

The Beacon

August 2020



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

*“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.” Jeremiah 17:7*

Trust is a basic element of how we live our lives in relation to each other and to God. It is also something we take for granted more than we realize. It’s just sort of there. We know who we can trust with our most private thoughts and scary secrets. We know who will be there for us, no matter what. We also learn who not to trust, sometimes the hard way through experiencing a betrayal we never saw coming. Similarly, as people of faith committed to following as best as we are able in the footsteps of Jesus, we know what it is to trust God. We trust that God hears our prayers and cares about what happens to us. We trust that what we hear and experience in church is true and real. We trust that we have the capacity to be who God needs us to be in any given moment.

One could make the argument that our trust in each other, and perhaps even in God, has been sorely tested in the last five months since

Coronavirus forced its way into the centerpiece of our lives without warning. Truly, it’s hard to remember that this time last summer we had no idea that come August 2020, our church would be shut down and everything would have moved online. If the prophet Jeremiah himself had come to us last August and told us this is where we would be this August, we would have laughed him out of the church. But here we are and here we are likely to be for a while.

That being said, I am so proud of our church – of all that we have accomplished in these last five months. We moved worship online and so many of you, plus may new friends from the community, join us each work for the joys and foibles of live broadcasting via *Facebook Live*. We’ve learned the hard way how to handle the music, how to do Communion virtually, even how to handle the offering virtually. Going with the flow when glitches happen, which they sometimes do. Well done us! And it hasn’t stopped with worship. Our boards are meeting online via Zoom as is Sunday Fellowship and even our Books group so the work and ministries of the church are continuing full steam ahead. Our Pandemic Response Team is an amazing and committed group of folks who are doing the difficult and challenging work of figuring out how we are going to move from where we are now back to real life and work together in person. Keeping up with ever changing regulations and recommendations is no small feat, never mind figuring out how to translate all that information into our UCC Westerly reality. Our most recently formed group is the Bazaar Brainstorming Team, a group of folks committed to making the annual Christmas Bazaar happen this year with a decidedly new look and some exciting and creative new options.

In short, dear ones, we have done some amazing, even miraculous things as we have worked together to become church in a whole new way we could not even have imagined last August. I am truly proud of us – of each and every one of you – for all that we have accomplished and all that awaits us as we move

into the future God has in mind for us. That there will be challenges we can't even imagine today goes without saying. But we know that we are up to whatever comes along as we have proven time and again in the last five months. Why? Because, as Jeremiah reminds us "blessed are those who trust in the Lord" and we know those blessed ones are and will continue to be us.

Check out this issue of the *Beacon* for details on everything going on in our wonderful church as high summer is upon us. We have so much to be thankful for. I can't wait to see what new possibilities emerge as the church universal and our church in particular discern how God is calling us to be God's people in this new reality emerging in a post-Coronavirus world.

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth



Dear Friends,

It is no exaggeration to say that the upcoming fall elections will determine what our beloved USA will be for years to come. No matter your political perspective, please be a responsible citizen and vote! If you are already a registered voter, show up to vote or make the necessary arrangements to vote by mail. If you are not registered to vote, GET REGISTERED! If you are not sure whether or not your registration is current, check and be sure! All our futures depend on it.

In Christ,
Rev. Ruth

PS - If you haven't filled out the 2020 Census Form yet, DO THAT TOO!



Deacon Ministry

Please note that our next Deacon's Meeting is scheduled for August 11th @6:30 when we'll be determining the weekly Deacon. Watch for announcements on your weekly News and Notes!



From the Deacons:

Many thanks for your continued support of the monthly Deacons Fund. Yes, your donations have reached us by mail or passed on by Rev. Ruth. We greatly appreciate this. Also, the Barbara Murano Scholarship Dine-to-Donate will take place this fall, at a date yet to be determined, at Stonington Pizza Palace. Our students will receive their scholarships in advance of the event this year. The funds will go toward replacing the funds used.



Bazaar Updates:

We are planning on our Christmas bazaar taking place in December; however, it may look a bit different. Here are some of the changes being discussed:

Rooms to put on hold this year:

- Hospitality Room
- Children's Shopping (small gift ideas may go in Nostalgia Boutique)
- Jewelry Room

- No live music in narthex entry.
- Not sure if Santa will be making an appearance.

Proposed changes:

- Nostalgia Boutique to use all 4 upper level rooms (If Martha would like to do her cards, this would be the place).
 - Artificial trees & decorations will be available to take home to decorate. Folks are encouraged to buy a fresh wreath to decorate at home. Bows can be provided.
 - Possible greens arrangements can be done at home as well. Decorations/bows/containers can be provided. Greens can still be dropped off outside upper Fellowship Hall door.
 - Weather permitting, greens, wreaths, & trees may be sold outside, with rotating sellers.
 - Mission/SERRV orders may be placed on line & shipped to home.
 - Baskets in Fellowship Hall, with possibility of on-line virtual sale ahead of time.
 - Bake room – Also in Fellowship Hall, with the possibility of ordering some items ahead of time. All items to be pre-packaged.
 - Silent Auction – Suggestion of folks purchasing & donating gift cards to be auctioned. Possibility of on-line virtual Silent Auction. Perhaps a mix of gift cards & other Silent Auction items for auction.
- Tea: Possibility of advance reservation take-out of sweet breads, cinnamon butter, cookies, dry spiced tea mix.
- Other:
- Have runners if folks who order in advance prefer not to enter building. Will need a phone system for contact.
 - Room monitors for direction & numbers.
 - Possibility of spread out hours: Thurs. & Fri. evenings, Saturday, Sunday after worship.
 - Possibility of reservations by time slot for number accountability.

Bazaar updates from meeting 8/2/20

Our bazaar hours this year will be spread out over 4 days:

- Thursday: 6pm-7:30
- Friday: 10-11:30 & 2-3:30
- Saturday: 9-10:30 , 11-12:30, 1-2:30
- Sunday: 11:30-1pm

So we can meet state guidelines, guests will be asked to make a reservation. We must also take into account the

number of workers in each shift. Please be thinking of when you are willing to work.

If possible, please purchase a gift card for a local business for the Silent Auction. This supports struggling businesses, can bring in beneficial income for us, and we can efficiently space out Auction goods.

Information will be coming out from our Bake Room folks about what popular items they will request from our bakers. We can help out those folks by pre-packaging and pricing bake room items. They will give us pricing & packaging guidance soon.



Attention crafters:

If anyone is looking for a project to fill spare time, and you'd like to decorate a small artificial tree or wreath at home, contact Lynn Murray to arrange pick up of supplies. That way, if we are able to hold the bazaar, we will be ready ahead of time.



Attic Treasures Sale

At this time, we are hoping to have the Attic Treasures sale on Saturday, September, 19th. If you have been purging while at home, please plan on bringing your items to church that morning. We will once again be doing our fill-a-bag for 5 dollars system. This avoids have to price & organize all the items, and we did very well last year. Paper grocery bags will be needed.



From the Financial Secretary

Once again, I'd like to thank Ed Stratton and Bill Street for counting and depositing the mailed-in pledges!

A clarification of the statements mailed out in July: Although the date span of the statement says it extends to July 11, in actuality, it may not include any mailed-in pledges sent in the first couple of weeks of July and even very late June. The reasons are twofold: a time gap for mailing time, and a gap between when the July 5th deposit was made (for late June) and when I entered the information in the Church Windows computer program on July 11th. The July 3/4th holiday may have also impacted the mail. Your next statement will reflect any deposits during this timeframe. I apologize for any confusion. Things are happening more slowly during this time.

If you have any other questions, feel free to contact the church office and I will investigate for you. We strive to keep copies of all checks that are deposited, in addition to the computer program and bank deposit records.

Your faithful attention to our church's financial stability is so appreciated. Thank you for thinking of the church, even in your absence.

Respectfully,
Jenny Brummund



Trustee Notes

The church facility is currently open for administrative purposes only. This means that only employees and others conducting church business (financial and maintenance) are allowed in the building. No visitors are allowed in the building and the support groups sponsored by the church are not allowed to hold weekly meetings.

Please remember to sign in and out on the forms at each entrance and to use the hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

We will be installing hands free soap and towel dispensers in each of the bathrooms prior to the restart of worship services.

We want to thank all who have been able to give generously to financially support the church. We understand that some may be unemployed (hopefully only temporarily) or have had a reduction in their income. There was no meeting in July so we will summarize financials in the next Beacon.

The next Trustee meeting will be on August 18 at 6:30 PM.



**KEEP WATCHING FOR THE
DETAILS AS OUR CHURCH MOVES
TO MAKE GIVING ONLINE AN
OPTION!**

DID YOU KNOW...

1. *That you can easily learn more about the Black Lives Matter demonstrations and just what is going on with these protests happening all across the country. Here are some excellent resources to check out through our Southern New England Conference, UCC:*
<https://www.sneucc.org/racialjustice>

Please be sure to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you have in this regard. This is a confusing and upsetting time in so many ways and I am here to talk with you about anything weighing heavy on your mind and heart. You need only let me know you'd like to chat.

2. *That it's still not too late to order a hymnal as a memorial or celebration of a loved one. Hymnals are \$19 each. Email the office for details on how to order OR if you can't remember whether or not you already ordered one (or more)! Hymnal orders will be placed in mid August.*



Rev. Ruth is excited to announce a new ministry of our church:

A VIRTUAL PRAYER GATHERING

Wednesdays @ 5pm on Facebook Live

Beginning on Wednesday, August 5

You may access the group through the church's Facebook page if you are not a member of Facebook personally.

This weekly prayer gathering will focus on developing the practice of praying with beads as a personal spiritual discipline. We will also be sharing weekly in a scripture reflection and prayers for those persons and situations most in our minds and hearts. Whether you are a veteran "prayer warrior" or a newbie to the entire idea of personal prayer, you will find a warm welcome in this group.

For more information, please contact Rev. Ruth at any time. Call or text 401-663-7934.
Email: revruth1121@aol.com



UCCW Pandemic Response Team update

We are continuing with our plan of opening on September 13 (Sunday after Labor Day) with full social distancing and mask requirements in place including a reservation system for attending morning worship. Facebook live worship will continue. Meetings will be active throughout August and early September as we ready the church.



Do you remember what it means that we are a UCC "5 for 5" church?

It means that our congregation is one which supports all five of the offerings received by the church and then passed on to the denomination in whole or in part. One of these offerings is what known as OCWM monies, which are a part of our regular pledges and gifts to UCC Westerly. These are passed on from our church to the denomination through our local conference, the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. The amount sent is determined by a formula worked out by our Trustees as a part of the budget preparations each year. In addition to these funds, there are four additional "special offerings" we receive during worship at various times throughout the year. Obviously, since we have not been worshipping in person, we have not been collecting those offerings. BUT, the ministries those offerings support continue on and their funding has been greatly impacted by this shift in giving by all churches during the Coronavirus shutdown. Those special offerings include:

- ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
- STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH
- NEIGHBORS IN NEED
- THE CHRISTMAS FUND (formerly known as The Veterans of the Cross Fund)

We are reminding you of these special offerings so that if they are something you would normally support with a check or cash donation in the offering plate, you can still support them by mailing a check made payable to our church with a notation in the memo line as to which of the funds you would like to support with your gift. Do know if you name more than one, the funds will be

equally split between however many of the offerings you indicate on the memo line. For example, if you send in a check for \$20 with a notation it is to go to "All" it will be split four ways giving each of the special offering funds \$5.

Thank you in advance for any support you are able to offer these ministries at this time knowing that what you do, does make a real difference in the lives of real people.

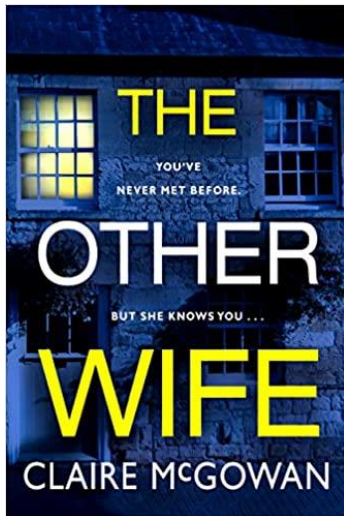
Rev. Ruth & the Missions Board

PNC

The Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center

The PNC is accepting donations of non-perishable food, and often needs diapers sizes 4, 5 and 6. Monetary donations are always welcome. Please feel free to mail your checks directly to them. Some people have also learned that ordering through Amazon and having the order delivered directly to the PNC works beautifully.





We'd love to have you join us at

BOOKS

The UCC Westerly folks who love books and talking about books!

Join us for our next gathering:

Thursday, August 6

6pm - via Zoom!

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:

The Other Wife

By Claire McGowan

8/13 - When can we have fun again?

8/20 - What's up with masks?

8/27 - School Daze

Interact via comments or schedule an appointment for a private Zoom or phone conversation.



SOME UPDATES FROM THE POLLINATOR TEAM!

- *The name of the game for this summer is socially distanced weeding in all the gardens and we need your help! Don't worry about pulling out the "wrong thing" because we have so much of everything the gardens need thinning!*
- *Looking for a good book to read this summer? Check out Doug Tallamy's NATURE'S BEST HOPE: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Own Yard. We're hoping to have a congregation-wide conversation about this book sometime this fall.*



*Rev. Ruth's Community Office Hours
Have gone virtual!!!*

Join her on Facebook Live

Thursdays @ 2pm for 30 minutes.

Discussion topics are new each week.

Here are the plans for August:

8/6 - Grief and loss in the pandemic

PRAYER LIST



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

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

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.



August Birthdays:

Rosemary Jette – 1
 Sandi Davis – 3
 Liz Dessaulles – 10
 Amanda Dessaulles – 13
 Bethany Foster – 20
 Shirley Miller - 30

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!

Eugene & Carolyn LeRoy – 8-4-62
 George & Cathy Gray – 8-23-86

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

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Office Hours: Monday and Thursday 9am – 1pm



Rev. Ruth

DAV Carol Joann Heather

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