

The Beacon

September 2020



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

“But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.” Proverbs 4:18

September is here and with it the gradual shortening of the long days of sunshine we so love about summer. The longest day of the year was way back in June and now we witness each day a few more minutes of darkness as the sun sets earlier and earlier. I will say this, though. Some of the sunsets recently have been absolutely spectacular. I’ve so enjoyed seeing some truly magnificent photos of sunsets in the Stonington/Mystic/Westerly area these last few weeks. Perhaps we are noticing them more as the days shorten? Perhaps the end of summer – this odd non-summer of a summer – feels like it’s coming too fast and these marvelous sunsets are our compensation for summer dreams left unfulfilled. Well, at least that’s how I’m thinking of it these days.

It has indeed been an odd summer and a bizarre year. Life is so totally different from what we are used to as Labor Day Weekend

rolls around and the entire community gears up for the return to school by our children and youth. Who would have believed this time last year that the usual beginning of school anxieties about teachers and school supplies and homework would have been bumped clean off the worry list, replaced instead by concerns about face masks and social distancing and just how safe it will be to return to the enclosed spaces of schools in these crazy Coronavirus days. Who would have thought that our kick-off for fall programming in the church would center on reopening the sanctuary for worship? Who would have thought part of that return would have to center on how do we worship without singing or praying out loud together or greeting each other with the hugs we so love? Is it really only a year ago that our lives at church and everywhere were so very different than they are now? Is it really only a year ago that we could turn on the news and not worry about rising infection numbers or yet another ugly incident meticulously recounted in the endless news cycles?

Dear ones, our lives are indeed so very different, so very unsettled and upended by all these circumstances we never saw coming a year ago. And yet here we are. Thankfully, we who are fortunate enough, blessed enough, to be part of a faith community like our wonderful church are not left to face this strange new reality on our own. We know that our God is with us, every moment of every day, easing our fears and pointing the way to the future. We celebrate the truth that new life is always possible through Jesus who reminds us over and over again that all we need do to live as the beloved people of God is to love God with all that we are and all that we have, and to love the other – no matter who they are – as we love ourselves. And how do we manage this herculean task? With the abiding presence, guidance, wisdom, courage and strength God gifts us with through the actions of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Dear ones, we do nothing on our own. As we struggle to find our way forward through this dark time of Coronavirus and a vitriolic election season, we can know

that God is with us. All we need do each day is what the writer of Proverbs reminds us to do: Follow the path of righteousness which “is like the bright light of dawn ... [shining] brighter and brighter...” Thank you, Jesus.

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth

WE'RE BACK!!!!!!
to In-Person Worship
as of Sunday, September 13 @
9:45am*!

Reservations required!

They can be made by calling the church office (860-599-1226) at any time!!!

Seating is limited and you MUST have a reservation to attend. Face masks required. Please see GUIDELINES sent out with the Beacon and bring your signed receipt for them with you, or mail it to the church office. If you need a printed copy of the GUIDELINES please let us know.

SERVICES WILL STILL BE BROADCAST ON FACEBOOK LIVE EVERY WEEK.

*Please note time change. We will be returning to 9:30am worship when we are beyond Coronavirus restrictions.



Deacon Ministry
Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
9/13	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
9/20	Joann Spurley	401-714-8948
9/27	Dwayne Spurley-Dows	860-705-6152

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!



From the Deacons:

Continued thanks and appreciation for the support provided for the monthly Deacons fund. We have approved the use of some of the funds to upgrade the sound system to improve broadcasting.

We are finalizing plans with Stonington Pizza Palace for our Barbara Murano Scholarship fundraiser. This was postponed from May, and the college students have received their scholarships. We are hoping to replace the funds in the account from this event. Angelo is awaiting news about whether outdoor dining will continue until the end of daylight savings time. There is inside dining, and take-out will count toward the church's percentage. Updates will go out once we have them.





ATTIC TREASURES!

Plans are on for the Attic Sale on Saturday, September 19th from 8 to 12. We will set up tables outside in the upper parking lot. Please bring your items that morning and place on tables. Please let Lynn Murray know if you have items to donate for sale, and if you will be available to help that morning. It will once again be a fill-a-bag-for 5-dollars event, so paper grocery bags are appreciated as well. There will be a few craft tables & a gift basket table set up in the circular driveway. Rain date is September 26th.



Plans are still in the works for the Christmas bazaar. It will look a bit different this year, with safety precautions a priority. Help will still be needed in all areas. Ladies & gentlemen: Start Your Ovens! More information and sign-ups to follow.

One part of the bazaar that will have to be done a little differently is the Bake Room, so we are asking our talented bakers to think about how you can help. Because of restrictions on how food items need to be handled, we are asking you to let us know what you are willing and able to donate. Especially needed will be cookies, fudge, Buckeyes, small breads, small cakes, pies, gf foods, as well as

jams & jellies, relish, pickles and small treats that can be packaged as small, wrapped items.

Please give this your careful consideration so that plans can move forward. Feel free to contact Shirin, Carolyn or Lynn with questions.

Thank you.



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.



From the Financial Secretary

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

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

As of September 14, the church facility will be open on a limited basis. This means that primarily employees and others conducting church business (financial and maintenance) are allowed in the building. The support groups sponsored by the church will be allowed to return to the building under strict guidelines.

Please remember to continue to sign in and out on the forms at each entrance and to use the hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes. Hands free soap and towel dispensers have been installed 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.

The next Trustee meeting will be a Zoom meeting on September 22 at 6:30 PM. Please free to speak with any of our Trustees with any financial or building related concerns you may have. Currently they are: Gary Davis, Bill Street, John Blake, Kathy Tarasuk, Melissa Stratton and Dwayne Spurley.



COMING THIS MONTH!!!

THIS & THAT

1. *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. *You can access either our worship services or Rev. Ruth's other Facebook Live events through our website? Just go to www.uccwesterly.org and click on the Facebook icon. Videos of the worship services and the other events remain on the Facebook page for a year!*



PRAY & CHAT WITH REV. RUTH
Wednesdays @ 5pm on Facebook Live

This weekly gathering will begin with Rev. Ruth’s thoughts on what’s happening in the world around us and the connections she finds with our faith and practice as Christians. 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. The Pandemic Response Team will be meeting at church on Saturday, September 12 to prepare the sanctuary for our first in-person worship service. They will then meet via Zoom on Sunday evening to discuss how things went and to see what improvements, etc. may be needed as we move forward.

MISSION MOMENT

It will be so nice to have our mission projects up and running when we are back together again! For the month of September, though, we will continue to encourage you to “donate from a distance.” Here are a few suggestions:



**Pawcatuck
Neighborhood Center**

27 Chase Street
Pawcatuck, CT 06379
860-599-3285

The PNC is in need of all non-perishable foods and living supplies, especially jellies, canned fruits, mayo, and diapers sizes 4 and 6. If you can’t drop these items off, it’s very easy to order them from Amazon and have them mailed directly to the PNC. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated. Reminder that they are not open on the weekends and that it is best to check their hours on their web site before dropping things off.

www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org



23 Industrial Drive
Westerly, RI 02891
401-377-8069

A message from the Jonnycake Center: “Food Donations sought! Many among us are struggling more than ever amid job losses and reduced incomes. Help ease the burden faced by neighbors in need by donating food and ingredients to the Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s Food Pantry. Non-perishables and fresh produce are especially sought.

To schedule an appointment, please email FoodDonations@jonnycake.org and use the subject line "Food Donation." Jonnycake staff will email you back with the soonest date and time available for a hassle-free drop-off.

All donations must be made by appointment only. Same-day or unapproved food donations will unfortunately not be accepted. We hope to reinstate open food donations as soon as possible. The entire community thanks you for any help you can provide!"

[#WeAreCommunity](#) [#NeighborsHelpingNeighbors](#)
[#SustainingCommunityTogether](#)



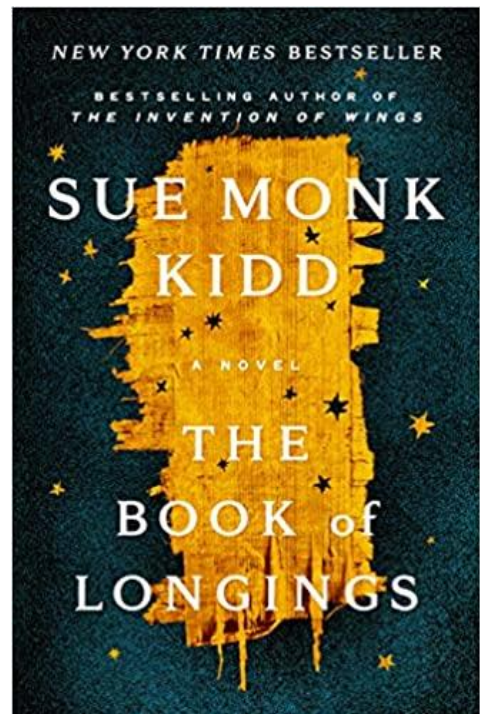
If you would like to donate directly to WARM, you may do so directly on their web page:

www.warmcenter.org

We are praying that we will be able to have another dine-to-donate WARM at Stonington Pizza later in the year or early next year. In the meantime, WARM would greatly appreciate a monetary donation.



In the last Beacon there was an excellent summary of the UCC Five for Five Offerings that our church participates in through our national organization. If you would like to make a contribution that reaches out to the broader global community, we encourage you to send your contribution to our church and we will forward it to the UCC. Be sure to write 5 for 5 on your check.



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, September 10
6pm - via Zoom!

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:

The Book of Longings

By Sue Monk Kidd

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A REMINDER FROM REV. RUTH...

That she is available for personal conversations by phone or Zoom or even socially distanced face to face outside, weather permitting. Please be in touch with her directly to schedule an appointment.



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.*

The Woodhall--Davis family would like to extend our deepest gratitude for all of the prayers offered for Jenn over the course of this very difficult summer. She is healing slowly and still has one more scheduled surgery, so we would deeply appreciate continued prayers. Blessings to all.
 Gary and Sandi Davis
 Jenn and Rob Woodhall



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!



PRAYER LIST

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

Madelyn Stratton
 Brian Madill
 Shirley M
 Connie
 Allie
 Ben
 Laura
 Mauri Hainsworth
 Emma
 Bea

Beverly & Family
 Scott & his parents
 Jennifer Woodhall
 Nicci & Jeff
 Josh
 Rev. Elizabeth King
 Ruth King Roes
 Bill Hoffman
 Crystal
 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.



September Birthdays:

Aidan Stratton - 16

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

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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@gmail.com**
Website: **www.uccwesterly.org**
Office Hours: Monday and Thursday 9am – 1pm



Rev. Ruth

David Carol Joann Heather

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