The Spire

From Your Pastor

February 2010

This Season Called Lent

Growing up as a Congregationalist and spending many years as a Baptist, there wasn't much emphasis on the liturgical season of Lent. As a little girl my grandparents would mutter under their breath about "all the hullabaloo" of people with ashes on their heads and not eating meat and a host of other things their Free Church experience just could not grasp. Before ecumenism, little congregational churches like the one I grew up in never heard of Ash Wednesday, let alone thought about having a worship service.

And we are the poorer for it. Fast forward forty years or so and now Lent is very much a part of the worship life of most congregational churches. In a post denominational world we are enriched by traditions other than our own. And so this year, for the first time (either ever or in a long time), we will observe Ash Wednesday with a worship service at 7:00 p.m.

There is something to be said for standing in line with a couple hundred (okay, so it's 25) other people and having ashes smeared on your head as a reminder of your humanness and the reality that, no matter how good you are or try to be, you still sin and fall short of the glory God intends for you.

There is something to be said for the notion of intentional spiritual practice for a period of time as a way of reminding ourselves that we live every moment of our lives in God's presence.

Okay, so it's not the most comfortable thing in the world. Being reminded that we are not the captains of our own fate is something we would rather not have waved in front of us. After all we are too busy planning the next meal, corporate take over, basketball schedule, church meeting, eye appointment or yoga class. Our busyness betrays our best hope that we really are in charge of this thing called life and if we do a good enough job at it we will somehow be spared the fate of the rest of our human compatriots.

Enter ashes and the forty days of Lent. And the ashes are the remains of the burned Palms from Palm Sunday the year before. The symbols of success and struggle balanced in perfect counterpoint. Forty days, reminiscent of Israel's wandering in the desert, Ninevah's invitation to repentance and Jesus' time in the desert while he prepared for his ministry. There are no coincidences.

There is something to be said for being reminded that life in the desert is part of our journey too. When the busyness is removed, who are we? When we look at who we are and not just what we do, what do we see? When all of our human categories of success and failure are scraped away, what remains? In the desert we stand as we are in the presence of the one who created us. In the desert there is no pretense; in the desert there is simply God and us. Sometimes the mountain is clearer from the plain, as Gibran said. Sometimes we need to find ourselves alone to find who we really are. Sometimes it's the only way God can get a word in edgewise.

Here in the journey of Lent we are welcomed as we are, with faith such as we have and such as we hope for, with all our good intentions and failed actions, with all our dreams and desires, all our love and longing, fears and hopes. It is a journey into the desert, through the desert, toward the promise of Easter. May you have faith sufficient for the travelling.

The Rev. Patricia L. Liberty

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)

February's Deacon of the Month is Linda Mendillo.

In Sympathy

The Congregation expresses deepest condolences to Fredericka Bettinger and family on the death of her husband, Franz Hayes who died on January 8th. A service was held in the sanctuary on January 16th.

All Boards Meeting: February 15th at 7:00 pm

All Boards will meet Tuesday, February 15th 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. The meeting will begin in the Sanctuary and then break out into individual Board/Committee meetings.

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.

THINKING AHEAD THINKING OF SCRIP

Early in December I received a telephone call from a church member who was interested in making a purchase with SCRIP. She had been told by her physician that she required a hearing aid. "If I am going to have to spend that much money, I want someone else to benefit too," she said. I searched our data base. With over five hundred vendors, we did not have one who sold hearing aids. She was not to be discouraged. She is working with the vendor to see if they would be willing to join the Great Lakes Scrip Program.

If that venture does not get successfully resolved, THERE IS A WAY TO STILL PARTICIPATE IN THE SCRIP PROGRAM. VISA Cards in the amount of $25.00, $50.00 and $100.00 dollars may be purchased through the SCRIP Program at the KCC SCRIP Table. These VISA Cards may be redeemed as any VISA purchase would be transacted.

My heart was warmed by her thoughtfulness and caring for others.

Will you think ahead for ways in which you may participate in the SCRIP MINISTRY? See you on Sundays at the SCRIP TABLE. We will be there before church at 9am and during the Coffee Hour.

Remember to BRING YOUR CHECKBOOK.

Dorothy Leduc

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 16th 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 will be available in Fellowship Hall on February 7 & 14, or at the door. Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler!

Fourth Annual MEXICAN DINNER

Your Mission Board's Peace and Justice Task Force is pleased to invite all of you to the fourth Annual Mexican Potluck Dinner on **February 26th, 2010** at 6:00 pm. You bring wonderful Mexican dishes and $5 (or more, if you want) to support our Mission Project in Chiapas, Mexico. It's "**Angelina's Shelter**," a small home for abused or abandoned street children in the town of San Cristobal.

This year has been especially difficult for Angelina – as it has for all of us – but her budget has increased by 500%! Instead of taking in one or two new children, Angelina and her staff answered God's call and rescued a family of five children that no one else would take. The children had watched their parents die in their small village at the hands of 20 men with machetes. They also suffered many wounds. We can only imagine why this terrible event happened. Even Angelina doesn't know.

So now the house is now practically bursting at the seams. Tina and Steve Letcher visited the shelter last year, taking KCC's donation of $1,000. Angelina cried when she saw us! "Your church makes all the difference," she said. Otherwise their small business of making communion wafers would not have allowed her to care for the five children, ranging in age from 4 to 16. Already she can see that the children's faces reflect the love and care of their new home.

Please come, enjoy great food and fellowship. All are invited, especially kids! There will be activities for children in the Fireplace Room.

Thanks very much,
KCC Peace and Justice Task Force

Souper Bowl Sunday February 7
To Benefit
South Providence Neighborhood Ministries

Please bring cans of soup to church on Super Bowl Sunday. Let's participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring, a national movement organized to fight hunger and poverty. Our goal is that every man, woman and child will provide donations of soup for those who are in need. Let's help fill up the food pantry at South Providence Neighborhood Ministries.

Pastor's Office Hours

KCC's Interim Pastor, The Rev. Patricia Liberty holds office hours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am until 12 noon, and others by appointment.

Give Your Family and Friends a Gift
Sundays – February 21, 28, and March 7
10:45 in the Fireplace Room

As our loved ones die, we all want to make arrangements that would follow their wishes and please them. There are so many details, so many conversations, dates, and places to remember, so many decisions to make that it is often overwhelming. Seekonk Congregational Church has put together materials which we at Kingston Congregational have modified, to help us, our families, and friends find our way through the maze of planning a service and making other arrangements.

Following our church service on three Sundays beginning February 21, details and information needed in making final arrangements will be explained so that families, friends, and individuals can begin to make choices that might be best for them. (No decisions need be made at this time.)

Sunday, February 21: The Rev. Patricia Liberty will guide us in the possibilities for services. For many, musical choices are an important part of the service, too.

Sunday, February 28: Avery-Story Funeral Home will speak to us about the role of funeral homes.

Sunday, March 7: Topics will include the Fernwood Cemeteries and other details to attend to.

This series is important for all adults – at home or in school, single, married, widowed, working, retired, parents. A written list of desires and information is an important gift. A member of our congregation used the Seekonk booklet and found it extremely helpful. All participants will receive a KCC edition of the booklet.

This series is under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education Adult Education programs. For information see Elizabeth McNab.

Save the Date:
April 24, 2010
KCC Progressive Supper

Sign-up begins March 20, 2010

Contact:
Cindy Dowgiallo if you have any questions
Acld98@cox.net or 783-6452

KCC Women's Fellowship News

We had a good turnout for our Monday, January 11th meeting in which a panel of women shared their stories about their faith journey. Thank you, Connie for putting this together and to Jane Skogley and Kennie Geary for refreshments. Thanks also to Canna for devotions and for preparing our budget and financials for the year which were voted on and approved. Canna is happily writing checks to our charities.

Please note the two date changes to Tuesdays: There will be a board meeting Tuesday, February 9 at 7pm at KCC and all are welcome to attend.

Our next meeting is TUESDAY, MARCH 9 at 7pm in the Fireplace Room and the program will be Tina Letcher and friends speaking about the Faces of Immigrants in South County.

The UCC New England Women's Celebration VIII is being held in Burlington, VT on March 12-14. Canna, Elizabeth and Helen are attending – call if you would like to go with us; it's a great weekend and WF can help pay your registration fee.

***Church World Service* – it's that time of year again and we will be starting our fund raising January 31 and February 7 with announcements and envelopes in the pews. Check the bulletin board on the stairs for information. Please give what you can so that we might fill our kits, the need of others is so great this year!**

Church Women United
World Day of Prayer 2010

Women, men and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer, Friday, March 5. The women of **Cameron** have written the service around the theme *Let Everything that has breath praise God.* They invite us to "Africa in miniature," a country rich in diversity, where climate and culture are widely varied, but where people are bound together by a love for music, family and faith. The worship service emphasizes the importance that the people of Cameroon place on music and celebration in their praise to God.

This year's service will be held on Friday, March 5 at 1 PM at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Old North Road, Kingston. It is handicap accessible.

Invite your friends, family and communities of faith to join the women of Cameroon in prayer and song to support women's ecumenical ministries toward justice, peace, healing and wholeness. The annual offering will support the work of World Day of Prayer USA and help meet the needs of families who are victims of poverty, violence and human trafficking.

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:
Alex Quarella, Scott Washburn, Kayla McMahon, Jessica Elliot, Lily Trodson, Zachary Jennings, Catherine Lenox, Hillary Gallagher, Rachel Hiener, Allison Lenox, Kara Bissonnette, Tai Marino, Allison Gallagher, Clarice Jennings, and the Junior Choir.

My special thanks go to Jack Beliveau for his "backstage help" and for being such a great INNKEEPER and for Enrico who blessed us this year by providing 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 21st.** They will collect pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and then dollars on each successive Sunday until March 21st. 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!

Thank you.

I want members of the KingCong Church to be aware of the welcoming and then supportive congregation you have been to Franz and me. We moved into our new home at Christmastime 2008 and a couple of months later began to search for a new church home. Our search was ended after our first experience with you!! We have been happy with the multi-generational membership, the participation of children and teens, the intent to be open and welcoming to all who come to worship with you, the talented music program and the pastoral leadership of John Zehring and now Pat Liberty. Franz and my journey together to face Franz' battle with cancer and now his death has been lightened by your overall support and prayers and the individual kindnesses. There were the cards, the prayers, the smiles, the food, the teens and parents who helped with the yard, the sitting in the pew with me when Franz was not able, pushing the wheelchair to get Franz to the Christmas service – the last he could make, and so much more. It was the comfort of knowing that you as a prayerful congregation each with your own place on life's journey were ever present and available. I thank you so much and I thank God for bringing us all together for our Christian faith journey.

Fredericka Bettinger

Environmental Task Force:

JOIN US FOR TWO UPCOMING EVENTS AT KCC:

Friday, February, 19; 7 pm in the Fireplace Room – Chris Kent of Island Solar will demonstrate and talk with us about Solar Hot Water: How it works, energy rebates, installation questions and more. Refreshments served.

Friday, March 19; 7 pm in the Fireplace Room – Eileen Barrett from RISE will talk with us about Energy Audits: how it works, what is involved and why you might want to have it done. She comes highly recommended by Pat Moore and Ron Stevens who had a very positive experience. Refreshments served.

Also the Rhode Island Power and Light organization is holding a conference with speakers and a panel on Thursday Feb 11, 4:30-9:20 pm at LaSalle Academy. Helen will be going for part of this if you would like to go. Visit the website www.riipl.org for more information.

The KCC Prayer Chain Update 2009

Our KCC Prayer Chain during 2009 had 228 requests from KCC members and 297 requests for prayer support from loved ones of KCC members for a total of 525 requests.

Sue Kenyon, who died in July at 103, suggested that KCC needed a prayer chain back in 1979 and was a prayer link for 30 years.

We'd love to have more prayer links. Each link agrees to pray for each need daily, wherever, whenever, and not mention the need to anyone.

If you have a PRAYER NEED or would like to be a prayer link (16 now), please contact Pastor Pat, the church office, or call:

Delight Carpenter 789-8006
Bev Larimer 783-6388
Lou Pearson 783-8975
Carol Shilling 783-5677