

The Kingston Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Kingston, RI 02881

Annual Report
July 2014 – June 2015



Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey,
You are welcome here.

Mission Statement of the Kingston Congregational Church

“We are a Christian Church that supports each person's spiritual journey through the communal pursuit of worship, learning, and service.”

(Voted on and approved by the Congregation on April 27, 2008)

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Annual Report of the Senior Pastor, 2014-15

Challenges Met, Opportunities Envisioned

Sometimes in our lives, as individuals and as families, and as communities of faith, we begin a year with significant challenges before us, often ones that signal to us that we are not doing as well as we might be doing in some regards. Challenges can be good in exactly that way; they tip us off when we may need to alter our practices.

But then, when we meet those challenges, we not only make the needed adjustments that will help us going forward, we also can look back with satisfaction and confidence. We can remind ourselves that we were resourceful, that we did not become disheartened, that we were creative and innovative, and, above all, that God sustained us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This, surely, was such a year for us at the Kingston Congregational Church. We began the year with some notable challenges, one of which was essentially emotion-management. We had, first, to figure out together how to face our challenges in ways that acknowledged our negative emotions, that allowed us to express appropriately, for example, our disappointment at the results of the previous year's pledge results, and our disappointment in having to consider what cuts might have to be made to our already modest church budget lines.

On the other hand, we needed to express our positive emotions, especially our faith in our ability, our God-guided and God-empowered ability, to meet the challenges facing us. It helped of course that this church has a long history of facing and meeting challenges, tough ones. It helped, as we went along, to watch the steady and thoughtful way our boards and our leaders responded to our needs, to see good ideas forthcoming, to see them being implemented and leading to encouraging successes. It helped that, within our boards, we listened carefully to each other, followed trains of thought to their conclusions, and moved carefully toward shared responses.

The result of our good faith and steady work is that we have ended this year a far stronger church, with renewed self-confidence, and with encouraging possibilities in our future. We have delighted in the many newcomers we have among us, and in the delight those newcomers are expressing to us about their experience of our congregation. We have delighted in our much more active social fellowship life, the steady strengthening of our Church School, our consistently wonderful music program, our warm and engaging worship, and our outstanding staff, officers and lay leaders.

We have demonstrated a range of new capacities, including the capacity to execute a major Church Benefit. We have demonstrated that we can plan and enact an all-church process of discussion and decision-making, one that, in this case, led to the milestone vote to become an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ. We demonstrated that we could make our church building look beautiful again, by getting the most urgent work completed and paid for. And we demonstrated that we could create a lively and colorful presence for ourselves on social media, a form of outreach and internal community-building that is crucial to our future.

But we have not only met the challenges that faced us; we have determined that **we are ready for some new adventures in the faith**. And we have taken key first steps forward and imagined together a **Year of Looking Outward**.

We look forward to a year in which we will engage new relationships, including an ongoing interfaith relationship with the Muslim Community Center (Mosque) of Kingston. A year in which we will begin developing a long-term partnership with a congregation in the United Church of Christ of Zimbabwe. A year that will mark renewal and deepening of missions and justice commitments we have held in the past, including those to the Haiti Mission and to South Providence Neighborhood Ministries. A year in which we will seek ways to deepen our commitment to inclusion and welcome of those in the LGBTQ community. A year in which we will make our sanctuary significantly more handicapped accessible. And who knows what more, as well?

As I have in previous years since I became your pastor, I rejoice at the end of this year in what we are doing together, and I live with constant and growing gratefulness for the life of faith we share. Let it be our resolve that we shall work together in the year to come, that we may share this life with others, whose lives will be blessed by it as much as our lives are.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. L. Weldon Palmer

KCC Annual Report President's Message

So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

When I stepped into this role as president, I likened it to cleaning the kitchen after a Thanksgiving meal. For one person, it is a daunting task; but when we all contribute, it becomes a social experience that draws others in.

As I reflect on the accomplishments of our church community, I am impressed with all that has taken place over the past year. The year began with a major 'revitalization' project, initiated under Mike McMahon's tenure, to repair and protect the church buildings. These recommendations were provided by the historical architect, Peter Borgemeister, and are being completed by Martone Painting Company. The Trustees continue to preserve the historic element of our church while making it more inclusive to the community (e.g. handicap accessibility).

In an effort to address budgetary issues, the Council organized the church's first annual "Great Church Benefit". The evening, like any good congregational event, began with a meal (Chili Cook-off) and highlighted the talents of our church membership through a Silent and Live Auction. The event raised over \$9,000 and we have started planning for next year's event.

The Board of Stewardship ran a successful campaign centered on the theme, "We are the Church." Using social media to share testimonials, the campaign achieved our goal in pledge amounts, allowing the Board of Finance and the Council to prepare a balanced budget.

Our church motto, "You are welcome here!" was bolstered by our decision to pursue 'Open and Affirming' status through the UCC. Following the Deacons' initiative, the Council supported meetings to explore the possibility of becoming an ONA church. After much dialogue, we drafted a proposal and received approval from the UCC as ONA Church #1298.

Three years ago, then President Tom Brillat wrote, "The challenges of maintaining and upgrading our wonderful facilities will be forever present as will the work of all the boards and committees. What we do in the community for others and what we do for ourselves provides us with endless opportunities for involvement." It has been my experience that members have contributed in various ways that express their personal commitment to the church community. This is our call to stewardship.

I am thankful to be able to work closely with the church boards and their respective chairs. It is my hope, whenever we have the opportunity, that we will continue to work for the good of all.

Respectfully,

Frank Lenox, President KCC Council

Annual Report from Board of Deacons July 2014 – June 2015

Board Members:

Craig Urian (Chair), Jan Kraus, Susan Berman, Tom Heald, Wayne Lee, James Findlay, Michael Wakefield, Bradley Trodson, Charley Sweeney, Tracy Heffron, Meera Viswanathan

This year started off with the organization of an all church meeting pertaining to the topic of “Church Attendance” that was held on September 28th. This was the result of discussions that had been conducted during the previous year wherein the title of the topic is not specific to our church but has great relevance to our strength as a community and growth.

One of the action items addressed from the above meeting, but that was also brought to the Board of Deacons independently by two other boards, the Board of Missions and Social Justice and the Board of Membership, was the topic of Open and Affirming. From the many discussions the Board of Deacons had pertaining to this topic, two all church meetings were held, on March 15 and March 22, to broaden the discussion to the congregation. From those meetings a decision was made by the Board that the church was ready to pursue the final process step of becoming recognized by the UCC as an Open and Affirming Church. A covenant was drafted and voted on by the congregation as part of a vote by the congregation to seek formal recognition as an Open and Affirming Church. The motion was made and passed at the May 17, 2015 congregational meeting. Following submission of the application, the church became officially recognized as an Open and Affirming Church on June 18, 2015.

The Board wishes to extend a grateful thank you to the following for leading Sunday worship service during the time periods Rev. Palmer needed to take time off: Rev. Sharon Key, Enrico Garzilli, Alice Babcock, Karin Aukerman, Chris Perrotti, Tom Butcher, and David Cann.

The decision was made again to go with a single Christmas Eve service at 5 pm and a single Easter Sunday service at 9:30 am and a Tenebrae service the Thursday before Easter.

The Board wishes to say THANK YOU to all of the KCC community for its continued interdigitated spirit, support and strength of each other.

Respectfully,

R. Craig Urian
Chair of the Board of Deacons, Kingston Congregational Church

Kingston Congregational Church Music Board Annual Report 2014-15

Members of the Music Board during the past year were: Joanna Burkhardt (Chair), Elizabeth Candas, Marc Ferrelli, Frank Osterman, and Clay Sink. Enrico Garzilli and Weldon Palmer attended meetings as non-voting participants.

The Music Board met on September 10, November 19 and April 15. (Our February meeting was cancelled due to terrible weather.)

The pianos were tuned and new music was purchased.

Enrico did a wonderful job leading the choir, selecting music, and getting many guest performers. New music was purchased and Enrico wrote an original piece specifically for KCC. He suggested that we not have a Christmas concert this year but rather spend some time thinking about format and content for a concert during the 2015 holiday season. He played a concert during the Kingston Fair this spring which was well attended.

A new element for the lavalier microphone was purchased to help with inconsistencies in the sound system.

In brainstorming about suggestions relating to music that came from the all church meeting regarding membership, we discussed many possibilities: First Friday coffee house, Sunday afternoon concert series, special occasion concerts (like the Valentine's Day concert two years ago), music at Soup Sunday, an annual music gala, establishing a scholarship fund the church could offer to aspiring musical members, and re-establishing the children's choir and/or incorporating music into the CE curriculum.

In thinking about the coming year, we want to:

- Encourage participation in the Children's Choir
- Encourage the establishment of the children's chime choir
- Plan a bus/train trip to NYC to take in some musical event there – opera, musical theater, etc.

Money allocated to the committee was spent on new music, guest performers, and maintenance of the instruments.

Lori Ann Hiener and Ann Ross will be joining the Board in 2015-16.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Burkhardt, Chair

Annual Report 2015

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.

The Senior 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, Timpani and Violin. We were fortunate to have Jenny Collins play trumpet for Palm Sunday and several other services this year. This Pentecost, the choir performed music written during the Civil War. Since it was Memorial Day (Decoration Day) as well as Pentecost, Tom Brillat used both themes in his leadership of the Service.

On a personal note, I have continued to compose music for both Concert performances and Services. I have also continued to conduct the South County Chamber Singers. On Palm Sunday, we performed the magnificent Coronation Mass of Mozart at St. Francis Church in Wakefield. In November of last year, we performed the thrilling Gloria and Te Deum of Rutter along with the truly beautiful Gloria of Vivaldi. Several members of our choir regularly sing with the Chamber Singers. One of our very dedicated sopranos, Margaret Bradley, is the president of the organization.

I would like to thank Joanna Burkardt and the Music Board for their excellent leadership, help, advice, and encouragement which have been invaluable. I would also like to thank Diana Geisler and Grace Woodward who have provided 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

Board of Trustees Annual Report 2014 – 2015

This year has not been without its challenges budgetary and otherwise. We started Rejuvenation Phase One - got the Sanctuary painted, reroofed, and installed new gutters. We are in the process of refurbishing the shutters and repairing the bulkhead to the Library/Sanctuary basement. We made improvements in the heat replacing/upgrading the boilers for the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.

Blue Jean Sunday is where the congregation pitches in with sprucing up and clean up in the spring and fall.

We found out about the Spruce tree and how lucky we are to have it. It's healthy and probably will outlive most of us. See the report by Clark Bridgman in the office.

Thanks to all who helped with winter cleanup. This was a very challenging year!

This was my last year on this Board and may I say that it's been a great pleasure and learning experience. Thank you to all that have helped along the way. Special thanks to the current board members:

Pat Cox, Steve White, Clark Bridgman, Joanna Burkhart, Eric Widmer, Brian Nelson, Audrey Hallberg. Welcome to new members Matt Simeone and Tracy Heffron.

Special thanks to Andy Cournoyer for every little and big thing he does such as taking charge of the lawn project this year.

With gratitude to all,
David "Rem" Remington

Treasurer's Annual Report for the year July 2014 to June 2015

The church has two liquid assets, our endowment, valued at approximately \$1.3 million, which resides with Vanguard and our checking account at Bank of America. The balances of these accounts are shown on the **Asset Balance** report attached.

The endowment has three major claims, music (about 4%) cemetery (about 8%) and church operations (about 88%) What this means is that over the years money was donated to the endowment which was earmarked for those specific uses. Generally accepted good practice is to withdraw 5%. In our case, that's about \$54,000 transferred annually and distributed to the 3 components for use as tracked in the annual budget.

The checking account consists of many funds. First claim which is the operating fund. The other claims are all the other funds. The balance in the checking account equals the sum of all the funds including operating. The **Treasurer's Report** attached is only for the operating fund, or colloquially known as "the budget". I also have reports for all the other funds.

These two reports, the asset balance and the treasurer's reports, when presented together show the whole picture of the church's finances

Of key interest on the asset balance report is the balance shown for the operating fund. This balance is known as the "reserve". This line is the link which connects the treasurers report operating fund to the asset balance sheet. The reserve does not have any claim on it by any fund. It is good practice to maintain a reserve balance equal to 2 to 3 months of our operational expenses. In years past we have had this, about \$40-60,000. In more recent years we have had to use more of the reserve. On the current asset balance report I show a reserve of \$14,900 at the end of the fiscal year 30 June 2015.

The church ended the year with a surplus of \$5,230. Considering we started the year with a deficit budget of \$18,814, through very careful spending by all boards and tight management the church did well to end with a surplus **and an increase in the reserve.**

For the most part, all of the funds or board balances are completely automated. The financial secretary can look up the balance of any fund or board account. I remind everyone to please use the description line on your checks when making a donation. Please use your giving account number, as this aids our recording accuracy. If you would like to know your giving account number, please call the office or you may find it on your annual giving statement.

I thank the members of the finance board, investment committee, financial secretary - Shirley Schock, and assistant treasurers, Mike Lockwood and Tom Brillat, and their helpers for their efforts gathering and recording the Sunday contributions.

Submitted by,

Doug Kraus, Treasurer

Board of Finance Annual Report July 2014 to June 2015

The Board of Finance regularly 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, Steve White, 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 and growing the endowment to 1.3 million dollars. The Finance Board is happy to report that next year's budget is on a sound footing. This year's budget was particularly challenging since we had an expected dip in pledging that caused a deficit budget to be passed which forced an appeal to the Congregation to contribute more money during the winter. The extra contributions shored up our budget so we could get through the fiscal year. We successfully moved past our short term budget shortfall.

The Board discussed our long term financial health of the church due to the aging demographics of our church family. The Finance Board discussed creating a strategic planning committee to look at 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 2015-16 Fiscal Year Budget was delivered to the Church Council where it was reviewed and delivered to the Congregation for its vote. The 2015-16 Budget was approved by the Congregation during the June 21 meeting. The Budget calls for a \$9,000 fundraiser via an auction and another \$ 10,000 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.

Jeff Richardson, Finance Board Chair

Investment Committee 2015 Annual Report

The Investment Committee met 3 times during the 12 months ending 6/30/15 one of which was a virtual meeting. On June 30, 2014 the Endowment portfolio had a market value of \$1,377,413. During the fiscal year, \$0 in gifts and bequests were added, previously disbursed Cemetery Funds of \$10,000 were reinvested, \$53,485 was distributed for support of Church operations and \$43,756 for approved capital improvements. In addition, the Hayes Memorial Fund balance of \$15,557 was fully distributed. The net outflow for the fiscal year was \$102,798. The market value as of June 30, 2015 was \$1,290,977. At fiscal year-end the portfolio held a mix of 10 index mutual funds and ETFs, with an approximate portfolio weighting of 78% equity, 21% bonds and 1% cash.

The Committee recommended, and the Trustees and Church Council approved up to 5% of a 7 year rolling average be used in fiscal year 2016 to support the general operating budget.

Committee member Ron Stevens researched the balances of the funds comprising the portfolio to appropriately allocate earnings over the previous seven years. The Committee approved this methodology for the future allocation of earnings and distributions among the various portfolio specific purpose funds.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Baker, Secretary

Members: Tom Butcher, Dick Geisler, Ron Stevens, Ernest Torres
Ex Officio members: Doug Kraus, Jeff Richardson

Board of Stewardship 2014-2015

The primary role of the KCC Board of Stewardship, as written in the church by-laws, is to “plan and conduct stewardship initiatives to generate funds for the support, expenses and benevolences of the church”. In short, we are charged with trying to raise pledges from the membership of the church which allow the Church Council, through the Board of Finance, to put together a budget which supports our employees, maintains or expands the many ministry, mission, and administrative activities of the church.

Because the 2014 Stewardship Campaign came up short on pledges last spring, we on the Board committed ourselves to trying new approaches during the spring campaign, and to bringing new energy to our efforts. Our campaign theme this year, “WE ARE THE CHURCH”, was chosen to make clear to everybody exactly how important the relationship of ALL members is to the success of KCC. In another attempt to make the stewardship campaign more immediate and personal, we focused on delivering the Stewardship message to the congregation via personal messages, which were delivered during the church service and (in a first at KCC) via email links to YouTube videos. These messages, delivered by Rev. Weldon Palmer, our Music Director Enrico Garzilli, and members Jean Miller and Katie Hopewood, provided a diverse set of perspectives on Christian faith and KCC, its congregation and programs. Thanks very much to our Stewardship testimonial speakers, and to Frank Lenox who arranged to record each talk and who edited and posted all the videos online for us.

In another first, an online pledge card was offered by email and about thirty-five families chose to pledge using the online form. Additionally, a “stewardship campaign letter” was sent out by good old-fashioned US Mail along with a paper card and return envelope, and an information sheet that summarized the church service testimonials and the needs of our church budget.

The results of the campaign are most gratifying; the pledged total rebounded from about \$216 thousand last July to 140 pledges totaling over \$237 thousand this year. This allows continued growth in the programs in our church, and the Board of Stewardship thanks all our members and friends very much for your support of our church.

This summer, the Board of Stewardship bids farewell to three long-tenured members – Karin Aukerman, Sue Kermes, and Chris Little. We will miss their enthusiasm and experience very much, and our new Board will meet this autumn to plan a new campaign for 2016!

Wishing all members and friends of KCC a wonderful summer,

Sincerely yours,

The KCC board of Stewardship: Sue Kermes, Chris Little, Karin Aukerman, Ann Lenox, and David Cann

Board of Membership Annual Report July 2014 – June 2015

The Board of Membership was created as the result of the Bylaws Review/Update process that was completed in 2011. The Board's initial Priority Areas were: 1) Attracting people to KCC, 2) Welcoming Visitors, 3) Implementing a New Member process, and 4) On-going Support for Members. These four considerations continue to be the focus of the Board.

During this year, the Board initiated and has worked on multiple items:

- 1) Church Directory. The Directory was updated, new photos and addresses, in the spring.
A very special thanks to Kileen Urian and Jaime Nelson.
- 2) Website Redesign. The new KCC Website was launched in the fall 2013 and has been well received by Church members and others. During the year both an "Open" Facebook Page and a "Closed Group" (KCC Members only) Facebook Page were added. Jaime Nelson and Will Palmer conducted two "Facebook" education and sign up sessions for members.
- 3) Welcome Table. A Welcome Table is present in Fellowship Hall each Sunday, staffed by two volunteers who are available to answer questions and provide information to visitors. Rev. Palmer mentions the Welcome Table in his Sunday Service opening comments. The Board now follows up within a week with those visitors who have submitted Visitor Cards. This has proven to be worthwhile in providing a friendly outreach to them.
- 4) Prospective Members Meetings. The Board presents Meetings (after church) two to three times per year for individuals who want to learn more about KCC and who may be interested in becoming members. In turn, Rev. Palmer, in conversation with these individuals, sets dates for them to join the Church during a Sunday Service.
- 5) "Friends" for New Members. Implemented in 2012, this initiative is intended to provide New Members with a personal contact if they have any questions about Church happenings or ways to get involved in Church activities. Board Members are assigned to New Members upon their joining KCC. The Board Members make contact with New Members and offer to meet with them. A "New Member" information packet has been developed that is provided at the time of this meeting. In turn, Board Members will follow-up with the New Members on a periodic basis through the first year.
- 6) Young Adults/Families Initiative. Coming from the September all Church Discussion Meeting, the Board discussed ways in which the Church could support Young Adults/Families. Rather than thinking of and trying events, etc., the Board developed and distributed a survey. There were good feedback/suggestions. A couple of the respondents were identified as the possible coordinators for activities. This will be discussed over the summer and some activities initiated in the fall. A special thanks to Andrea Richardson for developing and coordinating the survey effort.
- 7) Name Tags and Holder. The Board periodically reminds people to wear their Nametags. Order forms are available on the Harvest Table. With the construction assistance of Dave Cox, a Name Tag Holder was placed in Fellowship Hall.
- 8) Shepherding Program. With the interest in keeping in touch with Members who "are not seen in church for a while", the Shepherding Program was initiated with the guidance of Rev. Palmer. A Board Sub-Group, led by Loretta Shaw, meets periodically to identify Members who "have not been seen". In turn, they make a phone call to that Individual/Family, just to touch base. This outreach has been well received by those who have been called.

Board Members: Tom Butcher- Chair, Bill Bartels, Amy Coleman, Susan Eriksen, Jim Findlay, Jaime Nelson, Andrea Richardson, Loretta Shaw (Registrar)

**KCC Membership Report
July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015**

Members as of July 1, 2014		471
Additions:		
Confirmands	2	
New Members	9	
Total Additions:		11
Losses:		
Death	5	
Transfer	0	
Inactive by Request	1	
Total Losses:		6
Members as of June 30, 2015		476
Baptisms	0	
Marriages	0	
		<u>Date</u>
<u>Baptisms</u>		
none		n/a
<u>Marriages</u>		
none		n/a
<u>New Members</u>		
Joan Henderson		March 8, 2015
Heidi Henry		March 8, 2015
Judi Parman		March 8, 2015
Michelle Girasole		May 10, 2015
Beverly Keigwin		May 10, 2015
Jack Keigwin		May 10, 2015
Michael Northrup		May 10, 2015
Cliff Snow		May 10, 2015
Sue Snow		May 10, 2015
<u>Confirmands:</u>		
Nathan Hubertus		May 17, 2015
Lily Trodson		May 17, 2015
<u>Deaths</u>		
Howard V. Hallberg		August 22, 2014
George E. Moore III		August 27, 2014
Marilyn S. Goodman		February 15, 2015
Wilma J. Cole		February 24, 2015
Carl H. Beckman	non-member	April 15, 2015
Emily "Sally" Wells Bechtold		May 11, 2015

Respectfully submitted, Loretta Shaw, Registrar

SCRIP PROGRAM Annual Report July 2014 - June 2015

The SCRIP PROGRAM is an ongoing fund raising initiative that was started in the Fall of 2009. Church Members can buy Retailers' Gift Cards for groceries and other items. The Church receives a rebate from the retailers with our purchasing of the Cards. This rebate averages about 4.5%, with some retailers being as high as 16%. The National Program has about 400 Retailers. A complete list is at the Scrip Table.

The SCRIP Table is staffed in Fellowship Hall every Sunday before and after the Service. At the Table we carry Cards for 14 Retailers, including Stop & Shop, Belmont's, Shaw's, Walmart, CVS, Marshall's and several more. You can get these cards and go shopping that day if need be. Other Retailers' Cards can be ordered on a Sunday and be available to you the following Sunday. Cards for LL Bean, Amazon, Brooks Brothers are ordered in this way. You can pay for your cards with a check, cash or a credit card.

On average about 20 people participate each week. (We wish more of you would participate.) We are busier during the Holiday Season. For this Fiscal Year, the SCRIP PROGRAM raised \$9000. These funds are distributed as follows: 25% to Missions for a Special Local Project, 25 % to Trustees, and 50% to the overall Operating Budget. About \$204,000 of Card Sales were made to generate these "funds" for KCC Ministries. Since our inception in 2009, we've done over \$1Million in Sales volume. About 80% of this volume is for Groceries.

So think SCRIP for your groceries and other gifts. The retailers are willing to provide the rebates; why not use the funds for KCC's purposes.

Your SCRIP Committee: Tom Butcher, Nancy Corvese, Beth Curtis, Barbara and Gordon Johnson, Dottie Leduc, Elizabeth McNab, and Dick Shaw

KCC Board of Mission and Social Action Annual Report for 2014-2015

Your KCC BOM&SJ has been busy this year; it seems that each year more world-wide disasters occur, and there is more world-wide and local need for the most basic life support, such as food and shelter. We've had too many options for action, too many ideas that we couldn't possibly carry through into action. We are very grateful for the support of our beloved church in what we have managed to accomplish.

- 1) We have had an unusually large budget this year: \$6,000. Members have been most generous with giving to the usual offerings as well. We spent our budget as follows: \$2,000 each for South County Habitat for Humanity and South Providence Neighborhood Ministries; after Don Anderson's inspiring Emig Lecture: \$200 each for Dorcas International Institute of RI and the RI State Council of Churches to spend at his discretion; \$250 for Rev. Edward Matuvhunye for his sermon; and \$600 to the UCC Emergency Fund for Nepal. We have divided the remaining monies between Dorcas International Institute and SPNM.
- 2) The BOM has been appointed to administer a wonderful bequest in honor of Franz Hayes, Freddie Bettinger's husband. At present Freddie is anxious that the money be apportioned soon to Habitat for Humanity--especially the present "multigenerational build", perhaps to be called the Franz Hayes Build. We will consult again with Freddie over the summer as to the schedule of distribution and invite her to our next meeting in August to discuss these plans.
- 3) Several parishioners have traveled to Haiti with the UCC Haiti Project. In September or October we plan to have a fun *Haiti Dinner* fundraiser for the whole community to help with projects in Haiti. Natalia Hernandez will help us sing together the songs she sang with children in Haitian orphanages. We invite anyone interested in learning about or going to Haiti – and supporting the project!
- 4) Our usual collections have been very rewarding: Fall: **Blanket Sunday** for Church World Service: \$1,382, which earned us a certificate in the "Top Ten \$1000 Plus Churches!" and **Christmas Offering** :\$2,172, **One Great Hour of Sharing**: for Haiti Task Force \$900, and \$564 each to Wood River Health Center, Jonnycake Center and the Women's Resource Center.
- 5) We're still in the process of collecting contributions from church members for recent Nepal earthquake/landslide disasters to go to Church World Service; we're very excited about your wonderful response; at present we will be able to send nearly \$1,000, in addition to the "seed money" of \$600 we have already sent.
- 6) And we are excited to be working with all of you in next year's **Year of Looking Outward**. Already the church has acted on advice from Deacons and the Board of Missions in becoming Open and Affirming. KCC hosted a presentation by a representative from the local Interfaith Power and Light group. The Emig Lecture and sermon by Don Anderson inspired us to work with immigrants. 45 Gift cards and lots of food from you all have gone to Jonnycake and SPNM. We now have Fair Trade tea and coffee for coffee hour – and no more Styrofoam cups! Two church members sold their thoughtful children's books on joy and war/peace. We look forward with anticipation to new programs in 2015-16!

BOM&SJ: Cindy Buxton, Doris Findlay, Karen Johnson, Erin Trodson, Judi Parman, Tina Letcher, Cindy McDonald.

Board of Christian Education Annual Report July 2014 - June 2015

The CE Board had another successful year with our Church School Program and our Adult Education. The members of the Board included Barbara Hart, Michael Salvadore, Frank Lenox and on a rotating basis Patti Steere and Jessie Kenyon.

Church School:

From the Church School Director, Alice Babcock:

During the summer of 2014, a special 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.

Graduating seniors (2) were recognized and gifts (music and iTunes card) were given to each senior.

Youth Groups: Patti Steere and Chris Hiener have agreed to run the Senior High Youth Groups while Jessie Kenyon and Erica Estus will handle the Middle School group in 2015. Jessie Kenyon organized 14 youths to set up the new youth group room downstairs. The financial contribution to PCC for the shared youth director was ceased, as voted by the Council.

Adult Education:

In November Frank Lenox spoke on the Book of Jonah. Claudia Smith led a book group in February (Tattoos on the Heart). Jean Miller offered to run a Lenten series but schedules could not be coordinated.

Safe Church Policy:

The CE Board continues to update and amend the KCC policy to ensure that all members of the congregation are safe. An abbreviated version of the policy was drafted to hand out to all teachers and parents. The Board recommends having an attorney review the revised policy as well as the abbreviated version and will then send it to Church Council for approval.

Background Checks:

The BCI forms were collected at the teacher brunch for all teachers and volunteers. Alice will submit the forms to the AG and maintain reports once received.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Hart, Chairperson

Church School Annual Report July 2014 – June 2015

It has been another very busy and successful year for the church school program. During the summer of 2014, a special 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 – Amy Coleman
Grade 1 /2	Katie Hopewood and Kileen Urian
Grade 3/4/5	Michelle Davis and Sarah Simeone
Grade 6/7/8	Christy Sheehy and 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 2014-2015 school year, the Board chose to use a UCC curriculum titled “Shine”. This curriculum provided students with their own individual workbook as well as a resource guide with many different activity options for teachers. It explored both the Old and New Testament.

The annual Christmas Pageant was directed by Lori Ann Hiener and was presented by the Church School children on December 14, 2014 as part of the worship service. This allowed many children to participate.

Following her annual mission trip to Haiti, Cindy McDonald assisted the children of Church School to participate in a church wide fund raiser to assist the children of Haiti.

Recognizing the importance of Communion, the students in grades 6/7/8 remained in church for the entire worship service on Communion Sunday. All other children attended Church School classes and were given the opportunity to return to the worship service to participate in Communion.

The school year concluded with the children conducting the Worship Service on June 14, 2015. Each class participated in a variety of ways including a presentation of a highlight of what they learned throughout the year. A brunch followed the Worship Service to honor the teachers and volunteers who lead the activities each week.

Lori Ann Hiener led the children's choir which sang several times throughout the year. In an effort to expand the music opportunities for the children of the congregation, we are creating a chimes choir which will begin in September.

As Church School Director, I attended meetings of the Rhode Island Chapter of the New England Association of United Christian Educators including the annual retreat held in May.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice C. Babcock
Church School Director

Board of Fellowship Annual Report 2014/2015

The Fellowship Board is an enterprising group responsible for creating social events that bring our church community together such that we might get to know one another a little better – *esprit de corps!*

This year, the Fellowship Board hosted 7 events, almost all were held at the church immediately following worship:

- 3 Soup Sundays
- Advent Wreath Workshop
- February Chili Sunday (and chilly it was!)
- Progressive Supper
- Welcome Summer Barbeque.

Attendance grew steadily in our second year – from 100 to over 120 attendees. New members and visitors are always welcome.

Our Board is very interested in hearing and making program adjustments, based on suggestions and feedback from the Congregation. In this regard, we cut Progressive Supper by one course and added free child care to make the event more accessible to young families and adults who prefer to be home earlier.

I want to extend my thanks to Board members who work hard to make each event appear effortless: Brenda Yonkoske, Tracy Heffron, JoAnn Pillar, Maureen White, Sarah Simeone and Erin Trodson.

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

Respectfully,
Mary K. Daly
Board of Fellowship Chair

Annual Report- Flower Committee July 2014-June 2015

The Flower Committee continued its weekly responsibilities of organizing the ordering of the floral arrangements by request 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 Florist continues to be positive. For the summer of 2014 the flower committee placed a green plant on the altar and did not provide weekly services. For the summer of 2015 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. Many encourage us to consider alternating a display of tulips and daffodils, and lilies in future years. A total of 29 plants for Easter 2015 were ordered at \$15 each (cost of \$11 from Boy Scouts) and those that were not taken by purchaser were distributed to others.

Total costs for the Flower Committee for July 2014-June 2015 were \$2807.00 and total revenue was \$2665.00 resulting in a loss of \$142.00 for KCC. The Flower Committee will discuss tracking payments again to try to prevent future losses.

Going forward the committee continues to consider new ideas and ways to increase efficiency and promote the floral activities of our church.

Respectively submitted,
2014-2015 Kingston Congregational Flower Committee

Patti Steere, Co-chair

Jessie Kenyon, Co-chair

Erica Estus

Lora Hahn-Schubert

Beth Curtis

Lynne Broderick

Angela Haggerty

Jaime Nelson

Congregational Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase
Report of the Cemeteries Committee
May 12, 2015

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.

2014 - 2015 Report - Chris Faella, caretaker for New Fernwood Cemetery, is employed to cover the routine maintenance at Old Fernwood and the Peckham Cemeteries. Ann Ross, a member of our committee, continues to tend to the entrance. Scott Wallace continues to provide maintenance at the Tower Hill Cemetery.

A large tree fell last summer at OF in the wooded section causing a major cleanup in that area. We still have not heard a report yet from Applied Bio Systems who were hired in 2012 by DOT to check the health of the amphibians living in the wetlands next to the road and cemetery. The Cemetery Committee has also still not received a reply from DOT to the Committee's request on the Route 138 project "to walk the cemeteries" last year. Concerns continue to be raised as to how the road project will effect both Old and New Fernwood.

During the past year (May 2014-April 2015) the following deaths/interments took place: Patricia Reed Morales d. 6/19/14, interred in old section 6/25/14; Wilma Stanton Cole d. 2/14/14.

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 Congregational Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase.

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