



Westminster Chimes

Volume 2009 #11

May 27, 2009

Editor: Renée Bucklin

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

MAY 31 – 10AM

“Get in the Game”
Rev. Barbara Fast

Cal Ripkin’s book by that title has useful advice for life and our shared ministry. We hope you like the sports metaphors.

Special Congregational Meeting
11:30 a.m.

JUNE 7

9:00a.m.
RE Sunday Worship Celebration

11:00a.m.
Coming of Age Service
Rev. Barbara Fast and Renee Pierre

You are invited to celebrate the Coming of Age of our four 8th graders and their families.

JUNE 14 – 10AM

Standing on Holy Ground
Rev. Barbara Fast

Jacob wrestled with God alone all night and into the morning. Moses stood before a burning bush and was told to remove his shoes. How do we recognize the holy in our lives?

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

What a great turnout for last Sunday’s worship service and Annual Meeting. It was clear that the work we do here is important to each of you, that you are concerned about the decisions we make and the way in which we make them. Thank you for your thoughtful comments, your questions for clarification and your attention to detail. Together we get the job done!



Next Sunday, May 31st, you have an opportunity to take a giant step closer to building our future. Most of you have received Bill Stone’s report by email, while those who prefer hard copy should have received it by regular mail. Please take the time to review the Building Committee’s report, the architectural plans and Peggy’s beautiful rendering. The agenda is simple: review, discuss, and vote to move ahead with a capital campaign. Don’t miss this opportunity to participate in this historic decision for Westminster.

This past week, the capital campaign co-leaders (Bev Burgess and Abby Addington-May) and our annual budget co-leaders (Maureen Souza and Patricia Vinci) met with our feasibility study consultant, some members of the Board and finance to talk about the dual campaigns. The energy in the room was palpable. We all agreed that the church is ready to take this step – that we have been working methodically and patiently over the past three years to reach this point.

As you know, our bylaws do not have any provision for absentee voting. However, if you are unable to attend the meeting but have some comments or reflections which you would like me to share with the congregation, please email me or call me evenings. We need every voice to be heard.

Faithfully,
Jan Searles, President

Dear Friends,

May 24, 2009

“ Love is the spirit of this church, and service its law... ”

It is Memorial Day Sunday and I am home. It is strange not to be preaching on a Sunday, but this Sunday I am doing something different, I am resting from the pleasure and responsibility of preaching and sharing worship with you. And I am doing more than resting. Today, my son returns home from college and old friends are visiting for the weekend. It is a weekend of personal renewal and reconnection for me.

Such time has value for me and for my ministry with you. Some would call it a “Sabbath time”. Earlier this week I sat with six colleagues of our East Greenwich clergy group. We reflected on what Sabbath means. It was a shared time I treasure. The history and tradition of “Sabbath” and the importance of Sabbath time for human beings will be the topic of my final sermon for the year June 21st.

Now is a time filled with important business of the Church. Last Sunday found us with a full house in the Sanctuary and in Fellowship Hall. It was such a satisfying service and annual congregational meeting. The joyful energy in the sanctuary fed me. The fullness and variety of voices within the service created a nourishing meal of diverse and delightful spiritual courses. Let me thank Alice Marchant again, for her spirited inspiration and truthful and humor filled message that focused our minds and hearts on the importance of this community.

The Annual Congregational Meeting followed the service, which was alive with the spirit of intelligent care and sincere appreciation. Where much work is accomplished much appreciation is deserved. So *thank you, thank you, thank you*. *Thank you* Bill Stone for your service on the Board and your continuing service to Westminster’s future. I was also so happy to the return of the Good Egg Award and to see it given to Tom Townsend. *Thank you, thank you, thank you*, Tom!

Whatever we seek to accomplish we should never be too busy to say *thank you* to one another. I hope that I acknowledge your efforts sufficiently. Please know that I do.

Of course a congregation needs the participation of everyone in one way or another. WE need good eggs by the dozen! The congregation would not be alive without all of you working and playing and enjoying the Westminster *spirit*.

I guess that is what I felt so greatly last Sunday, the Westminster *spirit* freely flowing among us, working though us and towards the future generations. Let us call on that spirit this next Sunday. This coming Sunday we will meet for our congregational vote. You will hear from the Building committee and learn how we will turn dreams into reality and how much it will require. Then you will vote and decide whether to move forward with the building campaign. Such undertakings require all of us, to make our best effort, in good faith and true living our values this day. The work of the church is always for the present and for something greater. It is for the *spirit*.

In good faith and with love,

Rev. Barbara

LOBSTER ROLL UPDATE

First of all, thank you so much to everyone who helped us with “Lobster Roll Day.” We couldn’t possibly individually thank here all the people who made the event possible.

We sold 913 rolls, and we made about \$4,000. Considering the state of the economy, that’s pretty good. Another successful fundraiser!

Thanks so much,
Pam Bazar & Maryann Connor

HEALTH ALERT TO ALL STAFF AND MEMBERS AT WUC

HEALTH DEPARTMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR RHODE ISLAND states the following:

NO BARE HANDS SHALL TOUCH PREPARED FOOD THAT IS BEING SERVED.

Compliance is requested for health and sanitation reasons of all servers of food at our church for every function. Latex gloves must be worn and are available in the kitchen.

Cecile Mark, Property Coordinator

ATTENTION ALL WOMEN!

On May 28 at 7:30 promptly the Women's Group will gather in Fellowship Hall for a self-assessment and exploration of our vision. We urge all women in the congregation to attend and help to shape the future of our Women's Group.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on the direction you think our group should take, activities and programs that would sustain your involvement and obstacles that prevent you from attending now.

Please join us for this exciting and informative evening. Tea and light refreshments will be available.

SEWING MACHINES WANTED



Now is the time! Clear out your closets and recycle your gently used sewing machine. The Social Responsibility Committee will collect your working machine for the International Institute of Rhode Island.

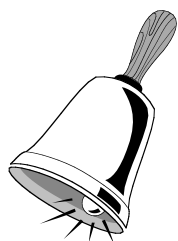
The International Institute of Rhode Island is in the process of forming a sewing collaborative so refugee women can sew garments for sale. A big challenge is helping refugees find gainful employment – a situation made all the more difficult in this current environment. Your unused sewing machine can have a new and useful life. Contact Donna Schmader to make transportation arrangements.



CARING CIRCLE CORNER

Do you remember the tooth fairy who used to leave cash under your pillow when you lost one of your baby teeth? Well, the Caring Circle seems to have a soap fairy who is leaving soap for the boxes we make up for shut-ins. The Caring Circle thanks this anonymous donor. It is much appreciated.

The Caring Circle is in particular need of blank cards, get well cards and sympathy cards. You can leave donations of these type cards at the caring circle boxes in the church house vestibule. Also, we have special occasion cards (such as thank you, birthday, friendship and others) that were donated and we can't use. Look for a box of these cards at the kiosk in Fellowship Hall. If you need special occasion cards, please feel free to take them.



Religious Education News & Calendar

Renee Pierre

Religious Education Coordinator

401-884-5933 (W)

SUNDAY MAY 31st: Each class will be preparing gifts to give to the class below them. We will present these gifts the following week on RE RECOGNITION SUNDAY June 7th.

SUNDAY JUNE 7TH AT 9 AM: **INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE** Join us for stories, gratitude and gifts as we celebrate our year of Religious Education at Westminster and the importance of Religious Exploration for all ages. The WUC Junior Choir will be singing as well. Join us for RE Sunday Sundaes following the service.

SUNDAY JUNE 7TH AT 11 AM: COMING OF AGE SERVICE The Coming of Age class will co-lead the service with Rev. Barbara and Renee Pierre. Join us as we mark this very important time in their lives and in the life of their families. They will share their Statement of Belief and we will welcome them into the congregation and into the Senior Youth Group as they will have completed their formal Religious Education classes at Westminster.

SUNDAY JUNE 14TH: 10 am RE For All Ages - TBA

IT IS EASY BEING GREEN! Our thanks to the Green Sanctuary Committee representatives who spoke with the children on Sunday, Natalie Aubin and Celia Humphreys. The children learned about “greening” our church and ways we can green our homes. The morning was topped off with our “It’s Easy Being Green” Project to create “green cleaning” products to sell and raise funds for the Providence Animal Rescue League. This was our final project in our Compassionate Care of Animals with Laura Carlson of the Humane Society. Our thanks go to the volunteers who helped with our project including: Bev Burgess, Kristen Morelli, Donna Vagshenian, Oliver Tyce, Julie Kennedy, Cory Baker, Erica Perrault, Tom Killmurray, and Teddy and Laura Carlson. Our thanks to everyone

who purchased a bucket and supported our efforts!

CHILDREN’S SUMMER R.E. PROGRAM

During the summer months, the children at Westminster will be learning about the earth - the home we share with all living things, and how we can behave in caring ways for our world. We are planning many interesting lessons, hands-on activities and some earth-centered songs. These activities are appropriate for children ages 4 to 12.

We have a core group of volunteers to co-lead these classes, but are looking for a few more who can share their love of the earth with our children. No teaching experience is required. A co-leader orientation will be held in early June for all volunteers.



If you are interested in having your child participate in the program, or can co-lead a class, please contact Natalie Aubin.

MOVIE NIGHT: JUNE 12TH AT 7PM WHAT THE BLEEP: DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

The extended Director’s Cut of the international hit What the BLEEP Do We Know!? includes new scientific findings that supplement the original movie, and goes more deeply into the concepts explored. New interviews with sixteen of the world’s top physicists, engineers, physicians, biologists, researchers, journalists and mystics, who talk about consciousness, psi research, physics, biology, emotion and addictions..

Featuring never before seen footage exploring the links between quantum mechanics, neurobiology, human consciousness and day-to-day reality.

For more info contact Nathan DeSisto.

FAIR TRADE CHOCOLATE

Spring is here, and soon we will be picking the first, delectable fruits of the year -- STRAWBERRIES. Get some local berries, dip them in a dark chocolate sauce and you have a simple, but heavenly, dessert.



Your coffee club has dark chocolate bars in stock which you can use as a base for the sauce. Please come and buy from me during coffee hour. Also, feel free to discuss any other Fair Trade items so that I can gauge the amount of interest in our products.

Isabelle Conrad

WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER ALL WOMEN WELCOME

We meet every Thursday evening.

Setup/Meeting: 7:00 to 7:15 PM
Announcements: 7:15 to 7:30 PM
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
- * Social Justice
- * Personal Empowerment

May 28 WOW Self-Examination
June 4 Sustainable Living
June 11 Book: "Urgent Message from Mother" by Jean Shanoda Bolen

THE PROVIDENCE SINGERS

Ecstasies Above

A recession-busting live performance value, this final concert of the original and adventurous 2009 PS season offers an imaginative grouping of ethereal compositions for a cappella voices and chorus, in collaboration with the innovative professional chamber ensemble, Aurea (www.aureaensemble.org). Featured are *Ecstasies Above*, — a setting of Edgar Allan Poe's "Israfel," for SATB chorus, two SATB vocal quartets and string quartet by rising 30-year-old British composer Tarik O'Regan that combines Renaissance and other early music influences with fresh 21st-century ideas. Also on the program: compatible works by William Byrd, Beethoven, Arvo Pärt, Olivier Messiaen and others. Two performances:

8 pm Sat. June 6 St Josephs Church

3 pm Sun June 7 Providence
Immaculate Conception
Church, Cranston

See www.providencesingers.org for additional information, including discounted advance ticket prices and directions to venues, or contact David Parker.

JUNE'S CHARITY OF THE MONTH – OIKOCREDIT

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 has selected



Oikocredit for the month of June.

“At Oikocredit, we believe the world’s poor can build better lives for themselves – if only given the chance. And our experience proves this. By no choice of their own, 1.5 billion people in the world live in poverty. They don’t lack ability. They lack opportunity.

“We provide that opportunity. Through financing, the poor gain vital access to credit. With it, they are able to generate income, support their families and sustain their communities. It is a formula that has been proven time and time again.

“At Oikocredit, the loans we provide to around 500 microfinance institutions have touched hundreds of thousands of families in some 70 countries all around the world. That’s a difference you can count on.

“Discover how you can help make a real difference – one life at a time.”

For questions about Sharing the Plate, please contact a member of the Committee: Kristen Morelli (kmorelli@cox.net), Bill Stone, Celia Humphreys or Nathan DeSisto. To make a charitable organization suggestion, please fill out a Nomination Form located in our mailbox, and available on our website.

UU LEGISLATIVE MINISTRY OF RI

By Don Tufts

It is morally wrong to have a tax policy which inflicts deprivation and hardship on lower-income families and severe discomfort on the middle-income taxpayer in order to provide unneeded benefits to the very rich. Basic Unitarian Principles about justice, equity, and compassion and the worth of every person have been violated. When government action or inaction has been unfair, unethical, or immoral, it is an important part of our UU tradition that individuals, committees, churches, and the UU Association have spoken out, demonstrated or acted to influence the politically powerful. Tax Fairness is the Top Priority of the RIUU Legislative Ministry.

The distribution of taxes over income groups should be based on the following two principles: (a) The more one gains economically from living in a civilized society, the greater one's obligation to pay taxes to maintain that society, and (b) The residual income in each income group, after taxes, should be high enough so that all persons, especially those with less wealth and power, have a reasonable opportunity to reach their potential. This opportunity is provided by access to decent subsistence, health care, housing, education, job training, and transportation.

Tax cuts for the very rich, mostly benefiting those making more than \$500,000 per year, have led to unacceptable pressures on middle-income taxpayers, making \$30,000 to \$300,000. It has been difficult for middle-income Rhode Islanders to pay a larger amount of overall state taxes, especially property taxes, because the incomes for this group, adjusted for inflation, have remained almost constant since the 1970s. Shockingly, in 2004, low-income Rhode Islanders paid state and local taxes at more than twice the rate of high-income residents.

In 2006 the approval of an RI flat tax, mostly benefiting those making more than \$1 Million per year, reduced state revenue by about \$18 Million in its first two years, 2006 and 2007. Tax year 2007 was the first year of the reduction in the long-term capital gains tax. In that one year, it reduced state revenue by \$26.8 Million. The poor are adversely affected by the reductions in services, like the 50% cut to the Food Bank, which help them to escape poverty.

We should demand that our Rhode Island legislators reverse the special tax benefits for the very rich. Also, to adequately supplement these rollbacks of special benefits, income taxes and capital gains taxes should be increased on the portion of income which is greater than \$500,000/yr., so that we can support good schools, programs for our needy citizens, repair of our infrastructure, and provide a significant reduction in property taxes.



INVITATION FROM SOUTH COUNTY UU

SPRING TEA IN SOUTH COUNTY

**GUEST SINGER WITH VIOLINIST & CELLIST
RAFFLE BASKETS OFFERED
FOOD SERVED WITH TEAS**
Saturday June 6th 3 to 5 PM
Lily Pads Estate
27 North Road, Peace Dale

OFFERED BY

UU Cogregation of South County

To benefit the Jonnycake Center

Tickets \$24 in Advance Before May 30th

\$30 at door Reservations: Call Cindy

Hosted by Tea with Marie

WESTMINSTER CALENDAR

5/28 7:00 PM WOW (FH)
5/28 7:00 PM Men's Group (W)
5/31 10:00 AM Worship
5/31 10:00 AM RE
5/31 11:30 AM Congregational Meeting (FH)
6/1 6:30 PM Funeral Consumers Alliance (W)
6/1 7:00 PM Youth Group
6/2 6:00 PM SG Facilitators (W)
6/2 6:30 PM Yoga (FH)
6/2 7:00 PM Program Council (W)
6/3 5:30 PM Caring Circle (W)
6/3 6:00 PM Music Committee (H)
6/3 6:15 PM Jr. Choir (CH)
6/3 7:15 PM Choir (CH)
6/4 7:00 PM WOW (FH)
6/6 6:30 PM Saturday Samplings (FH)
6/7 9:00 AM Worship RE Sunday
6/7 11:00 AM Worship Coming of Age
6/7 7:00 PM SGM with Andy Rollins (W)
6/8 7:00 PM SGM with Sue Bollens (W)
6/9 6:30 PM Yoga (FH)
6/9 7:00 PM Board of Trustees (H)
6/10 6:00 PM Buddhist Meditation (FH)
6/10 7:15 PM Choir (CH)

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
Website: www.westminsteruu.org
Office Hours 9-1 Monday - Friday

WESTMINSTER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

May 31

Ushers: 10:00 AM Ruth McIntosh
Al Jeffries

Worship Partner:

10:00 AM Jamie La Salle

Flowers: Judith Abbott

June 7

Ushers: 10:00 AM Mary Paolino
Chris Lewis

Flowers: Katrina Johnson

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

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: June 4th
MAILING: June 10th

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.