The Spire

From Your Pastor

December 2009

Dear Friends,

Well, it's the holidays and here we go again. Between now and December twenty-fifth people in the United States will spend almost $438 billion dollars. (National Retailers Association) Despite the economic downturn Americans continue to spend at holiday time. The average American family will take several months to pay off holiday credit bills, even though most families will spend less this year and seek more bargains and discounted items.

If you and your family have considered getting off the "holiday hoopla" train, here are some ideas to get you started:

- Pool gift giving by selecting ONE name and setting a spending limit for a gift.
- Take the difference between the cost of the one gift and the amount you usually spend and give it to the charity of your choice.
- Purchase gifts through SERRV or other sustainable market places.
- Give a gift through Heifer Project (www.Heifer.org).
- Choose a charity as a family and make a donation of time or money.
- Don't buy war toys or violent games/videos.

Observe the Season of Advent. The four weeks before Christmas are, in our Christian tradition, a time of preparation. Read the prophet Isaiah (particularly Chapters 40-55) and consider the promises of the coming Messiah. The gift of Jesus Christ is the promise of one who reshapes the priorities of the world and invites us to a new way of life that puts the poor, the lost, the last and the lonely in the center of our concern. Advent is a time to consider how we live and how we might live as we receive Christ.

Join the Advent Conspiracy (www.adventconspiracy.org) and dare to believe that Christmas can still change the world.

Stepping out of the "holiday rush" and into the rhythm of Advent is a challenge to be sure. Advent invites us to a counter cultural rhythm of non consumption and prayerful preparation for the One who is the author of peace, joy and justice.

Advent and Christmas Blessings to you all!

With gratitude for our shared ministry:
Rev. Patricia L. Liberty, Interim Senior Minister

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)

December's Deacon of the Month is Mike McMahon.

In Sympathy

The congregation expresses deepest condolences to Nina Gowell and family on the death of John Gowell who died on October 26th. A service was held in the sanctuary on October 29th.

Hope for the Holidays
A Worship Service for those who are
Sad, struggling, grieving or in the midst of change
Sunday, December 13, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
In the sanctuary at KCC

Christmas Offering

"What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace." -Agnes M. Pharo.

This year's Christmas offering will be divided among three charities:

- The Welcome House (Peace Dale)

A shelter which provides transitional & supported permanent housing for homeless residents in Washington County.
(welcomehouseofsouthcounty.org)

- The Jonnycake Center (Peace Dale)

This center operates an emergency food pantry for families in need & also a retail "thrift" store for those residents & the general public.
(www.jonnycakecenter.org)

- Neighbors in Need (UCC based offering)

This is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports the ministries of justice & compassion throughout the U.S. The funds are used for community grants & peace programs.
(www.ucc.org/nin/)

Envelopes for the Christmas offering will be available in the church pews EVERY Sunday throughout December & at the Christmas Eve worship service.
All other offerings in the plate will go to Kingston Congregational Church.

Many thanks,
Jean Bambara for the KCC Board of Missions

Healthy You, Healthy Church

KCC has made some changes in light of the threat of seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus. "A healthy you, a healthy church" means that if every one of us follows these hygiene guidelines, our collective action may lessen the flu's impact on our church community. And if you are a person who experiences a mild flu case and wants to "tough it out by being out and about", please don't - you are still infectious and a threat to people around you. In fact, those people around you could be at higher risk because of chronic illness or current medical treatment.

- Stay home if you're ill - no matter what your church commitment is. Be fever-free (and off fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours before you leave home, except for medical appointments.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve (shoulder or elbow). Or if you are able, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze. Wash your hands as soon as possible.
- Frequently wash hands with soap for 20 seconds or rub alcohol-based sanitizer on your hands until dry but absolutely sanitize after sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose.
- A long standing practice of Pastor Pat Liberty is her using hand sanitizer prior to communion. You'll notice hand sanitizers located in the sanctuary, bathrooms, and church school classrooms. In addition, teachers ensure that classroom surfaces and toys are routinely sanitized.
- Various health sources suggest that alternatives to hand holding and hand shaking be considered. Please understand if someone is reluctant to shake or hold hands.
- Should Church leadership need to cancel Sunday service or group events, changes will be communicated in an effective way - the way that weather cancellations are.

Scrip Program

In early November, we launched a new fundraising initiative….**Shopping With Scrip**!!! The **Scrip Program** is often referred to as "Shopping Cart Fundraising". **We all buy…. groceries, clothing, medications, books, coffees on the go, a quick bite to eat, a dinner out, office supplies, etc. We all buy gift cards to give to others as birthday or holiday presents.** Now, with KCC Scrip, you can make these same purchases and generate dollars for KCC's ministry. Scrip uses debit/gift cards to pay for your purchases. **All you have to do is order/pick up your cards at Church on Sunday, then go shopping- either at the store or online**. There are over 500 Retailers in the program; their rebates to non-profit organizations range between 2% and 19%, with an average of 5%. We've even added Belmonts to the list. In our first two weeks of operation **we've sold $8350 of card value and realized $400 for KCC. It's easy**. **<u>So please make the effort to get involved</u>**. **Get your Holiday Gift Cards from KCC Scrip!!!!** Come see us in Fellowship Hall or contact anyone of our Scrip Coordinators- Dottie Leduc, Nancy Corvese, Beth Curtis, or Tom Butcher for more info. Visit the Scrip website at www.shopwithscrip.com.

Emig Lecture January 24, 2010
Featured Speaker Pam Steager

Pam Steager has been the coordinator for the Department of Peace Campaign in RI since 2004. She has been trained in restorative justice and nonviolent communication, studying at the International Institute for Restorative Justice in PA and at Suffolk University's Center for Restorative Justice in Massachusetts. Between 2003 to 2004 she was the only North American in a pilot Masters Degree program, in Costa Rica for Gender and Peace Studies at the United Nations affiliated University for Peace. Since returning to the US she has served as the Director of Training at the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence and has consulted on the 'To Protect and Serve Project' - an effort to enhance the cultural competence and communication skills of recruits and officers of the Providence Police Department.

As a writer, trainer, consultant and performer, Pam has spent over 25 years in the prevention, education and human service fields, primarily in the prevention of substance abuse, family and community violence. She has managed to do all this, in addition to writing an opinion column for the Providence Phoenix for 15 years, perform as a story teller, standup comic and raise two daughters.

She provides workshops on restorative justice and restorative practices and believes that shifting our current ideas about justice from retributive to restorative is an essential building block for a culture of peace.

Pam hopes to educate us in the practices of restorative justice which are gaining a foothold around the world, from kindergarten classes to morning circles and national models like the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa and South America.

Pam will preach that Sunday and conduct a talk and discussion after service in the Fireplace room at 10:45AM. A fellowship soup and bread lunch will be served by members of the Peace and Justice Task Force and the Mission Board.

S. P. N. M.

At South Providence Neighborhood Ministries children are hoping for a Happy Christmas but times are tough for many, many families. Please share your holiday with new gifts, hats, mittens or your TIME. Gifts can be taken to the office at 747 Broad St., Providence, any week day. Organization and distribution days are as follows:

Sun. Dec. 13th, noon - 3pm: gifts will be received and organized.
Mon. Dec. 14th, 9:30 am to noon: we'll set up our "store"
1pm - 3:30 and 5:30 - 8 pm: Parents will come by appointment to choose one gift per child. Volunteer "escorts" are needed.
Tues. Dec. 15th 9 am-noon and 5:30 - 8 pm: Volunteer "escorts" will continue to assist parents in their selections.
Wed. Dec. 16th, 9:30 am - noon and 5:30 - 8 pm: Volunteers continue to assist parents
Thurs. Dec. 17th, 9 am - noon: Pack up

Thanks a million for your help at both Thanksgiving and Christmas time. Your volunteer time will be fun too! Call 401-461-7509 if you can volunteer or need more information.

Christmas Trees

Get your Christmas tree at Bedrock Farm, located on Indian Lake (turn off Route 1 at Arrowhead Trail; follow the signs to 106 Woodland Trail), and $5 of the purchase price will go to KCC. Trees are $30. Cut your own tree or they will cut it for you. Cutting season begins the Friday after Thanksgiving. Open weekends from 9 am until dark and weekdays 2 pm until dark. Use the enclosed coupon or pick one up in Fellowship Hall.

Women's Fellowship

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our annual appeal letter. We had 62 responses and raised $2209 – WOW!! This money helps support our programs and our chosen charities. You may still contribute at any time by giving/mailing your donation to our treasurer, Canna Falby with checks made out to KCC Women's Fellowship. Remember that your donation is fully tax deductible but will not appear on your pledge statement from the church. We appreciate your support and your generosity.

Please join us for our upcoming events:

Christmas Cookie, Fudge and Gifts Sale
Saturday, December 5, 9-4 Open to the Public
Sunday, December 6, before and after Church
Cookies are $7/pound.
Please Bake and Drop off items on Friday, December 4, 5-7 pm. Please come, Shop and Eat!!

Christmas Dinner
Friday December 11 at 6 pm, see insert in Spire for details.
Reservations required by Monday, December 7. $15 each. Pot Roast or Fish.
7:45 pm Program in the Sanctuary "A Child's Christmas in Wales", a reading by Prentice Stout & Friends.

Thank you.

Margaret Fernsler wishes to express her thanks for your prayers, flowers, cards, telephone calls, visits and delicious food.

UCC Women to Celebrate "Together Building Bridges"

United Church of Christ women from all of New England will gather in Burlington, VT on March 12-14, 2010 for their 8th CELEBRATION. The theme is "Together Building Bridges… a time to break down and a time to build up…" (Ecclesiastes 3:3)

Celebration VIII – "Together Building Bridges" – offers exciting opportunities for discovering and understanding differences. Topics such as age, immigration, sexuality, economics, generational differences, and worship choices will be examined. Plan to join the group to make new friends and re-establish old ties with people from New England and beyond. Celebrate our faith, our heritage and womanhood with prayer, singing, laughing and learning.

For more information, contact coordinator Susan Waldron (860-923-2887 or swaldron01@snet.net). Locally, contact Canna Falby or Elizabeth McNab.

Thank you.

Thank you to Claudia Smith and KCC's Women's Fellowship for a wonderful time of fellowship and decorating gingerbread houses that was open to all women who are members and friends of the church. Thanks to much advance preparation of getting houses and supplies ready and time put in assembling the houses, participants only come and do the fun part of decorating. This has been an annual event at KCC enjoyed by many.

Church School News

During the worship service on November 8th seven third grade students received Bibles. The students were:

Drew Dowgiallo
Kyle Hart
Lily McGrath
Jillian Previte
Nick Quarella
Luca Simeone
Devin Steere

All Children from nursery through 8th grade need to be registered for Church School!

Please note that new registration forms must be filled out each year for each child who attends church school.

Registration Forms are available in each classroom or sign up on line at **www.kingcongchurch.org**

Volunteers are still welcome for church school this year!

If you have a child, grandchild or young friend and are looking for a way to spend some special time with him or her, or you just enjoy spending time with children, please consider volunteering in our church school. This is a great way to contribute to the education and formation of Christian youth here at the Kingston Congregational Church. Nurturing the Christian development of our young people is a wonderful and rewarding ministry, so please prayerfully consider if this is something that God is calling you to do.
To volunteer, or if you have any questions, please contact Joanne Gyorgy at 294-7437 or **jogyorgy@verizon.net**

Speaking of volunteering. . . **The Christmas Eve Pageant** is right around the corner, and I can use all the help I can get! I especially need someone to help "backstage" to assist the children with costumes, cues, and questions during the 4:00 pm service. If you can help, please contact Joanne. Some of the costumes are also looking a little shabby – so if you have sewing skills please see Joanne.

Reminders from the Environmental Task Force

Recycling is now mandatory for residents of South Kingstown and a brochure was mailed about what and how to recycle. You can take your recycling to the Rose Hill site yourself for free or request large wheeled containers or small buckets from your trash pick up company. The rates do vary between companies so you might want to call and compare prices. Please urge the Town of South Kingstown to act for mandatory recycling for all commercial properties. We have been recycling at church for years and thank you, Helen and Andy, for taking it to Rose Hill.

With the Holidays approaching we urge you to think before you act!! What could you and your family do to make your holidays "more green"? How can you reduce, reuse, and recycle??

- Home Depot presently is offering to give you $3 off the purchase price of LED Christmas lights when you bring in a string of old lights which use much more electricity. So, convert your lights to LED, consider using fewer lights, and put them on a timer for fewer hours!
- Wrapping paper is not recyclable and goes in the landfill because of its high content of ink, color, and sometimes glossy texture. If it isn't good to recycle, it's not good for the landfill either!! So, if you use wrapping paper and reuse it from year to year, you can savor a gift longer by unwrapping it more slowly and carefully in order to save the paper, and you'll be amazed at how many years it can last!!
- Wrap gifts in newspaper – especially good for children who rip through anything!!
- Decorate your box or newspaper wrap with ribbon or bows that you can save and reuse.
- Use the front of Christmas Cards from previous years as tags for gifts...they decorate the package and can add meaning to a gift when chosen for that person or gift.
- Before buying, consider how and where an item and its packaging is made-- what is the carbon footprint in the creation of it, its life span and how it is disposed of...
- Give the gift of your time – a chore, a meal together, movie or theater tickets etc.
- Give a charitable donation in their name instead of "stuff" (it is nice if the giver and the receiver "approve" of the charity and it has meaning for both).
- Give a gift card and buy it through KCC Scrip Program to benefit the church with no extra cost and only a little effort from you.
- Remember, Jesus is the reason for the season and we are to be stewards of this beautiful blue-green planet we call home. We wish you a safe, healthy, joyous, wonderful and environmentally friendly Holiday Season!!

All Adult Members and Friends of
Kingston Congregational Church are invited to the

Annual Christmas Dinner
Friday, December 11, 2009

6:00 pm Appetizers & Hot Cider in the Fireplace Room
6:30 pm Dinner in Fellowship Hall by Wolf Rock Caterers

MENU

Yankee Pot Roast
OR Stuffed Filet of Sole
Oven Roasted & Mashed Potatoes
Butternut Squash & Green Beans
Salad and Rolls
Cake and Ice Cream
Coffee Decaf or Tea

7:45 pm PROGRAM

"A Child's Christmas in Wales"
A Reading by Prentice Stout & Friends
held in the sanctuary

Join Us To Celebrate the Holiday Season With Joy, Good Food & Friendship at KCC, sponsored by Women's Fellowship

Before Monday Dec 07: **CALL Canna Falby, 295-9742** to make your reservations and state your choice of entree and pay at the door or **MAIL** the form below with a check to KCC-Women's Fellowship, and send it to: Canna Falby, 75 Purgatory Rd, Exeter, RI 02822

Reservations are $15.00 per person. Please indicate your choice of entree

---------Cut here and return by Monday Dec 07----------

please print clearly **circle one for each person**

Names attending:_____ ROAST or FISH

_____ ROAST or FISH

Your phone number please: _____
# of persons_____x $15.00 each--enclosed is my check for_____