

# The Spire

**F**rom Your Pastor

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April 2020

*“You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet, still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.” — Franz Kafka*

When I was recovering from hip replacement surgery eight years ago, I was on crutches for a month and therefore restricted more than is usual. As you know I live alone and before the surgery I worried about too much solitude and a friend sent me this quote from Kafka. So in the mornings while sipping coffee I sat at my table waiting, so still that I did enter into a meditative state and in that state I felt connected to the world...much more so than when I'm out and about. And another thing happened as well. Friends and acquaintances began to show up unexpectedly with food, with flowers. Not a whole lot of people, just one at a time, slowly over the month. I remember one morning I needed contact...and sat at my table, waiting and the phone rang. It was one of my dearest friends who was in France at the time. I still remember how it felt to have someone offer love at a crucial moment.

We find ourselves in a time when we sit at our tables and wait. Alone or with family. We wait for normalcy, for the return to work, school, the gym, shopping, hugs, smiles, dinners out with friends and of course worship and church activities. We sit praying and wondering when, and if, we will all be ok when we do return to normal life. We are not only isolated, many of us feel endangered and suspended in time.

So how do we wait? We can worry our days away, or we can sit and pray and feel the deep presence of God when we become still. We can open our Bibles and read the words of people who have found themselves in exile, alone, under siege, on the run, excluded. Their stories and words give us hope and strength. We can hold one another in prayer, reach out with cards and phone calls as our Deacons are doing so beautifully. And when we surrender our fears, our wills to God we indeed may feel the world offer itself to us as it rolls in ecstasy at our feet.

This time when we are in our homes can be a trial or a gift...and of course both alternating. But let us cherish the gift of a closer connection with God and return to “normal” with a deepening sense of the essence of who we are and of our place in the “family of things” as Mary Oliver wrote in her poem “Wild Geese”.

On the other hand, we know others in our world are also waiting...for food, to be evicted from their homes, for medication, for doctor appointments and in emergency rooms. People around the world are in desperate need and this includes the folk all around us. Please give what you can to those who are serving the desperate. Locally consider the Jonnycake Center who writes, *“As the public health crisis ramped up this week, we were fortunate that the community had our back. We were not prepared to provide school vacation meals to 311 children - twice the number we served during winter break! We also served 336 individuals their monthly groceries in one week and made more than four times the normal number of deliveries to people's homes. That's a total of 647 visits to our pantry between Tuesday and Saturday.”*

What we can do: **Drive by Food Donations** of children's snacks, cereal, canned fruit and beans, and soup are welcome. You can simply drive up and drop these items off in bins on the curb during our normal business hours. Please drop these items at our food pantry located at 1183B Kingstown Road behind Salon Sante. **Donate Money** - We will use your donations to purchase food from as many local retailers as possible, helping to save jobs. Financial donations to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank are also encouraged as they provide the majority of food to our Center. **Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale** 1231 Kingstown Rd., Peace Dale, RI 02879 | (401) 789-1559

**Plans for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter.** We do not know when we will be able to resume worship services in person and normal schedule of activities. The Deacons and Rev. Sharon will make plans for how we might celebrate Palm Sunday and move through Holy Week and Easter Sunday if we are still not able to physically worship together. It's not possible at the moment of this publication to say what will happen. If you are not on the internet and able to receive updates from the church office and Rev. Sharon, please call the office or we will snail mail plans to you. Let us pray that this crisis will end soon and that we all remain healthy and ready to celebrate our physical “togetherness”!!! **Please reach out if you need special prayers, a phone visit or need deliveries of groceries, medications or help of any kind. Email Rev. Sharon at [singingrev@gmail.com](mailto:singingrev@gmail.com).**

Blessings,  
Rev. Sharon

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

*April's Deacon of the Month is Tina Letcher. ([tina.l@cox.net](mailto:tina.l@cox.net))*

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**Please note:**

**All events are PLANNED but due to the isolation requirements, check your emails from KCC or our website to confirm events will indeed take place.**

## **One Great Hour of Sharing**

The Board of Missions will be sponsoring a special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing soon. OGHS is a unique expression of our denomination. When the Sunday comes for our collection to be made later this spring, please make out your check to "KCC" and on the memo line put "OGHS." We will inform you via the Sunday Bulletin at least two weeks in advance of collection Sunday. We hope you will give generously to this extremely worthwhile missionary endeavor.

## **Stewardship**

It is that time of year where we pledge our support to the church for the upcoming new fiscal year July 1, 2020 thru June 30, 2021. The church council will be preparing a new budget in near future. Please find enclosed the stewardship letter "Longing to be, Belonging, Supporting". By now you should have received this in the mail along with a pledge form, and a form is included with this issue. A printable PDF pledge form is also available on the church's website ([www.kingcongchurch.org](http://www.kingcongchurch.org)) as well as a link to an online form under "upcoming events" in the lower right corner of the website homepage.

Thank you from the Stewardship Board,  
Carol Kinsley, Angelo Mendillo, Doug Kraus

## **Progressive Dinner**

The Fellowship Board has decided to hold our annual Progressive Dinner on Saturday evening, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 when days are longer and hopefully warmer. We will again enjoy appetizers and entrees the hosts enjoy serving before meeting all together for desserts, decaf coffee, or a cold beverage in Fellowship Hall. The sign-up poster will be available beginning Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> and each Sunday through May 24<sup>th</sup> for those interested in participating. If you plan to travel with someone else, please indicate this on the sign-up poster. Any questions, please call JoAnn Pillar at 860-287-8231 or email at [Jotea5678@gmail.com](mailto:Jotea5678@gmail.com).

## **Children's Easter Plants**

Daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips will again be distributed to KCC's children on Easter Sunday. This gift is made possible from a fund created by Clarice Metz. During the fifties her children enjoyed receiving plants from KCC. The spring flowers were then planted in front of the stone wall on Cherry Road to bloom for many years. Clarice loved the look of joy as each child chose a plant.

# Let Love Cast Out Fear

Michelle Girasole

It has been nearly a year since I began my role at KCC as Church School and Communications Director. How quickly time flies! It has certainly been a blessing in my life to connect with each of the children in our program, get to know our families a little more and guide our excellent teachers in exploring the Christian faith.

The past few weeks have been a period like none other this church has ever seen. We realize how very important it is in our lives to have a community of faith - people who hold us in prayer and remind us that God is with us in darkness and light. While we cannot be physically together, we have enjoyed our remote connections, via technology, and look forward to the time when we can gather again safely.

In the meantime, here are ten suggestions for practicing your faith at home - for the kids and adults alike! **Focusing on sharing God's love will cast out the fear we all feel each day.**

- 1) Begin the day by lighting a candle, and reading or saying a prayer. Each family member can contribute a wish, for themselves or someone else. As you blow out the candle, pray that God hears each of your prayers.
- 2) Write a letter. An old fashioned letter is always a gift to receive, amidst bills and promotional mailings. It is as joyful to send warm thoughts as it is to receive them.
- 3) Make and bake bread together, and discuss Jesus and our communion as a family in church.
- 4) Reach out to a friend - we just updated our KCC church directory, now is a great time to use it to say connected to our favorite people! It is always nice to know someone is thinking of you.
- 5) Use a small notebook to make a gratitude journal, or use paper links to create a chain. Writing down all we have to be grateful for gives us a welcome break from all the worrisome news.
- 6) Have the kids draw a picture and post it online to our Facebook group. Our kids love art and our adults love to see what the kids create!
- 7) Remember 5-2-1-0? We can likely throw out the 2 hours of screen time, with all the distance learning we are practicing at school, but let's not forget those other healthy habits! Eat your fruits and veggies and make sure you get an hour of movement each day.
- 8) Take turns reading your favorite Bible stories, and ask why they are your favorites - does it trigger a memory of a special service or story? We have some extra time at home, let's spend it with Jesus!
- 9) Seek out the positive news headlines and share them with the kids. Hope rises in troubled times and it is just as easy to find stories of love and kindness as the fearful ones.
- 10) Pray. Take time during the day to stop and offer a prayer to God, that we will all be protected and stay healthy and safe. Open meals with prayer and end the day with prayer. There has never been a better time to do it!

# **200 Years Ago!!!**

## **An Important Time in the Life of Our Church**

### **Part 6: Auctioning the Pews**

To raise the money to cover the costs of building our church, many of the pews would be sold and rented. From an 1819 Clerk's Record – "when building completed they shall make an estimate of the value of the pews (having regard to the situation) so as to cover the whole expense of building when each subscriber shall be entitled to receive the amount of his subscription in pews at such estimated value at all subsequent meetings of the Society shall be entitled to as many votes as he shall hold pews and should these donations for the ac't of said Society the amount thereof shall be set off in pews in some conspicuous part of the Meeting House and marked as free pews, or let annually for the benefit of the minister for the time being as the donors may direct." The pews were sold in such a manner as to cover the entire cost of construction and each person who had originally pledged to the cost of building the meeting house would be entitled to the number of pews at the stated values that would be equal to his subscription. Thereafter ownership of each pew would entitle its holder one vote in the Presbyterian (Congregational) Society affairs.

Thirty-one persons had signed the agreement of November 10, 1819, taking from 25 shares (Elisha Reynolds Potter, Sr.) down to a ½ share. To accomplish this auction on January 15, 1821 a committee was formed to appraise and sell the pews. This first committee consisting of J.G. Clarke, Thomas S. Taylor, W.P. Mewell, Christopher Gardner, and Thomas R. Wells put a value to all the pews. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 39 pews were sold to 19 of the original members of the Society, at prices totaling \$1,724.25. Some donations were received and in March some of the pews were rented, thus covering the remainder of the cost of construction.

The numbering of the pews remains almost the same as in 1821. Pews #23 and #24 were eliminated when the library doors were installed for the "new" addition in 1899. Pews #25 and #26 became just benches at that time. The front pews #1 and #2 were eliminated to create a bench in front of the altar. Pews #47 (now 25), 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 were removed to make a place for a stove – (ERP had owned 2 of them).

Some of the original owners/purchasers:

The Rev. Oliver Brown	Mary Potter
Cyrus French	James Helme
William French	John G. Clarke
Alfred Gardner	Jeremiah N. Potter
Christopher Gardner	Alfred Gardner
Dr. Peleg Johnson	Robert F. Noyes
Elijah Kenyon	Joseph Reynolds
Elisha R. Potter, Sr.	Rowse Clarke, Jr.
Thomas S. Taylor	Thomas R. Wells

Pew owners for their greater comfort sometimes put in footrests and stools, shelves, and special pillows. Some of these additions still exist today.

As of April 1960 only three pews were still owned under the CSPP and the owners were requested to convey their holdings to the Church. In September 1963 Mrs. Joseph Green of Wickford conveyed pew #34 to KCC.

## **“Longing to Be, Belonging, Supporting”**

### **Kingston Congregational Church United Church of Christ**

Dear Members and Friends of KCC,

We live in a time when people are searching for hope and community...longing to be in a closer relationship with God. All of us, no matter who we are or where we are on life's journey LONG TO BELONG...to a community that reaches out in faith to the wider world. You are receiving this letter because you have found that KCC has provided to you the sense of belonging.... as a valued member of a congregation that seeks to live out our faith together, in community, as one.

This June, KCC will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our beloved sanctuary. This congregation has been a symbol of welcome to the Village of Kingston and the University of Rhode Island with its tall steeple, chimes and doors opening wide to the intersection of diverse folk, cultures and ages.

KCC has had a rich history where couples have married, baptized their children and have eulogized and mourned in our sanctuary. It is staggering to think of how much KCC has meant to countless generations

In order for KCC to continue to be a place of mission and celebration, we like those before us, are invited to support and to be the stewards of a congregation that is vital, energized, and faithful and invites all to belong.

Enclosed is a pledge form and suggested giving or you can pledge online at [www.kingconchurch.org](http://www.kingconchurch.org). Look for the pledge form under “Upcoming Events”. In the next weeks, please prayerfully consider your pledge and give in whatever way you feel called. In this interim time, we await the call to a new pastor who will lead us into the future. Your generosity will inspire the congregation and new leadership to reach out more fully to the wider community and to celebrate all that we are to God and to one another. We will offer our pledges during worship on Sunday, March 29.

With Sincere Thanks,  
The Kingston Congregational Board of Stewardship  
Carol Kinsley  
Angelo Mendillo  
Doug Kraus

# Longing to Be, Belonging, Supporting!

## Kingston Congregational Church Pledge Form for July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

*Please fill it this form and return it to the church office, at the address below, or drop it in the collection plate.*

Kingston Congregational Church  
Attn: Board of Stewardship  
2610 Kingstown Road  
Kingston, RI 02881

Please respond before **April 5, 2020**

Last Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**My/Our current pledge for July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020 was \$** \_\_\_\_\_

weekly       monthly       annually

Please consider suggested giving:

I/we will increase my pledge for the KCC fiscal year July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021  
in the following amount (select one):

Increase my pledge by \$2 more per week

Increase my pledge by \$6 more per month

Increase my pledge by \$10 more per month

Increase my pledge by other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  weekly       monthly       annually

OR

I/we will pledge July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 was \$ \_\_\_\_\_

weekly       monthly       annually

**For a total new annual pledge : \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Kingston Congregational Church understands a pledge to be one's intention under current circumstances and does not consider it a binding obligation. Further, it may be changed at any time by letting us know if you are able to increase it or need to decrease it.

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State, zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I / We request pre-printed pledge envelope       Yes       No

I/We would like to talk with someone about including the church in my/our estate planning

Yes       NO