

# The Beacon

## FEBRUARY 2015



**GOOD NEWS from**

**United Congregational Church of Westerly**

**United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT**

**Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am**

**FROM THE PASTOR ...**

*“And they laughed at him.”* Mark 5:40a

This short little sentence comes almost at the end of one of the most famous of the healing stories of Jesus – the one where he brought a dead little girl back to life. This is a very unusual story because there are actually two healing stories merged into one. Mark along with Matthew and Luke tell this story in the same way – with the healing of the bleeding woman embedded into the story of the healing of a little girl. On his way to heal the little girl, Jesus is delayed by a woman who crept up from behind and touched the hem of his robe to be healed. As she is explaining herself to Jesus, the man learns his daughter had died. Jesus tells him not to fear but only believe and they go to the girl. When they arrive, Jesus confronts the professional mourners already gathered outside weeping and wailing asking them why they are making such a commotion when the child is only sleeping. They laughed at him. Unfazed, Jesus goes into the house where he takes her by the hand and says, “Little girl, get up.” And she does.

“And they laughed at him.” As I read through this familiar story once more, this one short

sentence leaped out at me. We just don't think about people laughing at Jesus. Now, I love to imagine Jesus laughing *with* people and I am sure he did since we know table fellowship was central to his ministry. He was always inviting himself to dinner somewhere. But the people in this story were most definitely not laughing with Jesus. They were laughing at him for daring to think he could make a difference in a hopeless situation. They laughed at him for daring to believe that faith and complete trust in God could change the reality in front of him. People laughed at him then and people are still laughing at Jesus today. And the truth is they are laughing at us too as people who follow Jesus. Most of us don't think too much about the people who just cannot understand why church and God and Jesus are so important in our lives. These people, family or friends or strangers, might not ever laugh in our faces but when we leave them to go to church, they are shaking their heads in wonder and confusion. Oh well, we think. To each his own. Only problem is that these are the very people Jesus expects us to reach out to with the Good News of our faith. How we do this is our task as the people of God, as the church.

This past Sunday we voted to approve a Capital Campaign for our church, an exciting and gutsy move designed to help us reclaim our beautiful, unique building as our primary tool for sharing the Good News of Jesus. But repairing and updating the building and equipment is not the only focus of the Capital Campaign. Church growth strategies to expand our efforts in reaching out to those very people wondering about God all around us will also be a vital part of the task ahead. And we can do this! The success we enjoyed this past weekend with Almost Iron Chef showed us that. The people calling for Valentine Tea reservations before the signs are even up show us that. The people asking for prayers from us all the time tell us the real truth – people are not laughing at us. They're wishing they had what we have as members and friends of this amazing church. They're wondering what it means to know and love Jesus and why it matters so much. Who better to tell them than us?

So as February rolls along ushering in the beginning of Lent and our Capital Campaign in the process, we have much to be excited about as we think about the year ahead. We will be able to raise the funds to do what we need to do with this incredible building. We are ready to grow our church in people, in financial viability and in faith.

All we need do is remember what Jesus said to the little girl's father before they got to his house – "Do not fear, only believe." We can do that. We will do that, together. May God guide our footsteps along the path being revealed in front of us and may the laughter we hear be our own, as we follow Jesus with joy into God's amazing future.

Blessings,  
*Pastor Ruth*

## CHILI & Corn Bread SUPER SALE



Following worship on **FEBRUARY 1<sup>st</sup>**, please come to Fellowship Hall and purchase chili (\$10 per quart) and corn bread! *This is being sponsored by the Men's Club.* Donations of corn bread are welcome. Please sign up!

## 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.

## OLD FASHIONED VALENTINE TEA



**Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**

**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 Linda Evans (860) 599-5066 or Judy Bartlett (860) 599-5486 or the office (860) 599-1226 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 on the bulletin board. 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.

## **BOOKS ON THE ROAD!**

***Monday, February 23 @ 6:00 pm  
at Nancy Schilke's home.***

This month we are reading An Invisible Thread by Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski. Come and join us as we gather to discuss this inspiring book which was a summer reading selection for middle and high school students last summer. We will be meeting over dinner at Nancy Schilke's home so please call Nancy (401-377-8238) to RSVP and get directions! Hope to see you then!

## CHOIR NEWS



***Open Meeting of the  
Music Committee  
Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>  
@ 11 am in the parlor***

Join us for this important conversation about hymnals and special music and new possibilities! Dav Cranmer, Our Interim Organist and Choir Director, will be with us as we begin to plan for the upcoming Lenten and Easter season. Everyone who cares about music is welcome!

## Mission Memos



The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC) has requested our assistance in **February** with **toilet paper and paper towels**. Please bring your items to worship on or before Sunday, **February 8** and we'll get them to the PNC!

The **Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center** is now helping to feed Westerly residents as well! Please know that our monthly dedicated offering is so appreciated. To encourage donations anytime, one Red Bucket will remain in the Bell Courtyard area of the narthex. *Feel free to contribute canned goods any Sunday.* The need is so great!

The **PNC** is also accepting donations of **used children's books**. The books help keep children busy while parents are filling out forms. Children are also able to take the books home with them. Dixie Lufbery faithfully

delivers the UCC donations to the PNC every week. Thank you, Dixie!

Thanks for all your help! Please speak to any member of the Missions Committee with your ideas and questions – *Sandi Davis, Melissa Stratton, Audrey Steinetz, Dixie Lufbery, Peter Hainsworth, Jenny Brummund, or Christina Brummund.*



## ***February Birthdays***

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

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



***ASH WEDNESDAY SERICE  
Wednesday, February 18 @ 7 pm***

Join us for a unique service of prayer, meditation and the imposition of ashes as we begin Lent, the time in the Christian year when we consider intentionally who we are and who God needs us to be.

# Annual Ladies' Night Dinner

*sponsored by the Men's Club*

**Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**5:30 p.m. at StoneRidge –**  
Jerry Brown Rd in Mystic, CT

Price: \$20.00 per person.

Entrées are: *Filet Mignon, Grilled Salmon, or  
Chicken Cordon Bleu.*

*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 your check out to  
UCC Men's Club and give to Ed Stratton.*



## Deacons' Notes:

**PRAYER TREE** – The Deacons are in the process of updating the prayer tree. If you would like to be one of the folks who receives a phone call to pray for joys or concerns within our church family, please let any deacon know. Any time you would like to activate the prayer tree for yourself or a loved one, you may do so by calling Ane Torres at (860) 599-5572. If no one is home, the Diaconate Person of the Week should be called. Their name and number appear in the weekly bulletin and in the Beacon newsletter.

**COFFEE HOUR** – A new **Coffee Fellowship Hosts** sign-up sheet has been posted next to the flower chart. Please consider committing to a week or two during the year. Any deacon would be happy to take you through the process if you'd like help. Just make a note on the sign-up and someone will join you. This is

an important ministry, especially when we have guests, and we have such a fabulous and easy-to-use kitchen!

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## Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name &amp; Telephone</u>
Feb 1	Bethany Foster (401) 539-4003
Feb 8	Lynn Murray (401) 539-7578
Feb 15	Becky Morrone (401) 596-1070
Feb 22	Ane Torres (860) 599-5572

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### **Watch for details of this year's LENTEN PROGRAM including:**

- The kick-off of a new, year-long bible study called *A Year with the Bible!* Read the bible on your own time and your own pace using a selection of readings provided. Learn how to use such bible study tools as concordances, commentaries, bible dictionaries and more. Then, meet for conversation about the texts we've read as we discuss our questions together. Informational meeting on Sunday, **February 15 @ 11 am** in the Parlor. Future meeting dates to be set by the group!
- A special Lenten Devotional program of daily prayers and readings.



### ***SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER***

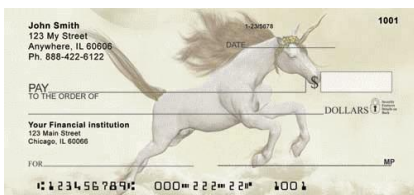
will resume its regular meetings as Lent begins. Watch for the announcement of day and time in the Weekly Email Update and the News & Notes in Sunday's bulletin.



## CHRISTIAN ED NEWS:



- ❖ Sunday School during the month of February on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>! There will be no Sunday School on February 15 due to the President's Day Holiday Weekend.
- ❖ A reminder of the books and activity bags located in the pew to the right of the organ for those Sundays when children remain in worship.
- ❖ **REMEMBER!** The best way for children to learn faith is to experience faith first hand through the adults in their lives whom they love and trust. *"Faith is caught, not taught."* William Willimon



with the one check in one pledge envelope, or simply list each week/special offering on the check memo. This last option does not leave much room, but will do in a pinch. We know that checks cost money and want to make you aware that we do not need to have separate checks for each donation. Just double-check your addition, and put the whole amount on one check. Please be sure to use one of the methods above to let the financial secretaries know how the money should be credited.

If you would like clarification about these suggestions, or need a 2015 Pledge Form (it's never too late!), feel free to ask Janet Allen, Financial Secretary, or Jenny Brummund, Assistant.

*Thank you again for your generous support!*

### **ATTENTION!**

**Members of the Visitation Team &  
The Prayer Tree Ministry Team**

*and those who might like to be*

**You Are Invited to**

**A RETREAT**

**Saturday, February 24**

**9 am – 11:30 am**

**The Parlor of our church**

UCC Westerly has had a successful Visitation Team ministry and Prayer Tree ministry for many years. Both of these ministries are vital in the life of our church, for our own people as well as for the wider community beyond our doors. That's why it's worth a few hours of our time to gather in prayer and reflection about what we do in these ministries and why and how we do it. This gathering will be co-led by Rev. Ruth and Peggy Matteson, the RICUCC Conference Staff person for congregational health and visitation ministries. A light breakfast will be provided. Kindly RSVP to the office (860-599-1226) if you are able to join us. We'll be looking for you!

### ***A Note from the Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary:***

Thank you to all who faithfully contribute to our church and its missions!

We wanted to share an idea that may make it easier when writing checks out for various donations. Sometimes, we need to "catch up" with missed weeks of offering, or make special donations (such as for Advent, Neighbors in Need, Per Capita Dues, Fair Trade, etc.). Even for these diverse donations, you can simply write one check and attach it to all applicable pledge envelopes (donation designations), perhaps placing them all in a business envelope. Alternatively, you could include an itemized written list of donations

**SAVE the date for the**



## **ATTIC TREASURES SALE**

**Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>  
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 1<sup>st</sup>** 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.



## **Corned Beef & Cabbage DINNER**

**Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.**

**Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage  
Homemade Dessert & Beverage**

**Admission price:** Adults \$10.00;  
Children \$5.00

*Everyone is welcome to attend. Please wear  
your green!*

**Help is needed** in the kitchen at 10:00 am on  
Friday, March 13, to cook the meat and peel  
the vegetables. A sign-up sheet will be posted  
for desserts and for helpers!



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

Ann Brown	Barbara
Madelyn Stratton	Sandi Davis
Fred	Catherine
Jeff	Jim
Millie Silver	Debbie
Shirley Harrington	Lisa
Beverly & Family	Carole Kus
John Dillon	Brian Madill
Sheryl	David Jones
Doris	Jennifer Clancon
Eugene Ravenelle	Kim Brown
David Stratton	Beverly
Karen & Bill	Doris Whitehead
Scott & his parents	Vivian Roode
David Hall	Paul Whitehead
Marcia Holly	Family of Nina Poeta
Ron Carlson	Shirley M.
William Underhill III	Gerry
Martha	David Keith
Linda Dessales	Timothy Nugent

*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.*

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### **OUR STAFF**

*Pastor:* The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth  
*Interim Organist:* David Cranmer  
*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

*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.