

The Spire

From Your Pastor

March 2020



We now begin the Season of Lent....the time when each in our own way makes our pilgrimage to the cross. The journey lasts for forty days, a holy number in Jewish faith...the number of days Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, the number of years the Israelites wandered in the desert before they found the promised land. The number is symbolic and reminds the faithful that they have entered a sacred time.

That is what Lent is for us as Christians a sacred time. A sacred time for what purpose you may ask? The cross pictured above represents Lent for me. It has as its center, a heart. And the way to the cross is through our heart....as we open our hearts to listen for God calling us in the silence but also in the busy-ness of our days.

Jesus was a prophet in the line of the Old Testament leaders such as Isaiah and Jeremiah and preached strong words against leaders who had abandoned the poor and declared sinners and the sick folk as unclean. Jesus included those who had been cast out as his followers and the numbers grew during his ministry and therefore he was rarely alone, always trailing folk who needed his message and healing touch. We read that often he left the crowds and went to a quiet place to rest and to pray and it was in these times that he was replenished by the presence of God within so that he could minister without. I think sometimes we forget or haven't yet experienced the reality that God is ENERGY...God is light, comfort as well as the one that prods us on to do God's will in the world. Spending quiet time, inviting the presence of God is energizing because God fills us and equips us to do what we are called to do.

It is so easy in these days to become distracted....I play too many video games and now have 1,000's of movies and TV shows to watch. Our phones ring everywhere and often we answer without thinking...and therefore we move out of ourselves and our centered-ness into distraction.

During these forty days I challenge us to stop...stop and check ourselves when we have quiet moments and seek to fill them with a screen. Stop and say "no" for a change and invite God to be present with us. I also urge all of us to pull out our Bibles and read them....Read the Gospels, the Letter of Paul to the Philippians, the Book of Ruth or Jonah....read it all.

You are also invited to read the book chosen for the Adult Education group, "What Jesus Meant" by Gary Wills and attend our group on Mondays from 5:30-6:30. Or attend Bible Study on Thursdays from 12:00-1:00. You can also attend the Wednesday Ecumenical Lenten worship and luncheon that is held on Wednesdays at noon...this week at Wakefield Baptist Church. These services are profound and an opportunity to build community with other congregations (and the food is awesome)!

This coming Sunday we will begin our Lenten Journey by celebrating communion in a different way....please come and see what is in store for all of us as a congregation! And I pray that Lent becomes for you a time of reflection, quiet and solace.

Blessings,
Rev. Sharon

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

March's Deacon of the Month is Louise Pearson. (lrpearson11@cox.net)

Minute for Missions

Thank you for your donations of cooking spices during the month of February for the Jonnycake Center. At the request of the director, in March we will be collecting food items for "Shut-in Boxes". The Center provides monthly delivery service to Seniors who are home bound. Items needed for these boxes include **crackers (Ritz, Saltines, etc.), tea, coffee, natural peanut butter and sugar free jellies**. Contributions can be placed in the baskets in the sanctuary any Sunday in March. Thank you to all who continue to support this important mission work!

Also coming in March: **LGBTQ 101**. Please join the Board of Missions and Social Justice on Sunday, March 22 after worship as we host Elana Rosenberg, Executive Director of Youth Pride in Providence, who will make a presentation on topics such as proper LGBTQ terminology and vocabulary, current issues in the LGBTQ community and how to be a good ally to LGBTQ adults and youth. Youth Pride is a Providence based organization dedicated to meeting the unique needs of youth and young adults impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity/expression while working to end the homophobic and transphobic environments in which they live, work and play. <https://www.youthprideri.org/>

Emig Lecture

The Board of Missions and Social Justice is blessed to announce that our Emig Lecture this year will be given by the Rev. Donnie Anderson who will preach the sermon on March 29 as well as give the lecture after worship. This year the theme of the lecture focuses us as a congregation on the fact that we are an "Open and Affirming" congregation who welcomes all people to worship and fellowship with us- no exclusions! But with that statement comes our need to become more aware of how we can become more welcoming and gain knowledge about LGBTQ issues and reach out more fully to folk. Rev. Anderson served as Pastor of the East Greenwich First Baptist Church of East Greenwich from 1998-2005 and most currently as the Executive Minister of the RI State Council of Churches 2005-2019. Please join us in this exciting and educational experience.

Adult Christian Education Class

Beginning Monday, March 2, our Adult Christian Education Class will meet on Mondays during Lent from 5:30 to 6:30. We hope that this time slot will allow more people to attend who come from work and those who aren't comfortable driving at night. This Lent we will read and discuss "What Jesus Meant" by Garry Wills. The book can be purchased on Amazon in paperback for \$10.89 or Kindle edition for \$5.99. It can be purchased on Apple Books for \$4.99.

The book explores the radical nature of Jesus and helps us better understand his stories and words by explaining the culture and the society he lived in. Rev. Sharon will lead the class.

Spring Potluck

The Fellowship Board is holding a Spring Potluck Dinner and we hope you can join us to celebrate the coming of spring on Friday, March 20th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

If your last name begins with the letters:

A through G please provide a dessert to share;

H through R please provide a main dish or entrée to share with 4-6 others;

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

We hope you can join us for some good food with good friends!

If you have any questions, you may contact Andrea Richardson at home at 792-8316 or cell phone at 932-1597 email her at arichardson120@yahoo.com.

Women's Fellowship

Our next meeting is **Monday, March 16 at 7 pm and is Open to the Congregation.**

Our speaker is Holly Gray from EDESIA NUTRITION which is a North Kingstown Company that produces Plumpy'Nut, a RUTF (ready to use therapeutic food) to help undernourished children globally. Since 2010 they have helped 11 million children in 50 countries!

Join us and come learn about their program.

(Please note this date is different than in the booklet or flyer.)

Lenten Services

South County Church Women United in cooperation with the local churches and clergy are happy to announce the Lenten Services Schedule for 2020.

Remaining services are:

- ❖ March 4: Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd with Rev. Angela Sagesse
383 Old North Rd. Kingston, RI 02881
- ❖ March 11: Kingston Congregational Church with Rev. Garvin Warden
2610 Kingstown Rd. Kingston, RI 02881
- ❖ March 18: Peace Dale Congregational Church with Rev. Sharon Hope
261 Columbia St. Peace Dale, RI 02883
- ❖ March 25: Church of the Ascension with Fr. Craig Swan
370 Main St. Wakefield, RI 02879
- ❖ April 1: Christ United Methodist Church with Fr. Robert Travis
2291 Kingstown Rd. Kingstown, RI 02881

Services are held at noon and will include a light luncheon.
All are invited to attend.

Coming soon to a King Cong Near You.....Messy Church!

Question: What is Messy Church you may well ask and why are we so excited to offer it here at KCC?

Messy Church is an all age worship experience that explores God's love in an accessible way. At Messy Church today's busy households of all shapes and sizes are invited into a welcoming space to experience faith. Messy Church meets once a month and EVERYONE is welcome whether single or partnered, young or old, tidy or messy, have questions or doubts, are filled with joy or struggling with life...you will be welcomed at Messy Church

What is the history of Messy Church?

Messy Church began at a small church in England in 2004 by Lucy Moore. Today there are close to 4000 Messy Churches throughout the world. Messy Churches are led by lay and clergy folk from a wide variety of denominations.

What are the Values of Messy Church?

The values of Messy Church are clear and strong....creativity, celebration, hospitality and an all-age experience. All four of these values come together with our main value which is Messy Church is CHRIST CENTERED.

What can we expect when we attend a Messy Church Experience?

MESSY CHURCH IS FUN! All ages gather to engage in activities, crafts and games that bring the Biblical story to life.

MESSY CHURCH IS FAITH! Following the activities, all ages join in a short celebration with an interactive Bible story, music and prayer.

MESSY CHURCH IS FOOD! Each Messy Church concludes with a meal. Sitting at the table with new and old friends sharing the stories of our real and messy lives!

What do we ask of you at KCC? Come to our first Messy Church experience on **Saturday, April 25 from 4:00-6:00**. Bring your open heart and mind and prepare to be moved spiritually, share food and fellowship and learn more about how to be a disciple of Christ out in our world.

How can You Help?

Please sign up to volunteer to help....we need folk to serve food, help act out our Bible Lesson, lead one of the activity tables that include projects such as: art, science, music, games. We need about 10 volunteers to make Messy Church a reality. You can be young or old, wary or all in to this experience, ready or not! Please help and we guarantee you will be inspired. Please see Rev. Sharon or contact her at singingrev@gmail.com.

Why are we celebrating Mardi Gras this year?

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a message from Michelle Girasole, Church School/Communications Director

Last year, Pastor Sharon encouraged me to create family-friendly events for parents of our church school children in 2020, and Mardi Gras seemed like the perfect place to start. Jean Miller, always wise in her advice to the board of Christian Education, reinforced that our focus should be on the *origin* of Mardi Gras. This is the night before we begin our season of Lent, and a day of preparation for the practice of fasting.

According to our wonderful resource book, “*Faithful Families*” by Rev. Traci Smith, **the three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving**. The book lists activities for each one that can be used by parents to help kids practice these three things at home. They will be shared on Mardi Gras night, and hopefully carried forward with our children for the next 40 days before Holy Week and Easter. Prayer will be focus of both the Mardi Gras night and our Lenten program during Church School.

As we also prepare to join with other Christian churches in the Messy Church movement, I have been studying their ideas and perspectives and feel they are so relevant to the challenges of parents today. I read a recent blog post of a young mother, trying to improve her own practice of prayer, which I will leave you with:

Lindsey Goodyear, blogger for Messy Church USA, wrote:

“I need 20 uninterrupted minutes a day with my savior. I’ve realized it doesn’t have to be at night before I go to sleep. I remember my father-in-law telling me he uses his 4-mile daily walk to chat with the Lord.

It got me thinking, although I’m busy running errands, driving kids, cooking, cleaning and whatever else us mom’s do, I also have little pockets of time throughout the day where I can scroll quickly through Facebook, Instagram, or ask Google burning questions.

If I traded out just one of those social media check-ins a day, I could legitimately reignite my passion for prayer. I’m not perfect so I know it won’t happen overnight, but it will become habit, again, if I put the effort in. So, that’s it. Practice makes progress...”

Her suggestion reminded me of the “digital sundown habit”, which I have been practicing as a New Year’s Resolution - shutting down the endless scroll of social media and doing something else, offline, for 2 hours before bedtime. Think about doing this, I highly recommend it for adults and children alike!

200 Years Ago!!!!

An Important Time in the Life of Our Church

Part 5 Our Ministerial Lands

Have you ever wondered where Ministerial Road got its name?

If one looks at a map, the access to the Ministerial Lands, straight across Saugatucket Road and Curtis Corner Road from the Tower Hill settlement (on the present Post Road/Route 1 and Torrey Road), is easily seen. The original map fits nicely on the present South Kingstown tax map. The only major change was when Ministerial Road was extended from Curtis Corner Road through the swamp to connect up with the Larkin's Pond Road. The original property bordered by the fresh water pond (now Worden's Pond) was highly sought after for rentals.

In 1658 five proprietors had bought the Pettaquamscutt Purchase in the Narragansett Country from three Narragansett sachems. Now eleven years later on June 4, 1668 they were meeting this time to agree on writing "That a tract of 300 Acres of the best Land and on a Convenient place be Laid out and for Ever set Appart as an Encouragement, the Income and Improvement thereof wholly for an orthodox Person that shall be obtained to Preach Gods Word to the inhabitants." This type of provision was already happening in Massachusetts. (Charles E. Clark [A Test of Religious Liberty: The Ministry Land Case in Narragansett](#))

The possession of this acreage in the 1700s by the Congregationalists was disputed by the Church of England inhabitants in this area and a legal battle was fought by Rev. MacSparren, minister of their church, (what many of you call Tower Hill is actually MacSparren Hill), and Dr. Joseph Torrey who was a long time (60 years) minister of our Tower Hill Church. The King of England and his council decided in favor of our church and the Congregational minister. Torrey Road is named after Joseph Torrey.

Income from this property was to be used by the "orthodox" church (as noted the Privy Council in England in 1752 decided the signers in 1668 meant the Congregational Church) for payment of a minister. The full story of these lands is quite fascinating.

Dr. Joseph Torrey enjoyed the living from this land until he left the pastorate. He then deeded the land to six trustees (Land Evidences of SK, Book 3, page 719 – I have trouble reading the writing.). Access to the land in the 17th and 18th centuries was via Curtis Corner Road, or the southern portion of Ministerial Road, then called Perryville Road. It was not until after 1857 that the road was completed from Perryville all the way to West Kingston and Kingstown Road.

By virtue of the act of incorporation of the Presbyterian Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase in 1820 permission for the sale was granted to this society. From our KCC archives (a full report is archived there), "This Book contains an account of the Ministerial Fund belonging to the Presbyterian Society or Congregation of South Kingstown, it being the Avails of the Sales of the Ministerial Farm (so called) lying in South Kingstown sold by James Helme, Thomas R. Wells, and Thomas S. Taylor, a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island for that purpose at their June Session A. D. 1821." The largest lots were Lot #1 which was 33 acres and sold to Jabez Tucker at \$19 per acre for \$627.00, Lot 14 containing 57 ½ acres sold to Gardner Tefft and Jos. Knowles at \$17 per acre for \$977.50, and Lot #15 containing 73 ½ acres to Parris G. Holley and Joshua B. Curtis at \$10 per acre for \$735.00. The total sales were \$5,214.23 and after expenses of \$134.23 for surveying, recording papers, the auctioneer, etc., the profit was \$5,080 "for the support of the Gospel". From the proceeds of this sale the Ministerial Fund and the General Fund now invested in securities were established.

The Kingston Improvement Association instigated the road's naming when its Executive Committee urged the South Kingstown Town Council to approve a petition to name the new Larkin's Pond Road that stretched to Perryville "Ministerial Road." The request was approved during the spring of 1935 and was noted at the KIA meeting on April 8. This name had been selected because the road ran through the Ministerial Lands (stone marker at the corner of Curtis Corner Road) which to repeat was chosen as 300 acres of the best property in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase in 1668. The road is 6.4 miles long now.

In 1991 the Ministerial Road Preservation Association was formed to address the collective concerns of people who shared a special affection for Ministerial Road, now a recognized scenic highway. These concerns had been brought on by the RIDOT who wanted to significantly widen, straighten and flatten the road. These changes people felt would damage its natural tree canopy, roadside vegetation, and rural character forever. A full Stewardship Plan was laid out in May 1997.

I have put a copy of the original Ministerial Lands and the present tax map on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board. If you are driving Ministerial Road going south, the Ministerial Lands start as you drive out of the swamp and up Tobey's Neck – the telephone poles start again. Still today the glorious rhododendrons and mountain laurels bloom in spring and a day is set aside for volunteers to clean and pickup unsightly trash along its length.

Enjoy the drive!

Submitted by Elizabeth McNab