

From the Pastor...

April 2013

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed . . .”

Matthew 13:31

Jesus taught in parables, all the time. He did other things too to be sure – healing folks of all sorts of diseases, raising people from the dead, praying for and with people, eating with all the wrong people. But, teaching, that he did all the time through everything he said and everything he did. His life and ministry were clearly people focused and yet, his deep awareness of nature and the delicate balance between people and the world they inhabited are evident throughout his life and ministry. Throughout the Gospels Jesus uses example after example from the natural world, like the parable of the mustard seed, to try to get the people to understand what he was trying to teach them about the nature of their relationship with God. He talked about the planting of seeds to explain how challenging it is to hear and respond to God’s action in our lives. He used the parable of the lost sheep to explain how precious we are to God. He used the parables of the fig tree and the grape vine to explain how it is we are connected to God through him. In short, even though Jesus focused his ministry on people, God’s beloved Creation was intricately interwoven into everything he did each day. It still is for us today.

This foundational interconnectedness between the Gospel teaching of Jesus and God’s need for us to be faithful caretakers of the Creation entrusted to us is why I am so excited for our church to be a part of the national UCC’s “Mission 4/1 Earth” initiative which kicks off on April 1. Designed to coincide with what is known as the 50 “great days” of Easter in the liturgical calendar, “Mission 4/1 Earth” offers a unique opportunity for us here at UCC Westerly to participate in something much bigger than ourselves by doing what we do around here anyway! The Mission 4/1 Earth initiative merely asks us to keep track of things like the number of hours worked by the people who help with our annual spring clean-up of the church grounds as well as the amount of time we each spend doing the same thing at home. Planting a tree or some shrubs at home this spring? That counts toward the Mission 4/1 Earth tally. Creating or maintaining a compost pile? That counts too. Are you

one of those people who love to write letters to elected officials? Make those letters about something connected to an environmental issue – like shoreline access or open space, and that counts too. Switching to energy efficient light bulbs at home? That counts too!

To participate in Mission 4/1 Earth as a congregation, all we need to do is keep track of all these things we do anyway and report them to the UCC national offices on the time cards they provide. Added to this will be a few new things like our first ever Blessing of the Animals service and a Blessing of the Gardeners service which will be book-ending our annual spring clean-up day here at the church. So, I hope you will join me and others at our church in the Mission 4/1 Earth initiative as we seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus – who always loved a nice walk in the garden.

Blessings,

Pastor Ruth

*Please join our Confirmands and their families
at UCCW’s first ever*

FAITH STORIES POTLUCK!

Saturday, April 6 at 5:30 pm

*Bring your favorite potluck food and a story or two
about your experiences as a church member here
or in any of the churches that have been a part of your life.*

*Remind yourself of the truth that
“Christianity is caught ... not taught.”*

CALLING EVERYONE WHO CARES ABOUT GOD'S CREATION!

Join us in making the national UCC's initiative

MISSION 4/1 EARTH

come to life in our church during April and May.

At our church we will be planting marigold seeds. These seedlings will be transferred to our gardens once they are large enough. Be sure to watch for more information on how you can be a part of the "Mission 4/1 Earth!"

THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

will be meeting for a **potluck** on Thursday, **April 4**, from **5:00 – 7:00 pm**. This meeting is open to all the women of the church. We will be enjoying each other's company and thinking about retreat and road trip possibilities for this lively group.

Please note: The **Music Committee** is meeting on Saturday, **April 6** from **4:30 – 5:30 pm**.

REMINDER: Please turn in your forms regarding updating our communications system as soon as possible. Thank you.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

- Pam DelPozo-Waldron - 6
- Barbara Johnson - 16
- Dan McCrary – 25
- Travis McCrary – 25
- Emily Dessaulles - 28



Happy Anniversary to:

Douglas & Jenny Brummund – April 25

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



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

- | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Elizabeth Ball | Ann Brown | Jimmy |
| Charlie Wright | Barbara | Barbara Simmons |
| Madelyn Stratton | Sandi Davis | Fred |
| Catherine | Jeff | Jim |
| Millie Silver | Debbie | Shirley Harrington |
| Beverly and Family | Carole Lennon | Lisa |
| Vince Amkhamavong, U.S. Marines | | John Dillon |
| Susan & Devin | Sheryl | David Jones |
| Doris | Jennifer Clancon | Christine Knox |
| Eugene Ravenelle | Brian Madill | Charlene |
| Captain Andrew McCarthy, Army Infantry | | Pamela & family |
| Perry family | | |

If you would like anyone added or taken off this list for the next newsletter, please call the office or let one of our deacons know. Thank you.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **April 14th** at **11:00 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by **April 1st**. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Thank you.

Thank you **E**veryone **A**ppreciate

THANK YOU for your help and participation for the past 16 years! After expenses \$1,100 was realized from the Tea.

- Judy & Linda

THANK YOU for our refrigerator in the kitchen. Money was received from Women's Fellowship and an anonymous donor.

Mission Memos

Thank you for your faithful donations to the **Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center**. Remember to mark the **second Sunday** of the month for an extra generous offering, which can be placed in the basket on the chancel (near the altar) before worship or during the first hymn. The following food items are currently running low: *coffee, jam or jelly, and canned pineapple*. Of course, any and all donations are so needed. There are red buckets in Fellowship Hall and in the upper parking lot sanctuary foyer. The “Living Supplies Closet” always needs #5 and #6 diapers, liquid dish detergent and laundry detergent.

Equal Exchange, Fairly Traded items are available on the cart in Fellowship Hall. We have *coffee, tea, baking cocoa, and chocolate bars*. Please **stop at the Mission Cart to purchase these items** and to check out these products—*Organic Chamomile Tea, Organic Peppermint Tea, Organic Darjeeling Tea, Organic Espresso Bean Chocolate, & Organic “Mind, Body, & Soul” coffee (medium Vienna roast)*. You may help yourself or ask a Mission Committee member for assistance. The price list & collection tin are on the cart. We sell “at cost” with no mark-up.



REMINDER: The **WARM CENTER meal** for Sunday, April 14th, is going to be the responsibility of the *Membership, Stewardship, Flower Committees and Delegates*. The Mission Committee appreciates everyone’s efforts in making meals for this important outreach mission every month.

Annual Barbara Murano Scholarship Ham & Bean Dinner

Saturday, May 11th, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

- *Sponsored by the Deacons to raise money to grant yearly scholarships to our church members of any age who are pursuing higher education!*
- *Those interested in applying for the scholarship are encouraged to help out before, during, or after the dinner if possible.*

MENU: Baked Ham, Homemade Baked Beans, Brown Bread, Cole Slaw, a variety of freshly baked Desserts, and Beverages

**Cost: \$10.00 – single ticket
\$25.00 – for a Family
Take-out is available.**

Donations of baked beans, brown bread, and desserts are needed. Please **sign up** on the sign-up sheet that will be posted on the bulletin board in the foyer.

Barbara Murano was a member and Deacon of our church. After her death on September 9, 1990, the Diaconate Board established a scholarship in her memory. Scholarships are awarded to members of the church who are continuing their formal education in some manner. To help support this fund and keep it growing, the Diaconate Board has a Ham & Bean Dinner each year. Please support this worthy cause and enjoy a great dinner and fellowship.

Barbara Murano Scholarship Applications

Barbara Murano Scholarship applications are available in the church foyer. Any member who is pursuing higher education may apply. Applications must be submitted by **Sunday, April 28.**

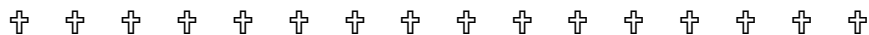
Applications may be left in the Deacons' mailbox outside the church office or handed to any Deacon. The presentation of scholarships will take place on **Children's Sunday, June 9**. **All recipients are requested to be present to accept their award unless other plans are made with the Deacons in advance of the 9th**. Recipients are encouraged to help out with set up/clean up for the **Barbara Murano Scholarship Ham & Bean Supper** on Saturday, **May 11**.

Deacons are seeking help with set up and clean up for the Ham & Bean Supper, as well as contributions of menu items (beans, brown bread, and gingerbread or other desserts). A sign-up sheet will be placed on the bulletin board to the right of the doors into Fellowship Hall.



Diaconate Schedule

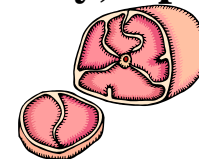
<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Apr 7	Ane Torres	(860) 599-5572
Apr 14	Bethany Foster	(401) 539-4003
Apr 21	Becky Morrone	(401) 596-1070
Apr 28	Chris Fuller	(401) 315-2282



Add Your Name to the UCC/Westerly Prayer Tree! Please contact Claire Calabretta or Chris Fuller, co-chairs of the Board of Deacons, or any other Deacon, if you would like to add your name to the list of people on the UCC/Westerly "prayer tree." Those who sign up for the prayer tree will automatically be called any time a church member or friend calls to ask that the prayer tree be initiated to lift up health or other concerns for the prayers of the congregation.

ROAST PORK DINNER

Saturday, April 13th



5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Men's club

Roast Pork, potatoes, vegetable & dessert

Tickets: Adults - \$12.00

Children under 10: \$6.00

Contact the Men's Club or the church office for tickets.

Annual Spring Clean-Up Day

at the church on Saturday, APRIL 20,

10:00 am – 2:00 pm.

Please join us at the church to spruce things up for Spring! We will start the morning at 10:00 am with a brief **"Blessing of the Gardeners service"** which will last about 15 minutes. Then we will gather at 1:45 pm for a brief **"Blessing of the Animals service"** which will conclude by 2:00 pm. *Hope to see you there!*

A note from Carole Cravinho:

BIG BAND MUSIC! I would like to put together a group who wants to attend an evening of big band music at Venice Restaurant in Westerly on **Thursday, May 2nd**. My husband plays with a 17-piece big band the first and third Thursdays of every month from 7:30 – 9:30 pm. Venice has a regular dinner menu or bar menu available from which you can order. I will have to put in the **reservation by April 18**. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. *Thanks in advance for your interest, Carole.*