

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

Annual Report
July 2019 – June 2020



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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Pastor's Report Annual Benediction

Shirley informed me that the Pastor's Annual Report is due now! As I retired on June 28 and left the Ocean State for the "daily 90 degree summer heat" State of North Carolina, it feels inadequate to prepare a summary of "what we have done and what we have left undone," this past year in light of the unprecedented events we have experienced. Instead, I have chosen to forsake the Annual Report format and employ instead, a Benediction.

Benediction means "blessing" and this blessing falls at the end of worship every Sunday. We hear words, "Go in peace and serve our God with gladness." or "May the Lord bless you and keep you, make God's face to shine upon you ...and give you God's everlasting peace." Or our favorite, "Go now in peace, never be afraid...." sung so beautifully by us all.

So in light of this past year I offer a benediction...

May God continue to keep you safe and well. May you continue to be grateful for and nurture your community of love and service that has withstood virus, isolation and fear. May your community of love hold each other close through these times of uncertainty and disruption and may you be held in God's tender heart.

May the love of Christ Jesus, our tender shepherd and righteous prophet, conqueror of death and injustice, may his love and call for inclusion and radical love continue to inflame and inspire King Cong so that every board and committee, every decision and action reflects the values of the Kingdom of God. May each of you be inspired to bring your best to meetings and make decisions as you have done this past year to serve our neighbors. As you have chosen to donate and pray for local and state organizations that serve the needy, may you also follow the call to witness to the prophecy of Jesus by advocating for, bearing witness and move into the forefront of helping others, even in this time when walking alongside one another physically may be impossible.

May the Holy Spirit inspire, challenge, guide you to make prophetic decisions, to worship with gusto and reverence and continue on with the Messy Church Worship so that your outreach is even greater and more inclusive. May the Holy Spirit continue to inspire your Deacons, Enrico, Michelle and Dave Bergeron as they bring worship into your homes with enthusiasm and as much expertise as possible. And continue to bless the staff who has not missed a beat during this time of isolation as they have served and labored along with you with expertise, wisdom and great compassion and kindness.

And may God go with you and guide you into your future...now with your Interim Pastor Bruce Greer and with your settled pastor...may you treasure leadership that brings new ideas, challenges and grace to and for you. May you love them, take care of them and stop in to chat from time to time.

Finally I will add that it has been a blessing to serve with you and to pastor you through the entire year. Together we have rejoiced with our new members, mourned alongside our families

and friends at the death of dear ones, and laughed during our fellowship times. We have been blessed to watch our Church School thrive with Michelle's leadership and the teachers who volunteer. We have been challenged to improve communication between our Council and the congregation, to increase discussion and accountability and to seek to value every opinion and empower folk to be involved.

As I sign off from Raleigh and settle into a new life, please let us know that we are all held and loved....and that I am grateful to you for your outpouring of love and prayers as Joe (the dog) and I took our leave..

Godspeed and my prayers go with you daily and peace to you all.
Rev. Sharon Hope

President's Annual Report

Since my last annual report, many things have changed. Pastor Sharon Hope departed and we wish her smooth sailing in her retirement and new home in North Carolina. We will soon be welcoming Reverend Bruce Greer as our new interim minister. He will be starting at KCC in the third week of July. Our search for a new full time pastor continues. We have had 17 applications for the full time pastor's position. Our Search Committee are vetting the applicants but the process is slower due to COVID 19 restrictions.

In May, we were able to secure a forgivable loan from the Small Business Administration of \$19,822 via the payroll protection program to help alleviate the fiscal disruptions caused by the COVID 19 virus. Since we kept our part time employees on the KCC payroll, the loan will not have to be repaid. The loan had the effect of helping balance the budget for our 2020-2021 fiscal year. We were also able to meet our pledging goals. The budget is balanced for this fiscal year which started on July 1. I thank the Congregation for their generosity and the Stewardship Committee for their hard work.

The Deacons are exploring some new ways to broadcast our church services during the virus. For the near future, we will have to stay connected via electronic presentations. Eventually, we can explore some limited social distancing seating in church during the Sunday services.

The first phase of the four year painting plan started this week with the painting of the church. We received a \$6,000 Potter Fund Grant to help offset the cost of the first year's painting contract. Breaking up the painting into four phases will help keep the cost manageable and will keep the church looking great. The Trustees have done a great job over the last two years. The Church has never looked so good inside and out.

My time as the President of the Church Council is now over. The Church will have new challenges during this time with the COVID 19 virus. With your continued support, I am confident we will be able to meet any new challenges. Thank you for your support over the last two years. It was an honor to represent our church family.

Thank you,
Jeff Richardson

Board of Deacons
Kingston Congregational Church
Annual Report
July 2019—June, 2020

Board Members: Susan Berman (Chair), Margaret Bradley (Recording Secretary), Dave Remington (Treasurer), Nancy Ross, Tina Letcher, Linda Mendillo, JoAnn Pillar, Carolyn Eldridge, Carolyn Eastberg, Louise Pearson.

In anticipation of Rev. Sharon's departure, the Deacons undertook a search for a new Interim Minister. In this, we were very much helped by the Southern New England UCC Conference, and were able to call the Rev. Bruce Greer, who will serve half-time from July 20 to the end of the summer, becoming fulltime in September.

OUR NEW INTERIM PASTOR – REV. BRUCE A. GREER

On July 20, Bruce Greer will begin his service as our “bridge” interim pastor, to help us complete our interim time work in preparation for the next “settled” Pastor. Certified by the Interim Ministry Network, Bruce's goal is to build on Rev. Sharon Ann Hope's “intentional” interim work of the past two years, providing continuity as well as proactive preparation for the incoming pastor.

Born in Georgia, Bruce has lived in 10 states in New England, the Northeast, Midwest, Appalachia, and Rocky Mountains. The son of a Georgia-born Baptist minister active in the Civil Rights movement and a Boston-born mother, he comes from a long line of Northern and Southern Baptists. Roger Williams, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jimmy Carter, Bill Moyers, and Peter Gomes are some of his Baptist heroes.

An Andover Newton Seminary graduate, ordained by the American Baptist Churches (ABC), Bruce served three settled pastorates in MA and RI. He completed post-seminary degrees in church growth theory and sociology, and conducted grant-funded research on Baby Boomer spirituality, church drop-outs, and mainline Protestantism. Church decline and renewal have been a major focus throughout his career.

Bruce served the Warwick Fire Department as Chaplain and on the Rhode Island Critical Incident Stress Management Team. Trained by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, he responded to many incidents, including Ground Zero after 9/11 and *The Station* nightclub fire. In 2005, he completed a 12-month, full-time clinical pastoral residency at the University of Colorado Hospital in Denver.

He has served 12 interim pastorates in four states and three denominations (ABC, Presbyterian, UCC); churches large and small, from healthy to dying. He has served churches following “beloved” pastors, churches in conflict and difficulty, and churches following pastoral misconduct. His greatest joy in interim ministry has been helping churches make courageous decisions and significant changes.

The Kingston Congregational Church will be Bruce's fourth interim pastorate in the United Church of Christ. Since his days at Andover Newton, Bruce has been very familiar with the U.C.C. and enjoyed many collegial relationships with U.C.C. pastors. Though American Baptists and Congregationalists have much in common, he feels a strong affinity with the U.C.C. because of its Open and Affirming stance.

Bruce lives in Providence (Elmhurst) with his wife, Dale Rogoff Greer, an RN since 1973. After 25 years in nursing she received her MPH and worked in public health leadership and consulting until retirement. They have three out-of-state adult children, two daughters-in-law, two granddaughters, and two “grand dogs.” In addition to the Pats and Sox, he loves bookstores, music, fire apparatus, railroads, and travel.

Per agreement with church leadership, he will serve half-time until August 31 and then full-time until our settled Pastor is called and ready to start. Bruce insists that “Reverend” is not his first name. He much prefers being just Bruce, versus “Pastor Bruce” or “Rev. Bruce”. He looks forward to meeting everyone and serving as our ministry partner during these challenging days.

KCC Community in the Time of Covid-19

In March, everything changed in order to control the spread of Covid-19. We are grateful to Rev. Sharon and to Michelle and to David Bergeron that we haven’t missed a single worship service since the March 16th Stay -at- Home Order. Services have been streamed live on Facebook, and we have been joined, remotely, by members all over the country and by members who were, because of illness or injury, physically unable to come to church even before the lock down. It is wonderful, watching, to be able to message the others watching and to imagine them in their pews, all of us hearing the message together. We are aware that we have some sound and other technology issues. We will work to address them in the coming year.

In Memoriam: Nancy Ross

This year the Board of Deacons lost one of our own. Our beloved Nancy Ross left the Board in December due to illness. She died June 14, and Rev. Sharon did a small service for her family. We look forward to a time when we can all be together for a memorial service. Nancy will always be loved and missed and part of us.

In Memoriam: Charley Sweeney

Our beloved Charley Sweeney, who had chaired the Board of Deacons until last year, died suddenly on March 28th. Rev. Sharon held a service for Clare and Charley’s children. We hope to be able to have a memorial service in March of 2021. Charley will always be loved and missed and part of us.

In Gratitude

The Deacons are grateful to Rev. Sharon Ann Hope, who finished her interim ministry at KCC on June 28, after leading us through turbulent times. We wish her all the best in her well-earned retirement. We will miss her and will never forget her. We are also grateful to those who finished their service on The Board of Deacons—Joan Henderson, Carolyn Eastberg, Tina Letcher and Louise Pearson, who is leaving the Board of Deacons to become Council President. Finally, we are grateful to every congregation member and friend of KCC for being the church!

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Berman, Chair
Board of Deacons

Kingston Congregational Church Board of Music Annual Report July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2020

The Board of Music members are Susan Snow (voted Chair), Lori Ann Hiener, Catherine Lenox (voted Sect.), Matt Simeone, Nancy Ross, Luca Simeone, Bill Nelson, and Margaret Bradley. Nancy Ross resigned due to health reasons and Luca Simeone resigned due to school responsibilities. The Board needs two new members at this time.

The Music Board decided meetings would be held on Sundays after church. Dates of meetings were September 20, 2019; November 24, 2019; February 23, 2019; and June 22, 2020 via Zoom.

The Music Board arranged for Mr. Dennis Costa, a guitarist, to perform for the December tree trimming party at church with the cost of Mr. Costa being covered by an anonymous donor. Mr. Costa gave an hour long concert which was enjoyed by everyone, young and old alike.

The Music Board discussed getting purple stoles for choir robes to use during Advent. This is still being worked on. All the instruments, including pianos and organ, are being cleaned, cared for, and tuned.

The KCC Church Choir CD's were still being sold at Coffee Hour each Sunday after church. They were for sale at the Annual Christmas Cookie Sale.

A dedication of the Chimes in memory of Alice Babcock was planned for May 1. We arranged for all members of the original Chimes Choir and anyone else who would like to play to perform one selection at the beginning of the church service. Because of scheduling conflicts and because of COVID-19, the dedication has been postponed indefinitely.

The Music Board decided to purchase a gift certificate for the Rhode Island Philharmonic as our contribution to the Habitat Gala, which was eventually cancelled.

Plans were in the making for KCC's 200th anniversary and the Music Board was asked to participate. That celebration has been postponed.

At the end of February, COVID-19 made its presence felt and everything changed. Church services were held via Facebook. The Music Board was asked to pay Mr. Rod Luther to play piano for Sunday services from March through May. There was no choir or organist during this time. In June, Dr. Garzilli recorded music for the streamed church services. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the choir will sing in the sanctuary until there is a vaccine for the virus. The CDC has indicated that there needs to be 15 feet between choir members. We are currently exploring other options.

At this time we have not been able to do an Annual Evaluation of the Music Director. However, I am grateful for Dr. Garzilli's professionalism, his guidance, his beautiful music, his innovation and his ability to teach the love of music to all of us. Thank you, Enrico!! A special thank you goes out to Sexton Andy Cournoyer for his help to the Music Board.

It has been a pleasure to serve on the Board of Music and I thank all who have made this a good year for us, despite certain difficulties. You all have been flexible, upbeat, and wonderful.

Susan B. Snow

Annual Report 2020 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. Unfortunately, the Covid 19 virus changed the ability of the choir to sing for services from the middle of March. At this point we are waiting for a vaccine that could keep us safe while practicing and singing for worship. There is quite a bit of interest in making a Christmas disc which we will probably address in the late spring of 2021.

The adult Choir meets every Thursday evening to prepare for Sunday Worship. I deeply appreciate their great contribution to Worship. The choir membership is as follows:

Sopranos - Loretta Shaw, Margaret Bradley, C. Elizabeth Candas, Susan Hammen-Winn, Diana Geisler, Sharon Davis, Andrea Richardson

Altos - Jean Miller, Karen Johnson, Susan Snow, Canna Falby, Louise Able

Tenors - Matthew Simeone, Ann Ross, Carrie Nally, Clay Sink, Frank Lenox, Ted Woodruff, Jacob Green

Bases - Jim Findlay, Bill Nelson, Eric Widmer, Paul Schubert, Gary Davis

We are very blessed to have Rev. Sharon Ann Hope with her beautiful soprano voice join us occasionally as well.

We are very fortunate to have Luca Simeone and Jenny Collins, very fine trumpet players, play for several of our services. In addition, I would like to thank Susan Snow who has been a very fine chair of the Music Board and to the entire Board for their work this past year. I would also like to thank Diana Geisler for her very much appreciated service as choir librarian. Her work continues to be outstanding.

Lastly, to all of you I express my gratitude once again for your support, encouragement, and inspiration.

Respectfully submitted,
Enrico Garzilli

KCC Trustees' Report to Congregation July, 2020

Current Trustees: Tracy Heffron, Wayne Lee and Audrey Hallberg

Projects initiated or completed in the past year include the following:

A Potter Fund grant of \$6,000.00 and congregational approval of \$12,470.00 allow us to start Phase 1 of the painting and maintenance of the exterior in 2020. Work will start in July.

With a generous donation from Jim McCauley in memory of Joan, we were able to purchase an exterior ramp leading from the parking lot into the Library. Also, a stair lift going up the stairs into Fellowship Hall was installed.

We purchased no-drip candles for evening services.

We hired a new heating contractor, Valley Heat and A/C.

We replaced the 100 year-old circuit breakers, and installed new wall switches.

We worked with the kitchen committee to coordinate paper and needed items for coffee hour and other events. Recycling efforts have been greatly improved.

This fall, we will be hiring a new snow plowing company.

Trustees continue to work closely with our Sexton, Andy Cournoyer, to keep KCC's grounds and buildings in good working order.

Annual Treasurer's Report 2019-2020

Having completed my second year as Treasurer of Kingston Congregational Church, I would like to thank Doug Kraus, Shirley Schock, Jeffrey Richardson, the Assistant Treasurers, KCC Council, and the congregation for working together with me to ensure that KCC remained financially strong during this pandemic.

Per the Treasurer's Report, KCC ended the year with a surplus of \$17,187.12. Although actual pledges were \$15,820.18 less than budgeted, we made up for the shortfall by applying for and receiving a \$19,822.00 Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan. Therefore, the most significant Treasurer activity this year has been documenting our Paycheck Protection Program loan spending so that it can be forgiven. We will apply for forgiveness from the Bank of America Bank in August 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Davis

Stewardship 2019 – 2020

The Stewardship Board had a very successful campaign for the 2020-2021 year. There were a total of 102 pledges which totaled \$212,999.00. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this campaign. I would like to thank Angelo Mendillo and especially Doug Kraus for all his help. We could not have done it without his knowledge and hard work.

Submitted by

Carol Kinsley

Scrip Program Annual Report 2019-2020

The SCRIP Program is an ongoing fund-raising program run by volunteers which has just closed its 10th year. Church members and friends may purchase participating Retailer's Gift Cards for groceries and other items in specific denominations and the church receives a rebate from the retailers. Most retailers offer a rebate around 4% to 5% but some are as low as 2.5% (Wal-Mart) and some as high as 16% (LL Bean).

The SCRIP Table is staffed in the Fellowship Hall almost every Sunday both before and after the service. Of course, once we could not hold services at church because of the COVID 19 pandemic, we could not offer in person sales. I have taken it upon myself to continue to sell the gift cards at my home, since we are not attending church for the near future. If anyone wants to purchase gift cards to continue to support the church with this fundraiser, I have made the sale as easy as possible. You may email me at arichardson@srt-law.com and let me know which gift cards you would like, or prepare a Scrip order form and email that to me. A phone call works just as well either 792-8316 (home) or 932-1597 (cell). You may pick the day and time to get your gift cards. I have offered no-contact purchase by leaving them on my front porch. The SCRIP Team will appreciate you purchasing any Scrip gift cards for your favorite vendors, because the sale of the cards has dropped off significantly.

The cards the Scrip Team have on hand are Belmont Market, Stop & Shop, Shaws, Dave's Market, CVS, Amazon, Walmart, Staples, Panera Bread, Marshall's, Camden's Restaurant, Walgreens, Starbuck's, and Dunkin Donuts. Many other retailers have cards available which can be ordered and will arrive in about a week.

The church used to earn approximately \$6,000 annually with this fundraiser; however, since the Coronavirus, the sales have dropped off significantly.

Our Scrip Team is open to suggestions on other ways to sell the gift cards to our members during this difficult time. Please feel free to contact anyone on the Scrip Team which includes Dottie Leduc, Dick Shaw, Wayne Lee, Nancy Corvese or me with your suggestions.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Richardson, Scrip Coordinator

KCC Board of Membership Report
Annual Report for 2019-2020
Submitted July 2020

Members of the Board of Membership: For the 2019-2020 church year, the following persons served on the Board of Membership: Claremary Sweeney and Fran Bergeron, co-chairs; Loretta Shaw, Joyce Stevos, Connie Fitzelle, Jan Kraus, Lori Ann Hiener, Alyssa Hiener, Gideon Lyngdoh, Janice Trottier, and Jee Lee. With the exception of Clare Sweeney, all members of the Board will continue serving on the Board for the 2020-21 church year.

The new photo directory was published and distributed to church members in November. An on-line version of the directory is also available to members.

The Board of Membership was very active during the fall of 2019, including greeting visitors in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday worship and hosting or assisting with several Congregational activities, including the Trunk or Treat Halloween Event, the Christmas Tree Decorating Party, and the Valentine's Day Party. In addition, in May the Board sent out cards congratulating the six KCC high school graduates. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, spring events, such as the Easter Egg Hunt and the Kingston Fair, were cancelled.

The Board last met on March 4, 2020. Since that time, the Board has shared information via email because regular in-person services and meetings have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shepherding and Visitations Committees: Loretta Shaw continued to chair the Shepherding and Visitation Committees. Information on the Committees' contacts with shut-ins was shared with Pastor Sharon and the Deacons. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Visiting Committee has been keeping in touch with our shut-ins by sending cards and making phone calls. The Committee plans to keep doing this until in-person visiting is allowed.

Membership: Five new members joined the church on Sunday, November 24th. The Membership Board hosted the coffee hour for new members in Fellowship Hall after the worship service. Four members requested to be removed from active status as they have moved out of state and two members were changed from inactive to active status and seven members have died in the last 12 months. The current number of active members is 267.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Bergeron, Co-chair, Board of Membership

**KCC Membership Report
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020**

Members as of July 1, 2019 **271**

Additions:

Confirmands	0	
New Members	5	
Members Reactivated	2	
Total Additions:		7

Losses:

Death	7	
Transfer	0	
Inactive by Request	4	
Total Losses:		11

Members as of June 30, 2020 **267**

Baptisms	0	
Marriages	1	

Marriages

	<u>Date</u>
Laurel Ferrelli & Fred Aurdelio	May 5, 2020

New Members

Alice Babcock	November 24, 2019
Pamela Lyons	November 24, 2019
Amy Monaham	November 24, 2019
Linda Mrozowski	November 24, 2019
Jim Souza	November 24, 2019

Deaths

David H. Barwise	August 1, 2019
William C. Metz	August 13, 2019
David N. Cox	October 13, 2019
Jason C. Davis	January 1, 2020
Alice C. Babcock	February 4, 2020
Charles F. Sweeney	March 28, 2020
Janice E. Test	March 31, 2020
Nancy Ross	June 14, 2020

Respectfully submitted,
Loretta H. Shaw, Registrar

KCC Board of Missions and Social Justice Annual Report July 2020

Board Members: Jim Findlay, Ron Stevens, Lisa Bowe (keeper of the books), Angela Haggerty, Cindy Buxton, Sue Davis, Judi Parman, Sharon Hope, Karen Johnson (chair)

We began regular monthly meetings in September 2019, we meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Fireplace Room.

We prepared for Blanket Sunday where we were able to send \$1909 to CWS in addition to the \$1798 sent previously to the UCC Disaster Relief Fund. We thank the congregation for their generosity.

Cindy Buxton has kept the board current with the pastoral search activities. Karen Johnson has been reporting on the Council meetings.

Lisa Bowe has assumed the responsibility for keeping the books and budget in order, with help from Ron Stevens who is heartily thanked for his service in that capacity. Lisa is writing pieces for the Spire regarding BOMSJ activities, to keep the congregation informed.

We are grateful for your food donations and as requested by Jonnycake, and let you all know of specific items each month, often items that the various forms of governmental assistance do not support. For January we collected personal care items such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes and tooth paste. The request for February was Spices.

We have held intermittent discussions on how to increase our support for people who cannot afford three meals per day, and ways to maximize your donations. We decided to disburse our Hunger budget line item to the RI Community Food Bank and the Jonnycake Center for purchase of food.

We would like to put out a survey to find out who is volunteering and what they are doing, in response to a request for opportunities to be helpful. Obvious places with volunteer opportunities are the Jonnycake Center, Habitat for Humanity, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and SK CARES.

Our Christmas collection amounted to \$4158 which was equally distributed among the UCC Refugee Relief Fund, the Nonviolence Institute (formerly the Institute for Study and Practice of Nonviolence) located in Providence, RI, and the Rhody Outpost URI food pantry. We thank all for their generous donations.

January 2020 began with discussions regarding finalizing the Emig Lecture arrangements and offering workshops/discussion groups regarding LGBTQ issues prior to the Emig Lecture. We had plans for groups led by Meera Viswanathan or Donnie Anderson, who agreed to give the Emig Lecture and a workshop/discussion after the service. We finalized dates at the February meeting. Pastor Sharon Hope was very helpful with her advice and contacts for this important content.

The board was thinking about polling the congregation to see if they already volunteer somewhere, and if they are interested in volunteering. Survey Monkey was the way chosen, and a survey was developed by Sue Davis. Implementing the survey was interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, and all other activities that the Board of Missions and Social Justice had planned were put on hold. The board began to meet via Zoom meetings in March, 2020. The Habitat Gala was scheduled for April 30, 2020 and the board had a raffle basket in the works, however this was also cancelled due to the pandemic.

In April 2020, the board decided to give the remaining money in our budget to the RI Foundation for Coronavirus (COVID 19) Relief Fund as this was a reliable and verifiable way to offer support to the people of RI who were adversely impacted by the economic shutdown and loss of employment and the shortcomings of unemployment compensation.

Jim Findlay has always championed the One Great Hour of Sharing contribution to UCC, traditionally around Easter time. This year was no exception, and despite not meeting at regular in-church services, the board put out a request and a total of \$2989 was sent to Church World Service to be used as they determine is most appropriate and no doubt will be used to mitigate suffering from the coronavirus pandemic.

The board continued to meet by Zoom on line and Karen continued to attend the KCC Council Meetings also on line by Zoom.

In June, due to the uprisings over racial injustice, the board supported the ringing of bells, along with other area churches, every 9 minutes for 8 minutes and 46 seconds which represented the time a white police officer had his knee on the neck of a black man, George Floyd, while being videotaped, thus his murder was viewed by the entire country which spurred the uprisings for racial justice. "Black Lives Matter" became important language and discussion. The June meeting was dedicated to developing language for the church banner that would indicate support for the Black Lives Matter movement and the call for racial justice in policing and an end to discrimination and injustice that began at the inception of slavery in the United States. The board will work via email to come to a consensus regarding a banner. We plan to take July and August off and reconvene on the second Tuesday of each month beginning in September 2020 either in person or via Zoom based on the status of the pandemic at the time.

Any questions or comments please see a board member.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Johnson, Chair 7/12/20

Board of Christian Education Annual Report 2019-2020

The Board of Christian Education met ten times to insure the provision of active and dynamic programs of spiritual formation for children and adults and to oversee the church library. The board evaluated our educational programs via a Zoom meeting in June.

The board is grateful for the outstanding leadership of Michelle Girasole in the Church School and for our dedicated volunteer teachers – Andrea Richardson, Evan Preisser, Dick Geisler, Carol MacKenzie, Dulce Ilgenfritz and Sarah Simeone. The online curriculum, *Whole People of God*, provided lectionary-based lessons according to age group. Attendance each week varied between 10-15 children. Discussion of the lessons at home was encouraged through the use of various parental resources. When church school was closed due to Covid-19, Michelle provided additional resources for learning at home. Special events were held for children throughout the year; these are listed in Michelle's report on church school.

Rev. Sharon Hope provided several opportunities throughout the year for Adult Christian Education. The topics included non-violence and the MLK Letter from the Birmingham Jail, an Advent series on hope, love, joy, and peace; and *Basics of our Faith* via Zoom. Rev. Sharon strongly encouraged future topics be focused on increasing knowledge of the Bible for children and adults. The weekly Bible studies on scripture related to the upcoming Sunday service continued at noon on Thursdays with 10-15 in attendance.

The church library was given a new look. The board is grateful for the work of Audrey Hallberg and Maureen White for their work on the shelves, Rev. Sharon for sorting and categorizing the books which now includes a children's section, and Tracy Heffron for her continuing role as the church librarian.

The board evaluated their responsibilities and felt that the programs that were offered before and during the pandemic were well received.

Submitted by Jean Miller for the Board of Christian Education (Jessie Kenyon, Sarah Simeone, and Rem Remington; Michelle Girasole, Director of Christian Education; Rev. Sharon Hope, Ex-officio)

Church School Annual Report 2019-2020

It was a year of learning the ropes, as a new church school director. I must say, it was a great honor to serve this Beloved Community and I learned so much from Pastor Sharon and Jean Miller, our CE Board Chair. After having attended the springtime NEAUCE conference with other regional Christian Ed professionals, we got off to a great start with our “Rainbow” themed summer program, which explored Bible themes while engaging in fun outdoor activities, such as a scavenger hunt, storytelling, and science. One Sunday, the kids helped create a rainbow buffet for Coffee Hour, baking blueberry muffins and prepping a variety of colorful fruits and veggies. Most importantly, we started each Sunday with a “highs and lows” circle, where the kids could share the elements of their week, and get to know each other outside of the classroom.

In September, we had a very lively start, traditionally called “Rally Day”, welcoming families back with an ice cream social. We began using our *Whole People of God* online curriculum, where teachers could login and prepare for school from home having access to activities and lesson plans based on the lectionary. We printed take home booklets for parents to have a sense of the weekly themes, with ideas for continuing their faith formation at home. We distributed copies of the book Faithful Families, by Rev. Traci Smith to assist in this as well.

We recruited a fantastic group of *Church School Teachers* for 2019-2020:

- Nursery - (none)
- Pre K / K - (none)
- Grade 1 /2 - Andrea Richardson and Evan Preisser
- Grade 3/4/5 - Dick Geisler and Carol MacKensie
- Grade 6/7/8 - Dulce Ilgenfritz and Sarah Simeone

They were awesome, each with their own unique style. Teachers rotated every other week, so they had the opportunity to be present in worship regularly, as well as in the classroom with the kids. Volunteers from the congregation as well as recent confirmands were recruited to serve as classroom assistants. Thank you to all that helped! On average, there were 10-15 children each week, an increase over last year, when 8-12 kids gathered all together in the fireplace room. It was nice to see some families returning and new families arriving. There never seems to be the same classroom twice, which is a challenge our teachers have become accustomed to. We also started a new tradition, of having the kids stay in worship with their families on the first Sunday, for communion. It’s important that they experience worship before 8th grade, and be part of our KCC community of all ages.

Special Events - throughout the year, we created special experiences including:

- *Blessing of the Animals* - a special afternoon service was planned in our courtyard. We got great press and community exposure for this event, and had a nice variety of pets and people!
- *Spooky Sleepover* - in October, after the Trunk or Treat event, our 6-8th graders were invited to stay overnight for a special experience the younger kids would be eager to do in the future.
- *Advent Series* - our children explored the four themes of Advent by participating in the candle-lighting, and by creating a painted tile art mural, singing songs, creating and directing a play.
- “*What is Communion*” Lesson from Pastor Sharon - all ages participated in this during service in January
- *Mardi Gras* - in February, we held a “Fat Tuesday” event to explore the meaning of Lent in anticipation of Easter, complete with King cake and music.
- *Regional UCC events* - several children attended regional events in Providence, a trampoline park visit and we co-hosted the youth snow tubing event at Yawgoo Valley in February.

Messy Church USA - After attending a regional training in Connecticut in September, we became a member of the Messy Church USA network of churches, and had a team planning a kickoff in April. The group was excited about delivering this new intergenerational celebration on a monthly basis, with activities, food and an interactive service.

And then, the COVID pandemic shut us down in March. All events, including Messy Church, were cancelled. We could no longer gather, and parents did not embrace virtual church school - with too much screen time the kids had all week with distance learning at school. So, we went offline, putting together activity packets for Holy Week and Pentecost Sunday, for the kids to do at home, offline. Each week, I joined Pastor Sharon for the virtual worship service and gave the “Word for All Ages” messaging for the kids to watch remotely. For the summer, we planned outdoor gatherings monthly to keep the kids connected to their friends at KCC. We eagerly anticipate the return of our friends to KCC in September, to continue to bring Christian awareness and fun to our children.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Girasole
Director of Christian Education and Communication

Board of Fellowship Annual Report 2019-2020

The Fellowship Board this past year was a group of six very hard-working women who were charged with creating meals and social events for the church members and friends of KCC throughout the year.

This year, the Fellowship Board planned on hosting seven events, but due to the Coronavirus was unable to host the last two events.

What we did host was:

- Welcome Back Ice Cream Social along with the CE Board – in September
- Fall Soup Sunday – in November
- Advent Wreath “wreaths to go” – in December
- Winter Potluck – in January
- Chili Soup Sunday – Super Bowl Sunday in February

We missed out on having our Spring Potluck and also the Progressive Dinner due to Covid 19.

Typically, there are about 80 people attending the Soup Sundays and approximately 50 attending an evening event such as the Winter Potluck.

Members of the Fellowship Board for 2019-2020 were the following: Maureen White (co-chair until 12/31/19) Ann Lenox, JoAnn Pillar, Lora Hahn Schubert, Lori Ann Heiner and Andrea Richardson.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Richardson, Board of Fellowship Chair

Women's Fellowship Annual Report - June 2019-July 2020

KCC Women's Fellowship is open to all women who are members and friends of this congregation. Our mission is to : 1) provide friendship and support and to nurture each woman's faith journey, 2) to come together for education, entertainment and enjoyment and 3) to donate our time, efforts and money to projects which benefit our church, our community and the world.

We enjoyed half of a successful year with well-attended events and fundraisers. We met in September with our annual potluck supper and shared our news and updated everyone with our calendar of events. In October Alinda Nelson organized a paint party where we each did a unique watercolor of a lighthouse. In November, Helen Rowe-Drake and Cindy Buxton again organized the Gingerbread House Decorating Event with 60+ houses and inter-generational participants.

In December, Judi Parman chaired our Christmas Cookie and Gift Sale during the "Holiday in Kingston" event fundraiser. It couldn't happen without the help of many who baked, set up, sold, and bought cookies and items -- thank you everyone! Diana Geisler again coordinated 24 containers of bulbs for shut-ins and our staff with help from others. Also in December during Advent's Peace Sunday, the Peace Pole we purchased with money from our Memorial Fund was presented to the congregation. Our January meeting was a dynamic introduction to "4 Types of People" led by Alinda Nelson & Michelle Girasole. Helen worked last July purchasing the items for 100 School Kits for Church World Service and in January sales items for 100 Hygiene Kits for a total of \$696.86. The items are on the stage and not yet boxed yet since Covid & CWS canceled their truck that collects the kits from New England. Time will tell when this gets completed. Helen has decided not to buy items for kits in 2021; we will just hope to make a money donation.

No further meetings or activities took place in person when the Covid 19 shut down began in March.
We continued to stay in touch with emails, phone calls & Facebook church services.

Throughout the year Carolyn Barwise sends out birthday cards, well wishes and sympathy cards. Overall, we have about 20-40 women who attend our meetings and many more who donate funds, gifts and baked goods for our sales. Our annual fundraising letter plus our bake sales enables us to donate to our local charities which include: SC Church Women United, Southern RI Volunteers, SC Habitat for Humanity, Welcome House, Adoption RI, Domestic Violence Resource Center, RI Food Bank, Jonnycake Center, Camp Ruggles, and Cane Child Development Center for a total of \$2500. An email was sent out in June in lieu of our annual meeting and we had approval from 24 women for our treasurer Karen Tucker to disperse our funds to these charities.

We have an opening for President and anyone who would like to help with Christmas in Kingston or the Spring Kingston Fair would be welcome! Other officers have agreed to continue for the next year: Helen Rowe-Drake VP, treasurer Karen Tucker, secretary Cindy Buxton, sunshine Carolyn Barwise.

Women's Fellowship is not a Church Board but we do have representation and a vote on the KCC Church Council. We are a small but vital part of the life of KCC and our local community.

Additional Notes:

We did not have any confirmation class this year so no prayer shawls.

We did not have regular flowers in church so no WF donation on Memorial Day.

No spring Kingston Fair.

Flower Committee/Deacons Annual Report July 2019-July 2020

The Flower Committee continued its weekly flower responsibilities from September 1 thru March 8 when Covid-19 shut down church in person and we cancelled our deliveries from Kenyon Florist and our Easter Lily order from Confreda Farm. Prior to shut down, there were 26 Sundays with flowers from Kenyon's with one donor each week. If everyone paid the income should be $26 \times \$50 = \1300 . Our relationship with Kenyon Ave Floral for weekly flowers will continue when we can have regular church services again.

Helen, Rem, Jenn and Ivy decorated the sanctuary and doors for Christmas with our traditional garlands and wreaths after service before the first Sunday of Advent on December 1st. Helen purchased two new sets of advent candles this year from Tally's for \$90.20. The Poinsettias were picked up on Friday, December 20th by Helen at the Pezza Farm's location in East Greenwich. Jenn Deluise and Lori Remington helped Helen unload and arrange the display. Some were taken after the 5:00 service on Christmas Eve and some after the 11:00 and a few were left thru Sunday the 29th. We ordered 22 red and 12 white = 34 for a total of \$400. We charged \$15 and sold 30 for a total of \$450.

With Covid 19, our last official flower Sunday was March 8th, therefore there were no Easter flowers or expenses since we were able to cancel our lily order in time!

Helen Rowe-Drake agreed to stay as chair for another year. She finds it easier to coordinate/phone/email past donors for each month and submit it to Shirley by the 15th of the month. Therefore, other members of the committee only need to be in church and do the arrangements for their assigned month. It would be very helpful to have more people on the committee. After the service, we divided the flowers into three arrangements-one was given to the donors (if in church) and two were given to other individuals based on prayers and celebrations or special music or speaker. A record is kept in a notebook in the committee's closet. Each donor is asked to pay \$50 for the arrangement by leaving a check in the offering or mailing it to the church office.

For the summer months of July and August, the committee gets a break and anyone can bring in flowers from their garden or purchase flowers to bring in/take out. Signing up in advance or a notice in the bulletin is not required unless someone wants a special remembrance.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Rowe-Drake, chair

Jenn Deluise

Angela Haggerty

Lora Hahn-Schubert

Carolyn Eastberg

Lori Remington-Jan only

Congregational Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase
Report of the Cemeteries Committee
May 13, 2020

Background - The Cemeteries Committee supervises three cemeteries: Old Fernwood and Tower Hill belong to the Society, and the Peckham Family Cemetery belongs 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 for 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.

2019 - 2020 Report - Chris Faella, caretaker for New Fernwood Cemetery, covers the routine maintenance at Old Fernwood and the Peckham Cemeteries. Scott Wallace continues to provide maintenance at the Tower Hill Cemetery.

We have many volunteers who work to maintain the beauty of our cemeteries. Tracy Heffron with the support of four of our young men will continue working at Old Fernwood.

During the past year (May 2019 - April 2020) the following death/interments took place: New section OF – William Clinton Metz 8-13-19 #113, Jason Davis 1-1-20, #222

Old section OF – Andreas Holmsen 6-15-19 #485, Lilian Holmsen 2-10-20 #485

Charley Sweeney's and Janice Test's burials will take place at a later time in the Old Section.

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. The Committee will be reviewing rates this year. 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 - Elizabeth McNab, Richard Shaw, Tracy Heffron, Judy Potter, and Jane Skogley