

The Beacon

MAY 2017



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

"The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how." Mark 4:26-27

Seeds are amazing, incredible, magical things. These little tiny specks contain within them the stuff of new life but yet we never notice them. At least I never thought much about them until recently. Thanks to the encouragement of our Pollinator Garden Committee and the wonderful array of seeds they secured for us for free from URI, I decided to take the plunge and try starting a few seeds myself this year. I've tried this a few times before with marginal success. Perhaps my hopes were too high or my attention span too limited. Whatever the reason, I grew seeds successfully only once before and planted the spindly marigolds in my front garden. They were positively pathetic mixed in amongst the bigger, bushier marigolds I had purchased at Home Depot but I hoped they would soon catch up to their professionally nurtured cousins. They didn't. Only one lived to see the end of the growing season and it never became as big as the Home Depot ones. But he hung in there and eventually produced bright yellow marigold blossoms as lovely as any.

You cannot imagine how proud I was of that spindly marigold. He was special because I knew him from when he was a seed. This year I have planted baby's breath and delphiniums. I have no expectations they will actually grow, but I hope they will. So far their progress is slow. But then just a few days ago, I could see tiny green shoots in the baby's breath tray! My hope is renewed once more that those tiny black specks I covered with dirt really do contain within them the life of those lovely little blossoms. Only time will tell.

I think this miraculous aspect of seeds – that they grow from tiny specks into all sorts of wonderful plants – is why Jesus used them as a metaphor for how he understood God's kingdom. "The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, a tiny seed that grows into a mighty bush," he says. Then in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus explains that only a few of the seeds planted will actually grow to full size healthy plants. But that's okay, he explains, because when they're the right seeds growing the right plants in the right place, you only need a few to accomplish what God needs done. But today I was drawn to the above verse about seeds from Mark's Gospel. It is, I think, an accurate description of what the church is facing at this moment in the 21st century when so much of life is in flux for so many disparate reasons. The church is intended to be an example of the kingdom of God on earth and this verse makes clear that we really have no idea how to do that and yet we somehow trust that we can. That's why trying new things and doing things in different ways is an important part of figuring out how to be that shining example of the kingdom of God that is needed in our little corner of the world. Jesus is calling us to be seed scatterers and seed nurturers and we do that in many ways.

We scatter and nurture seeds of faith and trust in worship each Sunday as we explore God's message for us in word, song and prayer. We scatter and nurture seeds of help and hope through our many mission and service projects for our community and beyond. We scatter and nurture seeds through our many ministries of caring and support for each other with every card sent, every phone call made, every visit undertaken. All that we do as the people of God gathered together in our church comes down to being good sowers and growers of the seeds God gives us to nurture. Who and what they are may not be clear but that's okay because Jesus tells us not knowing is part of growing sometimes. Jesus reminds us that God is always in charge, not us. All we need to do is show

up as best as we are able, ready to do what we can. Sounds like a plan to me. How about you?

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth

happy
Birthday

May Birthdays

- 1 – Kenton Michael
- 3 – Brian Johnson
- 4 – Charlotte Korean
- 5 – Gregory Sugar
- 7 – Gene LeRoy
- 9 – Nicholas Schilke
- 20 – Daniel Stratton
- 27 – Susan Moynihan

Happy Anniversary to:

Mark & Elizabeth Dessaulles – May 6, 1989

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

Rhode Island Conference, UCC

We currently have 5 delegates who are able to represent our church at the Conference Annual Meeting that will be held in Hartford, CT on Friday, June 16, and Saturday, June 17, this year. We are allowed to have one additional delegate and are looking for a **volunteer** to fill this position. The business portion of the meeting is held only on Saturday,

so if you would be interested in doing this for your church on Saturday, June 17, please contact the office as soon as possible. Financial support for registration cost is available!



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



Family Housing Support

Family Housing Support – The Family Housing Support steering committee thanks the members of our congregation who participated and donated generously using the Lenten boxes. We collected \$784.25. To date 19 families that included 33 children have been helped. It costs \$60,000 a year to support the 3 apartments, their utilities, and social services so fund raising is a continuing task. Thank you.
- Carolyn LeRoy



SAY YES!

**To
SUNDAY
SCHOOL**

MAY = BABY AND LADY MONTH



Here's what's happening in May!

Sunday, May 7 – Communion/Mother's Day cards for homebound

Sunday, May 14 – Mother's Day -- Plant

Sunday, May 21 – ONA Doors Project

Sunday, May 28 – Memorial Day Weekend – NO Sunday School

Sunday, June 4 – Children's Day Family Blessings Celebration

The month of May will be our Baby and Lady Collection for the PNC and WARM. Needed baby items include: *all toiletries, larger sized diapers (sizes 3 and up), baby foods, and sunblock.* They do **not** need the smaller sized diapers or formula. Lady needs include all feminine hygiene products.

MISSION MOMENTS



THANKS to the entire congregation for making our Second Annual Fill the Pews such a huge success! Although last year's winners retained their title, the other side of the church came in a very close second.

The entire staff at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center was awed, touched, and incredibly grateful for the donations from the Fill the Pews event that we had during Lent. In addition, they are quite excited about our May Babies and Ladies Collection. *It was very moving to experience their joy at our work!*

Thanks to the **Deacons** for providing the May 14th meal to WARM.

"Make Your Own"
Tacos & Sundaes Supper
Saturday, May 13th, 5:30 p.m.

- All proceeds benefit the Murano Scholarship Fund.
- Those interested in applying for the Barbara Murano scholarship are encouraged to help out before, during, or after the dinner if possible.



Adults: \$10.00
Children under 10: \$5.00
Family of 4 (2 kids under 10): \$25

Thanks for all your help.

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
May 7	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
May 14	Claire Calabretta	860-536-3625
May 21	Jenny Brummund	860-599-1719
May 28	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740

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HARVEST TABLE

Wednesday, May 17 @ 5:30 pm



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: Replanting of the Bell Courtyard Gardens!

Come and plant or just learn more about this Pollinator Garden project and why it matters.



“BOOKS” Continues ...

and our next gathering is planned for Tuesday, **May 16** and we will be meeting at **Church for a Potluck Supper at 6 pm**. The book we have chosen to read is *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Buckman.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT!



Congratulations to our own **ANNA TARASUK**

One of four Young Playwrights for 2017 honored by Trinity Rep Theatre in Providence, RI on May 1, 2017.

Anna's play, *The Story of the Night Sky*, was one of four winning plays chosen for this honor. Anna is the only playwright chosen from RI!
Way to go Anna!



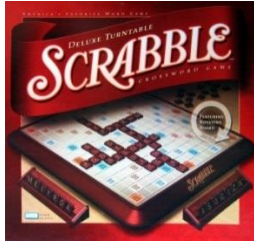
A HUGE THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE TO ALL OF OUR EARTH DAY VOLUNTEERS!

Phased 1 of the Pollinator Garden Project is now complete. Phase 2 will be the replanting of the existing garden areas now cleared out.

Volunteers welcome!

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE POLLINATOR GARDEN DESIGN ON DISPLAY IN FELLOWSHIP HALL!

Women's Fellowship Gathering & Scrabble Night!



Thursday, May 25 @ 5:30 pm

Please join us for a fun evening of food, fellowship and plain old fashioned conversation about this and that! Bring whatever potluck dish suits your fancy, a Scrabble game if you have one, and be part of this relaxed evening among friends. Let us know if you need a ride!



You are invited to join Rev. Ruth and other members of our community at a special event coming up soon!

HONEST CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR MUSLIM NEIGHBORS

Wednesday, May 10 @ 7pm
North Stonington Congregational Church
89 Main Street, North Stonington, CT

Topics to be explored: Who are our Muslim neighbors? What do they believe? How do extremist actions worldwide affect them? Hear CT Muslims share stories and respond to these questions at this important gathering sponsored by CT Council for Interreligious Understanding, the Muslim Coalition of CT and Hartford Seminary.

Sign-up sheet to go is on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall.

Our Church Library Lives Again!!



As most of you know, our library had fallen into disuse and was in desperate need of a make-over which it received last summer from Linda Evans and Carolyn LeRoy with funding provided by Women's Fellowship. In the months since, myself and others have been restocking the shelves and now, the Library is ready for your reading pleasure!

Why a church library when so much information is available on the internet or through our exceptionally fine local public libraries? Because we offer books for you to borrow that are unique to this church and our mission. For example, we have several shelves of bible study books and theology books of all sorts, not usually available in public libraries. We also have some really wonderful gardening books for all ages if you'd like to learn more about the Pollinator Garden project.

One shelf of books I am especially excited about is the one devoted to the books which have been read by our BOOKS group! Since this group began reading together in June of 2014, we have read 21 books as of this month! Our reading list is quite eclectic coming mostly from suggestions of group members. The goal of the BOOKS shelf in our library is to give any and all of you a chance to read what we've read! Eventually we may even add our own critiques to the inside front covers but for now, just read and enjoy!

Unfortunately our BOOKS collection in the library is incomplete so we need your help to add these books to our shelf:

The First Phone Call from Heaven Mitch Alborn

<i>And the Mountains Echoed</i>	Khaled Hosseini
<i>You Before Me</i>	Jojo Moyes
<i>Will You Love Me</i>	Kathy Glass
<i>Paper Angels</i>	Jimmy Wayne
<i>The Light Between Oceans</i>	M.L. Stedman

Perhaps you already borrowed one of these missing titles and forgot to leave a note that you took it. Perhaps you are a BOOKS member and have a copy you are willing to share with your church family by placing it in the library. Or perhaps you see one of these titles when you are out bargain hunting and are willing to donate it to the church. Whatever the case, we would appreciate your assistance in making our collection complete! Thanks so much!

REMEMBER! PLEASE LEAVE A YELLOW STICKIE NOTE WITH YOUR NAME AND THE TITLE OF THE BOOK YOU BORROW STUCK ON THE SHELF WHERE THE BOOK CAME FROM! THANKS!!!

PRAYER LIST



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

Madelyn Stratton	Shirley Harrington
Beverly & Family	Brian Madill
Karen & Bill	Shirley M.
Gerry	Scott & his parents
The Underhill Family	
Connie	Nicci & Jeff
Allie	David Hall
Josh	Ben
Millie Silver	Rev. Elizabeth King
Jesse B.	Donald Grant
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
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