

# The Beacon

## November 2021



*"They are like trees, planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season..."*  
Psalm 1:3a

This verse provides the theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign here at our beloved church. You can read more about the specifics of the campaign later in this newsletter, but for right now, I was struck by what a timely verse this is as we embark upon the change of seasons now becoming so evident. The fall foliage is coming into its glory, golds and reds, even pink and raspberry dot our landscape making even a drive to the grocery store a delight. Days are shorter, nights are longer, and colder! There's a chill in the air even on sunny days sending that luscious fall aroma of inside fireplaces wafting through the neighborhoods. Halloween is behind us and Thanksgiving beckons. I must admit, fall is my favorite time of year.

Even so, this verse from Psalm 1 is a curious scriptural choice for Stewardship given that it is taken out of context leaving us to wonder who the "they" is who "are like trees." There is a two fold answer to that when we look at this psalm from the beginning at verse 1. Then it's easy to see that "they" are those "who do *not* follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers." Hmmm, okay.... So, if they do NOT do these things, then what do they do instead? "Their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night." This is where our verse kicks in – "They are like trees, planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit" in season. Now the picture becomes clearer. "They," these people who are like trees reaching up to the heavens, heavy with fruit, are the people who

choose to love and follow God. "They" work to discern, figure out, what it is God is asking of them, and they do it. "They" live their lives grounded in Jesus' commandment to love God with all that one has and all that one is, and then to love the other as much as one loves oneself.

Funny how so many of the scripture texts come back to this one point – God's command to love. Over and over again the Scriptures make clear we are to love God and love the other because the one makes the other possible. And that's why our Stewardship theme is "Rooted in Love" for that is surely who we are as a church. Our church knows what it is to love and care deeply for each other as expressed through our many prayer ministries and mission programs and really everything about our church.

Love is truly where we at UCC Westerly are rooted. It really is that basic, that simple. And the good news of this text is that when we do that, when we invest in God and God's church, when we invest in each other, we become like those trees, strong and steady and heavy with delicious fruit for all who are hungry in body, mind or spirit. Sounds like a pretty good description of our church to me. *We are the "they"* in this text which undergirds our Stewardship theme this year. *We are* rooted in love in all that we do, and in all that we attempt to be in our community.

May God continue to bless us with the people and the financial resources we need to be the "beacon" of hope to our community we were founded to be.

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

**PS! Rev. Ruth's First Thursday COMMUNITY OFFICE HOURS AT THE SAVOY return on Thursday, November 4 from 1-4pm!**

**REMEMBER ON SATURDAY, 11/6!**





## **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, Nov. 7            Holy Communion &  
Guest Preacher, Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut from  
SNEUCC***

***Sunday, Nov. 14        Stewardship Sunday!***

***Sunday, Nov. 21        Thanksgiving Sunday!***

***Sunday, Nov. 28        1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent & the  
Hanging of the Greens!***

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



## **Deacon Ministry**

### **Diaconate Schedule**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Telephone #</u></b>
<b>11/7</b>	<b>Ed Stratton</b>	<b>401-218-8548</b>
<b>11/14</b>	<b>Joann Spurley</b>	<b>401-714-8948</b>
<b>11/21</b>	<b>Claire Calabretta</b>	<b>860-574-5962</b>
<b>11/28</b>	<b>Bethany Foster</b>	<b>401-539-4003</b>

***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 continue to be grateful for the generous donations to the monthly Deacon fund/communion offering as well as our special offering for the Strattons. You may have noticed that the pulpit has been moved. This provides a better view of the altar for our on-line viewers and eliminates having to move the camera as much. The Deacons will be participating in the Stewardship Sundays by assisting Pastor Ruth by delivering message moments received as thank you's to the church. We welcome anyone who would like to join our Board. Please reach out to any of us for more information.

Lynn Murray



The beginning of 'bazaar season' is just days away. Sign-up sheets are in fellowship hall, or you can email or call the church for more information. As many hands as possible will be needed to assist, bake, set up, take down, etc. each of the weeks

Our first Mini-Bazaar is THIS SATURDAY, Nov. 6 from 9am – 1pm. The Bazaar will be both outside and inside in Fellowship Hall and the Parlor only! Outside will be the Gift Baskets, the Wreaths, and the Bake Goods, etc. Table. Inside in Fellowship Hall will be the Mini-Trees, the Bid to Beat Baskets, the SERRV Table, the Jewelry Table, the Silent Auction and more. The Nostalgia Boutique will be in the Parlor. Donations of Baked Goods for the Bake Table happily received and you are requested to be sure they are packaged and priced for sale!!! Donations of decorated artificial wreaths and decorated mini trees also gratefully received. Donations of live greens are NOT needed before November 21 because they will only be for sale on Nov. 27 & Dec. 4. Feel free to ask questions of any of us!

## MISSION MOMENTS



### PNC



We remain concerned about our local neighbors and can reassure you that we are still collecting donations of non-perishable food supplies for the PNC. They have supplied a list of the most needed foods: **canned meats and fish, canned soups (clam chowder, in particular), healthy cereals and oatmeal, canned fruit. Please try to find the easy open cans, if possible. Little cups of fruit are also great for school lunches.**

## MISSIONS LOOKING AHEAD



### November and December

During this holiday season we will be participating in a **disaster relief mission** sponsored by Church World Service called **Blanket the World with Love**. We will have the opportunity to purchase blankets, either lightweight or heavy weight, that will be sent

through-out the United States and overseas. The blankets cost \$10 each, but feel free to donate whatever you can afford. For every blanket purchased we will be placing a heart on the Mission Christmas Tree in the sanctuary. Donations will be accepted in envelopes that will be supplied in church, through the mail, or on-line. You will be able to view the blankets on a display in Fellowship Hall as we get closer to the holidays. For more information on the ways in which these blankets have been used, please visit:

<https://cwsglobal.org/?s=blankets>.



### Trustee Notes

Pledges continue to come in at a higher rate than expected. As of September, we have received \$51,064 in pledges. This is \$5,211 (11%) more than the \$45,853 that was budgeted. We wish to thank everyone for keeping up with their pledges during the year. Our total income through September was \$98,587. Total expenses through September were \$114,876. This leaves us with a deficit of \$16,289. This is primarily due to some badly needed repairs to the church building including the new rooves over the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall and replacement of the Cross window.

The Trustees send a big thank you to Rev. Ruth, Cathy Gray, Shirin Platt, Ed Stratton, Kathy and Fred Tarasuk, and Sandi and Gary Davis who participated in our Fall cleanup on Saturday, October 23, from 9:00 to 12:00. We concentrated on cleaning the inside of the church this year. The dedicated crew of 8 accomplished the following:

- Sweep, vacuum, and mop hallway floors
- Remove cobwebs in hallways and rooms
- Wash windows at the end of the hallways
- Wash windows and dust window sills in middle and lower-level rooms
- Vacuum middle and lower-level rooms



The Trustees agreed to have the outer doors rekeyed. This will not happen until sometime in December after all Bazaar activities are completed.

The next Trustee meeting will be on November 16.



## OUR STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

### 2021 ~~ Planning for 2022

Stewardship season is rolling around again, as it does every year. What is "stewardship" in the church? It refers to how the congregation and its lay leadership manage the financial and property resources of the church. Everyone in the church is called to be a "steward" of their own time, talent and treasure as each person decides how to share those personal resources with the church.

This year's Stewardship Season will begin on Sunday, October 24 and continue through Sunday, November 14 which will be our Stewardship Sunday, the day when everyone's pledges are turned in explaining what you hope to be able to give to the church in the year ahead. This information is vitally important to our Trustees who are tasked with formulating a budget based on how successful our Stewardship campaign is.

Your Stewardship letter was mailed in late October and you are asked to return your pledge to the church by no later than November 14.

Thank you in advance for your generosity. We would not be here without you.

In faith, Your Stewardship Team

## SOME HELPFUL TAX INFORMATION FROM THE SNEUCC...

### Churches Should Inform Members of the Universal Charitable Tax Deduction for 2021

10/29/2021 - by: [David Cleaver-Bartholomew](#) - [Stewardship](#)

Late  
last  
year



congress extended and expanded the universal charitable tax deduction that became law as part of the CARES Act. This deduction now allows individual taxpayers to deduct up to \$300 and couples filing jointly and married to deduct up to \$600 in charitable contributions made in 2021. For many people, this restores the deduction for charitable contributions they benefitted from prior to the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA).

To qualify, charitable donations must be: 1) in cash, not property (a "cash" donation includes money contributed by cash, check, credit card, electronic funds transfer, or payroll deduction), and 2) given to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable organization, such as a religious organization like your local church, the SNEUCC, and/or the national setting of the UCC.

Importantly, this universal deduction is used to calculate one's Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), so taxpayers **don't have to itemize** their deduction on Schedule A to claim it. Instead, taxpayers can simply enter their qualifying amount on line 10b on page 1 of their Form 1040, then deduct it from their gross income.

There is no requirement that taxpayers provide any

documentation for their contributions with their tax returns. However, the IRS does require that taxpayers keep a written record of the cash contributions. For cash donations under \$250, donors can use a bank record or other documentation that substantiates the payment. For cash donations above \$250, the donor must have a document or timely receipt from the charity, for example, the church.

Because of the TCJA, it is estimated that approximately 90% of Americans now choose to take the standard deduction instead of itemizing, and thereby are unable to deduct their charitable contributions. While tax deductibility is generally not the primary reason why people make charitable contributions and/or how much they give, it can be a consideration.

Item #3 in the *Taxpayer Bill of Rights* states, "Taxpayers have the right to pay only the amount of tax legally due..." With this extension and expansion of the universal charitable deduction, individuals filing a tax return for 2021 have a right to claim up to \$300 (\$600 for a couple filing married and joint) in charitable contributions they make, including those made to the church, and thus reduce their taxable income.

I urge our churches to inform their members and friends of this tax change so that they can avail themselves of it when they file their 2021 tax return. Although there is legislation pending to both expand and extend this universal charitable deduction, its future is unclear. Hence, this may be the last year it is available.

David



[David Cleaver-Bartholomew](#)

Rev. Dr. David Cleaver-Bartholomew is the Director of Stewardship and Donor Relations for the SNEUC



With regard to Covid protocols for the next five Saturday mini-bazaars:

- 1) We will allow entrance from BOTH the Fellowship Hall far door and the Bell Courtyard door to reduce logjams of folks entering the indoor Bazaar.
- 2) Masks WILL be required of all guests. Hand sanitizer and masks will be available at both doors.
- 3) Anyone not willing to mask indoors will be invited to shop outside.
- 4) Access to the Bazaar through the Sanctuary entrance will NOT be allowed.
- 5) The stairwell to the lower level will be closed off with yellow caution tape and sign to the effect of "NO BAZAAR ITEMS DOWNSTAIRS. ACCESS RESTRICTED."
- 6) We will have signs on the lower door directing people to the Bell Courtyard and Fellowship Hall doors to gain entrance to the indoor Bazaar.
- 7) The small windows in Fellowship Hall, one window in the Bell Courtyard Narthex and one window in the Parlor will be open for air circulation. We think that these open windows along with doors opening and closing should provide sufficient air circulation. The heat will be set low to minimize heat loss through the open windows.
- 8) Pastor Ruth will be the person wandering around inside keeping an eye on any capacity concerns!

With regard to a request to return the Prayer Books to the sanctuary for use at Sunday morning worship:

- 1) After much discussion, the PRT did agree to return the notebooks to the sanctuary in their previous locations. Persons wishing to write prayer requests in the notebooks will be urged to use their own pens OR to take a pen from a "fresh" cup and return it to a "used" cup for cleaning after use.
- 2) It was also agreed that Rev. Ruth will resume asking for prayer requests which anyone wants to speak aloud although folks will need to be urged to do this without shouting or removing their masks. We will try this to see if it works with folks masked.
- 3) Rev. Ruth will buy new notebooks and Joann will assist with placement in the sanctuary when she returns from Maryland.

Finally, with deep respect, we strongly urge everyone to be fully vaccinated. 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. The Team continues to meet monthly to monitor and revise our worship protocols as changing circumstances warrant. Any questions regarding the Pandemic Response Team should be directed to Bethany Foster at 401-539-4003.



### **DID YOU KNOW UCC WESTERLY HAS A LENDING LIBRARY???**

Our next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, 2022 @ 6:30pm on Zoom.

### **The Mindfulness Group** *A new small group ministry of UCC Westerly*



### ***Christmas Frenzy a Problem???***

*You're not alone!  
Make some time to breathe at our  
Blue Christmas Service  
6:30pm on Thursday, December 16.  
Come early at 5:30pm for Mulled Cider,  
Christmas Cookies and a calming  
conversation.*

*Apologies that our October gathering  
had to be cancelled at the last minute!  
Monthly Gatherings of the Mindfulness  
Group will resume after the first of the  
year. Questions? Suggestions? Speak  
with Rev. Ruth anytime!*

We do and you will find in the Bell Courtyard Narthex some samples of the kinds of books for all ages and interests that we have for you to borrow! Check them over and if you find one you like, just fill out an index card with your name, the date and the title of the book and it is yours to read and return!

Check out the Library at the end of the office corridor to see what else we have!



### **NEWS FROM OUR POLLINATOR TEAM!**

**Good News!**

**Taking care of pollinators means no raking!!!!  
Leave those leaves and don't deadhead those  
plants and you'll be saving pollinators!**

**Who says pollinator gardening requires  
MORE work...**



*A Reminder...  
The Grief Group  
usually meets every other Thursday @  
4pm in the Parlor at church.  
Due to the Thanksgiving holiday,  
There will be only one gathering this  
month on  
Nov. 11  
NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!  
Please speak with Rev. Ruth for more  
information.*



### ***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!

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

Rosemary Jette & Ed  
6 Lynn Lane, Ashaway, RI 02804

Dorothy Oehrle  
20 Devonwood Drive, #162  
Farmington, CT 06032

## **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
Scott	Evan
Anna Michael	

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



### ***November Birthdays:***

**Megan Gray – 5**  
**Kali Woodhall – 6**  
**Amanda Hainsworth – 8**  
**John Walker – 21**  
**Rev. Ruth – 21**  
**Vera M. Leming – 23**  
**Christina Brummund – 25**  
**Caleb Stratton - 29**

*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](mailto:uccwesterly@gmail.com)**

*Website:* **[www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org)**

*Office Hours:* Monday 9 am-1 pm and Thursday 9 am-3 pm

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