

From the Pastor

One of my daily readers is a book titled *Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*. The author, Sarah Ban Breathnach (pronounced "Bon Brannock") celebrates quiet joys, simple pleasures and everyday epiphanies. Some say it is written just for women. I disagree. I have come to appreciate her wisdom, warmth, compassion and disarming candor. Sometimes I get so caught up in her writing that I read ahead, sometimes whole months at a time. I was most inspired, recently when I turned to her thoughts for June 18th (my mother's birthday). Even though my mom died many years ago, I still remember and celebrate her birthday in my heart so this reading was especially meaningful for me. I hope you find it helpful and meaningful as well.

June 18 - Choosing to Bloom

And the day came when the risk (it took) to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

Anais Nin

How much time, creative energy and emotion do we expend resisting change because we assume growth must always be painful? Much personal growth is uncomfortable, especially learning to set boundaries in relationships. When we commit to nurturing our authentic selves, people close to us are going to start noticing that changes are taking place. This is the season when growth in the garden, which has been gradual, now accelerates. It's the season for us to grow as well.

For it can be difficult to express your authentic needs by saying, "Sorry, I can't," when everybody else assumes you can. But it's worse to thwart the ascent of your authenticity. The day comes - maybe it's today - when "remaining tight in the bud" is more painful than blossoming. "Garden-making is creative work, just as much as painting

or writing a poem," the Victorian writer Hanna Rion tells us. "It is a personal expression of self, an individual conception of beauty." Gardening is also a wonderful way to gently explore some of the personal growth issues raised by authenticity. Mother nature is a patient mentor.

Can you find one perfect rosebud, either in your garden or at a flower shop? Place it on your desk or night table or kitchen shelf. The Talmud tells us that "Each blade of grass has its Angel that bends over and whispers, "Grow, grow, grow." So do we. (*Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*)

I encourage us, as individuals and as a Church, to be open to that whisper, "Grow, grow, grow." May we choose to blossom. May we, as a Church, search for new ways to help people grow. I recently saw some words about a spiritual curriculum - the words used to describe it capture how I feel about our Church and what our ministry and mission can accomplish if we work together - transforming lives. Know and love God. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Share God's good news. Commit to a life of service. Become a peacemaker. Embrace a love for all of God's people.

With love,



Memorial Sunday

Join us for worship on May 24th as we remember members and friends of our Family of Faith who have died throughout this past year.



Worship Schedule

- June 7th Communion
Mysterious Encounter - John 3:1-17
- June 14th High School Senior Recognition
Flourishing - Mark 4:26-34
- June 22nd In the Boat Together - Mark 4:35-41
- June 28th Hymn Sing
Healing Powers - Mark 5:21-43

Summer Worship Schedule

The Reverend John Livingston

- July 5th Sent with Power - Mark 6:1-13
- July 12th God-Inspired Joy - 2 Samuel 6:1-5
- July 19th Wherever We Are - 2 Samuel 7:1-14a
- July 26th God's Abundant Presence -
John 6:1-21
- Aug. 2nd Bread of Life - John 6:24-35

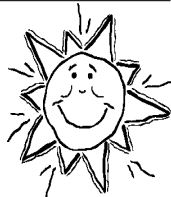
The Reverend Carla Dietz Carroll

- Aug. 9th Shaping Community -
Ephesians 4:25-5:2
- Aug. 16th Wisdom Quest -
1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14
- Aug. 23rd At Home in God - Psalm 111
- Aug. 30th Be Love - James 1:17-27
- Sept. 6th Be Opened - Mark 7:24-37

Rally Day - September 13th
10:15am Worship

Summer Worship

The worship experience of our Family of Faith remains an important and vital part of our overall program. During the months of July and August Services will be held in Pinkney Park starting on July 5th and will begin at 9:15am. This outdoor service, which has become very meaningful to many of our people, is casual, as people bring their own lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy the beauty of the Five Mile River and the peaceful setting by the gazebo. If it is raining, the service will be held in the Meeting House.



The final outdoor worship service will be on September 6th (Labor Day Weekend). Worship leadership will be shared by our Pastor John Livingston and Associate Pastor Carla Dietz Carroll.

Please do not park on Pennoyer Street in front of the Methodist Church. Please keep spaces open in front of the park for those who are handicapped or elderly.

High School Senior Recognition

Sunday, June 14th during worship, we will recognize our graduating seniors. Please join us as we affirm our commitment to supporting our own high school seniors and walk with them as they continue their life's journey into the future.

Music Notes –

Now Planning for the Fall

The handbell choirs, children's choir and senior choir will be taking a summer hiatus in a few short weeks. It has been a year filled with joyous song and rapturous ringing. When you see any of our dedicated musicians, be sure to give them a big pat on the back for their talent and commitment. However, the crux of this article is to get YOU thinking about next fall and you and your family making resolutions to get involved in the music program here at The United Church. We need you! No more excuses! Think about it. You have some time to get your calendars out and make plans for new beginnings in September.

Here are some reasons you should consider one of our choirs:

- You don't have to dress up – robes hide a lot.
- The ushers never pass the collection plate in the choir loft.
- You are guaranteed a seat on Christmas Eve.
- Music and words you rehearse stick with you for life.
- Be a part of a more personal and rewarding involvement in worship.
- Join a community like none other.
- God calls you to use your talents.
- Make wonderful music to the glory of God.

This program only thrives through the dedication of its members. The music program is only as good as the people who are willing to get and stay involved. The continued vibrancy depends on you! Nothing stays the same and we are looking for continued growth. Plan now!

If you have any questions, please contact Marsha Hall at 866-8118 or MJHarmony@aol.com

September Newsletter
Deadline
August 1, 2009

Congratulations to the Confirmation Class of 2009!

*Lucas Stever Aubrey
Rebecca Mai Culp,
William Doughty
Robert Eddie,
Lonneke Pauline Eenkema van Dijk
Rupert Jonathan Hansford
Megan Kelly Horne
Oliver Chapin Lowe
Deven Tracy Machette
Morgan Elizabeth Machette
Katharine Elizabeth Starkweather Marlow
Samuel Franklin Massey
Katherine McKay
Whitney Barlow Packer
John Harrison Pinkerton-Henson,
James Elias Smith
Geoffrey William Stewart
Lauren Kathleen Wachnicki*

Are We Open and Affirming?

There is no question that we, as a Church, make clear to anyone who reads the Order of Worship that all are welcome. But just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the question is not really whether we think we welcome everyone; the question is whether other people consider themselves welcome. This is particularly an important question when it comes to those in disadvantaged or marginalized groups.

One of the most vigorous ongoing civil-rights debates concerns gay rights in general, and particularly, gay marriage. Connecticut is in the vanguard of approving gay marriage. California, historically seen as a liberal state, has rejected it. There couldn't be a better time for The United Church of Rowayton to begin to discuss and examine our collective position on this issue, on gay rights in general, and on how welcoming we are to various other minority and special-interest groups.

The United Church of Christ has established a designation, called "Open and Affirming" or "ONA," that provides a framework for this self-examination. ONA is the formal designation for congregations in the UCC that have publicly welcomed people of all

sexual orientations into the full life and ministry of the church. There are 46 ONA churches in Connecticut, including United Congregational in Norwalk, First Congregational Church of Greenwich, First Congregational Church of Stamford, Saugatuck Congregational Church, and First Church in Fairfield. More information on ONA is available at www.uccoalition.org/programs/ona

The Board of Deacons, after much discussion, has approved the formation of an ad hoc committee to explore this issue, and to determine whether we, as a Church, want to elect ONA status. While the Deacons collectively hope and believe that the Congregation will decide that "all" really does mean "all"; the ultimate decision will be made by the Congregation.

We are asking anyone who is interested in helping the Congregation to engage in this process to join the Ad Hoc Committee. All are welcome. We expect the work of the Committee to take approximately a year. The Committee members will first educate themselves on the ONA program, including talking with local congregations that have completed the process. Next, Committee members will create opportunities to engage the entire Congregation in the discussion. Finally, the Committee will work to develop a consensus of the Congregation as to whether we want to elect the ONA designation. If we do, the Committee will prepare an "ONA statement" for approval by the Congregation.

You don't need to be on the Committee to participate in the ONA discussion. The Committee will make sure that everyone will have multiple opportunities to learn about, and be heard on, this issue.

If you are interested in joining the Committee, or simply want more information about it, please contact Patrick Begos at pwb@begoshorgan.com or 866-2091, or Sarah Starkweather at smstarkweather@hotmail.com or 203-656-3793. Or feel free to leave a message at the Church office. Once a meeting schedule for the Committee is determined, we will let you know.

Summer Worship Hours: 9:15am
July 5th - September 6th

Summer Office Hours:
Thursdays 9:00 - 1:00pm
Beginning July 1st

Associate Pastor's Study

Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.

A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.

But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.

He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Ordinarily, I am a news junkie. I listen to talk radio and news in the car, switch the television on for the 6:30 National News, use the equipment right in front of the TV at the gym, go online to the internet news feeds, on the weekends read the New York Times front to back and zealously read Time Magazine and Newsweek. I realize this is excessive, but I have learned to accept my desire to be in touch with the world at all times. Hey, it could be a worse addiction! Lately though, I find that I have not been tuning in and reading the news as much as usual – I have begun to turn it off and put the paper aside. The news is too difficult to ingest as of late and I find myself shaking and quaking at the next flu epidemic report and the latest dour economic prognostication. I am like the disciples in the boat with Jesus freaking out and shouting to him to help me out of my panic! "Where is your faith?" Jesus asks. It is a good question. Where is my faith when things go dark and negative and the seas of my existence swirl and splash about me? Why is it that I think life should be all rosie and easy to manage? It never has been. So, lately or maybe I should say, once again, I have made a decision to go to God and ask God for protection and for that which I am in need. I find a quiet place in the car, the gym, my living room, the backyard and seek the solace of God's love. It is always there as if waiting for me to come to my senses and turn inward to hear and experience that love. My summer is now dedicated to staying in touch not so much with the crazy world news but with God, through the practice of my faith. It is my prayer that you too will find peace, comfort and hope in the practice of your own expression of

faith this summer. I look forward to seeing you in August at the gazebo for worship and for Church School to start again in the fall. This has been a fantastic year for me for which I am very grateful to you all. Thank you for my work, thank you for your faith in me and thank you for giving me purpose. Peace this summer,

Carla

Special Dates to remember:

May 31st – Commissioning of Kentucky Mission Trip participants.

Please join us at worship as we commission, Carla and John Carroll, Ginny Green, John and Lynn Massey, Bill Peltz, Marcia Smith and Patrick Steele on their journey to Whitesburg, Kentucky to build and help out at H.O.M.E.S (Housing Oriented Ministries Established for Service)



June 7, 14, 21 Sundays - One Room Church School in the Meeting House. If you would like to volunteer to teach a small group of children with a curriculum provided, please let Carla know.

June 7th -13th - Kentucky Mission Trip!
June 14th – High School Senior Recognition
June 28th – Intergenerational Service

Christian Education News

Church School Teacher Orientation

September 8th at 7:30pm Carla will be running our annual teacher orientation, scheduling and training meeting in the Fellowship Hall. Volunteers who have signed up to teach for the 2009-2010 church school year should attend this very important meeting in order to pick your preferred days to teach and to get an overview of the curriculum. Don't miss it!

Rally Day!

On Sunday, September 13th, the BOCE will be hosting our Church School Rally Day and Ice Cream Social after worship in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

You Can Help Make Our 18th Annual Giant Tag Sale on May 31st a Success. . .

Plans are underway for our 18th Annual Giant Tag Sale, scheduled for Saturday, May 30th. This annual fund-raising event for our Church has raised almost \$215,000 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: artwork/frames, baby equipment and furniture, china, glassware, small working appliances, books, sporting and garden equipment and jewelry. New merchandise is also very welcome.

The Ladies Loft will once again be accepting donations of high quality ladies and children's 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. They also take linens - towels, sheets, bedspreads and rugs.

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:

Our ranks have thinned out due to moves, vacation plans and other obligations. We need some new blood to step forward to help get this sale together and help in any way possible. Workers are needed for the week of May 25th through May 30th. 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!

Relay for Life of Norwalk June 19th - 20th, 2009 Brien McMahon High School

3:00pm Setup

6:00pm Survivor Reception

Caregivers and Survivors welcome

7:00pm Opening Ceremony

9:00pm Luminaria Ceremony

All are welcome! Join a team - gather together 8-15 of your favorite people who love having fun and making a difference. Request your team packet today!

Join the committee! Committee members are now being recruited for team recruitment and retention, corporate sponsorship, logistics, entertainment, registration/accounting, survivorship, publicity, ceremonies and food.

For more information contact Diane Smilancsky at dsmilancsky@gmail.com



CAREGIVING MINISTRY

The Caregiving Ministry of The United Church of Rowayton, 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.

2009 Stewardship Update

We are successfully winding down our 2009 Stewardship Drive. We wish to thank all of you who have pledged.

And for the 35 folks who pledged in 2008 but have not pledged yet for 2009 please step up to the plate and pledge -- no matter how little. We are still short of our 2009 goal of \$400,000 (we are at \$370,000 and holding). As you know, due to the economy, we trimmed the Church's annual budget to the bare minimum— so to prevent the Church from cutting back any further on its vital mission we need the Congregation's full participation to meet our budget for this year.

And it is as easy as going to the Church's new website (www.ucrowayton.org) then click on the Stewardship tab; from the drop down menu click the Online Pledging option. You can either use a credit card (and get mileage points) or have the money electronically withdrawn from you bank account. You can also make your pledge the old fashioned way by putting a check in the mail...or even dropping it off with Kris Jenkins at the office.

The good news is that so far we are at 92% of our Stewardship goal. If you have any questions about pledging please contact Dwight Collins at: dcollins@collins-llc.com or Tim Smith at: docstudios@aol.com.

Again, thanks to all who have pledged. And we wish you all a fun and relaxing summer

For Everything there is a Season. . ."

Ecclesiastes 3.1

Baptisms:

- Isla Lily Trail,
daughter of Tamsin and Jeffrey Trail
granddaughter of Bettina and Peter
Drummond-Hay
- Samuel Franklin Massey,
son of Lynn and John Massey
- Robert James Eddie,
son of Carolyn and Alan Eddie
- Natalie Starr Pank
daughter of Mariaelana and Andrew Pank,
granddaughter of Brenda and Rick Pank,
Palma Calorossi, Naz Malazia

Deaths

- Patricia Gage

Summer Pledge Payments

Like any household, our Church has bills to pay year-round, whether we are all here or not. As Congregation members take their vacations this summer, our financial secretary and business manager will appreciate it if you keep your pledge payments current. The Church's financial needs continue throughout the summer, as ever, and the steady financial support of Congregation members and friends through plate offerings and pledge payments is needed to keep our Church in sound financial health.



Enjoy your summer, and please remember to keep your contributions current.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

www.ucrowayton.org

As the dog days of summer approach and you are looking for things to do – check out our new church website – www.ucrowayton.org (for commuters, Google it on your Blackberry while riding the rails). It has the latest and greatest news (including this newsletter) as well as a wonderful photo gallery, John's and Carla's sermons, the Church history including archival photos of the Church's construction back in the Bronze Age in 1962. It also allows you to make pledges electronically. Any thoughts or suggestions on ways to improve the site are also greatly welcomed. You can email Tim Smith at docstudios@aol.com or Kris Jenkins at ucr210@aol.com.

*Even if you have filled out this form in the past, please do so again,
so that we may keep our files up to date and correct.
Please mail, e-mail or drop the filled out form off at the
Church as soon as you are able. Thank you!*

**The United Church of Rowayton
Official Registration
Church School Families
2009-2010 School Year**

1. Parents/Guardians: _____ e-mail _____

2. Address: Street _____ City _____ Zip _____

3. Phone(s): _____

4. Please fill in the information below completely.
**LIST YOUR CHILDREN IN THE GRADES THEY WILL BE
ATTENDING STARTING SEPTEMBER 2009**
Pre K is for children 3-4 years old.
Toddler or Nursery is for infants – age 2

Child's Name – Any Allergies?	Birthday	Grade in 2009-2010

5. 2009-2010 Church School, I would like to teach or assist in the class checked below: *(YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM)*

Your Name: _____

___ Pre-Kindergarten (ages 3-4)

___ Fourth Grade

___ Kindergarten

___ Fifth Grade

___ First Grade

___ Sixth Grade

___ Second Grade

___ Middle School (6th, 7th, 8th)

___ Third Grade