

The Beacon

October 2020



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

“Yes, Jesus loves me, this I know!”

The above quote is not a scripture verse, although clearly it captures the sentiment of hundreds if not thousands of verses in the Gospels and epistles of the New Testament. It is from the first verse of the beloved children’s hymn, “Jesus Loves Me.” I would argue that this, along with perhaps “Amazing Grace” is one of the best known hymns, familiar to folks who have never set foot in a church. When we sing it at our church – at transition points within the service – it always makes me smile when I look around the congregation at all the smiling faces. This is one of those hymns that just makes you smile. Even the most singing resistant folks have been known to mouth the familiar words, “Yes, Jesus loves me.”

This is, I think, because it is a wonderfully simple affirmation of our faith as followers of Jesus – Jesus loves us – you and me – no matter what. “Jesus loves me, this I

know” is the faith we proclaim distilled down to its most basic form. The verses go on to explain how this happens and why it matters. Verse 2 describes Jesus “taking children on his knee” and verse 3 explains how this unconditional love of Jesus transforms who we are: “Jesus loves me still today, walking with me on my way, wanting as a friend to give light and love to all who live.”

This, dear ones, is who we are as we live out our faith together in this wonderful church we claim as our own. We at last returned to in-person worship a few weeks ago and, while many things are different, the important things remain the same. We must wear masks and sit distant from each other, but at last we are together, offering companionship to one another through these difficult days of 2020. We have to have our name on a reservations list and to have signed a receipt for the church’s Guidelines for returning to worship under the Coronavirus restrictions in place by CT, but we can relax when we are here, confident that everything is being done to keep us safe. The prayer books and hymn books and bibles are packed away, but our prayer requests are still brought before God as we once again gather in prayer. We cannot sing together but we can celebrate the glorious music of the church as we listen to our magnificent organ while we savor the printed words of beloved hymns. We can hear the greeting of the Deacon and myself. We can receive the Word of God for us in the moment as the Scripture is read. We can pause to reflect and meditate on that word, and the words of the focus hymn, as I share insights and pose questions.

Yes, we have returned to worship in our magnificent church and it is very different, but in every way that matters it is unchanged. In this way, it is like us – we too are not the same people we were when all this began back in March. The trauma of lives interrupted, of everything we loved about living life each day being suddenly ripped away was terrifying. It was unnerving. But, we found our way back on the path that leads to the new reality still emerging as Coronavirus continues to stalk us. No matter because we are still the church. We

are still followers of the Risen Christ. We are still and always supporting one another in the challenge of living each day as a person of faith. This is why even though our voices must be silent in worship, we sing from our hearts with confidence, "Jesus loves me, this I know."

This is why our church is alive and thriving in the middle of a global pandemic! Check out all the articles in this edition of the *Beacon* and you will see what I mean. We are an amazing church, filled with incredible people. Thanks be to God!

Your friend in Christ,
Rev. Ruth



WE'RE BACK!!!!!!

**to In-Person Worship
on Sundays @ 9:45am*!**

Reservations required!

They can be made by calling the church office (860-599-1226) at any time!!! Reservations accepted until 9am on Sunday, provided space is available. You may make a continuing reservation for every Sunday by asking for that when you call for the reservation. Then you only need to call if you will not be attending. Face masks and social distancing are required. Please see GUIDELINES sent out with the September 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>
10/11	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
10/18	Bethany Foster	401- 539-4003
10/25	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!



From the Deacons:

Once again, we greatly appreciate the Deacon fund offering donations that continue to come in. Your donations are greatly appreciated, especially as we contributed to the cost of updating our system for our virtual services. Our scholarship dine-to-donate event at Stonington Pizza Palace will be held on a date to be announced later. We hope you will continue to support Angelo's business during this time that is a challenge for small businesses.

ATTIC TREASURES UPDATE!



Many thanks for all the helping hands for the Attic Sale. So many folks donated items, moved tables & items, set up, manned the site, and packed up. Also, thanks go out to our crafters who earned some funds for the church that day. We made \$996.75 and we all had a beautiful - but chilly - morning outside together.



Bazaar Brainstorming Committee update:

Plans continue to be in the works for a different but still exciting bazaar this year.

Small Trees & Artificial Wreaths: We are hoping that folks will be able to decorate small trees and artificial wreaths at home. Ask Lynn Murray if you would like supplies.

Greens: We are hoping that there will be people willing to create greens arrangements at home closer to the event, as well as to purchase a fresh wreath or 2 to decorate at home. Bows are available if needed.

Bake Room: Carolyn & Shirin have created a list of items that sell well in the bake room, as

well as a price list so that items can be brought in ready to sell. Contact them for specifics.

Christmas Tea: While we won't be serving our traditional tea, plans are in the works for an alternative: dry drink mixes for spiced tea, hot chocolate and cappuccino, pre-packaged home-baked cookies, & small sweet breads/cinnamon butter. (Sandi has offered to bake these breads.) Packed assortments of 8 to 10 cookies would be appreciated.

Nostalgia Boutique: Always a favorite, this will stay the same.

Missions SERRV Table: A limited selection of items will be available on site with catalog orders through the SERRV website encouraged.

Gift Baskets: Always the hit of the Bazaar, these will be available once again.

Silent Auction: Smaller in scale with an emphasis on high quality items and gift cards from local merchants and businesses showcased in baskets. Giving the struggles of local businesses this year, we are NOT asking any of them to donate gift cards. Instead, we are hopeful folks will purchase gift cards which they in turn donate to the Bazaar. Linda Evans is coordinating donations of items for the Auction and Sandi Davis is coordinating gift card donations.

Preliminary Plans are for the Bazaar to be both in person and virtual, with in person shopping done by reservation only on Thursday, December 3rd, Friday, December 4th, Saturday, December 5th and after worship on Sunday, December 6th. Rev. Ruth will be coordinating the virtual aspect of the Bazaar. With so many shopping times we will need a lot of assistance with folks willing to work at the Bazaar for in-person shopping. Masks and social distancing will be required.

We hope everyone will be able to find a way to participate in some way this year. To volunteer, please call the church office and leave a message that you are willing to help and someone from the committee will be in touch! Thank you in advance for making this a Bazaar to remember in so many ways!



Generosity
changes everything

From the Financial Secretary

Hello everyone!

Third quarter financial statements (reflecting July, August, and September donations) will be mailed out sometime in October.

As you may know, you are now able to set up donation schedules and one-time donations on the church's website. A record of each donation is sent directly to our pledge accounting system, called Church Windows, and will be shown in your financial statement, just as checks and cash are shown.

I am wondering if anyone in the congregation would be interested in learning how to use the above computer program, to be a second person with this ability and familiarity. This person may be

interested in serving the church by way of financial record-keeping on this limited basis, and/or opting to train to do more in the future by learning how collections are counted and deposited. During the COVID 19 times, I have only been recording donations about every two weeks, for about one and a half to two hours each time. Any interested person could work with me, wearing a mask and sitting six feet apart. I only work in the office when no one else is in the office.

Experience on a computer would be a helpful "job" qualification; however, the rest is Easy! Thank you for considering this opportunity! I do plan to continue in my role as Financial Secretary, but I think it is important to train someone else to use the Church Windows program.

Ed Stratton and William Street are your dependable and accurate Assistant Financial Secretaries. They have been faithfully counting the offerings, both mailed-in and now the Sunday service collections. They record monetary "destinations," make up a deposit, and take it to the bank. They have been performing the "bulk" of the financial work since March and I am so grateful for their extra help and flexibility! Thank you Bill and Ed!!

Jenny Brummund

HELP NEEDED! We are in need of folks to assist with the following at church.

- *Sound Board Assistants* to manage the Sound Board for worship on Sunday mornings. VERY simple!!!! One or two Sundays a month would be great! Speak with Gary Davis for details.
- *Assistant Financial Secretary* to assist Jenny Brummund with computer work connected to maintaining the donation records of the church. Computer experience helpful. 3-4 hours per month total commitment. Speak with Jenny for details.



Trustee Notes

Trustee Notes

We have returned to Sunday morning worship in the sanctuary. The Pandemic Response Team has set guidelines for the worship service to maintain social distancing. During the week the church facility is 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. The support groups sponsored by the church are now allowed to hold weekly meetings in Fellowship Hall.

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

Recent accomplishments are:

- Hands free soap and towel dispensers have been installed in each of the bathrooms.
- Touchless hand sanitizers have been placed at the Bell Courtyard and Upper Parking Lot entrances.
- The hand-rail at the Bell Courtyard has been replaced.
- Approved installation of a remote internet access point in the sanctuary to stream Sunday morning worship service. Funded by the Diaconate Board.
- Approved purchase of a new computer for the office. Cost will be covered by a

generous donation from Dwayne Spurley and Kevin Dows.

- Approved contracting with Vanco to set up on-line giving to the church

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. As of the end of August we have received \$43,588 in pledges, \$3,383 less than the anticipated amount of \$46,971. The total income was \$64,200. Thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program loan to cover employee salaries during the Covid-19 Pandemic, our total expenses was only \$70,876, \$3,261 less than the planned amount of \$74,137.

The next Trustee meeting will be on October 27 at 6:30 PM.



**HAS ARRIVED AT
UCC WESTERLY!**

To participate, simply go to the church website, www.uccwesterly.org and click on the “Donate” button. Supported by the on-line giving platform provided by Vanco, be assured this is a completely safe and secure way to make your donations to the church. All donations made this way will appear on your quarterly statements from the church. After clicking on the “Donate” button, you will have options to make a pledge, pay a pledge, make a one-time gift or support one of the special Offerings of

the church (Deacons Fund, etc) or the United Church of Christ. You can pay by credit card or by pre-authorized withdrawal from a bank account. Please keep in mind that the church pays a small service charge for each donation processed so paying more than one week's offering makes your money go further! You can also choose to offset part of the church's expense incurred, if you would like to. Be assured we are thrilled by whatever you can give!! What you give makes a real difference to the life and ministry of this very special church.



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

Our plans for re-opening for in-person worship on September 13 came off without a hitch. Folks who attended were happy to be back and observed full social distancing and mask requirements. The Pandemic Response Team continues meeting regularly to monitor and revise our worship protocols as changing circumstances warrant. They are meeting next via Zoom on Sunday, October 25 in the evening. This group will also be involved in our planning of the Christmas Bazaar now underway. Any questions regarding the Pandemic Response Team should be directed to Bethany Foster at 401-539-4003.

MISSION MOMENT

October

Wildfire Relief



Picture credit: [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)

Our October Mission Project is focused on the devastating wildfires that continue to destroy acres of forests and thousands of homes, in addition to taking the lives of so many people and animals.

You may help in the following ways:

1. Send a check made out to UCC Westerly (with the notation of Fire Relief), and we will forward the collection at the end of October to the UCC Disaster Ministries; or,
2. Go to the UCC Disaster Ministries website (<https://transactions.ucc.org/CampaignForm/UCCChrist/Disaster>) to make your contribution directly to this national effort.

November and December

For years we have provided a monthly meal to the clients of the WARM Center. Although we started this mission by cooking a meal every second Sunday of the month, we began a much more reasonable approach a few years ago of sending a check for \$1200 to WARM to cover the cost of 12 meals a year. We have enlisted the aid of Stonington Pizza Palace the past few years to help us meet that goal. However, in the age of COVID-19, it does not appear that we will be able to meet that self-imposed obligation to WARM simply by planning a Dine-to-donate event to raise the funds. Therefore, it is the decision of the Mission Board that we will ask for monetary donations from the congregation to help us meet that goal. We have agreed to suspend all other mission projects until we have the \$1200 needed to send to WARM in January 2021.

Please send your checks directly to the church or place them in the offering plates. The checks should be made out directly to the church with a notation that the funds will go to the WARM Dinner Mission.

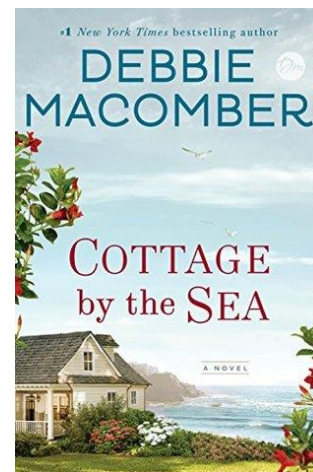
Thanks to the entire congregation for your continuing support of all of our Mission Projects. What you do makes a difference in this world.



All citizens have a responsibility to vote! Know your options for voting and make a plan that works for you! For voting information:

CT: <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Election-Services/Voter-Information/Voter-Fact-Sheet>

RI: <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/>



We'd love to have you join us at
BOOKS

A group of folks who love books and talking
about books!

Join us for our next gathering:
Thursday, October 15
6pm - via Zoom!

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:
The Cottage by the Sea
By Debbie Macomber

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.

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SOME UPDATES FROM THE POLLINATOR TEAM!

- *Check out the photo on the first page of this Beacon to witness a dream come true! This is a photo of our Meadow, a feature of the gardens from the first moment the plan for the gardens was first discussed. It took us several tries but at least the meadow is coming into its own! Keep in mind the beautiful blooms are without any watering! This is why it is so important to plant natives since they are hardy, drought resistant and beautiful!*
- *The name of the game for the pollinator gardens continues to be 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!*



Stewardship Sunday will be celebrated on November 15! This year's theme is *Let's Talk About Giving* with our focus scripture being "For God so loved the world God gave..." John 3:16.

Plan now on joining us for the Virtual Stewardship Brunch!!!! Details coming...



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.



October Birthdays:

Heather Stratton – 1
Judy Stratton – 1
Erin Gray – 7
Melissa Stratton – 10
Bobby Cornell – 19
Joan Edmond – 20
Brooke Foster – 24

Anniversaries:

Dwayne Spurley & Kevin Dows – 10-26-13

Brighten Someone's Day...

It would have been Erwin and Alice Dessaulles' anniversary on October 26th. We're sure Alice could use some cheerful thoughts. Please send her a card to let her know you are thinking of her and keeping her in your prayers.

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



Peter and I would like to offer our deepest appreciation for all your prayers and support during Peter's serious health issues in recent weeks. Be assured your prayers are what has kept us going at times. We will be sure to keep you informed.

Fondly,

Rev. Ruth



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

Dav Carol Joann Heather

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