

The Spire

From Your Pastor

April 2021



Holy Week (March 28-April 4 this year) offers us the opportunity to remember and live into the central story of our faith. Each day of that hard and holy week holds a mirror up that we might see ourselves in it and see Jesus right there, too, walking us deeper in the heart of God's love. I encourage you to mark the week in some way. If you are not already following a daily devotional or Lenten prayer practice, try one this last week. Like love, spiritual practices grow deeper and more meaningful the more we give ourselves to them. With repetition and intention to be with

God almost anything can be a spiritual practice. Write a letter/email a day to a friend (maybe let them know you chose them to be part of your being with God!). Take a meditative walk. Draw a picture, write a poem. Say a special dinner grace or bedtime prayer with your kids that references Holy Week. Compose a haiku. Sit in silence. Keep a journal. Read a chapter of the Bible each day.

Here's a possible reading practice for Holy Week:

Palm Sunday: Matthew 21 and 22

Monday: Matthew 23

Tuesday: Matthew 24

Wednesday: Matthew 25

Maundy Thursday: Matthew 26

Good Friday: Matthew 27

Holy Saturday: Sit in silence for a while marking the time Jesus is in the tomb

Easter Sunday: Matthew 28

Don't let Easter sneak up on you. I guarantee you if you enter the story for the full week, through personal practice and worship together, stone that rolls on Easter will rumble in your heart.

To walk this week together, our church will offer these services of worship:

Palm Sunday: Live online worship at 9:30. Deacons will be at church to (safely) hand out palms between 10:30-11:30; drive or walk through for a palm and a prayer.

Maundy Thursday: Pre-recorded service of Communion and Tenebrae ("shadows") as we remember the Passion story together. Uploaded to Facebook by 6:00 pm.

Good Friday: We join with ecumenical partners for an outdoor prayer walk and vigil: Noon-1 PM. Meet at the municipal parking lot in downtown Wakefield (343C Main St) and walk together to Saugatucket Park for a Good Friday vigil, including readings, reflection and music focused on the "seven last words of Christ." (I'll be reading the Third Word).

Easter Sunday: Two Worship Services

6:30 AM - Outdoor In-Person Service at the Church, led by Rev. Jan

9:30 AM - Live online worship at 9:30

As we move from the Lenten season to Eastertide, let your spirit and heart be moved, too. Commit to practicing your faith in a familiar or new way this Holy Week. Find new life in the old, old Story.

Grace&Peace, Rev. Jan

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

April's Deacon of the Month is JoAnn Pillar. (jotea5678@gmail.com)

In Sympathy

The congregation expresses deepest condolences to Frank Osterman and his family on the death of his wife, Paulette Osterman, who died on March 11th. A graveside service was held on March 16th at our Old Fernwood Cemetery.

Sundays in April:

Easter Sunday, April 4: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, John 20:1-9. *Joy*

The Great Good News of Resurrection: *Christ the Lord is Risen Today!* This is the high point of our year and faith! All that we do, sing, say and stand for is birthed from this moment: the power of love and life that even death cannot defeat. It is such good news that the Church (Universal) takes 50 days to tell it, "the Great 50 days"! Today is the first day all over again!

Sunday, April 11: Second Sunday of Easter: 1 John 1:1-2:2, John 20:19-31. *Doubt.*

Seems the joy and faith of Easter allows for questions and doubts. We join Thomas in asking hard questions and wanting assurance that what we believe is real and true. (Rev. Jan is away; Margaret Bradley will be leading worship and preaching).

Sunday, April 18: Third Sunday of Easter: EMIG PREACHER/SPEAKER, THE REV. DARRELL GOODWIN. *Justice*

Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ is our 2021 Emig Lecture featured speaker. The Emig Lecture series was founded to promote reflection and action on topics of social justice. Rev. Goodwin, as our Conference Minister, will speak to us on doing justice in our own neighborhood.

Sunday, April 25: Fourth Sunday of Easter: STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY. 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18. *Love.*

As we celebrate and bless our pledges of financial and spiritual support for all that God is doing and longs to accomplish through KCC, we remember the bedrock of all we do and are: love. Love of God and neighbor. Love for God and neighbor. Our giving empowers love!

Rev. Darrell Goodwin will give the 2021 Emig Lecture Sunday, April 18th



This year's Emig Lecture will take place over Zoom on Sunday, April 18th. The Emig Lecture is given each year in memory of Rev. Don Emig, a retired UCC pastor who was a member of KCC and was devoted to social justice. This is an annual lecture highlighting a different, timely social justice issue each year.

This year our new Southern New England Conference's Executive Conference Minister, Rev. Darrell Goodwin, will give the Emig Lecture. Rev. Goodwin will preach on April 18th and talk with us on Zoom after the service. He believes the progressive church has a particular role to play in speaking and acting for love and justice in the world. He will invite us to consider how we can partner to share our church's version of "Good News" to live out our collective vision of "Living the Love and Justice of Jesus" as the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Funding Forward



David Bergeron and Rev. Jan are our KCC reps participating in a national pilot program offered through Luther Seminary exploring alternative models for funding ministry. Wayne Lee and Michelle Girasole have now joined them as our KCC “Funding Forward Task Force.” (If this is something of interest to you, please consider joining the task force!). Funding Forward entails exploring, designing and conducting an “entrepreneurial mission experiment”—an outreach/service project that also generates income so that it can be self-sustaining. The question is, “How can we leverage our assets and resources (human, physical, spiritual) to meet a true need in the community that will generate funds to maintain its own operations?” The Task Force will be engaging in conversation with community leaders, church members, local business partners to get a better sense of where there are gaps and opportunities we might address. Here are some sample ideas:

- Cooking classes in our commercial kitchen
- Prepared, takeout meals for seniors or busy families
- Afterschool recreation program for school age children
- Concert series in Fellowship Hall
- Late-night internet café for URI students

What ideas come to your mind? In the coming months, we will be turning to the wider KCC community to share learnings and garner input. Put your thinking/imagination caps on!

Re-Opening Task Force

The Re-Opening Task Force met mid-March to take stock of where we are and where we might be going in the weeks ahead. With the roll out of vaccines, hopes have been raised for an eventual end to the pandemic and a return to in-person worship and other church activities. Some local churches are beginning to plan for some form of in-person worship in their sanctuaries. The Re-Opening Task Force reviewed recommendations from the Rhode Island Department of Health and our Southern New England UCC Conference. We also reviewed current infection rates in our area. As of mid-March, Washington County is still in the “red zone” (considered high rate of infection) and South Kingstown is one of the areas of greatest concern. Given the still elevated level of risk and the recommendation from the state and conference to maintain virtual services as long as possible, the Re-Opening Task Force recommends not opening up our sanctuary for in-person worship in the immediate future. We ARE making plans to move toward that eventuality, though, with hopes (if all indicators are favorable) to look to the beginning of June as a target date for phasing in “hybrid” worship. “Hybrid” means we would allow worshippers to attend worship in the church building while at the same time live broadcasting our service online for those participating at home. To assist our church in getting ready for a phased re-opening members of the task force are working in the following areas to create readiness:

- Technology/Audio-Visuals: Rev. Jan (working with worship tech team and staff)
- Music: Enrico Garzilli
- Cleaning Protocols: Andy Cournoyer and Tracy Heffron
- Communications: Carolyn Eldridge

Please be aware that even as we slowly but surely move toward in-person worship in the sanctuary, we will still need to observe safety protocols and best practices. Re-opening will be a process, not an all-at-once event. As we carefully work our way back to fully participatory, in-person Sunday activities, please practice patience and prayer. We will get there! We are on our way!

Introducing Our Newest KCC Members



On Sunday, February 28, seven new and renewing members were welcomed in worship, as the Dr. Joyce Stevos, Board of Membership, led them in a litany of membership. A prerecorded video was shared with the congregation in our online worship service that day.

Joining or Renewing Membership are:

Rev. Jan Gregory-Charpentier and Ron Charpentier, new pastor and her husband. Ron is a Rhode Island native having grown up in Manville (a village of Lincoln, RI). He is a muscular therapist and a farmer. Jan has been a UCC pastor for almost 30 years. They have three sons, Benjamin, William and Jesse.

Judy Korgen retired with her husband to the area after a career as a financial analyst. Her husband passed away shortly thereafter and she looks forward to making new friends and connections at KCC. She lives in Hope Valley. She has three children.

Brook and Christina Ross recently moved back to Kingston after living in Indonesia for many years. Brook works in finance and Christina is a professional chef. They have two children, Kingston and Caelyn. Brook's dad, Neil, and his late mom, Nancy, are well-known and loved by many in KCC. Brook grew up in KCC and he and Christina were married and baptized their children here.

Heather Ross, daughter of Nancy and Neil also grew up at KCC. She and her two children, Sahara and Kahilu recently returned to the area after living in Namibia for many years. Heather continues to support her work with the most vulnerable populations in Namibia while reconnecting to home.

While a long-time familiar face to KCC for decades, Neil Ross (husband of Nancy) is formally joining KCC. He is a retired adult educator and writer. He always has thought and felt to be a part of the KCC community and was a longtime Scout leader at the church. He is happy to be an official member and knows that Nancy would be delighted to see her family's growing connection with KCC.

Children's Easter Plants

Daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips will again be distributed to KCC's children on Easter Sunday following the Sunrise Service and at 10:30 following the online service. 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 stonewall on Cherry Road to bloom for many years. Clarice loved the look of joy as each child chose a plant.

From Stewardship

KCC Stewardship with the help of Rev Jan is in the process of mailing our 2021- 2022 Stewardship campaign.

Coming soon to the KCC website:

Please look for the:

1. Stewardship letter
2. Chart of giving with suggested giving
3. Online pledge form

Minute for Missions

We know the KCC community is aware of the important work done by the Jonnycake Center to provide basic needs, resources and hope to those in need in South County. But did you know that the Center has embarked on a \$1.7 million capital campaign to renovate the former Peace Dale Grammar School? This campaign will help the Jonnycake Center to have a place where our neighbors can get healthy food and support services under one roof in a safe, welcoming environment. The new space will double the size of their current facilities and provide ample space for the Jonnycake Market food pantry, community meeting space and education space, including a demonstration kitchen for healthy cooking classes.

The good news is that they have raised almost 90% of their goal! In support, the KCC Board of Missions and Social Justice has pledged \$1000 toward the campaign to help make the “New Home for Hope” a reality. For more details or to pledge your own support, visit <https://www.jonnycakecenter.org/newhomeforhope/>

Women's Fellowship News

Good Friday, April 2, 10:30 am – 12 noon

Helen will be at KCC to assemble school and hygiene kits.

If you are healthy and want to help, contact Helen, 789-8910.

Some of our youth will also be helping.

Monday April 19, 7 pm.

We will have a Zoom meeting. Please see the online weekly newsletter for the link and join in if you are able.

May Spire

Watch for info and a return envelope to participate in our annual appeal. We did not do it in the fall and would like to collect for our charities at this time.

Sunday, June 27, 2 pm or TBA

Let's dare to hope that we could do it outdoors with ice cream ???

To vote on our gifts to charities and celebrate!

Trustees' Report

We have had a very mild winter, with just one big storm, but Clark Farms has done a good job plowing the parking lot, and shoveling the walkways. Richard has done a good job filling in for Andy while he is away, and spring is just around the corner. It has been a long, hard winter, but we can now see light at the end of the tunnel. Stay safe, everyone.

Tracy Heffron
Chair

"Extravagant Growth"

by Michelle Girasole, Church School/Communications Director

The Super Saturday workshop titled, "Family Ministries Can Help You Grow" caught my eye. Ever since being hired in March 2019, my focus has been on fostering a church school program that will enable our current KCC kids to enjoy faith formation, and by doing so, encourage more families to come to KCC. Mission accomplished. We have a great group of families and kids who are regularly (and irregularly, but that's ok!) attending church school. And there is always room for more.

The workshop was led by a newly ordained man, a middle school teacher who had become part time staff at a UCC church near Springfield, MA. He credits the family ministry with growing the church members to 250, with about 50 students. He leads their CE programs - adult, youth and children - in true intergenerational learning experiences.

My notebook handy, I was eager to learn the secret sauce of programming that we could add to our mix to build on what we started with the kids. Believe it or not, KCC is doing 90% of the same "programs" that his church has done! The most expensive event they held cost \$150 due to many contributions from participants inside and outside the church.

Just like KCC, they have Welcome (Rally) Days, Trunk or Treat, Tree Lighting, Easter Egg Hunts, Family Game Nights, Souper Bowl Sundays, food drives, community service days - all familiar to us. Perhaps the biggest difference was that they partnered with other area Christian churches to host a vacation Bible camp that was profitable, with scholarships for those who could not pay. The VBC summer event was such a big hit, capped at 150 kids (pre-COVID) in attendance and 130 teen/adult volunteers, and the church school doubled in size. Hmmm.....

The secret sauce isn't doing much different at all - except INVITING. Several times, he used the phrase "extravagant welcome". The church insists on making community members feel extravagantly welcomed to any church event. The community was invited to at least 50% of the events, and area schools, teachers and families as well as partner organizations are personally invited - by members - to "church events". Children are always invited to invite their friends, as peer connections are so important to their enjoyment and continuation of attendance. All are always welcome.

As we prepare for Easter, are we ready to share an extravagant welcome to area families? Are we ready to invite a family to join us for a **youth-led outdoor Easter sunrise service**? Are we going to start a new tradition of welcoming Jesus on Easter Sunday morning BEFORE we welcome the Easter Bunny? Let's give Jesus and all God's children an extravagant welcome in 2021!