you'll join us in thanking our choir for another wonderful year of music ministry as they head off for a well-deserved summer break.

BOOKS ON THE BEACH



Tuesday, June 27th
@ 6:00 pm

We will be meeting at the Pavilion at Misquamicut State Beach. Bring a bag supper and something to drink as we gather to discuss Daniel Bergner's *Sing for Your Life*. Books have been ordered for our group through the Westerly Public Library. You will need a library card to pick one up. If this poses a problem, contact Rev. Ruth or Eileen Rawnsley.

Come and join us! Everyone welcome! Reading the book is helpful, but not required!



***Here's the latest buzz
on the
Pollinator Garden!***

Phase 2 – replanting the existing gardens underway! Look for announcements of work days. All welcome!

Be sure to check out the Pollinator Garden bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for the latest info and for gardening tips and suggestions of all types!!

Strengthen the Church Offering
June 18th

is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ which is used in part to fund new ministries that experiment with church, especially those trying to do bold new things for the sake of the Gospel. This offering in particular seeks to invest in the future of Christianity and of the church as we seek to discern what God is calling us to do. We will receive the offering on Sunday, June 18.

A SPECIAL SUNSHINE REQUEST!

We have received word that *Rev. Amy Frenze* who was the Interim Pastor here leading up to Rev. Ruth's call to our church has suffered a severe concussion and is looking at a significant recovery time at home. Cards and notes will be welcome and can be sent to Rev. Amy at her home address, 350 Diamond Hill Road, Warwick, RI 02886.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **June 11th** at **11:00 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by **June 5th**. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Susan will send you a form via email on June 1st to help you make out your report.

One of the items on the agenda for the conversation is the proposed merger of the RI, CT and MA Conferences. Your insight and comments on this issue will be most helpful to that conversation. The background information on the proposed merger Resolution appears with the other information about the Tri-Conference Meeting taking place in Hartford, CT on June 16-17. This information is posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall and is available on the Rhode Island Conference website, (www.ricucc.org). You are urged to take a few moments to read that information (paper copies can be obtained from Rev. Ruth or Susan) and then share your thoughts with Council via email or note sent to the church office and we will make sure it makes its way to the Council meeting. You are also free to speak with any of our delegates who will be attending the meeting in Hartford: Jenny Brummund, Christina Brummund and Peter Hainsworth and Rev. Ruth Hainsworth.

PRAYER LIST



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

Madelyn Stratton	Shirley Harrington
Beverly & Family	Brian Madill
Shirley M.	Gerry
Scott & his parents	The Underhill Family
Connie	Nicci & Jeff
Allie	David Hall
Josh	Ben
Rev. Elizabeth King	Jesse B.
Bill Colprit	Bill & Phyllis Horne

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 deCiuittis

CHURCH OFFICE SPECIFICS

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from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.