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Annual Report of the Senior Pastor for 2016-17

The year 2016-17 was a remarkable one in the life of our church, a year we will remember as one of deepening spiritual life, sound accomplishments and new adventures begun. It was a time in which we continued our efforts to look outward, but also one in which we looked to the internal needs of our church, and found that the two efforts began to complement each other.

I focused my sermons during much of the year on what I called “Christian Basics,” addressing essential questions that are commonly asked about our faith. This focus allowed us to examine the clear teaching of the Scriptures that our practice of faith is two-fold, both an outward-looking practice of actions and service, and an inward-looking practice of study and contemplation. The two, as Fr. Richard Rohr has observed, are like two sides of a coin; if either side is lacking, there is no coin.

There is great interest among our members in cultivating a deeper historical, theological and ethical understanding of the Scriptures. Such concerns were central to many of my sermons. And our Lenten Study of John Dominic Crossan’s milestone book, *How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian*, took us still more deeply into the biblical text and context. Prof. Crossan’s visit to KCC (sermon and lecture) during Lent was a major event for us, one that deepened our engagement with the Scriptures, but also publically marked our church as one that is serious about biblical interpretation as an integral part of the life of faith. The initiation of our after-worship Second Cup Conversations offered us an informal opportunity to reflect together on sermons, and our Questions of Faith series opened discussions on questions people often ask about our faith.

We were able to sustain our relationship with the Muslim Community Center of Kingston (Masjid Alhoda), in spite of major disruptions in the leadership and overall transition in the life of the mosque. After a lengthy but unavoidable delay, we were delighted to welcome them for a fellowship dinner and we look forward to renewing contact again in the fall.

We were also able to advance the development of our relationship with Norton United Church of Christ in Norton, Zimbabwe, the home church of our friends, the Rev. Dr. Edward Matuvhunye and his wife, Memory Matuvhunye. Our Deacons, Board of Missions and Social Justice, and Church Council adopted a biblical and theological Covenant that will serve as the basis of the Partnership we are establishing between KCC and Norton United Church of Christ. We have initiated contact in several ways, gradually beginning the process of getting to know each other. We have been delighted to see how easily some of the technologies now available can bridge the great geographical distance between our two churches, and we look forward to further development of the Partnership in the year ahead.

This year marked major growth in our use of social media to conduct sustained outreach in our community. When we began our Facebook Page, we had only a small number of “likes,” and people rarely shared our posts or visited our Page. Our posts reached only a small number of people. All of that has changed markedly. Our posts now often reach hundreds of people, most of them outside our congregation. And our page is visited frequently, often multiple times per day.

We have used our (publicly viewed) Facebook Page to promote events in our church, but also to express to the larger community the values and commitments that arise from our faith. And our closed Facebook Group (seen only by KCC members who join the group) has become a great vehicle for sharing and informing within the congregation. I learn things about our church family and community every day that I would not otherwise have known, thanks to posts (and great photos!) on our KCC Facebook Group.

I was glad to work in consultation with our Board of Deacons as they began to make more active use of selected banners in front of our church, ones that highlighted the values of our faith and promoted the seasonal worship and Church School offerings of our church.

I increased my involvement with the work of the URI Chaplains Association, meeting regularly with 12-15 other local clergy in an ecumenical and interfaith setting in which the focus is upon the life of the URI campus and community. It was in this group that I got to know Imam Qutaiba Albluwi, leading to our relationship with the mosque.

I was glad also to participate in the project sponsored by the Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty (to which KCC belongs) in which clergy in local houses of worship united in focusing our sermons on faith-based responses to poverty. The work of this Coalition has been promoted by posts on our Facebook Page, part of our deepening involvement with this excellent advocacy group.

I come to the end of this year deeply grateful for our life together, for the gladness with which we gather on Sunday mornings, for the wonderful music we share, for the excellent work of our Church School and overall CE program, for the goodness of our fellowship life, for our steadfast mission and outreach endeavors, for the careful work that continues in revitalizing our beloved building. I am thankful for our continuing work with our Youth Group and our Confirmation Program, our attentive efforts in welcoming visitors and new members, our helpful efforts in cultivating greater stewardship, in guiding our investments and financial matters, and our increasing efforts in fundraising.

I am grateful for all the devoted efforts of my colleagues on our superb staff, for the excellent leadership of our officers and board chairs, and for the attention and devotion of our board members and many volunteers.

From the quiet faithfulness of those on our Visiting Committee who visit our homebound members, to the care of those who prepare our budget proposals, to the thoughtfulness of those who take care of our Sunday flowers, and others who prepare our Coffee Fellowship, we create, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the life of a vital community of faith. I am honored to be your Pastor and I ask your prayers as I continue to do my best in that work.

Respectfully,

Weldon

President's Annual Report 2016-2017

This has been both an uplifting and challenging year in my life and in the life of KCC. The hard work of all the members of Boards and Committees makes the church hum with activity and I deeply appreciate the time and effort everyone expends on behalf of KCC. I worked in concert with our Pastor and Council to direct our voyage through this year. I attended many Board and Committee meetings and found, as expected, that the operations of the Church are in good hands.

One big issue this year has been the proposed merger of the Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut UCC Conferences. Small group, large group, online and other discussions have been held throughout the year, culminating in the gathering of the delegates from all three states in Hartford in June. The vote that was taken at this meeting was to confirm that the three states will pursue making a plan to merge the three state conferences in the coming year, with a final proposal for the merged conference to be voted on in June 2018. While KCC was not generally in favor of this proposal, the proposal passed by an easy majority in all three states. Details about the plan to merge will be forthcoming in the year ahead.

Council has been working on updating the By-Laws, revising language one Board at a time. As our church grows and changes, we need to update the rules we live by to accommodate those changes. We made good progress this year and hope to call a Congregational meeting before the end of next year to discuss and approve suggested changes.

We continued to strengthen our ties with the Muslim community in Kingston as they reorganized under new leadership. We also began our partnership with the UCCZ church in Norton, Zimbabwe. We also said good-bye to Reverend Matuvhunye and his wife Memory who returned to Zimbabwe this spring.

Council created two ad hoc committees—Pastoral Relations and Pastoral Evaluation—at the beginning of this year. Those committees have been operational all year and have done excellent work. The Pastoral Evaluation Committee sent out a survey to members of the congregation and compiled the responses, with the view of providing information that will help our Pastor and our congregation plan for the coming year.

In March John Dominic Crossan (author of How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian) visited KCC, giving a sermon, leading a discussion and giving a public lecture while he was with us. This visit was co-sponsored by several Boards and many, many people worked to make the event a success.

The HR Committee revised all staff job descriptions and presented them to Council. Council approved the revisions which now more accurately describe what our KCC staff does. Staff evaluations were conducted for all staff and the Congregation voted to give them a 3% raise in the coming year.

There were many improvements to our physical plant, including repairs to the clock and bell, restriping the parking lot, a new roof on the Fellowship Hall and updates in the Fireplace Room. There are more projects in the works. As we know, keeping an historic building in good repair is an unending task.

The Annual Church Benefit Auction was held in April, raising \$5,000 for the needs of the church. The Scrip Committee continues to appear faithfully to provide us with gift cards and a substantial boost to our budget.

I have had the joy of writing a message for the *Spire* every month this year. I appreciate all the feedback you have provided.

Three Congregational meetings were held to conduct church business, to hear reports from Boards and Committees and to establish the budget for the coming year.

As I review the past 12 months I am amazed, thankful for, and deeply appreciative of the many people who form the wonderful web that connects us all to KCC.

Sincerely,

Joanna M. Burkhardt
KCC President

Annual Report from the Board of Deacons, July 2016-June 2017

Board Members: Susan Berman (Co-Chair), Charley Sweeney (Co-Chair), Jim Aukerman (Recording Secretary), Margaret Bradley, Tom Heald, Joan Henderson, Nancy Holland, Dottie Leduc, Wayne Lee, Linda Mendillo, Dave Remington.

The Deacons are grateful to Weldon, to Enrico, to Alice, to the choir, to the Flower Committee and to every single person who has been part of worship services at KCC during the past year. To greeters, ushers, lay readers, coffee hour providers; to all who worshipped with us Sunday after Sunday; to all who helped with memorial services and to those who lit the Advent candles. The Deacons are responsible for the spiritual life of the church, and the church is every one of us— together.

Work for the Board of Deacons this year has included authorizing the ringing of bells as our call to worship. We are very grateful to Clark Bridgman for the success of the clock tower and bell project that made this possible. We agreed to remove a short pew from the back of the church in the first phase of improving accessibility and are most grateful to Joanna, our President, for actually doing the work to remove it. We are now on The RI Broadcasters Association list to announce weather cancellations on radio and television.

We supported and participated in the Second Cup Conversations and are grateful to Weldon for offering them. Each month, the Deacon of the Month welcomed the congregation, made announcements and recruited greeters, ushers, lay readers and coffee hour providers for each service.

The Board reviewed and edited our section of the By-Laws. Now that the Music Committee is a Board, we no longer have a Deacon as a member. We co-sponsored the Lenten Study series and the inspiring visit of Dr. John Dominic Crossan. We provided Christmas and Easter banners, and, with the Mission Board, a banner welcoming immigrants and refugees.

We held special services at Christmas and at Easter and have voted to expand next year's Maundy Thursday service to include supper and Communion.

We have voted to have the Deacons offer Communion to people unable to attend church.

We are reviewing, with Weldon, the information from the Pastoral Survey, which will inform our planning during the coming year.

During the year, we have had services every week (except for that one snow day). We have served Communion every month. We have had a presence at Baptisms, Confirmation, memorial services and services welcoming new members. And we have invited speakers to hold services during Weldon's time off, study leave, or any other occasion when our pastor is unavailable.

We work together to make our church a place of inspiration, support and peace for all of us.

Respectfully submitted.

Susan Berman, Co-Chair, Board of Deacons

Annual Report 2017 Music Director/Organist

I very much enjoy being organist and music director here at Kingston Congregational Church. I believe this past year again has truly been a wonderful musical and worshipful experience.

The senior choir continues to be outstanding in its dedicated contribution to Worship. The repertoire of anthems for the choir consists of the best available music from the past as well as new musical texts. We have added many new pieces and spirituals to our repertoire which we sing for service every Sunday.

The adult choir continues to meet every Thursday evening to prepare for Sunday Worship. I deeply appreciate their great contribution to Worship. Easter was truly wonderful with trumpets, percussion and violin. We were fortunate to have Jenny Collins play trumpet for Palm Sunday and several other services this year. Her student, Luca Simeone, a tenth grader, also played for several services. Luca is already an excellent trumpet player. We are all very happy and proud of him.

Among many of the excellent services this year was one dedicated to Martin Luther King. It was a beautiful combination of spoken and sung word. Elizabeth McNab not only brought us the musical work, she helped again with organizing the entire service. For the summer months we were fortunate to have wonderful guest musicians, among whom were Manuel Morales, Stephen Grueb, and Patti Stout.

In March of this year the Music Board took a very active part in supporting John Dominic Crossan's lectures at the Church. An international biblical scholar, Crossan gave outstanding talks at Service as well as those open to the public. We were very proud to have him here and to have supported his brilliant lectures. I would particularly like to thank Elizabeth Candas for chairing the excellent committee that oversaw the entire event.

On June 18 my very talented piano student, Sam Williams, gave a magnificent concert at the Church. He played music of Bach, Brahms, Chopin and Toch. It was open to the public and was very well received.

On a personal note, I have continued to compose music for both concert performances and services.

On March 26, I performed my five movement organ symphony, entitled the Annunciation. Rev. Sharon Key sang the Magnificat which was the fourth movement of the symphony.

In addition, my musical *The Smart Set* was performed in June at the Narragansett Theater. It is set in the twenties and tells the story of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald. I was very grateful and happy for its fine reception.

I would like to thank Lori Ann Heiner and the Music Board for their excellent leadership. Their help, advice, and encouragement have been invaluable. I would also like to thank Diana Geisler and Grace Woodward who have provided a very much appreciated service as choir librarians. And to all of you I express my gratitude once again for your support, encouragement, and inspiration.

Respectfully submitted,
Enrico Garzilli

Kingston Congregational Church
Board of Music Annual Report 2016-2017

Members of the Board of Music: Lori Ann Hiener (Chair), Elizabeth Candas, Frank Osterman, Clay Sink, Ann Ross. Enrico Garzilli attended meetings as a non-voting member.

The Board of Music met four times over the course of the year.

Enrico continues to do a wonderful job leading the choir, selecting music and securing guest musicians to perform during Sunday Worship. Many thanks to all of the musicians who performed this year and contributed to the service.

The Board of Music planned, organized and oversaw the visit of Dr. John Dominic Crossan to preach to the congregation and provide a public lecture. This event would not have been possible without the support of other KCC Boards and private donations. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this a successful event.

The instruments were tuned as needed during the year.

Money allocated to the Board of Music was spent on music, guest musicians, maintenance of the instruments, and the cleaning of the choir robes.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Ann Hiener, Chair

KCC Trustees' Annual Report 2017

The KCC Trustees manage an annual \$50,000+ budget for the upkeep and maintenance of the KCC church buildings and grounds. In addition, Trustees continued their long range goal and multi-year plan to improve the KCC physical plant. In 2017 Trustees managed the following special projects in this effort:

Sanctuary:

1. New Clock and Bell - \$13,000.0 Cost
paid by donations from the Congregation.

Fellowship Hall:

2. Roof replacement with insulation – cost \$25,000.00
Financed by funds on hand available to Trustees (7,500.00)
and by Congregation's approval from Endowment (17,500.00)
Roof work completed in June 2017.
3. Floor replacement – cost \$14,000.00
[To be financed from savings arising from
not having to wax new floor @ \$200 per month.]
Installation to be initiated and completed in the fall 2017.

Church Office Building

4. Insulation in Church Office Building – cost \$3,500.00
[Financed jointly by Trustees funds on hand and
by funds made available by KCC Missions Board.]
Work completed in July 2017.

Parking Lot:

5. New parking space striping to allow for emergency vehicle access. \$2,500.00

In an ongoing effort to improve the efficiency and productivity of KCC's Trustees budget, Trustees made the following changes in 2017: (1) when renewing the KCC property and casualty insurance the KCC deductible for any particular potential loss was raised from \$1,000 to \$5,000 in order to save \$600 per year in premium; (2) when renewing the lease on the office copier systems a new upgraded copier and scanner were installed at a substantial reduction in cost; and (3) in conjunction with the KCC Council and Deacons, the snow plowing policy was changed to avoid excessive plowing during Saturday night storms when services are being cancelled for the following Sunday morning.

Respectfully,

Steve White, Trustees Chair

Annual Treasurer's Report Fiscal Year July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017

From the Balance Sheet attached:

KCC ended the fiscal year with an increase in the Endowment from \$1,252,319 to \$1,347,775, or \$95,456 increase, even though we withdrew the annual disbursement to operating of \$53,796 making the increase 11.9%.

The checking account balance ended the year with a balance of \$92,202.

Continuing down the balance sheet note the decrease in the operating fund from \$8,917 to \$7,448. This decrease reflects the negative ending on the treasurers report, attached, of \$1,469.

On the bottom of the balance sheet is the total of ALL the funds which lay claim to the checking account.

From the Treasurer's Report:

On the income side, current year pledges were slightly up from the budget of \$218,250 to actual income of \$221,305. This is great! The Finance Board actually budgeted a surplus of \$3,674. Overall operating income was down, (\$7,851) and we didn't make it. As mentioned above we ended the year with a slight deficit of \$1,469.

The budget allocated \$2,365 to give the non-contract staff a long awaited and well deserved bonus. But because it was long awaited, several years, the bonus was \$5,513. That difference only contributed to the negative ending balance. Though utilities were slightly down, what also contributed to the deficit is simply keeping up the building.

Board of Finance Annual Report July 2016 to June 2017

The Board of Finance met during the year to discuss its assigned mission to oversee the Church's financial matters. Jeff Richardson was the chair of the board. The other members of the board are Dick Geisler, Ken Kermes, Jim Ross, and Doug Kraus, who holds the position of Church Treasurer. The secretarial duties rotate for each meeting.

The Board of Finance supervises the Investment Committee, and thanks them for a great job of investing the endowment worth 1.3 million dollars. The Finance Board is happy to report that next year's budget was almost balanced. We had an unexpected dip in expenses when the Pastor's medical insurance costs went down which helped. The Board notes that as a means to bring costs down, our Church is not currently financially supporting the RI UICC. We hope to successfully move pass our short term budget shortfalls in the years to come.

The Board discussed our long term financial health of the church due to the aging demographics of our church family. The Finance Board will explore the issues of both long and short term financial health of the church with an eye toward the operating budget and the need for physical maintenance to the church buildings.

The 2017-18 Fiscal Year Budget was delivered to the Church Council where it was reviewed and delivered to the Congregation for its vote. The 2017-18 Budget was approved by the Congregation during the spring quarterly meeting. The Budget calls for a fundraiser via an auction and support by the Scrip program. The Finance Board wishes to remind the Congregation to support the auction and the Scrip program to help maintain our overall financial plans and all our other Boards' missions and good works.

Investment Committee Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 – 2017

The Investment Committee met three times in FY 2016-17 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017). The Committee revised its Investment Policy Statement on April 2, 2017, and updated it to include a Distribution Policy. The resulting Investment and Distribution Policy Statement (IDPS Rev. 2) was submitted to the Board of Finance for approval.

On June 30, 2016 the Endowment portfolio had a market value of \$1,252,319. During the fiscal year: \$14,530 in gifts were transferred into the Endowment's General Category and \$53,798 were distributed to the Church budget (\$46,698 for operations, \$1,926 for music, and \$5,174 for cemetery use). In addition \$17,500 was transferred from the Endowment to the Trustees to repair the Church roof (approved at Church Congregational Meeting on June 11, 1917). The net outflow from the Endowment for the fiscal year was \$56,798. The Endowment's market value on June 30, 2017 was \$1,347,775, reflecting a portfolio return of 12.4% for the fiscal year. For comparison, during this period, the Vanguard S&P 500 Stock Fund (VFIAX) returned 17.8%, the Vanguard Balanced Fund (VBINX) returned 10.5% and the Composite Index Allocation, specified in IDPS Rev. 2, returned 14.2%.

On June 30, 2017, approximately 40% of the Endowment was principal (cannot be spent) and 60% was earnings (available for budget distributions with 86.75% for operations, 3.58% for music and 9.67% for cemetery use). The Endowment portfolio held a mix of 10 mutual funds and ETFs with a year-end asset mix of 76.7% stocks, 20.8% bonds, and 2.5% cash.

Distributions from the Endowment are based on a trailing 7-year rolling average, using the Endowment's market value on December 31st of each year. The 7 year average from 2010 to 2016 is \$1,183,938. Using this average, the Committee recommended to the Board of Finance a 4.54% distribution (\$53,796) to support the Church budget for FY 2017-18.

Respectfully submitted,
Ronald G. Stevens, Chairperson

Members: Dick Geisler, Jim Aukerman, Mary Daly, Brad Trodson, Ron Stevens
Ex-officio Members: Doug Kraus, Jeff Richardson

KCC Stewardship Campaign 2017

The Stewardship Committee, consisting of Judy Anderson, Karin Aukerman, Sharon Davis (co-chair), Ann Lenox (co-chair), and Angelo Mendillo, planned this year's Stewardship Campaign around the theme of "Caring & Sharing & Giving." The campaign kicked off on January 22 with a wonderful testimonial from Sara Simeone. On February 5, Honorary Stewardship Chairperson, Dottie Leduc, spoke during a Soup Sunday meal hosted by The Fellowship Committee. Weldon preached on the topic of Stewardship on February 19, and Sue Macy was our final Stewardship speaker on February 26. Each of the speakers' testimonials and Weldon's sermon were made available to all members through an emailed link and all were posted to the church's Facebook page. All members and friends of the church were sent a Stewardship letter requesting a pledge for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Included with the letter was a suggested giving guide. The Board provided a variety of ways for pledges to be submitted: pledgers could use traditional pledge cards, pledgers could use a form which could be printed from an email attachment, or pledgers could submit their pledges online. The campaign ended on March 12, which was the date the Board requested that all pledges be submitted; however, we have received additional pledges beyond this date. To date, we have received 106 pledges for a total of \$218,774.00. The Board of Stewardship sent out thank you notes to each member and friend of KCC who pledged this year and received positive feedback for this.

Scrip Program Annual Report, July 2016-June 2017

The SCRIP Program is an ongoing fund raising initiative begun in the fall of 2009. Church members may purchase Retailers' Gift Cards for groceries and other items. The Church receives a rebate from retailers when we purchase the cards. This rebate averages about 4.5%, with rebates for a number of the 700 retailers being substantially higher. A complete list is at the Scrip table.

The SCRIP Table is staffed in the Fellowship Hall every Sunday both before and after the service. We carry cards for 14 retailers: Belmont, Stop & Shop, Shaw's, Dave's Market, CVS, Rite Aid, Walmart, Staples, Panera, Marshalls, Camden's, Starbuck's, Dunkin' Donuts, and iTunes. Cards may be used immediately. Other retailer's cards may be ordered on a Sunday for pick up the following Sunday. Cards such as Amazon, Brooks Brothers, Macy's, Home Depot, Lowe's and others may be ordered this way. Payment for the cards may be made by check or by the correct amount of cash.

Sales over the most recent year averaged \$2,730 a week. Our earnings, when we sell the cards and pay for shipping, amount to over \$6,000 a year, which we distribute in periodic payments split as follows: 25% to Missions, 25% to Trustees, and 50% to the overall Operations budget.

Most people think of Scrip first for groceries, then for gifts, then for hardware items. The acceptability of the Scrip idea is attested to by its widespread use among retailers.

Take advantage of this accepted trade practice by retailers and use Scrip on behalf of your church. The Scrip team is made up entirely of volunteers working for their church, so please use the facilities in place; we can handle a lot more business!

Your SCRIP team: Nancy Corvese, Beth Curtis, Barbara and Gordon Johnson, Wayne Lee, Dottie Leduc, Elizabeth McNab, Jim Ross, Dick Shaw, and Cliff Snow.

Respectfully submitted: Jim Ross

Board of Membership Annual Report July 2016 – June 2017

The responsibilities of the Board of Membership are to invite and welcome new members into the church; assist the Pastor in attracting and assimilating new members into the church; ensure that all members are nurtured and cared for; communicate with members to support their continued involvement in church activities; appoint a Registrar; and assist the Registrar in managing and maintaining the membership records of the church.

During the past year, the Board has worked to carry out these responsibilities in many ways:

1. **Welcome Table.** A Welcome Table is present in Fellowship Hall each Sunday, staffed by two volunteers who are available to talk with new people, answer questions and provide information to visitors, and take down contact information.
2. **Visitor follow-up.** We try to contact visitors who have submitted Visitor Cards or provided information at the Welcome Table within a week.
3. **Prospective Members Meetings.** We continue to offer meetings as needed for those who want to learn more about KCC and who may be interested in becoming members. When we have people ready to join KCC, Rev. Palmer talks with them to schedule a New Member Sunday.
4. **“Friends” for New Members.** A Board Member is assigned to new members upon their joining KCC to provide them with a personal contact. A “New Member” information packet is provided, and the “friend” will follow-up with the New Members on a periodic basis through the first year.
5. **Young Adults/Families outings.** Though scheduling has presented difficulties, one outing for young families did take place while another one was postponed due to weather. Thanks to Al Curnow for continuing to work on this.
6. **Shepherding Program.** A Board Sub-Group, led by Loretta Shaw, meets periodically to identify Members who “have not been seen recently” and to make a phone call to that individual/family, just to touch base and to let them know we are thinking of them.
7. **Website.** We maintain and update the KCC website to keep information current and add information as deemed necessary.
8. **Facebook Page.** Rev. Palmer and Michelle Girasole and others have continued to update KCC’s Facebook page as another means to reach out to both members and non-members.
9. **Membership Records.** We proposed By-Laws changes that will make it possible to keep our membership records up to date without causing undue hard feelings. Those changes have been submitted to the Church Council. Once they are approved we will update our membership records. Thanks to our Registrar, Loretta Shaw for her work on this.
10. **Name tags.** We provide new members with KCC name tags. The company that made our member name tags went out of business so we had to find a new one. Thanks to Clare Sweeney for doing the research and enlisting the new company.

Board Members: Bill Bartels and Andrea Richardson – Co-Chairs, Al Curnow, Jim Findlay, Josh Remington, Clare Sweeney, Fran Bergeron, Loretta Shaw (Registrar)

**KCC Membership Report
July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017**

Members as of July 1, 2016 **476**

Additions:

Confirmands	5
New Members	5

Total Additions: **10**

Losses:

Death	5
Transfer	0
Inactive by Request	10

Total Losses: **15**

Members as of June 30, 2017 **471**

Marriages 0

Date

Baptisms

Gilbert Paliulis Brillat	July 10, 2016
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New Members

Karen Johnson	February 12, 2017
Joan Wolfe	February 12, 2017
Fred Burditt	May 14, 2017
Jeannie Burditt	May 14, 2017
Joyce Stevos	June 25, 2017
<u>Confirmands:</u>	
Katelyn Davis	May 21, 2017
Dennis Haggerty	May 21, 2017
Sarah Ilgenfritz	May 21, 2017
Franklin Kenyon	May 21, 2017
Chloe Lockwood	May 21, 2017

Deaths

Robin H. Burrows Mello	July 23, 2016
Carla Moore	August 12, 2016
Dorothy Guth	November 5, 2016
Patricia Salisbury	November 24, 2016
John Eastberg	February 18, 2017
Charles Thomas (Tom) Schock	non-member June 8, 2017

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta H. Shaw, Registrar

Board of Missions and Social Justice Annual Report July 2016-June 2017

Members: Jim Findlay, Ron Stevens, Judy Anderson, Judi Parman, Sue Davis, Karen Johnson (chair). Occasionally attending as guests of support have been Cindy Buxton and Claudia Smith.

A meeting was held in late August, where the goal was to regroup and reform the committee with its current members, and establish what was allocated as our budget for the upcoming year. Ron and Jim facilitated the discussion with Doug Kraus. Line items were established for the budget as follows: SPNM, Housing, International Relief, Reducing Poverty in RI, Environment, Local and International Health, and Hunger. We recognized collections at special times of the year to include Blanket Sunday, Christmas Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing.

The meeting held October 19 featured Blanket Sunday preparations completed mostly by Judi with help of other members. The Committee thanks everyone for their generous contributions. Jim was instrumental in facilitating readiness for the Christmas Offering, dates for collection were discussed, arrangements made. Decision to split three ways for donation to RI Coalition to Reduce Poverty, Washington County Coalition for Children, and UCC retirees in need also called "the Christmas Fund. Disbursed from our budget during the past year has been \$2000 to SPNM, \$500 for the people of Haiti, and \$1260 sent to South County Habitat for Humanity.

Meeting December 4 confirmed readiness for Christmas, and plans for the upcoming sermon on Poverty to be given by Weldon in February, and the Emig Lecture with Emily Jones from the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty to be also given from the pulpit in February. We coordinated gift card donations for Jonnycake Center and gifts for SPNM.

At our last meeting on January 15 we disbursed contributions for the Emig Lecture and donations to the RI Education Exchange were made. In February is the Emig Lecture which we are ready for. There were discussions on how to support the Haiti mission with possible fundraising or collection event. Collection for Christmas will continue through 1/22. The Empty Bowl event sponsored by Wakefield Baptist Church was held in March.

We are saddened by the hiatus in the relationship with the Kingston Mosque and Muslim communities after the unfortunate destruction of their property and the travel restrictions placed on their leader. We look forward to peace and progress during these unstable times.

The Board of Missions and Social Justice is an official endorser of the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty (<http://www.endpovertyri.org>) and we actively participate in their efforts. This year, the Congregation completed postcards sponsored by the coalition to keep free bus fares for RI low income seniors and people with disabilities. Despite our efforts, this program was "put on hold" in February 2017, with a proposed 50 cent fare, but then reinstated as of July 1, 2017. We feel confident that our efforts, along with those of many other Rhode Islanders, made this difference. The congregation also completed cards to support efforts (spearheaded by Terry Shimmel) to keep individuals with a history of domestic violence/assault from owning or possessing guns.

Ron Stevens and Jim Findlay participated in the January 4 vigil at the RI State House Rotunda in support of the Coalition. Ron Stevens and Judi Parman are committed attendees to the monthly meetings held at the Lutheran church. They and other representatives from KCC meet with other South County churches at

the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. Welcome House and the Jonnycake Center are also represented. Emily Jones, the Coordinator of the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, leads these discussions with the purpose of providing a coordinated interfaith response to poverty in our area. The group set Sunday, February 12th as the date participating churches will preach on poverty. The Coalition announced this interfaith event to the press - faith congregations working together to address poverty in our area. Our church was proud to participate in this effort and Weldon's sermon addressed poverty on that date. The children's time also had an age appropriate message about those less fortunate.

On Sunday, February 26th Ms. Jones of the Coalition was the Emig Lecturer this year and gave the sermon. She addressed poverty and talked about the Coalition. She answered questions following the service in the Fireplace Room.

The Board of Missions and Social Justice supported the Interfaith Power and Light Membership with our annual dues payment of \$150.00 in February.

In an effort to help our building become more energy efficient, BOMSJ transferred \$350.00 to the Trustees for insulation in the Church School on February 12, 2017.

\$500.00 was sent to Dorcus International Institute of RI, Inc. to support their efforts at refugee resettlement. Dorcus International relies entirely on donations for their efforts (the RI Bar provides substantial support) and provides legal advice and advocacy for people newly immigrated to the United States.

One Great Hour of Sharing collection was taken between April 16 and 30, \$2351.00 was sent to the RI Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The Board of Missions and Social Justice decided to support the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale in their effort to provide emergency financial assistance to those in need. Guidelines are in place and were reviewed. \$500.00 was sent to this fund on April 25, 2017.

Karen was reimbursed for the cost of the tri-fold reusable poster used to highlight and inform the congregation of the activities of the BOMSJ. After this cost, the remaining money left in the 2016-2017 budget was sent to Sharon Key for use in her efforts to help individual refugee families in resettlement in the Bristol, RI community where she is serving as interim minister.

Cindy Buxton has joined the board officially.

The Chair would like to thank each member for their tireless contributions, attention to emails between meetings, willingness to help and support the work of the group, and thoughtful and creative ideas for future work.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Johnson (chair), Jim Findlay, Ron Stevens, Judy Anderson, Judi Parman, Sue Davis, Cindy Buxton

Board of Christian Education Annual Report July 2016 – June 2017

The CE Board had another successful year with our Church School Program and our Adult Education. The members of the Board included Jennifer Coleman, Carol Thornber, Michael McMahon and Jean Miller. The CE board, along with our Church School Director, Alice Babcock, has embarked on developing a new, dynamic curriculum for our upcoming year. We will be offering a blend of art, music and Christian education as part of our weekly classes.

Church School:

This year we were again blessed by the members of our congregation that participated as teachers and aides in our classes. With the guidance of Alice we had a well thought out curriculum that was helpful to our teaching staff. We are moving forward to widening this curriculum for next year.

Chimes Choir:

Our Church School Director, Alice Babcock, has been leading both our youth and adults in a chimes choir that has been very successful and a very nice addition to our church school activities. We are hoping to continue with the use of music as a component in our church school curriculum.

Adult Education:

The Board of Christian Education has been actively promoting adult education as a component to our regular worship. With the help of Jean Miller, Claudia Smith and Ernie Torres, we are planning on hosting an active program for our congregation in the fall.

Safe Church Policy:

The CE Board continues to update and amend the KCC policy to ensure that all members of the congregation are safe. With the help of our Pastor, Weldon Palmer, the CE Board, and others our goal is to stay up to date on any changes that need to be enacted.

The CE Board would like to thank our Church School Director, Alice Babcock, and our Pastor, Weldon Palmer, for their leadership and hard work. We are striving to expand our church school and adult education in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael McMahon

Church School Annual Report July 2016 – June 2017

It has been another very busy and successful year for the church school program. During the summer of 2016, a special activity time was held for the children of the congregation. Each session was led by volunteers from the congregation with an average attendance of 6 -8.

Teachers for this year:

Nursery	Nancy Gardner
Pre K / K	Andrea Richardson – Jenn Coleman
Grade 1 /2	Jessica Ilgenfritz – Mike McMahan
Grade 3/4/5	Dulcie Ilgenfritz – Dave “Rem” Remington
Grade 6/7/8	Mike Coffey

Volunteers from the congregation were recruited to serve as classroom assistants. This provided additional supervision for the children while providing the opportunity for teachers to attend worship service. It also provided an opportunity for adults in our congregation to be part of our exciting Church School Program

For the 2016-2017 school year, the Christian Education Board chose to use a UCC curriculum titled “Hands On Bible Curriculum”. This curriculum provided teachers a resource guide with many different activity options. It explored both the Old and New Testament.

The children enthusiastically participate in the worship service. Several children actively participated as lay readers in the worship service. They particularly enjoy presenting plays. This year’s presentations included:

- The annual Christmas Play was directed by Lori Ann Heiner which was presented by the Church School children on December 11, 2016 as part of the worship service. This allowed many children to participate.
- Under the direction of Elizabeth McNab, children and adults presented a special “time for children” to celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King.
- The school year concluded with the children conducting the Worship Service on June 4, 2017. Children were greeters, ushers and lay readers. In addition, they presented a play “Muddy Waters” which was written by Weldon Palmer. This was directed by Michelle Girasole.

As Church School Director, I attended meetings of the Rhode Island Chapter of New England Association of United Christian Educators.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice C. Babcock
Church School Director

Board of Fellowship Annual Report 2016/2017

The Fellowship Board is an enthusiastic and hard working group responsible for creating social events that bring together our church community to build camaraderie and kinship.

This year, the Fellowship Board hosted 7 events:

- Welcome back Ice Cream Social
- Soup Sunday
- Advent Wreath Workshop combined with Soup Sunday
- Winter Pot Luck Supper
- February Chili Sunday
- Progressive Supper
- Summer Barbeque

Attendance remains steady in our fourth year – with approximately 120 attendees. New members and visitors are always welcome.

Our board is very interested in hearing feedback and making program adjustments, based on suggestions from the Congregation. In this regard, we added the ice cream social and pot luck supper and combined Soup Sunday with the Advent Workshop to differentiate programs from previous years.

I want to extend my thanks to board members who work tirelessly to make each event appear effortless: Tracy Heffron, JoAnn Pillar, Maureen White, Sarah Simeone and Diana Geisler. I would also like to thank Andy Cournoyer, Shirley Schock, Reverend Weldon Palmer and spouses Mike McMahon, Dick Geisler and Steve White for their unwavering support.

We are looking forward to creating an equally welcoming environment of fellowship and community in the coming year.

Respectfully,

Mary K. Daly
Board of Fellowship Chair

Annual Report- Flower Committee July 2016-June 2017

The Flower Committee continued its weekly responsibilities of organizing the donors of the floral arrangements and distributing the flowers in the sanctuary to those named in prayers. Each donor is required to pay \$50 for the arrangement. The payment is usually made by leaving a check in the collection plate or by mailing it to the office. The cost of the weekly arrangement is \$50 and our relationship with Kenyon's Floral continues to be positive. For the summer of 2016 the flower committee placed a green plant on the altar and did not provide weekly services. For the summer of 2017 the flower committee will once again provide a green plant for the altar. The committee is also implementing the Carry In/Carry Out Summer Flower program. This will allow individuals to either bring in their own flower display or call Kenyon's to request an arrangement. If they choose to call Kenyon's, they will be billed directly \$50 for the arrangement.

The Flower Committee decorated the sanctuary and church for Christmas with our traditional garlands and wreaths for the first Sunday of Advent and the poinsettia display at the altar for Christmas services. A total of 34 plants were ordered at \$15 each (cost of \$11 from Boy Scouts) and those that were not taken by purchaser were distributed to others and to shut-ins. This year the committee did the display with both red and white poinsettias.

The Flower Committee decorated the sanctuary for Easter with a display of lilies. This Easter, Schartner Farms was no longer selling Easter lilies. Due to this change the flower committee had to order the Easter lilies from Kenyon Floral which resulted in a price increase. A total of 24 plants for Easter 2017 were ordered at \$18 each (cost of \$14 from Kenyon Floral) and those that were not taken by purchaser were distributed to others.

Total costs for the Flower Committee for July 2016-June 2017 were \$2,968.95 and total revenue was \$2,755.06 resulting in a loss of \$213.95 for KCC. The Flower Committee purchased several supplies this year possibly contributing to the loss. Going forward the committee continues to consider new ideas and ways to increase efficiency and promote the floral activities of our church.

As of June 30, 2017 both Patti Steere and Jessie Kenyon have stepped down from the flower committee. Helen Rowe-Drake has agreed to guide the committee for the time being. The flower committee is currently looking for two or three additional members.

Respectively submitted,

2016-2017 Kingston Congregational Church Flower Committee

Patti Steere, Co-chair

Jessie Kenyon, Co-chair

Erica Estus

Lora Hahn- Schubert

Beth Curtis

Michele Girasole

Angela Haggerty

Helen Rowe-Drake

Congregational Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase
Report of the Cemeteries Committee
May 10, 2017

Background - The Cemeteries Committee supervises three cemeteries: Old Fernwood and Tower Hill belong to the Society, and the Peckham Family Cemetery belonging to that family. The Tower Hill Cemetery, on the site of the first church building in the history of the Kingston Congregational Church, had its first burial in 1719 and its last one, Bernon E. Helme, in 1944. Although inactive since then, it is still open for burials. The Peckham Family Cemetery is restricted to use by members of that family, but is cared for by our committee in accordance with an agreement made with the late Dorothy Peckham who contributed \$5,000 to our endowment for that purpose. Old Fernwood is divided into two parts: the original section was given by Elisha Reynolds Potter in 1826 for use by members of this Society and of the church, and by people living within one mile of the church or of the cemetery. The extension of Old Fernwood, landscaped in the 1960's and put into use in the 1990's, was given by Herbert J. Wells in 1927 for use by members of this Society and of the church and their families.

2016 - 2017 Report - Chris Faella, caretaker for New Fernwood Cemetery, is employed to cover the routine maintenance at Old Fernwood and the Peckham Cemeteries. Scott Wallace continues to provide maintenance at the Tower Hill Cemetery.

Some stonewall maintenance at Old Fernwood was facilitated and the road was minimally graded. As reported last year at a meeting of URI and the Town of SK in November 2015, even though both considered "fixing" Route 138 a priority, it appears that construction will not take place until 2021-22.

During the past year (May 2016-April 2017) the following death/interments took place: Thomas Croasdale Rieser July 4, 2016; Carla Gockel Moore August 12, 2016; Marianne F. Ghonem November 11, 2016.

Our desire continues to have the cemeteries in every respect places of honor to the dead and of comfort to their relatives and friends. Lots remain available in both cemeteries with contributions to the endowment fund. Rates were raised on September 1, 2007 to \$600 for non-members and \$450 for members. Reservations may be made for future use, and a number of families have elected to have monuments placed on their lots even many years in advance of actual use, thus easing the burden on the family at a time of great sorrow. All reserved lots continue to be held in ownership by the CSPP.

Respectfully submitted: Cemetery Committee - Ann Ross, Jim Ross, Elizabeth McNab, Richard Shaw, Tracy Heffron, and Jane Skogley

