



*“Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”
Isaiah 43:18-19a*

Personally, I have always thought these words from the Prophet Isaiah (3rd Isaiah actually but that’s a story for another time) are some of the most exciting words in Scripture. They speak to one of the most elemental truths about our God – that God is always doing a new thing in our midst. That can be difficult to accept in these days when it feels like our country and everything we have counted on for all of our lives is being attacked from within. Yet, I believe it is even *more* true now than we might think. It is precisely in moments of upheaval that God reminds us that God is always in charge, always in the middle of things, always there to remind us we are not alone. God is already to show us a new way forward even when we worry there is no way.

Isaiah is not the only one of the prophets to address these worries of course. The story of Queen Esther is another powerful example of a moment when it felt like bad things were being planned for good people and yet, still, God prevailed through the most unlikely of sources – a young Jewish woman married to a king who had no idea she was a Hebrew. She found the courage to come to her husband and aid him in understanding just what was happening and her people were saved from annihilation as a result. With God all things are possible.

I’m talking about these new things always possible with God as a way of highlighting a few important matters now on our horizon as a church. Here they are:

➤ **The format of this digital Beacon** is decidedly different from what we’re used to. Key information is readily visible and detailed articles are now accessible by link. Jerin has come up with this design to address Google’s concerns about the length of the old format. We are hoping this new

format is user friendly, *HOWEVER*, if you find this format to be lacking, just let Jerin know by return email and she will keep working hard to find a format that folks find acceptable. As always, hard copies are available at the church.

- **The Threshold Retreat 2.0** is coming up next weekend, Saturday, February 15 from 9am to 3pm at the church. We will be continuing the work we began last year as we strive to get ready for the possibilities the future might hold for our church. Please plan now to join us if at all possible. Every single voice matters in these conversations!
- **The People Plan for 2025** will be one of our primary focuses for Threshold 2.0! If you can’t join us on the 15th, please let us know what you are willing to work on with us.
- **New projects including investigating a new roadside sign** are in the works. The planning committee for this project will be meeting soon and it’s not too late to join!! Just contact Lynn Murray to be added to the list.
- **By popular request we will be adding a new Adult Bible Study** during Lent! See the article on page 5 for more details.
- **Lent, Holy Week and Easter** are fast approaching with the return of many of our favorite services along with possibilities for something new!

Yes, our little church is alive and well daring to engage in new things as we continue to explore what it means to be us and what it means to answer God’s call to our church to continue its mission of being a beacon of God’s light and hope in a world increasingly fragile. Please join us as you are able knowing that, whoever you are, you are beloved of God and of us and you are *always* welcome here.

Your friend and fellow disciple,

Rev. Ruth



Tee hee! Which one could be me?????

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, February 13th and Thursday, February 27th.



Worship Schedule

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

Sunday, February 2nd – Worship with Communion. Rev. Dr. Ede Steele

Sunday, February 9th – Rev. Ruth preaching *Covenant* based on Micah 6:6-8

Sunday, February 16th – Rev. Ruth preaching *Called to ...* based on Jeremiah 17:5-10

Sunday, February 23rd – Rev. Ruth preaching *God's Promises* based on Genesis 45:3-11

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



Diaconate Schedule for February

Feb. 2nd – Joann Spurley (401) 714-8948

Feb. 9th – Christina Brummund (860) 599-1719

Feb. 16th – Bethany Foster (401) 539-4003

Feb. 23rd – Allana Allik (860) 599-5212

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

News From the Deacons

The Deacons continue to meet virtually each month, which makes for efficient meetings. At our January meeting, we discussed the possibility of the return of a visitation team, which we had prior to COVID. It means that folks can volunteer to visit our shut-ins or folks in nursing care. More information to follow.

We continue to discuss a memorial item for Linda Evans, likely something that will be sea glass theme related. We have also discussed using bazaar income to investigate the possibility of a more permanent sign in front of the building, a recommendation we took to the Annual Meeting where it was decided a committee will be formed. A sign catalog has been received. Once again, we would welcome new members on the Deacons Board.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Murray

Trustees Notes

Pledges for December were \$6,854, \$1,344 more than the anticipated pledge amount of \$5,510.

Total income for December was \$17,289. Total expenses for December were \$11,386.

The trustees would like to remind everyone to be vigilant in making sure doors are properly locked and lights shut off after use.

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

From the Financial Secretary



Thank you for your pledges for 2025!

Each month, this column will highlight timely special collections of the United Church of Christ and our own Mission Committee.

One of UCC's "Five for Five" offerings is usually collected in January. If you use offering envelopes, you will find one dedicated to "Yearly Per Capita Dues for the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ" (SNEC UCC). The official UCC name for this offering is "Our Church's Wider Mission," but at some point, our own church leadership

decided to make this a Per Capita Dues, as it is hoped by the UCC that each member contribute to this fund. The Per Capita Dues are used to support local youth programs, pastor training and education, and the work that helps our local SNEC UCC churches support one another, such as maintaining a substitute pastor supply and promoting ethical practices. Of the five UCC offerings, this one is the most "close to home."

Since less than half of our members use envelopes to make offerings, I like to make us all aware of this "first of five offerings." The suggested donation is \$20.00 per member. Of course this is voluntary, but our church does make up the difference to SNEC UCC in order to equal \$20.00 per member. By paying your own Per Capita Dues, it helps our church save some funds.

If you so choose, you may also make a \$12.00 offering to support our church newsletter, The Beacon. Most of us now receive this via email, however, many of our older members still receive The Beacon by post. Your donation will help pay for the copy paper, ink, and postage required to print The Beacon for our at-home members. Copies are also made for guests to pick up while attending worship. I know we all enjoy reading the news of our church, Reverend Ruth's monthly spiritual message, and being able to plan along with the calendar. Consider a Beacon donation to support this communication and outreach.

Once again, thank you all for your generous financial support of our church- whether it's on-site, local, national, or international! What we share makes a difference!

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Brummund

An Update from our Music Ministries

Choir Rehearsal



- Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:00 PM
- Join us in the Sanctuary, all are welcome!

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



Missions for February

Our Missions Board will be meeting after church on Sunday, February 9 to plan for the rest of this winter and spring. In the meantime, the month of February will be devoted to receiving cash donations via the Deacons Fund to go to Disaster Relief for the California Fires through Church World Service.

If you have any suggestions for the Missions folks, kindly speak with any one of them: Kathy Sugar, Sandi Davis, Melissa Stratton, Eileen Rawnsley and Rev. Ruth.

Operation Fresh Start



Prom Attire

Time to clean out those closets!! Do you have prom dresses, shoes, and jewelry cluttering your closets and drawers? You know, the dresses and accessories that were only worn once but you still can't part with? And let's not forget about men's prom suits (tuxes?), shoes, and accessories that may also be taking up much



needed space? Now is the time to donate them to the local kiddos who could give them new life this year. You know your attire is just waiting to be on the dance floor again! Give it a chance by donating it to Operation Fresh Start for our

February Prom Attire Collection Drive. We'll get those items where they need to go before prom

season. Feel free to put them in the pew where Sandi D. usually sits, and she'll deliver them to the OFS workroom downstairs. Please share with your neighbors, friends, and family members! Let that clothing party again!! (Oh, and please be sure that they are clean!!)

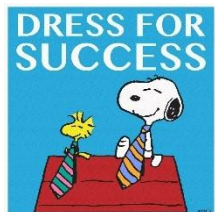
Toiletry Drive



February is also the month to restock our supply of toiletries for the toiletry bags we hand out to those in need. Next time you are in the store, please pick up some toiletries for any age and/or any

gender. All toiletries are needed, so don't stress about which would be best; feel free to hit the sales! These can be placed in the OFS baskets by the doors at the upper parking lot and bell courtyard.

Career and Confidence Workshop



We are very busy already planning our two-day Career and Confidence Workshop for March. Ten young people will be treated to two intensive days to aid them in their job searches and

interviews. Each participant will be assigned a mentor, so there will be at least 20 people involved. We are in need of the following: notebooks, paper, and pens for notetaking; hair and make-up stylists; gift cards to Ulta and/or Sephora; dress-for-success clothing (including shoes and accessories); simple breakfast and coffee break foods (muffins, bagels, juices); and lunches. Donations to fund any of these would also be appreciated. This is the second year for this initiative, and we are excited to continue it. See Sandi for more details.



**THE BOARD OF
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE &
CHURCH COUNCIL
INVITES YOU TO A
SOUP SUPPER!**

Friday, February 28 @ 6pm
In Fellowship Hall

Bring a soup and/or dessert to share!
\$10 basket donation appreciated!

Sign-up sheet on Bulletin Board.
Tell your friends!



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, February 19th @ 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!

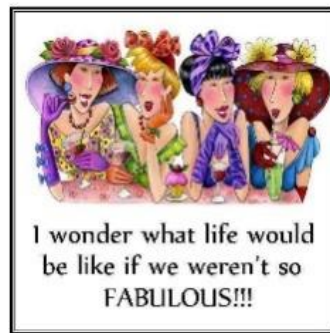
What we're reading...



"The Guncle" by Steven Rowley

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...

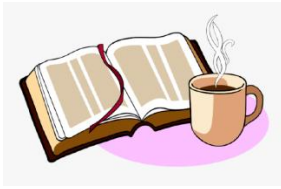
When: Wednesday, March 12 at 12PM

Where: J&G Rail Side, 15 Palmer St., Pawcatuck, CT 06379

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 a member of our prayer team or if you would like the team to pray for you, please speak with any Deacon.



Rev. Ruth is excited to announce A NEW BIBLE STUDY

The Bible Study will take place Wednesday mornings at 10am beginning on March 12. We will meet in the church parlor. We will be using the "Dickinson Bible Study" produced by the Massachusetts Bible Society. It is a six week course in basic biblical literacy that assumes no prior knowledge of the Bible and is not based in any particular Christian tradition. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board at church. Text books can be ordered online through Amazon and cost \$11 for a new book or as low as \$6 used. They are also available as audiobooks. Hope you can join us! This is gonna be fun!!!

Brighten Someone's Day...



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

- Jennifer & Don Goyette
29 Montauk Avenue, Westerly RI 02811
- Sandra Hoffman
22 Horne Drive, Westerly, RI 02891
- Elvis & Ane Torres
63 Nantucket Drive, Mystic, CT 06355



February Birthdays

Gary Davis
Dorothy Oehrle
Jessica Sylvestre

February 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

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, Wednesday, & Thursday
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

*Please be aware that the format and spacing for
the Beacon may appear differently on your
computer or device. Thank you for your
understanding!*