

# The Beacon

## MARCH 2017



**GOOD NEWS from**

**United Congregational Church of Westerly**

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

**Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am**

**FROM THE PASTOR ...**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put  
a new and right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10*

By the time you receive this, Lent will already have begun. Ash Wednesday will have come and gone, the ashen crosses on foreheads and hands no longer visible. Hopefully, though, the marks of those ashen crosses will still be present in the hearts and heads of those who received them, and even those who didn't. That's what Ash Wednesday offers – a chance to begin the process of accepting God's mark of ashes to show you are hoping to try to be who God invites you to be. Ashes are a sign of humility, a sign that none of us are free from the inevitable shortcomings of human nature, what we think of as "sin." Ashes are God's invitation to rejoice in knowing that a better you is not only possible, it's what God has in mind for you.

Ash Wednesday was not part of my religious upbringing in the little Presbyterian church of my childhood. Presbyterians, at least in the 1960's, just didn't "do" Ash Wednesday. I never did hear a satisfactory explanation as to why other than a few vague comments that Ash Wednesday was for Catholics. Certainly Ash Wednesday was one day when it was easy to tell at school who was Catholic and who wasn't. I remember feeling left

out when so many of my friends and teachers had those sooty smudges on their foreheads. I asked my mother what they were and she explained it to me. And then she did something else that in hindsight amazes me. She took me to the Lutheran Church in town which also observed Ash Wednesday. Their service was in the evening and we went and sat in the back. That pastor had an incredible voice and I remember him singing parts of the service so powerfully that I literally had goosebumps. I was also deeply moved by the focus on admitting that everyone falls short of God's expectations but God loves us anyway. I understood forgiveness in a whole new way after attending that long ago service and, looking back, it is probably one of those moments that set me on the path to being your pastor.

Those Ash Wednesday ashes still matter to me. They represent this unique opportunity every Lent to focus on my relationship to God and to Jesus. Those ashes invite me to listen more deeply to Jesus' advice for living my life. Those ashes, given out accompanied by the words, "remember mortal that you are dust and unto dust you will return" are a powerful, soul marking reminder that life right here and right now is all I have to put into practice God's hopes and dreams for my life. And so it is for all of us.

That's why I invite each of you to consider Ash Wednesday, however you observed it, as the first step on your Lenten journey this year. We will have other ways for you to make the most of that journey including a daily Lenten Devotional Guide and a weekly Lenten Bible Study offered at the church every Thursday morning at 11am in the Parlor. A unique twist to this is that the opportunity to participate online will also be available to anyone interested. Conversations about our ONA process will be another option for reflection this Lenten season as will the opportunity to use the Family Housing Support collection boxes as a Lenten discipline. The "Fill the Pews" March Madness Missions Project also makes a return as a way to remind ourselves to share of our own bounty with those in need and our own faith with those who wonder why it matters so much to us.

Lent is here, dear friends, and with it a unique opportunity to reflect on who you are and who you want to be, informed by God's love for you no matter what. However you choose to make your way through Lent this year, know that your church

is here, ready, willing and able to be with you on the journey.

Your friend in Christ,  
*Rev. Ruth*



Ash Wednesday service at **7 pm** on March 1  
Sunday Morning Worship @ 9:30 am  
Theme: Radical Love and Discipleship

*Daily Lenten Devotional Guide*  
for your use at home  
Copies at church or on the website  
*Weekly Lenten Bible Study* – see  
details elsewhere

The Deacons and Rev. Ruth are also looking for lay readers to participate in two Holy Week services: The Palm Sunday Symbols Service & the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service. Perhaps preparing to be a reader for one off these services could be your Lenten discipline for this year? Speak with Rev. Ruth for more information.

### **WEEKLY LENTEN BIBLE STUDY**



*Thursdays @ 11 am in the Parlor*  
*March 2, 9, 23, 30 & April 6, 13*  
Study Topic: Ecclesiastes  
From the *Listen Up!* Bible Study series  
of the UCC  
Can't make this time? Speak with Rev. Ruth  
about the online version!



## **Family Housing Support**

If you are looking for a positive way to help others during Lent the Emergency Family Housing Support group is asking once again for us to fill the little houses available in the narthex with coins or dollars. Please take one. We will be collecting them on Easter Sunday.

Thanks for your concern and generosity.  
-- Carolyn LeRoy



## **March Birthdays**

- 1 – Fred Tarasuk
- 1 – Madelyn Stratton
- 5 – Cathy Gray
- 7 – Shirin Platt
- 10 – Adam Tarasuk
- 12 – Emma Stratton
- 19 – Edward Stratton
- 30 – Brenda Cornell

*Happy Anniversary to:*

Ed and Nancy Schilke – March 16

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



**SAY YES!**

**To  
SUNDAY**

**SCHOOL**

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

YES will be meeting every Sunday in March. For more information or to volunteer with the program any week, please speak with Kathy Tarasuk at 401-364-9052. We would especially love to have volunteers for craft activities with the children.

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!

**Attention students in Grades 7 – 12!**  
**Announcing Maple Sugar Camp**  
**@ Irons Homestead of**  
**The Rhode Island Conference, UCC**  
**March 17-18, 2017**  
**\$70 per person includes all meals and materials**  
**To register contact Jennifer Geary,**  
**401-710-9478**



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

Come and chat about anything on any Thursday in March *except for March 16<sup>th</sup>*. Rev. Ruth will be away at a Ministry Conference. The hot drinks at the Savoy are awesome and don't get me started on the cookies...

## **MISSION MOMENTS**

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



### **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.

Let's get that competitive spirit flowing again!! During this Lenten season 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.**

Thanks to the Choir for providing the March WARM meal.

## **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING**

The next **Church Council** meeting will be held on Sunday, **March 12<sup>th</sup>** at **11:00 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by **March 6<sup>th</sup>**. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Susan will send you a form via email on March 3<sup>rd</sup> to help you make out your report.



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

continues to meet regularly with our next gathering scheduled for

**Wednesday, March 8  
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!

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## **Diaconate Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Mar 5	Jenny Brummund	860-599-1719
Mar 12	Claire Calabretta	860-536-3625
Mar 19	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
Mar 26	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003

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## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Join the **ONA Committee** after worship on Sunday, **March 26** and Sunday, **April 2** as the ONA Committee shares some important information regarding our plans to become an **OPEN AND AFFIRMING Church of the United Church of Christ**. More details to follow as details are confirmed! For more information, please speak with either of the ONA Committee Co-chairs, Dwayne Spurley and Lynn Murray.



*As the Beacon goes to press, the details for the next gathering of **BOOKS** have yet to be determined. Watch the Weekly Email and the Sunday morning bulletin for details!*



## **MUSIC NEWS**

**The TONE CHIMES CHOIR**  
*is gearing up for EASTER!*  
*If you are interested in joining,*  
*please see Dav Cranmer.*

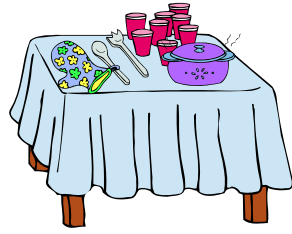
There will be an **OPEN MUSIC COMMITTEE meeting** on Sunday, **March 5**, at **11 am** in the Music Room/Library. All are welcome!

**Mark your calendars for a unique musical experience! A "community sing" of the Hallelujah Chorus on Easter Sunday, at the conclusion of the 9:30 am worship service. All singers welcome! Watch for rehearsal announcements in April!**



Our **HARVEST TABLE Dinner Ministry program will return in April!** In the meantime, we're looking for some gardening volunteers to help with growing vegetables for Harvest Table in our Community Garden plot. Speak with Sandi Davis for details!

# Women's Fellowship Potluck Supper



Women's Fellowship meets next on Thursday, **March 9 @ 5:30 pm** for a *Potluck Supper*. We will be enjoying food, fellowship and conversation as we brainstorm ideas and do some planning for future gatherings. A sign-up sheet is outside Fellowship Hall. If you would like to attend but would rather not have to worry about driving, please let us know on the sign-up sheet and we'll make sure you have a ride!!

## Notes from the TRUSTEES

Good news: We are putting out *Phase 2 flat roof installation* as part of our 3-year Capital Campaign. This will cover the roof over the offices to the Sanctuary doors and the south and west sides of the Sanctuary. Stayed tuned as bids are received, reviewed by the Trustees and a contract awarded. We hope to have the work started by April.

We are slowly replacing the *light bulbs* throughout the church with LED (Light Emitting Diode) bulbs. These are more efficient than the CFL (Compact Fluorescent Lamp) bulbs and should help reduce our electric bill. As a result there are a significant number of working light bulbs that we want to offer to the friends of the church. There are a variety of bulbs on a table in Fellowship Hall. Please help yourself and leave a contribution if you so desire in the basket.

Bad news: We were hit this week with a \$1400 bill to clear out the sewer pipes to the septic system. No damage was done to the facility but it was a costly repair. Please do not flush anything other than toilet paper. The sewer pipes are cast iron and have a rough surface and are especially susceptible to clogging from anything other than toilet paper.



*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

*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.