



# Westminster Chimes

Volume 2010 #4

March 24, 2010

Editor: Renée Bucklin

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT 9 AM & 11 AM Preschool through 8th Grade

Services at 9 AM & 11AM unless otherwise noted.

### MARCH 27: Saturday 6-7 PM CELEBRATION SERVICE: LAUGHTER

Everyone please join Nathan DeSisto & friends and Rev. Barbara for a service celebrating the joy of laughter.

### MARCH 28 LOVE IS THE SPIRIT & SERVICE OUR LAW Rev. Barbara Fast *Children start in the Sanctuary*

### APRIL 4 REAL LIFE Rev. Barbara Fast

Faulkner writes, "The only thing worth writing about is the human heart in conflict with itself." It is Easter Sunday. What does this holy day have to teach us about the fully human heart.

### APRIL 11: *One Service: 10AM* PLANTING SEEDS" Rev. Judith Downing

Planting seeds involves risk and requires patience. Some germinate, flourish and bear fruit. Others are lost to the whims of nature. It's a worthy spiritual practice for us to tend to the seeds planted in our backyard gardens as well as those planted within ourselves.

*We are happy to welcome Rev. Judith Downing back to Westminster*

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Last Sunday, the Board announced that, after much deliberation and investigation into alternate sites for church operations during construction next year, they had decided to make an offer to the Episcopal Diocese to rent the St. Matthias Church in Coventry, which has been empty for two years due to a merger of two congregations. Last week we put in our offer and request for a lease, starting June 1, 2010 and ending August 31, 2011, with a month to month lease thereafter if necessary. Our offer of \$1400/month plus utilities (their request was \$1800/mo) will be brought before two Diocese committees for review and approval, or alternate offer. The \$1400 suggested rent equals the parsonage rent. We hope to hear back by mid-April. Perhaps it seems strange that we decided to move away from E Greenwich and the church property for this building year. Let me explain. Westminster's members and friends love being together! In a time of transition and change, it seemed prudent to the Board to seek out a location where we could experience the year uninterrupted and with as few disruptions to our yearly calendar of events as possible. It became increasingly clear that parents also wished that our church school operate in the same location as the adults. It seemed incumbent upon us to find a place where we could all worship, work and play together. The Board took their job seriously. We explored using the parsonage for church school, offices and committee meetings but felt the space was inappropriate, somewhat inaccessible and not fire code safe for anything other than home ownership. (continued on next page)

We re-evaluated the consideration of using our own Sanctuary for church services because of the concern over heavy building equipment on the property, parking restrictions, and general disruption of the grounds making it possibly unsafe. We investigated rental of storage units for the contents of our Parish House as well as for office space, church school and committee meetings but discovered the cost prohibitive and the space inadequate. We searched for empty local business space to rent but determined some had fire code issues and others were not adequate for our needs. We even explored the rental of empty elementary schools but discovered the cost too high. The search was thorough.

Thanks to Bev Burgess, we heard about St Matthias Church in Coventry. Rev Barbara, DRE Renee Pierre, Judy Adourian, Bev Burgess and myself met a representative from the Diocese for a walk through. It seemed perfect! St Matthias is right on Route 3 (Nooseneck Hill Road), and easily accessible by 95. It is approximately a 15 minute (9 mile) ride from Kenyon Avenue and a mile West on Route 3 from Exit 6. It has a lovely, large, light wood sanctuary that seats 200, so we can worship together in one service. There is a separate area for the choir that also has a piano and organ. The sanctuary has a stage and amplification system. There is a ramp into the church building for those who require some assistance. The remainder of the first floor has plenty of office space for all staff, and storage galore. The downstairs consists of an ample kitchen, very large fellowship hall and plenty of classroom space. The downstairs does not have a ramp, but we were assured that coffee hour could be easily enjoyed between the front vestibule and the sanctuary. There is ample parking, a fenced-in play yard, and a wayside pulpit for announcing our arrival into the neighborhood. All our church meetings can take place uninterrupted; our fundraising events can continue as planned (income we did not include in our 2010 budget); our Sharing Locker will have plenty of space to operate. Lastly, we can continue to rent the parsonage for income.

Can we afford it? John Searle's inclusion of costs and savings into a revised budget for 2010 suggests a possible modest increase in cost. He tells me (and I listen to him) that his estimates for utilities at St. Matthias are conservative based on limited information from the diocese. As in any budget year we will watch the income and expenses carefully and keep you informed at congregational meetings.

What about the moving? As I have mentioned before, Dan Aubin has taken the lead on this aspect of the transition. We have the opportunity to move everything we will need for daily operations to the new location, eliminating the need to rent onsite storage. There are some items, such as the pianos in the Parish House that need not be moved, but can now be rolled into our current Sanctuary and stored at an appropriate temperature for the year. As well, the Sanctuary can be used to store boxes of books, artwork, or other items not deemed absolutely necessary for daily use or church school. Each committee should continue to carefully evaluate their church house belongings with an eye towards four decisions: toss, sell in our yard sale, box and store, box and move. Boldly mark each box accordingly.

As we get closer to the end of the church year, we can take a field trip to St. Matthias. We could even hold a service there before the end of June and bless the space as our own. We could have a church picnic on the grounds. And with the possible demolition date of summer for our Parish House, we can hold summer services in our new location.

As a Board we have attempted to be as deliberate and intentional about our decisions regarding our home for next year as we have been with all other decisions. This beloved Westminster community is firmly in our sights and in our hearts as we move forward in this exciting adventure. Please share any concerns you have with the Board – we DO listen. And remember: keep your eyes on the prize!

Faithfully,  
Jan Searles,  
President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Friends

March 22, 2010

Spring! The birds are waking the day. When I arrive home at night, I hear some peepers. Nothing stays the same. Change flows all around us and into our lives, bidden or not. Spring is a time for thinking of new life arising out of the old.

Palm Sunday, Passover & Easter are next week. Passover is one of my favorite holidays. It is a holiday that I came to love through my marriage. I love the story of the struggle for freedom, not just external, but internal, story as metaphor. I love the yearly ritual. The Seder dinner, where family and friends of all ages, gather together to be reminded of what it takes to live a decent life: That we cannot merely think of ourselves and that the struggles for freedom continue throughout the world.

This ethical tradition is transmitted during a ritual meal. The smell of matzo ball soup, roasted chicken, & carrot tsimmes remind of life: the salt water, tears, the haroset, life's sweetness. I savor the mealtime laughter, the singing and the sharing greatly. Many of those I first celebrated the holiday with have died. Every year, it is a holy meal. The Seder meal that Jesus celebrated became the "last supper" for Christians, and the basis for communion rituals on Sundays.

The Jewish tradition places great emphasis on ethical living, so that justice is done in this world. The focus is on this life and the growing of wisdom that takes our whole lives to accomplish. In our Wisdom class, we discussed Psalms. We worried and rejected the passages that described anger and rage and called upon God to provide revenge. Some of us wrestled with God & Lord language. Another held a grandmother's bible. One had tried chanting the psalms as if they were Buddhist chants. One spoke of how Psalm 139 was the powerfully consoling psalm for African American slaves.

I wondered why these texts matter to me. What with all the issues around language and retribution? They catalogue the range of human experience, with all those difficult emotional struggles and, yes, joyful emotions too. They also expose shadow sides of our nature. We here in the "civilized" world might think we are not like *those* people. But I wonder. If things become too fragmented and frightening, it takes a clear head and practiced spirit to provide the calm words and still water of presence to an agitated heart.

We spoke of the nature and power of fear, and noted how it has been used to influence national policy debates. It seems fear has lost, for now, in our health care debate. The health care bill passed! It matters that this nation enacts laws that facilitate universal access to health care. Religion should call us to uphold the ethical imperatives of our highest natures. This legislation is something to celebrate!

Nothing stays the same. It matters that we pay attention, every season we share this life together. When spring arrives, I think of Psalm 100, Make a Joyful Noise. It has been sung for thousands of years. Each Spring, earth sings its awakening, flowers push to the light, we laugh at candle lit Seder tables, and join in Sunday after Sunday. Sign up for our Seder. It is Tuesday March 30. Join in the worldly song of life!

*In good faith and with love,  
Rev. Barbara*



## Religious Education Program

Renee Pierre  
Director of Religious Education

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-4 and by appointment

### UPCOMING RE CALENDAR:

#### March 28:

9 am: Children begin in the Sanctuary & finish their morning in Fellowship Hall; Palm Sunday  
11 am: Children PreK through grade 5 begin in the Sanctuary

**April 4: EASTER SUNDAY-** Children in grades 8 and younger are invited to Children's Chapel in Fellowship Hall. Service will be followed by an Easter Egg Hunt. Bunnies will in the Hedge Room following the Easter Egg Hunt.

#### April 11:

9 am: Children begin in their Classes; Term 4 Begins. Theme: Stories from around the World  
11 am: Children begin in the Sanctuary

**CHECK OUT FUN STUFF AT:** <http://wuc-re.blogspot.com>

**COMING OF AGE CLASS:** Our next Coming of Age Class will be held on Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 pm. Our topic is: Worship. Don't forget to bring your homework!

#### TEACHER ORIENTATION - SAVE THE

**DATE:** Term 4 Teacher Orientation will take place on Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10 am to 12 noon. Two additional teachers are needed for this term. Our theme this term is: World Religions.

**TERM 3 TEACHERS ROCK!** Please welcome back to the Sanctuary for Sunday morning services our Term 3 teachers who have been teaching for the past 8 weeks. Many thanks to: Vikki Paull, Kerrie Bross, Kristen Morelli, Sunny Dennis, Stephen Paull, Jamie LaSalle, Lauren Kalian, and Dan Aubin.

## THE BOOKS OF WISDOM: PROVERBS, SONG OF SOLOMON AND JOB

3rd Wednesday of the month - April 21 and May 19; 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Join **Rev. Barbara Fast** and facilitator **Cindy Reiser** for this workshop. It will be some education, some contemplation, and some sharing in order to hear what, if any, wisdom these texts may contain for each of us. If you have a Bible, please bring it.

### YARD SALE REMINDER

As a reminder, a section in the cellar has been set aside for Westminster committee contributions to the Green Sanctuary yard sale scheduled for Friday, May 7, and Saturday, May 8. We ask that as you're sorting through your committee's or group's church possessions, you set aside articles suitable for the yard sale. Things for the yard sale should be in good condition. Anything requiring repair is not appropriate because these things generally don't sell. This should be completed before Thursday, May 6.

Beginning the week of the yard sale, Westminster members will be invited to donate goods to the yard sale. Please contribute only things in good shape. That means nothing that needs repair or is missing parts. Also, no TVs as they don't sell (particularly with the all digital broadcasting); TVs can be recycled at RIRRC or, in many towns, at the local transfer station.

The proceeds from this yard sale will go 50% to the Westminster general fund and the other 50% to the Green Sanctuary pass-through account. For information about the yard sale, please contact **Natalie Aubin** or **Celia Humphreys**.

## WHERE DO YOU FIT IN? A WUC VOLUNTEER JOB FAIR - APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>

Are you puzzled by what different committees or groups actually 'do' at WUC?

Are you looking for a place to fit in to the WUC Community?

On April 11, after the single services, there will be a Volunteer Job Fair where various committees and groups will have representatives available to help you put the pieces together. They will answer your questions and let you know how you can help.

Questions? Want your committee or group to take part? Contact **Mary Haney**.

### Sharing Locker

Item for April

**Animal Food**

## BOOK SALE - MARCH 26 & 27



Please get all your unwanted books together for the book sale. All books, CDS, Videos, and books-on-tape are wanted and needed.

Please don't bring any magazines, dictionaries or condensed books. I also need people to help with set up and selling. If you can help, please let me know via email or phone. Thanks, **Pam Bazar**

## BOOK SIGNING

**Mort White** will have a signing for his books on March 27 from 4-8 PM and Saturday 10-3PM at Fellowship Hall at the book sale.



## WESTMINSTER TO HOST PRESENTATION: "MOVING RHODE ISLAND FORWARD: GETTING BACK ON TRACK BY FIXING OUR UPSIDE- DOWN TAX SYSTEM"

Please join us at Westminster Unitarian on **Sunday March 28th at 12:30pm in the Hedge room** for a special workshop about how we can work to fight against devastating cuts to our cities and towns and help achieve a more balanced budget and tax system for Rhode Island.

Daniel Bass, the coordinator of Ocean State Action's tax/budget campaign will give a brief presentation "Moving Rhode Island Forward: Getting Back on Track by Fixing our Upside-Down Tax System." The presentation covers why Rhode Island has become over-reliant on property taxes, and how we can help fix our upside-down tax system to ensure that Rhode Island can make the investments that are the foundations for a strong economy and healthy communities, including investments in our schools and higher education, health care, affordable housing, child care, and more.

The brief presentation will be followed by a group discussion and action opportunity to advocate for responsible and practical solutions to our budget deficit. Please RSVP to Carolyn Mark.

## GET A WAY RENTAL

MT. DESERT ISLAND,

MAINE: 3 bedroom cottage

for rent by the week - July

thru Sept. Access and view of

ocean; near Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor. For

availability and rates, call **Bruce Foresman**



**WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER  
ALL WOMEN WELCOME**

We meet every Thursday evening.

Setup/Meeting: 7:00 to 7:15 PM  
Announcements: 7:15 to 7:30PM  
Program: 7:30 to 8:45 PM  
Place: Fellowship Hall

Our Mission/Statement of Purpose is to enhance and encourage:

- \* Spirituality
  - \* Support of each other
- Mar. 25 – Cool Congregations Workshop – Reducing Household CO<sub>2</sub> Footprints  
Mar. 27 – Womensphere Event: *Deep Listening* with Joanne Friday  
Mar. 30 – Seder  
April 1 – Curriculum: *Voluntary Simplicity*, Chapter 2

**YOGA**

Spring is the traditional season of rebirth. Achieve your own physical and karmic rebirth by joining Westminster's own yoga class.

We welcome those of all abilities – our class is enjoyable and welcoming for those completely new to the practice and challenging enough for veteran yogis. The approach is centered on the self-achieving what you can at that moment – and we teach and encourage modifications so no one pushes themselves to the point of pain.

We meet every Tuesday evening from 6:30- 8:00 in Fellowship Hall. Students are welcome to bring their own mats or borrow one as needed. For more information, call Elizabeth Wayland-Seal or email her. Namaste!

**CLOWNTOWN**

Greenwich Bay Women's Club's carnival for all ages benefits RI Meals on Wheels and Well One.

Saturday, Mar. 27 10a.m. – 2p.m.  
Swift Gym  
East Greenwich  
*Free Admission*

**APRIL'S CHARITY OF THE MONTH –  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE  
ISLAND CAMP SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Westminster shares unrestricted cash placed in our collection basket 50/50 with a different charity each month. With approval from our minister and Board of Trustees, the Share the Plate Committee selected *Audubon Society of Rhode Island Camp Scholarship Fund* for the month of April.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island, originally founded in 1897 to halt the slaughter of birds used in the day's fashions, has been offering nature day camps for over 30 years. They aim to provide campers with opportunities to develop and understand the relationship between themselves and the natural world. Year after year, children connect with nature and build a sense of respect and responsibility towards the environment through hands-on learning experiences.

Audubon Summer Camps are conveniently located at three of their wildlife refuges. These sites offer campers the opportunity to explore a variety of protected and carefully maintained wildlife habitats. These include woodland trails, fields, meadows, ponds, streams, salt marshes, and the rocky shore of Narragansett Bay. It's the perfect environment for adventure, exploration, learning, and loads of fun!

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island may provide financial assistance to parents/guardians, with special circumstances, to help send their child to camp. Camp Scholarships are available based on need, and on a first come/first served basis. They have three scholarship categories available based on the **Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines**. The categories are *25% scholarship, 50% scholarship, and 75% scholarship*. Every applicant must contribute at least 25%. More than one scholarship may be awarded to a family, but only one scholarship will be awarded per child.

Guidelines for Donations:

Checks and Cash Envelopes written out to WESTMINSTER will go 100% to Westminster.

If you wish to contribute directly to the charity, please write a SEPARATE check to the charity. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Unrestricted Cash will be split 50/50 between Westminster and the Charity.

For questions about sharing the plate, please contact a member of the Share the Plate Committee, Kristen Morelli, Bill Stone, Celia Humphreys, or Nathan DeSisto. To make a charitable organization suggestion, please fill out a Nomination Form located in our mailbox.

## WESTMINSTER CALENDAR

3/25 7:00 PM WOW (FH)  
3/26 4-8 PM Book sale & signing (FH)  
3/27 9-2 PM Book sale & signing (FH)  
3/27 6:00 PM Celebration Service (CH)  
3/28 9/11 AM Worship  
3/28 9/11 AM RE  
3/28 12:15 PM Membership Committee (W)  
3/28 12:30 PM Social responsibility (H)  
3/30 6:15 PM Seder (FH)  
3/31 6:15 PM Jr. Choir (CH)  
3/31 7:15 PM Choir (CH)  
4/1 7:00 PM Men's Group (W)  
4/1 7:00 PM WOW (FH)  
4/3 9-noon Teacher Orientation (FH)  
4/4 9/11 AM Worship  
4/4 9/11 AM RE  
4/4 6:30 PM Sr. Youth Group (W)(FH)(K)  
4/6 6:30 PM Yoga (FH)  
4/7 4:00 PM Caring Circle (FH)  
4/7 6:15 PM Jr. Choir (CH)  
4/7 7:00 PM Strategic Planning (W)  
4/7 7:15 PM Choir (CH)

### The Caring Circle is Here to Help You

If you have experienced a setback that has left you or a family member ill, or in need of meals, visits, rides or other help, please contact Nancy Rieser or Rev. Barbara Fast (phone 401-884-3561).



## CHIMES DEADLINES

DEADLINE: April 1<sup>st</sup>

MAILING: April 7<sup>th</sup>

## WESTMINSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

*Westminster Unitarian Church welcomes all individuals without regard to race, color, physical challenge, sexual orientation, age, or national origin.*

Church Office: 401-884-5933  
Fax Number: 401-885-2710  
Minister: Barbara Fast  
minister's study: 401-884-3561  
Religious Ed Coordinator: Renee Pierre  
Music Director: Nonetta Shatakhtsian  
Office Administrator: Judy Brown  
E-mail: [westminsteruu@verizon.net](mailto:westminsteruu@verizon.net)  
Website: [www.westminsteruu.org](http://www.westminsteruu.org)

Office Hours: 9AM to 1 PM Monday - Friday

## WESTMINSTER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

### March 28

Ushers: 9:00 AM  
11:00 AM  
*Volunteer needed*  
Essjay Foulkrod  
Jane Lindo  
Judith Abbott

Flowers:

### April 4

Ushers: 9:00 AM Katrina Pillay  
11:00 AM Nick & Donna Schmader  
Flowers: The Congregation

To volunteer, write your name on the schedule in Fellowship Hall, or contact Judy Brown, the Office Administrator.

If you prefer to have the Chimes e-mailed to you, please contact Judy Brown in the Church office weekdays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

## PASSOVER SEDER 2010



**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 30, at 6:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Gather between 5:45 and 6:15. (**NOTE:** This is earlier than usual start because folks have school and work Wednesday.) Jerry Tisser and Laurie Tyce will be co-leaders.

**SIGN-UP SHEET** is in Fellowship Hall. You should sign up so we can plan for seating, nursery care, and provisions. Since this is a cooperative event, we need your help with set-up and clean-up. Please indicate your availability when you sign up. There are **2** sheets: one for attendance, one to indicate what you will be bringing. Please complete both sheets!

**CONTRIBUTION:** \$3/adults, \$1.50/kids - \$5/family limit.

**CEREMONY:** Recognizing the wide diversity of people who attend this event, we attempt to balance the traditional ceremonies of Passover with a liberal mix of education and fun. The service is in English, lasts 45-60 minutes, and is followed by songs, dinner, and dessert.

**DINNER** is “organized” potluck. Aside from sign-up items, please be aware that certain foods should **NOT** be brought: ham, baked goods, like cakes or brownies. If you have a family Passover specialty, we’d love for you to share it with us!

**SOUP:** Once again, we hope to have matzo ball soup. If you can make enough for about 20 people, please contact Donna Poland.

If you are still confused or would like some advice, please call or email Jerry or Laurie!

To make the occasion more festive (and clean up easier!):

### **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN HOLIDAY PLATES AND SILVERWARE**

Many people bring a paper bag and bring their dishes home for washing. **WE WILL PROVIDE:** tablecloths, napkins, wine goblets, and paper cups, as well as wine and grape juice. Those with young children will want to bring high chairs/booster seats.

**GUESTS:** Your friends or family are welcome to join us. It's a nice way to introduce someone to the church! Please sign them up and tell them which food to bring. The cost is the same.

**SEATING:** We can seat 80-90 people. Seating is first come/first serve, so come early if you have a group wanting to sit together. Each table seats 9.

**NURSERY CARE:** Nursery care will be provided for infants and toddlers during the service prior to the meal. You must reclaim your child for the meal. We need to know if you are in need of nursery care, so please indicate that on the sign-up sheet.

**OTHER CHILDREN:** Out of respect for the holiday, please plan to supervise your children for the entire evening.

**DRESS** for the holidays, as you feel appropriate.

**QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:** Call Jerry Tisser or Laurie Tyce.

Hope to see you there --- sign up soon!