

The Spire

From Your Pastor

November 2021

Living in Community

We are part of many different kinds of communities, aren't we? Some of us live in residential communities (retirement villages, condo complexes, extended families, etc.). We often think of our neighborhoods or our towns when we think of communities. Sometimes we think of our schools or our social groups or sports teams. Church is a community. One of the signature practices of Jesus (the behaviors and attitudes he taught and modeled) was living in community. Have you ever noticed Jesus was always part of a community, his disciples? In November, in worship and Christian education gatherings, we're going to be exploring what kind of community Jesus and the early church fostered. Christian community is both like and unlike other kinds of community. Like other communities, we gather around shared ideas and activities. But our Christian community isn't based on what we have in common, but Who we have in common. We all are trying to be followers of Jesus, in our own ways but together. Christian community reminds me more of a family than a club or organization. Families share an origin story ("My family comes from California. My grandparents were cowboys and lumberjacks"). We tell our Christian "origin story" every Sunday in church: "Our scripture for today is..." We share a common Story but we are individuals who have been born with different traits and abilities. What holds us together is love for God and each other. Sometimes we quarrel and have to say we're sorry. But we share an identity that is bigger than what we do or how we feel. Like a family we support each other when need arises. Sometimes we pull the weight, sometimes we're the weight being pulled. There is always give and take. And like a family, we're comprised of different generations. Children, youth, adults and elders all have important roles to play, and no one is expendable. What a gift our church community is to us! It supports us in growing into who we're meant to be (a fully-fledged child of God). Community is also a gift we can offer others. Families grow through new partnerships, adoptions, births, fostering, blending. Our family has room for others. And our local family is broadly connected to an extended family. Jesus never traveled alone once he began his ministry. Let's learn from him and from his first followers how to live in community, live as a family, faithfully and joyfully. Many of our November activities and opportunities (descriptions below) are aimed toward just that! Let's gather the family, live in community, and follow Jesus together!

Grace&Peace, Rev. Jan

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

November's Deacon of the Month is Lori Ann Hiener (lhiener@cox.net)

Worship in November:

In November we continue with our yearlong “Follow Me” worship and education program that focuses on the practices that Jesus taught and modeled. Beginning in September, we spent four weeks exploring what “following Jesus” means: accepting the invitation to follow, following in community with others, putting love first, making disciples. In October we took up the Christian practice of “Welcoming All:” welcoming others as God welcomes us (revisiting the story of Creation and seeing how invitation and blessing are at the heart of our faith tradition), seeing Christ in others (responding with compassion to the needs of others), discerning and claiming our own ways of welcome, and challenging “othering.” Our focal practices for the next two months are: **Living in Community** and **Hope**.

Sunday, November 7: **Feast and Listen Together** (1st week of our “Live in Community” unit/practice). Exodus 13:3-10; Acts 2:41-47. Communities of faith, like other communities, often practice their faith around tables of food. “Breaking bread” is not just a way to nourish our bodies, it’s a celebration of who we are and how we are called to live together. It is no wonder that the first step of “Living in Community” is sharing a meal. Communion Sunday.

Sunday, November 14: **Gather Across Differences** (2nd week of our “Live in Community” unit/practice). 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Diversity and difference are not new to the Christian Church. The earliest Christians overcame great divisions and celebrated a unity not based on sameness but on the Spirit. As we dive into this month’s practice (“Live in Community”) we revisit the church in Corinth that wrestled with all the same questions we do, among them, how to be one in Christ when we are not one in much else!

Sunday, November 21: **Uplift Those in Need** (3rd week of our “Live in Community” unit/practice). Deuteronomy 24:17-22; Acts 6:1-7. On this Sunday before the national celebration of Thanksgiving, we are reminded that our harvest and our community gatherings are meant for all, especially those in need. Gratitude leads to giving. Celebration leads to serving. Our great God blesses us to be a blessing.

Sunday, November 28: **Hear Hope** (1st week of our “Hope” unit/practice). Isaiah 9:2-7. This First Sunday of Advent we hear the prophet Isaiah proclaiming words of hope, for an ancient people in crisis, for us and for the world. Hope is both an attitude and a practice. Hope changes us and therefore how we live. Today we light the candle named “Hope,” and begin again our attending to hope and where it points us.

Kingston Congregational Church Prayers of the People Request Cards

In an effort to bring a more interactive and engaging Prayers of the People time to worship, Rev. Jan and the Deacons are introducing the use of Prayer Request Cards. These cards may be filled out at any time during worship and will be collected by the Ushers during the Offertory. The Ushers will give the cards to the Deacon of the Month who will then share them with the congregation both in person and on-line. Prayer requests may continue to be emailed to the Deacon of the Month or Rev. Jan prior to Sunday Service. Look for the Prayer Request Cards in the pews beginning in November.

Advent Wreaths

During the month of November, the Fellowship Board will be taking orders for either fully assembled Advent Wreaths or kits only (kits include floral foam ring, candle holders, and candles - you provide the greens). Wreaths or kits may be picked up Sunday, November 28, 2021. An order form will be available in Fellowship Hall on the Harvest Table, or you may contact Ann Lenox to place your order (401-714-7638, or adlenox@hotmail.com).

Fully assembled wreaths go for \$25.00, kits go for \$15.00.

Soup Sunday

The Board of Fellowship is hosting a Soup Sunday and we hope everyone can join us after worship on November 21, 2021, in the Fellowship Hall. We would appreciate donations of desserts but come for soup and salad whether you have time to bake a dessert or not. If you have any questions, you may contact Andrea Richardson at 792-8316 or arichardson120@yahoo.com.

A Word about Scrip

As the Christmas season is approaching rapidly, please consider purchasing a Scrip Gift Card to use for your online shopping, or as a stocking stuffer, or to give to a teacher, mailman, Amazon delivery person, etc. Please order early as it takes a couple of weeks to receive the gift cards that are not purchased regularly by the KCC Scrip Team.

For your shopping convenience, we carry Amazon, Dunkin' Donuts, Starbuck's, Walmart and Marshalls gift cards every week. We can order gift cards such as Target, LLBean & Land's End to name a few.

Thank you,
KCC Scrip Team

Blue Jean Sunday November 7th

Everyone is encouraged to stay after church on November 7th to help the Trustees and Andy spruce up the church and grounds.

Helping Hands Ministry

The Helping Hands ministry is well underway since its inception last month. So far we have 9 volunteers offering support in the areas of meal preparation, grocery shopping or driving persons to needed destinations. This past month we have delivered 2 meals and one bouquet of flowers (not including altar flowers). If you are aware of a need in our community that has not been met, please contact Erin Trodson (474-7695) or Carol MacKenzie (862-2962).

If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out the HH form on our website or on the table in Fellowship Hall. Thank you to all who contribute to this special ministry of our church.

Funding Forward and “Beneficent Banquets”

Our congregation’s year-long participation in Luther Seminary’s “Funding Forward” program continues and KCC will be running its two-part Funding Forward “experiment” in November. Our experimental project is comprised of a ticketed dining experience (the “banquet”) in which a small group (8-12) joins with a local chef for hands-on instruction in the preparation of a special menu and then the enjoyment of sharing a meal together. Proceeds from the tickets for the Beneficent Banquet will go to address food insecurity in our region. Our first “Beneficent Banquet” will benefit the Jonnycake Center’s food programs and a November “Friendsgiving” here at KCC, open to all, and resourced by local farms and food rescue agencies, such as “We Share Hope” (www.wesharehope.org).

Our first Beneficent Banquet is scheduled for Sunday, November 14, 4-8pm. Tickets are \$100 (all profit donated to address hunger in South County). Our distinguished local chef will be our own Christina Ross, Johnson and Wales trained chef, chef/owner of three restaurants in Indonesia where Christina is from. She will be demonstrating and leading the group preparation of cuisine from Indonesia and the Spice Islands, featuring: Coconut Spice Island chicken, with Festive Yellow Rice, Orek Tempe in Palm Sauce, mixed vegetable Gado Gado with peanut sauce salad, plus a special dessert and cocktail/mocktail. Reservations can be made by contacting the church office at office@kingconchurch.org or 401-783-5330.

Our first Community Meal, a “Friendsgiving,” is scheduled for Saturday, November 20, 6-8pm. All are welcome for this sit-down, family-style dinner with some traditional and some new favorites. There will be 3 seatings for dinner, at 6, 6:30 and 7 pm. With ingredients sourced from local farms and food rescue agencies, such as Branden Family Farm and “We Share Hope,” we open our KCC arms (and kitchen/hall) to our Kingston community to feed body and soul! Reserve your seat by contacting the church office at office@kingconchurch.org or 401-783-5330.

Jonnycake Center Donations

Now that we are able to gather back in our sanctuary, the Missions Board is resuming our practice of collecting non-perishable food and paper goods for the Jonnycake Center. Baskets will be on the altar for your donations starting the first Sunday in November. Another way we can support the beloved community! Thank you.

Holiday Gift Cards Requested

The Domestic Violence Resource Center (DVRC) of South County is requesting help for their Holiday Giving Program, known as "Mary Gregory's Gifts of Hope". Your donations of gift cards will go directly to their clients and empower them by being able to shop on their own for their loved ones for the holidays. Gift cards from any store are appreciated but some favorites include Stop & Shop, Shaw’s, gas cards, Walmart, Marshalls, CVS and Walgreens. Consider buying gift cards from Scrip and assist KCC at the same time! You can deliver the cards or mail them to DVRC at 61 Main Street, Wakefield, RI 02879. They are requesting donations be delivered by December 1.

Called to Care: a New Caring/Visiting Ministry

The Board of Membership is reconstituting its Caring and Visiting Committees under a new name: *Called to Care*. *Called to Care* is a program initiated by the United Church of Christ in which local churches train and send out *Called to Care* visitors under the direction of a coordinator and/or pastor (<http://uccfiles.com/pdf/CTC-Resource-Description.pdf>). Janice Trotter and Rev. Jan are organizing the launching of a *Called to Care* team for KCC.

Who:

Visitors:

Do you feel a call to companion and support people, especially older persons, who need a friendly face and a kind, listening ear? Would you like to learn some basic companioning and caregiving skills (that you can use anywhere)? Do you have 1-2 hours a month you could give to visiting a senior or member in need of support in their residence? Are you ready to enjoy and receive the gift of wonderful people's company? You may be a perfect fit for *Called to Care*!

Visitees:

Our congregation includes members/friends who have limited ability to attend church or who have a desire for more contact with church members to foster caring relationships. Visitees are individuals who could use another friendly face and caring person to offer supportive presence.

What:

Called to Care visitors will be asked to make a minimum of one visit/month, requiring approximately an hour (along with travel time). You will need to have your own transportation. You will be assigned a visitee (who has asked to be visited by a *Called to Care* visitor) and make contact with them to arrange a day/time for your visit. You'll travel to their residence and spend about an hour (more or less) visiting, with a focus on friendship and support.

Called to Care is meant to supplement the pastoral ministry of the church, not replace it. The Pastor will still be visiting congregants with a focus on those in urgent need and crisis, such as hospitalization, bereavement, life crises. *Called to Care* visitors will focus on congregants who need/want non-urgent care and companionship.

When:

Rev. Jan will lead three-session training for *Called to Care* visitors in January 2022, on Sundays after church: January 9, 16, 23. Attend these three, 1-hour meetings to get oriented to the *Called to Care* program, (re)learn some basic companioning and caregiving skills (like active listening, positive regard, clear boundaries), and get ready to make your first visits.

How:

To participate in *Called to Care* you need to call or email Rev. Jan: revjan@kingconchurch.org; commit for one year to one visit per month; attend the January training meetings; have your own transportation and be able to visit members in their residences.

Goal:

To extend the pastoral caregiving of our congregation and maintain active and caring connection with all members, especially those who might need emotional and spiritual support.

"Casting Call for Christmas Pageant"

by Michelle Girasole

I think all would agree that it has been too long since KCC has seen a Christmas pageant. So this year, the show will go on! We will get creative and, putting our new technology to work, our kids will get to shine in sharing the true meaning of Christmas! Lori Ann Hiener and I would like to invite all KCC children to sign up. We know that our families are very busy, so we're going to make this very easy, so that everyone can participate! We will be holding video sessions, so that your family can come to the church, get dressed up, read their parts, and then we will create a movie for the "big screen" to debut on December 12th, during our worship time. If your kids would like to be part of it, please reach out via email to me, at Michelle.Girasole@gmail.com, so we can make plans that work for your schedule. Thanks so much!

Women's Fellowship

* Sunshine: Carolyn Barwise has done a great job for many, many years and is now passing the job to Judy Potter! Thank you both! Judy will do birthdays but also let her know if someone needs a get well or sympathy card: jpotter097@gmail.com or phone 789-6215.

* There will be **no** Gingerbread House Decorating Party this year – just didn't seem "safe enough".

* We will have a *Monday, November 15 Meeting at 6 pm--* via Zoom

* There will be Christmas in Kingston on Saturday, December 4th. Women's Fellowship will **not** be in charge, we will not have our usual cookies/fudge/gifts events or the \$\$ from it. More information to follow.

The Fellowship Committee is going to do soup and salad and everyone is invited to help them. More information to follow, especially at our November 15 meeting.

KCC Church Treasurer

The office of Church Treasurer, an important and necessary position in our church, needs to be filled. The Treasurer's duties include:

1. Providing a monthly Treasurer's Report to the Church Council, and to the Boards of Finance and Trustees.
2. Having charge of church funds, receiving all monies, signing checks and keeping open and true accounts of all financial transactions with the help of Shirley Schock, the financial secretary.

If you are interested in serving in this position, please contact Doug Kraus. Doug will be happy to speak with anyone interested in learning more about the Treasurer's duties. Doug is a past Treasurer and member of the Board of Finance with much experience in the finances of KCC.