

The Beacon

September 2019



GOOD NEWS from

**United Congregational Church of
Westerly
United Church of Christ, Pawcatuck, CT
Sunday Worship ~ 9:30 am**

From the Pastor

And what does the Lord require of you....

Micah 6:8

Without perhaps even realizing it, most of us spend time wondering about these two questions Micah proposes in the text above. How do we know what is good for us to do? How do we know what God expects of us? How do we know if what we're doing as a church and as individuals measures up to what God is asking of us, hoping for from us, needing us to do as we see the fragile state of the world around us each day? Put another way, how do we know we're not disappointing God?

Wow, now there's a sobering thought. Could it be we're actually disappointing God in what we do and don't do, say or don't say? In all candor, that's probably pretty likely for one simple reason. As humans, we're always falling short of God's expectations and hopes because we *are* human. We are fallible. We make mistakes. We are headstrong. We have a built-in tendency to put ourselves first. That's human nature, pure and

simple. Lucky for us, the story of our relationship with God is much more nuanced and flexible than that. God anticipated how and when and why we would fall short of all that God intended for us to be. That's the why of Jesus for us Christians. But it's also important to note that questions about how we measure up, or don't, to God's expectations for us go back to the beginning of time.

Micah writes, "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?" In these words Micah gives voice to all our wonderings, about what it is God is asking of us as God's beloved people. In the end Micah answers his own question in this way: "God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God. Sounds simple enough. But is it really? How close do we come, can we come, to doing these three things in our life together as a community of God's people here in our church and as individuals wanting to make some small difference in a world which sometimes feels broken beyond repair. This shall be our focus this fall in worship, in events and activities happening here at the church, even in our board and committee work as we move forward together.

I hope you'll read through this edition of the *Beacon* taking note of all that's planned in our amazing, vital church. In particular, I hope you will make a special effort to join us for worship as often as you can because worship truly is the heartbeat of the church. I'd love to see a big crowd on September 8 for our WELCOME Sunday during which we look forward to welcoming folks we haven't seen in a while. We also encourage everyone to *Bring A Friend to Church* that day for a very special welcoming celebration as our choir returns from their summer break and our *Sabbath Circles* educational program resumes. I'm thinking there will be a special treat at Fellowship that day! I'll be looking for you, as I always do...

Your friend in Christ, Rev. Ruth



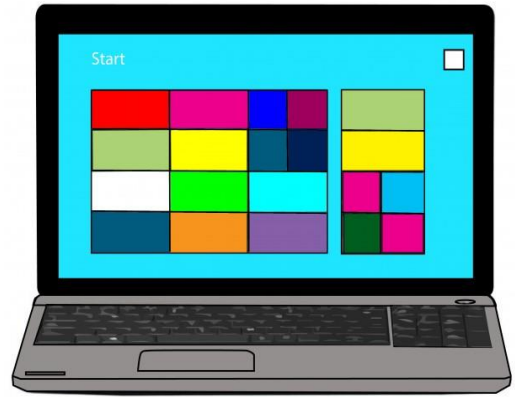
SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- Sept 1 Communion & Rev. Ruth preaching
Message: *It's NOT About You*
- Sept 8 WELCOME SUNDAY! Bring a friend to church!
Choir returns & Rev. Ruth preaching
Message: *What Does the Lord Require*
- Sept 15 Guest Preacher – Susan Sedensky,
Executive Director of the Pawcatuck
Neighborhood Center
- Sept 22 Rev. Ruth preaching
Message: *Jubilee*
- Sept 29 Rev. Ruth preaching
Message: *Treasure Hunt*

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**Diaconate Schedule**

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Name</u>       | <u>Telephone #</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Sept 1      | Joann Spurley     | 401-714-8948       |
| Sept 8      | Claire Calabretta | 860-536-3625       |
| Sept. 15    | Dwayne Spurley    | 860-705-6152       |
| Sept 22     | Bethany Foster    | 401-539-4003       |
| Sept 29     | TBD               |                    |



**Just a Friendly Reminder:**

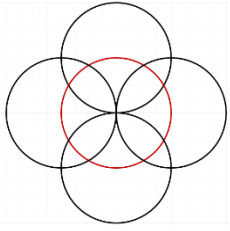
You can utilize our website, [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org) for access to weekly Sermons, Sabbath Circles Home School Curriculum as well as updates on events and projects at any time.



***September Birthdays***

- 16** - Aidan Stratton
- 26** – Jan McCrary

*Please add in your special days by calling the church office at 860-599-1226!!*



**SABBATH CIRCLES© --**

*UCC Westerly's Home  
Sunday School Curriculum*

*Sabbath Circles©* is a unique approach to family based education in the Christian faith. Directly connected to the weekly themes in worship from September through May, it offers a weekly lesson for multi-ages designed to be a learning experience for the entire family. Each session provides suggestions on exploring the text for the week in more detail including such basics as locating the text in the Bible (Old or New Testament) and placing it chronologically in a historical time line of the Bible (before or after Moses; before or after Jesus, etc.) and geographically, relating it to present day locations in the Middle East. Suggested questions for conversation about the text are provided as well as hands on activities for making the text and its meaning clearer as well as related to our contemporary lives, including connections with events coming up in the church and, on occasion, the community. Links to websites for additional resources round out each week's session materials.

The hope is that parents and/or grandparents will find these materials empowering to them in their role as "first teachers of the faith." It also honors and recognizes the reality that many of our families find it impossible to make a weekly commitment to attend Sunday worship but still desire an education in the faith for their children. *Sabbath Circles©* is one small step in making that desire into a reality. Also, the curriculum's home-based design makes it an ideal way of sharing the faith with family members who are not local and may not have their own connection to a church community. Anyone is welcome to use the materials, subject to the

copyright restrictions typical of any published curriculum.

The weekly lessons are posted on line on our website [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org) on Fridays. They will also be accessible through our Sabbath Circles Facebook Group through the church Facebook page, @UCC Westerly. This is a closed group so you will need to contact Rev. Ruth or Carol, our secretary in the church office, to gain access to that group. Hard copies of the lessons can be requested from the church for a small donation to cover copying and postage costs. If you hope to make use of our weekly lessons on line, a donation of \$5 per child for the year would be greatly appreciated, but is definitely NOT required.

For more information on *Sabbath Circles©*, please speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.



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

My Community Office Hours at the Savoy continue as usual at the Savoy Bookshop and Café from 2-4pm every Thursday. Come join me for a short chat or a long conversation and, of course, a delicious cold beverage and perhaps even a cookie... Remember, all conversations are confidential.

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❖ Many thanks to everyone who donated to, worked at, cleaned up after, talked about to others who came and shopped at our Yard Sale on August 24! The event was successful beyond our dreams! We raised over \$800 for the church! Yay! Special thanks to Lynn Murray for organizing. It was also really nice to partner with the local Castle Hill Neighborhood group as a part of their annual community yard sale! A good day for all!

❖ The newly formed Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ is offering a unique educational and training event for all church folks on Saturday, October 5 in Framingham, MA. Cost is \$59 per person and includes lunch and materials. A brochure with details is on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall. Kindly speak with Rev. Ruth if you'd like to register.

❖ Congratulations to Tina and Nick Scofield on the birth of their son Phillip in early August. Phillip joins older brother Charlie and we look forward to their return to worship sometime this fall.

- ❖ Best wishes to our youth and young adults heading back to classes this fall! Please keep them in your prayers!
  - Brooke Foster at the New England School of Law in Boston
  - Erin Blake at Eastern Ct. State University
  - Anna Tarasuk at Rochester Institute of Technology
  - J.B. Walker at Eastern Ct. State University
  - Lindsay Walker at URI
  
- ❖ Fun Fact! The Peace Pole was purchased through the international Peace Pole Project and, in recognition of this purchase, we have received a Certificate documenting that 10 trees have already been planted in Africa as a witness to our Peace Pole. How cool is that!!!

What's your news?? We don't know if you don't tell us!! Send your news items to Carol in the office via email at [uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net).





## Trustee Notes

We want to thank everyone for keeping up with pledged donations during the summer months. Pledge donations through July were \$43,951, about \$4,696 more than expected. Our total income through July was \$57,409, about \$9,053 less than anticipated. Areas where the income is significantly down are:

- Gifts to the Church: \$570 versus expected \$3,208
- Loose Offerings: \$504 versus expected \$1,313
- Special Projects: \$3,555 versus expected \$8,167 (normally made up by the Christmas Bazaar)

Our total expenses through July were \$70,832 bringing our deficit to \$13,423. Our utility costs continue to be higher than expected due to rate increases and the colder weather in this spring. Through July our total costs for electricity was \$1,865 (\$173 more than expected) and total cost for gas was \$5,213 (\$1,480 more than expected).

The Trustees will be seeking quotes this month for repaving a section of the upper parking lot and for cleaning the sanctuary carpet. Funds from the Capital Campaign will be used to cover the cost.

While our endowment fund is healthy, the Trustees are looking for ways to increase its value. Approximately \$6,000 of the interest generated by this fund is used as income to our yearly budget. There are numerous ways to donate to this fund and the trustees will be preparing a brochure describing our endowment and how contributions can be made to increase its value. Anyone

interested in making donations to the endowment should see any of the Trustees.

Volunteers are needed to help with maintenance of the grounds. The pollinator garden group has been doing an excellent job of beautifying the grounds with numerous gardens. But the following areas can use some work:

- Removal of grass in lower parking lot cracks
- Weed area around granite sign along Pequot Trail
- Remove/cut weeds along stone wall and our neighbor's property
- Trimming of grass around the building

The next Trustee meeting will be 24 September at 6 PM.

## MISSION MOMENTS



There has never been any doubt that we have the best congregation around! The Fifth Annual In the Middle School Supply Drive was an amazing success. Heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who donated so many supplies that will help our area's middle school students well into the 2019-2020 school year. Your generosity is heartwarming.

Next up:

### **SEPTEMBER IS PNC MONTH!!**

An all-out effort to support the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center will be our mission focus for the entire month of September. Instead of our usual collection, however, we are joining forces with the Congregational Life Committee to have some fun while we donate to a good cause!! Instead of loading your shopping carts with non-perishable food items, paper products, or toiletries a \$25 donation to the PNC will buy you a ticket to their **HOG WILD FOR PNC HOG ROAST AND FAMILY FUN DAY!!!**

**HOG**  
Wild  
FOR PNC

Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

**Hog Roast & Family Fun**  
at Stone Acres Farm  
393 N. Main St.  
Stonington, CT 06378

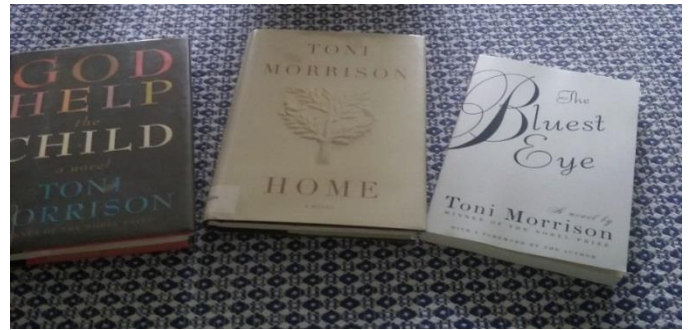
Farm tours, music, food, drinks & traditional backyard games  
*Rain or shine*

Tickets: \$25.00 adult  
\$10.00 children 16 & under

**September 22, 2019 • 12-4 PM**

Sponsorship opportunities still available!  
Payments can be made via check or on our website at: [www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org](http://www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org)  
Ticket sales for admission have begun!

Help us keep kids fed and healthy, support our seniors, and help your neighbors!



An Invitation to Join us at  
**BOOKS**

*A group of folks who love to read,  
talk about what we read  
or just talk & everyone is welcome!*

OUR NEXT GATHERING:

*Thursday, September 26 @ 6pm  
Bag Supper at the church with  
beverages provided.*

WHAT WE'RE READING:

*Any book by Toni Morrison!*

*We're trying something different this month as it was impossible to choose which of Toni Morrison's books to read. So we decided to try this "reader's choice" approach. Come prepared to give us a brief synopsis and your reaction to the book you chose. Because it's "Reader's Choice" there are NO books on reserve at the Wilcox Library this time!*

Tickets will be on sale during Fellowship time starting Sunday, September 8. This promises to be such an exciting event and will certainly be a lot more fun than shopping for all of those needed items and hauling them to church! What a great way to end the summer: great food, fun activities, music, and fellowship, all for a great cause, and WE don't have to roast the pig or make the desserts!! Vegetarian? Buy a ticket anyway to support this great cause!

In conjunction with this, on Sunday, September 15 we will be blessed by a visit from the Executive Director of the PNC who will present the morning message. Please mark your calendars for both of these PNC events!

**LOOKING AHEAD**

October: **FILL THE HIVE** a donation of \$5 will buy you a paper "bee" to tape on one of our paper "hives." 6 bees will fill the hive and enable us to buy a share of bees to benefit Heifer International and their mission to end hunger and poverty.

November and December: Our holiday theme will be **SURVIVAL MODE**. Let's help out the homeless in the area through the WARM Center by donating sleeping bags, large-size tarps, heavy blankets, ski pants, long underwear, and hand warmers. Keep an eye out for sales and coupons now. We'll try to alert you to weekly sales on these items. Even better: this is a good time to clean out those closets and donate some of your surplus belongings.

Thanks for your support! What we do does make a difference!



*ANNOUNCING SACRED  
THREADS!*

*Please join us at a special "retreat"  
(time apart)  
at our church as we work together  
to create new altar paraments &  
worship banners.*

*Tentative Date & Time: Saturday,  
October 19, 10am - 3pm*

*Interested? Add your name to the sign-up sheet on the  
board outside Fellowship Hall. Please note alternative  
date if Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> doesn't work for you!*

*For more information please speak with Lynn Murray  
or Rev. Ruth.*



**MAKE A NOTE!**

*New Bible Study Group forming in October*

We will be using a user-friendly curriculum developed by the Massachusetts Bible Society called *Exploring the Bible*. The curriculum is divided into three topic areas:

- ❖ What is the Bible?
- ❖ Introducing the Old Testament
- ❖ Introducing the New Testament

Each unit is divided into 6 sessions of approximately 60-90 minutes each. A textbook is required for each unit. Pre-registration for the course is needed so books can be ordered and to make sure we will have at least 6 participants in the group.

Tentative plans are for the group to meet on Wednesday afternoons beginning in October. To register, please sign up on the sign-up sheet outside Fellowship Hall.

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**DON'T FORGET!!**

*Annual First Responders Service*

*Sunday, September 29, 2019*

*Christ Episcopal Church, Westerly*

*4pm Westerly Band Concert on the lawn of Central*

*Baptist*

*4:35 Blessing of the Vehicles by Clergy Association*

*4:50 pm Processional*

*5pm Evensong Service at Christ Church followed by*

*Reception*



**Music Committee Announcement**

Last June, the Music Committee elected to purchase more sheet music for the choir! The choir enjoys learning new songs to complement worship services. David Cranmer, our music director, files and saves all music to be used again in future years. Since such music is copyrighted, it must be purchased in order to be used lawfully (and it supports the artists and publishers who created the music!) If you especially enjoy the organ and choir music each Sunday, you may wish to help defray the cost of new music with a small donation to be used especially for this purpose.

Just make a note in the Memo portion of your check that the donation is for "Choir Music" and it will be used for that sole purpose.

Thank you so very much!

*Generosity*  
changes everything

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**Notes from your Financial Secretary**

Please let me know if you ever have a question about your pledge or your quarterly statement of giving.

I continue to learn more about all the elements of this position.

A reminder: feel free to combine multiple weeks of your pledge (and even other items, such as Fair Trade purchases, or bulletin donations) onto one check. Just be sure to mark the various donations in the memo line of the check or on a separate piece of paper enclosed in the envelope. The only exception to this practice would be a payment for altar flowers; this check must be made directly to "McQuade's Marketplace".

If you are a new member of our church, or are considering becoming one, you may wonder about the envelopes folks place in the collection plates. Once you are a member, you have an opportunity to make a weekly, monthly, or annual pledge to help support the missions, worship, and maintenance of the church. In the early fall, members of a Stewardship Committee choose various people to speak during worship about ways and reasons to support our church. On Stewardship Sunday, our paper pledges are placed in the offering plates. I collect all pledge cards and tabulate the total (keeping names confidential).



From there, the Trustees will use the total pledge amount to assist them in creating a realistic budget for the following year, which the congregation discusses and votes upon at the Annual Meeting, held after worship in mid-January.

Before the first of the new year, you will receive a box of weekly pledge envelopes, assigned with a number. This keeps your donation anonymous; only the financial secretary and assistant financial secretaries have the master list of corresponding names and numbers. Some people, who donate yearly or quarterly, etc, elect not to use envelopes. Simply make a note on your pledge card if this is your preference. You will still be assigned a pledge number for the year.

I think it is helpful to see how people and committees volunteer to work together, alongside the small handful of folks paid by our church to make things happen and run smoothly (in addition, of course, to our spiritual and worship leader, Reverend Ruth). The financial secretaries' role is simply to deposit any funds received by the church and record how they are to be allocated, as well as from whom they were donated. Your record of donations is both your cancelled checks and the quarterly statements.

Money matters in a church are always a delicate concern. Our pledges enable us to be a self-sustaining and missions-supporting fellowship. I simply want to thank you for your kind and generous donations. Know that you can speak with me in confidence with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,  
Jenny Brummund



The Deacons are proposing that we provide a meals-on-wheels (or meals-in-the-fridge) program for Pastor Ruth & Peter during their challenging times of Peter's treatments. To keep things convenient, a meal can be brought on Sunday morning for them to take home to use to make life a bit easier for them. A sign-up sheet is on the narthex bulletin board. Please include any cooking/heating instructions. We are told there are no dietary restrictions. Thank you from all of us.



### ***Here's the latest buzz on the Pollinator Garden Project!***

How exciting to watch the Meadow and the additional gardens on the upper lawn literally explode before our very eyes this summer! The Pollinator crew had anticipated it would take at least one more growing season for the Meadow to look as it does now. And, during a recent planting event in the Bog, the gardeners did hit water just a few inches below the ground surface meaning the bog is doing exactly what it's supposed to do! It is truly SO exciting when a plan works out the way it is imagined. How blessed are we!!!

In other Pollinator Gardens news, Claire recently took a tour of our property with an expert historical botanist from Wild Ones named Charlie Boos. Charlie is thrilled with what he sees happening on our property and he made some exciting discoveries we didn't even realize we had. For one, we have an entire colony of a very rare plant called whirled loosestrife in the shady glen garden on the far side of the driveway to the lower parking lot. It's on the CT endangered species list!!! We also have an ancient uncultivated apple tree on the edge of the property which is a vestige of long ago days when all this land around us was agricultural.

After Charlie's visit we realized that the shady glen garden, which had been a potential site for the Peace Pole, needs to be left in its pristine condition. This is great news for the Pollinator folks because it is an entire garden area that doesn't need to do anything but continue to grow. No weeding!!! However, this did mean finding another location for the Peace Pole which the group has done. The Peace Pole, already purchased and on view in Fellowship Hall, will be installed between the Bog Garden and the labyrinth on the stony knoll. The two red flame bushes, lovely but dangerous invasives and toxic to local birds, will be removed by Nate Micelli. The Peace Pole will then be installed on the knoll surrounded by gravel we saved from the refurbishment of the gardens a few years ago. The Peace Pole will be installed as part of our celebration of World Communion Sunday on October 6.



### **The Pollinator Committee**



Two upcoming changes to our regular office hours for this month:

The office will be closed on Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> to observe the Labor Day Holiday. Office hours that week will be Thurs and Fri. 800-2:00.

Also, hours are shortened on Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup> (9-11 am) so that Carol and her husband Jim can celebrate their 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary! The office will have extended hours on Thursday the 19th. Thank you!

### **PRAYER LIST**



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

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Madelyn Stratton | Beverly & Family    |
| Brian Madill     | Scott & his parents |
| Shirley M.       | Gerry               |
| Connie           | Nicci & Jeff        |
| Allie            | Josh                |
| Ben              | Rev. Elizabeth King |
| Laura            | Ruth King Roes      |
| Mauri Hainsworth | Bill Hoffman        |
| Emma             | Crystal             |
| Bea              |                     |

*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

*Organist:* David Cranmer

*Secretary:* Carol Lindsay

*Sexton:* Joann Spurley

*Web Master:* Heather Stratton

## CHURCH OFFICE SPECIFICS

*Mailing Address:* 9 Castle Hill Road  
Pawcatuck, CT 06379

*Telephone:* **860-599-1226**

*E-mail:* **[uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uccwesterly@sbcglobal.net)**

*Website:* **[www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org)**

*Office Hours:* Monday, Thursday & Friday 9-1 pm