The Spire

From Your Pastor

Summer 2008

> *He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?* (Luke 12:54-56)

Karl Barth, a 20th century Swiss-German theologian, advised Christians to pursue their faith with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

Ironically, this may be the first generation to grow up asking *"What's a newspaper?"* Today, the news is on the internet, carried by devices the size of a cell phone, with up-to-the-millisecond headlines and videos. The 11 o'clock news has degenerated into little more than summarizing the daily police scanner. CNN drones on with 101 urgent, compelling, and breaking news tidbits per hour.

The handheld computer that delivers news, phone calls, schedule, music, and family photographs also can store two dozen translations of the entire Bible. Enter any words to a verse, and a search displays the full text in a nanosecond.

And yet, are we any closer to understanding the pressing issues of contemporary society or the eternal truths contained in God's holy word? Perhaps we have taken giant leaps… in reverse. Jesus said, *"You do not know how to interpret the present time."* Perhaps he would remind us that we're not so good at it either. Have we lost our ability to receive, digest and understand news? Is our ability to interpret the present time due, at least in part, to a growing biblical literacy?

This summertime, as life slows and we pursue activities at a more leisurely pace, I encourage you to read the Bible. Turn off the multi-tasking, find some sacred space, and read. Biblical literacy is not a matter of memorizing dates and characters, but understanding the great truths. This summer, read some of the Bible.

.. Review the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5, 6, and 7.

.. Center yourself in some of the great Psalms: 1, 8, 18, 23, 24, 31, 42, 100, 118, 121, 150. They're all great.

.. Read one of Paul's epistles. Philippians, one of the shortest, is also one of the most uplifting.

.. Turn to the beginnings: Genesis… Exodus, up through chapter 20.

.. Tackle one of the great prophets: Isaiah or Jeremiah. Try to understand how they were attempting to interpret their present time to their confused and confounded people.

.. Read an entire Gospel. Mark, the earliest and shortest, is said to be equivalent of roughly three and a half pages of the *New York Times*. Why not read it from beginning to end?

We might become wiser by turning off the news for awhile, sitting on the deck with an ice tea in hand, and patiently reading the Bible. Then, when it's time to turn life's multitasking back on at full volume, we will be more able to face our world with the newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other, a bit more informed and able to interpret our present time.

– John Zehring

John Zehring will take the second half of his Sabbatical and vacation from June 16 until returning to work on August 25. Kevin Munroe, Assistant to the Pastor, will be leading worship and will be available for pastoral emergencies: 789-4011. Providing supervision will be the Rev. Sharon Key, Pastor of the Woodbridge (Cranston) Congregational Church. Frank Lenox, Chair of the Board of Deacons, may be contacted if Kevin is not available: 295-5805.

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)

Your Summer Giving

He or she who gives early gives twice, goes an old saying.

This summer, consider pre-paying your pledge for the time you will be away. It is a significant help to the church.

If you will be on vacation during the summer, pre-addressed envelopes are available on the back tables in the Sanctuary for your convenience to mail your pledge to the church.

Thank you!

Summer Office Hours

The church office will be open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm from June 16th through September 1st. Regular office hours of Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, will resume the day after Labor Day, September 2nd.

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 15th.

Sundays in June

June 1 Message: *Living with Ambiguity.* Communion. Children's Sunday.
Teacher Appreciation Sunday.

June 8 Theme: *A Medley of Bible Greats.* Senior High Sunday.
Morning Prayer by Sharon Alemany. Choir's last Sunday.
Teacher Luncheon.

June 15 Message: *Why the Amish forgive so quickly…*
and what we can learn from them.
Baptism of Lilah Simoes. Men's choir.
Fathers' Day.

June 22 Kevin Munroe Preaching.
Women's choir.

June 29 Kevin Munroe Preaching.
Quarterly Meeting of the Congregation.

June's Deacon of the Month is Tom Brillat.
July's Deacon of the Month is Dottie Leduc.
August's Deacon of the Month is Paulette Osterman.

SUMMER BOARD MEETINGS: Boards will be deciding their summer schedule in June. Board chairs should notify members and the Church Secretary of changes. The Church Calendar online is the most accurate calendar for KCC activities.

Coming in September:

September 13: Leaders' Retreat, for staff and Board chairs. At the Zehrings, 9 am to 2 pm. Special guest leader: Chuck Barnes, Conference Minister.

Save the Date

Christian Family Life Committee invites you to the annual Church Picnic on Sunday, September 7, 2008 from 12:00 - 3:00 at Tuckertown Park. Enjoy the last days of summer and delicious picnic fare with your church family members. Find more details in September's *Spire*.

The Kingston Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

QUARTERLY MEETING
Sunday, June 22, 2008
10:45 a.m.
Church Sanctuary

Child care will be available.

Tentative Agenda

1. Call to Order

2. Adoption of Agenda

3. Minutes of Quarterly Meeting April 27, 2008

4. Treasurer's Report

5. Reports: Trustees, Deacons, Christian Education,
   Mission and Social Justice, Women's Fellowship

6. President's Report

7. Old Business

8. New Business
   a. Planned Giving Initiative- Spire Society

9. Closing Prayer and Adjournment

The Kingston Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 10:40AM.
A quorum was declared by Moderator Tom Butcher.
It was M/S/P to adopt the agenda.
It was M/S/P to adopt the minutes from January 27, 2008.

Dick Giesler presented the treasurer's report.
He stated that pledges are behind by $7,266.00.
Mark Tortolani suggested the idea of Bingo to help close the fundraising gap.
Dick pointed out that the fundraising line is $29,000.00.
It was M/S/P to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Sharon Davis presented the Trustees' Report.
She thanked Bob Scott and Dave Cox and Jim Ross who left the board in January.
Sharon has been elected the chair for 2008.
A request has been submitted to the Potter Fund for $6,000.00 to repair the chimneys.
Two more handicap spots have been added to the parking lot.
Gary Harlow is working on installing TV monitors in the choir loft so the choir can see the service.
Quotes are being taken to decrease the pipe façade in the choir loft to add more space.
Insurance policies are being reviewed.
Endowment fund is scheduled to be audited.
Quotes are being obtained for the kitchen renovation.
Blue Jean Sunday is next Sunday-May 4, 2008.

Frank Lenox presented the Deacons' Report.
Dottie Leduc is a new member of the Deacons.
Tracey Heffron is the new Librarian.
Diana Geisler will be in charge of checking and restocking the pews.
The budget for the Assistant to the Pastor has been increased from $3,000.00 to $4,000.00 to cover John's sabbatical. The position will be left vacant from September to December in order to re evaluate the job.
John Zehring will be on sabbatical from mid June to the end of August. Kevin Munroe will be filling in except for two weeks. Sharon Keys will be on retainer during that time.

Michelle Davis presented the Board of Christian Education report.
The Christian Ed Board held an open house in the Sunday School rooms and conducted a survey. The Board will provide the results of the survey when they are available.
The Heifer project was very successful.
The Board has started a task force to investigate the possibility of creating a scholarship fund.
The Family Life committee held the Pancake Supper and the Progressive Dinner.
The Youth are holding a car wash on May 10, 2008 to raise money for a mission trip.
Vacation Bible School will be in August.

Tina Letcher presented the Mission and Social Justice Report.
Welcome to new members Margaret Munroe, Jane Buxton, and Sarah Simone.
The Board is designing a sheet to show where the mission money is going.
There is a survey being prepared to ask the congregation where they are volunteering outside the church.
There is a new button being created on the KCC website for Mission and Social Justice.
The Board is encouraging everyone to get the *Spire* electronically to save paper.
One Great Hour of Sharing raised $2,834.00
A Peace Service was held in March.
Tina and Terry Schimmell attended the Northeast Peace Conference.

Helen Rowe-Drake presented the Women's Fellowship Report.
There were 30 baby kits, 204 school kits, and 130 health kits put together for Church World Service. Women's Fellowship paid for the shipping charges.
May 17 is the Kingston Fair and the church will be holding a luncheon and bake sale.

Marcus Ferrelli presented the President's Report.
Due to the talent and dedication of the members, things are going well.
A men's retreat was held at Irons Homestead.
The Progressive Dinner was well attended by 105 people.
The Strategic Planning Committee will have a survey for the congregation soon.

Old Business-
Mission Statement- "We are a Christian Church that supports each person's spiritual journey through the communal pursuit of worship, learning and service."
It was M/S/P to accept the Mission Statement.
Assistant to the Pastor- The Deacons have decided to leave the position vacant after Kevin leaves in August in order to reframe the job description.
Stewardship- the reorganizing of the Stewardship committee has been tabled until further notice.

New Business-
Jim Aukerman said that the Planned Giving Committee has identified a need to increase the endowment. The committee needs ideas for programs to encourage planned giving.
Steve White said there is a need to address concerns about UCC and its association with Rev. Wright's comments and our response to that. It was agreed that we need to have a discussion about this.

It was M/S/P to adjourn at 11:45AM

A closing prayer was offered by John Zehring.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Holland, Clerk

Planned Giving

The Planned Giving Committee met on November 25, 2007. We discussed ways of addressing the need to increase the permanent endowment of the church, recognizing that no new gifts had been made to the permanent endowment in many years. The Committee discussed methods of encouraging planned giving through wills, trusts, charitable gift annuities, and so forth. Last Quarter, the Board of Trustees and the Church Council both approved that a formalized planned giving program be initiated to recognize existing donors who are willing to be identified and to cultivate prospective donors of planned gifts. Our goal is to double the size of the endowment by June 30, 2013.

The proposed program would formally initiate a core group of donors to be called The Spire Society. We would identify them, quantify the amount of their gift, maintain the anonymity of donors where they request it, but recognize those who would be willing to accept identification with a pin or bracelet/necklace charm in the shape of the spire of the church which could be worn by The Spire Society members. We would print a brochure for distribution to all members of the church encouraging them to plan a gift through their will or other estate planning document and to be recognized and become a Spire Society member. We would have writeups in The Spire occasionally of individual Spire Society members telling stories of their legacies and what they mean to the donors and their families. We would also hold an annual recognition event in an upscale setting where members could meet with other donors, the pastor, and President of the church and be thanked for their planned gifts and cultivated, if appropriate, for additional gifts. We would ask members of The Spire Society to give testimonials at planned giving workshops to explain the tax and other benefits of their planned gifts. We might also recognize donors who had made gifts to the permanent endowment of the church during their lifetimes. We would correspond or otherwise communicate with advisors, such as accountants, attorneys, and financial planners, to encourage them to discuss charitable gifts with their clients who may be church members. Through providing information on a repetitive basis, we believe we can encourage additional gifts.

As part of the program, we would also send out a questionnaire to church members that would provide information about planned gifts and also help to identify members who may have plans in place that we are not aware of.

The committee introduced the idea of this initiative to the Congregation at the last quarterly meeting. It asks for your suggestions and input before the initiative is brought before the Congregation for approval at the Quarterly meeting in June. Please contact Jim Aukerman for your input.

Habitat for Humanity

Over 100 Habitat for Humanity volunteers were recognized recently at a dinner held at Peace Dale Congregational Church. Two KCC volunteers were honored with special awards.

The Youth award was presented to **Eric Dumican**, not only for his leadership in raising $1700 for the homeless (with our Senior High), but for building at the worksite, and also for assisting considerably with the Habitat auction.

Sue Davis was presented with an award for chairing the Habitat auction each fall and for various help with Habitat activities over the years.

We are so proud of both of them.

Carolyn and David Barwise

Environmental Task Force

Patty and Prentice Stout have shared with me, at my request, things they do at home to be more environmentally friendly. I hope people may get some new ideas from the list of things they may be able to do. There were certainly things I hadn't thought of, but would be happy to include in my life. Patty writes...

You asked if I could give you a list of what we do in our house to be more environmentally sound and there are so many small ways in which we attempt it that I have barely been able to enumerate them. They are based mainly on the list Al Gore has in the front of his DVD "An Inconvenient Truth". We drive less, flush less, use fewer lights, using CFL's when we can, use the dryer less by drying on a rack in a bathtub or hanging clothes on the line, bought a Hybrid when we needed to replace our car, do not buy fruits and vegetables flown in from Argentina, California , shrimp from Indonesia, avoid fish that is over-fished including swordfish and tuna (no more sushi or sashimi), wear more fleece, thus using less oil, and generally try to be more aware of the need to cut back and be more environmentally sound. We have recycled for years, use less water, etc. One book I have only caught a bit of a read in but is quite good is Organic Housekeeping by Ellen Sandbeck, Scribner $30. Beneath the title on the front cover it says "In Which the NONTOXIC Avenger shows you how to improve your health and that of your family while you save time, money and, perhaps your sanity". Also we bring our own reusable bags to the market instead of the paper or plastic offered by the market. In California people take their own mugs to the coffee shop and I guess here that is starting as well.

You can get Al Gore's list by borrowing the DVD "An Inconvenient Truth" from the church office or e-mail me if you need it.

If anyone else wants to share what they do please contact me at cabuxton@coxnet and I will include it in a future *Spire*.

Respectfully,
Cindy Buxton from your Environmental Task Force

A Note from the Flower Committee

This summer, the Flower Committee will be trying something new and will not be coordinating flower arrangements for the church service during the summer months of July and August. We will set up a sign-up sheet on the harvest table in Fellowship Hall for anyone who wishes to bring in flowers from his/her garden for a specific Sunday. If you regularly donate flowers during July or August in memory of a loved one, and wish to continue the practice this summer, you must sign up and pre-pay ($40.00) before the end of June. If you do wish to have flowers on a specific Sunday, the Flower Committee will have them delivered to the church, but then you will be responsible for setting out the flowers and removing them after the service. (The brass container will be left in the Flower Committee closet.) A lovely houseplant will sit on the table in the sanctuary and can be switched out when someone is either bringing flowers or having flowers donated on a particular Sunday. If there are any questions, please contact Vickie Wallace (295-1870) as soon as possible.

Gail Rudginsky
born 5/9/1948, died 8/26/2007

As many of you know, Gail Rudginsky died last year and her ashes were buried in our KCC (Old Fernwood) cemetery, in a plot that was donated. A graveside service was held on October 11th, 2007, followed by a Remembrance Service on November 18th, after church in the Fireplace Room. Some of us who knew Gail would like to purchase a simple marker for her grave site that includes her name and dates of birth and death. The estimated cost for this is about $650. If you would like to contribute to this effort, please send in a check made out to: KCC Cemetery Fund-Gail or put cash in an envelope marked "Gail" into the offering plate. Our goal is to have the marker in place by the anniversary of her death or by October 11th. Thank you. If you have any questions, please contact Helen Rowe-Drake 789-8910.

Women's Fellowship
Ice Cream Social

Monday, June 9th
7:00 PM

Followed by Annual Meeting

Men of KCC

Herb Behrens continues to facilitate the **Men's Breakfast** at 8 AM on Thursday mornings. He plans to continue this schedule until late June and resume again in October.

The recently re-established Men's Fellowship provided further opportunities for fellowship this year with two other activities to date. The first was a **Saturday Seminar** ably led by George Fitzelle and the second was a retreat at **Irons Homestead**. A handful of men stayed overnight at the Irons Lodge and were led in an evening devotional discussion by David Barwise, and were joined in the morning by six others for a hearty breakfast courtesy of Tom Butcher, an inspirational talk by Rev. John Zehring and then spent a few hours helping to prepare the grounds at Irons for the summer season.

For the fall, we are planning a **slide show presentation by Britt Bell** on his recent trip to India. We hope to combine this with a dinner of Indian food prepared by KCC Members. Check the Church Calendar as we finalize the date over the summer.

Another activity planned for the early winter season is **URI Basketball** (stay tuned for particulars).

Many thanks to all who help make Men's activities a part of church life.

Son World Adventure Park!

Save the date! Canonicus Camp - July 21 to July 25. Young people from Kindergarten through high school will enjoy a "Theme Park Adventure" that includes games, crafts, swimming, nature, music and food. They will meet children from area churches for a week-long exploration of God's love. This camp is a real bargain at $35.00 per child. Volunteers are needed, and the children of volunteers receive a substantial discount! See Joanne if you are interested.

Senior High Fellowship News

The weekend of June 27-29th the Senior High Fellowship will be taking a Mission/ Social trip to the UCC Horton Center in New Hampshire. We would like to invite any of you that may be interested in joining us to make this a mini inter-generational trip. We will leave Friday afternoon and arrive at the Horton Center located on top of Pine Mountain. We will be staying in cabins (12 to a cabin). On Saturday we will work on a project together, probably right on site. On Sunday we will have breakfast and get going for a day of fun and fellowship. Right now we are looking to go to Wildcat Mountain for a zip line ride and then to Echo Lake for a picnic, hiking and swimming. We will return Sunday evening. Please contact Sharon Alemany if you are interested.

Jacquelyn Stoewer Piez

Jacque was born in Galena, Illinois, a small mining town. Later the family moved to Iowa City, Iowa where she graduated from high school. Her husband was going to do his medical internship in Wichita, Kansas and wanted Jacque to go with him. The end of World War II found them celebrating in Kansas. Jacque's first job was as an elevator operator in a large department store. Before technology made it automatic, it took skill to line up the elevator floor with the store floor! She mastered that and worked selling the first nylons after the war. It was a wild day and reminded us of the song "When the Nylons Bloom Again" from "Ain't Misbehaving."

The next move was to Lincoln, Nebraska where her husband served as Captain in the ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) to pay back time owed the government. After this service he began his medical practice in West Union, Iowa. Jacque wanted so much to have a child and finally Scott was born. Her marriage dissolved leaving Jacque, a single mother, without much education looking for a way to earn money. She started a business in Iowa City. Her grandmother had taught her to construct and design patterns and she soon was in demand making bridal gowns.

When Scott was three she married Brit Piez who had two girls, Cindy who was two and Debbie who was four. Taking care of all three small children was a challenge but Brit was a great help. He had been hired by the University of Rhode Island as a Physical Education professor in 1956. At first they lived in Narragansett and later built a house in the Oaks. It was a wonderful house and location to bring up their children and they lived there for 40 years.

While the children were in school Jacque found time to join the Junior Women's Club where she made many friends who are still close friends today. The Club did the Follies each year. Jacque was extremely active and served as President of the Junior Women's Club, and later the State President of the National Federation of Women's Clubs. These activities helped to keep her busy after Brit died.

Brit took early retirement because of his health and they were able to travel to many European countries. A favorite memory was following URI's football team to Wiesbaden, Germany where they played Army. Warm countries like Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Mexico were favored by Brit so he could play golf. Jacque's other interests besides golf were bridge and pool. She was headed for the pool table at the Commons after I interviewed her.

When Cindy started attending URI as a freshman she persuaded her mom to also begin a degree. Jacque started by taking one course and found she loved it. More courses were taken and she never felt out of place as an older student. She loved every minute of it, the courses and the students. I hope she loved the professors also as I had Jacque in class! Eventually she majored in the Textile Department because of her interest in textiles and design. She says it was one of her most wonderful experiences attending college. Brit was able to give her her diploma when she completed the Bachelor's degree.

Today Cindy lives close by and has two children, Brittany and Colby. Scott is also nearby and has two, Kayli and Kelsi. Her other daughter, Debbie, lives in Connecticut.

Jacque and Brit joined our church in 1958 and Jacque has served on many committees, among them the Flower Committee and the Board of Deacons. I remember telling the congregation that she felt as though this church was her home and family.

Submitted by Pat Weeden