The Spire

From Your Pastor

February 2009

The challenges facing President Barack Obama seem of epic Biblical proportions. Everything appears to be broken: the economy, to be sure. Our international relationships and stature in the world. The environment. Education. Mental health. Safety nets for those least able to care for themselves. Jobs. Health care.

The hopes for what our new president can fix bear an eerie similarity to Old Testament prophets and writers, for a Messianic hope to:

Restore our fortunes…	Psalms (126:4)
Restore…	Isaiah (38:16)
Restore your fortunes...	Jeremiah (29:14)
Restore your fortunes…	Lamentations (2:14)
Restore your own fortunes…	Ezekiel (16:53)
Restore and rebuild…	Daniel (9:25)
Restore the fortunes…	Hosea (6:11)
Restore the fortunes…	Joel (3:1)
Restore the fortunes…	Amos (9:14)
Restore the fortunes…	Zephaniah (2:7)
Restore you to double…	Zephaniah (9:12)

One of my friends told his spouse *"You don't even want to know… how much we've lost."* Another said *"I can't bear to look at my portfolio."* Like the people of the Old Testament, we hope that our fortunes can be restored.

I wonder, though, if that is the most important hope. Mahatma Gandhi said, *"A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."* Let us hope to be that kind of a great nation.

French writer Alexis de Tocqueville searched for America's greatness and concluded that *"America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great!"* Let us hope for that kind of a great nation, where the world looks at us and sees us as good.

I find myself throughout the day praying for President Obama: for his safety and good health, for God's divine guidance, for his counselors to be wise, and for his decisions to be measured by what makes a nation truly great. Pray with me, for him. May Barack Obama be blessed by God and become a blessing to others. May God bless America, in the way that the Lord told Abram (Genesis 12:2)

"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

– John Zehring

Welcome *to new visitors and to old friends.* ***Welcome*** *to grandparents, to mothers, fathers, single people and children.* ***Welcome*** *to people of all colors, cultures, abilities, and sexual orientation, to young and old, to believers and questioners, and welcome to questioning believers.* ***Welcome*** *to all who have no church home, need strength, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. We joyfully and unconditionally welcome you. We hope you find peace and inspiration in our service.* ***YOU are welcome here!***

(Voted on and approved by the congregation January 28, 2007)

Baptism:

Marah Anne Nelson	Parents: Brian and Jaime Nelson	December 28, 2008
Kingston Anton Williams Ross	Parents: Brook and Christina Ross	January 4, 2009

In Sympathy

The congregation expresses deepest condolences to the following families:

Frances Hatch and family on the death of her husband, John Hatch, who died on December 22nd.

Joanne Gyorgy on the death of her mother, Barbara Cook, who died on December 27th.

Sharon Alemany on the death of her father, George Reed Govers, who died on January 14th.

SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY

February 1	Message: *"The Shepherd's Psalm."* Communion. Installation of Council, Board, and Committee Members. Christian Education's Heifer Project begins.
February 8	Guest Worship Leader
February 15	Message: *"Your will, and the quality of your life."* President's Day Weekend.
February 22	The Rev. Dr. Donald Anderson, Executive Minister of the RI State Council of Churches, will join Pastor Zehring in the service. Don Anderson will preach the sermon and then deliver the Emig Lecture on Social Justice in the Fireplace Room following Worship. The Peace and Social Justice Task Force has been invited to lead the Time with the Children.

February's Deacon of the Month is Linda Mendillo.

We welcome new members who joined KCC on January 25th.

Kyle Ashworth mother to Billy (6) and Riley (4). She and her husband Bill have been married for ten years and live in Narragansett. Kyle enjoys spending summers on Block Island, going to the beach, and swimming.

The Rev. Sharon Key has recently concluded her ministry as Pastor of the Woodbridge Congregational Church, UCC. She is a Level I Trainer at the URI Center for Peace and Nonviolence Studies, is a Soprano and cellist, and served formerly as a Prison Chaplain. Sharon lives in Narragansett.

Dan Quarella is husband to Tracy and father to Alex, Zack, Nick and Noah. He is an Insurance Executive at Mastors & Servant in East Greenwich. Dan enjoys playing golf and spending time at the beach with his family. Dan lives in North Kingstown.

Tracy Quarella is wife to Dan and mother to Alex (13), Zack (10), Nick (8) and Noah (6). She enjoys exercising, cooking, and coaching her sons in basketball. Her favorite place to escape is at the beach. Special interests include helping families with children suffering from cancer. Tracy lives in North Kingstown.

All Boards Meeting: February 24, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

All Boards will meet Tuesday, February 24, at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary for our February ALL BOARDS MEETING. Committees and Council members are welcome to meet on this night too. Following the plenary session in the Sanctuary, Boards will break out into individual Board meetings.

Here's a plan: come to the Pancake Supper at 5:30 – 6:30 (always held the Tuesday night before Ash Wednesday) and then stay for the All Boards Meeting.

Boards will **not meet at their usual time** in February. This is the only time for Board meetings. Church Council will meet as scheduled on February 25 at 7 p.m.

Adult Education Forum – Ecumenism in America

The next Adult Education Forum will begin
on Tuesday night, February 10, 2009 at 7 p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

Topic: "Ecumenism in America" led by Jim Findlay.

Jim is a specialist in American religious history and has published extensively on ecumenism in the United States. His book and articles focus on the National Council of Churches' involvement in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's and the later history of that organization. Subsequent sessions will be held on February 17, when the Rev. Don Anderson, Executive Secretary of the R. I. State Council of Churches, will discuss state councils in the ecumenical movement, and on March 3 Laura Everett, Associate Director of the Massachusetts State Council of Churches will speak about the national ecumenical movement in recent years. Mark the dates and attend!

Progressive Dinner Update

Mark your calendars! The 2009 KCC Progressive Dinner will take place on Saturday April 25th from 5:00 to 10:00 pm. The Family Life committee is in the process of creating this year's menu and would like your input. If you have any favorite recipes for a long-cooking (3+ hours) entrée, please leave it in the Family Life folder outside the Secretary's Office.

Mardi Gras Pancake Supper

You don't need to go to New Orleans to experience Mardi Gras! Join the Family Life Committee for our Mardi Gras Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 24th from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Celebrate Fat Tuesday with luscious fruit and whipped cream-topped pancakes, "King Cakes", New Orleans music, and Mardi Gras crafts for the kids! Tickets available in Fellowship Hall on February 8, 15, and 22, or at the door. Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler!

S. P. N. M.

Super thanks to all those KingCongers who contributed to South Providence Neighborhood Ministries for the Thanksgiving and Christmas distributions, the Christmas offering and especially your enthusiastic support of our Spelling Bee. Your efforts have greatly enhanced our ability to serve our neighbors. If you would be interested in receiving monthly updates on our Youth Program, please send your email address to Amy@spnm.org. Please mark on your calendar Sunday, March 8th for our Spring Benefit Concert at Phillips Memorial Baptist Church, 565 Pontiac Ave.

Church School News

Christmas Pageant

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Family Service on Christmas Eve. The young people who took part in this year's service did a really wonderful job, and made this service a joyful experience for all who attended. Participants this year were:
Ben Hubertus, Alex Quarella, Scott Washburn, Kayla McMahon, Jessica Elliot, Chris Lenox, Catherine Lenox, Hillary Gallagher, Rachel Heiner, Allison Lenox, Kara Bissonnette, Tai Marino, Allison Gallagher and the Junior Choir.

My special thanks go to Mike Couturier for being such a great INNKEEPER and for his years of "backstage help" and to Canna Falby who did a wonderful job with the music.

Heifer Project

Start saving your loose change! The Church School children will be collecting "spare change" for Heifer Project International beginning on February 1st. They will collect nickels, dimes, quarters and then dollars on each successive Sunday until March 1st. I keep thinking we cannot possibly do better than the previous year, and I am continually proved wrong by the incredible generosity of our congregation. Hopefully this year will be no exception!

DON'T HIDE YOUR LIFE UNDER A BASKET …Let it shine forth!

We are all aware of the impending "shortfall" in our budget … how to increase pledges … or cut services?

One way to increase giving is to increase attendance … to increase membership. It is not enough to know about our building. It is not enough to know about our U.C.C. affiliation. Folks … local folks from throughout the South County area need to know what we stand for … what we do as a congregation. "If you build a better mousetrap, they will come"! And if <u>we</u> build more awareness, folks <u>might</u> come … and like what they see … and hear. And if folks do come … and find out firsthand about our warmth and hospitality … <u>most</u> will want to become part of US … become MEMBERS!

But they must KNOW what we are about … and <u>WE</u> MUST TELL THEM. We must tell them about our events … our fundraising … our charity … our community support. I <u>can</u> HELP, but I need <u>YOUR</u> help. I have developed contacts within the local Newspapers … the local Radio Stations, and have received their support. Alas, in my 12 months as "publicity guru", I have received but a handful of requests for help (with a few notes of errors in our Church listings). If you or your group would like to share your activities with the outside community, I am as near as your phone … or fax. "Seek, and you SHALL find (out).

Earl Baker

Carolyn Whitmore Shilling

Carol grew up in a small town, Sunderland, Massachusetts which has grown into a large suburb of Amherst. She attended school at Northfield Mt. Hermon in Massachusetts. It was there that she first remembers being interested in Comparative Religions. Carol earned a degree from Massachusetts State College, now the University of Massachusetts. It was during her college years that she became interested in the Student Christian Movement and later was offered a graduate fellowship by a Danforth grant at Kansas State College.

After completing her graduate fellowship, Carol felt the need for more religious education. She attended the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She was asked to return to Kansas State College where she became the Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association. The next year David Shilling came to Kansas State College to teach Chemical Engineering. After one year of dating, they married. David was offered a job at the University of Rhode Island by Dean Crawford and Carol urged him to take it. A month later they married and moved to Narragansett but were forced by high summer rents to move to Wakefield. Their last move in 1955 was to Kingston where they built a home. David died four years ago but Carol still lives in the house they built. I was an interested observer as she debated with a lawn and yard worker about how much naturalness was good and how manicuring of the yard was unnecessary.

Carol has two daughters, Barb and Ruth. Barb lives in the Florida Keys but Ruth is nearby in Tuckertown Village. Ruth teaches music and heads her own business, a tour group which visits Egypt. Carol took advantage of this connection and recently visited Egypt with her daughter.

One of Carol's loves is writing or journaling as she calls it. As evidence she pointed out many journals in the room. She is currently in a tiny writing group. Carol writes poetry and has printed some of her thoughts and poems in booklets for Christmas gifts.

She and David joined the Kingston Congregational Church in 1957, over 50 years ago. She has served on many committees among them Social Action and Christian Education. She was the first woman deacon, a real breakthrough. Carol is currently teaching once a month the seventh and eighth grade classes and is coordinator of the prayer chain. Carol has known many ministers in these fifty years and has appreciated qualities in every minister and has sometimes been disappointed in some ways. She added she always remembers that they, like us, are human.

Other activities Carol has been involved in have been the Church Women United and also furthering of interracial understanding and she has served as a Chaplain's Assistant at South County Hospital and loved each activity. Throughout our meeting her emphasis has been on loving connecting with people.

Carol stresses her search for a deeper and broader spirituality and how this search has developed over many years. She has gone from simply being an active participant in the church to a deepening of her faith. Her focus has been the oneness we all share despite the differences we may have. Carol is intrigued by the oneness or the commonality we all have and yet we all have our own priorities. She says the older she gets the simpler her faith gets. "God for me is the power and presence of love as well as the mystery."

Submitted by Pat Weeden

The Spire Society Recognizes Your Gift and Your Legacy

The Spire Society of the Kingston Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, was approved by the congregation at the September 2008 Quarterly Meeting. The Society recognizes gifts of $2500 or more and planned gifts to KCC's Permanent Endowment made by KCC members and friends. These gifts help grow the Permanent Endowment. Interest from them helps pay maintenance, heat, utilities, insurance and other facilities costs. As of January 2009, these costs amount to roughly 20 percent of our Annual Budget. If we grow the Permanent Endowment by $1 million, the interest from the Permanent Endowment will substantially help meet the Annual Budget. This is a huge help in supplementing pledges asked of members.

"Planned giving" means naming KCC in your will or trust, specifying a dollar amount or a portion of your estate. Planned giving covers other gifts also, such as charitable gift annuities through the United Church of Christ's Legacy Program, or designating KCC as a beneficiary of your life insurance, retirement account or other asset.

Brochures: Spire Society brochures are on the Welcome Table in the Church Hall at coffee hour. For more information about the Spire Society, contact a member of our church's Planned Giving Committee: Jim Aukerman, Tom Butcher, Bill Entwistle, Britt Foss, Richard Geisler, Audrey Hallberg, Elizabeth McNab and Steve White.

Spire Society Pins and Pendants: Beautiful, custom-made sterling silver pins and pendants with the KCC Spire have been crafted for Spire Society members. When you designate a gift to the Church for its Permanent Endowment, either through an outright gift of $2500 or more or through your will/trust or planned giving and notify the KCC of such, you will receive this gift appreciation for your generosity and foresight.

Since the September meeting, several church members have responded. Please indicate below if you have included the KCC in your will or planned giving. Send the completed form to the Planned Giving Committee, Kingston Congregational Church, 2610 Kingstown Road, Kingston, RI 02881-0116

SPIRE SOCIETY

_____Yes, I/We have designated KCC in our will or trust for a future gift.

_____Yes, I/We have designated KCC as a beneficiary of a retirement account, insurance or other asset.

_____Yes, I/we have established a charitable gift annuity through the United Church of Christ.

_____ Please contact me with more information on ways I can make gift(s) to the Permanent Endowment of the Kingston Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

_____ (name) _____(phone number)