



*"Lord, let me know my end,
and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is."
Psalm 39:4*

On first glance, this probably seems like a very odd choice as the focus verse for this month's reflection from me. It appears to be talking about the end of one's life – asking God to illuminate it more. How soon will it be? I need to know because I want to reflect on how I am spending my life! These are the questions that come to all of us at one time or another. How we choose to spend our days is, in fact, directly related to how we practice our faith. We know this. It is not new information.

I vividly remember being asked to reflect on one particular question decades ago in Sunday School in the basement of my childhood Presbyterian church in Pennsylvania. And I remember being terrified by it! Here it is: Would someone who didn't know me, didn't know what perfect attendance pins meant, didn't know who Jesus was – would they recognize me as a Christian? Would Jesus? Dear ones, that should be a scary question. That should be a question we pause to think about every now and then. And how we are able to answer should matter to us. We also need to ponder the truth that there is more to being a recognizable follower of Jesus than just being a good person.

Dear ones, we who are part of the Christian faith know this. We who are part of the United Church of Christ can celebrate that we are part of a denomination that has been at the forefront of justice issues for all of its 60+ years of existence. We who are members of this church, the United Congregational Church of Westerly in Pawcatuck – we know what we stand for and what we believe. We embrace our symbol of a lighthouse because it celebrates our call from God to be a beacon of justice, kindness and mercy to each other and to the community outside our doors. We know this about ourselves.

Unfortunately, sometimes we think we know it too well. So well that we believe it doesn't matter how often we make it here to church on Sunday mornings. Yes, some of the folks who join us virtually do so because they live too far away to come, or they are homebound or new folks curious about us but not comfortable enough yet to come in person. Yes, of course. But most of you could be here in person on Sunday mornings. Even if it's only once a month. The thing is that when you choose not to be here, that hurts, more than I think folks realize which is why I am writing this. It's not that it hurts me personally. I'm a big girl. I understand the draw of other things on Sunday morning. I feel them myself, even as a pastor. More importantly, the absences hurt our community as your friends who are here each week wonder where you are. The simple truth is, you are missed when you are not here. There is a hole in our wholeness that can only be filled by you. When you are not here, we simply are not whole.

Dear ones, being here on Sundays for worship every now and again does matter. Did you know that if everyone who donates to the church, volunteers at the church, participates in the prayer tree and the donation drives – if all those people came on the same Sunday, we would have more than 60 people in worship! Probably more. How incredible would that be! So energizing and exciting for everyone! Who knows what might happen then.

That's my dream as this new program year begins. Seeing you – all of you – as we re-engage in the life and ministries of the church. Hearing the chatter and laughter as old friends reconnect. Experiencing the life and energy of this congregation bubbling and swirling as the Holy Spirit moves among us. This is my dream for the year ahead for our church. Is it yours? I sure hope so. I'll be looking for you...

Your sister in faith and sibling in Christ,
Pastor Ruth

REMINDER!!

Church Council Meeting

Sunday, September 22nd @ 11am

**All reports to be sent to Cathy Gray
electronically by Sept. 20.**

See you then!



Worship Schedule

Our Sunday morning worship service begins at 9:45am in-person and live on Facebook.

Sept. 8th – “Dogs and Crumbs”

Mark 7:24-30

Sept. 15th – Reunion Sunday! “That They May

All Be One” John 17:20-26

Sept. 22nd – Church Council Sunday

“A Harvest of Righteousness” James 3:13-18

Sept. 29th – “For ... Or Against”

Mark 9:38-41

Kindly Note: Please speak with Rev. Ruth if you would like a hard copy of the weekly sermon.



Diaconate Schedule for September

Sept. 8th - Joann Spurley (401-714-8948)

Sept. 15th - Bethany Foster (401-539-4003)

Sept. 22nd - Lynn Murray (401-450-9249)

Sept. 29th - Christina Brummund (860-599-1719)

Please know you can call any Deacon at any time with your joys, concerns, and prayer requests.



MAKE A NOTE! Sunday, Oct. 4 will be Rainbow Bridge Remembrance Sunday!

Please bring photos or mementoes of your pets who have crossed the

Rainbow Bridge for a special blessing during this service.

News From the Deacons

The Deacons had a lovely potluck dinner meeting at Lynn’s house on August 6th. While it was a delicious & productive meeting that was intended to be on the deck, the weather once again had us inside. One of our meeting topics we discussed was that if/when we have another drought, we will plan our next meeting at Lynn’s house, to ensure it will rain.

The Deacons also discussed how nice our annual Caring and Sharing Sunday is. Feel free to bring in some cards or use ones provided along with the directory to continue to write cards to our folks who can't be with us in person. They are greatly appreciated by the recipients, and it's a good feeling for the senders.

We are grateful for Pastor Ruth’s preparation she leaves for the Deacons for the Sundays she is on vacation/retreat. It was agreed that we would send a \$250 donation to WARM from the Deacons Fund. We also agreed that we should keep our Caring & Sharing supplies available for all coffee hours, not just those designated Sundays, as the recipients are truly grateful, and the senders feel good as well. If you have any generic greeting cards hanging around, feel free to bring them into fellowship hall.

In September, we will return to our zoom Deacons meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Murray

Trustees Notes



Pledges for July were \$6,899, \$1,389 more than the anticipated pledge amount of \$5,510. Thanks to all those who are able to keep up with their pledges! Total income for July was \$10,824. Total expenses for July were \$9,528.

The carpenter ants have been treated in the upper hallway. The trustees voted to hire Medusa Masonry to take care of the chimney and electrical work. The trustees are also in the process of narrowing down bids for a structural

engineer assessment of the building, as discussed at the threshold retreat. They are also working on getting the roof issues resolved.

Should you notice something in the building that needs attention, please speak to any trustee.

From the Financial Secretary

In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is



“Mental Health Justice for All!” A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with

mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey.

Please join us in promoting this year’s NIN “Mental Health is a Universal Human Right” campaign. One-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

As always, if you have any questions about your giving to the church, please speak with us at any time.

Thank you.

Jenny Brummund & “crew”



2024 Bazaar Preparation!

2024 UCC Bazaar Dates

- Saturday, November 16th
- Saturday, November 23rd
- Saturday, December 7th

Silent Auction Donations



Our Silent Auction is always a popular highlight of the Bazaar, attracting a wide range of bidders. We welcome donations of artwork, crafts, small furniture, unique glassware, tools, and vintage or antique pieces. Additionally, you might consider asking local merchants for gift cards or product donations to contribute to the auction.

Donations may be placed in the crib-room adjacent to the sanctuary or in Room #3 on the middle level, any time before mid-October, which is when we start our setup. Please label your items with "Silent Auction." Your contributions are invaluable in ensuring the success of our bazaars. Thank you!

Tree & Wreath Decorators Needed

If you’re feeling crafty and have some spare time, why not decorate a wreath for the UCC Bazaars? In Room #4 on the Middle Level of the church, you’ll find several plain artificial wreaths and small trees waiting for your creative touch. The table and wall shelves are stocked with brightly colored decorations, artificial poinsettias, assorted pinecones, garland, and lights. Feel free to take what you need and have fun!

Calling all Canning Jars!

Have you purchased canned jams, jellies, relishes, pickles, or other goodies at our bazaars in the past? Or do you have empty canning jars from your mom, grandmother, neighbor, or friend just sitting around your kitchen or basement, taking up space? Now is the perfect time to clear some space in your home and help out the church canners. Please return or recycle those jars by placing them in the basket in Fellowship Hall. We will be eternally grateful! Thank you so much!

Baked Goods

With the Bazaars fast approaching, the bake chair team is asking for your help in supplying

items to sell. This is a very popular and profitable part of our bazaar, so we need inventory for each of the three Saturdays. In previous years, we've had homemade items such as preserves, pickles, relishes, and various sweets.

Please label your items clearly, especially noting if they contain nuts. We will feature pies on the first two Saturdays in anticipation of Thanksgiving. Plates of Christmas cookies will be sold on the third Saturday, December 7th, so you can wrap your cookies well and store them in the church freezer.

This year, we will also offer a variety of soups, which can be made ahead and frozen in mason jars or plastic containers. Some containers will be available at the church.

Please place a sticker on your baked goods if they have been frozen to prevent them from being re-frozen.

Thank you for helping make our bake room a successful part of our bazaar!
Carolyn, Shirin, and Sandi

Bazaar Pantry Update

Yes, believe it or not, Bazaar season is quickly approaching! But never fear, some of our bakers, who are also canners, picklers, and jelly makers, have been very busy all summer preparing for our three holiday bazaars. To date, they have filled dozens of canning jars, used countless pounds of sugar and bottles of vinegar, and cut up pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, some even grown in their own gardens. They have also filled their freezers with fruits and vegetables to be used in baking later. These dedicated members have given so much of their time and energy this summer, purchasing or growing their own ingredients, and that's even before the baking begins! It's truly mind-boggling, isn't it?

Last year, some of you mentioned that you are no longer able or don't have the time to bake

for the bazaars, and we all know that our customers expect homemade goods, not store-bought. How can you still help? Contributing to our bazaar pantry would be incredibly helpful. A list of our baking needs is included at the end of this article. Don't worry if we receive more of an item than we can use this year; we can store it for next year (if it has an extended expiration date) or donate it to the PNC in January. When you are shopping, just grab anything on the list that may be on sale and put it in the kitchen labeled for the bazaar pantry. We will store it in the plastic tubs in the kitchen closet for our bakers to access when they fire up their ovens. If your item is perishable, place it in the kitchen refrigerator and note on the list on the outside of the fridge what you have placed there for the bazaar. Easy peasy! No sign-ups or stress involved. Thanks so much for whatever help you can give us. You have no idea how much we appreciate your donations. Here is a shopping list to help!

Not up for shopping either? Monetary donations are also gratefully accepted!

Bazaar Pantry Shopping List

Dry Goods

- Granulated sugar
- Light Brown sugar
- Dark Brown sugar
- Confectioners' sugar
- Molasses
- Vegetable oil
- Solid Crisco
- Peanut butter
- Chocolate chips (also white chips and cinnamon chips)
- Cocoa
- Cider vinegar
- Flour (King Arther preferred)
- GF Flour - (Bob's Red Mill 1 to 1 Baking Flour or King Arthur Measure for Measure GF Flour)
- Pecans and Walnuts

Refrigerated items

- Butter (unsalted and salted)
- Eggs
- Plant butter (Earth Balance sticks)

Packaging

- Plastic clamshells
- Cardboard pie boxes
- Plastic quart and pint-sized soup containers
- Glass Mason jars—quart, pint, half pint, and Jelly jars

Sincerely and gratefully,
Your Bazaar Bakers



Missions News Updates

Mission Moment

The local schools are very appreciative of the donations of school supplies that were delivered this past week.

An interesting note: This was our tenth *In the Middle School Supply Drive*!!

September

School lunches

September is Back-to-School month, and there is no better time to donate the essentials for those back-to-school lunches. Think...

Canned meats and fish

Peanut butter

Juices

Fruits

Puddings



There is a significant need for canned juices and fruits.

Please place your donations in the baskets in front of the altar.

Thanks so much for all that you do!



Operation Fresh Start



After a very successful school supplies drive and the equally successful (and entertaining!) Sip and Sign

event, it is now time to regroup and prepare for the holiday drives.

Grammies Pajammies, the Toy Drive, and the Adopt-a-family for the holidays will be starting up in the near future, so you can start shopping now when you see those sales.

Be on the look-out for the many requests for daily necessities that Shannon posts on her Facebook page. There are always families in need of the basics of everyday life: sheets, towels, dishes, small kitchen appliances, even beds. The need in our community continues to be great. Thank-you for all of your help and support.

An Update from our Music Ministries

Donations of AA Batteries are appreciated!



Please consider donating good quality (Duracell or major brand) batteries to power the individual receiver/microphones used by our choir members, as well as the pulpit microphone. Each battery "change out" requires about ten AA batteries. Change out is done once a month, and more frequently for the pulpit.

We have had a generous Benefactor for several years, but it would be nice to ask the wider congregation to share this expense.

Thank you for your generosity!

The Music Committee!

Rev. Ruth's Community Office Hours

Come visit me at Martin House Books (in the old Savoy Bookstore space!) from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

- Thursday, Sept. 12
- Thursday, Sept. 26

UCCW Books is an on-going discussion group ministry of UCCW. We are a group of folks who love to read, talk about what we read, or just talk. Everyone is welcome!

Our next gathering...

Wednesday, October 30 @ 12:00PM

This gathering will take place in the church parlor. Please RSVP with Rev. Ruth, the office, or via the sign-up sheet outside Fellowship Hall.

We have two book selections for this gathering; you may choose to read either or both books.

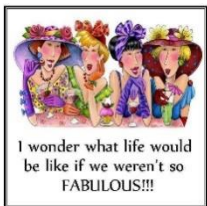


What we're reading...

- *The Keeper of Hidden Books*, by Madeline Martin
- *The Only Women in the Room*, by Marie Benedict

These books are available to borrow through your local library or for purchase through your favorite local bookstore.

UCCW Ladies Who Lunch



This fellowship group for the ladies of our church with no agenda other than fun! We meet approximately once a month for lunch, conversation and general frivolity.

Sometimes we will eat out in restaurants (each person orders off the menu and pays their own bill) and other times we may gather in someone's home for a potluck lunch.

Our next gathering...

When: Wednesday, September 18th at 12PM

Where: *Breakwater at Stonington Harbor*

66 Water Street Stonington, Connecticut 06378



A Sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall. Hope to see you there! Advance registration a must!

Prayer Tree Our church has a very active and vital prayer ministry which involves our Prayer Tree. If you would like to be put on the tree, or to withdraw your name, please let any of the Deacons know.



Brighten Someone's Day...

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

Charlotte Korean
11 North Drive
Ashaway, RI 02804

Carol & Bill Budnick
332 Burdickville Road
Charlestown, RI 02813

Whitney Stamm
312 Pequot Trail
Pawcatuck, CT 06379



September Birthdays
No Birthdays this Month

September Anniversaries

Amanda Hainsworth & Jennifer O'Donnell

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

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



Our Staff

Pastor: The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth
Organist & Choirs Director: David Cranmer
Office Assistant: Jerin Peloquin

Address: 9 Castle Hill Road
Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Telephone: (860) 599-1226

E-mail: uccwesterly@gmail.com

Website: www.uccwesterly.org

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday; 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

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