

The Beacon

JUNE 2018



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there among them."* Matthew 18:20

I've had the same thing happen to me several times in the last few weeks and in the midst of several situations. It's happened to me before, but I never really thought about it much. However, when it happened these last few times in close proximity to each other, I decided God needed me to pay attention and here I am.

So, what was it that happened? Well, I was talking with different folks in different settings – the UCC clergy group who visited here to learn about the Pollinator Garden projects, the Westerly Substance Abuse Prevention group I am now part of, the Westerly Health Impact Collaborative board I serve on at the hospital, the local clergy, etc. – and the same question kept coming up, over and over again. "How many folks are in your church anyway? You guys are always doing so much!" Then, when I give the answers – membership hovering around 150 and worship attendance around 50 – the folks posing the question are startled. "That's all? How is that possible? How do you do everything you do? I thought it had to be a really big church!" That's when I smile and tell

them, "big" is a relative concept when it comes to God.

Our church may not have a lot of members but it does have a really big heart. Really big. But you all know that already. If someone needs something and we find out about it, we respond. Just enough hesitation to plan out the best response but absolutely no hesitation on whether to help. Only on how to help in ways that are really in the best interest of the individuals needing help, not to make ourselves feel good about ourselves for helping. This attitude is second nature here so I am sure you are unaware of just how rare this quality – of loving folks as they need to be loved rather than how we think they should be loved – really is.

Our church also has a big capacity for hope -- for itself, for our community, for the world. This church dares to be what it proclaims itself to be – a beacon of hope for all. This church has fully embraced that UCC branding slogan of a decade ago: "No matter who you are or where you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here." That is a statement grounded in hope and in a big, big faith that whoever and whatever comes our way, we will be up to the challenge. You have proven this to be the case time and time again. As people die or drift away from church for health reasons or move to new communities, we mourn the loss and then we move forward. The way we do things may change – like doing "Dine To Donate" events as fundraisers instead of our own church suppers – but our commitment to hope and faith never waivers.

This is why folks think we must be a "big" church because we are doing "big" things and we're successful at it! For example, our Dine to Donate events have been the most successful Stonington Pizza Palace has ever hosted. Our Pollinator Gardens project is moving forward and people know about it. They've seen the meadow coverings and are watching to see what happens. They've heard about the planned labyrinth and are waiting until it's available to walk. People also know about our prayer ministry and how quick we are to respond to prayer requests of all kinds. Most of all they know we are a church founded in and living out love as best as we are able, with the help of God.

So, when you're tempted to lament that our little church is not bigger, just remember all those people who are convinced we are big because of the difference we are making in our community every day. Would we love to have more people each week? Of course! Is that ever going to happen as we hope it will? That, dear ones, is up to God. In the meantime, we are striving always to be the church God needs us to be, and that's all that really matters. Hope to see you on Sunday!

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth



June Birthdays

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

Happy Anniversary to:

Bobbie & Pam DelPozo-Waldron
June 6, 1992

Ed & Judy Stratton
June 6, 1970

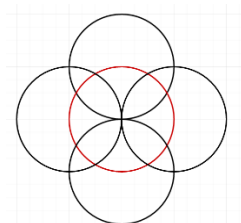
*Please add in your special days by
calling the church office!*



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

In June the office hours will only be on the 14th & 28th, due to some vacation time and some family concerns. Come by and we can talk about whatever is on your mind and heart – maybe a question on a sermon or about the church; maybe a personal situation that is confusing or hurtful; or maybe life in general or maybe even none of the above! The conversation topic is up to you and the listening is up to me.

Your friend and chatting partner, Rev. Ruth



SABBATH CIRCLES NEWS

*All the study materials from the program year
just ended in May will still be available
in Fellowship Hall and on line.
Check it out any time!*

HARVEST TABLE

*is officially on hiatus until fall as we focus on
gardening season and the pollinator gardens
projects! Late afternoon and evening work
time in the gardens are open to all!*

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Jun 3	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
Jun 10	Elvis Torres	860-245-4759
Jun 17	<i>To be determined at meeting</i>	
Jun 24	<i>in June!</i>	
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EVER WONDERED WHAT IT MIGHT BE LIKE TO PREACH???

Well, here's your chance! The Deacons are looking for someone to preach at our Sunday morning worship on July 29. No experience necessary! Just a willingness to get up and share a few words on life and faith and the intersection of the two in your life. Support and assistance available from Rev. Ruth and the Deacons. If you're interested, please speak with Lynn Murray or any Deacon, any time.



THANK YOU to everyone in the UCC Family for all your prayers and well wishes for Judy Stratton. Her operation went well and the whole Stratton family appreciates your support.

MISSION MOMENT



The summer months are almost here, and everyone knows what that means!!! Yes, that's right, our fourth annual **IN THE MIDDLE**

school supplies drive for local middle schools!!

In conjunction with the Blessing of the Backpacks at the end of summer, we will be collecting school supplies to help children in need during the summer months. Thanks to local middle school teachers for their help in compiling this list of needed supplies:

- Pencils of good quality (like Ticonderoga) that sharpen well
- red and other colored pens and pencils for students to correct their work
- thin markers
- highlighters
- zippered "folio" type binders, 3-ring binders (1½ inch)
- 3-ring binder paper
- pencil cases that go in the 3-ring binders and small change purses
- one-subject notebooks
- cap erasers for pencils and regular erasers
- glue sticks
- backpacks
- And to help the teachers, boxes of tissues for the classroom

Strengthen the Church Offering June 10

is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ which is used in part to fund new ministries that experiment with church, especially those trying to do bold new things for the sake of the Gospel. This offering in particular seeks to invest in the future of Christianity and of the church as we seek to discern what God is calling us to do. We will receive the offering on Sunday, June 10.

BOOKS IS BACK ON THE BEACH



**Thursday, June 14th
@ 6:00 pm**

We will be meeting at the Pavilion at Misquamicut State Beach at the picnic tables to the right facing the ocean. Bring a brown bag supper and something to drink as we gather to discuss Vanessa Diffenbaugh's *The Language of Flowers*. Come and join us! Good conversation if you've read the book, or just thought about reading it.

Please note: We will meet at church if we don't have beach weather!

Books are available to borrow through the Wilcox Library in Westerly. Check with the Reference department on the second floor and tell them you are with the UCC Westerly group!



**ATTENTION
CONFIRMATION
ALUMNI OF
2016 & 2018
And your friends
and relatives!**

Announcing an **END OF SUMMER LOCK-IN**
**Saturday, August 25 @ 5 pm – Sunday,
August 26 @ 11 am**

Games, Movie, Food, Hide & Seek Rematch!!
Check the July-August Beacon for details!

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **June 10th at 11:00 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by June 4th. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Susan will send you a form via email on May 31st to help you make out your report.

CONFESSION TIME...



I am finally ready to admit it. I have a confession to make. I have not written the individual thank you notes for the Grandparents Shower you had for Peter and me way back in April. My mother would be so disappointed in me. And I do know the proper etiquette. I really do! There's just been one problem that I have been embarrassed to admit. The baby cards and the presents got all mixed up as the gifts were packed up for us to take home and as a result, I have only a vague recollection of who gave what individual gift. I am so VERY sorry! So, if you are one of the people who gave us one of those individual gifts, -- the books, the silver picture frame, the baby towels, the baby afghan, the stuffed animal – we do thank you from the bottom of our hearts! And for those of you whom we can connect to a gift – Carolyn to the Christmas stocking, Becky to the Easter Bunny book, Janet to the blue and white afghan, the Strattons to the baby socks – thank you so very much as well. Most of all, to all of you, thank you for your patience and your willingness to forgive this social failing on my part. This failing is absolutely no indication of my love and gratitude to each of you!



On a related note, I took all the gifts up to Boston during one of my "Reese Times" and the girls helped themselves to several items!!! And they LOVED everything! The gifts from the church family that were hand-made were the only hand-made gifts they received for Reese and they were deeply, deeply touched. And, you all will get to meet Reese when he is baptized here on Sunday, September 23! They are very excited about this and so are we! Looking forward to our entire church family welcoming Reese into our faith!



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

**COMMUNITY GARDENING CELEBRATION!
UCC WESTERLY MEADOW PLANTING!
Saturday, June 9 10 am to 1 pm**

We will begin with a prayerful dedication of the project generally and the meadow in particular. Then all are invited to work with members of our Pollinator Gardens Committee and the local chapter of Wild Ones as we plant the meadow! In keeping with our commitment to be a living laboratory and teaching/learning resource for the community, we will be using a variety of cultivating techniques in our meadow. Everyone welcome to come and learn along with us!

Pizza & soda for all volunteers @ 12 Noon!
GF & Vege options will be available!



BIBLE 101!
Not your usual Bible Study!!

This unique, wide-ranging and unconventional Bible study continues and new folks are always welcome. Our next meeting time is tentatively set for Sunday, **June 17 @ 10:45 am** but this could change! Stay tuned for details on this! Our topic for this gathering is, however, confirmed! We will be focusing on the story of Abraham and Sarah as it unfolds in Genesis, Chapters 11-25.

We continue to use the book *The Unofficial Handbook of the United Church of*

Christ as the anchor point for this far-ranging discussion group. If you need a Bible to use or would like a copy of the *Handbook*, please speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.

DINE-TO

DONATE!!

SALADS

PIZZA

GRINDERS

**SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYONE
WHO SUPPORTED THE
BARBARA MURANO SCHOLARSHIP
DINE TO DONATE FUNDRAISER
ON MAY 17
@ Stonington Pizza Palace!**

Once again this event was a huge success thanks to all of you for coming and bringing your friends to enjoy a meal or two at this wonderful, community minded restaurant. We made double the amount of money we have made at previous fundraisers such as Tacos & Sundaes!

We especially want to acknowledge and thank Angelo & Agathi Koukoularis, owners of the restaurant, for their wonderful support and enthusiasm for our two recent fundraisers there. We hope you will continue to enjoy and support their wonderful restaurant even if we don't have a fundraiser going on!



Ed Stratton wishes to thank everyone for all their cards and prayers for his recovery. He really appreciates them!

Vacation Time



Rev. Ruth's June Schedule is a little unusual...

She notes, "I will be working mostly from home the week of June 4 because Peter will be having hip replacement surgery on June 4. He will be released home after a few days in the hospital but he will need someone there for at least a few days and that will be me!" Rev. Ruth will be accessible by cell (401-663-7934) at all times during this week.

Then, on Tuesday through Thursday, June 19-21, Rev. Ruth is taking a few days' vacation at the Cape with Peter and Jack. Kindly be in touch with the Deacons with any urgent pastoral concerns during this time frame.

PS – In case you're wondering, Rev. Ruth's actual vacation will be from July 3-30. The Rev. Sharon Key will be the guest preacher on July 8 and the Deacons are coordinating worship for the other Sundays Rev. Ruth will be away. Details will be announced in the next *Beacon*.



OFFICE HOURS for JUNE

Susan will be in the office on Mondays and Fridays from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm, and on Thursdays from 8:30 am – 1:30 pm. These hours will begin on Monday, June 4th, and end on Friday, June 29th.

OUR BRAINSTORMING WORK CONTINUES!



at the next Church Council meeting on June 10. Council meetings are always open meetings but this one in particular will focus on identifying some specific tasks folks will be working on over the summer months so that we are prepared to move forward with restructuring the way we do the work of the church and how we will be able to make it easier for folks to become involved. Hope to see you then!



THE ONA COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE!

We will be participating for the first time in the Providence PRIDE celebration alongside our UCC sister churches from Rhode Island – Chapel Street, Beneficent and Central to name a few – on Saturday, June 16 and we need your help to make this the success we are hoping it will be. Our participation includes two main events: during the day at the display booths along the river in Providence (down by RISD) AND the famous Lights Parade that evening. We need several items and we really need volunteers to help us greet folks at the booth and to walk with our church in the parade. Details are still coming together but we already know we need:

- A 10 X 10' "Easy-Up" canopy style tent. If you have one we can borrow, please let us know!
- A large quantity of mini packs of Skittles which will be one of our handouts to

booth visitors and as we walk the parade route.

- Volunteers to work at the booth – hopefully at least 4 people; 6 would be ideal.
- Volunteers to walk the parade with our church banner – as many people as possible!

If you are willing to help in any way, please speak with Dwayne Spurley or Kevin Dows or Rev. Ruth at any time! Hope you can join us for all or part of the day. It should be a blast!!!!



CONGRATULATIONS to our GRADUATES!

Jamie Foster who graduated with a Master of Science in Taxation from Bryant University. Jamie will begin work at Price Waterhouse Coopers in Boston this July.

Lindsay Walker who graduated with an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice from the Community College of Rhode Island. She will continue her studies at the University of Rhode Island this fall.

John “JB” Walker V will be graduating from Westerly High School this month. He will be attending Eastern Connecticut College in the fall where he will be studying Computer Science and running cross country as well as indoor & outdoor track.

Congratulations! We're so proud of you!

A Gentle Reminder...

that the church has bills to pay all year just like you! So, it's a huge help if you pay your pledge year-round too. Remember, you can always drop a check in the mail when you haven't been here in a while – UCC Westerly, 9 Castle Hill Rd., Pawcatuck, CT 06379 Attn: Janet or Jenny.

Also Capital Campaign Pledges should be paid

in full by July 31, 2018 if at all possible. New gifts to the Campaign always welcome!

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	Josh
Ben	Rev. Elizabeth King
Jesse B.	Bill Colprit
Laura	Ruth King Roes
Devyn Moynihan	Susan Moynihan-Freeman
Mauri Hainsworth	Bill Hoffman

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
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 for June: Monday & Friday from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm; Thursday 8:30 – 1:30 pm