

The Spire

From Your Pastor

January 2020

Happy New Year! I know we share our prayers for a more peaceful, just and kinder world in 2020. Our world and each of us can also use some wisdom from time to time. Our scriptures contain sage advice and we can learn much from our forebearers... Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Elijah, the Disciples, Paul...to name but a few. In our contemporary world, I found the following story on Facebook recently and feel Mrs. Jones has provided needed wisdom, faith and hope. Read on and see if you find inspiration from her. I wasn't able to copy her photo but she is a beautiful woman with a lovely smile.

"A 92-year-old, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coiffed and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home yesterday. Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window. "I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room just wait."

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time.; Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged, it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away, just for this time in my life."

She went on to explain, "Old age is like a bank account, you withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories Thank you for your part in filling my Memory bank. I am still depositing."

And with a smile, she said: "Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less, & enjoy every moment.

This year will be an important one in the life of the KCC congregation. There are many reasons to celebrate and give thanks for the gifts we have been given....and we are also given the opportunity to look forward to the coming of your settled pastor. In our remaining time together as interim pastor and flock, my prayer is that we can, like Mrs. Jones, pray more and worry less, take stock of our many blessings rather than enumerate our shortcomings. That we might free our hearts from fear and have more faith in God and in one another. And finally give thanks for everyone who calls KCC "home." We are a congregation that works hard, gives from the heart and values history. If we can celebrate, others will want to join in the party. If we place our future in God's hands, the Holy Spirit will lead us. I have the greatest faith in you....and look forward to our time together as we move ahead to lay groundwork, prepare and anticipate God's next step for your future. Onward and Upward!

Blessings,
Rev. Sharon

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

January's Deacon of the Month is Nancy Ross. (nancy.ross@cox.net)

Minute for Missions

The Board of Missions extends a big THANK YOU to the generous members of KCC for their support of our annual Blanket Sunday offering held in October. We collected over **\$1900** for Church World Service who will use these funds to send blankets wherever God's people may need care-blankets which can provide warmth, shelter, comfort, privacy, healing and hope.

With tremendous gratitude we are also proud to report that over **\$1100** in gift cards were delivered from KCC to the Johnnycake Center for their "Hope for the Holidays" donation drive to brighten the holidays for local children. This is in addition to the generous and faithful contributions of food that are contributed throughout the year to the Center to help them achieve their vision: A community without hunger and poverty where everyone can reach their full potential and improve their quality of life.

For the month of January the Board is asking for donations of personal care items for the Center. Government aid cannot be used to purchase these items as they are considered "non-essential" (the government's definition, not ours!). Suggestions include toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, feminine products, shampoo, conditioner, diapers, dish and laundry detergent. As always, your contributions can be placed in the baskets in the sanctuary and they will be delivered to the Center by members of the Board of Missions. Thank you in advance!

Winter Potluck Dinner

The Fellowship Board is holding a Winter Potluck Dinner and we hope you can join us after the holidays on Friday, January 10th, 2020 at 6:00 pm. in Fellowship Hall.

If your last name begins with the letters:

A through K please provide a main dish or entrée to share with 4-6 others.

L through S please provide a salad, fruit or vegetable dish to share.

T through Z please provide some type of dessert to share.

Hope you can join us. If you have any questions, you may contact JoAnn Pillar at 860-287-8231 or email her at Jotea5678@gmail.com. You can also text or send an instant message at this number if you prefer.

**The January Congregational Meeting
of
The Kingston Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

Will be Held in the Church Sanctuary
Following the Worship Service
Child care will be available

Sunday, January 26, 2020
10:45 a.m.
Frank Lenox, Secretary

Tentative Agenda

1. Call to Order Mary Daly, Moderator
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of Congregational Meeting of October 20, 2019
4. Report of the President Jeff Richardson
5. Report of the Treasurer Sharon Davis
6. Reports of Board and Committees
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Pastor's Comments & Closing Prayer Rev. Sharon Hope
10. Adjourn

**The January Congregational Meeting
Kingston Congregational Church, UCC
Sunday, October 20, 2019**

1. Call to Order by Moderator, Mary Daly (11:05 am)
 - a. 2 handouts: Agenda w/ Minutes from 5/19/2019; Balance Sheets
 - b. Quorum declared by Moderator

2. Adoption of Agenda
 - a. **Motion** to accept the agenda, M/S/P

3. Approval of Minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting, May 19/June 9, 2019
 - a. **Motion** to accept the minutes, M/S/P
 - b. The June meeting was a continuation of the May meeting.

4. Report of the President, Jeff Richardson
 - a. The focus of attracting a new pastor is impacting other Boards, committees.
 - b. Investment Committee, needs to evaluate future funding, expenses for a new pastor.
 - c. Trustees, establish a fund for painting/maintenance of church structures.
 - d. Updates to the Library are currently being addressed to make certain the room remains a relaxing place for people to sit during/after service and for persons with disabilities since it is close to the handicap ramp.

5. Report of the Treasurer, Sharon Davis
 - a. Assets - \$133, 976; YTD - \$1.507M
 - b. Monies for Women's Fellowship should be indicated as such on the payment (i.e. memo line)
 - c. **Motion** to accept the report, M/S/P

6. Reports of Boards and Committees
 - a. Membership, Clare Sweeney
 - i. Directory is in the final stages
 - b. Missions, Cindy Buxton
 - i. Listed organizations for Blanket Sunday collection
 - c. Christian Ed – Jean Miller
 - i. Church School - the curriculum, One World, is working very well in connecting sermons with children's lessons
 - ii. Adult Ed. - non-violence workshop conducted by Sharon Hope and Jonathan Lewis; Advent workshop for adults
 - iii. Adult Bible study – 10-16 individuals each week
 - iv. Church Library – thanks to those who have sorted through the books and updated the Library

- d. Deacons – Susan Berman
 - i. Thanks to various members for their contributions over the summer
 - e. Fellowship – Andrea Richardson
 - i. Soup Sunday, Nov 3rd
 - ii. Advent wreaths: buy a kit or completed wreath
 - iii. SCRIP - \$6,000 distributed (Missions, Trustees, Operating - \$2k to each)
 - f. Search Committee, Frank Lenox
 - i. Update on preparing the church profile
7. Old Business
- a. none
8. New Business
- a. none
9. Pastor's Comments, Rev. Sharon Hope
- a. 'Wrestling with Angels' – addressing the demands of our church
 - b. Originally intended to leave her post at the end of May, a bridge interim would join us at the end of summer
 - c. After reflection, Sharon will leave her post once the Church Profile (Search Comm.) is complete.
 - d. Deacons will begin a search for a new interim minister.

Closing Prayer, Rev. Sharon Hope

10. Meeting Adjourn: 11:36 am
- a. Motion to adjourn, M/S/P

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Lenox, Secretary

Women's Fellowship News

submitted by Helen Rowe-Drake

Gingerbread: This was our 15th year of decorating houses! Another successful turn out with 64 houses and a good time was had by all. Thanks to helpers on Monday: Elizabeth McNab, Michelle, and Sue P-B. My builders on Tuesday: Judi Parman, Lori Remington, Jane Mello, Sue Snow, Jan Kraus, Linda Mendillo and helpers Eliz and Tina. Thanks to my co-chair Cindy Buxton for set up on Friday (& Jim with tables) and monitoring the candy table and clean up on Saturday. Also thanks to cashier Karen Tucker. It takes a group effort!

Bulbs for shut ins: Special thanks to Diana Geisler for organizing (and donating) the bulbs and supplies. 24 bulb containers were assembled and delivered!

Helpers: Connie Fitzelle, Tina Letcher, Elizabeth McNab, Sue Brillat, Tracy Heffron, Loretta Shaw.

Holiday in Kingston Cookie Sale: Special thanks to Judi Parman who worked so hard and organized, baked and crafted for this event! Thanks to all the women who helped set up, sell/cashier, clean up, and to all those who baked and who bought! Special kudos to Jan Kraus for a huge platter of delicious fudge! We had a profit of \$1018 which will go towards our local charity donations we give in June.

Next Meeting in January: Monday January 13th at 7:00pm in the Fireplace Room. We will have a brief business meeting and then Alinda Nelson will present and teach us about "4 Types of People". It's fun, fascinating and useful. Come join us for refreshments, conversation and learning something new!

Our New Peace Pole - May Peace Prevail On Earth

submitted by Helen Rowe-Drake

On Sunday, December 8, in conjunction with the Advent Candle of Peace, we dedicated our Peace Pole. This was purchased by Women's Fellowship from our Memorial Fund. It is on a stand for indoor use and can move around the church as wanted though it will spend most of its time in the front windows of Fellowship Hall where the Christmas tree is now. In the spring we will have a "stump" in the courtyard so that we can move it outside for Peace Day, the Kingston Fair or on display temporarily (as per the Historical Society rules).

Women's Fellowship debated about which languages to choose from the extensive list offered. We started with the idea of representing the major continents so: English for North America, Spanish for Mexico, Central and South America, French for Europe, Swahili for Africa, Korean for Asia. Then we chose Hebrew for our Jewish friends and Jesus' language and Arabic for our Muslim friends and the Middle East. We had one space left and so many other language choices, we finally chose the phrase "May Peace Be in Our Communities", with the hope that so much gun violence ends. We also have a brass plaque that says it in Braille

A little history: This peace movement was first started in Ishikawa Japan by Masahisa Goi in 1955. He was a peace maker and philosopher and others came to hear him speak. He coined the phrase, "May Peace Prevail on Earth". His group started to produce stickers and posters and literature to promote peace. In 1976 the idea of Peace Prayers on a pole began in Japan. When Mr Goi died in 1983, his daughter became chairperson and began to expand the movement internationally and started the World Peace Prayer and Flag Ceremony. In 1986 the first US ceremony was held in Los Angeles and the Peace Pole Project spread through the United States and on to Europe and the world. In 1988 the World Peace Prayer Society was incorporated as a nonprofit, non-sectarian organization and the headquarters moved to NYC. In 1990 it became a non-government organization affiliated with the Department of Public Information of the UN. In 2001 the World Peace Sanctuary was established and is located in Wassaic, NY. Now it is called May Peace Prevail on Earth International.

There are now 250,001 Peace Poles and in every country! Some notable ones: the Vatican's garden, the Israel-Jordan border, Bethlehem, the Pentagon, UN Headquarters, Nevada Nuclear Test Site, beside the bridge over the River Kwai, South Africa's Table Mountain, Macchu Picchu, a mountain in Nepal's Himalayas, the Kyber Pass in Pakistan, Saigon in Vietnam, Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Ben and Jerry's in Vermont! (which I saw 3 years ago and reminded me about them and I ordered one for our yard and then thought the church should have one!) So many more to look for... there are two in Westerly, is there another in South Kingstown or elsewhere in RI? Maybe your school or vacation area needs one?

The May Peace Prevail on Earth movement is a grassroots global movement to inspire and re-awaken the inherent consciousness of love, peace and harmony which exists in every one of us. It is a movement to bring inner peace of mind and to foster peace in the world at large. I hope that you will see our Peace Pole as a silent vigil to remind each of us to **think, speak and act** in the spirit of peace and harmony. Peace begins with me! May peace prevail on Earth in 2020!

Progressive Dinner

I know you are not yet thinking of summer, but the Fellowship Board has decided to try something new this year. We are going to have our Progressive Dinner in the summer. Since the days are longer in June, maybe cooking or eating outside could be an option. Save the date with more information to come later in the spring. The Progressive Dinner is scheduled for Saturday June 13, 2020.

Picture Directory Updates

The Membership Board has been distributing the recently arrived Picture Directories. We strive to have member directories be as accurate as possible but information is always changing and errors do happen. Please check this latest directory to see that your information is accurate. If there are any changes and/or updates to be made, please contact the church office (office@kingcongchurch.org or 783-5330) or a member of the Membership Board. Let the office know if you do not want your changes included in the *Spire*.

Please note the following address correction:

Bev Stringer
P.O. Box 747
West Kingston 02892

Want to help a refugee? Do you have Airline Miles to Spare?

My husband and I each used credit cards for years that gave airline mile rewards. I was wanting to cancel my Chase and Citibank cards for environmental reasons, and we had no immediate plans to fly but I didn't want to lose all the miles. I discovered a program where I could donate our miles for refugees to get out of detention and fly to their sponsors. The website is www.miles4migrants.com. They help you thru the easy process and they let you know as your miles get used. We had miles on American that went to two sets of a mother and child released from Iran to join their husbands in England. They were detained for being Christian and hadn't been together for over a year. Our Southwest airline miles I requested be used at the border and they helped four different people released from detention in San Diego to fly to their sponsors in other cities. It is a great feeling to know we made a difference for these people who have been thru so much. If you don't have miles, they also accept donations which help with the fees and taxes. Have questions? I'm happy to talk about my experience.

Helen Rowe-Drake

200 Years Ago!!!!

An Important Time in the Life of Our Church

By Elizabeth McNab

Part 3: Oliver Brown – A Man for the Time

In February 1819 under the auspices of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Oliver Brown preached for several Sundays in Little Rest at the Court House. It was obviously a “match” as he returned in May and recorded that return - “by the request of a number of the inhabitants, and the Directors of the MSPCK”. He continued as minister until March 1835. Brown was an 1804 Harvard graduate and for many years was the Chaplain at the Charlestown Massachusetts State Prison. He was ordained in Newton, Massachusetts in October 1819 and from then on was able to administer communion on the second Sabbath of the month.

During these early days of the church regular monthly meetings were also held and preparatory services in true Presbyterian fashion preceded communion. The pastor, Oliver Brown, was clerk and kept the records.

Also in 1819 the Sewall funded school was moved from Tower Hill to Little Rest and Brown was asked besides being pastor to supervise the school and hire instructors. In the 1820s a new school was built on North Road and renamed the Kingston Academy.

Children were very important to him and he, therefore, “devoted time and energy” into establishing a Sabbath School. His entry in the record book:

“The Sabbath School in Little Rest in the Town of South Kingstown, R.I. which opened in the Sewall School at the commencement of the summer quarter of the present year, having continued in a flourishing state to the present time, it is concluded, not only to continue it, but to make the exercises, recited by the scholars, matter of record.”

For the quarter that began December 5, 1819, he listed 23 girls and 44 boys. About two-thirds of the girls and about half of the boys appear to have been quite regular in attendance. By 1826 the register shows 84 names. (WDM, p. 45-46)

On the completion of the building by the Society, Rev. Oliver Brown organized the Kingston Congregational Church (remember the building, finances, etc. were dealt with by the Presbyterian Society in the Pettaquamscutt Society). He wrote the church covenant and profession of faith to which seven believers in religion residing locally affixed their names. They were: Oliver Brown (the

minister), Jeremiah Niles, Hilliard M. Towle, Hannah Brown, Catherine Helme, Hanna Potter, and Mona P. Wells. The Covenant read as follows:

Profession and Covenant of the Church in the Presbyterian Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchases

“You do now, penitently confessing your sins, avouch the Great Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be your God and Portion, resolving by his grace humbly to submit yourself to his holy laws and government.....” (KCC pamphlet Nov. 1932)

This formal organization was consummated on January 17, 1821. At this time the building was dedicated as noted and the seven signers publicly gave their assent to the covenant.

During this time period Brown reported that “the change in the social and religious intercourse of Little Rest is great. The Sabbath is very much more regarded; meetings on that day are better attended; and, as to harmony and good neighborhood, it seems like another place.”

Later activities that Oliver Brown was involved in included in 1824 the beginnings of the Kingston Free Library and Reading Room when a group of 49 men founded a “Social Library to be kept in Little Rest”. The Reverend Brown was elected President of the library society and was its first librarian. With subscriptions from the founders, fees, and donations Rev. Brown immediately collected about 150 volumes. (CMcB, p. 272)

Under Rev. Brown Fernwood Cemetery was created and in 1831 the Rhode Island Conference of Congregational Churches met in Kingston for the first time for their quarterly meeting.

In 1829 he was a member of the newly formed South Kingstown Temperance Society established in Kingston (24 men, 27 women).

The Rev. Oliver Brown was the minister at KCC for 16 years before moving to Connecticut. His son Oliver Brown, Jr. (born in 1830 in Kingston) served as joint pastor of Kingston and Peace Dale from December 1857 to September 1858.

(References noted in Part 1 of 200 Years Ago)