

The Beacon

March 2021



*“... Lazarus, come out!”
John 11:43*

March is here at last, dear ones! The “Spring Forward” time change happens this month. So does the first day of Spring! And, even as we mark the one year anniversary of the Covid lock-down beginning, we also can begin anticipating our gradual return to in-person worship and so many of the other events and experiences we have so missed during this past year.

The verse above is, of course, from the story of Jesus raising his dear friend Lazarus from the dead. This story is often a part of our reflections as we prepare for Easter coming up in a few short weeks. It is this action – the raising of Lazarus from the dead – that really sealed Jesus’ fate as a dangerous threat to the status quo. Our focus on this text in our own Covid context is one of joy and celebration of the coming change in our own status quo as we dare to think about, to begin to plan for, all that we will once again be able to enjoy together as a congregation as we carefully emerge from our Covid year. Worship, of course, but hopefully more and more as time goes on and people are vaccinated. Masks and social distancing will be our reality for the foreseeable future but how wonderful will it be to be able to be together again!!!

So, dear ones, as you begin to dream and

plan for your emergence from your own “tomb” of sorts which has been our Covid lockdown, what are you most looking forward to? What are you excited about? I hope at least part of your excitement has to do with your plans for re-engaging at church! In case you didn’t already know, our church is truly an amazing place. I still marvel at how quickly we were able to move everything online, from worship services to board and committee meetings to our planning for how to deal with it all through the work of the Pandemic Response Team. Our leadership has been phenomenal through all of our trials and tribulations, setting us up to thrive and move forward into the future with hope and enthusiasm.

In the rest of this issue of the *Beacon*, you will find information on all that is currently going on at church as well as what is coming up. Trustees and Deacons have never missed a beat through our pandemic year and we owe them much for their tireless and faithful service. Our Congregational Life folks have stepped up as well, reaching out to folks and to organize probably our most memorable Christmas Bazaar ever – pop-up style! Our Missions Board too has kept us focused on the tremendous needs in our community for everything from face masks as the pandemic began to food for people and now for pets. And now, joy of joys, our Pollinator Gardens Team is emerging from its prolonged hiatus to begin work in our gardens once again. Our BOOKS group too has kept right on reading and meeting, Zooming together from our homes to keep in touch and talk about a book or two. Truly our life as a church has become even more enriched despite all the many, many challenges the pandemic forced on us. So much is happening in our wonderful church! So many opportunities to become involved in whatever way might work for you. I hope you will take a moment to decide how you can come out to join us in one of the many opportunities you will find in the weeks and months ahead.

I do want to remind everyone of the very Special Church Council meeting happening this coming Sunday, March 7 @ 11:30am via Zoom. Info on this meeting has gone out in detail before so I will not rehash all that here. I will

just encourage you to attend if there is anyway you are able to. Just email me for the Zoom link. Do know you can also call in to a Zoom meeting. Just sayin'. To join us you must email me by 5pm on Saturday, March 6. revruth1121@aol.com .

So, dear ones, Easter is on its way and its promises of new life and new beginnings mean so much more to us this year! Come be a part of this joyous rebirth at the church and in life each day! Remember, it was Jesus who invited Lazarus to come back out of the tomb. And he's inviting you to do the same, as soon as you feel ready to do so.

Your sister in faith,
Pastor Ruth

Schedule of Worship Services



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

Lent 2021 – Gifts of the Spirit

Sunday, March 7 Worship with Communion
“The Gifts of Kindness & Gentleness”

Sunday, March 14
“The Gifts of Generosity and Self-Control”

Sunday, March 21
“The Gift of Faithfulness”

HOLY WEEK 2021

Sunday, March 28 – PALM SUNDAY SYMBOLS SERVICE. Watch for details on our plans for the distribution of palms...

Thursday, April 1 – Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service @ 6:30pm

Friday, April 2 – Good Friday Vigil at the Labyrinth 12 noon to 3pm

Easter Sunrise Service @ 6:15 am in our Gardens (in Fellowship Hall if poor weather)

Festival Easter Service @ 9:45am in our Sanctuary and via Facebook Live

Reservations requested for both Easter services! Just call Carol in the office.

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



Deacon Ministry

Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
3/7	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
3/14	Dwayne Spurley-Dows	860-705-6152
3/21	Claire Calabretta	860-574-5962
3/28	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
4/1	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
4/2	Ed Stratton	401-596-5740
4/4	Claire Calabretta	860-574-5962
4/4	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!



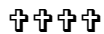
Don't Forget! Set those clocks ahead on Saturday, March 13!!!!



An Update from the Deacons:

The Deacons are excited that soon, there will be a diaconate person of the week back in worship on Sundays, and that beginning on Easter, with restrictions of course, we will be welcoming folks back for in person worship. See details elsewhere!. Once again, we are grateful for your continuing support of the Deacons fund. We know these have been trying times for all. Please feel free to reach out to any of us at any time!

If you have any questions on any of the above, please call Lynn Murray, Chair of Deacons at 401-539-7578.



MISSION MOMENT

Thanks to everyone who donated to our Winter Back to Basics Drive for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center and the Jonnycake Center. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation and our neighbors we were able to deliver a total of five car loads of non-perishable foods and other essentials to help those in need in our immediate area.



March and April

Our Furry Friends

Let's celebrate spring and our return to church in the sanctuary by giving some extra TLC to our furry friends who have helped us endure this pandemic with their snuggles, purrs, and wagging tails. Did you know that the PNC and Jonnycake also accept donations of pet food and supplies? These items are in great demand, and the shelves are frequently bare.

So, for March and April we are collecting dry and canned pet foods, cat litter, and doggie droppings bags.

Collection bins will be available at several times and places:

Mondays and Thursdays: 9am—1pm in the Bell Courtyard

Sundays: 8:30am—12pm at the sanctuary entrance in the upper parking lot

Looking Ahead

May and June will be dedicated to our much-appreciated Babies and Ladies Collection.

July and August will see the return of In the Middle School Supplies Drive.

We were not able to have either of these annual collections last year, due to Covid restrictions, so let's celebrate their return with full bins!

Remember: What you do makes a such a difference in this world.





Trustee Notes

Due to the ongoing Covid 19 Virus pandemic; in person Sunday morning worship in the sanctuary remains suspended. Rev. Ruth has been live streaming Worship service from the sanctuary via Facebook. There is a plan in place to restart in person worship service on Easter, April 4. 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.

Since we could not hold a Congregational Meeting in January (due to the Covid19 pandemic) the Church council reviewed and approved the Trustees proposed 2021 budget which shows a deficit of \$17,213. The total proposed income is \$99,587 of which \$61,137 comes from pledges. The proposed expenses are \$117,213 as follows:

- \$65,048 minister's salary and benefits
- \$10,157 church programs
- \$14,390 church office
- \$12,411 building maintenance and utilities
- \$10,897 general expenses

This is challenging budget, but we are off to a good start. As of the end of January we had received \$8,932 in pledges, \$3,837 more than the anticipated amount of \$5,095. Our total income for January was \$13,414. \$5,148 more than the budgeted amount of \$8,266. Our total expenses in January were \$12,343, \$2,575 more than the budgeted amount of \$9,768. Primarily due to the quarterly payments for insurance and benefits. we ended January with a net surplus of \$1,071.

The Trustees have selected Clinton Glass LLC for replacement of the Cross Windows panes. The cost of \$4,250 will be covered by a generous donation by Bill Morrone in the Memory of Becky Morrone.

The Trustees have evaluated three quotes for re-shingling the slanted roofs and is currently negotiating with Roofing and Home solutions for the work. They are the ones who did an excellent job on the flat roof sections. Cost for the project will be covered from several available funds depending on the outcome of a Special Church Council meeting scheduled for Sunday, March 7.

The next Trustee meeting will be on March 23.



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 have been mailed out. They 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:

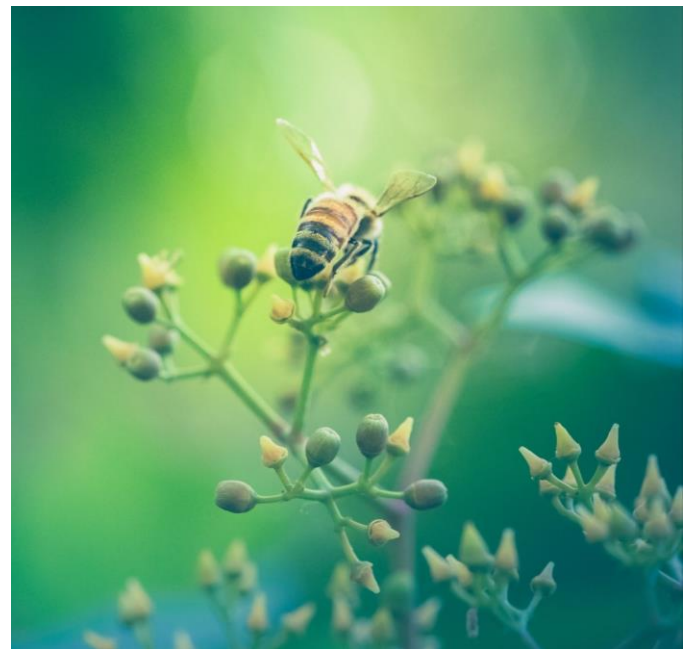
A wise member of our congregation suggested that our financial statements should reflect any donations we make through the church, such as for our Monthly Mission Drives. Such offerings, although they do not go directly to our church or the UCC's Five for Five mission collections, are still made in the 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.

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



UCCW Pandemic Response Team

The Pandemic Response Team is excited that we are beginning the process of returning to in-person worship for Easter. Please know the Team continues meeting regularly to monitor and revise our worship protocols as changing circumstances warrant. They are meeting via Zoom later this month. Any questions regarding the Pandemic Response Team should be directed to Bethany Foster at 401-539-4003.



The Pollinator Team has scheduled its first meeting on Tuesday, March 9 @ 6:30pm via Zoom and, if you are curious about pollinators or love to garden, you are welcome to join us. Please speak with Claire Calabretta anytime for more information on this exciting and unique project!

REMINDER! Don't do those spring yard clean-ups too soon! You can disturb nesting birds and all sorts of pollinators like butterflies, moths, bees and the like by disturbing them from their winter rest too soon. Please wait to rake especially until there have been several days of temps above 50 degrees!



Just a reminder of Rev. Ruth's special offerings during Lent!

THE LENTEN DEVOTIONAL
in a "refrigerator friendly format"
offers suggestions for observing Lent
each day until Easter.

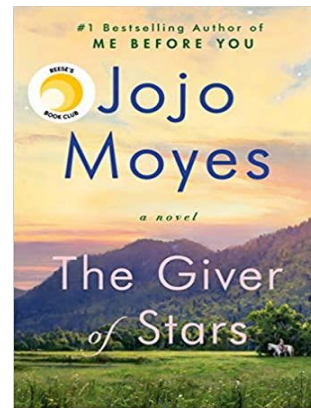
REV. RUTH'S
"WORDS TO THE WISE"
For Parents and Kids
Sundays @ 11am
Via Facebook Live

Join us as Rev. Ruth talks about typical kid's
questions about God, Jesus and faith.

MIDWEEK LENTEN MEDITATION
Wednesdays @ 6:30pm
Via Facebook Live

Rev. Ruth offers additional insights and
answers questions on this year's Lenten
focus on Paul's Fruits of the Spirit

*For more information on any of these Lenten
programs, please speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.
401-663-7934 Cell <> revruth1121@aol.com*



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
March 25, 2021

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:

The Giver of Stars
By Jojo Moyes

††††



Annual Reports Are Due
As Soon As Possible

We have postponed the Annual Meeting until later this spring, yet we would like to collect your reports as soon as possible while the particulars of 2020 are still fresh in your minds. All groups, Boards, organizations and Treasurers should submit an annual report. Please email yours to Carol at uccwesterly@gmail.com. Hard copies can be left on Carol's desk if email is not available to you. Thank you!!

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.



Brighten Someone's Day...

Some of the folks in our UCCW family could use some cheerful thoughts. Please send them a card to let them know you are thinking of them and keeping them in your prayers.

*Judy Stratton
71 School Street, Westerly, RI 02891*

*Rosemary Jette
6 Lynn Lane, Ashaway, RI 02804*

*Sandy & Bill Hoffman
22 Horne Drive, Westerly, RI 02891*

*Bob Sicilian
c/o TINA LESSING
186 Jerry Browne Rd. #2504,
Mystic, CT 06355*

PRAYER LIST



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

Madelyn Stratton	Beverly & Family
Brian Madill	Shirley M
Jennifer Woodhall	
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.



March Birthdays:

Fred Tarasuk – 1
Madelyn Stratton – 1
Cathy Gray – 5
Shirin Platt – 7
Adam Tarasuk – 10
Emma Stratton – 12
Dwayne Spurley-Dows – 18
Edward Stratton – 19
Brenda Cornell - 30

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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