



The Beacon **February 2024**

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?"

Matthew 5:13

Hard as it is to believe, Lent arrives in the week ahead! Our season to reflect on who we are in relationship with God is upon us. Also coming up is our Threshold Retreat as we gather together to consider how we envision our church in five years, ten and beyond! So it would seem this year that an intentional time of self-reflection as individuals and as a congregation is especially important.

Our Lenten observance will begin on Wednesday, February 14 with Ash Wednesday. Ironical that it coincides with Valentine's Day! Seems to me that this is a pretty clear invitation from God to approach Lent a little differently – not so much giving something up (like chocolate 😊) but instead taking something on. What might that be? That's up to you! It could be spending a few extra minutes each day in silent meditation using the Breath of 10. It could mean making a point of reading the Scriptures more intentionally. For example, you could try to read through the entire Gospel of John during Lent, writing down your questions and observations. How is John similar to the other Gospels? How is it different? Fun to think about!

You can also make the effort to attend worship in person every Sunday, and maybe take a risk and bring a friend! Wouldn't that be cool? Whatever you decide to do, the whole point is to make a sincere effort to invest in yourself by investing in learning more about the faith you profess. Who knows? You might just like it!

Yours in faith,
Rev. Ruth



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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

February 11 – "No Bleach!"

February 14 (Wed.) – Ash Wednesday

February 18 – A Conversation about Scripture

February 25 – "An Accounting"

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

OUR SCHEDULE

Lent – Holy Week & Easter

***Lenten theme this year:
How do we understand sin?***

Wednesday, February 14 – Ash Wednesday

- *Drive through ashes from 12-1pm*
- *Service in the Iona style at 6pm*

***Sunday, February 18 – Conversations about
Scripture possibilities for the Retreat***

***Sunday, February 25 – An Accounting
Scripture: 1 Peter 3:13-22***

***Sunday, March 3 – Law or Faith?
Scripture: Romans 4:13-25***

***Sunday, March 10 – Stumbling Blocks
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25***

***Sunday, March 17 – Cheap Grace
Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10***

***Sunday, March 24 – PALM SUNDAY
SYMBOLS SERVICE***

***Thursday, March 28 – Maundy Thursday
Tenebrae Service***

Friday, March 29 – Good Friday Vigil at the Labyrinth

Sunday, March 31 @ 6:30 am – Sunrise Service – location TBD

Sunday, March 31 @ 9:45am – Festival Easter Service in our sanctuary



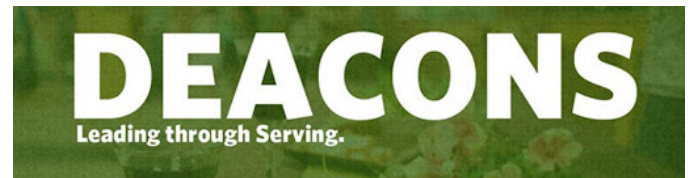
Diaconate Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
2/11	Lynn Murray	401-539-7578
2/18	Christina Brummund	860-599-1719
2/25	Bethany Foster	401-932-4337
3/3	Allana Allik	860-599-5212

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.



The Board of Deacons is grateful for the years that Claire Calabretta has dedicated to being on the Board and we support her in her decision to take a step back from being a Deacon at this time. We do confess that we are hoping that someone will step in to take her place! It is a pleasure to be on the Board. The responsibilities include being Deacon of the week, setting up and serving Communion monthly, sending out prayer tree requests, and participating in monthly meetings, which are still held virtually. Our August meeting is usually a potluck dinner/meeting on the deck at Lynn's house. We are very flexible with our schedule of duties. Those still on the board have served for quite some time, as a result of the elimination of term limits. Please join us!

One of the topics for our next meeting will be to discuss what to do with the wooden cross that was taken from the cross window when it had to redone a few years ago. Also, after a discussion at our last meeting about the nice turnout we had on Christmas Eve, we have decided that the 4:00 service was a good time for our members as well as our guests, and we will plan on that schedule going forward. We are working with Rev. Ruth on plans for Lent, Holy Week and Easter this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Murray



Trustee Notes

Pledges for December were \$4188, \$1878 more than the anticipated pledge amount of \$6,066. Total income for November was \$15,389. Total expenses for November were \$16,772. Budget preparation for 2024 is in process.

The Trustees and the Financial Officers of the church would like to thank everyone for their participation in this year's Annual Meeting on January 28. The meeting was very successful, due to the diligent efforts of so many.

The Trustees continues to work to find a solution to address the leaks in the building. They also would like to remind everyone to be mindful of turning off lights, locking doors and turning the heat back when you are leaving the building. Please speak with any Trustee if you see something that needs attention. Thank you!



MISSIONS NEWS FOR FEBRUARY!

Our Missions folks have been busy creating a preliminary calendar of Missions Projects for the church for 2024. Here it is!

February - HOMELESS AWARENESS

Donations of cold weather gear (coats, hats, gloves, scarves and/or \$10 gift cards for Dunkin or Bess Eaton Donuts

March - ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
(A UCC Five for Five offerings)

April - LADIES & BABIES donations of feminine hygiene supplies and baby/toddler diapers in all sizes

May - STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH
(A UCC Five for Five offering)

June - GENTS donations of men's grooming products like razors, beard care, etc.

July & August - SCHOOL SUPPLIES drive

September - TBD (suggestions?)

October - NEIGHBORS IN NEED
(A UCC Five for Five offering)

November & December - TOYS drive & ADOPT A FAMILY through Operation Fresh Start

OPERATION FRESH START MISSION MOMENT



The February Operation Fresh Start donation drive is TOILETRIES FOR ALL! Look around your bathroom and bedroom and make a list of everything you need to keep clean and look your best; then, head to the store to stock up on some of those items for those in need. Toiletries for ladies, men, and children are all essential everyday items. Please place all donations for OFS in the big tubs in the Bell Courtyard Narthex. Thank you for everything you do to support this effort.



From the Financial Secretary

Thank you, as always, for your faithful donations to UCC Westerly!

For those pledgers who do not use envelopes, I am including a monthly reminder of donations to supplement your basic pledge. These are, of course, voluntary. Please choose what is meaningful to you- or create your own special donations.

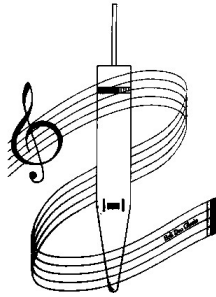
Annual Conference Member "Dues" (which is actually one of our Five for Five Offerings!): \$20

Beacon (to support printing, paper, and mailing costs) \$12 or other amount

Special Holy and Holiday Offerings: Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas.

The Mission Board will coordinate the other four UCC Five for Five Offerings during the year.

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!

Watch this space for details on the Dedication of the refurbished organ in the fall! Lots of fun ideas in the mix. Do you have any to share??

The Organ Committee



UPDATES FROM CONGREGATIONAL LIFE!!

Here is a calendar of planned events as created by the Board of Congregational Life at their January meeting: Please note these dates are subject to change without notice depending on weather and other factors so keep paying attention!

FEBRUARY 24 **THRESHOLD RETREAT**
Here at our church!

MARCH 9 **SOUPS ON** Potluck Supper
& basket donation fundraiser

APRIL 13 **ATTIC TREASURES INDOOR**
YARD SALE

APRIL 27 **POLLINATORS EARTH DAY**
OUTDOOR CLEAN-UP & PIZZA
PARTY

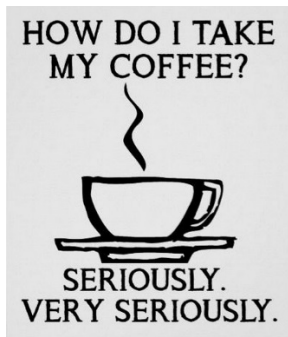
MAY 13 **UCC WESTERLY NIGHT OUT**
Trivia Night at the Breachway
Grill in Charlestown

JUNE 1 **VENDORS CRAFT SALE**
(tentative - we need vendors!)

JULY/AUGUST **SUMMER BREAK!**

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER Organ Dedication &
Concert - exact date TBD

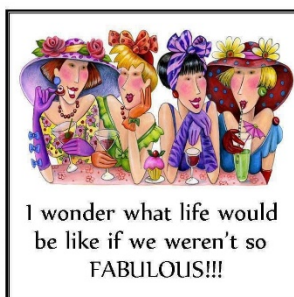
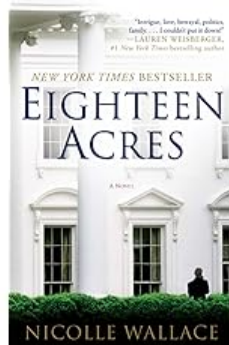
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER **CHRISTMAS**
BAZAAR on November 16 & 23
and December 7



Rev. Ruth's Community Office Hours will return soon.

Location and times TBA.

Thank you for your patience!



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. You are invited 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, February 21 @ 12:30pm
Stonington Pizza on Route 1 in Stonington**

RSVP to Rev. Ruth by Monday, Feb. 19

Sign up sheet outside Fellowship Hall

HOPE TO SEE YOU THEN!!!

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,
February 28, 2024 @ 12:30pm

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



WHAT WE'RE READING:

EIGHTEEN ACRES by Nicolle
Wallace

EVERYONE WELCOME!

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

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...

A few suggestions of folks who might enjoy a card or note.

John & Laura Blake
9 Pine Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Barbara Sadowski
3 Lois Court, Pawcatuck, CT

Sandy Hoffman
22 Horne Drive, Westerly, RI 02891



February Birthdays*

Gary Davis
Alice Dessaulles

Dorothy Oehrle
Katharine Tarasuk

We don't have any anniversaries on file for February. Are we missing yours???

*We are no longer providing specific birthday dates as an added measure of confidentiality for folks. Hope you understand.

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
Office Assistant: Jerin Peloquin

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: Tuesday and Wednesday, 9am – 12pm
Thursdays 9am – 1pm

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!