

The Beacon

April 2021



“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings...” Luke 13:14b

Every Sunday when I am driving to our church for worship, I look forward to my short little excursion on Route 49 just as I exit 95. I’m only on it for 2 miles or so, but there are two houses I pass by where I sometimes get to glimpse a flock of hens clucking and scratching, a gorgeous rooster carefully keeping guard. I don’t always see them, especially not in the winter months. But, lately, I’ve seen them more often than not and they always bring a smile to my face. I don’t really know why. I’m a city girl, as you all know, which means I know absolutely nothing about taking care of chickens. I love the sounds they make and the way they strut around whatever yard they have decided to explore. I love how the wary rooster keeps a careful eye, for what I’m not sure. Is he worried one will wander off, trying to find out the answer to the timeless question, “why did the chicken cross the road?” Or is he keeping a watchful eye for their owner, ready to herd his feathery charges back home. I don’t have a clue. But I know they still make me smile.

Jesus apparently liked chickens too and was more familiar than me with how they lived their lives. In this text from Luke, Jesus draws an analogy between the way a mother hen keeps track of her chicks and the way he has

attempted to gather up all of God’s people into his arms. He is lamenting that far too few have wanted to find the kind of shelter of God’s love he was offering them in his preaching, teaching and healing. I like this text and not just because it’s about chickens. I like it because it shows what a realist Jesus is. He knows all that he has done and he knows that while many people follow him because they want to be healed or relieved of some other burden, not very many understood this new way of understanding God that was his unique ministry. At this point in time, Jesus was well aware of who his friends were, and who his enemies were. He also knew that his time to do God’s work would not be without an end.

This year during the season of Eastertide, the time between Easter and Pentecost, we will be exploring the Jesus that had these crowds so enthralled. We will be taking a look at some of the many miracles of Jesus – the very same miracles that brought people to him in throngs in search of their own miracles. Jesus loved these people, God’s people, but he knew all too well that while they loved the miracles, they still didn’t really understand him or why God had sent them into their midst, miracles and all. Jesus’ miracles fall into several categories – Nourishing people, casting out evil spirits, healing of bodily infirmity, controlling nature and the biggest miracle of all – resurrection of others as well as himself. As we explore these stories, we’ll also be considering how these miracles can help us find our own way forward as we emerge from this past pandemic year. How do we need to be healed spiritually as well as physically? How is God active in guiding us forward, no matter what external conditions we encounter? Are we open to our own Jesus miracle, to allowing Jesus to comfort us as a mother hen comforts her chicks, or not?

So, dear ones, welcome to Eastertide. I hope you will come along with me as we continue on this miraculous journey of faith.

Your sister in faith,
Pastor Ruth

Schedule of Worship Services



All Sunday morning worship services are now in-person AND broadcast on Facebook Live at 9:45am. Masks & Social Distancing required at all in-person services!

EASTER SUNDAY, April 4

Sunrise Service @ the Labyrinth 6:15 am

*Please bring a chair if you would like to sit!
We will be singing at this outdoor service.
This service will NOT be broadcast.*

Festival Easter Service 9:45am
with Communion & Dedication of new hymnals

EASTERTIDE – Pondering Miracles

All Services @ 9:45am, In-Person & on Facebook Live

Sunday, April 11 *Miraculous New Life*

Sunday, April 18 *“Who, then, Is This ...?”*
EARTH DAY SUNDAY! *Grounds Clean-up immediately following worship*

Sunday, April 25 *Lay preacher, Lynn Murray*

Sunday, May 2 *“You Feed Them...”*
Communion!! Bring your own elements!

Sunday, May 11 **MOTHER’S DAY**
A Woman Who Knows Her Son

Sunday, May 16 *Merciful Gratitude*

Sunday, May 23 PENTECOST *Returning*

***Our seating capacity is still limited so seating is only guaranteed with reservations.
Just call Carol in the office to be put on the list!***

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>
4/4	Claire Calabretta	860-574-5962
4/4	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
4/11	Joann Spurley	401-714-8948
4/18	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
4/25	Claire Calabretta	860-574-5962

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!



An Update from the Deacons:

The Deacons have reached out to our church member college students and high school senior regarding the Barbara Murano Scholarship for this year. In place of the usual application, we are asking them to share their experiences and changes over the last year. We anticipate three applicants this year, but if we have missed someone, please let a Deacon know. This is open to church members who are either a high school senior or a college student who is planning to return to school next year.

For those who didn’t know Barbara, she was a wife, mother, teacher, church member, and good friend of Becky Morrone. She lost her life to cancer at a very young age, more than 30 years ago.

The Deacons are also pleased to pass on the good news that our Dine-to-Donate fundraiser, which supports the Barbara Murano Scholarship, is back this year, after having to be put on hold last year. Mark your calendars for Thursday, May 20th at Stonington Pizza Palace. We are so fortunate to have such a generous business owner in our community. Unlike other similar fundraisers, Angelo donates a percentage of the whole day's sales to us, not just during limited hours or only for folks who identify themselves as being associated with the church. This goes a long way in funding our scholarships. It also includes dine in and take out, and possibly outdoor seating will available again as well. I can personally recommend his chicken parm calzone & his scallops & bacon pizza! Tell your friends, get your appetites ready, and be sure to thank Angelo for his generosity. If you want to make a trial run at Pizza Palace, please know that they will be closed at some point during April for vacation, not because of health concerns.



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.

As a result in April we are collecting dry and canned pet foods, cat litter, and other assorted pet needs.

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 entrance from the upper parking lot

We are also very excited to note that *the Mystic Seaport* has joined us again for this donation drive!



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

Trustee Notes

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

As of the end of February we had received \$13,488 in pledges, \$3,398 more than the anticipated amount of \$10,190. Our total income through February was \$19,919. \$3,321 more than the budgeted amount of \$16,598. Our total expenses through February were \$21,195, \$1,660 more than the budgeted amount of \$19,535. Primarily due to the quarterly payments made in January for insurance and benefits. Also, our gas usage was higher than anticipated due to an efficiency with the boiler that supplies heat to the sanctuary. We ended February with a deficit of \$1,276.

Repairs were made to the boiler that supplies heat to the Sanctuary.

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. Work should start within the next several weeks,

The Trustees have contracted with Roofing and Home Solutions to re-shingle the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall roofs. for the work. Work began on March 25th and has already been completed.

The next Trustee meeting will be on April 29.



Spring Earth Day Clean Up

The Trustees are extending an invitation to all to help clean up the grounds around the church after Worship service on April 18.

Those attending Worship that Sunday can wear their work clothes and be prepared to spend a few hours

raking leaves, picking up branches and trash, pruning shrubs and trees, and maybe even a little outside painting. Those not attending Worship that Sunday are welcome to stop by around 11:00 to lend a hand.

Please bring any tools, pruners, leaf blowers, etc. that you may have. We have several yard rakes and long handled loppers. The church will also supply paint and brushes but feel free to bring your favorite paint brush.

The Trustees will have a detailed list of jobs on that day and volunteers can select which chores they wish to tackle.



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.



GARDEN CLEAN-UP FROM A POLLINATOR'S PERSPECTIVE!

By Claire Calabretta from UCC Westerly's Pollinator Gardens Team

Are you tired of social distancing? Experiencing the symptoms of spring fever? Dreaming of the day we can once again be social, active, and blissfully normal? What better way to get on with life as we knew it, than to find joy in satisfying, physically demanding tasks like raking leaves and tidying up garden beds. It is only human to want to restore order to our gardens and grounds, which to our human eyes have begun to look brown and "spent." But the winter garden is actually teeming with insect life! The Xerces Society, an organization devoted

to invertebrate conservation, encourages gardeners to consider the nesting and overwintering habitat of pollinators and beneficial insects, especially at this time of year. Here are a few of their garden clean-up recommendations, most of which run counter to traditional gardening practices:

1. Hold That Rake, Rest That Trowel, Leave the Leaves! Ideally, gardeners should wait to begin clean up until the daytime temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees F for at least a week. Butterflies, pollinators, and other beneficial insect friends spend the winter hunkered down in plant stems and leaf litter, either as eggs, pupae, or adults. In early spring, many insects are still in “diapause,” a hibernation-like state. Garden clean up should be timed so that it does not disturb them before they have a chance to emerge. It is ideal to let leaves lie where they fall in autumn. If leaves must be removed in spring, make sure you wait until late spring to increase chances of emergence of butterflies and other insects.

2. Save the Stems!

Birds and other wildlife feed on the seeds of plants and grasses. (ok, admittedly we did not have much energy after a record four Bazaars last fall ... but we still earn gold stars for our efforts to NOT clean up at year end!). Begin pruning dead flower stalks in early spring to create nest sites for bees. When pruning, make cuts at a variety of heights from 8 – 24” above the ground. Cuttings can be placed loosely in a mulch pile, or even tied up in bundles with jute and hung from a fence or leaned against a stone wall or tree. The insects sheltering inside will emerge when they are ready, or other insects will move in and use the stems as “brood chambers.” (It would also give us the chance for a citizen science project, watching for insect activity up close!)

3. Avoid Mulching Too Soon (if at all!)

Covering the ground with a layer of mulch too early in spring may block the emergency of beneficial insects and pollinators who overwinter in soil either as eggs, pupae or adult. Once again, wait until the weather warms and the soil dries out. Xerces Society recommends avoiding landscaping with plastic mulch, landscape fabric, and heavy wood chips, as these can limit nesting sites for ground nesting bees. A little groundcover goes a long way.

4. Prune with Care

When pruning back woody perennials or shrubs, keep a watchful eye out for cocoons and chrysalises of moths and butterflies. Allow these branches to stay intact until later in the season.

5. Install a Pollinator Habitat sign

Our church is planning to do just that this year! Stay tuned for more details!

This article is drawn from the following two articles on garden clean up, recommended by Wild Ones/Mountain Laurel Chapter:

<https://savvygardening.com/spring-garden-clean-done-right/>

<https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/18-014.pdf>

The Pollinator Gardens Team is ALWAYS looking for more folks who are interested in sustainable gardening practices. The best way to learn is by working alongside us! For more information on how you can be involved with this vitally important eco-justice ministry, please speak with Claire Calabretta or Sandi Davis anytime.



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.

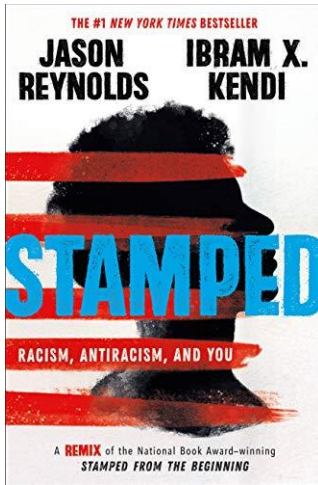
virtual meetings are a little wierd...



CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, April 11 @ 6:30pm

Via ZOOM!!!!



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
May 6 @ 6:30pm

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You
By Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi

††††



Annual Reports Are Due NOW

We have postponed the Annual Meeting until later this spring and we anticipate it happening sometime in May. So, 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.

Also, please note Rev. Ruth is on vacation from April 19 - 26. Pastoral care emergencies should be directed to the Deacon of the Week while she is away. Thank you!!!



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 Nihal Maarouf

*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.



April Birthdays:

Pam DelPozo-Waldron – 6
 George Gray – 26
 Emily Sineiro – 28

April Anniversaries:

Rev. Ruth & Peter Hainsworth – April 23
 Douglas & Jenny Brummund – April 25

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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