

The Spire

From Your Pastor

September 2021

“Ready, Set, Go!”

That is what the lead up to September usually feels like to me as a church pastor and, in years past, as a parent. Even earlier as a student myself, the end of August was an exciting countdown to a new year in a new grade, school, or class. “Five, four, three, two, one: blastoff!” Maybe for those of us who are retired and whose calendars are less affected by the school year, the shift from summer to fall doesn’t feel so momentous. But for churches, whose activity levels often mimic our academic counterparts, the shift from August to September feels like that car commercial tag line, “Zero to 60mph in 5.2 seconds.”

This year is no different, even given lingering concerns related to pandemic. Our ministry plans are full and picking up speed. Our church calendar is filling up, with the resumption of old activities and the addition of new ones. We will proceed with due care and caution, attending to health guidelines and prevention recommendations. But we will proceed—and worship, and pray, and serve and share and grow! Read below for some of the upcoming events and opportunities for mission, education, and fellowship: Ice Cream Social, new All-Church curriculum/worship program called “Follow Me,” Fall Retreat, Funding Forward/“Beneficent Banquets,” Confirmation, Women’s Fellowship, Habitat for Humanity Faith Build, The Witness Stones Project, Brave Church study, Helping Hands Ministry to launch.

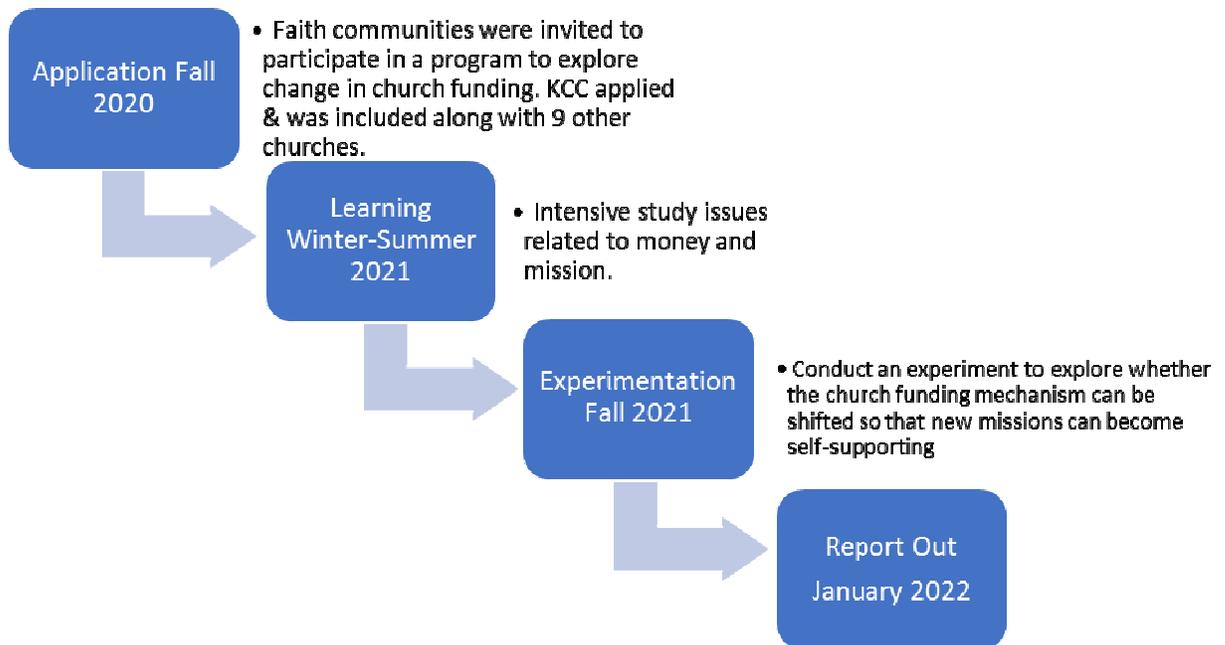
There are many, many ways for you to re-engage with your church! What is your faith goal for this year? To worship more regularly, to learn about your faith and/or the Bible, to get to know more people in our congregation and forge deeper friendships, to find a place to serve others in a way that suits your gifts and life demands, to deepen your prayer life, to engage in acts of justice, mercy or peacemaking, to strengthen ties across generations, to have more fun, to mentor youth and children, to care for others in hands-on ways, to feel connected and respond to the real needs of the world, to feel more spiritually grounded? If you have a desire to do any of the above, KCC has a ministry, activity, event, service opportunity, small group for you!

“Ready, set, go!” It’s time to blast off!

With you on the journey,
Rev. Jan

Funding Forward

David Bergeron and Rev. Jan have been the KCC team appointed to represent our church in a national pilot program out of Luther Seminary, called Funding Forward. Along with a local task force (Michelle Girasole and Wayne Lee), David and Rev. Jan have been engaging the material presented at monthly online seminars and required readings and assignments. Funding Forward is designed to progress along the following steps:



We are entering the Experimentation phase, where local churches design and conduct an experiment that combines mission and funding strategies. At the August meeting of the KCC Council, the Funding Forward Task Force presented the outline of its experiment, titled “Beneficent Banquets: Cooking Fresh, Eating Well, Doing Good.” The Beneficent Banquets (BB) design is to bring local chefs to KCC to lead a teaching/eating, cooking, and dining experience for a small group (10-12) who pay per seat for the culinary instruction and delicious meal that they prepare and enjoy. The hope is to source as much of the ingredients from local and donated sources as possible contributing to local businesses and food recovery efforts. The money raised by the banquet will be used to support food insecurity missions, both at KCC and in the local area. BB participants will enjoy: cooking fresh, eating well and doing good! Stay tuned to hear how our “experiment” goes and what we learn!

All-Church Curriculum: *Follow Me!*



Follow Me is an all-age curriculum and learning program for every age, meant to be integrated into the full life of a congregation: worship, education, fellowship, outreach. The *Follow Me* program focuses on the practices that Jesus taught and lived, with lessons and encouragement to live these practices in our lives today. We'll be following Jesus, as he invited his disciples like Peter and Andrew to do, saying "Follow me." We'll take one practice a month and dive in each week to that practice in worship through preaching and liturgy, in Christian education through Church School and A.C.E.S , and in fellowship through monthly all-age, intergenerational dinner gatherings to break bread and learn together across the generations with hands-on activities. As you'll see below in the Sunday schedule, the first month introduces the year-long theme of "Following Jesus." In the months to come we'll explore other practices Jesus taught and modeled, such as: welcoming all, live joy, honor Sabbath, do justice, and many more. Rev. Jan and the Christian Education Board deeply hope we will all learn many tools and ideas for following Jesus more closely in our day-to-day lives, and no matter our age, we will grow in more faithful living!

Our First *Follow Me* Practice: Follow Jesus

Sept. 12 – Rally Day! Ice Cream Social to welcome us all back! John 1:35-61 - Accept Jesus' Invitation

Sept. 19 - Ephesians 4:1-15 - Follow Jesus in Community

Sept. 26 - Mark 12:28-34 - Learn to See through the Lens of Love

October 3 - Matthew 28:16-20 - Follow Jesus by Making Disciples

Confirmation

After a year+ of COVID shut down, KCC is once again offering eligible youth the opportunity to participate in a journey of Confirmation. Youth 14-16 are invited to join with Rev. Jan and other adult mentors and meet twice a month October-April to learn, talk, engage, serve, retreat, play and deepen in faith, toward the goal of joining our congregation as an adult member. Identified youth and families have been notified by email and are asked to respond with your intention to participate by August 31.

Helping Hands

It has always been a Christian responsibility to visit the sick (Matt. 25:34-40), support the weak (Acts 20:35), and through love serve one another (Galatians 5:13-14).

Helping Hands is an upgraded version of what used to be called "the Casserole Committee." Helping Hands is a network of parishioners who assist with the practical needs of families or individuals in time of stress (temporary and unusual), both "happy" stress, such as a new baby, or painful stress, such as illness or bereavement.

Helping Hands is coordinated by an individual or team but depends on enough offers of assistance so that volunteers are called infrequently. Sign up forms will be distributed through the weekly newsletter and on paper in coffee hour. On the form you will indicate what type of help you're willing to give. When needs arise, the coordinators will match the needs with the availability of volunteers.

Erin Trodson has graciously agreed to serve as our Helping Hands Coordinator. Thank you, Erin! You can contact Erin or Rev. Jan if you or another parishioner has a need.

The Witness Stones Project

A task force comprised of members of the Board of Mission, Rev. Jan and other interested KCC members continues to explore a possible collaboration with The Witness Stones Project (www.witnessstonesproject.org), researching and recognizing the often overlooked and underappreciated contributions of enslaved individuals in the history of our town and church. After an open meeting with the Director of The Witness Stones Project, Dennis Culliton, in June, we are exploring options for community partners and potential grant funding for developing and coordinating a Witness Stones installation at our church and/or in Kingston. If you are interested in joining the small group from our church engaged in this topic, contact Lisa Bowe, Board of Missions, Chair, or Rev. Jan.

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

September's Deacon of the Month is Gideon Lyngdoh. (glyngdoh@uri.edu)

Pastor Away

Rev. Jan will be away from September 3rd through September 11th. In cases of pastoral emergency, please contact Board of Deacons Co-Chair Susan Berman at 401-789-3813.

I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream!

The Board of Fellowship and Board of Christian Education cordially invite everyone to an Ice Cream Sundae Social after worship on Sunday, September 12th in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate the start of Church School!

We hope to see you all there!

Save the Date: September 19

After Coffee Hour, please join us back in the Sanctuary for a special speaker sponsored by Women's Fellowship. Holly Gray will give us a powerpoint presentation about the wonderful work that **Edesia Nutrition** does here in North Kingstown, Rhode Island.

Edesia is the Roman Goddess of food who presides over banquets and was the name chosen by Navyn Salem for her company which produces RUTF ready-to-use foods that have helped 10 million malnourished children in 55 countries in the last 10 years. Please come learn about this amazing RI non-profit enterprise that is saving lives! Children are encouraged to attend!

Air Purifiers

The Board of Trustees has purchased 3 “Air and Surface Pro” air purifiers to keep the air and surfaces inside our premises as free from germs as possible. These lightweight machines use the most powerful disinfecting technology available, without the use of chemicals or ozone, to rid our buildings of mold, mildew, viruses, fungi, bacteria, SARS, and COV-2 within minutes of operation. This system evolved from the NASA space program for flights in space, and due to its success, it is being used in many hospitals, churches, restaurants, schools, businesses and residential buildings today. Since early July, we have been using them in all areas of our church buildings to ensure the safety of KCC members and guests. We sincerely hope you can feel some relief from this good news, since health and safety are our top priorities!

Minute for Missions

The Board of Missions and Social Justice has been busy this summer! Contributions were sent on behalf of KCC to the following:

- **Phillis Wheatley Fund for Innovation**, a new program of UCC Southern New England Conference to sponsor creative and innovative programs that may otherwise not be possible with existing budgetary limitations. Phillis Wheatley, Poet Laureate of the American Revolution, was the first African American woman to publish poetry. Wheatley was baptized into and became a member of Old South Church in Boston in 1771, two years before she was freed from slavery by the Wheatley family. Read more at <https://www.sneucc.org/philliswheatley>
- **KIND (Kids in Need of Defense)**, providing legal and social services to unaccompanied children arriving in the United States. Find out more at <https://supportkind.org/>
- **Sisters of Notre Dame** in Douglas, Arizona who are providing migrant support at the US-Mexico border. Read an update from their work this summer at <https://ssnd.org/douglas5-30-21/>
- **South County Habitat for Humanity (SCHH) 2021 Faith Build Project**, a building project renovating a duplex in Westerly. Find out more at <https://www.southcountyhabitat.org/post/building-on-faith>. Additionally, KCC has signed on as partner with SCHH and other local churches to support their mission of helping to provide affordable housing in our communities. One way we will be doing that is participating in a Team Build Day at the Westerly project this fall- look for details coming soon!

Additionally, thanks to your generous contributions to our **One Great Hour of Sharing** collection in May, over \$1600 was raised to support communities in need around the world.

Brave Church: Tackling Tough Topics Together

A congregational study co-sponsored by
the KCC Mission and Social Justice and Christian Education Boards

Join us after worship on Sundays, Sept. 26-Nov. 7, 10:45-11:45 am in the Fireplace Room, for discussion based on a book by Elizabeth Hagan titled "Brave Church: Tackling Tough Topics Together."



In today's deeply divided world where discussions can quickly become heated and uncivil, our society needs brave churches where people can talk about the real struggles they are experiencing without fear of being dismissed, shamed, or judged. "Brave Church" helps congregations learn tools and strategies for talking about controversial topics with sensitivity. It guides readers to think through how they can foster conversations about such challenging topics as infertility/miscarriage, mental health, domestic violence, racism, and sexuality.

As our world is rapidly shifting and changing, our values and vision will be challenged and stretched. How do we talk together, with clarity and compassion, to address issues and questions where our opinions and objectives might clash? Brave Church lends us vocabulary and practices for healthy congregational conversations.

Place your order for a copy of Brave Church by calling or email the church office. Some copies will be available first-come-first-served in coffee hour in September.

Women's Fellowship News Mark Your Calendars & Save the Dates

Monday, September 13, 6 pm, Fellowship Hall. Pot Luck Supper & Sharing. Please come even if you can't bring food.

Sunday, September 19 after coffee hour, in the Sanctuary. Women's Fellowship is sponsoring our speaker, Holly Gray, from Edesia Nutrition to tell us about their work. Please attend and grab a friend so we have a good attendance!

Monday, October 18, 7 pm, Fireplace Room. Connie and Cindy have a program for us.

Saturday, October 23, 9-5 KCC Retreat Day

Saturday, November 20, 11-2 Gingerbread House Decorating. This is tentative pending Covid Status. Building on Wednesday the 17th.

Church School

Can you share God's love with our kids?

Ready for a new adventure in faith at church?

If you are looking for a new way to grow in your own faith, or a new spiritual practice on Sundays, talk to Michelle about joining our awesome church school teacher team. By volunteering every other week, or once a month, you will help our kids understand God's unique love for them. The "Follow Me" curriculum is prepared for you and we have all the supplies you will need to share the stories, songs, crafts and games. We are currently seeking teachers for three age groups (pre-school, elementary, middle school). If you are reading this, and thinking, "Well, maybe that would be fun..." shoot Michelle an email at michelle.girasole@gmail.com, so she can confirm that you are absolutely right. Our kids are joyful humans and your own faith will come alive as you teach what Jesus taught us to practice.