

The Beacon

JANUARY 2014



GOOD NEWS from

**United Congregational Church of
Westerly**

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Luke 2:21

The above verse from the Gospel of Luke, like so many others from all the Gospels, is one we seldom read. One reason no doubt is because it falls neatly through the cracks of how we usually tell the “Jesus story” which begins at his birth at Christmas and ends on Easter with the Resurrection. This verse in Luke describes one of the ordinary things which happened to the infant Jesus when, just like every other Jewish male baby, he was circumcised and named. Yet even here, in this one sentence, the uniqueness of Jesus shines through – his name came from an angel before he was born.

As we make our way beyond the season of Christmastide into the season of Epiphany which stretches until Lent begins the first Wednesday in March, it seems to me like the perfect time in the life of our church that we get to know Jesus a little better. So we will during worship this Epiphany as we explore various answers to the question: *who is Jesus?* On the one hand, this would seem simple

enough as we talk about Jesus in worship literally every week. Even when the focus of the sermon is an Old Testament text, we still reference Jesus in the Lord’s Prayer every week. We might even feel especially confident now in the wake of Christmas answering with ease that Jesus is God’s Son. True enough. But then what? What does *that* mean?

We are Christians worshipping in a Christian church. But we live in a world far distant in time and culture from the one in which Jesus lived and ministered among others. That’s why taking the time to reflect together on who Jesus was in history and in the Bible as well as on who Jesus is personally to us is so very important. This came home to me so clearly in recent weeks as the commercialization of Christmas this year seemed to pass new benchmarks of tasteless and crass. Jesus was nowhere to be found in most commercials but especially so in some featuring everything from the black leather “Biker Claus” to the truly offensive Joe Boxer commercial. How can we hope to keep Christ in Christmas if we don’t know who he was and why it matters that he was? The simple truth is that we can’t and the society in which we live proves that every day.

So, if you’ve wondered about Jesus and why we talk about him so much, you’ll want to be in church in the weeks ahead. I do hope you’ll come with your questions and your comments as I will be looking forward to hearing them both after worship during fellowship time. And as long as you’re coming anyway, why not bring someone along with you? I’m sure they might have a question or two about Jesus also. I know I do.

Blessings,

Pastor Ruth



Thank you so much for the very generous Christmas gift of Gift Certificates from the Chamber of Commerce. When I opened it I felt like I had hit the jackpot! In fact, my family and I already used one of the gift certificates to go out to dinner on Christmas Eve before worship. I deeply appreciate your

thoughtfulness and generosity with this amazing gift. – Pastor Ruth

CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

**UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
Sunday, January 26, 2014
following the worship service.

ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE
on Monday, January 6th, 2014
and can be submitted (to Susan) as early as possible!

The reports will be ready for distribution on Sunday, January 19th, 2014.

All groups, Boards, and organizations should submit an annual report as well as all Treasurers. Please *email* your report to Susan at uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net. Hard copies can be left on Susan's desk if email is not available to you.

If you need more time to complete your report, please contact the church office and let us know. *Thank you.*

A REMINDER TO THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP!
Sunday, January 12, 2014
2:00 pm



We are meeting at the church to carpool to the annual
EPIPHANY TEA of the
BAD GIRLS OF NEWMAN CHURCH
Rumford, RI

This is the group Rev. Ruth began during her time at Newman, still going strong! The Bad Girls invited us to join them at this, their signature event which they sponsor for all the women of their church. Part of the fun of this gathering is that all the women are

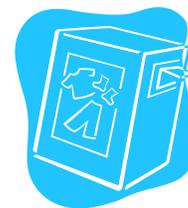
encouraged to wear fancy hats and gloves, recalling afternoon tea of a bygone era.
Sign-up sheet outside Fellowship Hall!

Mission Memos

THANK YOU for all the **Hat and Mitten Tree** donations. We were able to donate over 25 hats and 25 pairs of gloves and mittens to Westerly and Pawcatuck Elementary Schools!

SERRV Sale Total: During the Christmas Bazaar, the SERRV Missions Table raised over \$1,000! Most of this amount will benefit the artisans in selected countries who created the handcrafts. About 10% of the total is "extra" for return postage of the crafts. The Mission Committee donates this amount to the Christmas Bazaar total. Thank you to all who shopped globally!

THANK YOU from the **WARM Center!** We collected enough sweat pants, sweat shirts, socks and underwear to fill 3 huge boxes and take 2 trips to get into the vehicle when the WARM Center volunteers came to pick up our Giving Tree gifts. We also collected \$175 dollars in cash for RIPTX which they were especially thrilled with since they have had no funds for RIPTX in months. Know that you have made a real difference in the lives of real people who are homeless this Christmas season.



The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC) has requested our assistance in *January* with two specific items: **laundry detergent** and **dishwasher detergent**. Please bring your items to worship on or before Sunday, **January 12** and we'll get it to the PNC!

Thanks for all your help! Please speak to any member of the Missions Committee with your ideas and questions. – *Dixie Lufbery, Jenny*

Brummund, Christina Brummund, Peter Hainsworth, and Audrey Steinetz



Birthdays

- 3** Judy Bartlett
9 Douglas Brummund

- 11** Carolyn LeRoy
18 Lindsay Walker
23 Nancy Schilke
26 Sonya Johnson
28 Jamie Foster
31 Ben Macko

Happy Anniversary to

Dan & Jan McCrary – 1-7

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

Storm Closing Information



If we have a cancellation at the church due to severe weather, the cancellation will appear on **Channel 8 in Connecticut** and **Channels 6, 10, and 12 in Rhode Island**. You will also receive an emergency email from Pastor Ruth.

Please tune to one of these stations for more information about the cancellation of worship or other church events.

First Annual IRON CHEF COMPETITION ***Saturday, February 1st***



After asking for suggestions from our congregation as to what ingredient we should use in our competition, the ingredient will be announced on **January 5!** We will begin accepting competitor registrations at that time. The Iron Chef Winner will be selected by vote of the participants present at the event.

- Competitors will need to register in advance and pay a \$5 registration fee.
- Tickets to the event will be \$10 each (\$5 for children under 12).

Here's some other gatherings coming up in January that you'll want to put on your calendar!

-Mission Trip Planning – Monday, January 13 at 6:30 pm. We'll be deciding on location and dates for the trip this summer.

-UCCW 101 – Monday, January 20 at 6:30 pm.
 This group will continue its lively discussion of the UCC Statement of Faith.

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.

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Diaconate Schedule

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Name & Telephone</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Jan 5 | Ane Torres (860) 599-5572 |
| Jan 12 | Bethany Foster (401) 539-4003 |
| Jan 19 | Pam DelPozo-Waldron (860) 495-5389 |
| Jan 26 | Claire Calabretta (860) 536-3625 |

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

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| Ann Brown | Barbara Simmons |
| Charlie Wright | Barbara |
| Madelyn Stratton | Sandi Davis |
| Fred | Catherine |
| Jeff | Jim |
| Millie Silver | Debbie |
| Shirley Harrington | Lisa |
| Beverly & Family | Carole Kus |
| John Dillon | Brian Madill |
| Vince Amkhamavong, US Marines | |
| Susan & Devin | Sheryl |
| David Jones | Doris |
| Jennifer Clancon | Eugene Ravenelle |
| Kim Brown | David Stratton |
| Captain Andrew McCarthy, Army Infantry | |
| Beverly | Patricia Whipple |
| Martha Hale | The Burdick family |

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: Darla Rines
Sunday School Contact Persons: Tanya Sylvestre
 and Susan Lanphere
Secretary: Susan Perreault
Sexton: Debby Johnson

CHURCH OFFICE SPECIFICS

Mailing Address: 9 Castle Hill Road
 Pawcatuck, CT 06379

