

# The Spire

**F**rom Your Pastor

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Summer 2020

## What We've Done Together....

I will have served as your Interim Pastor for one year and ten months when I leave you on June 28. Some of you have already written expressing thanks and words of kindness and farewell. As you turn the pages of this newsletter, you will read a report from the Deacons describing what I'VE done while we've been together. But the truth is I have done very little as Sharon the Pastor. It has been "US" ...making decisions, working together, making changes, praying, praising, worshipping and having a lot of fun and laughter in the mix. Oh yes, I introduced some new ideas and rocked a few boats but it has been your willingness to listen, make the changes, bring your individual and collective spirits to the mix so that together you have become a more grounded, livelier congregation who has learned that your imaginations, time and talents guided by God's guidance and wisdom can bring about wonderful and healing changes and new ideas.



Together I believe we have changed the idea of what a "pastor's role" is in your midst. When I arrived, I would hear folk whisper about "what the pastor ...wants, needs, says". Through this interim time you've learned that the pastor is YOU...us... working together and serves as a shepherd, guide, cheerleader, spiritual teacher and preacher who invites the Holy Spirit to guide you and to cheer you on when you move your values, time and priorities toward the Kingdom of God...and become more faithful and hopeful. I hope that you will continue to forge a healthy relationship with the Interim Pastor who will follow and with your new Settled Pastor in the future...one that is built on good communication, mutual respect and the understanding that (as I say too often), "he/she isn't God, he/she just works for God."

I have loved our time together and have felt the presence of God continually.... In my 34 years of ministry it is with you that I've learned how sacred some of our seemingly mundane tasks can be. Together our meetings (at least for me) moved from toil to inspired discussions that generated excitement and a lot of creativity. Over time I have noticed the discussion moving from "this is how we've always done it" or "that's really hard" to "yes! Let's try it!" That is you, my friends...and my prayer is that you continue on with that spirit of "Yes! Try It! Why not!"

As we end our time together, we could not have imagined we would do so during a pandemic and not be able to worship in the sanctuary or have a coffee hour party with CAKE! This disaster has brought with it sadness, loneliness and has challenged us in ways we had never imagined. But together we have offered worship that has been technically available but not sophisticated and you have been incredibly supportive and have worshipped, met in Zoom meetings and never skipped a beat. For the most part (and that is all any of us could ask) we have remained cheerful and supported, cared for and loved one another without ceasing. It has been awesome to experience this time with you and I'm so grateful we have been together....and that is the word...we have moved through this time always together....looking out for one another and for our community.

This is not a “goodbye letter” but just a reminder of how much we need to treasure all of the good things we have accomplished with God’s guiding hand and the Spirit’s inspiration. There will be more farewells in a few sermons and weekly emails. For now, I want to take the opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness, support, gratitude and your willingness to try new things, look above and beyond and for the fact that together we have moved closer to the reality of bringing God’s kingdom to Kingston, to our URI neighbors, to our community and to those who so desperately need the Good News of God’s love that is manifested through us.....

Peace and much love...  
Pastor Sharon

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## **A Letter of Thanks for the Ministry of Rev. Sharon Ann Hope**

In the spring of 2018, Rev. Sharon was ready to retire. During her ministry, she had spent sixteen years ministering to people in prison and spent thirteen years as a Kingian Nonviolence trainer. She had been ordained in the Presbyterian Church. In 1998, Rev. Daehler Hayes, our Conference Minister at the time, encouraged her to become a UCC minister. She went on to serve five Rhode Island Churches. She served as Senior Pastor at Woodridge and at Newman, leaving Newman when her mother and sister died. After that, she served three more Rhode Island churches as Interim, finishing in 2017. In January of 2018, she had told the RI Conference that she was not going to seek another call—unless Kingston Congregational Church came to need an interim. She had done Nonviolence Training for us and had sung with our choir, and she knew us. That was a time of transition for us with our Pastor leaving to address health issues. When we called Rev. Sharon, she came.

She brought new energy to our pulpit and to our boards and to our Church School, where our Church School Director was battling cancer and the program was flagging. With the Board of Christian Education, Sharon crafted a new position combining the roles of Church School Director and Communications Director and hired the exuberant and talented Michelle Girasole. Sharon offered new adult Christian Education opportunities and rejuvenated our Thursday Noon Bible Study.

With Sharon’s leadership we re-instated the 11:00 P.M. Christmas Eve service in addition to the earlier Christmas Eve family service. We added a Thanksgiving service. Holy Week services included Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Sharon had interrupted her opera career to go to seminary, and she brought her beautiful voice to her ministry. Enrico had often invited her to sing with the choir before she became our interim minister. When the world suddenly changed to control the spread of the corona virus, Sharon was able to provide the music as well as the sermon for services live-streamed by Michelle.

All of this, without mentioning the pastoral care Sharon has provided to so many of us, makes our celebration of her well-earned retirement from ministry bittersweet. It comes at a time when we cannot be together for a great big party, making it even harder to say goodbye. Plans are underway for small group, socially distanced gatherings. She leaves us stronger and knowing that we are the church.

It is our honor to be the last church to receive the blessings of her ministry. We will miss her. We will have new leadership, but Sharon will always be part of us. She will always have our gratitude and love.

With deep appreciation,  
The Board of Deacons

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

## Church Council Notes

The next KCC congregational meeting will be held at noon on Sunday, June 14 which will be broadcast via the internet so that members do not have to attend the meeting in person. There will be an electronic ballot sent to all church members via their email. If you desire a paper ballot, please contact the church office. The 2 main topics on the ballot will be to vote on new board members and the annual church budget. Reminder to please pledge if you have not already done so.

The Church Council voted to hire Reverend Bruce Greer as our next interim minister as Pastor Sharon will be retiring and moving to a continuing care community in Raleigh. Reverend Greer will start at KCC on July 20.

## Stewardship

As we rapidly approach the end of the KCC fiscal year at the end of June, the Treasurer, Finance Board, and Council are diligently working on the budget for next year, July 2020--June 2021.

We're happy to report that to date, the Stewardship Board has received 90% of anticipated pledges accounting for about 90% of the upcoming budget.

If you have already submitted your pledge, on behalf of KCC, the Church Council, Finance and Stewardship Boards, we thank you.

Accordingly, if you have not yet done so, we are kindly asking you to help us by pledging and supporting Kingston Congregational Church.

However, during this time of uncertainty, please note that pledges are only an estimation of giving in order to create a budget...and pledges can be lowered or raised at any time according to your changing circumstances.

If you have misplaced your pledge form, please visit the church website: <http://www.kingcongchurch.org/> Here you may print a form or you may pledge online directly to the Stewardship portal.

In the lower left corner under upcoming events are two links:

1. The first link is **NEW! Online 2020 Pledge Form.** This online form will go to the Stewardship Manager's portal.
2. The second link allows you to **Download and print the Pledge Form.**

If you need further assistance, please contact the church office at 401-783-5330.

Thank you,  
The Stewardship Board:  
Carol Kinsley  
Doug Kraus  
Angelo Mendillo

## **Scrip**

Dear KCC members and friends,

While we cannot be together at this time due to the Coronavirus, your Scrip Team continues to offer you an opportunity to support the church through the Scrip Ministry. If you are interested, please follow the steps below:

Attached is the Scrip card order form.

1. Complete the form and sign it. (Or email me and tell me what Scrip gift cards you want.)
2. If you are able to scan it, please do so.
3. Email it to Andrea at [arichardson@srt-law.com](mailto:arichardson@srt-law.com) and tell me when you want to come by and get your card(s) - Day/time.
4. On that day/time please come to the Richardson's house at 207 South Pier Road, Narragansett to pick up your gift cards;
5. You may either knock on the door and I can give you the gift cards in exchange for your check, or if you would prefer, I can (a) bring them to your car in the driveway or (b) leave them on my front porch table for you to pick up and leave your check. I will then take your check off my table while you drive away.

I hope this will be of some service to all of our members and friends at KCC. Please feel free to call me at home 792-8316 or cell 932-1597 if you have any questions or need assistance with your purchase.

Thank you for your continued support,

Your KCC Scrip Team

## **Board of Trustees**

In early spring, I submitted a grant request to the Potter Fund in the amount of \$6000.00, and KCC received that money recently. These funds will be used for the painting and maintenance of the exterior, and the work should commence very soon.

Trustees and Andy are working closely together to keep the church buildings and grounds in good working order.

Tracy Heffron

Board of Trustees

## OGHS Thank You

The Board of Missions offers heartfelt thanks to all those parishioners who donated to the special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing. It is too soon for a final accounting, but you will be informed about that later. Be assured that this gift of yours will be put to good use in the pandemic. Thanks again for your help for others in a crisis.

## Pastoral Search Committee

Report from the Kingston Congregational Church Pastoral Search Committee:

The Search Committee usually meets weekly on Sundays at 11 o'clock via Zoom. There are 3 stages to the Search Process. They are 1) Preparing for the Search, 2) Discerning through the Search, and 3) Completing the Search. Completing of the Local Church Profile ended stage 1. We are now in the second stage of Discerning through the Search and we are working closely with our conference representative Chuck Ericson. The steps in this stage are:

The Search Committee meets with the conference to begin a spirit-filled search.

**COMPLETED**

The conference posts our open position on UCC Ministry Opportunities.

**COMPLETED**

The Search Committee considers ministerial profiles received from the conference.

**ONGOING**

The Search Committee holds interviews to narrow the candidate pool. **IN PROCESS**

The Search Committee identifies a final candidate.

Our governing body negotiates a compensation package with the candidate.

To date we have received a good response (17 and continuing) considering the pandemic environment. Profiles continue to come in so that we are constantly considering profiles and working our way to holding interviews to narrow the candidate pool. As we discern, we keep in mind the congregation's responses to our initial questions - "Who Are We?", "Who is our Neighbor?", and "Who is God Calling Us to Become?"- now immortalized in our church profile (Stage 1).

During the coming weeks we will be interviewing potential candidates to narrow the pool. We are proceeding carefully and, individually and together, praying for God's guidance for clarity, wisdom and humility in completing this stage.

Pastoral Search Committee:

Joyce Stevos, Chair; Cindy Buxton, Herb Curtis, Connie Fitzelle, Amy Hubertus, Frank Lenox, Dick Shaw

**Congregational Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase**  
**Report of the Cemeteries Committee**  
**May 13, 2020**

Background - The Cemeteries Committee supervises three cemeteries: Old Fernwood and Tower Hill belong to the Society, and the Peckham Family Cemetery belongs to that family. The Tower Hill Cemetery, on the site of the first church building in the history of the Kingston Congregational Church, had its first burial in 1719 and its last one, Bernon E. Helme, in 1944. Although inactive since then, it is still open for burials. The Peckham Family Cemetery is restricted for use by members of that family, but is cared for by our committee in accordance with an agreement made with the late Dorothy Peckham who contributed \$5,000 to our endowment for that purpose. Old Fernwood is divided into two parts: the original section was given by Elisha Reynolds Potter in 1826 for use by members of this Society and of the church, and by people living within one mile of the church or of the cemetery. The extension of Old Fernwood, landscaped in the 1960's and put into use in the 1990's, was given by Herbert J. Wells in 1927 for use by members of this Society and of the church and their families.

2019 - 2020 Report - Chris Faella, caretaker for New Fernwood Cemetery, covers the routine maintenance at Old Fernwood and the Peckham Cemeteries. Scott Wallace continues to provide maintenance at the Tower Hill Cemetery.

We have many volunteers who work to maintain the beauty of our cemeteries. Tracy Heffron with the support of four of our young men will continue working at Old Fernwood.

During the past year (May 2019 - April 2020) the following death/interments took place: New section OF – William Clinton Metz 8-13-19 #113, Jason Davis 1-1-20, #222  
Old section OF – Andreas Holmsen 6-15-19 #485, Lilian Holmsen 2-10-20 #485  
Charley Sweeney's and Janice Test's burials will take place at a later time in the Old Section.

Our desire continues to have the cemeteries in every respect places of honor to the dead and of comfort to their relatives and friends. Lots remain available in both cemeteries with contributions to the endowment fund. Rates were raised on September 1, 2007 to \$600 for non-members and \$450 for members. The Committee will be reviewing rates this year. Reservations may be made for future use, and a number of families have elected to have monuments placed on their lots even many years in advance of actual use, thus easing the burden on the family at a time of great sorrow. All reserved lots continue to be held in ownership by the CSPP.

Respectfully submitted:

Cemetery Committee - Elizabeth McNab, Richard Shaw, Tracy Heffron, Judy Potter, and Jane Skogley

# **200 Years Ago!!!!**

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

### **Part 7 – The PSPP and CSPP**

Now we call it the Congregational Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase. In March of 1820 this Society was formed to build the church. In October 1820 by virtue of an “act to incorporate divers persons by the name of the Presbyterian Society in the Pettaquamscutt Purchase” the Rhode Island General Assembly gave its legal sanction to the banding together of a group of men residing in the neighborhood of Little Rest for the purpose of fostering the support of public worship. This charter to the church had been developed by 47 charter members (only 2 of whom were women - Mary Potter, wife of Elisha Reynolds Potter, Sr. and Hannah Potter, wife of Asa Potter who was Elisha’s brother). Its main functions were to hold in trust certain lands and buildings, maintain in repair the church building and grounds, and defray, in part, the minister’s salary by managing the rents of the Ministerial Lands.

It might be noted that Elisha Reynold Potter, Sr., although he never joined the church, donated the most money to fund the construction of the building. However, he was a major player in the PSPP, the secular arm of the congregational church that saw to the church’s welfare.

It was not until 1960 that property titles were changed from the CSPP. This happened in order to borrow and provide funds for the new construction (Fellowship Hall). At that time all contiguous property was transferred from the CSPP to the Kingston Congregational Church, Incorporated. Now only our Tower Hill and Old Fernwood Cemeteries plus some invested funds are under the jurisdiction of the Society.

Our Cemetery Committee remains under the auspices of the CSPP and meets yearly with the KCC’s Board of Trustees in May. An Annual Report is also given to our Church Council and distributed in the “Spire”. New members of KCC during the year are voted into membership in the CSPP.

### **Summer Office Hours**

The church office will be open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm from June 15<sup>th</sup> through Labor Day, September 7<sup>th</sup>. Regular office hours of Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, will resume the day after Labor Day on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Spire* Printing Schedule**

Please note that printing of the *Spire* will be suspended for July and August. The *Spire* will resume printing for the September issue. The deadline for September *Spire* articles is August 15<sup>th</sup>.

# Spring Gift Card Order Form

Our organization earns with every gift card purchased.

Order deadline: / /

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## Our Organization's Coordinator

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	\$25		
	\$100		
Barnes & Noble	\$5		
	\$10		
	\$25		
	\$100		
Best Buy	\$25		
	\$100		
	\$250		
Bath & Body Works	\$10		
	\$25		
Buffalo Wild Wings	\$10		
	\$25		
Domino's	\$10		
	\$25		
Foot Locker	\$25		
Macy's	\$25		
	\$100		
Outback Steakhouse/Bonefish Grill/Carrabba's/Fleming's Prime Steakhouse	\$10		
	\$25		
	\$50		
Target	\$10		
	\$25		
	\$50		
	\$100		
	\$250		
The Home Depot	\$10		
	\$25		
	\$100		
	\$500		
	\$1,000		
T.J. Maxx/ Marshalls/HomeGoods/ Homesense/Sierra	\$25		
	\$100		

	Denomination	Quantity	Total Cost
Starbucks	\$5		
	\$10		
	\$25		
	\$50		
Subway Restaurants	\$10		
	\$50		
Walmart	\$10		
	\$25		
	\$50		
	\$100		
	\$250		
Zappos.com	\$25		
	\$100		
Zaxbys	\$25		

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