

The Beacon

September 2021



“...let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together ... but encouraging one another ...”
Hebrews 10:24-25

Dear UCC Westerly Church Family and Friends,

In a perfect world, you would be receiving this invitation in a much more personal form, perhaps even hand-written individually to each of you. Alas, I do not live in a perfect world, nor do you. So, this invitation to a very special Sunday in the life of our church is coming to you in this form through the most reliable and consistent of all our forms of communication with you – the monthly BEACON.

Dear ones, it has been a rough, rough year. Covid has kept us out of our beloved building far too much. We have lost treasured friends and loved ones too soon and not been able to say good-bye in our usual way. We have struggled as we found our path into being “church” in entirely new ways and, honestly, that has been a gift and a blessing more than one might imagine. We are now reaching so many more people each week with our live-stream services, and we made the necessary changes to do it! We have moved much of the administrative work of the church on-line as well using Zoom frequently and effectively. Oddly enough, the switch to Zoom for meetings and other gatherings has enabled people to become more involved in the life of the church because you can join the meeting from wherever you are.

The biggest blessing of all this dramatic change as a result of Covid for me has been our rediscovery as a church and as just people living our every day lives that being TOGETHER is really important! All those one on one mini encounters with folks you know and folks you don’t that happen when you come to church really matter! Being able to hug each other and chat face to face is beyond delightful. We have learned it is crucial to who we are and how we are church together.

So, this year, as our Homecoming Sunday on September 12 is upon us, I am writing to you to extend this direct and heartfelt invitation that YOU make every effort to join us on this day. If you feel comfortable and can make it work to be with us in person, that would be AWESOME! Remember in this regard that worship now begins at 9:45am and that masks and social distancing are required once again. Vaccinations are strongly encouraged.

If life and work or your own sense that being out in public with other folks is still just a little too risky, that’s fine. We get it. Do remember that you CAN still join us via the Facebook Livestream either as it is happening or later on that day or even the week. You do not need to be on Facebook to participate in the service. You can go to the website www.uccwesterly.org and just click on the Facebook icon on the home page and that will bring you to the service. Be sure to put something in the Comments so we know you are there!

You’ll be playing an active role on Homecoming Sunday too! As Lynn explains in her Deacons Update, we will be celebrating our return to pre-Covid worship experiences as much as we can. Our new hymnals will be placed in the pews by whomever joins us in worship so that you can choose the hymnal you want to sing from! The Pew Bibles will also be back as will our Prayer Shawls and Prayer Bears. Thanks to Rosemary Jette especially for all the beautiful “lap shawls” she has been knitting for us.

Finally, we will be dedicating our beautiful new cross window on Homecoming Sunday. Please read Gary’s Trustee’s report on that. Do know that the new window will be dedicated in memory of two of our beloved sisters of faith: Becky Morrone and Connie Hill.

September 12 will indeed be a special day at UCC

Westerly. I truly hope you will be with us, one way or another!

Your friend and sister in Christ,
Rev. Ruth



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*All Sunday morning worship services
are now in-person AND
broadcast on Facebook Live at 9:45am.*

***Masks & Social Distancing required for everyone.
Full vaccinations strongly recommended!***

Sunday, Sept. 5 *The Foundation of the World*
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Exploring God's promises as Jesus explained them

Sunday, Sept. 12 **HOME COMING SUNDAY**
*Who Are We at UCC Westerly? What is unique
about us and why does it matter?*

Sunday, Sept. 19 *The Heart of Us*
Understanding our core values of "Continuing
Testament, Extravagant Welcome & Changing
Lives"

Sunday, Sept. 26 *Prayers of the Faithful*
Exploring the central role of prayer in our life as
a faith community

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

A reminder that donations to the Stratton Family Assistance Fund to help out in the aftermath of their recent house fire are gratefully being accepted through the UCC Westerly Deacons' Fund. Checks should be made payable to the Deacons Fund with "Stratton Family" on the

memo line. Cash and on-line donations welcome and must be clearly marked as being for the Stratton family.



Deacon Ministry

Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
9/5	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
9/12	Dwayne Spurley	860-705-6152
9/19	Joann Spurley	401-714-8948
9/26	Elvis Torres	860-245-4759

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 are planning a Homecoming Weekend on September 12th. During the service, we will ask folks to place the new hymnals in the pews. Folks who have donated them can place them in the pews of their choice. We also hope to dedicate the new window at that time. It will depend on if the installation is on schedule. We will also be bringing back prayer bears & prayer shawls into the sanctuary and placing them on a limited basis.

We are hoping that the Service of Remembrance for members lost during the pandemic can still take place in October. This decision will depend on health concerns at the time.

We will continue to prepare and serve communion as we have been doing.

It has been wonderful to see an increased in-person presence in worship recently.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Murray

MISSION MOMENT



A huge thank-you to everyone who contributed to our annual summer donation drive, In the Middle School Supplies. Westerly Middle School and Stonington Middle School each received bags and bags of school supplies that will be distributed to students in need in a very discreet manner. We heard from guidance counselors from both schools that their supply cabinets were nearing empty.



Another huge thank-you arrived from Heifer International for our donation of money to buy bees and hives two years ago. Since that time the bee-keeping co-operative in Chiapas, Mexico has been able to develop a true community of farmers working together. According to Heifer, working together is helping them to thrive. "Saving costs where they can is something they learned from Heifer, along with finding ways to pool resources like cars and gas, and reinvesting in their businesses in forward-thinking ways. For instance, with Heifer's help, the group recently went through the

challenging process of gaining organic certification to command a higher price for their honey. As they continue to think about how they can grow bigger by growing together, the do-operative hopes to begin selling their honey as a group with their own label!"

As Heifer states, by gifting the bees "you also helped Heifer's mission of fighting hunger and poverty while caring for the earth."

Those paper bees and hives from Fellowship Hall certainly made a difference in a big way! Thanks to all of you who contributed!

September and October



LIFTING UP HOPE FOR HAITI

As we have heard in news reports and read in the newspapers, the nation of Haiti has been hit again by both an earthquake and a hurricane. Devastation covers the island. One of the recurring issues for Haiti is that it always gets bumped off the headlines and out of our awareness by the next crisis and this year is no exception with hurricanes and the plight of Afghan refugees to name just a few. This is why during the months of September and October we are conducting a fund-raising drive to help this impoverished country. The Rhode Island Association of the SNEUCC has a long standing mission on the ground in Haiti which is why we know that any funds we give to this group will go directly to Haiti for direct assistance where it is needed most. The only way to do this is through cash donations so that is what we are doing. A display "Lifting Up Hope for Haiti" is located just outside the sanctuary doors leading to Fellowship

Hall where you can pick up a “Hope for Haiti” little gift box to fill with your coins and dollar bills over the next 8 weeks. If 30 people give just \$2/week between now and the end of October, that will give us \$500 to send to Haiti. It may not sound like a lot to us, but it can make a world of difference in a country in the midst of chaos and devastation. Please join us in bringing a little hope to people who need it most.



Trustee Notes

The church facilities are now open for visitors and group activities. We respectfully request that any person not fully vaccinated to please wear a mask when in the building. Please continue to sign in and out on the forms at each entrance and to use the hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

Pledges continue to come in at a higher rate than expected. As of July, we have received \$41,100 in pledges. This is \$5,437 (9%) more than the \$35,663 that was budgeted. We wish to thank everyone for keeping up with their pledges during the first 7 months. Our total income through July was \$79,753. Total expenses through July were \$95,250. This leaves us with a deficit of \$15,497. This is primarily due to some badly needed repairs to the church building including the new roofs over the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall and replacement of the Cross window.

A special thanks goes out to all who showed up on August 21 to secure the building against the approaching hurricane.

The next Trustee meeting will be on September 14th.

Update on the Cross Window

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. The Trustees accepted a proposal from Clinton Glass for installation of a dark brown bronze aluminum framing

for the window. The material was ordered and finally received by Clinton glass on August 12. We are now scheduled for installation on September 7.

The cost for the framing is \$8,498. We have received approximately \$7,100 in donations to help pay for the new framing. We are seeking donations to help cover this unexpected expense.

The window was covered with plywood on August 21 as additional protection against the approaching hurricane. The plywood will remain in place until the new window is installed. A special thanks to Alan Hill and his worker for putting up the plywood.



UCCW Pandemic Response Team

The Pandemic Response Team is pleased to report that our return to in-person worship services continues going very well. Please note that at our last meeting on August 19 we made the decision to return to requiring everyone to wear masks given the recent significant uptick in the Delta Variant Covid cases locally. Fellowship will continue following worship each Sunday with the permission and input of the Ledge Light Health District folks. Also, with deep respect, we strongly urge everyone to be fully vaccinated as this is the only way we can put this disease behind us once and for all. 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.



*We gather in the Parlor,
at least to begin.*

Any questions? Speak with Rev. Ruth anytime.

NEWS FROM OUR POLLINATOR TEAM!

Some great information from our friends at Pollinator.org!

7 Things You Can Do for Pollinators

The Mindfulness Group

*A new small group ministry
of UCC Westerly*



Burning the candle at both ends never turns out well...

*The candle just flames out in a matter of minutes.
Join us at the Mindfulness Group and learn out to
keep your own candle burning brightly...*

*Stressed? Overwhelmed?
Looking for ways to calm down and find some
peace?*

*Mindfulness might just offer you some of the
answers to these and other questions.*

*Why not join us and find out?
Next gathering is:*

**Saturday, September 25
9:30-11:30am**



1. PLANT FOR POLLINATORS

- Habitat opportunities abound on every landscape – from window boxes to acres of farms to corporate campuses to utility and roadside corridors – every site can be habitat.
- Utilize plants native to your area (or at the least, non-invasive for your area).
- Utilize the [Ecoregional Planting Guides](#) and the [Garden Recipe Cards](#) to create or enhance your pollinator garden. Decide among the plant material options - seeds, plugs, plants or a combination.
- Know your soil type and select appropriate plant material.
- Plant in clusters to create a "target" for pollinators to find.
- Plant for continuous bloom throughout the growing season from spring to fall.

- Select a site that is removed from wind, has at least partial sun, and can provide water.
- Allow material from dead branches and logs to remain as nesting sites; reduce mulch to allow patches of bare ground for ground-nesting bees to utilize; consider installing wood nesting blocks for wood-nesting natives.

2. REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE IMPACT OF PESTICIDES.

- Check out the [Pesticides Learning Center](#) on the Pollinator Partnership website to learn more about the interactions between pollinators and pesticides!
- Where possible, avoid pest problems in the first place by burying infested plant residues, removing pest habitat, and planting native plants that encourage natural enemies of pests.
- Practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- If you must use pesticides, read and follow ALL label directions carefully.

3. REGISTER AS A BEE FRIENDLY FARMING GARDEN

- Register your home or community garden with [Bee Friendly Farming Garden](#) to showcase your commitment to pollinator health!
- Along with your registration, you can opt to receive your very own BFF Garden sign, to encourage others to do the same.
- Your registered garden will appear on the [Bee Friendly Farming map](#), along with any photos you choose to submit.
- Apply [here!](#)

4. REACH OUT TO OTHERS – INFORM AND INSPIRE

- Utilize all the materials available to help you tell the story of pollinators.
- Tell local and state government officials that you care about pollinator health.



5. SUPPORT LOCAL BEES AND BEEKEEPERS.

- Buying local honey supports the beekeepers in your area.
- If you're concerned about the number of chemicals used in agriculture, buy organic.
- If you're concerned about contributions to global carbon emissions, buy local.

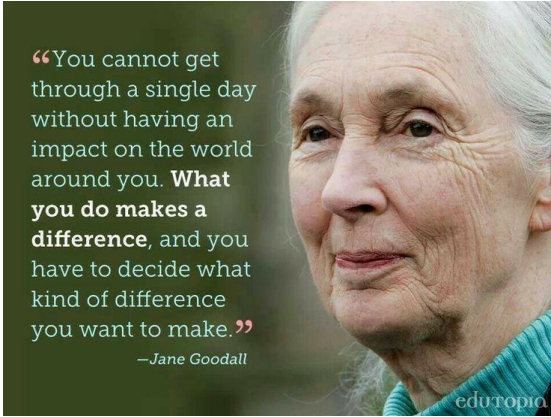
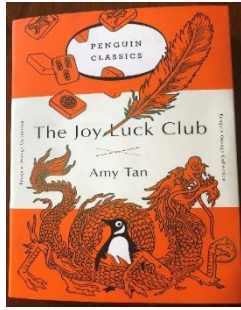


6. CONSERVE ALL OF OUR RESOURCES; USE LESS AND REDUCE YOUR IMPACT.

- Pollinators are dramatically affected by extremes in weather.
- Climate change puts pressure on native ranges and overwintering sites.

7. SUPPORT THE WORK OF GROUPS PROMOTING SCIENCE BASED, PRACTICAL EFFORTS FOR POLLINATORS.

LIKE OUR VERY OWN POLLINATOR TEAM HERE AT UCC WESTERLY!
TALK WITH SANDI DAVIS, SHIRIN PLATT OR CLAIRE CALABRETTA TO VOLUNTEER! HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO LEARN BY DOING!



*A Reminder...
The Grief Group
Meets every other Thursday @ 4pm
in the Parlor at church.
September meeting dates: 2, 16 & 30*

*Rev. Ruth will also be leading a seminar
entitled
GRIEF: Making Meaning in the
Aftermath of Loss
September 23rd @ 11am
Westerly Senior Center*

*Please speak with Rev. Ruth for
more information on either group.*



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, September 9 @ 4pm
At the church

(Postponed from August 26th)

Note: An excellent movie version of "The
Joy Luck Club" is available on YouTube
and/or Amazon Prime.



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!

**Shirley Miller
C/o The Elms
22 Elm Street
Westerly, RI 02891**

**Jennifer Woodhall
4 Garden Drive
Gales Ferry, CT 06335**

**Susan Perreault
10 Chase Hill Road
Ashaway, RI 02804**

BEACON PRAYER LIST



*Our church has a very active
and vital prayer ministry which*

involves our Prayer Tree, requests for prayers during Sunday morning worship and this invitation in the Beacon each month to pray for specific folks who are requesting prayers here. So, that means we have multiple active prayer lists at any given time! How wonderful is that! Below is this month's list for the Beacon Prayer List.

Madelyn Stratton	Ruth King Roes
Shirley M	Jennifer Woodhall
Bill Hoffman	Donald
Emma	Paula

If you would like anyone added or removed from this list for the next newsletter, please call the office. Thank you.



September Birthdays:

Aidan Stratton - 16

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 9 am-1 pm and
Thursday 9 am-3 pm

Please be aware that the Format and spacing for the BEACON may appear differently on your computer or device depending upon which WORD version you have. Thank you for your understanding!