The Spire

From Your Pastor

April 2007

The Eighth Last Word from the Cross

If you grew up in the church going to Good Friday Services, you know there were SEVEN last words. Even then, that's a composite from multiple gospel accounts. And think about it: how did any even hear those last words, some barely whispered, a few with head facing heavenward? The gospel record probably resulted from dozens of eyewitnesses sharing their stories with one another, which worked their way into the gospels a generation later.

I'm going to guess, based on a lifetime's study of this man, that there was an EIGHTH last word from the cross which was not reported, because it was heard only by God. I also base this notion on the opportunities I have had to be with people of faith at their life's end. I particularly remember one woman who wrote her own obituary, in the first person, where she wrote about what was important to her and what she wanted people to remember. The last words of her obituary concluded, *"Thank you God and all. Connie."*

Those are the sentiments of many people of faith in their final moments: gratitude. That's what I would guess was Jesus' eighth word from the cross. He would have said, *"Thank you God and all."*

That's what I hope will be my final heart's response, to say *"Thank you."* May you and I live so that it's not just our final word, but our everyday word, spoken as feet hit the floor in the morning and as they tuck in at night.

– John Zehring

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY	April 1, 9:30 a.m. Message: *Feel valued.* Communion. We will sing *The Palms.*
MAUNDY THURSDAY	April 5,6:00 p.m. Simple Supper and Service of Tennebrae (scripture readings) and Communion at the Table; Fellowship Hall
GOOD FRIDAY	April 6, noon. Worship Service in the Fireplace Room. Judy Scott officiating, Canna Falby pianist.
EASTER VIGIL	April 7, Come enjoy the peaceful setting of our sanctuary for prayer or reflection. Let the aroma of the lilies penetrate your senses and bring you closer to God. 30 minute time slots are available from 6 pm until 6 am. More than one person/couple/ or family may sign up for the same slot.
EASTER	April 8, Services at 9 and 11 a.m. Music spectacular (including guest instrumentalists), child friendly, fast moving. Family Sunday (no church school so teachers can be in worship).

For your Holy Week meditation:

SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST:

(1) (Luke 23:34) And Jesus said, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*"

(2) (Luke 23:43) And he said to him, *"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

(3) (John 19:26) When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, *"Woman, behold, your son!"* Then saith he to the disciple, *"Behold thy mother!"* And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

(4) (Matthew 27:46; also Mark 15:34) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* that is, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

(5) (John 19:28) After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), *"I thirst."*

(6) (John 19:30) When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, *"It is finished,"* and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

(7) (Luke 23:46) Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, *"Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"* And having said this he breathed his last.

Other Sundays in April

April 15: Casual Sunday (come in relaxed clothes). Kevin Munroe preaching.
Message : "*A Vision of Judgment Day"*

April 22: Blue Jean Sunday. New Member Meeting. Message: *"You Raise Me Up."*

April 29: Quarterly meeting. New member reception. Message: *"In Celebration of Creation"*

April's Deacon of the Month is Frank Lenox.

Would you like to join the Kingston Congregational Church?

A meeting will be held **April 22** following the worship service for those wishing to consider membership in the Church. Please enjoy some brief refreshments at Coffee Hour and then come to the Fireplace Room (directions available at The Welcome Table in Fellowship Hall) to meet with John Zehring and a member of the Board of Deacons.

Welcome *to new visitors and to old friends.* ***Welcome*** *to grandparents, to mothers, fathers, single people and children.* ***Welcome*** *to people of all colors, cultures, abilities, and sexual orientation, to young and old, to believers and questioners, and welcome to questioning believers.* ***Welcome*** *to all who have no church home, need strength, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. We joyfully and unconditionally welcome you. We hope you find peace and inspiration in our service.* ***YOU are welcome here!***

(Voted on and approved by the congregation January 28, 2007)

Confirmands who became members of KCC on March 18:

David Alemany
John Alm
Lindsy Marie Bissonnette
Blake Carpentier
Patrick Franco
Morganne Larimer
Harrison Lee Matthew
Marissa Keener McMahon
Andrew David Messner
Hope Godfrey Nelson
Katelyn Richardson
Cameron Robert Schneck
Dennis John Tierney III
Whitney Washburn

In Sympathy

The Congregation extends its heartfelt condolences to the family of Paula Miller who died on March 6th. A celebration of her life was held in the Sanctuary on March 12th.

The Congregation also extends condolences to the family of Fred Votta who died on March 15th. A service was held in the sanctuary on March 24th.

The Congregation also extends condolences to the family of Ellen Henry who died on March 18th. A service is planned to be held in the sanctuary on March 31st at 1:00 pm.

Our prayers go to the Bob Steiner family on the loss of Lee Anne Steiner who died on February 16th. She was a member of KCC and an active participant in the early sixties.

CONGRATULATIONS to Judy Scott!

Judy was examined by the Church and Ministry Committee of the Rhode Island Conference of the UCC for her ordination examination, which voted that she is "fit for ministry in the United Church of Christ" and approved her to proceed to an Ecclesiastical Council, to be held at the Kingston Congregational Church at a date soon to be arranged. All churches in the Conference will be invited to send delegates to the Council to examine Judy and to vote to ordain her, pending an approved call to ministry.

The Church and Ministry Committee also granted Judy a license to perform all functions of ministry at the Kingston Congregational Church during the summer weeks when John Zehring is on Sabbatical, at which time she and Kevin Munroe will be Summer Pastors, under the supervision of The Rev. Ray Bradley, a long-time pastor in the Conference.

Reminder to Progressive Dinner Participants

The Annual Progressive Supper will take place on April 21, from 5:00 to 10:00. Enjoy appetizers at one home, salad at the next, entrée at the third and fabulous desserts in the Fellowship Hall.

If you have any questions or for more information, please contact Cindy Dowgiallo, 783-6452; acld98@mindspring.com or Ann Lenox, 295-5805; adlenox@hotmail.com.

Note from the Board of Trustees

The repairs to the flat roofs on both sides of the Fellowship Hall, in the areas over the kitchen and over the two bathrooms, have been completed. There was extensive damage to the roof over the kitchen. The total cost of the project was $19,400.00. Donations to the roof repair were approximately $13,000.00 and the remainder came from the Trustees' account. The good news is that no moneys had to be taken from the KCC endowment fund. The Board of Trustees wishes to thank all those that made a donation.

Dick Shaw, Chair
Board of Trustees

Laptop Wanted

Since January, the members who count the weekly contributions have been adding that contribution data directly into the Church Windows program in the main church computer. In order to make this process more efficient, the Trustees are hoping that the money counters could have a dedicated portable computer available for entering this contribution data. If anyone reading this message has a laptop which he/she would be willing to contribute to the church for this purpose, such a contribution would be greatly appreciated. Please contact the church office or Dick Shaw, Chair of the Trustees. Thank you.

Dance Lessons at KCC

DANCING WITH THE STARS?? We're all potential stars at KCC!
Latin/Ballroom dance classes are coming soon to KCC to help raise some money for our church. Please come for the fun, recreation, exercise, and have a few laughs. Sue Davis is our instructor. She has been taking ballroom/Latin/swing/tango lessons for years, but has been doing some form of dance since the first grade!

Dates: Sundays, April 15, 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20
Time: 4:00-5:30 will include warm up and practice time
Fee: $30 per person for the 6 week series- NO PARTNER NECESSARY
Place: Fellowship Hall, KCC
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
Classes will focus on Latin favorites – merengue, rumba, salsa, cha-cha (other requests will be given serious consideration!)

Questions to Sue Davis, 789-5295. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall.
See you on the dance floor!

The Kingston Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
Sunday, January 28, 2007

Moderator, Angelo Mendillo, called the meeting to order at 10:55 AM. A quorum was declared with over 56 members attending.

INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED: ***Agenda for Annual meeting; Minutes for Quarterly Meeting, 10-22-06; January 2007 Annual meeting KCC Treasurer's Report; KCC Treasurer's Report for January, 2006 through December, 2006; KCC 2007 Budget; Welcome Statement; Safe Church Policy Summary Statement, 1-28-07; and, KCC Annual Report 2006 including Ballot for 2007.***

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by A. Mendillo, Seconded and Passed, (M/S/P), to accept the Agenda for today's meeting reversing the order of items number 3 and 4.

TREASURER'S REPORT BEN SMITH

Expenses have been controlled making a surplus of ca. $10,00-15,000 possible. These figures may change but there will be a surplus. The $20,000 roof repair was paid for by $13,000 donated to the roof fund and the balance taken from building and grounds maintenance funds which were under-spent. No money was taken from the endowment. The endowment balance is $1,200,000. Ben asked if there were questions about the *Fund Raisers Income* line item. There were none.

M/S/P to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF QUARTERLY MEETING OCTOBER 22, 2006

M/S/P to accept the minutes of the KCC Quarterly Meeting, October 22, 2006 as presented.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT KEN KERMES

Ken thanked the Stewardship Committee and welcomed the new committee members Carolyn Henn and Michael Shea. He noted that in the Treasurer's report for January-December, 2006 the YTD 2006 pledge total is $269,289. For 2007 we now have pledges of $253,000 in hand and total pledges may reach $270,000. We have experienced a slide in the number of pledge units over the last 2-3 years from a three year average of 225 to 183 so far this year. It is hoped that the total number of pledge units for 2007 will reach 190. Ken asked, "How do we address the decline?" and thanked the congregation for their support.

DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF A 2007 BUDGET RICHARD SHAW

It was moved by P. Schubert and seconded to adopt the 2007 KCC Budget. Discussion followed. R. Shaw explained the budget process and identified the changes that the Trustees made to the proposed budget, presented to the congregation in October, in order to present, today, a balanced budget based on 2007 pledge income. Mark Tortolani presented ideas for fund raiser plans including a Silent Auction and Christmas Bazaar. Other suggestions were the sale of furniture, dishes, etc., and use of eBay. Concerns were raised about *Pulpit Supply,* the Sunday school rooms being cool, whether we have an accurate count of the number of members we have, why the number of pledge units is down and do we do exit interviews. The Pulpit Supply money, $3000, will cover pulpit supply during John's sabbatical this summer. The Deacons review the membership lists. Pastor Zehring stated that we do not give exit interviews. Some people do indicate why they are leaving and there are others who leave without our knowing why.

M/S/P to accept the 2007 Budget as presented today and approved by Council on Jan. 7, '07.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT: ELECTION SUE KERMES

Sue presented the Ballot for 2007. She noted that the committee sought to include new people and expressed appreciation to all who said yes. There were no additional nominations from the floor.

M/S/P to accept the 2007 Ballot as presented.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT PAUL SCHUBERT

Paul recognized and thanked Council members, our Staff and Pastor Zehring. He expressed appreciation for the comfort level he experienced at Council meetings and for the opportunity he had to learn and grow. He then welcomed Marc Ferrelli, the incoming president, offered to help with the transition and stated that in 2007 he will help with the Strategic Planning ad hoc committee. The moderator then thanked Paul for his service.

OLD BUSINESS There was no old business

NEW BUSINESS SAFE CHURCH POLICY and WELCOME STATEMENT

1. The ***Safe Church Policy***, approved by Council on November 29, 2006, was presented as an informational item and attention was brought to the one page summary in the handouts. There are copies of the policy in the church office and on the KCC website. D. Findlay expressed her interest and experience in writing such policies and asked if the congregation would get to vote on this policy. The answer was that, since a congregational vote is not necessary, suggested changes should be brought to the chair of the Board of Christian Education.

2. The ***Welcome Statement,*** approved by Council on August 23, 2006, was presented, at the request of Council, for a congregational vote of approval. A motion was made by Paul Schubert and seconded by Jacque Piez that the congregation approve the *Welcome Statemen*t as presented in today's package. Jim Findlay asked what is going to be done with the statement. Paul referred to the note at the bottom of the Agenda stating where the policy might be used: the internet, the wall in the front vestibule of the church, and the cover of the KCC Annual Report. Paul said the statement could also be in the Bulletin and that the intent is to get the word out to the community. Ken Kermes asked Pastor Zehring to give us his perspective on what the statement means. John answered that churches have a wide range of what they require for membership, for example, some churches require a vote of the members. He noted that we are on the other end of the spectrum. *YOU* means you.

M/S/P to approve the Welcome Statement as presented.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

The Moderator thanked Shirley Schock, Jim Ross, Paul Schubert, Richard Shaw and Martha Hartman for their assistance in preparing materials for congregational meetings and noted that copies of the 2007 Budget were available two weeks before the meeting as promised. Doris Findlay thanked Angelo on behalf of the congregation for his dedicated work as Moderator.

M/S/P to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 PM with a closing prayer led by Pastor Zehring

Respectfully submitted,

Martha E. Hartman, Clerk

Investment Committee

Since the Church's Endowment was mentioned at the Planned Giving Workshop held after church Sunday February 25, 2007 and in John's February *Spire* letter, I thought it would be helpful to provide some insight into the KCC Endowment Fund.

The Endowment is meant to exist in perpetuity with periodic payments, usually semiannual, for support of the Church and its programs, while maintaining or increasing the purchasing power of the Fund's assets. The Endowment funds are managed by the Investment Committee, which reports its activities to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. In addition, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees is a member of the Investment Committee and attends all meetings. The Investment Committee is a standing committee of the Church and is composed of approximately eight members who have a diverse mix of professional and private investment experience.

Management of the Endowment follows a "prudent investor" philosophy. To keep management costs low the Endowment portfolio is held at The Vanguard Group and is invested in low cost Vanguard index mutual funds or ETFs (exchange traded funds). The funds are balanced across the three major asset classes: stocks, bonds and money market funds. In addition, the funds are diversified within the stock and bond asset classes. Large company, small company and international stocks along with REITs (commercial real estate) are held in the stock allocation and a variety of bonds, predominately treasuries are held in the bond allocation. In order to maintain or increase the purchasing power of the Endowment, 5% of the trailing 3-year average value of the Endowment is recommended for distribution to the Church's budget each year.

Taking the previous considerations into account and adjusting for gifts, bequests and a 5% annual rate of distribution, the KCC Endowment has had a very satisfactory return over the past 17 years, December 31, 1989 through December 31, 2006. Over that 17 year time period the Endowment returned a 10.0% annual rate of return versus 9.5% for a balanced index of 60% stocks/40% bonds. Since viewing things on a percentage basis can sometimes be a rather sterile process and percentages don't pay the bills, it may be more informative to view the return from a different perspective. On 12/31/89 the portfolio had a value of **$268,000** and over the next 17 years the Endowment received gifts and bequests of **$361,000** for a total of **$629,000.** Over that same 17-year time period distributions in the amount of **$740,000** were made for support, **$111,000 more** than the starting value plus all of the additions. On 12/31/06 the Endowment had a value of **$1,252,000**, over four and on half times the starting value. In 1990 the Endowment paid out $21,000 for support, in 2006 it paid out $54,000 and in 2007 the plan is to distribute $57,000.

Hopefully this letter is enlightening and conveys not only the purpose, management and return of the Endowment but also the value it has added to the Church and it's programs over the years. In addition, I would hope you view it as a growing perpetuity, in that a gift to the Endowment will benefit the Church now and well into the future. We ask; if you are considering making a gift to the Church or including the Church in your will, please consider making the KCC Endowment Fund the benefactor. Thank You.

Investment Committee: Jim Aukerman, Earl Chambers, David Deuel, John Ferry, Richard Geisler, Sue Macy, Richard Shaw (Chair of Trustees) and Nelson Weiderman.

Submitted by: Richard Geisler
February 28, 2007

Enrico Garzilli's *Michelangelo*

Friday, April 27 and Saturday, April 28 at 8pm
at the Providence Performing Arts Center

Order tickets online at www.ppacri.org or call 401-421-ARTS
Tickets $25-$60

Habitat for Humanity

Many thanks to those who so generously provided lunches for the recent work crew.

They were: Nancy Barth, David Barwise, Courtney Beauchamp, Alaina Coffey, Joanne Gyorgy, Dorie Gerhardt, Christy Sheehy

If any of you teens need credit for community service, this is a wonderful chance for you (perhaps with a friend) to make sandwiches for Habitat. I will be glad to verify your hours.

Carolyn Barwise
783-7954

Board of Missions

Our Board of Missions is beginning a video and DVD library for use by church members and friends. If you would like to advance the mission of our church by sharing suitable materials, you may leave any donations in the church office for cataloging. Please label items.

Examples are "An Inconvenient Truth" and "Troubled Waters."

A reminder: On Communion Sundays non-perishable food items are welcome and should be placed in either one of the baskets at the entrance to the sanctuary. Your gifts will be shared with local food pantries. Thank you for remembering the hungry in our midst.

The Board of Missions Needs You

We are looking for 4-6 people (more would be fine) to help with Local Missions! You could work on donations for the Jonnycake Center, Welcome House Meals, Habitat for Humanity, other local agencies... I just learned of another organization being formed to deal with local hunger/food insecurity. There was an exciting meeting in South Kingstown Wednesday night with all of the above agencies, local churches, soup kitchens (yes, South County has them), other food pantries, South County C.A.P., the South County Children's Coalition, URI students and teachers, local teachers, and other interested people in the community. The group gathered to discuss hunger and food insecurity in South Kingstown. This group will be forming some smaller groups to work on specific issues. All of these are opportunities for our church community to make a difference in the local community. Please call or E-mail if you would like to get involved in any one of these programs.

Cindy Buxton (Board of Missions/Social Justice) 789-3744; cabuxton@cox.net

Celebrate Earth Day

KCC's Environmental Task Force would like to encourage YOU to commit to one or more ways to celebrate Earth Day – today and everyday!! There are many activities happening on Saturday, April 21 and Sunday, April 22. Check your newspaper for listings. There are events for children/families at Roger Williams Zoo and at RI Audibon. If you would like to participate in a clean-up campaign, go to www.dem.ri.gov/earthday and there is a listing of where and when and who to contact: Narragansett, Exeter, and others.

Be sure to spend time outdoors and be grateful for what beauty is around you! You might take time for a walk or visit an area new to you, plant flowers, go bird watching, canoeing or kayaking, read/learn something about nature you didn't already know! You also could spend time on the computer BUT write a letter for nature/environment … go to biogemsinfo@nrdc.org and it's easy to send letters to help save endangered areas or learn from their educational information. There also is SaveOurEnvironment.org or www.care2.com or www.enn.com (Environmental News Network) or you can search for a site that connects you to some aspect about Planet Earth. You can make a difference.

Talk to your children and to each other about daily routines of: turning off the lights, powering down, buying energy bulbs, driving efficiently, using less water, not littering, and following the 4 R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, and respect our planet!!

Women's Fellowship and Church World Service

Thank you to everyone who has contributed money – so far we have collected about $500. *Donations are still needed*. Envelopes marked CWS are in the pews and can be put it in the offering plate or mailed. Please make checks payable to KCC Women's Fellowship. Thank you for the donations to the Kids Kits – we have all the items needed. The children will assemble them on Palm Sunday. Thank you to knitters of baby sweaters and to sewers of school bags – great job!

Tuesday, April 10, 1:30 – 4:00. We will be setting up for the next morning. Work involves getting all materials out, undoing wrappers and taking tags off clothes and towels. Any help is appreciated. Many hands make light work!

Wednesday, April 11, 9:00 am. Our April Meeting. We will enjoy a delicious breakfast together and then assemble the kits! It's fun, it's easy, and it's all for a good cause!!

Sunday, April 15 during coffee hour, join the "bucket/box brigade" and help move the boxes from the stage to the van.

South County Church Women United

The South County Unit of Church Women United will hold its 38th annual retreat on Saturday, April 21st from 9 am to 4 pm at the Shaub Lodge, Canonicus Conference Center, 54 Exeter Road, Exeter. The leader will be Dorothy Levesque centering on the theme, "Coping with Change Creatively". For 25 years Dorothy was the Director of the Ministry of Loss for the Diocese of Providence. She is a noted retreat leader and facilitator. The cost for the day is $35.00 including lunch. Checks must be received by April 14th, payable to South County Church Women United and sent to Diane Manning, 26 Manning Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882; 789-6185. All women are invited.

S.P.N.M.

Volunteer Recognition and Election of Board Members for SOUTH PROVIDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRIES will be held Tuesday, May 1st at 6 pm for an International Pot Luck Supper at Phillips Memorial Baptist Church, 565 Pontiac Ave., Cranston. If you have volunteered, you are invited. If you are curious, you are invited but not to vote. Several of our KingCong members are on the slate including Linda Mendillo as Secretary, returning Board member, David Deuel, and new members, Claudia Smith and Jim Findlay. We'll share transportation so do come!

Gardeners do help out: GROW A ROW in your garden for those receiving food this summer at SOUTH PROVIDENCE NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTRIES. Fresh produce makes such a difference to one's health and enjoyment of eating in the summer. We would appreciate your help. Recently the fishermen's coop also provided fish which went to numerous pantries in the state. Let us know about your surplus: Call Doris Findlay at 783-2254 or the RI Food Bank, 942-6325. Many thanks!

Junior High Fellowship

Game/ Pizza Nite , April 1st from 5-7PM.
This Pizza nite will be with the Sr. High Fellowship. Sixth graders are welcome.
For information call Sue Macy 294-6513

There will be an informational meeting on Sunday, May 6th for parents of children currently in the 5th and 6th grade to discuss Junior High Fellowship. Please grab a cup of coffee and meet the Rev. Zehring and members of the Christian Education Board in the Fireplace Room immediately following the service.

Thank you

Dear Friends and Members of KCC,

On behalf of my stepfather Bob Miller, my entire family and myself, I would like to extend my most sincere gratitude to John Zehring for his tribute to my mother, Paula Miller at her “Celebration of Life” Service on March 12. Thanks also to Enrico for his beautiful music and solo and to all of you in the congregation for your cards, prayers and concern as well as your attendance at the calling hours and funeral service. We were truly blessed to have Paula as our mother, wife and friend and greatly appreciate all the love and support we have received from the congregation during this difficult time. I know that Mom is smiling down from heaven, grateful for all of it. Thanks again and God bless all of you.

Sincerely,

Carla Entwistle, Bob Miller and Family