

From The Pastor



Spring and Spirituality - Quotes and Questions

Spring is nature's way of saying, "Let's party!"
Robin Williams

Spring prepares her green traffic light and the world thinks Go.
Christopher Morley, John Mistletoe

Everything is blooming most recklessly; if it were voices instead of colors, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night.
Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke

It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want - oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!
Mark Twain

*Awake, thou wintry earth -
Fling off thy sadness!
Fair vernal flowers, laugh forth
Your ancient gladness!*
Thomas Blackburn, "An Easter Hymn"

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden. Ruth Stout

I have begun this article with the above quotes because I do love spring and I believe this unfolding season opens our hearts to many wondrous things including the Season of Easter. I believe it is the perfect time to explore our spirituality and try our best to strengthen our faith. There are many different understandings of the term spirituality. Books have been written on Celtic spirituality, on women's spirituality, on a spirituality of ecology and eco-justice. Today there is a revival of interest in matters of the spirit as people try in various ways to be open to God's Spirit, to deepen their

relationship with God. Prayer groups, retreats, meditation groups and opportunities to share stories all provide opportunities to widen our experience. Here are some quotations to stimulate your consideration of spirituality:

Spirituality: the quality or condition of being spiritual; attachment or regard for things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests.
From the Oxford English Dictionary

The word "spirituality" seems daunting but is perfectly straightforward. It is simply the way someone does their religion - not what they believe but what they do with what they believe.
From The English Spirit: The Little Gidding Anthology of English Spirituality

"Spiritual practice" is a phrase that means what it says. Madeleine L'Engle once likened spiritual practice to piano etudes. You do not necessarily enjoy the etudes - you want to skip right ahead to the sonatas and concertos - but if you don't work through the etudes you will arrive at the sonatas and not know what to do. So, too, with the spiritual life. It's not all about mountaintops. Mostly it's about training so that you'll know the mountaintop for what it is when you get there.

From Mudhouse Sabbath: An Invitation to a Life of Spiritual Discipline by Lauren F. Winner

Sometimes people get the mistaken notion that spirituality is a separate department of life, the penthouse of our existence. But rightly understood, it is a vital awareness that pervades all realms of our being. Someone will say, "I come alive when I listen to music," or "I come to life when I garden," or "I come alive when I play golf." Wherever we come alive, that is the area in which we are spiritual. And then we can say, "I know at least how one is spiritual in that area." To be vital,

awake, aware, in all areas of our lives, is the task that is never accomplished, but it remains the goal.

From The Music of Silence
by David Steindl-Rast and Sharon Lebell

- How would you describe your own spirituality? What are the things that make your spirit feel alive?
- Do you have any spiritual practices that sustain you and give you life – patterns of daily prayer, journaling, periods of quiet reflection, painting or drawing, music, favorite books? If so, what is there about these that you find helpful?

I encourage you to reflect on these quotes and questions as springtime and your own spirituality unfold.

With love,



Worship Schedule

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Apr. 5 th | Palm Sunday - Communion
(4 th Graders First Communion)
Message: Into Jerusalem
Mark 11:1-11 |
| Apr. 12 th | Easter Sunday
Message: What Now?
Mark 16:1-8 |
| Apr. 19 th | Message: Marks of Faith
John 20:19-31 |
| April 26 th | Jazz Worship Service |
| May 3 rd | Confirmation Sunday - Communion
Message: Enfolded by Love
John 15:11-18 |
| May 10 th | Message: Abiding in Love
John 15:1-8 |
| May 17 th | Message: Friends Together
John 15:9-17 |
| May 24 th | Memorial Sunday
Message: Guided in Prayer
Acts 11:15-17, 21-26 |
| May 31 st | Pentecost
Message: Spirit for All
Acts 2:1-21 |

Easter Memorial Flowers

The Altar Committee reminds members they may contribute to the Easter flower fund by calling the Church Office at 866-1415. Please bring or mail memorials and contributions to the Church Office by Thursday, April 2nd.

Maundy Thursday Holy Communion and Tenebrae April 9th, 8:00pm

This powerful service involves the lighting and extinguishing of candles as a reminder of the darkness that covered the Earth after the passion and crucifixion of Christ. Tenebrae, a Latin word for "darkness," is also observed to impress upon our minds and hearts the tragic consequences of humanity's sin and the greatness of the Saviour's sacrifice at Calvary. Throughout this service, there will be readings highlighting the Passion Story of our Lord Jesus Christ. You are encouraged to join us for this meaningful service.



Good Friday - April 10th 12 Noon

Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus. The Rowayton United Methodist Church will be joining us for this special service of dramatic readings.



Easter Services - April 12th

- Theme: What Now?
- | | |
|---------|--|
| 6:00am | Sunrise Service at Bayley Beach followed by community breakfast at Rowayton Firehouse. |
| 9:15am | Easter Festival Worship |
| 10:15am | Easter Egg Hunt |
| 11:15am | Easter Festival Worship |



The Promise of Easter

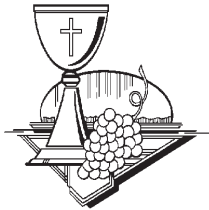


Jazz Worship Service Sunday, April 26th, 10:15am

Worship in a unique way at a Jazz Worship Service on Sunday, April 26th at 10:15am at The United Church of Rowayton. This special service features David Snyder and a group of talented jazz musicians from the Fairfield County Art Ensemble who play contemporary jazz standards. Come join us for an inspirational worship experience.

4th Grade First Communion

On Sunday, March 1st, 4th graders remained in worship to observe communion. Following the service they met with Pastor John Livingston for an exciting class endorsed by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. The class provided the children of our Family of Faith with an understanding of the Lord's Supper. A special communion service will be held on Sunday, April 5th when these 4th graders will make their First Communion.



Confirmation Sunday

On Sunday May 3rd we all have the opportunity to show our support to this year's Confirmation Class as they step forward and confirm their faith and share with us the importance of their journey. As we face such uncertain times in our world it is with much joy and pride that we welcome these high school students into the life and fellowship of our Family of Faith. Don't miss this very special worship service. You will find your faith being confirmed and strengthened as well.



Memorial Sunday

On Sunday, May 24th we will remember all those members and friends from our Family of Faith who have passed away in the last year. Join us for this special service of remembrance.

Board of Christian Outreach AmeriCares HomeFront Day

Once again our Church will be participating in AmeriCares HomeFront Day to bring sunshine to someone's life and home! This year HomeFront Day is scheduled for Sat., May 2nd, rain date May 9th. Our Church will have the opportunity to join this project which needs help from 20 - 25 members of our Congregation.



HomeFront Day is a one-day volunteer effort to renovate and repair the homes of the poor, the handicapped and the elderly who are not able to manage this work for themselves. More than 30 homes will be spruced up this year in the Norwalk area. The event brings together people from all walks of life, in service to those in need.

Volunteers need not be skilled at home repair, direction will be provided. We will begin sign-ups shortly for our crew of builders, cleaners and painters. Please call Caroline Robinson at 838-0598, if you are interested in helping.

Norwalk Housing Services identifies and interviews the home owners for eligibility. Work includes carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, plastering, painting, weather-stripping and installation of smoke detectors, as well as trash removal and yard work.

As any past volunteers from our Church can attest, the day is a very worthwhile one, full of laughter, warm feelings and perhaps even miracles.

Adult Education Survey - Let Your Voice Be Heard

Are there topics that you want to see explored in a Christian Education program at Church? Do you want to participate in Christian education but the times haven't worked with your schedule? In an effort to better serve our adult family of faith, the Board of Christian Education is conducting a survey and wants your thoughts and comments on adult education at The United Church of Rowayton. The survey will be available both online and in hard copy and will be conducted from April 26th through May 24th. Look for the announcement in Church and via e-mail. We hope that you will all participate!

Associate Pastor's Study

"God of the earth, the sky, the sea, Maker of all above, below. Creation lives and moves in thee. Thy present life through all doth flow."

Samuel Longfellow

Do you know anyone who does not like spring? Who is not in favor of renewal, sunshine, daffodils, crocuses and tulips? What's not to like about Easter Bunnies, children hunting for eggs, the blessing of nurture on Mother's Day and the last days of school? Who is up for putting the dinghy in the water, walking the beach and opening the windows for fresh Spring air! I am and I bet you might be ready for spring too. Winter can get to be a drag on our souls after awhile but we here in Connecticut are so blessed by our magnificent season of spring. We have the opportunity to once again emerge from our cocoons of down jackets, hats and gloves and step out into warm weather, long walks and children on the playground gleefully running around. As Christians we are blessed to remember the most significant time of our Church calendar when we are taught that Jesus resurrects from the dead reminding us that there is always hope and there is always God's presence. Even at the coldest, darkest times of our souls, God is there and invites us to open up the windows of our hearts and minds to let God in. As we participate in the final days of Lent, Easter services and the "Lusty Month of May" let us be one in covenant with one another to savor the miracle of Easter and the miracle of life and love of God. Let us join hands in acknowledgment of the privilege and joy of being people of faith. Church is family and a Christian family is a place of love, encouragement and compassion. Let us spread this joy and love to one another this spring, in Jesus' name.



Church School Sundays 10:15 am

- April 5** First Communion for 4th graders. PreK-3rd Regular Church School
- April 12** EASTER SERVICES 9:15am, 11:15am
EASTER EGG HUNT 10:15am
- April 19** One Room Church School with Carla
Teachers off for the day
- April 26** Jazz Sunday/4th grade and up stay in
worship. PreK-3rd Regular Church School
- May 3** Confirmation Sunday 10th Grade
Regular Church School PreK-3rd Grade
- May 10** Regular Church School for all
- May 17** TEACHER APPRECIATION SUNDAY/
Last Day of Church School

Youth Group

Wednesdays 7:30-8:30pm

- April 1** Easter Card Making for
seniors and homebound
- April 8** Movie Night "The 10
Commandments" part 1
(popcorn, soft drinks)
- April 15** No Youth Group –
vacation week
- April 22** Movie Night "The 10 Commandments"
part 2 (popcorn, soft drinks included)
- April 29** PARTY!!! Last night of Youth Group for
this year. Potluck dinner, everybody
brings a dish



Adult Bible Study Sunday Mornings

- April 5** Bible Study at 11:15 after worship/BOCE
Meeting at 9:00am
- April 12** EASTER no Bible Study
- April 19** Bible Study 9:00am
- April 26** Bible Study 9:00am
- May 3** Bible Study at 11:15 after worship/BOCE
Meeting at 9:00am
- May 10, 17, 24 and 31** Bible Study 9:00am

Please feel free to come to our Sunday Morning Bible Study at 9:00am. We have a very enthusiastic group of adults who are happy to have you join us. We have learned a lot about the Bible and frankly, we have fun. Does anybody out there like to have fun, while at the same time learning? You are invited!

Carla

Board of Christian Education

The Board is hosting its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday at 10:15am after the 9:15am service. The hunt will be open to nursery school children through 2nd graders.



The Collins Family will be hosting the annual teacher fellowship cocktail party on Friday, April 24th at 6:30pm Details to follow.

An Adult Education Survey has been drafted and the BOCE is encouraging the whole congregation to participate. Hard copies will be available in the Fellowship Hall and the back of the Sanctuary. An e-mail copy will be sent too. The survey will take place April 26th through May 24th.

Who Wrote the Bible?

Everybody wants to know, who wrote the Bible? Some Christians believe it is the inerrant word of God, others consider it a Holy Scripture handed down through different interpretations and yet others think it is a quasi-historical document. Wherever you are in your understanding of the Bible, we invite you to join us as we explore this very question in four information-packed sessions.



BIBLE STUDY

We will be referencing the text "Who Wrote the Bible" authored by Richard E. Friedman who writes:

"People have been reading the Bible for over two thousand years. They have taken it literally, figuratively and symbolically. They have regarded it as divinely dictated, revealed or inspired, or as a human creation. They have acquired more copies of it than any other book. It is quoted (and misquoted) more often than other books. It is translated (and mistranslated) more than the others as well. It is a strange fact that we have never known with certainty who produced the book that has played such a central role in our civilization..."

Come learn about this remarkable book -
The Holy Bible
Wednesday nights 7:00-8:00pm
May 13th, 20th, 27th and June 3rd.
Facilitated by The Rev. Carla Dietz Carroll
The Meeting House
Fellowship Hall

(We have a few copies of the text available at Church and it is found on Amazon.com
<http://www.amazon.com/Who-Wrote-Bible-Richard-Friedman/dp/0060630353#>)

Please let us know if you are planning to attend!

Easter Baskets



This is a wonderful Lenten Outreach project for the entire family to participate in. Please fill an Easter basket with small toys, candy and books and return it to the Meeting House by April 5th. Baskets will be distributed by The Family and Children's Agency.

Faith-in-Film Ministry

Our Faith-in-Film series offers movies that make your heart sing and laugh and perhaps cry a bit. Join others in the lounge at Hill Top Homes on Sunday afternoons at 2:00pm to share the film, refreshments and discussion.



April 5th - Something the Lord Made

This movie is truly a story of resurrection. As two men work together they break society's boundaries and, in doing so, bring new life to children, to themselves - and to all of us.

June 7th - Summertime

"Summertime and the livin' is easy" goes the familiar tune. So let's join Katherine Hepburn and Rossano Brazzi in their romantic romp through the beautiful city of Venice in this classic film.

Calling all Junior and Senior High School students



Before finals and the end of the school year let's get together! Come to the Church on Wednesday, May 13th at 7:00pm and spend an hour or two reconnecting with Pastor John Livingston and your fellow Confirmands. This will be a time to look back and to look ahead - share stories and get some advice for life after high school. Come for some good conversation and fun with friends.

Thanks Caregiving Ministry!

So many people in our Family of Faith have benefited from the help, concern and loving care of our Caregiving Ministry. Recently, Marian Wilder asked that her heartfelt gratitude be passed along to our team of caregivers.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Caregiving Ministry of The United Church of Rowayton, it is dedicated to utilizing its spiritual gifts in a shared ministry that provides for the well-being of God's people. Caregivers are caring Christian friends who listen, understand, accept and pray for and with care receivers who are experiencing the joys and sorrows of life.

If you need the help of the Caregiving Ministry, please do not hesitate to contact Joanne Brown, 655-3713 or Ann DiLeone, 838-3169. All of our Ministry work is kept strictly confidential.

You Can Help Make Our 18th Annual Giant Tag Sale on May 30th a Success. . .

Plans are underway for our 18th Annual Giant Tag Sale, scheduled for Saturday, May 30th. This annual fundraising event for our Church has raised almost \$220,000 since 1992. Aside from providing much needed funds, the Tag Sale provides an opportunity for us to come together as a team. There is a lot of fun to be had, and new people to get to know. You can help in many ways - from donating merchandise, or providing storage space, to picking up merchandise, receiving, sorting, pricing, selling or baking.



Donate Merchandise:

Items to donate include: china, glassware, small working appliances, books, sporting and garden equipment, jewelry and linens (draperies, bedspreads, pillow shams only). New merchandise is also very welcome.

The Ladies Loft will once again be accepting donations of high quality clothing in excellent shape, washed and folded or hung, as appropriate. They are also accepting hand bags, wallets, belts, hats, scarves and shoes in excellent condition.

We can't handle: upholstered furniture, sofas, mattresses, box springs, records, textbooks/encyclopedias, Reader's Digest Condensed Books, magazines, skis or building supplies (including screens), exercise equipment, computers and peripherals.

Drop Off Merchandise:

Tag Sale workers will be in the Meeting House to receive goods on:

Mon. May 25	10 AM - 3 PM
Tues. May 26	10 AM - 4 PM and 7 to 9 PM
Wed. May 27	10 AM - 4 PM and 7 to 9 PM
Thurs. May 28	10 AM - Noon

Bake for the Bake Sale:

Our Bake Sale is a delicious way to help out. If you like to bake pies, cakes, breads, muffins, cookies, bar cookies or any other non-heat-sensitive goodies, please sign up during Fellowship Hour to bake.

Volunteer:

We forward to help get this sale together and help in any way possible - between graduations and other family commitments we always need new people to get involved. Workers are needed for the week of May 26th through May 31st. Sign up lists are in the Meeting House listing all the ways you can help and for each day. You can be a sorter, a tagger, a pricer, a receiver, a cashier, a seller, a baker or a security guard. Sign up for an hour or a day. It will be fun and rewarding.



Distribute Flyers:

We have "Hi Neighbor" letters that you can distribute on your block advising neighbors when they can donate merchandise to the Church. Pick up a handful at Church on Sunday or in the office.

Letters for acknowledging donations for tax purposes will be available.

Early Bird Shopping:
8:30 to 9:00 AM
\$10 Admittance Fee.
Spread the Word!

Silver Lake Summer Camp

Come and join the fun this summer at Silver Lake! Sessions begin June 28th and run through August 15th and are for anyone in 4th grade and up. There are variety of programs including "Mom and me," "Boys Only," "Girls Only" and a family camp conference. For more information and an online application or to see a real cool video, go to silverlake.ctucc.org.

"Spring Into Summer" Lunch

The Social Committee invites you to a "Spring Into Summer" lunch during Fellowship Hour on May 17th. Bring your favorite dessert or side dish to share. Look for a sign-up sheet in April.

2x4s Tuesday Luncheon

The 2x4s meetings are held the **SECOND AND FOURTH Tuesdays** in the Meeting House **EXCEPT in JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND SUMMER MONTHS**. The social hour starts at 11:30am and lunch follows at 12:00 noon. On the **SECOND** Tuesday lunch will be provided; on the **FOURTH** Tuesday bring your own lunch. Coffee and dessert are always provided. Donations are most welcome to help defray our expenses. Everyone is welcome no matter what your age.

April 14 - The Harmonica Guys, a chromatic lead/chord duo, who have brought back the unforgettable sounds of the world famous "Harmonica Rascals" and the "Harmonicats."

April 28 - John Carroll (Bring a Sandwich)

May 12 - The Blue Notes, one of our favorite groups, will present a new program for our enjoyment. **DON'T bring your LUNCH today!**

May 26 - The Lunch Bunch hits the road to convene at the American Steak House



"For Everything there is a Season. . ."

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Baptisms:

--Diana Valentina McAree,
daughter of Amanda Garcia and Ed McAree

Deaths:

--Rose Valentik

Miles for Myles - May 16th

Miles for Myles 10th annual family 5K fun run/walk which celebrates the life of Myles Marshall Beringer on the weekend of his birthday. The course will run through the scenic beach community of Rowayton. This year the event will be held Saturday, May 16th, rain or shine and will begin at the Rowayton Community Center. Registration begins at 8:00am and the race starts at 9:00am. Registration is \$20.00 for an adult and \$15.00 for a child. (Day of the race registration is \$25.00 for an adult and \$20.00 for a child). For more information, call Marcia Smith at 852-9439.

Donations may also be made in Myles' name. Checks should be made payable and sent to:



Myles Beringer Foundation
36 Beach Drive
Darien, CT 06820

UCNS Summer Camp

UCNS will again be offering our fantastic Summer Fun Camp with a five-week program beginning May 26th - June 26th. Each weekly session will center around a theme with activities focusing on water play, singing, nature, cooking, dramatic play, games and art exploration. The program is open to any child who is currently attending a drop-off Threes, Fours or Fives (pre-K) program, with priority registration given to current UCNS families.

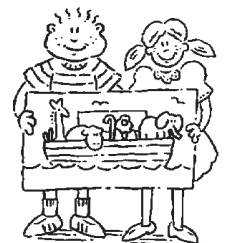
IN PERSON registration for current UCNS families only will take place Wednesday, March 4th 9:30 -10:30am. Spaces will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. If needed, Community registration will take place IN PERSON at UCNS on Monday, March 30th, 9:30am to 10:30am, again on first-come, first-served basis for any available slots. Each session is open to 20 children.

The fee for all full week sessions is \$225.00 (the first week will cost \$180), a three day week (M-W-F) is \$135, and a two day week (T-TH) is \$90. Registration fee of \$25.00 per family.

The program will take place at the United Church Nursery School from 9:30am-1pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesdays (same times) will be Beach Days at Bayley Beach. Parents will drop off and pick up their child each day at the appropriate location. For more info, contact Paula Keller, Director, UCNS at 853-3554.

UCNS ART SHOW

Now in its 7th year, the UCNS Art Show will be held at the UCR Meeting House on Saturday, May 9th, from 10am to 12 noon. On display will be the artwork and projects created by UCNS students over the course of the school year.



As in years past, we will have art activities for all children to get their creative juices flowing. In addition, there will be a Chinese paper cutter on hand, live music, face painting and lots of fun activities for the family.

For more information, contact Paula Keller, UCNS Director at 853-3554.
