



"Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and charity." - Acts 9:36

Whenever I read this particular text, it makes me remember the church of my growing up years in Pittsburgh, PA. Ours was a little Presbyterian Church and a staple of congregational life in it was the ladies "Circles." Our church had at least three. These Circles were basically a combination of prayer group, Bible study group and fellowship group for the ladies who belonged. A very popular name for these "ladies circles" was "Dorcas," a reference certainly to the Dorcas of the scripture text above.

Dorcas, as we meet her in this little story about one of the first healings done by Peter, was a much beloved local woman. She was devoted to God and to "The Way" of Jesus, known for "her good works and acts of charity." Honestly, this description of Dorcas would describe every woman in the little circle groups of my home church as it still describes the women of our little church right here in Pawcatuck, CT today. These women, devoted to "good works and acts of charity," are the backbone of every church. These are the ladies who make sure coffee is hot and fresh on Sunday mornings, switching to ice water and lemonade in the summer. These are the ladies who made Attic Treasures happen just last weekend, and they are the driving force behind the Bazaars and so much of the work this church does within and beyond our walls. It has always been thus in churches.

One reason for this was that early on women were largely excluded from professional ministry as a matter of course. They were often even excluded from leadership roles in the local church, just because they were women. I still vividly remember the very first woman who was elected an Elder in that little Presbyterian church. It happened when I was in 5th or 6th grade -- early 1960's. I remember because it was a big deal made plain by the fact that all the other ladies of the church were crying as Ruth Thornton received the laying on hands when she was installed as an Elder in the church. An Elder is sort of a cross between a Deacon and a Trustee in our church today. Anyhow, Mrs. Thornton was crying, getting tears all over her orchid corsage the other women had made (not

bought) for her. My mom was crying. Her friends were crying. I had no idea why and my mom never really explained it. All she could say in that moment was something like, "this is a really important position in the church and it's such an honor and great responsibility for her." I was young but I understood that well enough. What I didn't get was why it was such a big deal. Why wouldn't Mrs. Thornton get this position? She was wonderful and such a hard worker! Of course she should be an elder! Who could possibly think otherwise?

Only now do I realize what a huge, big deal this was. Only now do I fully appreciate Mrs. Thornton and Mrs. Waggoner, Mrs. Braymer and Mrs. Roth, Mrs. Lipps and Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Rizzo and Miss Gilson. And my own mother and grandmother of course. Extraordinary and ordinary women at the same time. Some of these ladies worked outside the home, sort of. They were "unofficial" and unpaid office managers for the family businesses run by their husbands. Others, like Mrs. Roth, worked in their own hard earned careers. She was my elementary school principal. My mother built her own career in retail management in local department stores and even my grandmother worked in her family's wholesale rose and floral business. These women, then and now, were my heroes -- just like the extraordinary women of this church still are.

As Mother's Day is upon us once again, I find myself thinking about these women, only this time with an even deeper respect and gratitude for all they did, seemingly with no one really noticing at the time. Yes, it was a very big deal when Ruth Thornton became an Elder in that little church. It's still a big deal to me because I know she paved the path forward for me and every other woman like me who eventually pursued ordained ministry. Moments like Mrs. Thornton's elevation to Elder should still be a big deal, but sadly, these early women leaders have a way of slipping into anonymity. Younger women are only just now beginning to realize all that these women stood for, all they worked for, as these rights are being threatened by some seeking a return to what they see as "better days" of some imagined past.

That's why this Mother's Day; I invite you to pause and remember all the extraordinary women who were part of your growing up years. I know they were there and they deserve to be remembered and given all the thanks we have to offer, and so much more.

Your sister in Christ,

Rev. 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 on Thursday, May 8th & Wednesday, May 21st. (Notice change of day on the 21st!)

WORSHIP SUNDAY 9:45AM

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

May 4th – *Do You Love Me?*

Scripture: John 21:1-14

May 11th – *Finding Edna*

Scripture: Acts 9:36-42

May 18th – *The Same Gift*

Scripture: Acts 11:1-18

May 25th – *MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND!*

Guest Preacher Gary Davis

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



Diaconate Schedule for May

May 4th – Lynn 401-539-7578

May 11th – Allana 860-599-5212

May 18th – Joann 401-714-8948

May 25th – TBD

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

News From the Deacons

The Deacons would like to thank the many folks who volunteered to do readings on Palm Sunday & Maundy Thursday. Your participation was greatly appreciated. We are working on bringing back our visitation team. More information to come. We are still recruiting new folks for the board. Please see any Deacon if you are interested. We are down to 5 who have all served for quite some time. Our Barbara Murano Scholarship Sunday will be June 1st, with coffee hour to follow. We look

forward to presenting the scholarships once again.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Murray

Trustees Notes

Pledges for March were \$7,477, \$1,495 more than the anticipated pledge amount of \$5,982. Total income for March was \$11,412. Total expenses for February were \$16,177.

The Trustees have contracted with Northern Exteriors to patch the roof over Fellowship Hall where it has been leaking. Thank you to Gary Davis for taking care of mowing the Pollinator meadow! The Trustees approved the use of Fellowship Hall and kitchen by the Safe Futures organization. Trustees have also contracted with Casella Waste for trash and recycling. Thermostat issues in Fellowship are being addressed as is the ant situation.

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

From the Financial Secretary



To those folks who have recently made a donation to our church here at 9 Castle Hill Road, a huge thank you!

We appreciate all of you who include an offering as an intentional part of your worship. Faith abounds in many ways!

Jenny Brummund

Update from our Music Ministries



Choir Rehearsal

Join us in the Sanctuary,
Wednesdays from 7:00 to 8:00 PM.
All are welcome!

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

Pollinator Committee Updates



Please spread the word that there is still a nice load of wood chips located in the middle of the meadow area. These are free for the taking, so help yourself! We are

grateful for any support in diminishing the pile so we can begin to repopulate the meadow flowers and grasses on the spot where the pile has been located.

The wood chip pile can be readily seen now that Gary Davis has cleared the meadow. We recognize this is laborious task so thank you Gary!

Many thanks also to Gary and Kathy and Fred Tarasuk for your arduous work on removing the piles of wood and brush left behind by the tree limb removal work last fall. Your work over the last few weeks to clear out this fragile woodland area will allow the understory plants, shrubs, trees and grasses to thrive this spring!

The Pollinator Committee



Missions for May

Our focus for Missions donations in May will be to ask for your financial support of the UCC's Five for Five offering known as *Strengthen the Church*. This offering is used to fund initiatives for leadership development, new churches, youth ministry and innovation in existing congregations throughout the United Church of Christ. Thank you in advance for your kindness!

Note: Rev. Ruth misspoke on Sunday, May 4 when she said the focus UCC offering for this month would be One Great Hour of Sharing.

UCC WESTERLY IS PLEASED TO HOST THE: Safe Futures Fundraiser

**Join us in creating the "Tree of Hope"
Mural for The Center for Safe Futures!**



We are excited to invite you to paint a tile for the Tree of Hope Mural! This new mosaic mural will represent unity, resilience, and hope, connecting survivors of abuse, families, and communities. Composed of approximately 500 individually painted tiles, this eight-foot by eight-foot mural will be a centerpiece of the new Safe Futures Waterford facility, scheduled to open in 2026. Safe Futures helps thousands of victims of domestic violence in 22 communities throughout southeastern Connecticut. This is a special opportunity to contribute to an important cause while enjoying some relaxing and creative time together.



The event will take place on **Wednesday, May 21, between 5:30-7:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall** in our church, UCC Westerly. Light refreshments will be served. The event is open to the community so please invite your family and friends (adults and older teens only please). RSVP to Donna Bellantone, who is coordinating this event for Safe Futures, by Friday, May 16, to reserve your tile. Donna can be reached at dmbellant1873@gmail.com or by phone/text at (860) 917-5450.

The cost to attend is \$50, which covers the expense of the tile painting kit. Advance payment is encouraged. You may pay by cash or check made out to Safe Futures. Credit card payment is also accepted through the Safe Futures' website, www.safefuturesct.org. Click on the Tree of Hope image and follow link. If you can't join us, please consider making an online contribution directly to Safe Futures.

Donations of any amount are deeply appreciated. Just follow the instructions above.

Please note: NO painting skills are needed! All supplies to paint the 6" x 6" tile are provided and the instructions are simple. Your completed tile image will be uploaded and you can take your original artwork home to enjoy forever.

If you have any questions, please let us know. We "hope" to see you on May 21!

Our Thanks,
Donna Bellantone and Claire Calabretta



Annual Plant and Artisan Sale & Basket Raffle!

**93 Sunrise Ave., Pawcatuck
Saturday, May 17th 9 AM – 2 PM**

How can you help? We are always looking for annual and perennial flowers and veggies, in addition to succulents and house plants. We do ask, though, that they be labeled with the name of the plant and the location the plant enjoys the most (sun, part sun, or shade). Please deliver them to Shannon's house (93 Sunrise Ave.) or to Sandi at church on or before Saturday, May 10.



No plants to share? Come to the sale, buy some plants, and enjoy the fun! The plants will be beautiful, and the artisans, baskets, and raffle items are INCREDIBLE!!!

Questions? See or call Sandi Davis for more information.



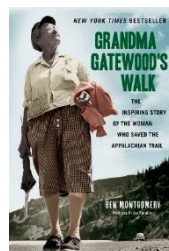
UCCW Books is an on-going discussion group ministry of UCC Westerly. We are a group of folks who love to read, talk about what we read, or just talk. Everyone is welcome!

Our next gathering...

Wednesday, May 14 @ 12:00PM

This gathering will take place in the parlor at church. Please bring a bag lunch and a beverage for yourself. Dessert will be provided!

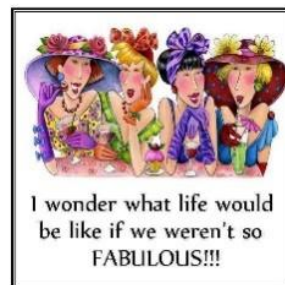
What we're reading...



GRANDMA GATEWOOD'S WALK by Ben Montgomery

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

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.

Our next gathering...



When: Wednesday, May 28 at Noon

Where: Stonington Pizza Palace

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

Prayer Tree

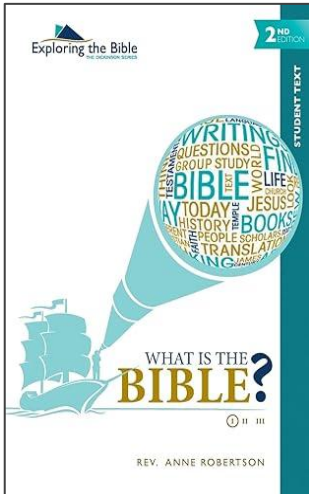
Our church has a very active and vital prayer ministry which



includes, among other things, 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.



Wednesday Morning Bible Study



Join us for Bible Study, Wednesday mornings at 10AM. We meet in the church parlor and are using the "Dickinson Bible Study" produced by the Massachusetts Bible Society. All with a curiosity about the Bible and how do read and understand it are welcome to attend!

Card & Game Party



Join Us for an afternoon of fun and games!

June 17th @ 1:00 PM

UCC Westerly proudly presents an afternoon of fun and games! Form a table of four and bring your own cards or games to play. Enjoy brownie sundaes with coffee or tea. Dairy free and gluten free options will be available. Tickets are \$10 per person and proceeds benefit the Organ Fund. Arrival time is set for 1:00PM on Tuesday, June 17th. Please contact Jenny Brummund for tickets.

MAKE A NOTE!



The ONA Team of UCC Westerly will be representing our church at Westerly PRIDE in Wilcox

Park on Saturday, June 7 from 12 noon to 2pm! You are welcome to come join us!!!

Brighten Someone's Day...



Suggestions for folks who might enjoy a card or note.

George & Cathy Gray

11 Bluebird Lane, Ashaway, RI 02804

Dan Stratton

71 School Street, Westerly, RI 02891

Dorothy Oehrle c/o Karen Wright,

128 Anvil Drive, Avon, CT 06001



May Birthdays

Kenton Michael

Charlotte Korean

Gregory Sugar

Jackson Edmond

Eileen Rawnsley

Felix Ainsworth

Daniel Stratton

Kathy Sugar

Susan Moynihan

Mark Sugar

May Anniversaries

Fred & Katharine Tarasuk

Mark & Elizabeth Dessaulles

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.



Our Staff

Pastor: The Rev. Ruth Shilling Hainsworth

Organist & Choirs Director: David Cranmer

Church Operations Coord.: Jerin Peloquin

Contact Us

Address: 9 Castle Hill Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Telephone: (860) 599-1226

E-mail: uccwesterly@gmail.com

Website: www.uccwesterly.org

Office Hours

Tuesday 9 AM - 1 PM

Wednesday 9 AM - 12 PM

Thursday 9 AM - 1 PM

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