

The Beacon

OCTOBER 2016



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:3c

This is part of the promise God made to Abram, the eldest son of an eldest son ten generations after Noah. We don't know why God chose Abram, whom we know better as Abraham, to receive this particular promise. He had two other brothers – Nahor and Haran and probably more siblings besides that the text just doesn't mention. But, God chose Abram to receive this promise ... with a string attached. Quite a string it was too. God said to Abram that he needed to leave his home and family to go to a new place God would reveal to him. If he did this, if he trusted God enough to leave everything he knew for the complete unknown, then God's promise would kick in. “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Perhaps to us in our 21st century, extremely mobile lifestyles, this doesn't seem like a big deal. We hop on a plane for a weekend getaway thousands of miles away and don't think twice. We

move where the jobs are and make it work. To us, leaving what's familiar for the unfamiliar is just part of life. Not so in Abram's time. First of all, you walked everywhere you went, no easy feat in the scrub desert landscape he called home. Water was in short supply and you could only get it with the permission of whoever owned the well you might stumble across. Add to this that hostile tribes were the rule rather than the exception and you quickly see that God's call to Abram was neither simple nor easy. Accepting would take courage, determination and incredible faith. We know that Abram believed what God said was true for he did leave his home and family, just as God had asked. And indeed, he did become a blessing for all the world as not one, not two, but three major world religions trace their origins back to his decision to trust God completely at this one moment in time. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all claim Abram, Abraham as he would become, as a spiritual ancestor. Literally millions and millions of people know God because of Abram's decision to trust and follow God.

Okay, fine, we think. But what does this have to do with us? God isn't asking us to move far away from everything and everyone we know. What does this story have to do with us? Well, simply put, we all receive the same sort of invitation from God to set aside one possibility in order to pick up another. That's what living a life of faith is all about. God through Jesus shows us a different way to live and relate to others in the world around us. We are to love others – be a blessing to others – because God loves us. We are invited to be the blessings we would like to receive because that's what God needs from us. We are therefore blessed to be a blessing, just like Abram was.

Truthfully, this challenge is no easier for us than it was for Abram. Our lives are already filled with challenges and jam-packed schedules but still God asks each of us to find the time and the way to be a blessing. How we understand that call, that challenge from God, is why we come to the church – for help in figuring it all out and for a community to support and love us as we struggle with doing it in life as it is each day. This is why the church matters. It is the place where we learn what it means to be a blessing on God's behalf, why that matters and how we do it as the people of God. The church matters in this fragile, hurting world where blessings are in such short supply because blessing is what we do.

Blessed to be a blessing. That's you. That's me. That's everyone in our wonderful church. So, what should we do first? Let's figure it out...

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth



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

continues to meet monthly with our next gathering scheduled for

***Thursday, October 20
at 6 pm in the Parlor.***

Plans are taking shape more concretely and we are getting even more excited! 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!



Blessed to be a blessing!
Genesis 12:3b

"Blessed to be a blessing" is our theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign which will kick off on Sunday, October 9th. Each Sunday of the campaign you will hear different folks offering "Blessing Moments" about our wonderful church. Do know that this year our annual stewardship letter, accompanied by a brief narrative budget and a pledge card, will be mailed out the week of October 16 with a request that you return the pledge card on or before November 6, Stewardship Sunday. Our annual Stewardship Brunch will take place that morning after worship as we celebrate our blessings and our bounty together! We hope you will plan now to join us.

So as you consider your financial contribution to our church for 2017 we invite you to

consider all the ways this church has been and is a blessing to you and how you hope it will continue to be a blessing to you and our community for years to come. The truth is your support with your time, talent and treasure is what makes the blessings possible.

How has UCC Westerly been a blessing to you? Here are one person's thoughts:

As I wonder about how the UCC of Westerly in Pawcatuck has become so important to me, it brings to mind my search for a new church family following my move to Westerly nearly four years ago. The key word in the above sentence that answers it all is "family." People here in this congregation were so welcoming after my first two visits here that I knew I was home. Why is that important? Because we all need to feel the love and care of our fellow members, which this congregation excels in daily. Stewardship is a large part of this church. Even though a call may not go out when there is a need, things quietly and enthusiastically get accomplished, both behind the scenes and under the radar. As the 2017 Stewardship Campaign moves forward, remember that God loves you and He loves the work we do in His name. -- Shirin Platt

UCC Westerly is blessed to be a blessing, now and in the future, with your help and support.

Your Stewardship Committee

*Janet Allen, Sally Panciera,
Shirin Platt, Joann Spurley*



"BOOKS" at church...

with an old-fashioned church potluck (instead of going out). The next meeting is on Tuesday, **October 4th at 6 pm.** Our book is *The Light Between Oceans* by M.L. Stedman. Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend! Don't worry if you've read the book or not since the conversation always ranges into all sorts of interesting topics.

UPDATES FROM OUR MISSIONS COMMITTEE

2nd Annual POLAR FLEECE EXPRESS!



Please join us on *Wednesday, October 12th* at **6:30 pm** for our second annual Polar Fleece Express Workshop. This is a fun and mission-focused gathering of church family and friends interested in making warm items for our homeless neighbors and others in need. No sewing skills required! We plan to make hats, mittens, scarves, and head bands in all sizes and will also enjoy coffee, fellowship, and cider and cider donuts from Clyde's!

Scour your cabinets for polarfleece "rems" and also 100% woolen sweaters (no other fibers please – we learned last year that wool works best!) and bring them in to church ahead of time – or that evening. If you have scissors, pins and other sewing items feel free to bring them too, but we should have plenty for everyone to use.

Claire Calabretta and Sandi Davis will determine patterns for items to be made and will do our best to have the patterns and sewn display samples in Fellowship Hall in advance of the 12th!



Many thanks to everyone in the congregation who helped make all of the mission activities over the past few months so successful!!

Together we:

- collected a car load of apples, soups, broths, and cereals to

respond to a special request from the PNC,

- amassed a mountain of school supplies for students at the Pawcatuck Middle School and juice boxes for the PNC,
- prepared (in 40 minutes!!!) and served a special All-American Meal to very grateful clients of the WARM Center in honor of the 15th anniversary of the life-changing events of September 11, 2001.

Wow! If we accomplished all of that during the "lazy" days of summer, just think of what we can accomplish the rest of the year!

Thanks to the **KITCHEN COMMITTEE** for supplying the WARM meal in October.

A reminder that we continue to collect non-perishable food for humans and their fluffy, furry friends in our Mission red tubs. All contents are taken periodically to the PNC.



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 cold drinks at the Savoy are awesome although it will soon be time to switch to hot drinks and what better place to do it. Don't get me started on the cookies...

EXPERIENCE "CHURCH" RE-IMAGINED!

The Harvest Table Dinner Ministry
Wednesday, October 19
5:30 – 7:00 pm



This month's theme: "HARVEST!"

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. Questions? Speak with Sandi Davis, Claire Calabretta or Kathy Tarasuk.



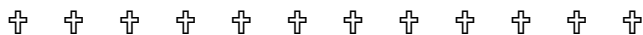
October Birthdays

- 1 – Heather Stratton
- 1 – Judy Stratton
- 7 – Erin Gray
- 10 – Melissa Stratton
- 19 – Bobby Cornell
- 20 – Joan Edmond
- 23 – Barbara Colby
- 24 – Brooke Foster

Happy Anniversary to:

Erwin & Alice Dessaulles – 10-26-58

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



Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
Oct 2	Elvis Torres 860-599-5572
Oct 9	Claire Calabretta 860-536-3625
Oct 16	Bethany Foster 401-539-4003
Oct 23	Gary Davis 860-599-4279
Oct 30	Lynn Murray 401-539-7578



BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES and Everyone Welcome!



I'll be attending a ministry conference the end of this month which means Bible Study will only meet once on **Thursday, October 13th @ 6 pm** in the Parlor

Readings for this session:

Oct 13 – Genesis 13-15; Psalm 5; Matthew 5

A NOTE from the OFFICE:



Our new **Church Directory** of members & friends of the church is available for you to pick up in the office. Please stop by on Sunday mornings or on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays between 8:30 am – 1:30 pm to pick up your copy...or give Susan a call in the office and I can put it in your mail slot outside the office door!

Please note the following **CHANGES** that need to be made to our new directory:

Please change the telephone numbers for:

Dav Cranmer -- #401-447-9848
Joann Spurley -- #401-714-8948

Please change the following addresses to:

Judy Bartlett
28 Indian Hill Rd
Uncasville, CT 06382
#860-892-8474

Doug & Yana Brummund
77 Spring St, 1st Floor
Peacedale, RI 02883



Family Housing

Support

FAMILY HOUSING SUPPORT – On Saturday, **October 1st**, The Winnapaug Country Club will be hosting their **1st Annual Family Housing Support Golf Tournament** to fight local homelessness. Please check out the flyer posted on the bulletin board at the entrance to Fellowship Hall for more information or speak with Carolyn LeRoy.



Say **YES**
to **SUNDAY**
SCHOOL!

YES = Youth Engaging in Service
Here's what's happening in October!

Sunday, Oct 2 – World Communion Sunday with children participating in Communion and then leaving for class for **Media & Art** Sunday with Kathy Tarasuk.



Sunday, Oct 9 – Indigenous People's Day (aka Columbus Day) Weekend -- **No YES** Program

Wednesday, Oct 12 – Polar Fleece Express!
See details elsewhere.

Sunday, Oct 16 – Sunday School – “Shepherd Sensibilities” with Polar Fleece followup

- Senior High Youth attending **RICUCC Youth Event at Irons Homestead!**

Wednesday, Oct 19 – HARVEST TABLE! See details elsewhere.

Sunday, Oct 23 – Sunday School – “Mary & Martha”

Saturday, Oct 29 – Halloween Supper with Spaghetti Dinner provided by the culinary program students of WARM

Sunday, Oct 30 – Special Stories about Syria with Sally Shaw

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!



Hard to believe but it's almost...

BAZAAR

TIME!

The gift baskets are finished—all 204 of them! The conversations about what is going where in the building this year are already happening. And, we're trying to get a head-start on a few things too, especially with regard to donations for the Christmas Tea. What would be helpful now is if, when you're out shopping and you see a really good deal on Andes Mints or peppermints or pickles, pick some up! If we can get all or most of these items donated, that will be less we have to purchase. And, if we end up with more than we need, the folks at WARM and the PNC will share in the abundance.

Also, watch the "What's Happening" board in Fellowship Hall for the Bazaar sign-up sheets which I'm confident will be appearing shortly. Remember, we need all hands on deck for our annual bazaar, the one by which all other Christmas Bazaars in the area are judged! By the way, the date for the Bazaar is Saturday, **December 3rd**. ☺



LATE BREAKING NEWS!

Join us for a Halloween Supper
Saturday, October 29 @ 5:30pm

Spaghetti Dinner
provided to us FREE by the culinary students at
WARM as a thank you to our church!
Watch for details!



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 |
| Ed Roberts | 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.