

# The Beacon

## January 2021



*“Today’s trouble is enough for today.”  
Matthew 6:34b*

In light of what we witnessed transpire in our nation’s capital this past Wednesday, Jesus’ wisdom as expressed in this snippet from the Sermon on Mount seems the best advice I can think to offer. What we witnessed was something I think we are all still struggling to process – an attack on the Capital itself, egged on by the President of the United States desperate to hold on to power no matter. I know we try to keep overtly political conversations outside the church walls, but this act was so heinous, so egregious, so frightening, that it transcends mere politics. To ignore it would make me feel complicit in a seditious act.

We are a rarity in the United Church of Christ these days as a church with a flag in the sanctuary, on the chancel no less. Many of our sister churches have removed their flags entirely or moved them to more inobtrusive locations. I am grateful that we have not. Its presence in our midst makes sense because it was our UCC forefathers and foremothers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony who laid the foundations on which this country was built. Our church and our ability to worship as we choose, surrounded as we are by much more theologically conservative churches, exists because of that flag. I also believe we are citizens of this country as well as practicing

Christians who live here and the flag is a powerful and visible reminder of that. Jesus calls us to live our faith into reality every day, not relegating it to the shelf to be dusted off just on Sunday mornings. So, I feel as aggrieved as a pastor as I am as a citizen by what happened Wednesday. I have no intent of detailing what led to the explosion of violence in DC. We know what caused it, and who. The question before us now is, ironically, the question I had imagined we would be struggling with as this new year begins with a Pandemic raging out of control and our economy struggling.

That question is, how do we heal and move on? How do we acknowledge the pain and fear and worry and anxiety that has been dogging us every day since last March in a way that will enable us to move forward into God’s future? We all were hurting before we witnessed the core of our democracy under attack on Wednesday. That was literally adding insult to pre-existing injury. Yet, life goes on. We go on, hurting and fear-filled though we may be. This is why I decided to spend this time in Epiphanytide – the liturgical season between Christmas and the beginning of Lent – by focusing on healing. The sermon topics for each Sunday follow this article and I hope they pique your interest! Also, I would love to hear your questions, your concerns, your thoughts about any of them as we move forward in our ponderings on healing together.

So, dear ones, as we face these challenging days together – the remaining days until the Inauguration and all the days to follow – let us remember to pray each day for this beautiful country that we so love. Let us pray for her leaders and all of her people, the ones we love and the ones we don’t, the ones we know and the ones we’ll never meet. Let us pray for our wonderful church that we may be the shining beacon of hope we aspire to be always. Let us pray that in this sacred season of Epiphany the healing light and love of Jesus will infiltrate every trembling heart and guide us into the future God is counting on us to create together.

Your friend in Christ,  
**Rev. Ruth**

## Schedule of Worship Services



### ***Epiphanytide 2021***

#### ***Meditations on Healing***

*All Sunday morning worship services are broadcast on Facebook Live at 9:45am.*

January 10 -- Healing and faith

*"Only Speak the Word"* Matthew 8:1-16

January 17 – Healing for those struggling with poverty -- *"Without Resting"* Ruth 2:1-13

January 24 – Healing from fear and anxiety  
*Scribbles* -- John 8:1-11

January 31 – Healing for broken hearts and bruised spirits – *Just in Time* -- Luke 8:1-11

February 7 -- Healing for ourselves  
*Souls Restored* Psalm 23

February 14 – Healing for others  
*Healed by Friendship* Mark 2:1-12

Kindly Note: Copies of sermons will be provided by request only. Speak with Rev. Ruth or Carol to receive one!

***A note about worship:*** In an abundance of caution, the Deacons in consultation with the Pandemic Response Team have determined that we need to restrict the number of people in the building at any given time as much as possible. Therefore, Sunday morning worship will be led only by Rev. Ruth and Dav Cranmer, Organist. No Deacon nor Tone Chimes Choir for the time being! Also, do note that we may need to switch to Rev. Ruth broadcasting from her home without notice as happened on January 3. Flexibility is key as we all are learning!



## **Deacon Ministry**

### **Diaconate Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
1/10	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
1/17	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
1/24	Dwayne Spurley	860-705-6152
1/31	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740

***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:**

A reminder that we are still receiving donations on the first Sunday of the month, or any time really, to our Deacons Fund. This fund has a dual purpose – to assist with some expenses for worship (like purchasing candles and Communion supplies) AND more importantly to provide financial assistance to folks in dire need in our congregation or the community. Thank you for your generous support recently and in the weeks and months ahead!!

Also, please know that the Deacons have responsibility for coordinating our outreach to members and friends of the church, a role especially important in a Pandemic! We are currently revising our list of folks who might like to be on the

receiving end of phone calls and notes so if this is you, please be in touch to make sure you are on the list. Also, it may be that you would just as soon not receive phone calls and/or notes since everyone has their own way of coping with the Pandemic. In either case, please call Lynn Murray, Chair of Deacons to make sure we have you in the right list for you!!



## MISSION MOMENT

A huge thank-you to everyone who contributed to our Holiday Trim-the-tree for the Jonnycake Center. Well over \$300 was collected and will be sent to Jonnycake for food, housing, and fuel support. We hope you had a chance to see our beautiful tree during the Facebook services in December. We also appreciated your support of our SERRV bazaar initiative. We do not yet have a total of funds raised, but be assured that every penny is appreciated by this church and by the struggling artisans who create such beautiful items.

### JANUARY AND FEBRUARY INITIATIVES HOMELESSNESS AND HUNGER AWARENESS



### DONATIONS FOR THE PNC AND WARM

As part of our annual Homeless Awareness Vigil we will be doing a collection of much needed items for the PNC and WARM. We are hoping that, in addition to drawing attention to the problems of nationwide homelessness and hunger, we will be able to alleviate some of the suffering associated with these two problems.

For the PNC, we are asking for any and all non-perishable food supplies, but especially the following:

- Nutritious canned soups and stews
- Canned meats and fish
- All healthy breakfast foods
- Canned beans
- Coffee
- Hot chocolate

For WARM we are asking for donations of blankets and tarps.

The big, red Missions tubs will be out in the alcove at the upper parking lot doors the day of the vigil, so feel free to drop off items at any time that day. In the meantime, why not start purchasing the items listed above and storing them at home?

**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT IN AN ABUNDANCE OF CAUTION, the Homeless Awareness Vigil will not take place on January 16 as discussions on the best way to do it under Pandemic conditions are continuing. We will let you know the date, time, and form of the vigil as soon as we can. Thanks so much for your patience.**



### HAVE-A-HEART VALENTINE BACK TO BASICS DRIVE FOR THE PNC

On Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 14, 2021, we will sponsor a second event with a Back-to-Basics drive for the PNC. We are asking for donations of all nutritious non-perishable foods and essential paper products. Drop off your donations between the hours of **11:00am and 1:00pm** and receive a token of our appreciation.

### LOOKING AHEAD

In March we are planning to focus on our Furry Friends with a collection of food, litter, and treats. April and May will see a return of our Annual Babies and Ladies Collection of basic necessities. Our summer collection of In the Middle School Supplies will return for June, July, and August. Again, thank-you so much for all of your support. Together we are making a difference.





## Trustee Notes

### **Trustee Notes**

Due to the increase in the number of Covid 19 Virus infections; Sunday morning worship in the sanctuary has been suspended. 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.

If you do have a need to enter the facility, please remember to sign in and out on the forms at each entrance and to use the hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

We have completed our fall inspections and servicing:

- The fire alarm system was serviced and tested. There is a water leak at the end of the middle hallway that is getting into the pull station on the wall. The leak appears to be coming from where the landing outside the door in the upper hallway meets the building. This area will be cleaned and caulked when warmer weather returns. Meanwhile we will keep an eye on this pull station during the winter months.
- We passed the Fire Marshall inspection. He recommended that emergency lighting be installed in each of the bathrooms. We will schedule this work as funds become available.

We are seeking quotes on the following maintenance projects:

- Replacement of the cracked cross windows
- Re-shingling the slanted roofs

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 November we have received \$59,056 in pledges, \$5,529 (8%) less than the anticipated amount of \$64,585. The total income was \$97,134. Thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program loan to cover employee salaries during the Covid-19 Pandemic, our total expenses were only \$102,484, \$2,005 less than the budgeted amount of \$104,489. Our current deficit is \$5,350

If you have not submitted a pledge for 2021 please do so as soon as possible. The next Trustee meeting will be on January 14, 2021 at 6:30 PM. We will be finalizing the 2021 budget at that time.



From the Financial Secretary

Greetings to all...

Here are a few notes for 2021.

Please continue to use the same Pledge Number (found on the upper right corner of pledge envelopes) for the new year. You can place that number in the Memo line of your check. Do not worry if you do not know your number or if you pledge electronically. We can look up your number/name very easily. If you usually use pledge envelopes, please know that we will hold these at church until such time that we can worship together again. Perhaps making a note on your calendar each time you send in a contribution will help you keep pledges relatively current.

The Assistant Financial Secretaries, Ed Stratton and Bill Street will continue to "process and categorize" the pledges and other monies that come into church and then make a deposit about every two weeks or so. I will then go in and record the pledges on the computer for your statements. Know that there could be delays between when you send in checks and when they are deposited.



Year-end financial statements will be mailed out in early January. They will reflect your 2020 donations.

**\*\*I just found a news release from The IRS with the headline "Special \$300 tax deduction helps most people give to charity this year even if they don't itemize." Here is the link to the article:**

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/special-300-tax-deduction-helps-most-people-give-to-charity-this-year-even-if-they-dont-itemize>

As always, please check your statements for accuracy and call or email me or the church office if you have any concerns or questions.

Change for 2021:

A wise member of our congregation suggested that our financial statements should reflect any donations we make through the church, such as for our Monthly Mission Drives. Such offerings, although they do not go directly to our church or the UCC's Five for Five mission collections, are still made in the name of our church. This was a very sound observation! Beginning in 2021, I will endeavor to record any monetary Mission donation you make on your financial statements. If you ever donate simply CASH, and wish to have the Mission donation recorded in your statement, please put it in an envelope with your name/mission destination on it and we will be sure to record it. You can also make Mission donations through the new on-line giving option on our church's website! All on-line donations will be recorded on your statement.

In the next Beacon, I would like to feature a step-by-step simple tutorial about how to make an on-line donation.

Blessings to all in the coming year and Thank You for your faithfulness and generosity to our church!  
Jenny Brummund

To participate, simply go to the church website [www.uccwesterly.org](http://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.

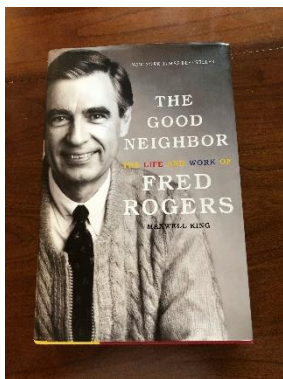


**UPDATE!  
UCCW Pandemic Response  
Team**

As reported earlier, the Pandemic Response Team has made the difficult decision to return to online worship for the time being due to changing CT Guidelines for the Coronavirus. Please know the Team continues meeting regularly to monitor and revise our worship protocols as changing circumstances warrant. They are meeting next via Zoom on Thursday, February 4th. Any questions regarding the Pandemic Response Team should be directed to Bethany Foster at 401-539-4003.



*A reminder from the Pollinator Team that our gardens may be sleeping but life stirs beneath the snow and winter landscape. Spring will soon be here!*



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  
February 25, 2021

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:  
**THE GOOD NEIGHBOR: The Life and  
Work of Fred Rogers**  
By Maxwell King



#### **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.*

#### **THIS & THAT!!**

- **Congratulations to JB Walker** for placing third overall in the 2020 Virtual Cross Country Invitational at Hope River Trail. Walker is a member of the class of 2022 at Eastern CT State University majoring in computer science.
- **Congratulations to Erin Blake**, also a student at Eastern CT State University for her outstanding academic accomplishments

in the fall semester of 2020.

- Mark your calendars now for a unique opportunity to attend **the General Synod of the United Church of Christ**, an entirely virtual event happening this summer, July 11-18. General Synod is a microcosm of everything that makes the UCC the unique and diverse denomination it is. Usually restricted to delegates and visitors willing to travel to a distant location and stay in hotels, this year's virtual Synod will allow this wonderful experience to be open to everyone. Worth considering for sure! Check out the details here: <http://www.generalsynod.org/>

- **Know of any other accomplishments of our church family we can celebrate together?** Please send them to Carol or Rev. Ruth at any time!



#### **PRAYER LIST**



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

Madelyn Stratton	Beverly & Family
Brian Madill	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.*

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### ***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!!*



### **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

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