The Spire

From Your Pastor

February 2008

Paris Hilton and God

Last summer, *Newsweek* reported that Paris Hilton, in jail, found God:

> *"… while preparing to go to jail, Paris Hilton sauntered out her front door with a Bible tucked under her arm -- facing outward so the cover would be clearly visible. So it wasn't a shock that it took just three days in prison before Hilton found God. She told Barbara Walters that she had 'become more spiritual' and that God had given her a second chance."*

The article posed the question on the tip of readers' minds: is this authentic? How do we know if this is just theatrics to gain attention? To get at the answer, *Newsweek* turned to Mark Earley, president of Prison Fellowship. How can people know if Paris Hilton's conversion is real? Earley told *Newsweek* that based upon his 30 years working with prisoners, he identified three things that indicate a genuine change of heart:

humility,
accountability and
involvement in local faith communities over time.

I was curious about whether or not, since last summer, Hilton's faith remained or grew. Then I realized that it is not for me to judge whether her relationship with God is authentic or not. If *"Judge not, that ye be not judged"* (Matthew 7:1, KJV) applies to anything, it applies to this. I asked someone what she thought of assessing the authenticity of Paris Hilton's faith. She answered, *"That's not anyone's #%&^*+! business."* Correct. It is not for us to judge.

However, the Prison Fellowship's criteria for an authentic change of heart made me wonder how I would stand up to those measures. You and I can only ask ourselves…

About our **humility**: Do we do things for the right reasons? Without humility, a person cannot learn, because you can't teach a know-it-all. Without humility, a person cannot love, because all a narcissist can see is herself or himself. Without humility, there can be no right relationship to God, who said in Isaiah (57:15) *"I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with the person who is of a contrite and humble spirit..."*

About our **accountability**: Do we accept responsibility for our choices and decisions, or do we seek to blame another, circumstances, or God? Do we admit our need for change, seek God's forgiveness, and make changes where they are needed?

About our **involvement** in a faith community over time. "A flash in the pan." Isn't that what people are called who show up, become enthusiastic for a brief time, and then fizzle out? Or, who claim to be a person of faith, but do not connect with a community of faith. I spoke with a daughter about her mother, who hadn't attended church for decades. She was a very busy woman with many commitments. Her daughter summarized, *"Something had to go and that was church."* Involvement in a faith community over time, notes the Prison Fellowship, is a mark of an authentic change of heart.

The authenticity of your faith relationship with God is your business and yours alone. No one else has the right to judge. When anyone comes up with a list of what makes for an authentic relationship (and who is to say their list is right?), it is a good exercise to apply that list to ourselves to consider how we're doing in walking humbly with our God. Center yourself with the query: *"How authentic is my faith relationship with God?"*

– John Zehring

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)

Sundays in February

February 3	MESSAGE: *Even there shall thy hand lead me.* Communion. Installation of Board and Committee members. SECOND HOUR: Jeff Richardson on the History of Christianity.
February 10	The Reverend Natasha Miller preaching. Emig Lecture. First Sunday in Lent.
February 17	MESSAGE: *Our inner nature is being renewed day by day.* Second Sunday in Lent. Presidents' Day Weekend.
February 24	Kevin Munroe preaching. Message: *The Woman, the Well and the Water* Confirmation Class with The Rev. John Zehring: *"The Ten Most Important Things to Know about the Bible."* Third Sunday in Lent.
March 2	MESSAGE: *"Hard Questions at Eastertide."* SERMON TALK BACK. Communion. Fourth Sunday in Lent. Confirmation Class at 5 p.m.: Planning for Confirmation Service.

February's Deacon of the Month is Paulette Osterman.

Second Hour: History of Christianity

Jeff Richardson will teach the Second Hour on **February 3** following worship in the Fireplace Room on the History of Christianity.

All Boards Meeting – February 5

All Boards and Committees will meet on the same night in February, replacing their normal meeting times by meeting February 5 at 7 p.m., starting in the Sanctuary. Then, Boards and Committees will break out into individual meetings, where they will elect or re-elect chairpersons and secretaries and conduct monthly business.

Here's an idea: Come to the Pancake Supper (this is the night before Ash Wednesday, known as Fat Tuesday). Then, stay for the All Boards Meeting.

Confirmation

Confirmation Class in February will be held February 24. Pastor Zehring will speak about the *"Ten Top Things You Should Know About the Bible."* Last class is March 2, to plan for the March 9th Confirmation Service.

Baptism:

Caroline Jane Strough Parents: Jonathan and Meghan Strough January 6, 2008

In Sympathy

The congregation expresses deepest condolences to the family of Virginia Cottrell who died on January 7th.

Emig Lecturer to Preach, Speak on Sunday, February 10th

This year's Emig lecturer is the Reverend Natasha Miller from the national staff of the UCC in Cleveland. Ms. Miller is a practicing lawyer, a former Assistant District Attorney in the state of Pennsylvania, and an ordained minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The Emig lecturer brings a message concerning social justice as it relates to the national debate over environmentalism. She will preach at the regular service on February 10th and conduct an open "talk-back" type session with church members at the 11 a.m. hour following coffee hour. We will welcome the Rev. Miller to our church and look forward to her message.

The Peace and Justice Committee

KCC Casserole Committee 2008

-announces our-
"CASSEROLE DONATION DAY"
Sunday, February 10, 2008

The KCC Casserole Crew has eased the stress of many getting back home from the hospital, recovering from a crisis, or having a baby – just to name a few! Many members have volunteered to prepare and deliver casseroles this year. However, there will be times when a meal is needed quickly. The Casserole Committee acquired a freezer to store donated meals for such occasions. Now, we're looking for anyone who would like to donate a meal to help us restock our freezer. The next time you make your favorite stew, soup, or one-dish meal, make a little extra, pack and label it for freezing with your name, phone, list of ingredients, and directions for eating. Bring it to church on February 10th – "CASSEROLE DONATION DAY". We will be at the Welcome Table (before and after the service) to gratefully receive it and make sure it gets to the right place just when it means the most.

Mexican Dinner Coming February First!

Mark your calendars now for our **Second Annual Mexican Potluck Dinner, February 1 at 6 p.m.** We've decided to repeat this popular event: good fellowship, great food – and $5 admission will help us raise some badly needed dollars for school uniforms for the girls who live at "Angelina's Shelter" in Chiapas, Mexico. You'll also have an opportunity to purchase Free Trade craft items from Guatemala from Susan Letendre and to hear about her latest trip.

Mardi Gras Pancake Supper

You don't need to go to New Orleans to experience Mardi Gras! Join the Family Life Committee for our Mardi Gras Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 5th from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Celebrate Fat Tuesday with luscious fruit and whipped cream-topped pancakes, "King Cakes", New Orleans music, and Mardi Gras crafts for the kids! Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler!

Progressive Dinner Update

Mark your calendars! The 2008 KCC Progressive Dinner will take place on April 26th from 5:00 to 10:00 pm. The Family Life Committee is in the process of creating this year's menu and would like your input. If you have any favorite recipes for a long-cooking (3+ hours) entrée, please leave it in the Family Life folder outside the Secretary's Office.

Thank you

Dear Friends,

We send our heartfelt thanks to you for prayers, caring, and so many kindnesses. You mean the world to us. Joe's struggle continues, along with the hope of "seeing you all in church" again.

With appreciation and love,

Joe and Kennie Geary

Two Upcoming Concerts
at the Kingston Congregational Church

Sunday, February 3, 2008 at 3:00pm

Theresa Patton Pope, Jane Murray, & Susan Wood
of the celebrated *Northeast Chamber Trio*
will feature pieces for flute, oboe, and bassoon

Saturday, May 10, 2008 at 7:00pm

Valerie Nicolosi, mezzo soprano,
will give a solo voice recital featuring
A Celebration of Motherhood in Song

For both concerts, the suggested donation is $15 at the door.
Contributions to the Concert Series are also gratefully received:
Sponsor: $100; Patron: $50-$99; and Friend: $25-$49; and will be listed in the program.
Please make out checks to the KCC Music Series (tax deductible within limits of law).

From SPNM

Many THANKS from South Providence Neighborhood Ministries for our congregation's help with hats, gloves, and gifts for Christmas for kids up to 18 years. It was all greatly appreciated. 282 families received gifts for 921 children and youth. Photos can be viewed at www.snapfish.com or email: info@spnm.org.

Our first SPELLING BEE was a roaring success with help from King Cong spellers: Margaret Dein Bradley, Tom Brillat, Sue and Gary Davis, Norma Hagist, Frank Lenox, Nancy Ross, Deb Shaw, Jim Buxton, and from the Senior High Group: Eric Dumican, David and Matthew Alemany. Crucial backing came from those who contributed money for the four teams, those who attended, and to Jim Findlay for chairing the event. Join us next year!

Please mark your calendar for our SPNM Benefit Concert, Sunday afternoon, March 9, 2008 at the Phillips Memorial Baptist Church.

KCC Prayer Chain Report for 2007

During the past year we have had 235 requests for prayer from KCC members and 349 requests for prayer support from loved ones of KCC members totaling 584 requests.

Gail Rudginsky, one of our 18 prayer links, died this year. Kevin Munroe has become a new prayer link and we would welcome any interested in this kind of ministry. Each link agrees to pray each day at some time and to honor the confidentiality of each request. If you would like to be a prayer link or have a need for prayer support, please contact one of these contact persons:

Delight Carpenter: 789-8006; Bev Larimer: 783-6388; Lou Pearson: 783-8975; Carol Shilling: 783-5677

Back in 1979 Sue Kenyon suggested the idea of a prayer chain for our church similar to one she had known in New Jersey. Sue, who is now 101 years, is STILL one of our faithful prayer links in the KCC prayer chain.

Church School News

Christmas Pageant

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Family Service on Christmas Eve. The young people who took part in this year's service did a really wonderful job, and made this service a joyful experience for all who attended. Participants this year were:

Call to Worship:	Shannon Rudd
Invocation:	Stephanie Couturier
The Promise of a Savior:	Casey Farrell
Narrator:	Kayla McMahon
Mary:	Catherine Tierney
Joseph:	Scott Washburn
Shepherd 1:	Chris Lenox
Shepherd 2:	Kyle Farrell
Shepherd 3:	Sean Farrell
King 1:	Tai Marino
King 2:	Chris Lenox
King 3:	Mackenzie Ormiston
Herald Angel:	Cate-Ellen Ormiston
Angels:	Junior Choir

My special thanks go to Mike Couturier for his help "backstage" and to Canna Falby who did a wonderful job with the music.

Heifer Project

Start saving your loose change! The Church School children will be collecting "spare change" for Heifer Project International beginning on February 10th. They will collect nickels, dimes, quarters and then dollars on each successive Sunday until March 9th. Every year the children have beaten the previous year's total – last year they raised $900.00! That is an amazing "chunk of change" to beat, but what a wonderful way to support this great organization. So dig deep into those sofa cushions, and under those car seats, and let's see if we can make it to a thousand dollars this year.

Martin Luther King Jr. Presentation

A special thanks to Elizabeth McNab, who worked with the Third and Fourth Grade students to provide a wonderful presentation about Martin Luther King during the worship service on January 13th. Elizabeth also provided books, worksheets and other materials about Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement that were used in all the Church School classes to help teach our children about peace, justice and equality.

VBS

Save the date! Canonicus Camp - July 21 to July 25. Young people from kindergarten through high school will enjoy games, crafts, swimming, nature, music and food as they gather with other area churches for a week-long exploration of God's love.

Senior High Fellowship

Mark your calendars for February 8 for our pasta dinner from 6pm- 8pm. Tickets will be $5 for adults and $2.50 for children. Please come hungry and support the Senior High Fellowship.

A few thoughts from your environmental task force...

We had a warm dry fall and, although we have had some rain and snow lately, we are still experiencing a water shortage. It's not the time of year we usually think of being in a drought, but look around... the skating ponds are low. I found some water saving suggestions on the internet. Pick those you are willing to try.

1. Fix the dripping faucet ... a small drip can waste 10 gallons of water a day.

2. Leaking toilets waste even more water. There is an easy way to check your toilet for leaks. Put several drops of food coloring in the top of your tank and wait a few minutes. If the color appears in the toilet bowl ...you have a leak.

3. Limiting shower time, filling the tub only a few inches for a bath, and turning the water off while you brush your teeth all save a lot of water.

4. In the kitchen, keep cold water in the refrigerator instead of running water until it is cold each time you want a drink.

5. Rather than running water, use a wet sponge or dish cloth to rinse dishes before putting them in the dishwasher.

6. When washing dishes in the sink, put in a small amount of water to start and fill the sink as you rinse the dishes.

Just trying to be aware of water use year round will put less strain on our water systems. I always thought of the water coming out of the tap as an unlimited supply, but news from around the world tells us otherwise.

Respectfully, Cindy Buxton for your Environmental Task Force

Jane Walker Skogley

Jane was born in Rhode Island where her father was employed as a Textile Chemist for a mill in Apponaug. When she was six years old the family moved to Wheeling, West Virginia where she attended both elementary and high school.

In her teens she visited an aunt in Newport, RI. Her aunt took her to a dance and she was asked to dance by a young man, Richard Skogley. They corresponded while Dick was serving in the South Pacific and Jane was majoring in English at Pembroke (later called Brown University). Dick returned from the Pacific and entered Rhode Island State College in the College of Agriculture. His favorite professor was Dr. Bell (Katharine Bell's husband).

After Jane graduated from Pembroke she and Dick were married in 1948 and lived in Narragansett while Dick earned his Master's degree in Agronomy. Their first son, Tom, was born while they were living in Kingston. Dick went on to earn his Doctoral degree at Rutgers University which meant a move to New Brunswick. It was there that Elizabeth and David were born. The oldest son, Tom, lives in Oregon and David, the youngest, lives in Germany. Elizabeth lives close by, next door to her mother.

When Dr. Jessie DeFrance retired, Dick was offered DeFrance's position. The family returned to Rhode Island and bought a home in Exeter. This puzzled their friends who couldn't conceive of living in the "boonies". Jane and Dick have lived there ever since. Sadly, Dick died in 1997. Jane had a sister, Sheila, who also recently died which left another hole in Jane's life.

Dick had two sabbaticals. One was a year in England. They were able to travel and camp throughout the continent with their children. They loved the time there and Jane still has friends there. The second sabbatical was in the Netherlands. David, the youngest, was with them. Jane did all her errands including grocery shopping riding a bike. She must have been in good physical condition! Jane's job experience included working in the Registrar's office at RISC for Dean Weldin (Pat also worked there). Later the principal of an Exeter school asked (actually pleaded and begged) Jane to become the school librarian. She had had no training but accepted and in time earned her Master's degree in Library Science. She retired in 1989. Jane says her proudest achievement is the work she did to help establish a public library in Exeter (the only town in the state without a library). She served for seven years on a committee struggling to establish one and finally they were successful.

Jane has many hobbies. Tennis was a favorite for many years. Reading is a passion and knitting and indoor plant gardening keep her busy. She has always been a willing volunteer serving in the community on library boards and the South Kingstown visiting nurses board, been a member of the URI Foundation, and active in garden and book clubs. She still volunteers one day a week at the Metcalf School Library.

Jane has been actively involved in the Kingston Congregational Church. She and Dick began attending aback in 1948 and joined around 1960. Over the years she has served on many of the church committees, among them Flower, Stewardship, Mission, and others. When her children were younger she was a Sunday school teacher and a Deacon. Jane says church has been important to her for the music and worship service. It has been a huge part of her life.

Submitted by Pat Weeden