

The Beacon

MAY 2016



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

“Set up road markers for yourself, make yourself guideposts; consider well the highway, the road by which you went.”

Jeremiah 31:21

Something happened to me at church today that has literally never happened to me before. That's saying something because I have been involved in churches for all of my life, and in professional ministry for more than 25 years. Yet this has never happened before. Someone rang the doorbell of the church while I was working in my office and, when I went to answer it, I encountered a middle aged woman who was lost and looking for directions. She was new to the area, she explained, and needed to find a particular location in Pawcatuck. Her GPS only succeeded in getting her lost and now her phone had died so she needed help. Driving by she saw the church and my car in the driveway, so she stopped confident she would find the help she needed. Thankfully, I was able to provide the directions she needed and she was soon on her way.

This chance encounter lasted less than five minutes but as I've thought about it since, I see in it some profound lessons for us to consider. First, this woman, a stranger, was confident the church would provide the help she needed. That's not a new phenomenon except this woman wasn't asking for financial assistance like so many strangers who ring our doorbell. She wasn't asking for prayers either. She was literally lost and had someplace important she needed to get to. Asking at the church for directions was a logical choice to her. She didn't go to a gas station or a store or any of the other places she could have gone. She came to a church, our church. And she found the help she was looking for.

How extraordinary and yet how perfectly wonderful and natural too. Church should be a place where the lost can find the direction they seek, literally and metaphorically! Think what it will mean if our church is identified by the people outside her doors as a place where the lost and lonely, the disconnected and the discouraged can recover their place in God's Creation through what they find here. I hope whoever shows up at our doors or in our gardens will find what they seek here. I hope we will welcome them with open arms and hearts. As far as I know, that's what happens in this wonderful church and I hope it will continue to happen, especially as our new outreach efforts to the community – like the Pollinator Garden and the Labyrinth and Community Office Hours – begin to bear fruit.

We are traveling unknown roads into the church's future as we try new things and experiment in doing familiar things in new ways. The truth is the world is changing so fast and the church must change with it. But, we must also never lose our sense of direction, our knowing who we are and whose we are and how that grounds us for whatever we encounter as we move forward into God's future. Exciting days ahead for us, I'm sure. The road ahead may be a little foggy at times, and we may take a detour or two along the way, but the good news is – we can always stop and ask for directions. And, with God's help, be ready to provide them to others too. Future – here we come!

Your friend in Christ,

Rev. Ruth

It's Scholarship Time



Applications for the **Barbara Murano Scholarship** are available for new and returning college students. Please note there is a different form for each category. The deadline to apply is **May 1st**. The Board of Deacons also requests assistance at the Barbara Murano Scholarship **Make Your Own Tacos and Sundaes Dinner** (see below). **PLEASE SIGN UP** on the **sign-up sheet** posted at the entrance to Fellowship Hall. Assistance in making this a full profit event is most welcome.

"Make Your Own"

Tacos & Sundaes Dinner

Saturday, May 14th, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

- All proceeds benefit the Murano Scholarship Fund.
- Those interested in applying for the Barbara Murano scholarship are encouraged to help out before, during, or after the dinner if possible.



Adults: \$10.00
Children under 10: \$5.00
Family of 4 (2 kids under 10): \$25

Thank you for all your help and participation.

Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
May 1	Gary Davis 860-599-4279
May 8	Elvis Torres 860-599-5572
May 15	Claire Calabretta 860-536-3625
May 22	Bethany Foster 401-539-4003
May 29	Lynn Murray 401-539-7578

† † † † † † † † † † † †

We have two families representing us at the **Conference National Youth Event** this summer in Orlando. *Anna Tarasuk and Erin Blake* will be attending, and both families are making the trip. Please help the Deacons support them with your donation to the **Deacons' Fund Offering on May 1st**.

YES!

PROGRAM

SCHEDULE



Sunday, May 1 – **Story Engagement** –
 "Jesus Goes to a Wedding"

Sunday, May 8 – **Art Engagement** –
 Details to be announced

Sunday, May 15 – **Confirmation!**

Sunday, May 22 – Preparation for
Children's Day

Sunday, May 29 – **NO YES! Program**

† † † † † † † † † † † †

ATTIC TREASURES SALE

Saturday, May 21st
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 *any time!* Please leave them downstairs – 1 flight down, second door on the right! Please no big items, such as couches, and no clothes, computers, or other electronics. *Women's Fellowship* will be coordinating this event.

"BOOKS – out on the Town!"



Mark your calendars for Tuesday, **May 24 @ 6 pm** to join us for the next Books gathering! We will be meeting at Bridge Restaurant in Westerly. The book we have chosen to read is *The 19th Wife* by David Ebershoff. It is available through the library or in most book stores or online. Everyone welcome! We will also be making our summer reading plans at this gathering so come and put your 2 cents in!

★ HAPPY ★ BIRTHDAY!

May Birthdays

- 1 – Kenton Michael
- 3 – Brian Johnson
- 4 – Charlotte Korean
- 5 – Gregory Sugar
- 7 – Gene LeRoy
- 9 – Nicholas Schilke
- 15 – Debby Johnson
- 20 – Daniel Stratton
- 27 – Susan Moynihan

Happy Anniversary to:

Mark & Elizabeth Dessaulles – May 6, 1989

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



Family Housing

Support

Family Housing Support – Thank you to all who helped in raising \$392.61 for families in Westerly who need emergency housing. The need for families with children is so critical that a third apartment is being rented since 30 families are on a waiting list! Your generosity is much appreciated. -- Carolyn LeRoy

Mission Moments

The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center was very grateful for the **Fill the Pews** items! Thank you to both sides of the church for your bounteous contributions of non-perishable food for the PNC clients and their four-legged family members. The front pews were filled to overflowing!



The Missions Committee is excited to be assisting with the early planning phase for our church's proposed **Labyrinth and Pollinator Garden**. The vision for this garden is to create a public space that people can freely visit for contemplation and prayer, and to connect with and be enveloped by the beauty of God's creation: the fragile, interdependent ecosystem of "unsung heroes" (birds, butterflies, bees, beetles, etc.) that are critical to the web of life, and the flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees that sustain them. Committee members met recently with Kristen King, program coordinator at Stonington Human Services, to discuss potential partnerships with them, including youth volunteer support and potential funding. We are collecting toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls to use as seed starters and, with the help of our youth, hope to try our hand at planting some pollinator-friendly plants during Earth Day celebrations on Sunday, April 24th. Stay tuned for project updates!

Our THANKS to the Deacons for supplying the **May WARM meal**.

Thanks for all your help! Please speak to any member of the Missions Committee with your ideas and questions – *Sandi Davis, Melissa Stratton, Claire Calabretta, Darla Rines, Kathy Sugar, or Peter Hainsworth.*



VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE OUR EARTH DAY SUNDAY CELEBRATION SUCH A WONDERFUL SUCCESS!!

Be sure to check out all the photos on Facebook!!



CONFIRMATION REMINDERS

- Confirmands, their families and mentors are expected to attend the **Faith Stories Potluck** on Saturday, **April 30** at **5:30 pm**.
- Confirmand at-home meetings with Rev. Ruth will be scheduled for next week and Confirmands will meet for their final class on Sunday, May 8. Watch email for details!

INVEST in the VISION **Strengthen the Church Offering** **May 15th**

This offering of the United Church of Christ supports our commitment as a denomination to grow the UCC's future by funding "The Stillspeaking Ministry" and lay and pastoral leadership formation. It helps to strengthen and renew existing congregations, and "plant" new churches. Your gift awakens new ideas in existing churches and develops spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Your generous gifts are administered by your Conference in Rhode Island, by Local Church Ministries, and The Stillspeaking Ministry. Envelopes will be available at the entrances to the sanctuary and in the bulletin on May 15th.

Details for the Day Trip Mission Experiences 2016 are coming into focus. Watch the Mission Trip bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for specifics!

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

Announcing...



**Rev. Ruth's Community Office Hours!
Thursdays from 1 – 3 pm
May 5 – The Savoy Bookstore in downtown
Westerly**

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

Future locations to be announced in the Sunday bulletin and Weekly Email. Come and join Rev. Ruth for a cup of coffee or tea and a conversation on whatever topic you'd like. Bring a friend or come alone and if someone else is already chatting with me, just pull up a chair and join us! Hope to see you then...

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**.

BIBLE STUDY STARTING THIS MONTH!



In response to several requests, I am excited to announce that I am going to be offering a Bible study at church one morning a week for anyone interested. Please check out the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall to let me know which meeting time works best for you. Then, off we go!!!

A NOTE from the OFFICE:



If you are on a board or committee, and know that a FAX will be sent to the church, please let someone in the office know ahead of time. With our new telephones and voicemail service, Rev. Ruth discovered that the fax machine needs to be set at "manual." This means for us that we will need to have the person sending us the fax call us first so that we can receive it. Thanks for your cooperation.
– Rev. Ruth & Susan



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

Barbara	Madelyn Stratton
Sandi Davis	Fred
Jeff	Catherine
Debbie	Jim
Millie Silver	Carole Kus
Shirley Harrington	Lisa
Beverly & Family	Beverly
John Dillon	Brian Madill
Doris	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

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
Sexton: Debby Johnson
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.