

The Beacon

OCTOBER 2015



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

“Now the Lord said to Abram...

I will make of you a great nation...

and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:1-3

The above text is the beginning of the story of Abram and Sarai, more familiar to us as Abraham and Sarah. These words mark the very beginning of their journey undertaken at the direction of God, long before they became Abraham and Sarah. Theirs is an incredible journey which covered a span of more than 30 years and more than 20 chapters in the book of Genesis. It is the foundational story of three of the world's great religions – our own Christianity as well as Judaism and Islam and it is a story that literally changed the future of the world.

What we seldom stop to think about when we consider this story is that Abram was 75 years old when God gave him his marching orders. “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you,” God says to Abram as he was staring his twilight years square in the face. Notice that God doesn't ask Abram if he wants

to go. God tells him to go – and here's the really crazy part – Abram goes, taking Sarai along with him. They also bring along Abram's nephew Lot – yes, the same Lot who had the wife who became the pillar of salt later on. They didn't have any children of their own to bring along. That too came later, when Abram and Sarai, now Abraham and Sarah, had their first child *in their 90's* – a son named Isaac.

Abram and Sarai, not to mention Lot, had plenty of adventures after they left as God directed. These are actually some of the raciest stories in the Bible so you might want to check them out, if you dare! ☺ You'll find them in Genesis 12-25. These stories are surprising in a lot of ways, but they also reveal these people who are the patriarchs and matriarchs of our faith to be all too human. But, what I really hope we can take from this story is what I see as God's continuing mandate to each and every one of us in our church in the 21st century. It appears in that third line – “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Now admittedly, that's a very tall order for one little church.

Truthfully, it's not a mandate just for us. It is a continuing mandate for every faithful person who claims the story of Abraham and Sarah as their own. We are all, as people of faith, called by God to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Sadly, none of us have done a very good job at that. But there's always tomorrow and tomorrow is where God needs us to focus our energies and our hopes and our dreams. In fact, God is counting on us to do just that! And, God doesn't care how young or how old we are, how tired or how energized we are, how rich or how poor we are. God needs all of us, each of us, just as we are, to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Our starting place is right here where we are in the Westerly-Pawcatuck corner of God's earth.

What does it mean for us to be a blessing? That we have to figure out together and those conversations are already happening in our boards and committees. They will also

be an important part of our upcoming Leadership Retreat on October 17 (check out the enclosed announcement for details). I know it will take all of us to figure out the ways God needs us to be a blessing to our community and our world. I hope we can count on you for your prayers and support in whatever ways God is inviting you to consider. As you do, remember Abram and Sarai who dared to answer God's call to a whole new life in their seventies! With God all things are possible, indeed...

Blessings,
Rev. Ruth



October Birthdays

- 1 – Heather Stratton
- 1 – Judy Stratton
- 7 – Erin Gray
- 9 – Sheryl Caswell
- 10 – Melissa Stratton
- 19 – Bobby Cornell
- 20 – Joan Edmond
- 23 -- Barbara Colby
- 24 – Brooke Foster

Happy Anniversary to:

Erwin & Alice Dessaulles – 10-26-58

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



Open Music Committee Meeting – Sunday, October 4th @ 11 am in the parlor

Last year's Open Music Committee meetings were so successful in helping us to revitalize our music program that we are continuing them this year with the first meeting planned for Sunday, October 4 at 11 am in the Parlor. Join us as we talk about what music we'd like to see as a part of Sunday worship and also what musical opportunities might exist for the special holiday worship services in November and December. Dav and Rev. Ruth are also really interested to hear your ideas about how we might be able to bring local musicians into the church for worship and other special events, as we were able to do last year. Everyone is welcome to these gatherings – no musical expertise or experience required!!!

BOOKS IN THE PARLOR!



**Monday, October 19th
@ 5:30 pm**

Books on the Beach did not meet as planned in September for a number of reasons. Our next gathering is scheduled for Monday, **October 19th** with tentative plans for a potluck in the Parlor at church. *However*, these specifics may change so stay tuned to updates through the Weekly Email Update and the Sunday bulletin! Our book remains the same, *Will You Love Me* by Cathy Glass. Some folks have had difficulty locating this book but extra copies are available through the church office. Feel free to stop by and borrow one on Sunday! Hope you can join us! I think you'll be glad you did!

Mission Memos



The Mission Committee is modifying its monthly donation schedule to reflect a wider range of needs in our community. We will be working on specific basic needs the entire month, with the fourth Sunday of the month being the final day to donate. There is a greater need at the moment for all sizes of MEN's new **underwear & socks**. These will be shared with **the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center & Mathewson Street Church** in Providence. Please bring your items to worship on or before Sunday, **October 25th**. Collection boxes will be at both entrances to the sanctuary.

The **Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center** helps to feed Westerly residents too. *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!

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



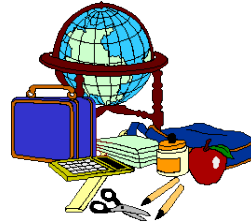
Family Housing

Support

Linda Evans, Carolyn LeRoy and Ed Stratton are taking part in the **Fall Stroll-A-Thon** to support families struggling with homelessness. This walk will take place at Wilcox Park on Saturday, **October 10th**. Check out the flyer on the bulletin board at the entrance to Fellowship hall for more details. If you would like to donate towards this cause, please give your check or money to Linda. Thank you for your consideration.

-- *Carolyn, Ed & Linda*

YES! *There's lots going on for Children and youth in October!*



Sunday, Oct 4 – Special Service of Worship for World Communion Sunday; YES session following Communion will be Nature Engagement with Jay

Sunday, Oct 11 – Art Engagement with Jenn

Sunday, Oct 18 – Story Engagement – “Abram & Sarai” sessions begin
Watch for details on Corn Maze outing in the afternoon!

Sunday, Oct 25 – Nature Engagement with Jay

Confirmation Meetings begin in October!

This year's Confirmation program will include youth in the 8th and 9th grade. By the time you receive this newsletter, our first gathering for Confirmands and their parents will already have happened on September 27th. Our first class meeting is scheduled for Sunday, **October 18 at 11 am** in the Parlor. A letter of invitation to the Confirmation program has been sent to all Confirmation age youth of whom we are aware but if you know of someone in the 8th or 9th grade who would like to join us, please speak with Rev. Ruth as soon as possible. We always have room for more friends!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE!

The "Next 50 Years of our Church" Capital Campaign continues humming along! We have now received 35 pledges totaling just under \$86,000 with pledges ranging from \$500 to \$7,000. Be sure to check out the flyer (see below) on the Leadership Retreat with Church Growth consultant Peter Saros on Saturday, **October 17th**. This retreat will be your **ONE** opportunity for input on how campaign projects are prioritized and funds utilized. Everyone is welcome to attend.

YOU ARE INVITED!!



Have you already made a pledge, or are you still considering making a pledge, to our Capital Campaign? Do you want to have a say in how the money will be spent and how we will use our revitalized building to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our community?

If your answer is **YES**,
then this invitation is for **YOU!**

WHAT? The Capital Campaign Full-day Leadership Retreat

WHEN? Saturday, **October 17**, 2015
8:45 am—3:00 pm

WHERE? Here at our soon-to-be revitalized Church

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?? Coffee and treats, lunch, and, more importantly, the **ONE** opportunity to work with members of your church family to help prioritize the suggested Campaign Projects and set guidelines for how

the Trustees will be empowered to spend the Capital Campaign funds raised.

RSVP to Susan in the church office
(860-599-1226)

Please note donations to offset the cost of foods will be gratefully received!

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
Oct 4	Ane Torres (860) 599-5572
Oct 11	Becky Morrone (401) 596-1070
Oct 18	Jay Macko (860) 705-3512
Oct 25	Gary Davis (860) 599-4279

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From Your Friends on the Stewardship Committee

During this time on our church calendar, we are again pondering the question, "Am I doing what I can to be a steward of UCC Westerly?" It is time to make a commitment to present ourselves completely to God as his servants with no strings attached. Be it time, talent or pledge of money, can you give with the spirit of true peace and joy knowing that you are doing God's will? We hope so!

Our Stewardship Campaign for 2016 will kick off on **October 11th** and will continue through **November 8th** culminating with pledges received and dedicated on **November 15**. Our annual **Stewardship Brunch** will take place after worship that Sunday so we hope you'll plan now to attend. A sign-up sheet for that event will be up shortly.

We hope you'll join us in worship during this stewardship season as four of your UCC Westerly friends talk about our church, what it means to them and why they give as they do. What we each do, does make a real difference. We'll be looking for you!

Janet Allen Carolyn LeRoy Sally Panciera



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	Shirley M.
Scott & his parents	Gerry
David Hall	Timothy Nugent
William Underhill III	
Family of Gary Dobson	Hope
Connie	Nicci & Jeff
Bob & Ann	Sharon Brooks

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

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.