

From the Pastor...

June 2013

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

Jeremiah wrote these words to comfort the Israelites who had just suffered a humiliating defeat in battle. Their capital city lay in ruins and all of their key people had been carried off to captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah is reminding these battered people of an important truth about God – that God is still in the middle of our lives even in the midst of brokenness, chaos and upheaval. Jeremiah was assuring them that God was still in control even though it might not seem that way. Most of all, Jeremiah was asking them to trust God and to let that trust inform their lives.

Chaos and upheaval have been too much a part of our lives lately as the unrelenting news cycle makes all too clear. Senseless gun violence, brutal and ferocious weather events, terrorist attacks, and horrendous accidents have become our constant companions these days, whether we want them to or not. Our seemingly limitless access to news has brought the chaos and upheaval which abound in our world today into our living rooms in ways Jeremiah and those ancient Israelites could never begin to fathom. Yet Jeremiah’s words still ring true for us just as much as they did when he wrote them thousands of years ago.

In these powerful words, Jeremiah is reminding us of two things. First is that God loves us and wants the best for us, always. The second is that we have to do our part in response to God’s love. We have to trust that God’s plans for us are real and that God will help us figure them out and get them underway. In other words, we have to live into God’s plans for us – God’s hopes for us – God’s dreams for us. And we need to do that together, as a community of the faithful gathered here in our church. An important part of how we do that will happen at the Congregational Planning Retreat on June 1. During that gathering we will work together to discern future plans for our church. Together we will build the church events calendar for the program year which begins in September, reflecting on all the amazing work we are

already doing as a church in the process. This will allow us to see where we are and to begin dreaming about where it is God is inviting us to go. So, you can see we need you there. I hope you come.

This same dreaming about the future is also happening in our own Rhode Island Conference, United Church of Christ, right now. A new “listening/sharing process” was kicked off at the recent Annual Meeting where the above words from Jeremiah shaped the theme. Our delegates who attended were able to participate in the Conference’s first “Listening/Sharing Session” facilitated by the members of the Design Process Group, a team of lay and clergy leaders tasked with talking with as many people in the Rhode Island Conference as possible in the next several months. Two members of this DP Group, lay leaders in other churches, are coming to us on Sunday, June 23 to facilitate a conversation about our future as a church which is a part of the Rhode Island Conference, United Church of Christ. What a gift this opportunity is and I hope many of you will take advantage of it.

So, as June is upon us and the wonderful and relaxing days of summer beckon, I encourage you to take some time to ponder deeply Jeremiah’s words about God’s plans for our futures individually and as a church. These divinely inspired words written more than two millennia ago still ring true for us as individuals and as people who are a part of the family of the faithful gathered here at United Congregational. Together we will explore who it is God is calling us to be in the days and months and years ahead. Remember – we already know the most important aspect of this exploration – that God’s plans for us are for a future with hope. How great is that?

Blessings,

Pastor Ruth

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to:

Eric Sadowski - 5
Tyler McCrary – 7
Victoria Tosti - 20
June Sicilian – 23
Emma Sugar – 28



Happy Anniversary to:

Bobbie & Pam DelPozo-Waldron – June 6, 1992
Ed & Judy Stratton – June 6, 1970

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

Operation Christmas Child

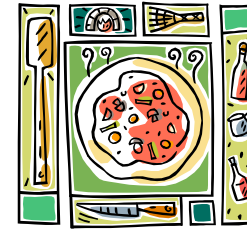
In order to prepare for OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD in the fall, we will be requesting a different item each month that will be included in our shoeboxes. For June, it's **child-size flip flops!** Good places to check are dollar stores, pharmacies, and craft shops. There is a collection box in the foyer. Empty shoeboxes are also appreciated. Thank you very much for the face cloths collected in May. Heads up for July & August—*school supplies, such as pencils, crayons, colored pencils, etc.*

A **Listening/Sharing Session** about the *Rhode Island Conference, United Church of Christ* is scheduled at our church for Sunday, **June 23**, at **11:00 am** following worship. Join us for an important conversation with Ray Christian and Evelyn Watkins of the Conference's Design Process Group as we talk about our joys and frustrations with the Conference and imagine together God's plans for our future together with hope!

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 the foyer, Fellowship Hall and in the upper parking lot sanctuary foyer.

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. You may help yourself or ask a Mission Committee member for assistance. The price list & collection tin are on the cart.



REMINDER: The **WARM CENTER meal** for Sunday, **June 9th**, is going to be the responsibility of *Women's Fellowship*. The Mission Committee appreciates everyone's efforts in making meals for this important outreach mission every month.

On **July 14th** the **WARM Center meal** is going to be the responsibility of the **Congregation** in order to give a break to those who serve on boards and committees. Closer to the date a **sign-up sheet** will be posted on the hallway bulletin board with suggested items for donation. We can go with the "summer picnic" theme—including packs of hotdogs, etc. The Mission Committee will transport the food to the Center. Thank you so much!



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 & John
Captain Andrew McCarthy, Army Infantry		Pamela & family
Jeffrey		

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.

TAKE UCCW & THE BEACON ON VACATION!

Let's see how far and wide we can spread the news about our church this summer! How? It's simple! Just take this copy of the *Beacon* with you on your travels near and far this summer and take a photo of yourself holding it in whatever places you visit. Then print the photo and bring it in to add to our "UCCW on the Road" display in Fellowship Hall! Plus, send us a postcard and we'll add it to the display!

"Not Your Typical Church Concert!"

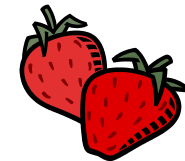
Saturday, June 15th 3:30 pm

featuring an impressive array of our homegrown talent,
including a special surprise performance you won't want to miss...

followed by our Annual

CHOWDER & Strawberry Shortcake Supper

at **5:00 pm**



Mark your calendars and join us for an afternoon of fellowship, food and music! Darla, the choir and the music committee have been hard at work on the concert. There will be more than a few *surprise performances* so make sure you come!! Then stay for supper and enjoy a bowl of homemade quahog chowder made with fresh local clams, or a bowl of corn chowder. For dessert: a dish of strawberry shortcake made with fresh locally grown strawberries.

Cost: Adults: \$10.00

Children 10 and under: \$5.00

When the sign-up sheet is available, please sign up to help out in the kitchen or to set up or clean up.

LIFE'S JOURNEYS

*Congratulations to the following new members
who were confirmed on May 19, 2013:*

Brooke Catherine Foster
Eric Christopher Sadowski
John Morton Walker, V
Lindsay Elise Walker

The Hair Care Products donation drive for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center coordinated by the above **Confirmands** netted over 5 dozen items including, shampoo, conditioner, brushes and styling gel! Great job! The items were delivered to the PNC by Rev. Ruth on Tuesday, May 21st.

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Jun 2	Becky Morrone	(401) 596-1070
Jun 9	Bethany Foster	(401) 539-4003
Jun 16	Ann Torres	(860) 599-5572
Jun 23	Pam DelPozo-Waldron	(860) 495-5389
Jun 30	Becky Morrone	(401) 596-1070

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THANK YOU for making the **Ham & Bean Supper** fundraiser for the Barbara Murano Scholarship Fund such a rousing success! Your support of this event is an important reason why we are able to continue to present the scholarships each year.

Sunday School Juice Box Collection



The youth of the church are collecting
juice boxes and bottled water

for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center's food pantry. These items are especially needed as we head towards the hot weather of summer. Please place your donations in the special box in Fellowship Hall from now through **June 9**. (No soda, please.) Thank you very much for helping with this community service project!

More Christian Education News:

On the Fellowship Hall bulletin board you will find two sign-up sheets for Family Fun events being sponsored over the summer by the CE Board. One is a **CT Tigers Baseball Game** on **July 5th** and the other is the second annual **Church Picnic** on **August 25th** right after worship where we will be doing the Blessing of the Backpacks once again. The picnic will be held from noon – 2:00 pm at the Stonington High School Pavilion.

WaterCraft Camp at Irons Homestead

July 5 – July 7

If you like to canoe, kayak, sail, or row, this weekend at Irons would be nice for you! Arrive on Friday between 4-5 pm and pick up by noon on Sunday. Cost = \$100 per person for those going into Grades 6, 7, & 8. If you are interested, please contact Jennifer Geary at #401-710-9478 or jgeary@ricucc.org for more information.

Stewardship News:

Hosts for this fall's "Getting Connected" Meetings

The Stewardship Committee would like to know if you are interested in hosting one of this fall's "Getting Connected" meetings. Last fall we had six meetings with between 10 and 20 members of our church family at each one and a good time was had by all! This fall we would like to have 5 volunteers to host our meetings in their homes once a weekend (Thursday – Sunday) from September 15 through October 27. A Stewardship Committee member will be at each meeting to facilitate the program. If you are interested in hosting a meeting, contact either Susan in the church office (860-599-1226) or Jay Macko directly for choices of when and where you would like to host your meeting. Thank you for your consideration.

- *The Stewardship Committee*

We've Struggled to be BAD!

The calendar this Spring has been jam-packed on Sundays – and that's a good thing! BUT, it has also meant that the BAD Bible Study has been shifted to the sidelines more than anticipated. One final BAD Bible Study session will take place in June on either the 9th or the 16th – whichever date suits the most people. Get in touch with Pastor Ruth to let her know your preference!!

A Note from your Secretary:

I have been noticing in the last several months that fewer people are sending me information for our newsletter. While it is wonderful to have Pastor Ruth here keeping me up to date as to what is going on, it is always nice to hear from you! Thanks -- Susan

CONGREGATIONAL PLANNING RETREAT

*Saturday, June 1
from 9am – 1pm in the Fellowship Hall*

All members of the church's boards, committees and groups are encouraged to participate in this important event where we will engage in bible study, prayer and conversation as we plan the calendar of events and activities for our church family for the next program year which begins in September.

Check Out Our Final Mission 4/1 Earth Totals!

They are posted in Fellowship Hall and they are pretty impressive! Thanks to you all for your wonderful support!



A note from Darla:

To my wonderful church family:

After many years of serving as your organist, I have thought for some time to take the summer off, and with Pastor Ruth's blessing, I shall begin my sabbatical following service on June 16 and return on September 8. I have hopes of being enlivened by the Spirit and of visits to my family while the days are warmer than wintertime! This past year has been a great change for me and my gratitude for the support of the choir and all of you is beyond words. Happy Summer and God bless.

-- Darla