

The Spire

From Your Pastor

May 2022

El Camino

As you may have read in last month's *Spire*, I will be away from mid-May to mid-June fulfilling a long-time hope of walking El Camino de Santiago. The Camino, as it's known as, is an old and extensive pilgrimage route across northern Spain ending in Santiago where it is said the remains of St. James, Jesus' brother, came to rest. Pilgrims have been making this devotional trek for centuries. Renewed interest in the Camino arose in the 20th century and now thousands of religious pilgrims and non-religious trekkers walk the Camino every year. I am going because I find the blending of a spiritual and physical journey to be very powerful. I am a hiker and backpacker from childhood (my father introduced me to the Sierra Nevada mountains in California when I was six) and these last few decades I have come to love long distance cycling as well. My very first sabbatical in 2006 included a weeklong pilgrimage called "the Scottish Cross," in which a few dozen of us walked with a large wooden cross through the highlands of Scotland over Holy Week to arrive on the isle of Iona for Easter. I found then that pilgrimage is as much about spirit as it is body. It's about giving yourself to a journey and being fully present in all senses to where the path takes you. While I knew our itinerary I didn't know, and couldn't predict, where God was leading me. That particular pilgrimage was full of joy, pain, loneliness, companionship, rejection, acceptance, and finally, as always, God's amazing grace. I'd love to tell you more about it sometime. But I learned then that while I might have a map, God has the journey. And I learned that I can pray with my feet as well as my mind. While crossing a snow laden mountain pass, I crafted a walking prayer/meditation: "Walking, I walk in God. Every step I take, I take with Christ. By the Spirit, I follow the path." I repeated this to myself to the tempo of my footsteps. I recommend it to you whether you are walking around the block or for days on end. But even just walking will do. Remember how Jesus conducted his ministry: on foot! There is something in the walking itself that lends itself to deeper trust and contemplative presence. I hope to find that as I walk through Spain. I will be carrying you all in my heart and in my prayers. I thank you for the time and space to be a pilgrim. I will look forward to sharing some stories and nuggets from El Camino with you upon my return.

Grace/Peace, Rev. Jan

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

May's Deacon of the Month is Carolyn Eldridge (grauntiec@yahoo.com)

Rev. Jan Away in May-June

As part of her pastoral call agreement with KCC, the congregation and Rev. Jan agreed to an additional two weeks of paid leave (on top of annual vacation and continuing ed leave) to fulfil Rev. Jan's previously made plans to walk the Camino de Santiago in Spain. The Camino is an ancient pilgrimage route across northern Spain that ends in Santiago, the traditional resting place of St. James, the brother of Jesus ("Santo Iago"). In medieval times pilgrims made the long trek (the traditional "French Route" starts at the border with France and proceeds almost 500 miles to Santiago) to fulfil religious vows, seek dispensations, make special prayer petitions. In the last 100 years, the Camino has been rediscovered (though never completely lost) and it was Rev. Jan's plan to walk it over the course of a sabbatical she would have been granted in 2021 if she had remained at her previous church. Wishing to keep this promise to herself, she negotiated the additional time off with the Search Committee who added it to the Call Agreement the congregation voted to approve on August 16, 2020. As the pandemic precluded travel in 2021, she is fulfilling her plan this spring. She will be gone from May 10-June 15, appending accrued vacation time to her granted leave. While she is away, Sunday worship leadership will be covered by members and friends of KCC and pastoral emergencies (should there be any) will be covered by the Rev. Pat Liberty. Rev. Jan will keep a journal and send (at least) weekly images back to KCC to be included in the weekly e-newsletter so you can track her progress.

Sundays in May 2022:

May 15 – Tom Brillat

May 22 – Mike McMahon

May 29 – Margaret Bradley

June 5 – Jackie Camm with Bill Bartels offering Communion

June 12 – Brook Ross

June 19 – Frank Lenox

Stewardship

On behalf of the Stewardship Team I would like to thank all those who have submitted a pledge for the new fiscal year starting 1 July 2022 and ending 30 June 2023.

This year's campaign was successful and eventful starting with a luncheon, speakers and fulfilment culminating on Sunday 20 March with a blessing. We have received pledges from 87% of the members of the congregation and over 89% of last year's budget. Your pledges are "Rooted in Love" to grow our community. I ask everyone who has not submitted a pledge to please do so.

Thank you,
The Stewardship Team

The Kingston Village Spring Fair Returns on May 21st!

For more than 50 years, the people of Kingston Village have gathered together to welcome Spring with a traditional village fair. Come stroll the village and visit our unique blend of community groups and small businesses, each offering a range of opportunities to decorate the house and garden. Hear the village band. Visit the book sale. Take a ride on a fire truck. And, spend some time in our very own jail cell. At the church this year, we have lots going on, too!

- FOOD (9am - 1pm) Carolena's Bakery from Bonnet Shores is going to be here with breakfast and lunch items throughout the day. There will be fresh baked pastries, egg cups, stromboli and sweet treats for sale. And, KCC will offer coffee, seltzer and water as well.

- GOD'S CREATION GARDEN & SPECIAL GUESTS (9 am - 3pm) In the courtyard, our church school will be spreading the word about butterfly gardens, and handing out rose milkweed seedlings to take home and plant in your own yard. We will have a table with health and lifestyle books available for a donation, with a special guest appearance from local radio personality, Patricia Raskin, who has interviewed many of the authors of those books on her podcast, The Patricia Raskin Show / Positive Living Radio. Heather Ross, who works with the homeless in Providence, will also have a table to raise awareness for her program, "Turning Surviving into Thriving".

- TOURS - Elizabeth McNab will be giving public tours of our historic building, with the sanctuary, built in 1820, being a centerpiece of Kingston Village for two centuries! Come hear her wonderful stories and ask questions.

See all that is happening that day at <https://www.kingstonvillagefair.org>.

Update on The Witness Stones Project

We are happy to announce that Rev. Jan was granted a “Strengthening Ministry Grant,” through Duke Divinity School that will help to pay for our KCC Witness Stones Project that we will be engaging in, in partnership with The Compass School, and, we hope, other community groups and individuals. The grant will cover the expenses of the Witness Stones Project staff and researchers who will help us use primary sources to tell the story of an enslaved person related to our church and honor their contribution to our community with a memorial stone. Training for the project will take place in the fall and the memorial ceremony in spring of 2023. We’re excited to have this generous gift to seed our efforts to celebrate a fuller story of our church and its history.

Want To Join the Chimes Choir?

The Music Committee would like to start the Chimes Choir again and we would like to know if anyone is interested in playing. Anyone from age 8 on up can play. The chimes are lots of fun and not too difficult. Knowing how to read music is nice, but the choir will only play about 4 times a year. We will also be needing a volunteer to direct the choir, as well. Please consider joining the chimes choir. See a Music Board member (Susan Snow, Margaret Bradley, Matt Simeone, and Cathy Lenox) if interested. Here's hoping we can again raise beautiful chimes in celebration.

From Rem Remington and the Board of Christian Education

I encourage everyone to try A.C.E.S. Adult Christian Education and Spirituality on Monday nights. If you don't try it you really are missing out on an opportunity to deepen your faith, get to know people a little better, and be inspired. Sessions are starting up again on Monday, May 2 via Zoom at 7-8 p.m. Discussions for the next four weeks will be on the practice of joy. As always, feel free to join one or all sessions as you are able.

DRAFT

**The Annual Congregational Meeting
of
The Kingston Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

Will be Held in the Sanctuary & via Zoom
Following the Worship Service

Sunday, June 26, 2022

10:45 a.m.

Frank Lenox, Secretary

Tentative Agenda

1. Call to Order Joyce Stevos, Moderator
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of Congregational Meeting of January 23, 2022
4. Report of the President Louise Pearson
5. Report of the Treasurer Sharon Davis
 - *Presentation of Budget 2022-2023
6. Reports of Boards and Committees
 - *Report of Nominating Committee
7. Old Business
 - *Funding Program: Beneficent Dinners and Community SuppersRev Dr. Jan Gregory-Charpentier
8. New Business
9. Pastor's Comments & Closing Prayer Rev. Jan Gregory-Charpentier
10. Adjourn

Women's Fellowship

May 2022

Dear KCC Women and Friends,

We are still here! Like all life with Covid we are having to adapt and reinvent. Women's Fellowship is struggling to continue as we do not have a President or a full board and we are all getting older! We had a few Zoom meetings but we haven't been able to have our monthly Monday night meetings. In addition, we were not able to do the Cookie Sale at Christmas in Kingston and we are *NOT* holding a bake sale at the Kingston Fair on May 21.

The bake sales were fundraisers as well as donations at our meetings, which means this appeal letter is it and whatever funds are given will be donated to our charities after discussion and a vote at our Annual Meeting on Sunday June 12th, following coffee hour at 11:00.

Our previous gifts have been to: Southern RI Volunteers, SC Church Women United, Habitat for Humanity, RI Food Bank, Jonnycake Center, Domestic Violence Center, Camp Ruggles, Welcome House, Adoption RI and Cane Child Development Center, and Church World Service. We also have had an occasional special project or something for "this old church" and the total has varied from \$1800-\$2700.

Please understand that whatever you can give to Women's Fellowship will be appreciated and we will vote to divide it up and give it away!

Please make checks payable to: KCC Women's Fellowship and use the enclosed envelope to put it in the collection plate or to mail.

Hope to see you at the annual meeting if you are able. We will also discuss any plans for the fall and next year.

Thank you for your support,

Helen Rowe-Drake, VP
Cindy Buxton, Secretary
Karen Tucker, Treasurer