

The Beacon

January 2020



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

“... what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8

This January 18 we will once again be living our faith in a very tangible way through our annual Homeless Awareness Vigil. For several years now, on the Saturday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend, we have been gathering in our upper church parking lot around a bonfire to deepen our understanding of the reality of homelessness in our area by “living” primarily outside during an eight hour vigil. This may seem like a small, almost inconsequential thing to do, but I assure you, it is not. This kind of Vigil is a powerful witness to the community that we as a church family know homelessness is real and present in *this area* and that everyone is responsible for finding and implementing solutions.

During the Vigil we will have visitors from the WARM Center come and talk with us about their experiences as the folks on the front lines of the homelessness problem in our area. We will also pray together about how we are hearing God in the midst of this experience as we try together to make some small difference in the lives of so many people without a place to lay their heads at night.

The Vigil will culminate with a Campfire Supper during which the entire meal will be cooked around our campfire outside under the expert direction of our own Fred Tarasuk, outdoorsman extraordinaire. Everyone is invited to this Supper and a sign-up sheet so we can adequately plan will be on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall. Donations to cover the cost of the supper will be deeply appreciated. Also during the Vigil, the WARM Center’s Will Houlihan, street outreach case manager, will be presented with the results of our Operation Survival Advent and Christmas Mission project – a Walmart gift card in excess of \$700 which he will use to purchase the tents, tarps and bike locks he needs in his work.

On Sunday morning, Russ Partridge, WARM’s Executive Director, will offer the morning message as our Homeless Awareness Weekend comes to a close. He will also be available during Fellowship to answer your questions about the reality of homelessness in our area.

Sound interesting? We hope so and we are counting on everyone to do something to support the Vigil. Sign up to participate in the Vigil itself for a block of time and/or come to the Campfire Supper @ 6pm. Bring a breakfast food to donate to the PNC or small toiletry items for the homeless. Most of all, invest the time to find out for yourself what you *don’t* know about homelessness in our area. This is exactly what Micah was talking about when he reminds us that God expects us to live out justice, kindness and humility every day.

Your friend in Christ, *Rev. Ruth*

*THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH
For the generous and thoughtful Christmas remembrance of gift cards and books. Thank you too for all the beautiful cards we received over the Holidays. Your love and generosity are most deeply appreciated!*



EPIPHANYTIDE
WORSHIP SCHEDULE

All Sunday morning services are @ 9:30am.

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

Sunday, January 5, 2020 – Epiphany Sunday
STAR SUNDAY with Communion

Sunday, January 12 – Family Worship

Sunday, January 19 – HOMELESS AWARENESS SUNDAY

Russ Partridge from WARM preaching

Sunday, January 26 – Family Worship
*ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Sunday, February 2 – Family Worship with Communion

Sunday, February 9 – Family Worship

Sunday, February 16 – Family Worship

Sunday, February 23 – Family Worship
*Last Sunday before Lent begins on Feb. 26



Deacon Ministry

Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
1/5	Claire Calabretta	860-574-5962
1/12	Joann Spurley	401-714-8948
1/19	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
1/26	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578

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!

Christmas Bazaar WRAP-UP

A note from Lynn Murray:

The bazaar 2019 has come and gone, and what a great day it was! The things we can't control – the weather and crowds – were great. We had both return customers and first time shoppers. Apparently we were the talk of the town at other bazaars that day, and at social events following the bazaar. Many thanks go out to the many hands that made the day possible, from Santa, the parkers and musicians, the bakers, decorators, organizers, so many workers, donators, cleaner-uppers, money counters, and so many more. It wouldn't happen without YOU. The wrap-up

meeting was well attended, with ideas noted for next year jotted down. Speaking of next year, now is the time to visit the craft shops to snag the sales on next year's supplies, such as mini trees, ornaments, lights, ribbon, seasonal picks, decorative containers, and anything else that looks like it might be useful. Again, many thanks to all.

And a note from our Financial Secretary:

Thanks for all the hard work of so many... This year's Christmas Bazaar brought in around \$10,800!!!



The Valentine Tea is quickly approaching. We are currently thinking February 9th. Like the bazaar, this is an all-hands-on-deck event, as it is very popular with both our annual and first-time guests. We will need bakers, sandwich ingredient donators, many kitchen workers & wait staff, as well as parking attendants. Signup sheets will be posted this Sunday in fellowship hall. For our early bakers, the chest freezer is plugged in and ready to fill.

Oh, my! It's almost time for the Valentine Tea!! As you are putting away those Christmas gifts and cleaning out closets and cabinets, please consider donating any of the gently used items that you are clearing out, Christmas gifts that honestly aren't YOU, or gift cards that you will probably never use to the gift basket raffle. Although we are going to reduce the number of baskets that will be raffled, we still could use "filler" items or already filled baskets.

All proceeds from this raffle will be donated to the general fund. Last year we were able to contribute well over \$500!

Please give all items to Shirin Platt or Sandi Davis. Thanks in advance for your donations!



Check out the **People Plan 2020** bulletin board in Fellowship Hall which is now up and waiting for your participation! Emails have already gone out to current officers and Board members to ask of their plans for 2020. If you received one, we kindly ask you to respond asap. You can either respond directly to Carol by return email, or add your name to the space on the 2020 People Plan where you are willing to serve.

Just a reminder that under our new organizational structure, all positions in the church are for one year only. You have the opportunity each year to decide what you want to do moving forward for the year ahead: Stay in your current role, move to a different Board or Committee or take a step back for a year.

We hope you will prayerfully consider your options so that you have made your decision prior to the Church Council meeting on January 12. As you consider what you will do, please hold on to this thought from a long ago PTA Conference: "No one can do everything but everyone can do something!"



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 hosts three 12-step recovery groups as a part of our community ministry? AA Groups meet here on Tuesdays @ 6pm and Thursdays @ 7:30pm. GA meets here on Tuesdays @ 7:30pm.
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. They are also posted on our Sabbath Circles Facebook Group every Friday. For more information on *Sabbath Circles*, please speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.

Generosity
changes everything

A note from the Financial Secretary:

Offering envelopes for those who turned in pledges are available in a pew at the rear of the sanctuary. It is never too late to pledge! Simply find a pledge form on the small tables with the Prayer Request Notebooks and fill it out. You can even create your own! Turn them into the collection plate or mail into the church c/o Jenny Brummund, Financial Secretary.

Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness to our church!



Trustee Notes

There are no Trustee's Notes for this January BEACON, but a complete update for the year will be in the Annual Report for 2019. The Trustees remind you to plan now to attend the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 26th following Worship!!



CALL FOR THE 56th ANNUAL MEETING
UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
WESTERLY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Annual Meeting shall be held on
January 26, 2020 immediately following
worship.

The purpose of the meeting shall be to
receive the yearly reports of Officers,
Boards, Committees, Organizations and
Departments; to elect officers; adopt the
annual budget; set up plans for the new
year; and vote on any other business that
may come before the congregation.
The Treasurer's Report, duly audited, shall
be presented.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Gray, Clerk

A Reminder: if you are someone who will
be submitting an Annual Report, the
deadline is January 15th. Electronic
Submissions preferred.



NEW HYMNALS IN THE WORKS!

As you know by now, conversations have
been taking place in the Deacons and the
Trustees about purchasing some *New
Century Hymnals* for the sanctuary. These
would be in addition to the current blue
hymnals and the *Renew!* songbooks. The
cheapest price we have been quoted is \$19
each and we would like to purchase 80-
100. This number is based on the
number of pew racks in the sanctuary.

Please note 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.

If you are interested in supporting this,
kindly add your name to the sign-up sheet
posted outside Fellowship Hall. Do know
the response has been wonderful so far
and we hope to move forward with this
after the first of the year.

Thanks so much!!

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*Celebrate Nature's Glory
Throughout the Year*

News and Notes from the Pollinator Committee:

With the hectic push of Christmas and New Years now behind us, the Pollinator Committee is reflecting on the successes of the past year and planning out our next steps toward creating and maintaining our church's gardens and grounds as habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. We will provide a thorough report on our committee's progress for the 2019 Annual Report, but we wanted to focus on one aspect of garden planning to keep in mind now, as you dream and scheme about your own garden during the quiet of the winter months.

According to the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), "Wildlife need our help. Human activity has changed and eliminated habitat, locally, and on the global scale, and birds, butterflies, and other wildlife are pushed into ever-shrinking wilderness areas." Sometimes the challenges of global climate change can seem so daunting. One small way we can make a change on a personal level is to reconsider our own garden and landscaping practices. Rest assured that there are simple steps that each of us can take to support Mother Earth, right in our own backyards, community playgrounds, and parks!

NWF actually offers a wildlife habitat certification program for gardens and lawns. This certification requires that a yard include the following critical habitat elements to invite wildlife: food, water, shelter, and places to raise young. (Sounds pretty much like what we humans require, right?!) NWF also requires those interested in certifying their yard employ sustainable landscaping practices such as water conservation (e.g., rain barrels), control

of exotic (non-native) plant and animal species, use of native plants, and organic lawn and garden care practices that eliminate the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and promote composting. If you follow these simple steps, you too can have a home space that welcomes birds, butterflies, and other small wildlife.

The NWF's "walk-through checklist" for garden certification provides more details about the steps needed to create your own wildlife garden. We will post this list on the Bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Please speak to any Pollinator Committee member if you are interested in pursuing the NWF certification for your home grounds. We plan to certify our church with NWF this year. We have already listed our church's gardens as part of the Million Pollinator Gardens Initiative as well as Pollinator Pathways.

For further winter reading, check out "Noah's Garden: Restoring the Ecology of Your Own Backyard," by Sara Stein, or Doug Tallamy's "Bringing Nature Home." These thought-provoking books are written by experts with a gift for making environmental science both accessible and inspirational.

Also, please stay tuned for more information on an exciting Wild Ones program at our church, Botanizing Your Back Yard, led by native plant expert and Wild Ones member Charlie Boos. Charlie will walk participants through our woodland spaces and gardens, to identify various native plants, trees and shrubs that have been living with us for many years – including some that we may never have even noticed!

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.



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

All conversations with me at any time are always confidential.



January Birthdays

- Judy Bartlett - 3
- Peter Hainsworth - 5
- Douglas Brummund - 9
- Carolyn LeRoy – 11
- Liz Walker – 15
- Lindsay Walker – 18
- Jamie Foster – 28
- Anna Tarasuk – 31

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



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.



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**

Website: **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!

