



The Beacon **January 2024**

"The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God." Mark 1:1

Another new year has begun and I for one hope it will be a year of excitement and renewal for our amazing church. Some things will be different, like the way our office is staffed. Other things will remain the same. And, always, we will be listening to discern what it is God is inviting us to consider, to do and to become.

Our Annual Meeting is coming up once again on the last Sunday of this month. More about that here in the *Beacon*. We do hope you will plan now to join us and to bring a dish to share for the potluck brunch which follows. Sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall!

Our boards and committees are regearing and plans for our congregational Threshold Retreat are coming together nicely! Be sure to read the flyer sent out with the *Beacon* and register asap!

We're also approaching People Plan season so if you are currently serving on a board or committee, or as an officer, it's time to decide on your plans for 2024!! If you are not serving but would like to, please watch for the People Plan display which will be going up in Fellowship Hall shortly and sign up! No one can do everything but everyone can do something!

I am excited about the year ahead and hope you are too! What we are doing really does make a difference in the lives of real people right here in our own community.

Your sister in faith, Rev. Ruth

CALL FOR THE 60th ANNUAL MEETING UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERLY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Annual Meeting shall be held on
January 28, 2024 immediately following
worship in the sanctuary. 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

POTLUCK BRUNCH TO FOLLOW!

Sign up sheet for the Brunch is on the bulletin board
outside Fellowship Hall!

COPIES OF THE ANNUAL REPORT
*will be available to pick up on
Sunday, January 21.*

*If you are someone who needs to submit an
Annual Report, it needs to get in to Rev. Ruth
NOW!!!! Thanks! 😊*



PLEASE NOTE THAT THE THRESHOLD
RETREAT FLYER IS A SEPARATE DOCUMENT
SENT OUT WITH THIS NEWSLETTER!!!



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Our Sunday morning worship services
In person & on Facebook Live
every Sunday at 9:45am.

Please mask if you are feeling unwell or are unvaccinated.

January 7 – SNOW DAY with online Epiphany Celebration

January 14 – STAR SUNDAY with Communion

January 21 – “Working Together”

January 28 – “With Authority”

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



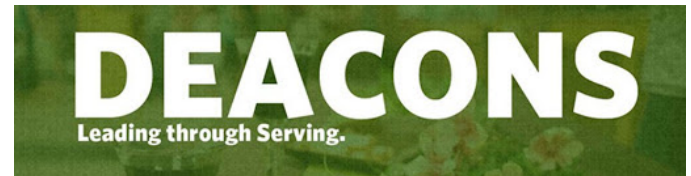
Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
1/7	Bethany Foster	401-932-4337
1/14	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
1/21	Christina Brummund	860-599-1719
1/28	Joann Spurley	401-714-8948

Please know you can call any Deacon 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!

Prayer Requests Always Welcome!

As many of you know, we have had an active prayer tree for quite some time. This is a way for prayers to go out quickly when they are requested. We have both phone branches, and an email group. If you would like to be put on the tree, or to withdraw your name, please let any of the Deacons know.



Deacons met last week and discussed how pleased we were with the excellent turnout for Christmas Eve service! The music was wonderful, the altar was gorgeous and we actually ran out of prepared Communion elements! How exciting! Given our success with this 4pm timeframe on Christmas Eve, the Deacons have already decided to keep this as the time of our Christmas Eve service in the future.

The Deacons voted to invest part of their Deacons Fund monies into the Harvest Homes program of the WARM Center. We made a \$250 donation in support of this vitally important program for homeless families in our area. This is why your donations to the Deacons Fund on every Communion Sunday matter! We can make a difference when we work together.

We will be working with Rev. Ruth in the coming weeks to plan a meaningful Lenten and Holy Week experience for everyone. Your thoughts and suggestions always welcome. Please speak with any Deacon any time.

A reminder too that we would love to have some new folks on Deacons so if you'd like to know what's involved, please talk to me or any Deacon.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Murray, Deacon chair



Trustee Notes

Pledges for November were \$6435, \$369 more than the anticipated pledge amount of \$6,066. Total income for November was \$19,574. Total expenses for November were \$11,945. Budget preparation for 2024 is in process.

The Trustees would like to remind everyone to be mindful of turning off lights, locking doors and putting the heat back and please speak with any trustee if you see something that needs attention. Thank you!



OPERATION FRESH START MISSION MOMENT

What a generous community and congregation we have! Our December

Mission project, which was planned to support Operation Fresh Start's Adopt-a-Family drive was a huge success, as was the Adopt-a-Family Drive itself. Our congregation adopted an entire family of three children and their parents for Christmas, and it seemed that every one of our members was involved in some way. The gifts arrived in just a week's time and were quickly moved downstairs to Shannon's Christmas Workshop. It was amazing how many families were helped during this holiday season. We are truly blessed to live in such a caring community. Here is a picture of our gifts, ready to be picked up by the dad and mom:



A huge thank you to everyone who donated.

Stay tuned for Operation Fresh Start's and our Mission Board's January projects.



From the Financial Secretary

Thank you all for your 2024 Pledges! You can still submit your pledge. Be assured it will be appreciated!

Since fewer folks use the pledge envelopes these days, I wanted to make you aware of a few additional donations that are contained within the envelope box:

*One is \$12.00 for **The Beacon**, our monthly newsletter. This helps defray the cost of postage for mailing to our members who do not use the computer, as well as for paper and ink, which are so costly. We just had to purchase a new printer for the office, too!

*Another offering assists the National and Southeastern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ in its administrative work and training clergy and lay people. It is called **"Yearly Per Capita Dues"** and is \$20. Many years ago, we voted to ask our members to try and pay this amount as a personal donation. Previously, this donation came out of our church budget. It is considered one of the "Five Offerings" we make through the UCC. The other four are Mission-oriented: Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, One Great Hour of Sharing, and the Christmas Fund to assist retired ministers of limited means. More information and special envelopes are shared about the UCC mission offerings throughout the year.

*There are also extra envelopes for **special donations** for Pentecost, Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas; many members choose to make a donation to commemorate these holiday times, or even any personally-chosen occasion! I was so touched to discover that my uncle, who did not attend church regularly, made a donation every year on his mother's birthday.

We do not provide pledge envelopes for our non-member guests; however, once someone joins the church, we include them in the following year's pledge drive. If donations are made with a check or name attached, we credit the donors (members or not) and they receive a printed quarterly statement of giving, as do all members. The final statement can be used for proof of charitable donations for those who itemize on their tax returns.

Beginning this January, if you make a donation to the Deacons' Fund in the collection basket on Communion Sundays (and include your name), you will be credited for it on your financial statement.

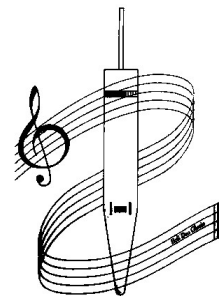
Those who mailed in checks or contributed electronically already received credit on their statements.

Some people donate using our electronic system (through the church's web site); some people donate in the collection plate, or by mail.... weekly, monthly, semi-annually, or annually. Please use the system that works the best for you and your budget. We truly appreciate your financial support; it is what helps our church to exist! If you do not use envelopes, just be sure to include a note or check memo to explain how you want your donation to be allocated, for example: "Pledge" or "Mission Collection" or "Conference Dues" or "Deacons' Fund," etc. We will be sure to credit your statement accordingly.

As always, feel free to contact me if you have a question about your statement or financial donations. Our team works hard to be accurate in counting funds, maintaining confidentiality, allocating incoming funds, and reporting the monthly totals to our Treasurer George Gray. We appreciate your input to help us improve our methods.

Thank you again for your faithful support of UCC Westerly!

Jenny Brummund, Financial Secretary,
Michele Mitchell, Edward Stratton, and William Street, Assistant Financial Secretaries



Organ Fund Update

The contracted work on the organ has largely been completed but a few issues still remain to be resolved. Rev. Ruth and Dav are working on this!

Be assured our fund raising will continue as we now need to support the Organ Fund so we can keep the organ in the best shape possible. The amount Foley-Baker estimates will be necessary for this is \$4000 annually! So, watch this space for fundraiser events to come. And if you have any ideas, please let us know!

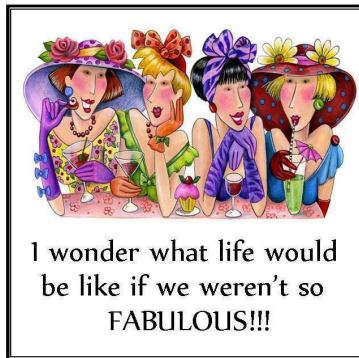
The Organ Committee



UPDATES FROM CONGREGATIONAL LIFE!!

The Bazaar Debrief conversation will continue as part of the Church Council meeting on Sunday, January 14. Come join us to share your thoughts and ideas.

Watch this space for upcoming events!!



UCCW LADIES WHO LUNCH

This is a fellowship group for the ladies of our church, members and friends, old, young and in-between, single and spoken for to meet once a month for lunch, conversation and generally frivolity. NO AGENDA FOR THIS GROUP OTHER THAN FUN!

NEXT GATHERING is planned for
Wednesday, January 17 @ 12:45pm
EVIE'S in Dunns Corners, Westerly
RSVP to Rev. Ruth by Monday, Jan. 15/
HOPE TO SEE YOU THEN!!!

HOW DO I TAKE
MY COFFEE?



SERIOUSLY.
VERY SERIOUSLY.

Rev. Ruth's Community Office Hours will
return after the first of the year.

Location and times TBA.

Thank you for
patience!

your



An Invitation to Join us at BOOKS

A group of folks who love to read,
talk about what we read or just talk...

OUR NEXT GATHERING:

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @
12:30pm

Join us for a BYO Lunch & Beverage
DESSERT PROVIDED!!

WHAT WE'RE READING:

THE SALT PATH By Raynor Winn

EVERYONE WELCOME!

This book is available to borrow through your local library or for purchase through your favorite local bookstore.

Michelle MacDonald
114 Granite Street, #308, Westerly, RI 02891

Daniel Stratton
71 School Street, Westerly, RI 02891



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.

Shirley M
Donald
Scott

Jennifer Woodhall
Emma
Evan

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



Brighten Someone's Day...

Maybe they're having a health issue. Maybe they just don't get out much. Whatever the case, there are a few suggestions of folks who would like to receive a card or note.

Peter Hainsworth
99 Worcester Avenue, Riverside, RI 02915

January Birthdays:

Peter Hainsworth – 5
Douglas Brummund – 9
Carolyn LeRoy – 11
Liz Walker – 15
Lindsay Walker – 18
Jamie Foster – 28
Anna Tarasuk – 31

Please add in your special days by calling the church office at 860-599-1226!!

†††



OUR STAFF

Pastor: The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth
Organist & Choirs Director: David Cranmer

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; 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!