

The Spire

From Your Pastor

September 2023

Parable Moments

This summer a small group has been meeting after church to discuss the book Close to the Heart: A Guide to Personal Prayer by Margaret Silf. In one of the chapters titled “Finding God in All Things,” the author writes about what she calls *parable moments*, times when “...something will cross your path or catch our attention that will show you something of the nature and mystery of God.” Akin to Jesus’ parables that employ everyday images (a mustard seed, a wheat field, a woman sweeping her house), our parable moments come right out of our day to day lives, when God uses the ordinary things of life to teach or show us something deeper. Margaret Silf writes: “I would suggest to you that everything—every creature, person and situation—has the power to reveal something, however small, of what God is like, if, as Jesus said, we have eyes to see and ears to hear.” In our Sunday discussion we shared times and places, people and animals, who have provided us with parable moments. I shared about what for me felt like a lived parable: our July Community Meal.

The last Sunday of July, the KCC Community Meal Team that Carolyn Eldridge and I captain, Team One, was up for our second opportunity to prepare, serve and share a homemade meal with guests. Team One inaugurated our new KCC Community Meal ministry in April. We had a great time prepping a delicious Chicken Piccata meal for 40 —and served TWO guests (not from our own congregation). Nevertheless, we counted the premiere a success! I had heard that at meals in May and June the number of guests had gone up a little each time. Word has been spreading.

On July 30, again, Team One prepped, served and shared a meal (burgers on the grill, three different, freshly made summer salads, corn on the cob, watermelon and strawberry shortcake) for 40 guests. And we had 40 guests! The crowd that night was a wonderful mix of KCC and wider community guests, some having seen our signs on the street and walked in, some having been invited by members, some having read our flyers distributed at the food pantry and the Dinner Table (PDCC’s meal ministry). There were elders and families, students and couples. Everyone, including Team One, pulled up a chair, enjoyed good food made with love, and shared companionship with old and new friends. It felt like a living parable! A small slice of the Kingdom of God! There were no “haves” and “have nots.” On the Facebook post advertising our Community Meal we included the tagline: “Because everyone needs to eat.” And we all did. One of the important practices of our Community Meal is that everyone eats. After the cooks and servers help guests fill their plates, we fill our own and join them at the table. It truly is a community meal.

For me it was a parable moment! I went home elated, feeling I had caught a glimpse of what Jesus intended his followers to practice: open-hearted welcome and generous sharing. There are many, many parable moments all around us, all around our church and our world. They are moments when God uses what's at hand to speak love and truth into our lives. You don't have to be a Christian, a church member, or even religious to experience them. But for those who have the ears to hear and the eyes to see, we lift up our hearts in glad thanksgiving for these mustard seed-sized reminders of God's love.

Grace&Peace, Rev. Jan

Upcoming Sunday Worship Themes:

Sunday, September 3: Guest preacher and worship leader, the Rev. Kevin Munroe.

Sunday, September 10: *Rally Sunday!* Welcome back to our “program year,” our choir and Church School! Matthew 18:15-20. Jesus instructs his followers how to deal with conflicts between them. What?! Church members treating each other badly?! Perish the thought! But really, our church is only as healthy as its ability to resolve conflicts. Jesus knew that. This Sunday and the next three we'll be talking about “Tools for the Road,” reading Jesus' teaching stories and picking up some pointers on how to live our own lives by his examples. Ice cream social following worship! When else are you encouraged to fill up on ice cream at 10:30 AM?!

Sunday, September 17: Matthew 18:21-35. As important as it is to speak directly and honestly about conflicts (see previous Sunday's reading), it's important to practice forgiveness, our “tool” for this Sunday. Peter thinks he's being generous offering to forgive his brother or sister seven times, but Jesus ups the ante: “seven times seven times,” in other words, keep on forgiving! Let's talk about what that means!

Sunday, September 24: Matthew 20:1-16. Jesus' wonderful and confounding parable of the workers late to the field. We so want God's blessings and love for us to reflect how “deserving” we are (and, if we're honest, how undeserving “they” are). We all practice relative grace, except for God who practices unconditional grace. Darn it!

Sunday, October 1: Matthew 21:28-32. The parable of the Two Sons, one says “yes,” but doesn't do what his father asks. One says, “no,” but does. Jesus seems to care more about what we do than what we say. Looking and sounding faithful are no match for living faithfully. Jesus tells this parable to the Pharisees—and to us.

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

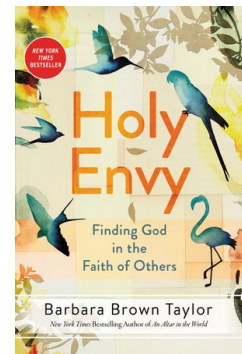
September's Deacon of the Month is Amy Monahan (amypmonahan287@yahoo.com)

In Sympathy

The congregation expresses deepest condolences to Steve Letcher and the Letcher family on the death of his wife, Tina Letcher, who died on July 16th. A memorial service will be held on November 18th.

Adult Christian Education and Spirituality: ACES

This fall ACES will use the book Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others by Barbara Brown Taylor, best-selling author/Episcopal priest/college professor. In Holy Envy, Taylor shares relatable stories from her World Religions class at Piedmont College, delving into personal perspectives and humorous anecdotes as she helps her students (and herself) to appreciate—and even envy—the beauty of religions that aren't their own. You can order a used copy [here](#) or at your favorite bookseller. ACES will meet after church on Sundays beginning Sept. 24th and continue for six more Sundays through Nov. 5th. This ACES group will be offered as a 'hybrid' group, providing Zoom access for those who can't be at church in person.



Reading Schedule:

Sept. 24: introduction and Chapter 1

October 1: Chapters 2 and 3

October 8: Chapter 4 and 5

October 15: Chapters 6 and 7

October 22: Chapters 8 and 9

October 29: Chapters 10 and 11

Nov. 5: Chapter 12 and Epilogue



"Circles" is a new concept in the life of KCC. Join a group of 8-10 other adults for monthly meetings that combine fellowship and faith sharing. Meet in members home for a time of sharing and deepening, gently facilitated by a trained layperson. The goal of KCC Circles is to provide a community within a community where new and old friends can deepen their connections to one another and to God. Half of the monthly Circle time will be a chance to check in, update one another on your lives and deepen your acquaintance. The second half of the Circle is facilitated faith sharing around a topic, theme or activity the Circle members have chosen. Circles will convene for 6 months (6 monthly meetings), after which members have the choice to continue or not. Circles will provide those who are new with quick and ready connections with other KCC members/friends, as well as offer existing members and friends a way to deepen and grow current connections. Circles will begin convening in the fall.

If you are interested in joining a Circle or learning more, please [email Rev. Jan.](#)

Don't Forget Scrip!

Bring your checkbook and shopping list to church this Sunday! See the Scrip volunteers in Fellowship Hall before and after worship.

Did you know every time you buy a gift card through our Scrip program you contribute money to the church? Our Scrip proceeds help fund our ongoing programs (like church school and worship), care for our building (like fixing the roof), and our mission outreach (like Doctors without Borders and Habitat for Humanity).

Let's make a goal of raising our previous year total Scrip proceeds (~\$4,000) by 100%. Can we reach \$8,000 in '23-'24?



Let's ring the chimes! Calling all persons (any age) interested in ringing chimes: Rev Cheryl von Ehrenkrook is a handbell/chime ringer and director and would like to revive KCC's chime program. Do you have any ringing experience? Come join in! Do you have some ability to read music, but no ringing experience? Come join in, and we'll teach you to ring!

Chime Camp will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Rehearsals will be held on the Thursday nights that the Chancel Choir is NOT rehearsing.

Please contact Rev Cheryl for more information or to express interest in ringing at revcherylvone@gmail.com or 401-500-1176.

Welcome our new Director of Communications, Tori Hunt!



Tori began in her new position with us on Sunday, August 20. She is a Narragansett native, a URI graduate, with a major in Communications and a specialty in social media. Tori has been running communications and social media most recently for the Diocese of Providence, so is familiar with church life and activities. When you see her in the balcony on Sunday mornings at the Tech Table, make sure and give her a warm welcome! Going forward, if you have events, activities, opportunities to be communicated within or outside the church, contact Tori at communications@kingconchurch.org. In addition to overseeing our livestreaming on Sundays, Tori will be editing and sending the KCC weekly E-Newsletter and managing our website. She will also help us promote our activities on social media and the press.

Warm Welcome House in Need of Donations

Welcome House shelter for the homeless in Wakefield, has now combined with Warm Welcome in Westerly and is called Warm Welcome House of Peace Dale. Our church has a long history with Welcome House since its beginning.

They are currently in need of the following donations: FOOD: canned or frozen food, fresh produce or vegetables, milk, juices, bottles water or coffee; TOILETRIES: toothpaste, toothbrush, floss, shaving supplies, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, nail clippers, chap stick, wash cloths; LINENS: all linens must be **new**. They cannot except used linens or blankets. Twin size bed sheets, blankets, pillows, and comforters; OTHER: paper towels, napkins, new men's and women's underwear (M-X-large). All furniture and appliance donations must be approved by staff beforehand. Please send pictures of your potential furniture or appliance donations to shazelton@warmcenter.org. They are no longer accepting any clothing donations.

Any donations you are able to make to our neighbors who need our help, are greatly appreciated.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
Your Board of Missions and Social Justice

Edesia Tour

The Board of Missions is going on a tour of EDESIA to see the process of manufacturing the RUTF (Ready to Use Therapeutic Food) Plumpy Nut at their facility in Quonset on Wednesday, September 20th at 5:30 pm. We have three open reservations. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Helen 789-8910 and carpooling is possible.

Women's Fellowship News

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6pm on Monday, September 18th for a Potluck Supper. We will be joined by Sarah Hazelton who is the new Manager at Warm Welcome House and she will share with us their news and needs. All women are welcome; come even if you are not able to bring food. Help needed to Hostess and for Devotions; contact Helen. Do you have changes to your listing in our WF directory or want to be added?

Contact Helen: 401-789-8910 or luckystarllamas@verizon.net

Summer 2023 Beneficent Banquet

The Beneficent Banquet team would like to thank all the guests and volunteers that participated last Monday night. It was a wonderful night of friendship, learning new cooking skills and feasting together on a delicious 4-course meal. Special thanks to guest chef, Ben Charpentier!

Our meal was prepared in Fellowship Hall, with guests learning how to bread cod filets, coating shrimp with a pistachio crust, roasting vegetables, slicing slaw, making delicious sauces for dipping, and assembling a sweet blueberry crumble for dessert. The table was set in the cozy Fireplace Room and guests were served each of the courses they prepared, savoring each one as much as they savored the company of one another.

If you missed it, plan to buy tickets for our next event in November, with Chef Jack Piedmont from Cap'n Jack's restaurant in Matunuck. With your support, we are able to offer our free meals to the community every month.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

Speaking of our Community Meals, if you haven't experienced one yet, please plan to join us this fall.

(Volunteers always welcome to set up, cook and/or clean up!)

We feel so blessed to share a fresh-cooked meal, meet new friends from the neighborhood and sit and eat together for an evening. The upcoming dates are:



Join us at Kingston Congregational Church
2610 Kingstown Road, Kingston, RI 02852

Sunday, 6:00 p.m.

August 27th	September 24th	October 24th
November 19th*	December 17th*	

**Note: Normally the last Sunday of each month,
our last two in 2023 are earlier, due to the holidays.*

We look forward to offering warm hospitality to anyone in the community that would enjoy a free, fresh-cooked meal. Hope to see you there!

Questions, call the church office: 401-783-5330

Habitat for Humanity



On Saturday, July 15, seven volunteers from KCC spent the morning helping with construction of three new Habitat homes in Hopkinton. We had fun and learned some new skills but the best part was knowing we were helping to make home ownership a reality for some South County families.



From the Director of Christian Education

Thank
you ❤️

to all of you who volunteered to help with Activity Time this summer. Your dedication to the King Cong Kids is greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you are interested in helping with the church school throughout the year. Thanks again! Ms. Cindy



Church School Happenings

Sept 3rd- Bring your backpacks and devises to church to be blessed before going back to school. This event is also for

teachers, principals, professors and school administrators

Sept 11th- Rally Sunday- First Day of Church School

Join us for Ice Cream after church- provided by the Fellowship Board.

Sept. 24th-Join Ms. Cindy at the Intentional Fest- A Celebration of Wellness and Peace -located at Saugatucket Park- Paint Peace Rocks 12-5pm - rain date: Oct. 1st.

September 17th 4-6pm



Remember to always reach out with questions or suggestions to dirce@kingconchurch.org

Theme: Water

Join us for Fun, Faith and Fellowship and invite your family, friends, and neighbors. A sign-up sheet for helpers will be posted on the Harvest Table. Your help is needed with set up, activity stations, meal preparation and clean up.

Two KCCers Attend the United Church of Christ Synod: Alyssa Hiener and Jay Thornber

Here are Jay and Alyssa's reflections on their time at Synod (the every two-year national gathering of the UCC, this year in Indianapolis).

Jay:

Let me start this with the fact that I'm extremely grateful for KCC's funding of my trip to Youth Synod; this experience taught me priceless lessons and morals. When I stepped on the plane to Indianapolis, I was full of wonder. My mind swirled with all the possible outcomes of this trip. Would I meet important people? Would I come closer to God? Maybe I would form long lasting friendships? The answer, in fact, was all of them. For me, Synod has taken the role of a mentor, teaching me how to be a leader and challenging my once concrete beliefs. Issues that I thought were easily answered soon held a new challenge. Layers of thoughts piled on to my brain; creating a mental lasagna of sorts. Speakers such as Ibram X. Kendi and Ralen Robinson forced me to confront my internal prejudice and assisted me in altering my problematic views. I was offered a support system that far outweighed my expectations, and friends that will last a lifetime. I rarely encounter members of UCC my age, and meeting the adolescents who share my views is essential to my development as a child of God. My relationship with the Lord is not optional for me; I strive to be matching his every step as I stroll down the road of life. Youth Synod has helped me along this path, as it has brought me closer to God, myself, and my brothers and sisters in the Church. For that, I'm forever in debt to KCC for this opportunity.

Alyssa:

Although I attended Synod in 2019, I was still extremely anxious and uncertain leading up to the trip. I knew Jay was coming but we weren't very close and I was afraid I was going to feel very alone and have no one to talk to. As soon as I met the SNEUCC Youth group, I knew this was not the case. We were almost instantly laughing and sharing various stories that created deep bonds. Being a youth chaperone, I wasn't entirely sure what that was going to entail or if I would get along with the other, older chaperones. We definitely faced challenges the first day with uncomfortable living situations and, personally, finding my own voice. I knew that a lot of youth may have been strongly encouraged to attend by parents, guardians, or their church. For me, I begged to have the opportunity to attend the 34th Synod. This made me a bit unsure when beginning conversations because I wasn't sure who would take them seriously and who would not care at all. I spent a lot of time reaching out to my mom for guidance because I was unsure who I could turn to as we were all so new to each other. She kept encouraging me to speak up and let my light shine. One of the youth worship services themes was labels and how other



people box you in with them so that you are afraid to let those colors show. And that service truly got me thinking about letting my true light shine. So, I finally spoke up and explained that I was feeling a level of disrespect because this trip is so important to me and other youth were making fun of it and not taking it seriously as it is meant to be. Once I spoke out, I felt a lot freer and more confident to no longer hide behind an unrecognizable face. I truly enjoyed participating in the homelessness workshops and working to break the stereotypes surrounding it. I truly see homelessness in a different perspective now that we dove deep and recognized root causes while relating them to our own lives. I had always looked at homeless people and tried not to make eye contact but now I feel so much more educated and empowered to recognize and help rather than ignore them. Some of the resolutions we discussed were very large-scale problems that would take a lot of effort, time, and contribution to change even slightly. But helping the homeless is something I can do now and on my own. And helping them by giving leftover food to them when we passed made me feel so much better and not only that, but so much more hopeful for our future. I remember this one interaction and I don't think I will ever forget it, when I was passing an older man carrying drumsticks and holding a very small bag of belongings. I went up to him and gave him the food in my hands and told him to have a wonderful Fourth of July. I looked into his eyes to see he was extremely surprised I wanted to help. And he just looked at me and gave me the most beautiful smile that said more than words ever could. I am so grateful I got to experience the homelessness workshop and educate myself more about it. If I had chosen to be a delegate, I don't think I would have had that opportunity. And I believe God wanted me to learn more so I can spread it to my church and my community more. And I know God forgives me for all the times in my past when I viewed homeless persons through stereotypical eyes. And I know there was so much more to Synod, including Plenary and Worship, but during this reflection I truly wanted to reflect on how impactful it was to me to have been a Youth Chaperone and experience Youth @ Synod for one final year. God knows what God is doing.