



*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

*Romans 12:2*

I was intrigued when I saw this verse as the featured one on the sign for our neighbor just down the road. This is a great verse, one of the better ones attributed to our friend the Apostle Paul. What makes it great is that, if you take the time to ponder it deeply – to allow the words to open your mind to the possibilities offered to us every day by God – you really will find it renewing to your heart, your soul, your mind and even your body. But how does one go about the sort of renewal that Paul is suggesting here?

Well, like so many other things when it comes to the practice of our faith, the meaning of this idea of renewal is up for debate. I've been reading a lot of Richard Rohr's work this summer. He's a Franciscan priest who, as his book jacket states, "is a globally recognized ecumenical teacher bearing witness to the universal awakening within Christian Mysticism."<sup>1</sup> He is an expert on what is known as "the Franciscan alternative orthodoxy." (Richard Rohr, *Yes, And ... Daily Meditations*, © 2019, Franciscan Media) What that means is that he takes traditional Franciscan belief and practice, which dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and reorients it to contemporary culture so that it is more easily understood and practiced in the world in which we live each day.

Father Richard says a lot of wonderful things, but I especially like what he has to say about contemplation and prayer. In this way, he outlines some very basic pieces of what it means to be actively engaged in the renewing of one's mind. Of course, his entire compendium of writings is devoted to explaining this, but I would like to share just two of his points with you here.

#1 – He describes *contemplation* as "the prayer beyond words and ideas." This, he says, is what Jesus was doing in the wilderness for those 40 days at the beginning of his ministry. Prayer beyond words or, put another way, just *being yourself* in the presence of God.

#2 – He further describes prayer as "not about changing God but being willing to let God change you." YES!!! He continues, "true prayer is always about getting the 'who' right. Who is doing the praying: you or God-in-you, little old you or the Eternal Christ Consciousness?" And I absolutely adore this little gem: "Basically, prayer is an exercise in *divine participation* – you opting in and God always being there!"

So, dear ones, I share these thoughts as a way of getting you ready for our worship experiences planned for this coming Fall. Most of it will feel familiar and some of it will be new, and hopefully engaging and inspiring offering comfort, hope and new possibilities. We will be engaging in the renewing our minds so that we can continue to discern together "what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect." How exciting is that!

*Your sister in faith and sibling in Christ,  
Pastor Ruth*

Just a reminder that Pastor Ruth will be on vacation from August 17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>. Please be in touch with the Diaconate Person of the Week for any Pastoral Care requests or emergencies while she is away.

## **Worship Schedule**

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

Aug.4th – Worship with Communion & Rev. Ruth preaching –

- *Free* based on Galatians 3:23-39

Aug.11th – Worship with Rev. Ruth preaching

- *What Is Perfect?* based on Matthew 15:21-28

Aug.18th – Worship with a special message

Aug.25th – Mission Sunday: Blessing of the school supplies

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



## **Diaconate Schedule for August**

Aug. 4<sup>th</sup> - Allana Allik (860) 599-5212

Aug. 11<sup>th</sup> - Allana Allik (860) 599-5212

Aug. 18<sup>th</sup> - Lynn Murray (401) 539-7578

Aug. 25<sup>th</sup> - Christina Brummund (860) 599-1719

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.

## **News From the Deacons**

The Deacons appreciate those who attended worship, both in person and on-line, during the warm Sundays while Pastor Ruth was on vacation. We are also grateful for the plans she left for us for each service. Thank you to the

folks who wrote cards for Caring and Sharing Sunday. I know the recipients are very grateful, and would be happy to continue to receive communications from us. We will be having out annual pot luck meeting at Lynn's house for our August meeting. Folks are always welcome to join the board.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Murray

## **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, August 8th
- Thursday, August 29th

## **Trustees Notes**

Pledges for June were \$5,294, \$216 more than the anticipated pledge amount of \$5510. Thanks to all those who are able to keep up with their pledges! Total income for June was \$6,474. Total expenses for June were \$12,324. A landscaper has been hired to mow the church grounds. A building use agreement was signed for a local musician to use a room on the lower level for practice. A lock has been installed on the interior door to the lower level. The trustees hired a company to treat the carpenter ant problem in the upper hallway. Should you notice something in the building that needs attention, please speak to any trustee.

## **Mission Moment**



## **Missions News Updates**

In the Middle School Supplies Drive Our annual "In the Middle" School Supplies Drive will again take place during July and the first half of August. As always, the drive benefits students in the middle schools on both sides of the Pawcatuck River. These items may be on sale in the coming weeks. We have consulted with local middle school guidance

counselors to update this list. They will be the ones to distribute items to those students in need, so that the upmost discretion will be taken.

- Pencils of good quality (like Ticonderoga) that sharpen well or that are already sharpened!
- Handheld pencil sharpeners
- Thin markers
- Highlighters
- 3-ring binders (1 1/2 inch)
- 3-ring binder paper
- Binder dividers with tabs
- Pencil cases that go in the 3-ring binders and small change purses
- One-subject notebooks
- Pencil erasers
- Glue sticks
- Sticky notes
- Double pocket folders
- Index cards
- Mini hand sanitizers
- Rulers
- Clipboards
- Basic calculators
- Plastic sheet protectors
- Especially needed are boxes of tissues

NB Backpacks are no longer a priority. The school supplies drive will run officially from the beginning of July until August 25, when we will bless them in church.



### **Operation Fresh Start - Summer School Supplies Drive**

Once again OFSNB is collecting school supplies from July until mid-August, to be distributed to children from pre-school through high school. Please note that this is different than our church's In the Middle School Supplies Drive.

### **This list is specific to OFSNB:**

Clear water bottles, Lunch boxes, Crayons, Pencil bags or boxes, Sharpened pencils, Handheld pencil sharpeners, Eraser caps, Pens, Highlighters, Sticky notes, Index cards, Folders with pockets, Backpacks, Kleenex/tissues, Hand sanitizer, 3-Ring binders, Dividers with tabs (for binders), Clipboards, Basic calculators.

Donations for Operation Fresh Start should be placed in the red bins in the bell courtyard narthex. Thanks so much for all of your help!!

### **Operation Fresh Start – Sip & Sign Fundraiser**



Please visit <https://fb.me/e/1li3TmMI5> to access the specifics about the OFSNB fundraiser that is scheduled for Wednesday, August 21. This promises to be a fun event featuring local authors and yummy treats from local chefs. Tickets must be purchased on Eventbrite but talk to Sandi Davis if you aren't sure how to use that platform.

### **The Bazaars are Coming!**

*Annual Bazaar Silent Auction*



You may not be ready to think about our three bazaars coming in November and December, but odds are that you may be cleaning out your closets, cabinets, attic, or basement, and wondering what you could do with all of your valuable treasures that you no longer need. No, we aren't referring to the odds and ends you've

collected through the years; they would go to a yard or attic sale. We are searching for nice items that others would like to bid on for our Annual Bazaar Silent Auction. Or maybe you have some cute items that you could put together to create a themed basket.

We have already started our search and have pledged two baskets so far, a pollinator-themed basket and a Rhode Island themed basket to be added to our treasure trove. What themes can you think of?

We also have a gift card or two to add to our list, but we need more! Maybe you could ask some local merchants to donate gift cards and/or products? Need some ideas of stores to approach? We have some thoughts in that area, as well.

It's never too early to start prepping for the bazaar! Thank you for all of your past, present, and future help.

Shirin, Cathy, Deb, and Sandi

### **From the Financial Secretary**



No special offerings this month but we hope you always remember that by your generosity, you build up the Body of Christ.

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"

### **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!

### **Updates from Congregational Life**



### ***Summer 2024 UCC Night Out***



*Stonington Vineyards Friday Night Concert  
Friday, August 2, 2024 6:00—9:00pm  
523 Taugwonk Rd. Stonington, Connecticut  
06378*

We are going to try to do this again. Last time we were rained out, so we are hoping for better weather this year. Let's meet at Stonington Vineyards for one of their enjoyable Friday Music Nights. There will be food trucks on site (Brick and Basil Pizza, Six Penny Oyster, and at least one other), but it is always a ton of fun to picnic with one's own food. Bring food for yourself or bring enough to share—totally up to you! The only thing that isn't allowed is outside alcohol—they are a vineyard after all. There will be a sign-up sheet posted for this closer to the event. Don't forget to bring your own chairs and maybe a portable table, picnic blanket, or even an easy-up, if you don't like being in the sun for the first part of the evening. We can set-up early, so come early and stay late. The earlier you arrive, the better parking space you will snag! Can't wait to see you there!

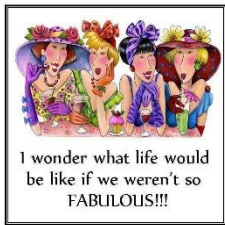
### **Please note some important details:**

- Tickets are \$10 per person online and are non-refundable.
- Pre-sale online tickets stop at 5pm the Thursday before the concert.

- Day-of tickets are \$15 cash at the door.
- Children are free if under 21, with parent or guardian.
- 20% of the net ticket profits go will go to relative charity.
- No Wine Tastings are offered during music, but wine is available by the glass or bottle.
- Last call is 8:30 PM

***The music for August 2 will be provided by 2 Cat Zoo.***

### **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...**

Wednesday, August 7 @ 12:00pm  
Dog Watch in Mystic  
(20 Old Stonington Road, Stonington – Off Route 1 on the way to Mystic)

A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall

Hope to see you then!

### **UCCW Books**

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.

### **Our next gathering...**

Wednesday, September 4, 2024 @ 12:30PM

Join us for a BYO Lunch & Beverage. Dessert will be provided. ***Everyone is welcome!***

### **What we're reading...**



***The Vanishing Half, By Brit Bennett***

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. 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

#### **The Hartmut Doerwaldt Family**

40 Castle Hill Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

#### **Joan Edmond**

65 Cross Street  
Westerly, RI 02891



**August Birthdays:**

Rosemary Jette  
Sandi Davis  
Elizabeth Dessaules  
Bethany Foster  
Shirley Miller

**August Anniversaries:**

George & Cathy Gray

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**

Address: 9 Castle Hill Road  
Pawcatuck, CT 06379  
Telephone: (860) 599-1226  
E-mail: [uccwesterly@gmail.com](mailto:uccwesterly@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.uccwesterly.org](http://www.uccwesterly.org)  
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, &  
Thursday; 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

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