

The Beacon

May 2021



*“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”
Mark 4:40*

Jesus spoke these words to the disciples as one of the miracle stories Mark records in his Gospel is coming to an end. He and the disciples were crossing over a lake after a long day of preaching, teaching and healing. Jesus was exhausted and promptly fell sound asleep in the bottom of the boat. Meanwhile, a terrific storm blew up, getting worse and worse by the minute. The wind was roaring and the waves were washing into the boat and still Jesus slept. Finally, the disciples decided they had to wake him up since the storm hadn't. “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” they shrieked at him. Seems a little harsh but the disciples were in full panic mode so what can you expect.

Finally, Jesus woke up, rebuked the wind and waves and the sea calmed as the storm withdrew. Then he looked them right in the eyes and asked: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” This is a legitimate question as the disciples had been with Jesus for a long time. They had seen lots and lots of miracles. They had seen lives changed and hearts transformed. They had heard Jesus tell them over and over again how precious they were to God, how with God all things are possible. Still, they were terrified in the middle of a storm they never saw coming.

We get that. We get what it is to be terrified by something so unexpected, so dangerous and so completely beyond our control. We get it because we have just survived Covid 19 and the havoc it created. We know what it is to be frightened by a force of nature coming out of nowhere and changing everything. We know how scary it is to hear the infection rates climb and the death toll mount as the news grows more and more dire. And if we forget, all we need to do is look at the news coming out of India right now. But then the vaccines started becoming available. And people became more vigilant about hand washing and mask wearing and staying physically distant from folks, weird and upsetting as that was – especially with folks we know and love, like our church family.

Now we find ourselves with Covid receding and we're trying to figure out what that means in practical ways. When is it safe not to be masked, to hug someone outside of our “household,” to sing in church? When will the fear we have lived with for so long finally leave us in peace? That, dear ones, is probably the most difficult and long lasting of all the questions the pandemic has left us with. When will our fear – of an invisible and potentially deadly virus, of people denying that same virus even exists, of life just being so totally different – ever go away? When will we be able to live in peace as we did before we ever even heard of Covid 19? Probably never because the change the world has experienced because of Covid, has become part of us, and our church.

Dear ones, I believe that is a good thing. I believe that God is at work even here. That's why our question is no longer “when will things be as they were?” Instead, our questions need to center on what have we learned from all this and how we can emerge stronger and more resilient. That's what Jesus was getting at in his questions to the disciples as a little dingy emerged from a storm. “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” Dear ones, let us answer boldly and bravely, “Yes, Jesus, we do have faith! And our faith is leading us forward beyond fear and worry, making us whole!”

Your sister in faith,
Pastor Ruth



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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!

EASTERTIDE – Pondering Miracles

Sunday, May 11 ***Mother’s Day***
A Woman Who Knows Her Son

Sunday, May 16 *Merciful Gratitude*

Sunday, May 23 PENTECOST *Returning*

PENTECOST I Summer – Backward & Forward

Sunday, May 31 – Annual Memorial Day Weekend Celebration

Sunday, June 6 – Scholarship Sunday

Our seating capacity is still limited so reservations are suggested. 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!

☺ ***SUMMER PLANS!*** ☺

Is there a particular sermon you remember hearing Pastor Ruth preach that really stuck with you? Can you remember the bible reference or the theme or the title? If yes, please contact her to let her know since Sundays this summer will offer a re-mix of a few of her favorite sermons and she'd like to include some of yours too!



CROSS WINDOW HELP!

Our beautiful cross window needs your financial help. Three of the four panes were found to be cracked and replacement panes were purchased from Clinton

Glass. Unfortunately, when they removed the old glass, it was found that the exterior wood framing of the windows was so rotted that it was structurally unsound to install the new panes. This means that the framing needs to not only be replaced but needs to be beefed up in order to meet a 25-pound wind load. Clinton glass has proposed an aluminum framing that will meet the specification but it will cost an additional \$9000. Several other options are being explored at this time. One being possibly building up a wood frame that will do the job. We do not have an estimate yet of what that would cost.

The best answer is the aluminum framing since this would require minimal upkeep and maintenance. A wood frame would require regular maintenance and painting to keep it from deteriorating.

The Trustees are asking for donations to help cover the additional cost. Any donations should be marked for the Cross Window.

Thanks,
Board of Trustees





Deacon Ministry

Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
5/11	Dwayne Spurley	860-705-6152
5/16	Bethany Foster	401-539-4003
5/23	Ed Stratton	401-596-4740
5/30	To be determined	
6/6	To be determined	

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.



MISSION MOMENT

Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to our drive for our Furry Friends. A special note of thanks goes out to the staff at the Mystic Seaport, as they are now collaborating with us on our donation drives! So great to have a community partner!

BABIES AND LADIES MONTHS

MAY AND JUNE



Our traditional Babies and Ladies Collection for the PNC will take place again during the months of May and June. Needed baby items include: *all toiletries, larger sized diapers (sizes 3 and up), baby wipes and sunblock.* They do **not** need the smaller sized diapers or formula.

Lady needs include **all** feminine hygiene products. Also requested were the larger sized adult wipes. These items are greatly needed and are appreciated beyond words by the people receiving them.

COMING ATTRACTIONS!

Our annual "In the Middle" School Supplies Drive will again take place during July and August. The drive benefits students in both the Stonington and Westerly Middle Schools. In the next *Beacon* you will find a list of needed school supply items requested by the middle school teachers and staff. In the past we have dropped these donations off at the schools where the guidance counselors have quietly distributed the items to needy students at the beginning and through-out the school year.

What you do makes such a difference in the world



Trustee Notes

Sunday morning worship in the sanctuary has returned along with live streaming of the service from the sanctuary via Facebook. 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 we end the first quarter of 2021, we are doing very well financially. At the end of March we had received \$22,195 in pledges, \$6,911 more than the anticipated amount of \$15,284. Our total income through March was \$50,439. \$25,542 more than the budgeted amount of \$24,897. This increased income was primarily due to the transfer of \$20,000 from the endowment fund to the general fund to pay for the re-shingling the

Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall roofs. Our total expenses through March were \$47,126, \$17,823 more than the budgeted amount of \$29,303. This increase in expenses was primarily due to the partial payment for the roof work (\$10,450). We ended March with a surplus of \$3,313.

A very successful Earth Day cleanup of the church property was held on April 18 following worship. The Trustees would like to thank everyone who participated in this annual cleanup of the property.

The Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall roofs have new shingles. There have been no signs of any leakage during the recent rain storms.

Clinton Glass started replacement of the Cross Window glass on April 26. Upon removing the old cracked glass and the trim, it was found that the wood framing had rotted so badly that it was structurally unsound. Repairs to the framing will have to be made prior to the new glass being installed. For the next several weeks the Cross window will be covered with a tarp. Alan Hill (Asael Hill's son) will be working with Clinton Glass to make repairs to the framing so that the new windows can be installed.

The next Trustee meeting will be on May 25.



UCCW Pandemic Response Team

The Pandemic Response Team is pleased to report that our return to in-person worship services is going very well. Thanks so much to everyone who is cooperating fully with masking and social distancing. Your support on these matters makes everything easier for us all. 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.



CALL FOR THE 57th ANNUAL MEETING
 UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
 OF WESTERLY
 UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Annual Meeting shall be held on May 23, 2021 at 10:45 in person in the sanctuary and also virtually via Zoom conference call. Reservations are required for those attending either meeting format. All are welcome to attend; only members of the church are able to vote.

The purpose of the meeting shall be to receive the yearly reports of Officers, Boards, Committees, Organizations and Departments; to elect officers; adopt the annual budget; set up plans for the new year; and vote on any other business that may come before the congregation.

The Treasurer's Report, duly audited, shall be presented.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Gray, Clerk

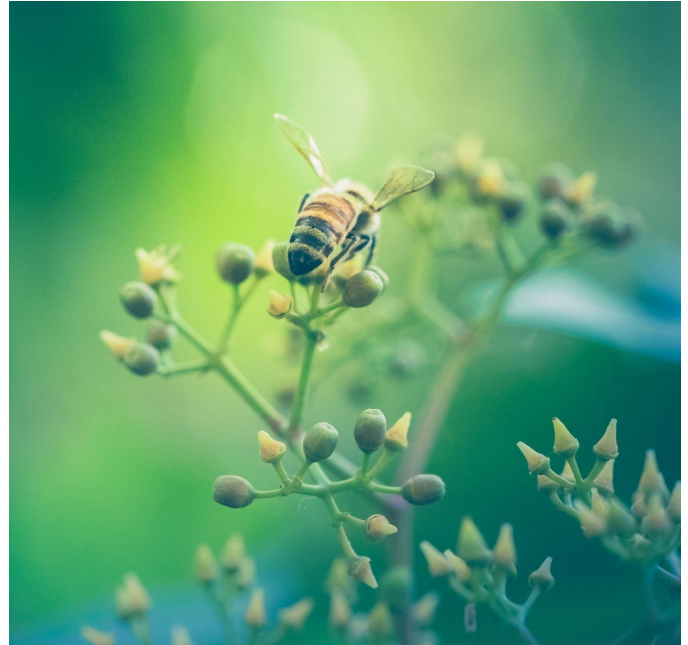


Annual Reports Are Due NOW

The Annual Meeting is coming up fast and we need those reports NOW! All groups, Boards, organizations and Treasurers should submit an annual report. Please email yours

to Carol at uccwesterly@gmail.com or leave paper copies on Carol's desk if email is not available to you. Thank you!!

THOUGHTS ON SUSTAINABLE GARDENING FROM OUR POLLINATORS TEAM!



TIPS TO CONSERVE WATER IN YOUR YARD AND GARDEN from the UCC Westerly Pollinator Team

Choose plants wisely. Plants native to our area are beneficial to wildlife and often eliminate or cut down on the need to water. Smaller, narrow-leaf plants generally need less water than large leaf plants. Intersperse these with drought resistant broad-leaf plants. Replace water-guzzling lawns with groups of pollinator plants.

Water at the right time of day. Water in-ground plants in early morning will lessen evaporation. However, container plants grow stronger and healthier if they are watered in the afternoon. Avoid watering in the evening because it may promote fungus diseases.

Water the right amount. Do not overwater. Use a water gauge and watch weather conditions so you only water when necessary. Instead of using oscillating sprinklers, try drip irrigation hoses. Soaker hoses distribute water to where it is needed and lessen water evaporation and runoff. Less frequent but deeper watering encourages plants to grow deeper roots.

See to your soil. Use mulch to retain moisture and keep weeds out. A 2-3 inch layer of coarse mulch is best to allow water to permeate the soil and avoid compaction.

Increase organic matter in the soil by adding compost made from leaves and vegetative food scraps.

Capture rainwater. Rain can be captured in buckets, barrels, tanks and stone cisterns. Top containers with a fine-screened lid to keep out mosquitos and other pests.

Slow water runoff. Keep rainwater in your yard with a Rain Garden, essentially a depression planted with water-tolerant plants (able to be wet for 24 hours or less). The Rain Garden at UCCW collects runoff and filters out pollutants allowing cleaner water to seep into the earth and aquifers. Rain Gardens enhance backyard habitats as they attract butterflies, birds and other beneficial visitors.

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.



SPRING YARD SALE!!!

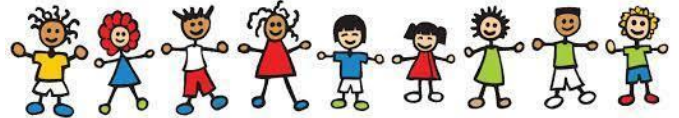
8am - 12 noon

In our Upper Parking Lot

Fill a bag for \$5 (bags provided)
with large items priced individually.

If you have items to donate, please leave in Fellowship Hall.

Volunteers needed to set up and work the day of! Speak with Lynn asap!!!



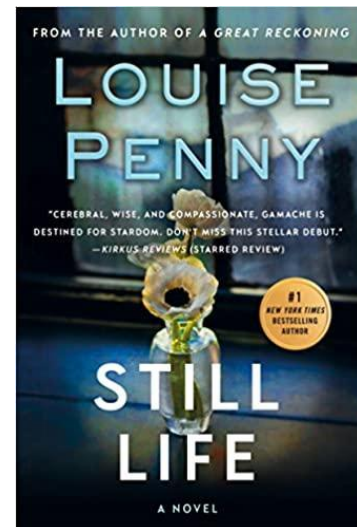
REV. RUTH'S
"WORDS TO THE WISE"

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.



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, June 10 @ 6:30pm

Please contact Rev. Ruth for the Zoom link.

WHAT WE'RE READING:

Still Life

An Inspector Gamache Novel

By Louise Penny



A Note from The Congregational Life Committee

Many moons ago, the Congregational Life Committee planned monthly activities; among them being a night out to a local restaurant. So, this month we are urging everyone to eat at the Stonington Pizza Palace on May 20th to support our Barbara Murano Scholarship recipients, and to enjoy good food and fellowship. We thank the business owner for his generous support and for yours also!

AN INVITATION AND 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.



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Rev. Darrell Goodwin
Executive Conference Minister
The Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ

“We encourage every congregation to participate in this special **Strengthen The Church** offering to be received on Sunday, May 23. This year’s offering will be used to support of the Conference’s new *Center for Transformational Leadership* as a key resource to offer assistance to local churches as they emerge from the Covid shut-down.”

Donations can be made through our church by check with STC marked in the memo line or through the Vanco online donation link on our website, www.uccwesterly.org. You can also make your donation directly to the Conference. by visiting:

www.sneucc.org/StrengthenTheChurch

OR by check payable to the SNEUCC with "STC 2021" in the memo line. Checks can be mailed to the Hartford office:

SNEUCC
125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105



Brighten Someone’s Day...

We don’t see each other as often as we would like to these days. Here are a few suggestions of folks who might like to receive a card or note from you! Check out the newest Church Directory for more!

Janet Allen
2 Weathervane Way, Bradford, RI 02808

Beverly Barone
44 Governor Avenue, Westerly, RI 02891

Bill & Christa Colprit
3 Elizabeth Drive, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Joy Liborio
375 Main Street, #1, Danielson, CT 06239

Dorothy Oehrle
20 Devonwood Dr., #162, Farmington, CT 06032



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.



May Birthdays:

Kenton Michael – 1
Charlotte Korean – 4
Gregory Sugar – 5
Gene LeRoy – 7
Daniel Stratton – 20

May Anniversaries:

Mark & Elizabeth Dessauls – May 6, 1989

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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