

The Beacon

JULY/AUGUST 2016



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

"Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?"

Genesis 18:14a

Not surprisingly perhaps, these words are spoken by an angel. We would expect an angel to know in a way we never could just how wonderful the Lord is. After all, we think of angels as knowing God "up close and personal." The angel said this to Abraham as the angel was scolding Sarah, Abraham's wife, for laughing when the angel told them she would bear a child – her first child – in her old age. Sarah laughs and we can imagine how Abraham must have looked as he heard the angel's fantastic prediction.

"Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?"

These are good words for us to ponder as life slows down in these summertime months. We have a tendency these days to look for the bad news, to expect the worst, to focus on the gray clouds and miss the silver lining completely. And why wouldn't we. The news is rarely anything but depressing. Even the local countryside looks desolate as the gypsy moth caterpillars eat their fill at the expense of our trees. Summertime traffic we know all too well will only get worse as tourists and day-trippers to the beaches pour into the area. "Is anything too

wonderful for the Lord?" Sometimes it's difficult to remember what wonderful looks like, feels like, sounds like. Then something totally unexpected happens...

I have had two such *wonderful* experiences here at our church in the last two weeks. Well, truthfully more than two but two in particular I want to share with you. The first one happened about two weeks ago. I was working at my desk in my office when I looked out my window and saw all these little birds running around. I had no idea what they were but they looked sort of like tiny pheasants. I tried to get a better look and that's when I saw the momma turkey and realized these were her babies! I counted 12!!! Momma was letting them explore, I think for perhaps the first time, outside their nest most likely located in our woodlands behind the church. They were all excitedly running around, most of them in one big clump. But there was one little one determined to go off on his own, checking out what was happening underneath some of the shrubbery. I had cautiously stepped outside to try to get a photo, but momma freaked! She clucked and squawked and the little clump quickly ran toward her but the one hold-out scurried deeper under the azalea bush. Momma stayed right where she was staring me down as she tried to encourage Mr. Independent out from under the bush (there's always a kid like that, right?). So, I backed off and returned to my office, still thrilled by this most remarkable encounter with some of God's wild creatures.

My second wonderful experience happened when I stayed late for a meeting one evening last week. I was heading to my car parked on the circle by the Bell Courtyard when I saw them at the far side of the driveway – a momma deer and two little fawns! They were adorable! My "city girl" reality is now showing because that is the *first time in my life* I had ever seen deer that close who weren't in a zoo. Of course, momma deer had spotted me as soon as the door opened and was watching me warily long before I saw her. So, just as I noticed them, momma nudged them off back into the woods. Once again, one fawn followed her right away but the other lingered, looking at me before he too took off.

Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? NO! My two encounters with these baby creatures and their mommas reminded me of that. All these baby

critters also reminded me that our efforts to reach out to families with children and youth are starting to bear fruit. And much more is in the works for this fall in this regard. The YES program will return with a unique Bible geography and missions curriculum as its centerpiece but retaining the nature, service and art components. We will have a Youth Group this fall for the first time in years! We will be offering an exciting new "dinner ministry" called Harvest Table which you will hear more about as summer comes to an end. We will also be continuing our work on the Pollinator Garden and Labyrinth Project which is already attracting a lot of interest from the community! Dear friends, we are proof that the wonderfulness of God is always being revealed in our midst if only we will make the effort to notice and respond. That's just what I hope you'll do this summer... But we'll still be looking for you on Sunday!

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth



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

Come and chat about anything!
 Whomever, whatever happens is wonderful.
 The cold drinks at the Savoy are awesome!
 And don't get me started on the cookies...
PS – Remember, in July my Community Office Hours will resume on July 21, after my vacation!



Check out our new **Music & Library Rooms!**
 Our thanks to *Linda & Ernie Evans, Carolyn & Gene LeRoy, Ed Stratton, & Gary Davis* for their many hours of work involved in transforming this space. Thanks also to Women's Fellowship for the nice new carpeting!

BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES and Everyone Welcome!



2nd & 4th Thursdays @ 6 pm in the Parlor

This summer: July 28th and August 25th
Bible Study Reading Schedule is available in the church as we make our way through the whole Bible in however long it takes us!!

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>	
July 3	Elvis Torres	860-599-5572
July 10	Claire Calabretta	860-536-3625
July 17	Gary Davis	860-599-4279
July 24	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
July 31	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578

August schedule to be determined!

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CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **July 24th at 11:00 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by **July 17th**. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Susan will send you a form via email on July 7th to help you make out your report.



July Birthdays

- 4 – Darla Rines
- 13 – Mark Comito
- 19 – Bobbie DelPozo-Waldron
- 21 – Ane Torres
- 22 – Ed Schilke
- 27 – Jim Cornell
- 30 – Elvis Torres

August Birthdays

- 1 – Rosemary Jette
- 10 – Liz Dessaulles
- 13 – Amanda Dessaulles
- 20 – Bethany Foster
- 30 – Shirley Miller

Happy Anniversary to:

- Elvis & Ane Torres – July 20, 2002
- Eugene & Carolyn LeRoy – August 4, 1962
- Andy & Heidi Schilke – August 4
- George & Cathy Gray – August 23

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



Vacation Time

Rev. Ruth's Summer Schedule

Monday, July 4 through Monday, July 18
On vacation!

Monday, August 8 – Sunday, August 14
On vacation, but will be home in time to attend the CT Tigers Baseball Game on Sunday at 4 pm!

Tuesday, August 16
Working as usual ☺

For pastoral care issues when Rev. Ruth is on vacation, please contact the Diaconate Person of the Week or the Chair of the Deacons, Lynn Murray (#401-539-7578).

Susan will be out of the office on her vacation on Monday, July 25th, and Thursday & Friday, July 28rd & 29th.

"BOOKS" Continues on the road...



Our next gathering will be on **Tuesday, August 30** and we will be meeting at **Supreme Pizza** in Westerly. The book we have chosen to read for this gathering is *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. It should be available through the library or for purchase in local bookstores or online. Hope you'll join us!

Mission Notes

Upcoming events:

- School supplies will once again be collected over the summer to support our second annual *"In the Middle"* donation drive. Here is a 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 (1 ½ 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!
- The July and August **meals for WARM** will be provided by the Trustees and Missions respectively.

Announcing a Women's Fellowship Summer Gathering! Rescheduled to Saturday, August 27 from 2 - 6 pm



A potluck cook-out at Rev. Ruth's home!

Hamburgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers will be provided along with buns and condiments. The rest is up to you!

Our agenda will be to brainstorm ideas for what we'd like to do next year. Car pools will be arranged so you don't need to worry about making the drive.

Sign-up sheet on bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall.

All women of the church are welcome!!!!

MISSION DAY TRIPS

are being planned as follows:



- **Tuesday, July 26 – 9 am to 12 noon – Franklin Farms, Cumberland, RI**
 - Picking produce in support of the food banks of Rhode Island
- **Friday, July 29 – 2 to 7 pm – Mathewson Street Church, Providence, RI**
 - Working in support of their ministries to the homeless and near homeless, including serving at the PICA (Providence In-town Churches Association) Dinner
- **Saturday, August 20 – 9 am to 5 pm? – Labyrinth Pilgrimage in Rhode Island**
 - Making a road trip to visit several labyrinths at various churches throughout Rhode Island. Lunch out at a restaurant is part of the plan!
- **Sunday, September 11 – after worship – WARM Center, Westerly, RI**
 - We will be planning, preparing and serving the meal at the WARM Center this day.
- **To be finalized – Trip to the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, CT**
 - Seeing the Abbey's spectacular gardens, as well as a pollinator garden nearby; participating in one of the Abbey's prayer services
- **To be finalized – Date to volunteer at the Jonnycake Center Community Garden in Charlestown, RI**

Also in the planning for this fall:

- **An overnight Labyrinth Retreat** to experience and learn firsthand why labyrinths are such a powerful resource for prayer and spiritual renewal.
- **A trip to Block Island to visit the labyrinth there!**

Check out the Mission Day Trips bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for details and to sign up for the trip(s) that interest you!

THE CE BOARD and THE FAMILY FUN FELLOWSHIP are pleased to announce this year's OUTING to the CT TIGERS BASEBALL GAME!



**Sunday, August 14
Game Time 4:05 pm**

Sign-up sheet outside Fellowship Hall.
Group discount ticket price is \$7 each.
You must sign up to attend so we are sure we have the correct number of tickets reserved!
Deadline to sign up is **August 1.**

COMING IN SEPTEMBER!



"DABBLE and

DESSERT"



PARTY

Our Dabble and Dessert event is locked in for Thursday, **September 29th at 6:00 pm.** If you are not familiar with this, we will have an artist who will be instructing us on creating a beautiful painting (which one is still to be determined. Speak up if you have a seasonal preference.) All materials will be provided, including canvas (16" x 20"), paints, brushes, easels, and step-by-step instruction. Desserts and beverages will be provided and there will also be a basket raffle. Each participant will leave with a beautiful painting. The cost is \$45 per person, with \$20 of each participant going to the church's capital campaign. We need a minimum of 30 participants, so invite your friends. It's the perfect opportunity to have a night out with friends, learn something new, and leave with your own creation. Promotional materials and sign-up instructions will follow.

ATTENTION GARDENING ENTHUSIASISTS!



Our Church is pleased to offer you TWO opportunities to put your love of gardening to work in supporting the ministries of the church this summer!

#1 – Summer Gardening Tasks! – We have prepared a Summer Gardening Tasks list which is posted in the window of the Bell Courtyard with the idea that gardening volunteers can come when they can and do what they can, using the Tasks list as a guide. Do note that watering needs to be done when the office is open because water access is tricky!

#2 – Pollinator Garden & Labyrinth Working Group is meeting next on Tuesday, August 2nd at 6 pm. Participation in this group is open to anyone interested in any aspect of this exciting project. Come join us to find out firsthand what's happening!

ANNOUNCING A NEW TAKE ON SEVERAL OLD IDEAS...

The Harvest Table Dinner Ministry

Wednesday, September 21

5:00 – 7:00 pm



We all come together to create a simple soup supper enjoyed as we gather at the table to sing, pray and talk. All ages welcome! Details to follow in September BEACON. Intrigued? Speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.



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

Madelyn Stratton	Sandi Davis
Fred	Jeff
Catherine	Millie Silver
Carole Kus	Shirley Harrington
Lisa	Beverly & Family
Brian Madill	David Jones
Eugene Ravenelle	Jennifer Clancon
Karen & Bill	Kim Brown
Shirley M.	Hope
Gerry	Timothy Nugent
Scott & his parents	William Underhill III
Family of Gary Dobson	
Connie	Nicci & Jeff
Bob & Ann	Sharon Brooks
Allie	Family of Doris Whitehead
Rae Drager	

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
YES Program contact: Kathy Tarasuk
Secretary: Susan Perreault
Web Master: Heather Stratton

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.