

The Beacon

SEPTEMBER 2015



GOOD NEWS from

United Congregational Church of Westerly

United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT

Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am

FROM THE PASTOR ...

“For in Jesus every one of God’s promises is a ‘Yes’.” 2 Corinthians 1:20a

You might be surprised to know that, while I have a lot of favorite Bible stories and verses which have become special to me over the years, I do not have the entire Bible memorized. Not even close! But that’s a good thing because it means I am always discovering new things in those pages I have been turning in my Bible for decades. The above verse from 2 Corinthians is one such verse. I discovered it earlier this summer when it was one of the scripture verses referenced in an *Upper Room* daily devotional. When I read it, I experienced one of those “God moments” when you just know God really is paying attention to what’s going on. That’s because the CE Board had just a few days earlier agreed to change the name of the children’s and youth ministry program we offer on Sunday mornings to YES! Now, for us, YES is meant to stand for “Youth Engaging in Service.” Chosen with the input of some of the youth, this new name for what we used to call “Sunday School” captures what we are trying to do in this exciting new experiential approach to passing on the Christian faith to our next generation.

Christian Education theologians – they do exist! – have for years been arguing in favor of experiential learning as the most effective way of making sure the faith is passed on to the next generation. William Willimon states it as “faith is caught not taught.” Thomas Groome phrases it as “everything the church does teaches.” Maria Harris and Craig Dykstra argue that the only truly life changing curriculum the church offers is one where faith is practiced through concrete actions, connecting head and heart. In other words, the traditional school approach the church has used for more than a century is no longer functional in today’s 21st century, instant information available on the internet reality we live in. Anyone who wants to know who Jesus was can google him in less than 10 seconds and instantly have more information to wade through than they can handle. But, someone who craves a deeper understanding of *why* knowing Jesus makes a difference in your life and holds the potential to change the world – *that* you can only learn by experiencing faith lived out with people you know and trust.

This is the goal, the hope, the dream of YES this year. Our program participants will engage with a few basic Bible stories through a variety of experiences. “Story Engagement” presents the story itself, offering opportunities for the participants to ask questions and look for connections to the story in their daily lives. “God in Nature” Engagement grounds the story in God’s Creation through nature exploration on our own beautiful grounds as well as local nature preserves, with advance planning and permissions of course! “Art Engagement” under the direction of our Artist in Residence using a variety of media arts encourages participants to make the story their own through painting, sketching, sculpting, and cartooning as well as music and drama. “Service Engagement” provides faith experience lived in community through activities such as the “In the Beginning” Pancake Breakfast participants will prepare and serve to the church on September 13 as a gift to the congregation.

YES! My encounter with the verse above has convinced me that YES *is* the word God wants us to focus on this year in our church. YES to new programming and new possibilities for our children and youth. YES to the ongoing Capital Campaign and the promise it holds to address long standing property issues as well as funding the seeds of new ministries and programs to grow our church. YES to our re-energized and energizing music program! YES to plans for revitalizing our visitation ministries and for building up the strong prayer ministry

foundation already in place here. YES to continuing outreach to and involvement in our community through expanded support of WARM and the PNC, and so much more we are only beginning to consider. Dear friends – I think God intends this to be our year of YES! But of course that is really up to you, isn't it. Time will tell, so here's hoping....

Blessings,
Rev. Ruth

***PLAN NOW to join us for our FIRST
ANNUAL HOMECOMING
SUNDAY
on September 13!***

This will be a festive worship service celebrating our choir returning from its summer hiatus and the kick-off of our new Christian Ed programming for children and youth – **YES!** A special fellowship hour will follow featuring the **"In The Beginning" pancake breakfast** hosted by the children and youth! We'll be looking for you as we get our new program year off to a rousing start!



***September
Birthdays***

- 6** – Brian Edmond
- 16** – Aidan Stratton
- 26** – Jan McCrary

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

Mission Memos



The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC) has requested our assistance in **September** with **clam chowder and/or brown rice**. Please bring your items to worship on or before Sunday, **September 13th** and we'll get them to the PNC!

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

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.*

Neighbors In Need

The UCC "Neighbors in Need" offering will be collected on **October 4**. This special mission offering of the UCC supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One third of the offering supports the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM), to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. Envelopes are available in the newsletter. Please give generously.

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Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name & Telephone</u>
Sep 6	Lynn Murray (401) 539-7578
Sep 13	Gary Davis (860) 599-4279
Sep 20	Lynn Murray (401) 539-7578
Sep 27	Carole Kus (860) 822-3787

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Many of us have wondered what we can do to help the Foster family following Doug's accident. They have an active support system through their family and neighborhood, but we still want to help. Doug is now in a rehabilitation facility that is an 80-mile round trip from Bethany's home and she works more than 20 miles in the other direction. The Deacons have decided that with the September diaconate fund offering, we will purchase Visa cards to be given to Bethany that she can use for gas, meals on the road, dinner with Jamie when she visits her at Bryant...whatever might make their life just a bit easier. We just wanted you to be aware of this in advance. – The Diaconate Board

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

The next **Church Council meeting** will be held on Sunday, **September 13th** at **11 am** in the Parlor. All Council Members please submit your reports for the meeting to Cathy Gray by **September 6th**. **Electronic submissions are preferred.** (Cathy's email address is graygc@mindspring.com) Susan will send you a form via email on August 24th to help you make out your report.

BOOKS ON THE BEACH



Monday, September 21st
@ 5:30 pm

We will be meeting at the Pavilion at Misquamicut. After a summer of excellent books read together -- *And The Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Hosseini and *You Before Me* by JoJo Moyes, we are continuing our literary exploration of what it means to love and be loved under extraordinary circumstances. Our next book is *Will You Love Me* by Kathy Glass. Come and join the conversation. You'll be glad you did! These beach gatherings are BYOG – Bring Your Own Grinder (or sandwich or salad – you get the idea!) Hope to see you there!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE!

The “Next 50 Years of our Church” Capital Campaign continues humming along at a steady pace. We have now received 31 pledges totaling \$80,000 with pledges ranging from \$500 to \$7,000. Keep an eye on our Campaign bulletin board in Fellowship Hall for updates regularly on pledges received and projects being considered for funds raised. Questions about the Campaign can be directed to the Campaign Leadership Team via the church office. Let's keep the momentum going!

Info from Peggy Matteson, PhD, RN-BC RI Conference of UCC

If you are concerned about the mandate from the RI Department of Health stating that all children in 7th grade need to receive the HPV vaccine, please contact Peggy who is a Faith Community Nurse for the Conference. You can email her for the information at: peggymatteson@cox.net.



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	

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

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.