

# The Beacon

## February 2020



### **GOOD NEWS from United Congregational Church of Westerly, UCC in Pawcatuck, CT**

*“And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”  
1 Corinthians 13:13*

When I was a kid growing up in Pittsburgh, PA, the only thing exciting about February was Groundhog Day. By the time February rolled around, everyone was sick of winter cold and snow and counting the days until March with its hope of spring on the way. Not here! Not at UCC Westerly! Thoughts of February are always happy ones as the much beloved Valentine Tea is anticipated.

When I first came to UCC Westerly as your pastor 8 years ago, folks couldn't wait to fill me in on two things – the Christmas Bazaar and the Valentine Tea. Since I started on February 1<sup>st</sup>, Valentine Tea preparations for that year were in high gear. “You haven't seen anything like our Tea,” I heard over and over again. I would smile and say something vague like, “I'm sure it's lovely!” And I meant that! But, come on, I'd been to church Teas before. I'd even organized several at one of the churches where

I had served before coming here. I thought I knew what a Valentine Tea would be like. I thought I had a pretty good idea of what to expect. WRONG!

The Valentine Tea is like no other event I have ever experienced at any church at any time in my life. The living legacy of two ladies – Linda Evans and Judy Bartlett -- it is a unique, one of a kind experience which captures everything wonderful about our church. Creativity abounds in everything from the decorations to the favors to the myriad finger sandwiches and spectacular cookies lovingly created. The Spiced Tea is brewed with love in every drop. Same for the punch for those desiring something cold to drink. And the scones! My goodness, the scones. The ladies baked them themselves this year right here in the church kitchen the last Saturday in January. All 478 of them in four varieties.

Most important about the Tea for this wonderful, unique faith community from my perspective is that it provides the church a unique chance to do what it does best – shine in making every one who walks through the door feel welcome and valued. Each year I have the pleasure of greeting folks as they arrive and as they head home. They arrive excited and so happy to be here and they leave smiling and satisfied. “I never knew a church could be like this,” is a comment I hear over and over again on Tea day. The reason for this is so obvious to me – the key ingredient for everything about the Tea is love. The food, the decorations, the favors, the service, the entire experience is planned with care and carried out in love. No matter who you are, you will find a warm welcome at our Valentine Tea!

That's why each year the Tea calls to mind the verse above. Faith and hope are what churches are about, certainly. But love – that's what really matters and that's where our church outdoes itself – at the Valentine Tea and all year long!

Your friend in Christ,  
*Rev. Ruth*



**EPIPHANYTIDE**  
**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

All Sunday morning services are @ 9:30am.

**WORSHIP THEME FOR EPIPHANYTIDE:**  
**God's guiding and abiding light in our lives**

Sunday, February 2 – Family Worship with Communion

- ❖ "Reel to Real" Sunday exploring *Groundhog Day* starring Bill Murray

Sunday, February 9 – Family Worship

- ❖ *Boulders & Specks – Matthew 7:1-5*

Sunday, February 16 – Family Worship

- ❖ *From the Outside In – Luke 7:1-10*

Sunday, February 23 – Family Worship

- ❖ *Answers in the Night – John 3:1-8*  
\*Last Sunday before Lent begins on Feb. 26

*Ash Wednesday*



*Remember that you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.*

**ECCLESIASTES 3:20**

Ash Wednesday Service  
Wednesday, February 26 @ 6pm



# Deacon Ministry

## Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Feb. 2	Claire Calabretta	860-574-5962
Feb. 9	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
Feb. 16	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
Feb. 23	Joann Spurley	401-714-8948

*Please feel free to call the Diaconate Person of the Week at any time with your joys, concerns and prayer requests. Your church family cares about you all the time, not just when you're in the building!*

Are you ready for summer? Online registration for Silver Lake's 2020 summer programs is open Jan. 15! Log on to [www.silverlakect.org](http://www.silverlakect.org) and sign up for a life-changing week of summer fun. Register by Jan. 31 to save \$50 (coupon code EARLY20). See you at the Lake!





**VALENTINE TEA**  
*Sunday, February 9, 2-4pm*  
*Tickets: \$12 for adults;*  
*\$6 for children 8 and younger*

*Only a few tickets remaining but lots of opportunities to help out! Servers and kitchen staff needed especially!!!*



**THANK YOU!!!!**

As of our Annual Meeting on January 26, we are blessed to have every Officer position filled and all four of our Boards fully staffed with volunteers. Our Ad Hoc committees are also well populated so we are ready for the year ahead!! The full listing of the People Plan for 2020 is posted on the People Plan/Congregational Life bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.



***INTRIGUED BY UCC Westerly?***  
***Considering Membership?***  
***Wonderful!***

Join us for an Inquirers' Gathering  
 Sunday, February 16 @ 11am in the Parlor  
 Questions and queries expected!!!!

For more information  
 speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.  
 †††

**DID YOU KNOW...**

1. ***Did you know that*** there is a basket for donations out on the Fellowship Table every Sunday? This is how we pay for things like coffee cream, milk, coffee, tea and lemonade! Your cash donation in any amount is greatly appreciated as are Coffee hosts and help! Please speak with Joann Spurley to volunteer.

2. ***Did you know that*** UCC Westerly rents out space for individuals and groups in the community in need of an affordable place to gather for meetings or parties? A flyer explaining what we have available, what it costs and how to rent a space is out in both narthexes.
3. ***Did you know that*** we have daily devotional guides available for anyone to take home to guide your daily connections with God? They are called *The Upper Room* and they are available in the Bell Courtyard Narthex. Take one for yourself or anyone you might be visiting!
4. ***Did you know that*** UCC Westerly is the only church around that has its own Home Sunday School Curriculum called *Sabbath Circles*? Weekly lessons are posted on line on our website [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org) . They are also posted on our Sabbath Circles Facebook Group every Friday. For more information on *Sabbath Circles*®, please speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.



## **Trustee Notes**

What a year. Everybody deserves 2214 pats on the back for your efforts to control expenses while

keeping up with pledges and fund raising for the church.

Pledge donations for the year \$74,985, about \$7,691 more than expected. The successful Christmas Bazaar netted \$10,614, making our total income for the year \$121,940, \$8,006 more than anticipated. Our total expenses for the year were \$119,726, only \$2,085 (1.7%) over anticipated expenses. This leaves us with a surplus of \$2,214 instead of a deficit of \$3,898.

2020 will be another challenging year for us as another deficit budget will be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting. Rest assured that the Trustees will do everything they can to control expenses. We ask that the congregation continue to do their part in keeping up with pledges, donations, and fund raisers.

Our utilities bills continue to be a large part of our expenses during the year. We ask everyone to be mindful of turning off lights and keeping the thermostats tuned down as much as possible. If anyone would like to make special donations to help offset these utility costs please see any of the Trustees.

One additional unforeseen expense that we will incur this year is asbestos removal. It was noted by the company that services the organ that the enclosure for the organ blower is lined with asbestos and is showing signs of deterioration. We have had the material tested by Mystic Air Quality Consultants and their recommendation is to have the box removed by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor. We will be seeking quotes for this work during the coming weeks.





### Light the Church



In order to reduce our electric bill, the Trustees are going to sponsor a “Light the Church” campaign to raise funds to replace the CFL bulbs throughout the church with LED light bulbs. We are going to take a lesson from Missions who successfully raised money this year by selling shares in Beehives, to raise money for Heifer International, and shares to purchase items needed for the homeless in our area.

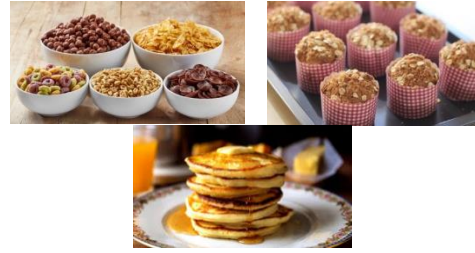
Starting this Sunday and through the start of Daylight Savings Time on March 8, the Trustees will be selling “shares” for \$5. Each share will go towards the purchase of LED light bulbs. We will be selling shares and accepting donations in Fellowship Hall after Sunday morning worship. We have installed some LED bulbs but still need to replace approximately 125 general purpose bulbs and 30 indoor flood and globe lights.

### MISSION MOMENT



A great big “thank-you” goes out to all of you who came out to support the Dine-to-donate to benefit WARM last month and another one to Angelo and Agathi at Stonington Pizza Palace for donating so generously again to help our church and other community groups. We received a check from Angelo and Agathi for \$967.50. With added donations from the Homeless Awareness Weekend and the Diaconate Fund, we will be able to send a check for \$1200 to WARM!

### PNC Our winter collection continues EVERYTHING BREAKFAST!!



Everything breakfast includes healthy cereals, oatmeal, pancake mixes and syrups, muffin and bread mixes, jams and jellies, coffees, teas, and juices. **Healthy cereals** and **oatmeal** are needed the most, though!

### FEBRUARY REFLECTING

During the month of February we are asking the congregation for its input into our Mission goals for the coming year. You will find a survey inserted into the Beacon and the Sunday bulletins that focuses on Mission events from the past couple of years and on what you would like to see us do in the future. We are asking you to respond thoughtfully and prayerfully and to return the survey to the basket in the Bell Courtyard narthex. We thank you in advance for your input.

We will not have a specific drive during February, other than the PNC collection, so that the Trustees can move forward with their Light the Church fundraiser. We are hoping that they will have as much success with their efforts as we have had with ours!

### EQUAL EXCHANGE

Don't forget that the cute red cabinet just inside the door of Fellowship Hall holds a treasure trove of Equal Exchange items that you can purchase each week. Buy some excellent organic chocolate bars, cocoa, coffee, tea, etc. and realize that you helping the world's needy population in the process.



We'd love to have you 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, February 20, 2020  
@ 6pm  
Potluck Supper at the church  
with beverages provided.*

**WHAT WE'RE READING:**

*WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING  
By Delia Owens*



**NEW HYMNALS!**

Do know it is still not too late to order hymnals and remember that this time it is not a requirement that the person being so honored/remembered be a member of our church. So, you can celebrate the memories and lives of anyone special to you with the purchase of one or more

hymnals! Dedication placards will appear in the front of each hymnal.

Fill out the order forms now available in the Bell Courtyard Narthex. Please complete the order form even if you pre-ordered one on the sign-up sheets posted the end of last year. We want to be sure we have the spelling of your loved one correct for the dedication placard! Also, payment is now being received and checks should be made payable to *UCC Westerly* With "hymnal order" on the memo line. Hymnals are \$19 each.



*Celebrate Nature's Glory  
Throughout the Year*

*An excerpt from the Annual Report of the  
Pollinator Committee, in case you missed it...*

We are already planning for a busy gardening year ahead. We will be refreshing the stone planters, cleaning up the shadow garden, enhancing the bog plantings, and hopefully adding plugs and full-grown forbs and grasses to the meadow to ensure both attractive color and increased biodiversity. We hope to also plant low maintenance, wildlife supporting native ground cover around the peace pole in the coming year.

Also in the works is a public program at our church, *Botanizing your Backyard* (or Church Yard) on June 13, in partnership with Wild Ones/Mountain Laurel Chapter. Local native plant expert and Wild Ones member Charlie Boos will lead us through our grassy knoll area, "accidental meadow" adjacent to

the lower lot, meadow, and other areas on the property to ID native plants that have been happily growing unnoticed and untended for many years!

We have tentatively scheduled a Dine-to-Donate fundraiser at Stonington Pizza in March in order to proceed with ordering signage for our pollinator gardens.

Stay tuned for more information about a formal “garden blessing” ceremony in 2020!

We continue to welcome members of the congregation and the community to join our efforts to help our environment. Please feel free to attend any of our meetings, work sessions, or programs and to bring your friends!



### *The Pollinator Committee*

Please remember memorial gifts to the Pollinator Gardens in any amount are always welcome. Donation forms can be found on the Pollinator Table in the sanctuary.

**Attention Ladies of the church!** We received an email invitation late yesterday from the "CT Women of the United Church of Christ" (a lay organization) to attend their Annual Spring Gathering on Saturday, April 25 from 8:30am to 3pm at the First Church of Christ Congregational in Farmington. Information on this and other activities sponsored by this active group are posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall. If you might be interested in attending this event, kindly add your name to the informal list next to the posting.



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

What do people come and talk with me about? Anything and everything! Questions about God and the church, sharing frustrations and worries about life, just passing time! No topic is off limits and every word is confidential. Hope to see you soon...



### **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.*



## February Birthdays

Dorothy Oehrle - 7  
Jimmy Cornell - 9  
Alice Dessauls - 12  
Katharine Tarasuk - 17  
Nick Comito - 20  
Gary Davis - 22

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



### 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,  
9am - 1pm

Rev. Ruth is generally in the office on Tuesdays, Thursdays and either Wednesdays or Fridays but the times vary. If you want to catch up with her in the office, she suggests you call first to be sure she is here. Thank you!!!



Rev. Ruth

DAV Carol Joann Heather

Please be aware that the Format and spacing for the BEACON may appear differently on your computer or device depending upon which WORD version you have. Thank you for your understanding!