



“... and very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.” Mark 16:2

The story of the women’s discovery of the empty tomb on Easter morning is, of course, the foundational story of Easter, and indeed all of Christianity. That almost goes without saying. What’s really remarkable, though, is that the story is distinctly different in all four Gospels. The only commonalities among the four stories are that the tomb was empty and that the discovery was made by one or more of the women who were then charged with sharing this incredible news with the disciples. During our Easter celebrations populated with Easter bunnies, baby chicks, jelly beans, Easter Eggs and beautiful spring flowers, we just sort of gloss over this rather glaring situation. How is it that the most foundational story of the entire Christian faith can have so many differences in different accounts? It’s fascinating, at least to me. Let’s consider the differences, in the order the Gospels appear in the Bible.

In Matthew, Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary” go to the tomb at dawn to finish preparing the body for burial. As they arrived there was an earthquake as an angel descended from heaven and rolled away the stone from the tomb’s entrance. The angel told them not to be afraid but to go and tell the disciples that he had been raised so they took off to find the disciples. On the way, they ran right into Jesus and they fell at his feet to worship him. He told them to get up and go tell the disciples he would meet them in Galilee and they took off.

In Mark, it’s Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome (yes, that Salome from Herod’s court) who went to the tomb at dawn to anoint the body. They had been worried about who would roll the stone away but when they got there it had already been moved. They went into the tomb and saw a “young man” dressed all in white who told

them not to be afraid. He told them that Jesus had been raised and was not there. He also told them to go and tell the disciples, but this time, they don’t because they were too terrified. The text ends with them running away.

In Luke, it is Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and “the other woman” who go to the tomb. The stone has been rolled away so they are able to go in. There they find “two men in dazzling clothes” who reminded them that Jesus had told them he would rise again and that’s just what he had done. They were to go to the disciples and tell them what had happened which they did but the disciples, considering it “an idle tale” did not believe them.

In John, it was only Mary Magdalene who came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away. She went back to find the disciples. Peter and “the other disciple” ran back to the tomb and looked inside but only saw the grave cloths. Mary stayed outside weeping. Finally she looked into the tomb and saw two angels who asked her why she was weeping. She then turned around and saw Jesus but she did not recognize him. She thought he was the gardener so she asked him if he knew what had happened. At that point, Jesus called her by name, and she recognized him and tried to hug him. He did not permit her too but instead told her to go to the disciples and share the news of his resurrection which she did.

So, four different versions of the *same* story – THE Easter story for all Christians everywhere. Only in two does Jesus himself actually make an appearance! Yet, the essential elements are all the same in each account. What are those essential elements? The Empty Tomb awaiting the visit of Mary Magdalene who is clearly designated to be THE witness to the Resurrection. How amazing is that? So much to unpack here but for now let’s just leave it at this – Jesus always chooses the most unlikely people to do the work that needs doing. Even you and me.

Happy Easter!

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 Thursdays, April 10th & 24th.

Worship Sundays 9:45AM

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

Sunday, April 6th – Worship at 9:45AM with Communion - 5th Week of Lent - Rev. Ruth preaching “Do-Able”, from Luke 15:4-10

Sunday, April 13th – Palm Sunday Symbols Service

Thursday, April 17th – Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service with Communion

Sunday, April 20th – Easter Sunrise Service at 6:00AM @ Stonington Point

Sunday, April 20th – Easter Sunday Worship at 9:45AM – Rev. Ruth preaching “Weeping & Wonder”, from John 20:1-17

Sunday, April 27th – Worship at 9:45AM

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



Diaconate Schedule for April

April 6th – Joann Spurley (401) 714-8948

April 13th – Allana Allik (860) 599-5212)

April 20th – 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 have worked on planning the remaining Lenten services, including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday Vigil, and the Easter services, including the sunrise service at Stonington Point. Also, sign-up sheets are posted for folks who would like to be ushers as well as candle lighters/extinguishers each week. Feel free to sign up when you are

available. Barbara Murano Scholarship Sunday will be June 1st. Rev. Ruth found a sea glass artist at the Westerly Art Gallery. We are still looking into something with that theme in memory of Linda Evans. We continue to be grateful for the ongoing support to the Deacons fund. Nearly \$600 will be sent to Church World Service for California fire relief. The Deacons also sent a check in support of the administrative assistant of the Ledyard Congregational Church who was assaulted and robbed while in her building, and had accumulated a mound of medical bills and has had to resign from her job. As always, we would be happy to welcome others willing to be on the Board of Deacons.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Murray

Deacons Initiating New Visitation Ministry!

The Visitation Ministry is a vital part of the mission and service offered by any congregation, ours included. Realistically, there is only so much visiting Rev. Ruth can accomplish along with all the work we entrust her with to keep our congregation vital, alive and moving forward. Therefore, the Deacons are hoping that a few folks might be willing to volunteer to participate in a formal visitation ministry. Some of this would be in person visits at nursing homes but it could also include visiting folks in their homes. Phone calls and sending cards and notes would also be an important part of this ministry. If you are interested in participating in this visitation ministry for 4 or 5 hours per month, kindly call or email Jerin in the office (uccwesterly@gmail.com) to let her know. Once we have a few folks signed up, we will arrange a training event so folks feel prepared to begin this work. Thanks so much for considering! What you do does make a difference!

TRUSTEES NOTES

Pledges for February were \$4,618, \$1,364 less than the anticipated pledge amount of \$5,982. Total income for February was \$8,257. Total expenses for February were \$9,797.

The trustees have contracted with Northern Exteriors to replace the roof sheathing, siding and flashing over the sanctuary cat walk and

organ pipe chest. The piping for the booster pump in the kitchen was replaced.

The trustees are putting together a list of things to be tackled on the 'Don't Sweat the Small Stuff Day' April 6th. If you have any ideas, please speak to any trustee.

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

From the Financial Secretary



The month of Lent is marked by one of the United Church of Christ (UCC)'s Five for Five Offerings called "One Great Hour of Sharing." Envelopes will be available in the sanctuary, or you can simply mark your check memo OGHS.

This offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC, all of which are so pertinent these days.

This year's theme, "Be the Light," is based on Matthew 5:14-16. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the people, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." An interpretation of Jesus' words is that followers of Christ should be visible and impactful. Rev. Shari Prestemon, who is Acting Associate General Minister and Co-executive for Global Ministries shares that she sees the OGHS offering as "a showering of unexpected blessings, letting people know they are not alone. People they don't know see their pain and care enough to respond...It is a witness of love...powerful and healing." You can watch a video about OGHS at ucc.org/giving.

Thank you for considering this additional offering, which will be accepted throughout the month of April.

To those folks who have recently made a pledge 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.



Missions for April

Babies & Ladies

For the month of April, we will be accepting donations for babies and ladies!

Babies: Diapers (Large size), baby wipes, Baby powder, shampoo, lotion.

Ladies: Intimate supplies, Kotex, tampons, incontinence supplies, lotion.

Thank you in advance for your kindness!

Operation Fresh Start



Wow! Was our prom attire ever a huge success! Our room downstairs was filled to the brim with GORGEOUS dresses, shoes, jewelry, and other accessories, not to mention handsome tuxes and suits. Thanks to everyone who donated, from local businesses to community members who were delighted to clean out their closets. In the very near future all prom attire will be spread across various agencies in the area to the delight of high school students looking for the perfect attire, free of charge!

Unfortunately, our Career and Confidence Building Workshop had to be canceled at the last minute, as our key presenter had a death in her family. Our sympathy goes out to Shirley, but our young participants can rest assured that they will have another opportunity to attend this workshop next year. The women

who lost out on the opportunity this year were still treated to gift cards for make-up and new outfits.



What's up now, you ask? Time to prepare for our annual Plant Sale and Basket Raffle that will be held on Sunrise Ave.,

Pawcatuck, on Saturday, May 17. If you would like to support us, feel free to start your seedlings now. 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). Not into gardening? We are anticipating an epic raffle, so all baskets and gift cards are appreciated. See Sandi Davis for more information.

Lastly, OFS would like to express our deep gratitude to the Trustees of UCC Westerly for officially allowing us to use some additional space next to our office downstairs. We will be looking for additional storage space in the future, but having some space close to our office is very much appreciated.



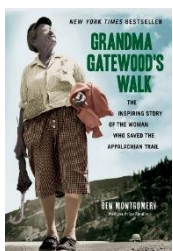
UCCW Books is an on-going discussion group ministry of UCC Westerly. We are a group of folks who love to read, talk about what we read, or just talk. Everyone is welcome!

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!

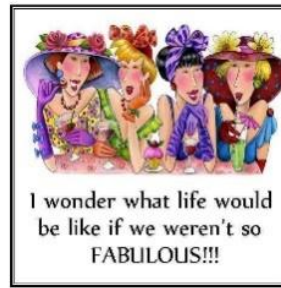
What we're reading...



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, April 30 at 12PM



Where: Guytanno's
62 Franklin Street,
Westerly

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

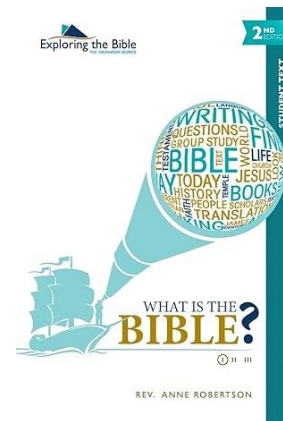
Prayer Tree

Our church has a very active and vital prayer ministry which



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.

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!



WE NEED YOU!

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff Workday

Sunday, April 6 - Immediately Following Worship

Wear your work clothes to worship and join us for a church workday where we focus on the little things that make a big difference!

We warmly invite all our members to join us in working on some light, manageable projects highlighted in the structural engineer's report and last year's Threshold Retreat. These are fixes that anyone can help with, and your participation will make a big difference in our church!

News from CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Attic Treasures – May 3rd



It's Yard Sale Time!
Our annual Attic Treasures indoor yard sale is right around the corner, taking place on

Saturday, May 3rd, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Afterward, we'll pack up the remaining items for Jonnycake to pick up between 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM.

To make this event a success, we need your help! Start clearing out your **cupboards, closets, shelves, toy boxes, garages, and attics**, and bring your unwanted items to **Fellowship Hall**. We're accepting donations **now through April 30th**.

We kindly ask that you refrain from donating:

Electronics, large furniture, or broken items

Cassette tapes, VHS tapes, encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines, or anything stained.

What we're looking for: Clothing, books, kitchen items, and a variety of household treasures.

Event Highlights:

Fill-a-Bag for \$5.00: A crowd favorite and a great deal!

Complimentary Coffee, Tea, and Baked Goodies: Grab a treat while you shop. Donations for refreshments are welcome.

If you'd like to contribute baked goods, we'd love items like muffins, cookies, small breads, or any goodies you think shoppers might enjoy.

We'll also need a team to help set up and organize during the week leading up to the sale—stay tuned for more details on the schedule. Fliers will be available soon for you to share around town.

Thank you for being part of this fun church event. Your support and generosity make all the difference!

Card & Game Party



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.

Brighten Someone's Day...



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

Martha Evans

7 Scot Circle, Charlestown, RI 02813

Don & Jennifer Goyette

29 Montauk Avenue, Westerly, RI 02891

Eileen Rawnsley & Margaret (sisters 😊)

2 Wilford Court, Pawcatuck, CT 06379



April Birthdays

Pam Del Pozo-Waldron Reese Hainsworth

George Gray Emily Dessales

April Anniversaries

Peter & Ruth Hainsworth

Douglas & Jenny Brummund

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

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