

The Beacon

FEBRUARY 2014



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight."

Proverbs 3:5

Another of my favorite Scripture verses and one I pray every day, this simple verse is worthy of our deeper consideration as we head into the February doldrums. In my experience at least, February often seems like the longest month of the year even though it is clearly the shortest in number of days. This is because by this time in the winter, as February rolls around, we are tired of the cold and gray and feel a longing to feel the warm sun on our faces, to see those first green shoots poking up from the dirt. Alas, only the promise of spring is with us during these February days and sometimes that is just not enough.

In winter, our thoughts naturally turn inward, as we do ourselves. We spend more time at home, tucked into the warmth of cozy afghans and a good book or a favorite television program. It is no coincidence that *Downton Abbey* begins its season in mid-January! We are clearly focused on what is happening in our own homes and in our own

heads as the cold winds of winter make being outside for long an unappealing option. So, the natural inward turning of our thoughts and activities this time of year is not surprising.

But, and here's the tricky part the writer of Proverbs was trying to get at, when we spend too much time inside our own heads we end up focusing on ourselves and our own thoughts to the exclusion of other things. We set ourselves up for what my mother used to call "cabin fever." We get antsy, feeling like if we don't go somewhere or do something, we'll just explode. Or, we get depressed, able to focus only on the things we don't like about ourselves and our lives. We get stuck in counting our struggles instead of our blessings and that leads nowhere positive or helpful in a big hurry.

This is why the writer of Proverbs says what he (or she ☺) does – "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and don't rely on your own insight." In other words, when your thoughts get too upset or unsettled, let them go and trust God knows what you need better than you do. Literally step away from your own thoughts and hand them back to God. Write down what's upsetting you and put the paper in your Bible. Then take a walk, pet the dog, play with the cat, plant some seeds in starter pots – *do something* which disengages your thoughts from yourself so God can take over and move in.

In other words, sometimes you need to surrender and trust God, not yourself and your own ability to "think things through." That's important to do, of course. But, there comes a time to let go and let God with whatever it is that has you unsettled in your thoughts or your heart. Perhaps that time for you is now. Perhaps you love winter and have no idea what I'm talking about! In either case, remember, spring *is* coming!

Blessings,
Pastor Ruth

OLD FASHIONED VALENTINE TEA



Sunday, February 9th
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

*Come and enjoy
Delicate Tea Sandwiches,
Cookies, Fancy Pastries, Fresh Scones,
and a variety of Beverages.*

Tickets: \$10.00 each

***Please purchase tickets ahead of time ~
Reservations required!***

You can call the office (860) 599-1226 or Linda Evans (860) 599-5066 for reservations or tickets. Then please mail in your check (payable to the United Congregational Church). This will guarantee that you won't be waiting in line for a seat! Thank you.

Please **sign up** on the sign-up sheets located on a round table in Fellowship Hall. Volunteers will be needed to make pastries, donate chicken, tuna, or ham, be waitresses or waiters, work in the kitchen, help set-up for tea, and clean up on Sunday.

Make A Note!

*Our Follow-up Session for the Listening/Sharing Project of the Rhode Island Conference, United Church of Christ has been scheduled for Sunday, **February 23rd** at **11 am** in the Parlor. Representatives from the Conference will join us once again to explain the results gained through the entire project and explain how our feedback fits into the overall information received. We were promised during our Listening/Sharing Session last June that they would return and this is it!*

Please join us.

SAVE the date for the



ATTIC TREASURES SALE

Saturday, March 22nd
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Clean Saleable Items are appreciated and *some treasures would be nice too!* They can be brought in starting on Sunday, **March 16th**. Please leave your items on the tables in Fellowship Hall. Please no big items, such as couches, and no computers. *Women's Fellowship* will be coordinating this event.

Thanks, - *Linda Evans*



Birthdays

- 1** Andy Schilke
- 6** Heidi Schilke
- 7** Dorothy Oehrle
- 9** Jimmy Cornell
- 12** Alice Dessaulles
- 20** Nick Comito

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

Mission Memos

THANK YOU to the *Stewardship Committee* and *Linda Evans* for providing the WARM Center meal in January.



The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC) has requested our assistance in *February* with **BABY** items, such as **diapers, wipes, cream, formula, shampoo, etc.** Please bring your items to worship on or before Sunday, **February 9** 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, Audrey Steinetz, Sandi Davis, and Melissa Stratton.*

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 ALMOST IRON CHEF COMPETITION

Saturday, February 1st

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm



Our "secret" ingredient for this competition is **BACON!** The Iron Chef Winner will be selected by vote of the participants present at the event.

Tickets to the event will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 2 – 12.

Competitors are encouraged to **pre-register** as the number of competitors will be limited.

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall to let us know who will be competing and who will be coming!

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
Feb 2	Brenda Cornell (860) 599-3580
Feb 9	Melissa Stratton (401) 596-4740
Feb 16	Claire Calabretta (860) 536-3625
Feb 23	Elvis Torres (860) 599-5572

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Annual Ladies' Night

Dinner

sponsored by the Men's Club

Wednesday, February 12th
5:30 p.m. at StoneRidge –
Jerry Brown Rd in Mystic, CT

Price: \$26.00 per person (gratuity included)
includes your choice of entrée, appetizers,
salad, dessert, coffee or tea. Beer, wine, and
soft drinks are provided.

Entrées are: *Chicken Parmesan, Beef
Tenderloin, or Stuffed Sole.*

Two of the entrées are served with potato and
a vegetable; the chicken parmesan is served
with pasta.

In case of inclement weather, the date will be
February 13th.

*Please sign up on the sign-up sheet located on
the bulletin board in the foyer to let us know
you are coming and what your choice of meal
is. Please make payment to Ed Stratton.*

UCCW 101 – Come and join us!!

This is a delightful group having a wonderful
time once a month as we join in lively
conversation about all aspects of what it
means to be “UCC” at our wonderful church.
We have just finished two sessions on our
Statement of Faith, conversations which took
us in directions we never expected to go –
including an interesting discussion of what it
means to be “right-e-ous”. You had to be there
to get that one. And that’s what we’re hoping!
We hope you’ll come join us at our next

gathering as we explore the sacraments of
baptism and communion in our church. What
makes these two rituals sacraments when
other rituals we practice – like weddings and
funerals – aren’t? Why do we do what we do
with these sacraments? How is what we do
and what we believe different and the same as
other Christians? If all this sounds intriguing,
we hope you’ll join us for our next gathering on
Monday, **February 17 at 6:30pm**. We’ll be
looking for you!



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

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
Beverly	Patricia Whipple
Martha Hale	The Burdick family
Karen & Bill	Scott & his parents

*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.*

THE CONGREGATIONAL MISSION TRIP HAS BEEN SCHEDULED!!!

When are we going? Thursday, July 31 through
Sunday, August 3

Where are we going? A national UCC mission program called the **Providence Experience** which is based here at Irons Homestead in Gloucester, RI

What will we be doing? We will do this scheduling ourselves but our work will focus on food insecurity (think the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and its network of local farms) and homelessness (think Habitat for Humanity and various inner city homeless initiatives).

Downtime will also allow us to enjoy all the waterfront activities available at Irons including swimming, fishing and kayaking. Evening campfires, games and story-telling are also planned.

How much will it cost? \$125 per person includes everything! Keeping this cost affordable is one of the big reasons we decided to stay close to home.

When do I have to decide? We'll need a firm decision from all participants by June 1. A \$25 deposit will be needed to reserve your spot. Families are welcome to participate with special activities for children under 12. Do know we can only accommodate 24 persons on this trip!

Why should I do this? Mission Trips offer a unique opportunity to learn more about your faith by living it as we help others. You see God's Word come alive in the actions of yourself and others.

How can I get more information? Join us at our next informational gathering which will be on Sunday, **February 2nd** at **11 am** in the Parlor.

*The following is a special invitation to our church
from the Rhode Island Conference, UCC*

When Churches Gather: A Celebration for Communication, Collaboration and Cooperation

*You spoke, we listened, and now some
results!*

**Saturday, March 1, 2014 (snow date, March 8).
8:30 - 12:00**

**Central Congregational Church, 296 Angell
Street in Providence**

A light breakfast will be available.

**Every member of all Rhode Island Conference
churches is invited!**

Topics for group conversation include: *Ministry across the ages* (Intergenerational Ministry) led by Rev. Ruth Hainsworth; *Music Ministry*, led by Bob Nolan; *Health Ministry*, led by Peggy Matteson; *Christian Education Ministry with Children*, led by Kristin Putney; *Christian Education Ministry with Adults*, led by Rev. George Peters; *Outdoor Ministries, Irons Homestead*, led by Rev. Jennifer Geary; *Ministry of Stewardship*, led by Susan Rotblat-Walker; *Justice, Witness and Mission Ministry*, led by Tracy Baran and Rev. Sharon Key; *Leadership in Ministry*, led by Rev. Claudia Demick; *Technology and Productivity in Ministry*, led by Ray Christian; *Youth Mission Event*, led by Aidan Kelley; *Church Growth Topics*, led by Rev. Cleo Graham, Rev. Todd Yonkman and Rev. Nicole Yonkman.

**A sign-up sheet for UCCW participants will be
going up shortly!!**

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

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E-mail: **uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net**

Website: **www.uccwesterly.org**

Office Hours: Monday, Thursday, & Friday
from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.