

The Spire

From Your Pastor

December 2023

In Bible Study this week, one week before Thanksgiving and two weeks before Advent, we were talking about how our faith invites us to live “as if—.” Another word for that is “idealism.” Or, “trust.” The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews said “Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Our faith in God, our trust of God’s goodness available to us everyday and everywhere, helps us to live courageously into the unknown—the things we only can hope for, the things we cannot yet see. I have always loved Jim Wallis’ definition of faith: “Faith is believing despite the evidence, then watching the evidence change.” Living from a place of trust, faith, idealism, hope is a risky but rewarding way to live. Jesus says that over and over again in his teaching. We’re not sheltered from the world’s sorrows or struggles but we are given a deeper well from which to draw upon to meet them. That subtle shift from discouragement to gratitude, from cynicism or despair to hope and trust is what the life of faith is all about. We’re not denying reality; we’re looking straight into the eyes of reality and seeing Another there.

These holidays in which we are immersed—Thanksgiving, first, and soon Advent—invite us to look through the eyes of faith at our hurting world and see beauty and blessing even in the uncertainty. We cannot change the facts on the ground in Gaza, in Ukraine, in Sudan, in Yemen, or even, in many ways, in Rhode Island. But we can choose to believe that our prayers, our generosity, our hope, our kindnesses, our compassion, our advocacy can make a difference. Perhaps another opposite of faith besides cynicism is learned helplessness. Jesus constantly rejoiced over and praised the “faith” (read: hope and trust) of those who dared to reach out to him for help and wholeness. Jews, Gentiles, sinners, saints, children, widows: they dared to believe something could be different, that they would be accepted, that healing was possible (despite the evidence).

I hope and pray for you, for me, for us at KCC in this holy time of year, a deeper sense of God’s goodness and nearness such that we can risk trust and hope, that we can live “as if” the prayers we invoke for hope, peace, joy and love are effectual and themselves a dynamic response to the needs of the world. We light candles, we sing carols, we tell stories, we donate money, serve food, not because we are without doubt or fear, but because we are living with faith, living “as if—”, living with “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” And that, Jesus says it what saves us.

Blessed Advent to you!
Rev. Jan

This Advent in worship, we will again be using the beautiful resources from A Sanctified Art © to guide our Advent/Christmas/ Epiphany worship services and personal/shared devotions. The writers/artists/ musicians/ theologians at A Sanctified Art have prepared a seasonal series that traces significant encounters in Luke's Nativity story that show us how to find joy in the midst of our sometimes weary world. Below find an outline of our worship and devotional opportunities for these holy seasons about to unfold.

Personal and Shared Devotions: An Advent Devotional

"How Does a Weary World Rejoice?" Advent Devotional is available as either a printed or online resource. Divided into seven sections, from Advent 1 to the Baptism of Christ Sunday, dip into written reflections, art, poetry, music and journaling prompts to center your heart, soul and mind on the sacred Story that tells God's good news. If you prefer a printed, paper devotional, please email or call the church office and we will print "on demand." If you prefer an online devotional, use this link: <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/136123036/>

Adult Christian Education and Spirituality (ACES) for the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Seasons: You are invited to meet via Zoom on four Monday nights at 7pm as we share ideas and insights spurred by our personal reading of the (above) devotional. KCC "Zoom Room:" Meeting: 946 883 3427; PW: kingcong
Monday, Dec. 4: the First Week of Advent (pp. 3-10)

Monday, Dec. 11: the Second Week of Advent (pp. 11-18)

Monday, Dec. 18: the Third Week of Advent (pp. 19-26)

Monday, Jan. 8: Christmas and Epiphany Reflections (pp. 35-46)

Sundays in Advent/Christmas Season:

First Sunday of Advent: December 3 - Luke 1:1-23 & Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 How does a weary world rejoice? We acknowledge our weariness.

Second Sunday of Advent: December 10 - Luke 1:24-45 & Isaiah 40:1-11 How does a weary world rejoice? We find joy in connection.

Third Sunday of Advent: December 17 - Luke 1:57-66 & Psalm 126 How does a weary world rejoice? We allow ourselves to be amazed.

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 24 (morning service) - Luke 1:46-55 and Luke 1:67-80
How does a weary world rejoice? We sing stories of hope. Also, the debut of our Chimes Choir! And Church School presentation: "A Very Special Child" Christmas Drama

Christmas 1 Sunday: December 31 - Luke 2:21-38

How does a weary world rejoice? We root ourselves in ritual.



Special Services:

The Longest Night Service, Wednesday, Dec. 20, 7 pm in the Sanctuary (no livestream): come let the stillness and quiet embrace your weariness and feed your hope. A time for remembering our weary world in prayer and holding up the "light that shines in the darkness."

Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24, 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary (no livestream): The Babe is born! The angels sing! The Good News for all people is told! Emmanuel is here! God is with us!

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

December's Deacon of the Month is Frank Lenox. (fmlexox@gmail.com)

Saturday, December 2nd 2023 Kingston Village Christmas Fair

This year, the South Kingstown 300-year anniversary event calendar will wrap up with the Kingston Village Christmas Fair. We expect a wide audience from the area to visit and welcome in the 2023 Holiday Season! Come stroll the village and visit our unique blend of community groups and small businesses, each offering varied opportunities to celebrate this festive season. See all the activities happening throughout the village at <https://www.kingstonvillagefair.org>.

- Women's Fellowship will be hosting a charity fundraiser from 9am to 1pm, with Bake Sale items, handmade fabric bags, and Christmas Greens and Advent Wreaths
- The Fellowship Board will be hosting a warming soup and salad luncheon from 11am - 1pm, for \$5.

All proceeds from the fundraiser will be donated by Women's Fellowship to local charities in 2024. See Michelle Girasole or Cindy Anderson to help out.

Winter Soup and Salad Luncheon Saturday, December 2, 2023

The KCC Board of Fellowship invites one and all to a winter soup luncheon in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 2, 2023 from 11:00-1:00. If you are out and about at the Kingston Village Winter Fair, shopping for greens, or purchasing cookies and baked goods from the Women's Fellowship, come take a break with us and enjoy delicious hot soup and salad, with a beverage and hot chocolate, for just \$5.00. We look forward to seeing you there!

KCC Tree Trimming December 3rd

Come join the Fellowship Board as we decorate our enormous Christmas Tree in Fellowship Hall following Sunday worship on December 3rd. There will be ornament making for all ages, advent wreath sales, door wreath and greenery sales, tasty treats and hot cocoa.

Christmas Offering

Your Board of Missions collects money each year, through the Christmas offering, to support organizations which help people in need. This year we have chosen three organizations which provide food to those who are hungry. The first is local, the RI Community Food Bank. More Rhode Island families than ever are in need of food assistance. The second is national, Blessings in a backpack, which fills the backpacks of children in need with food for the weekend. These children get meals at school during the week, but there may not be enough food at home on the weekend. This helps fill the gap. The third is the World Central Kitchen. This organization focuses on providing food relief in the wake of natural disasters. They also respond to emergency food needs for refugees from the war in Ukraine and more recently in Gaza, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt in the wake of the escalating conflict. These organizations make a real difference in people's lives. Please consider supporting them through the KCC Christmas offering this year. Thank you for your generosity.

Gift Cards for the Jonnycake Center

The Board of Missions will be collecting gift cards for the Jonnycake Center November 26th and December 3rd and 10th. Gift cards will give families in need the opportunity to shop for Christmas gifts for their children. If you purchase gift cards from SCRIP you will be giving twice, once to Jonnycake families and again to KCC through the SCRIP program. Thank you!

Join us at Kingston Congregational Church

Sunday, 6:00 p.m.

December 17th*

**Note: Normally the last Sunday of each month,
our last two in 2023 are earlier, due to the holidays.*



We look forward to offering warm hospitality to anyone in the community that would enjoy a free, fresh-cooked meal. Hope to see you there!

Questions, call the church office: 401-783-5330

New Member Orientation

On Saturday, January 20, Rev. Jan and church representatives will hold a New Member Orientation from 10:00 to Noon, at the church. Anyone who would like to become a full member of Kingston Congregational Church is welcome to attend. At this orientation we will get to know one another, the church and its mission better. Participants will learn more about our history and organization, our current ministry priorities and our United Church of Christ denomination. The goal is to help new members to feel fully equipped for and warmly welcomed into ministry with us at KCC. Please RSVP to Rev. Jan by calling the church office (401) 783-5330 or email her at revjan@kingconchurch.org.



From the Director of Christian Education

I personally want to Thank Everyone for the successful Trunk or Treat Event held on Sunday, October 29th on a very rainy and cold afternoon.

The trunk decorators did a fabulous job decorating considering the weather. A special thanks to those who helped pass out treats as well as those who donated candy.

We could not have done this without All of those who helped support me.

There were 13 trunks decorated and we had about 30 treaters! Two of the decorated trunks were unaffiliated with our church and one car of treaters came from North Providence.

Also, thanks to those who provided the Community Dinner. It was wonderful to come out of the rain and cold to eat a warm delicious dinner.

Another Thank You to Everyone who has participated in our MESSY CHURCH program. WE cannot have done this without YOU!

EVERYONE'S SUPPORT MEANS THE WORLD TO ME SO THANK YOU!

UPCOMING:

CHRISTMAS SKIT by our children and youth shown at the 9:30 am service on December 24th

If you are looking for a different way to keep Advent this year, The Mission and Social Justice Board invites you to practice this "Reverse Advent Calendar," contributing a non-perishable item for donation each day of Advent and then bringing in your box on Christmas Eve (Sunday, December 24) morning service for blessing and celebration.

For Local Food Banks
REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR
for each day of Advent

- 
- Dec. 3 - Box of Cereal
 - Dec. 4 - Bottle of Dish Liquid
 - Dec. 5 - Canned Soup
 - Dec. 6 - Bar of Soap
 - Dec. 7 - Package of Pasta
 - Dec. 8 - Canned Meat/Fish
 - Dec. 9 - A Toothbrush
 - Dec. 10 - Package of Teabags
 - Dec. 11 - Jar of Pasta Sauce
 - Dec. 12 - Canned Tomatoes
 - Dec. 13 - Canned Vegetables
 - Dec. 14 - Package of Lentils or Beans
 - Dec. 15 - Laundry Soap
 - Dec. 16 - Canned Fruit/Fruit Cups
 - Dec. 17 - Package of crackers
 - Dec. 18 - Powdered Milk/Protein Drink
 - Dec. 19 - Bag of Coffee
 - Dec. 20 - Tube of Toothpaste
 - Dec. 21 - Bottle of Shampoo
 - Dec. 22 - Packet of Rice
 - Dec. 23 - Can of Baked Beans
 - Dec. 24 - Chocolate Bar/Treat

Bring items to church on Christmas Eve morning, Sunday, December 24 for donation and celebration!

Anyone who would like to give a Christmas Poinsettia in memory of a loved one is requested to complete this form.

Please return this form with your payment to the church office or place in the collection plate by December 17th.

The cost per Poinsettia is \$15.00.

I would like to purchase _____ poinsettias at \$15.00 each for a total amount of \$_____.

Given by _____ Date_____

Please choose one sentiment per poinsettia:

"In memory of _____
_____"

or

"In thanksgiving of _____
_____"

or

"In celebration of _____
_____"

Please check one:

- ☐ *I would like to take my poinsettia following the service on Christmas Eve.*
- ☐ *I would like to take my poinsettia following the morning service on December 31st.*

THE SPIRE

December 2023

**Kingston Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
2610 Kingstown Road
Kingston, RI 02881**

Return Service Requested

Dated Material – Please Deliver Promptly

Mission Statement of the Kingston Congregational Church

**“We are a Christian Church that supports each person's spiritual journey
through the communal pursuit of worship, learning, and service.”**

(Voted on and approved by the Congregation on April 27, 2008)

Worship and Church School

9:30 am

Ministers

All members

Senior Pastor The Rev. Jan Gregory-Charpentier

Interim Music Director

Eden Casteel

Church School Director

Cindy Dowgiallo

Communications Coordinator

Jillian Seibold

Office Administrator

Shirley M. Schock

Sexton

Andy Cournoyer



Donate

**Don't forget to bring your
canned goods
on December 3rd,
Communion Sunday.**

Telephone: (401) 783-5330

Email: office@kingconchurch.org

Web address: www.kingconchurch.org

Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/kingconchurch

**Deadline for January *Spire*
Articles is December 15th.**

Office Hours: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Monday - Thursday



The Jonnycake Center For Hope accepts year-round food donations and is NOW ACCEPTING gift donations for

Hope for the Holidays

Serving 500 local children

SUGGESTED DONATIONS

Gift cards to Amazon, Walmart, VISA, Wakefield Mall retailers.

Clothing including pajamas, coats, sweats for teens, socks and undergarments for all ages.

Other gifts such as toys, games, sports equipment, beauty products, legos, and art supplies



Please deliver **UNWRAPPED** donations by December 15th to:

22 Kersey Rd, Peace Dale
Monday – Friday 9am to 4pm
holidays@jonnycakecenter.org
789-1559 ext. 15



Prefer to make a donation?
Scan the code to support
Hope for the Holidays now.

 DECEMBER 1 On a piece of paper, write a list of every-thing—big and small—that brings you joy. Tape your list to your fridge or display it somewhere you will see it daily.	 DECEMBER 2 Take a photo inspired by the word, “Joy.” Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see. Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice	 DECEMBER 3 On a piece of paper, write down everything that makes you weary. Then, rip the paper into small pieces as a way to release it all and offer it to God.	 DECEMBER 4 Write about a time joy surprised you. What was unexpected about that experience?	 DECEMBER 5 Breathe deeply and pray. With every exhale, release something that makes you weary. With every inhale, ask God for something that brings you joy.
 DECEMBER 6 After nightfall, spend some time looking up at the stars. How do you feel? Offer a prayer to God.	 DECEMBER 7 Write, text, or call someone who might be feeling weary. Tell them, “I’ve been thinking about you.”	 DECEMBER 8 Look at the list you wrote on December 1st (the things that bring you joy). Do something on that list.	 DECEMBER 9 Take a photo inspired by the word, “Connection.” Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see. Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice	 DECEMBER 10 Bake, cook, or eat something that fills you with delight.
 DECEMBER 11 Read the poem, [i carry your heart with me (i carry it in)] by e. e. cummings. Dedicate the poem to someone you know.	 DECEMBER 12 Write a kind note for a stranger to find. Place the note in a public place: a park bench, on a car windshield, in a mailbox, etc. Fill the note with a message you would like to hear such as, “You are loved.”	 DECEMBER 13 Make a donation to an organization doing needed work in your local community. If you can’t give financially, read about what the organization is currently working on and consider how you can participate.	 DECEMBER 14 Write a letter to a loved one who has passed on. Tell them what you love and miss about them.	 DECEMBER 15 Write, text, or call someone who brings you joy. Tell them, “I appreciate you.”
 DECEMBER 16 Read the poem, “Don’t Hesitate” by Mary Oliver. Reflect on how you might savor love’s “plenty” today.	 DECEMBER 17 Go on a walk in a familiar place. As often as you can, stop and look up. Pay attention to all the details you usually miss.	 DECEMBER 18 Read about and reflect on the word, “Attunement.” What does it look like for you to practice attunement this season?	 DECEMBER 19 Write about the last time you were truly amazed. How did you feel?	 DECEMBER 20 Take a few minutes to look at some of the images online of the cosmos captured by NASA and the Hubble telescope. How do you feel? Offer a prayer to God.
 DECEMBER 21 Listen to or sing the song, “O Holy Night.” What gives you a “thrill of hope”?	 DECEMBER 22 Look at the list you wrote on December 1st (the things that bring you joy). Do something on that list.	 DECEMBER 23 Take a photo inspired by the word, “Amazement.” Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see. Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice	 DECEMBER 24 Reflect on 3 things you are deeply grateful for. Offer a prayer of gratitude to God.	 DECEMBER 25 Read the poem, “i thank You God for most this amazing” by e. e. cummings. Offer it as a prayer.
 DECEMBER 26 Ask someone who is older than you what gives them hope. Then ask someone who is younger than you what gives them hope. What did you learn?	 DECEMBER 27 Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Slowly scan every part of your body, starting with your toes and moving slowly all the way up to the top of your head. Notice how each part of your body feels. Notice where your body holds weariness. Continue to breathe deeply and do a body scan again, this time inviting each part of your body to hold joy.	 DECEMBER 28 Read the poem, “Touched By An Angel” by Maya Angelou. Consider where in your life love has arrived.	 DECEMBER 29 Look at the list you wrote on December 1st (the things that bring you joy). Do something on that list.	 DECEMBER 30 Take a photo inspired by the word, “Hope.” Text it to a friend or post it online for others to see. Tag us! @sanctifiedart #howdoesawearyworldrejoice  DECEMBER 31 Reflect on the past year. What are the moments and memories that are filled with joy?

ADVENT CALENDAR

Daily prompts for practicing joy in a weary world



How does a weary world rejoice?