

# The Beacon

## NOVEMBER 2017



**GOOD NEWS from**

**United Congregational Church of Westerly**

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

**Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am**

**FROM THE PASTOR ...**

*“So they committed themselves to the common good.”* Nehemiah 2:18b

This verse is from a wonderful story about Nehemiah, the Jewish cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of the Persian empire. It is a tale of adventure and intrigue, of hope and possibility. And it is a story with a powerful message – God is always ready to help those who ask for God’s support and assistance. Nehemiah and the king interacted every day and one day the king noticed Nehemiah obviously very sad. He said to him, “this can only be a sadness of the heart.” Nehemiah poured out his grief over the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, ending with a request to the king for assistance in returning to Jerusalem to rebuild it. The king agreed and Nehemiah was on his way. In spite of problems with folks he encountered, he finally reached Jerusalem where he met with the Jews living there about his plans. Their support of his plan appears in the verse above.

I love this story because it reveals that God, the same God we spend time with as a gathered community every Sunday morning, is truly a God of

new beginnings. God is all about opening doors we thought were slammed shut, all about revealing possibility where we only see problems, all about renewal even when the task ahead seems daunting. This is what Nehemiah learned as he was faced with knowing that what he had been doing was in stark contrast to what God needed him to do. He knew what needed to happen but he had no clue how to do it. So, he trusted God would make a way and God did. Nehemiah’s commitment to God and to his faith community is what made the impossible task of rebuilding doable. It didn’t happen all at once and it took a lot of people. That’s what the rest of the book of Nehemiah describes. But get it done they did and each step of the way their connection to God and God’s plans for them became ever stronger. They literally rebuilt their hopes as they rebuilt their city and the Temple.

Our church knows something about rebuilding. Just in the last year, we have checked off some major projects including the repair of the flat roof sections of the building and the repaving of the circular driveway. The Trustees have also overseen repainting of much of the building exterior and the repair of the exterior lighting as well as the septic system of the church. The pollinator gardens project has transformed the exterior of the church as well, causing quite a stir in the community as people stop by to talk when our folks are out working in the gardens. People are noticing that some new and exciting things are happening here and that’s wonderful!

Another reality for us is not so wonderful. As you no doubt remember, we have lost a number of our dear friends this past year as God has called them to their eternal home. We miss them and mourn their loss. We are also faced with the stark reality that their passing means we are down pledging units as our Stewardship Campaign begins. In a bigger church, this would be noticeable, but not quite so worrisome as it is for us. Folks have also noted that our Sunday morning attendance is sometimes not where we would like it to be. This too is a painful reminder that we are not a big church. When several folks are unable to attend church regularly because of illness and shifting family realities, their absence in the pews on Sunday is obvious and keenly felt. Thank goodness we stay connected through prayers offered and cards sent, through visits made and connections maintained. We are still a strong and

committed faith community, but life goes on and things change.

That's why each person in our beloved church matters. If we were a bigger church, it would be easier for us to lose track of each other. It would be easier to assume no one would notice if we gave in a little more frequently to that Sunday morning temptation of an extra hour of sleep or an extra cup of coffee. But we're not that big. People do notice when those familiar faces aren't around. We experience acutely that "sadness of the heart" the king noted in Nehemiah. That's why as you consider your own future commitment of time, talent and treasure here, I hope you will remember Nehemiah and the lesson he learned about the importance of his own faith community to him. Stewardship Sunday is on November 12 and we are planning a wonderful celebration of all that God has done, is doing and will do for our beloved church as we move into God's future together. I hope you'll join us for worship that day and make a dish to share at the Celebration Brunch to follow. I hope you realize that what you do really does matter. We'll be looking for you...

Your friend in Christ,  
*Rev. Ruth*



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

Come and chat about whatever is on your mind and heart.

Your friend and chatting partner, *Rev. Ruth*

## *November*

### *Birthdays*



- 5 – Megan Gray
- 6 – Kali Woodhall
- 8 – Amanda Hainsworth
- 21 – John Walker
- 21 – Rev Ruth
- 23 – Vera M. Leming
- 25 – Christina Brummund
- 26 – Alison Schilke
- 26 – Sara Schilke
- 29 – Caleb Stratton

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

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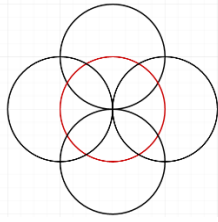
### **Diaconate Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Nov 5	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
Nov 12	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
Nov 19	Claire Calabretta	860-536-3625
Nov 26	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740

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*Congratulations to Carole & Joe Cravinho who have a new great grandson,*

***Raylan Bradley Zlebis***



## SABBATH CIRCLES NEWS for November!

Our Children's books series concludes this month with the following books:

- November 5 *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
- November 12 *Where the Wild Things Are*
- November 19 *The 329<sup>th</sup> Friend*
- November 26 *Love You Forever*

At Home study materials are available for November now!

Our worship plans for the month:

- November 5 Communion!
- November 12 Stewardship Sunday Celebration!
- November 19 Thanksgiving Sunday!
- November 26 Missions Sunday! and Bazaar Week Kick-off

## CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **November 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 **November 6<sup>th</sup>**. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is [graygc@mindspring.com](mailto:graygc@mindspring.com)) Susan will send you a form via email on October 30<sup>th</sup> to help you make out your report.

## MISSION MOMENTS

A huge thank-you to everyone who helped to cut and tie fleece blankets at the last Harvest Table. We plan to sell these at the bazaar to help fund future mission projects. The blankets that we don't sell will be given to those in need.

There are directions and templates available in Fellowship Hall if you would like to work on your own to add to our warm and fuzzy pile.

**Many thanks in advance to the Deacons' Fund for providing the November WARM meal.**

## November and December Collection for PNC

## BREAKFAST – the most important meal of the day!



In November and December our food drive will focus on everything breakfast! Please help fill our Mission buckets with healthy hot and cold cereals of all kinds, granola bars, muffin and pancake mixes, maple and fruit syrups, Pop Tarts (are there healthy versions??), etc. Please remember that all items must be non-perishable. (These items were requested by the PNC.)

## HOLIDAY COLLECTION

November and December will be dedicated to our two new holiday mission collections.



You can start shopping the sales right now for warm winter socks for all ages to decorate our **Christmas Sock Tree**. Area shelters have indicated that heavy socks are the most needed items during the cold winter months.



Also, in December we will be distributing **Reverse Advent Baskets**, complete with lists of items needed the most by the area's homeless and needy population. The idea is to place an item from the list into the basket every day during the Advent Season. Saying a prayer to accompany each donation is a great way to enrich this activity.

### **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP RETREAT**

at **ENDERS ISLAND** in **Mystic, CT**

*"...come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest"*

Matthew 11:28

**Saturday, November 4**

9 am – 4 pm

Cost: \$25 includes lunch and all materials

Sign-up sheet outside Fellowship Hall.

Only 1 slot left!

Payment due at time of sign-up! Please make checks payable to:

UCCW Women's Fellowship.



### **CONFIRMATION IS UNDERWAY!**

But it's not too late to join us! Speak with Rev. Ruth to be added to the list and receive the materials for Unit 1. Our next gathering is **November 12** at the Stewardship Brunch.

### **Why are we celebrating Communion with gluten-free bread?**

In the past several years many people have chosen to eat a gluten-free diet because they have discovered that they feel better by eliminating wheat, barley, and rye products from their diets. Although they generally shun breads and baked goods with gluten, they can "cheat" and occasionally chose to eat breads and baked goods that are not gluten-free and not experience any long lasting or serious ill-effects.

However, studies reveal that at least 1 out of every 100 people suffer from Celiac Disease and cannot CHOSE whether or not to eat gluten containing products. Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disease in which someone develops a permanent intolerance to gluten. The only treatment is to **TOTALLY** and **PERMANENTLY** avoid gluten in all of its forms. Just the smallest crumb can trigger an attack that could last for days and can further damage the villi of the small intestine, which are responsible for the absorption of nutrients necessary for our bodies to function. Continued exposure to gluten can lead to the development of various cancers. Cross contamination (in which a gluten-containing item comes into contact with a gluten-free item) can be just as dangerous to those with Celiac as consuming a gluten-based item itself.

In addition, the Celiac Disease Foundation estimates that two and one-half million Americans are undiagnosed and are at risk for long-term health complications because

they continue to consume gluten without realizing the damage being done to their bodies.

Because of the dangers of consuming gluten, many people with Celiac Disease admit to refusing communion in church, avoiding church altogether, or risking the effects of consuming communion bread containing gluten. In order to be more inclusive, many Protestant churches (lead by UCC churches, in fact) have opted to serve gluten-free bread.

By serving gluten-free bread for Communion our church fulfills its ONA mission of being a welcoming, inclusive, and safe community for our congregation and our visitors.



Sunday, **November 5** is the **Fall Time Change!** Remember to set your clocks **BACK** one hour the night before. The good news is folks get an extra hour of sleep that first day and there will be more light in the morning. The bad news is it will be getting dark much earlier. So, you can oversleep and still make it to church on Sunday! See you then....

### HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS UNDER WAY LOCALLY

As was reported last month, several churches in the Westerly-Pawcatuck Clergy Association are organizing a **joint mission trip** to work on hurricane relief in Texas during School Vacation week this April. The cost to participate is \$1200 with a \$100 deposit due by *December 1*. If there are five folks from our church interested in going, Rev. Ruth will go. Otherwise, interested UCCW folks will be partnered with a group from another church. If this is something you would be interested in, kindly let Rev. Ruth know asap.

Also, it's not too late to purchase tickets for **Jesus Christ Superstar** on November 14 at the Granite Theater. Tickets are \$25 each and all proceeds will go to offset the costs of the Mission Trip and the supplies needed for work in Texas. See Rev. Ruth for tickets asap!!! We already have a good group going but there's room for more.

### **HARVEST TABLE**

is taking a month off and encourages everyone to savor the bounty of God's blessings around your own Thanksgiving tables. We're happy to provide a blessing for your Thanksgiving Feast if you need one. OR, share yours with us! We'd love to hear it!

### STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



Dear friends of UCC,

The Stewardship Campaign for 2018 will continue through November 5 culminating with pledges received and dedicated on Sunday, **November 12** when the **annual brunch** will take place. A **sign-up sheet** for *donations for the Brunch* is now up and your support is appreciated.

We, your Stewardship Committee, hope you will prayerfully consider how you can be involved in our ministry here at UCC with your commitment to pledge. With God's guidance your gift, be it time, talent or pledge of money will be used wisely and will be shared generously.

Your Stewardship Committee,  
*Shirin Platt, Joann Spurley, & Sally Panciera*

The annual Westerly Pawcatuck  
Community Thanksgiving Service  
sponsored by the Westerly Pawcatuck Clergy  
Association is being hosted by our church this  
year and we hope you will join us!



**Sunday, November 19 at 4:00 pm** will be a festive worship and thanksgiving in our beautiful sanctuary. The Thanksgiving message will be offered by the Rev. Dr. Joyce Duerr and we will have a special guest musician, the Reverend Robert Nolan, Associate Minister for Music and Healing Ministries at the Woodridge Congregational Church, UCC in Cranston. A "community choir" will be formed for that service with anyone from the community who would like to sing invited to come at 3 pm for a brief rehearsal of the anthem. A simple reception will follow in our Fellowship Hall. Also, child care will be available.



**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR &  
TEA & SILENT AUCTION**

***Saturday, December 2, 2017***

*10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

*Please support our annual event!*

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**Bazaar Helpers** are needed! **Sign-ups** are ready for your names and are posted next to the Flower Chart in Fellowship Hall.

*We are looking for new folks to work in  
**Children's Shopping**, as well as the  
**Ornamental Tree Area.***

The Bazaar is coming quickly! Here are some things to note:

- *Donations are needed for **Children's Shopping**: items that kids can purchase for their families. These are usually priced at under \$2.00. If you could price and provide wrapping/gift bag, box...it would be even better.*
- *George Gray is wondering if **any area could use a riser for their display**. Please see him as soon as possible, as he has offered to build them.*
- **Tea bakers**: If you would like to bake early and freeze your goodies, the chest freezer in the kitchen has been turned on. Please label any items for the tea.
- **Bake room bakers**: Please label any of your goodies that have nuts, so our shoppers with allergies can be alerted. Also label any gluten free items.
- *Feeling crafty? Feel free to create. We would like to incorporate handmade items into the bazaar once again. Small craft items would be great for Children's Shopping as well.*
- **Nostalgia Boutique** would appreciate donations of collectible, vintage, and unique gift items.

Please be aware that there will be **some new kitchen regulations** that we will be implementing this year so that we meet inspection rules. This will include *wearing gloves and hats/hairnets* for kitchen workers, *more caution in keeping sandwiches cold*, and *serving smaller plates of sandwiches* to avoid leftovers. Folks can always request additional sandwiches.

If you would like to *make something that our workers can eat* if they can't get to the Tea,

there will be a sign-up for that soon. Crock pot items are usually a hit and easy to keep warm.

Please *notify Janet Allen* of what you will need for the cash box for your room: coin change, extra small bills, etc., so she can do the proper banking.

We are trying to logistically have **extra tables** for the Tea, so we can avoid some of the backup we've had in the past. Folks love our tea so much, they don't want to leave, but it creates a traffic jam. There may be some changes to the set-up of that area, and *additional wait staff may be needed.*



PLEASE consider helping the **greens area** by coming to the morning or evening workshops. The wreaths and arrangements are very popular, and some of our veteran workers may be unable to help as much as they have in the past.

Speaking of greens, we have had *holly issues* the past 2 years, and wreaths and arrangements containing holly had Charlie Brown Christmas tree issues and had to be removed from our display area. As beautiful as holly is, we will try to replace it with other greens as much as possible, especially since we've had a dry year. *Donations of all other evergreen-type greens will be gratefully accepted.*

- **Jewelry Room:** If anyone is able to help prepare Jewelry for the Jewelry room, please see Joy for more information.

As you know, this is an  
ALL-HANDS-ON-DECK EVENT  
because of our stellar reputation!  
*Many thanks for all the helping hands!!*



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

The Pollinator Committee is breathing a sigh of relief that fall is finally here! As nature begins to draw within, pulling resources down into the roots to keep plants, shrubs, and trees alive through winter, so too will we draw inward. We will use this quieter season to reflect on all that our church has accomplished this year and begin planning for next year's activities. We reflect with gratitude on all who have contributed to this spring and summer's work projects. Our church, with the help of volunteers from the community, has accomplished so much this year: clean out of the bell courtyard, "welcome" and side gardens on Earth Day; planting pollinator friendly plugs and donated mature plants; landscape design by Jim of Stonington Gardens; design of the labyrinth by Kathy Tarasuk; weeding, weeding, and more weeding; and a bulb relocation planting party this week. Many of our work parties have followed the monthly "Harvest Table" meal with Bible-based conversation and simple but delicious home-prepared vegetarian foods.

In September, Pastor Ruth submitted a proposal for funding from UCC/National office in support of the installation of the labyrinth and meadow as well as for educational outreach. (We should hear back very soon about funding decisions so keep our proposal in your prayers!). Using borrowed tarps and cinder blocks, we are "smothering" (slowly killing the grass) on a 1/10 acre plot of our church lawn in preparation for seeding meadow flowers and warm season grasses next spring. We are looking forward, with God's grace, to all that we have to accomplish in 2018 with the labyrinth and meadow installation! Special thanks to Gary Davis for innumerable trips to the dump for wonderfully rich compost and for the artistic "God's Pollinators at Work" road construction sign he painted to notify passers-by that our tarp-covered property is a meadow-in-progress!

## 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
Devyn Moynihan	Susan Moynihan-Freeman
Ruth King Roes	Laura
Bill Hoffman	Mauri Hainsworth

*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

### CHURCH OFFICE SPECIFICS

*Mailing Address:* 9 Castle Hill Road  
Pawcatuck, CT 06379  
*Telephone:* **860-599-1226**  
*E-mail:* **uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net**  
*Website:* **www.uccwesterly.org**  
*Office Hours:* Monday, Thursday & Friday from  
8:30 am – 1:30 pm

**"BOOKS" IS (back) IN THE BUILDING!**  
**With a change of date!!**



Next gathering is Tue, **December 5 @ 6 pm**  
with a **Potluck Supper** at the church!

Our book for this gathering is:  
*The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*  
by James McBride

Bring your favorite autumn dish to share and join us for a wonderful conversation, and a timely one! Books available at the Wilcox Library in Westerly on the second floor. Just say you're looking for the book for the UCC Westerly Book Group!