



"... but this one thing I do; forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14

As I write this, Election Day is underway. In some respects, it seemed like it would never get here, that we would be doomed to listen to the endless round of campaign rhetoric and the pundit analysis which have dominated our hearts and minds for what feels like years. In other ways, we are relieved that our uncertainty about the future will soon be clarified, one way or the other. I have no more insight than anyone else into how this quagmire of an election will turn out, but I do have a couple of thoughts for your prayerful consideration in this fraught moment.

First, I must say that I woke up already praying about the election finding myself repeating over and over again the famous prayer of Julian of Norwich. An anchoress, mystic and theologian who lived in England in the 14th century, Julian endured much during her lifetime. For one, the Black Death or plague as we think of it today, was rampant during her lifetime. At one point she herself became ill and thought she was dying. But she recovered and then experienced a series of visions depicting the Passion of Christ. Her writings consisted of descriptions of these visions. While she preferred to remain in seclusion (hence her decision to become an anchoress – a hermit walled into a small cell attached to a church), she still became well known during her own lifetime as a mystic and especially prayerful person. Julian never became a saint and not that much is known about her life before she became an anchoress, but she nonetheless was an inspiration to all who knew her. I came across her years ago when I was introduced to her most well-known prayer, a simple one and the one with me so powerfully this morning.

Julian's prayer was "and all will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things will be well." This simple prayer is incredibly powerful, saying so much in a few simple words. I love that it starts with "and" emphasizing I think that we are always in the midst of life as it unfolds each day. I also love the supreme confidence in God's abiding

presence as life unfolds – sometimes in ways we embrace, and other times in ways we fear. I love that she trusts completely that everything – *all* – will be well. Note she is not saying anything about how this will happen. She does not presume to state what it is God wills to have happen. She simply states that she has absolutely no doubt that whatever happens, it will be as God intends, even perhaps especially if we don't understand it. She trusts that God is firmly in the middle of everything that will transpire and is transpiring in the moment. This is a powerful faith and witness indeed, one that we need on such a day as this one surely is.

The anxiety and fear surrounding the outcome of this election is absolutely palpable in a way I have never experienced in my lifetime. That in itself is so difficult for us to accept, to wrap our heads around. Those of us who are old enough remember elections when there were stark differences between the platforms of both Presidential candidates, but we never had any sense of fearing the results. Looking back on some of those elections, we could say we probably should have been more afraid, more anxious to do everything we could to get everyone to vote. How different would the climate change crisis be if Al Gore had won? Would our collapsing infrastructure be in better shape if Ronald Reagan had not been so successful in branding government as wastefully and needlessly expensive? Maybe. But I don't think we ever experienced the existential fear so many of us bring into this day.

This is where Julian's prayer becomes so important as a means of calming our hearts and opening them up to God's leading, and we can also allow ourselves to be lifted up by these wise words from the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Philippi. He says to them, "forget all this stuff you've been worried about. Instead, push yourself forward into the future because that is where God's plan for you and for all of us is waiting."

Dear ones, rest assured that whomever wins this election – Kamala Harris with a message of hope or Donald Trump with a message of fear -- there will be much work for us to do. Now is the time to prepare and trust that, as Julian teaches us, "all manner of things will be well." Thanks be to God. We are not alone in whatever we will face as dawn comes on November 6.

Your sister in faith and sibling in Christ,

Pastor Ruth

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

- Thursdays, Nov 7 & 21



Worship Schedule

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

Nov. 3 – All Saints Sunday with Communion Blessed, Salted & Lit (Matthew 5:1-16)

Nov. 10 – Veterans Day Weekend Heads or Tails (Mark 12:13-17)

Nov. 17 – Stewardship Sunday Going Deeper (Luke 5:1-7)

Nov. 24 – Thanksgiving Sunday with New Members Received and Communion What's in the Basket? (Rev. Ruth)

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



Diaconate Schedule for November

Nov. 3 – Lynn Murray (401) 539-7578

Nov. 10 – Joann Spurley (401) 714-8948

Nov. 17 – Allana Allik (860) 599-5212

Nov. 24 – Bethany Foster (401) 539-4003

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

News From the Deacons

The deacons are very grateful for the generous deacon fund donations for hurricane relief. Over \$800 was raised! We are looking forward to Stewardship Sundays, where we will hear messages from a few of our members as we focus on pledges for the upcoming year. Since Pastor Ruth will be off on December 1st, we will

serve communion on November 24th, where we will recognize Thanksgiving & welcome new members. We have begun to plan for Advent this year, with plans for a Blue Christmas service on December 19th at 4pm taking place outdoors at the labyrinth. Our Christmas Eve service will also take place at 4pm this year. Our bazaars are coming up quickly! Sign-ups are on the bulletin board in fellowship hall as a reminder of all the help that is needed.

Lynn Murray
Deacon Chairperson

Trustees Notes



Pledges for September were \$6,364, \$854 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 September was \$9,896. Total expenses for September were \$14,866.

Space heaters were purchased for each the rooms on the lower level. The ant treatment is still being monitored, but at this point seem to have worked! The trustees have contracted with Coast and Country Landscape Management for snowplow services for the winter. Many, many thanks to Sally Panciera for her donation of an upright freezer to replace the chest freezer in the kitchen!

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

From the Financial Secretary



Traditionally, November is a month for "Counting our Blessings." Our UCC congregation is one of those blessings!

Thank you, God, for the fellowship of our church family, the opportunity to worship together, and our commitment to a wider outreach, which brings blessings to so many people.

Jenny Brummund & "crew"



**“Into the Deep”
Stewardship
Campaign is
underway!**

This year’s Stewardship theme comes to us from the Gospel of Luke and the story about Jesus encouraging some of his soon to be disciples to head out into deeper water, despite being exhausted, in order to make a larger catch of fish. The letters and pledge forms have gone out and we’ve had two “skits” centered on fun – a delightful change from previous years and all due to the creativeness of our Stewardship Team! The third skit will take place on Sunday, November 10 and our Stewardship Sunday, the date when pledges will be blessed and dedicated, will be November 17. We hope you will remember that what you pledge is so important to our Trustees as they engage in the budgeting process for next year. What you give does make a difference!

Your Stewardship Team,
Allana Allik, Cathy Gray & Jack Hainsworth



**60th Annual Christmas
Bazaars!**

2024 UCC Bazaar Dates



Saturday, November 16th

Saturday, November 23rd

Saturday, December 7th



Volunteer workers are always needed and welcomed!

Don’t know what to do? Be a floater and check to see if anyone needs a break or a cup of coffee!

Can’t come for all 3 Saturdays? No problem, just sign up for, or come, whenever you’re available!

Can’t volunteer for the whole day? No problem, just sign up, or come, for a few hours!

Come join the excitement of the bazaars...and maybe go home with some goodies, too! You never know what you’ll find- there’s something for everyone!

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

ANNOUNCING OUR CHRISTMAS



CARD EXCHANGE

Annual Fund-Raiser for the UCC Christmas Fund!

The UCC Christmas Fund is one of the Five for Five offerings we receive to support various ministries of the United Church of Christ. The Christmas Fund is unique in that it

is used to provide financial support to clergy who served as missionaries overseas or at small rural churches so their retirement funds are minimal. It is also used to provide emergency assistance to clergy dealing with unexpected financial hardships.

We will be establishing a **Christmas Card Exchange** bulletin board with the idea being that instead of sending out lots of cards to your friends in the church, you just post one on the bulletin board and then make a donation to the UCC Christmas Fund relative to your cost savings. Or, in whatever amount you would like to give. Christmas Fund envelopes will be available at the bulletin board which will be established after the Bazaar ends on December 7th. Thanks so much for your support!

Operation Fresh Start New Beginnings

October was an incredible month of jammies galore!



Thanks to so many generous people in our area, children and adults alike will be blessed with new pajamas to keep them warm this winter. You have only to take a glance into the OFS room in our lower level to realize what a great community we live in.



A great surprise came to the congregation of UCC Westerly during the organ rededication service at the end of October when Shannon DePerry and members of the OFS Board presented us with a check for \$3400 to help with the Organ Repair

Fund. What a wonderful gift that was, coming from grant money received recently. That organ should be sounding great for many months in the future, and the congregation is incredibly grateful.

The holiday season is now upon us with two major drives between now and Christmas. Toy

donations can start coming in now, with anything but crayons being accepted for the kiddos in our area. Most of these will be donated to the Stonington Police Department's Stuff-a-Cruiser event to take place in early December. Note, though, more than one cruiser has been "stuffed" in recent history, so many toys will be greatly appreciated!

Next on the list is the Adopt-a-family event for Christmas. Families in need are already submitting their requests for gifts for their children. Lists of those families can be found on the Operation Fresh Start Facebook page in the coming days. It is amazing how many businesses and individuals in our area have already been inquiring about families to adopt. There is one local restaurant that has already committed to adopting TEN families, no matter what their size or needs! The love and compassion in our area is heartwarming.

See the Mission article below to see how you can help.

Mission Moment



Missions News Updates

A huge thank-you to everyone who donated to the NIN offering in October. This fund is part of the UCC Five-for-five donation drives that occur over the course of the year. Our church has been very proud over the years to qualify as a 5 for 5 Church, as we participate in all five donations.

Our next project is to participate in OFS's Adopt-a-family event for Christmas. We already have chosen our family, and the "tags" for needed gifts will be available soon. In the meantime, let's introduce our family:

We have a family with five children and one on the way, due on Christmas Day!



What an appropriate family for a church to sponsor!

Family #5

- Adriana—16-year-old girl
- Brennan—13-year-old boy
- Gavin—11-year-old boy
- Riley—9-year-old boy
- Sadie—3-year-old girl
- Baby girl—due December 25

We have sizes and wish lists that will be available in the next couple of weeks. Look for the display soon!

Thanksgiving Meal Delivery

St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Mystic will be delivering traditional holiday dinners to the community. If you or someone you know needs Thanksgiving dinner and are living in Groton, Mystic, Noank, Ledyard, Pawcatuck, or Stonington, please call (860) 572-9549 by November 21 to request a meal delivery.

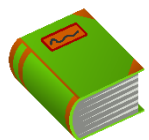


An Update from our Music Ministries

Many thanks to all who came out to support our Organ Dedication Sunday the end of October. What an amazing service that was! Many thanks especially to Dav for all the hours he spent researching and practicing the beautiful music shared with us that day. And of course, none of that would have been possible without the generous support of all of you who donated so generously to the Organ Fund via direct donations and supporting our many fund-raisers! We could not have done this without your support!

AA Battery donations are always appreciated! Duracell, Energizer, and other major brands are preferred.

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, January 8th @ 12:00PM

This gathering will take place in one of our member's homes so an RSVP is required to attend. A signup sheet will be posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall in December.

What we're reading...



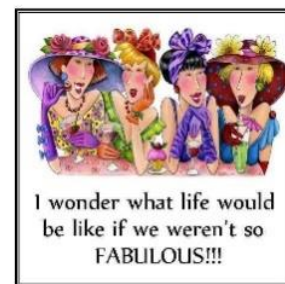
"The Mystery of Mrs. Christie" by Marie Benedict

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

Congregational Life Outing Mashantucket Pequot Museum

During her sermon on Indigenous Peoples Sunday in early October Rev. Ruth offered to organize an outing to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in Mashantucket, CT and a number of folks were interested. What we have discovered, however, is that finding a time that will work for everyone is challenging to say the least, especially with Holidays now almost upon us. So, Rev. Ruth has decided to schedule this outing sometime after the first of the year.

UCCW Ladies Who Lunch



This is a 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.

Due to the busy holiday season, our next gathering will be in January.

Our next gathering...

When: Wednesday, January 15 at 12PM

Where: S&P Oyster House, 1 Holmes St. Mystic, CT

A Sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall mid-December. 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 a member of our prayer team or if you would like the team to pray for you, please speak with any Deacon.



Brighten Someone's Day...



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

Beverly Barone
44 Governor Avenue
Westerly, RI 02891

Sandra Hoffman
22 Horne Drive
Westerly, RI 02891

Martha Evans
7 Scot Circle
Charlestown, RI 02813

Barbara Sadowski
3 Lois Court
Pawcatuck, CT 06379



November Birthdays

Kali Woodhall
Ruth Hainsworth
Amanda Hainsworth

November Anniversaries

None

*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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