

The Spire

From Your Pastor

February 2024

This coming month two “holy days” align: St. Valentine’s Day and Ash Wednesday on February 14th. Now, at first, one might not think these two days have anything in common. Valentine’s Day (secular culture dropped the “Saint ____”) has evolved to be about romance, chocolate and hearts. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is about sober things like humility, repentance, and self-denial. They don’t seem too aligned! Until you dive a little deeper. The Britannica website says: “Although there were several Christian martyrs named Valentine, the day may have taken its name from a priest who was martyred about 270 CE by the emperor Claudius II Gothicus. According to legend, the priest signed a letter ‘from your Valentine’ to his jailer’s daughter, whom he had befriended and, by some accounts, healed from blindness. Other accounts hold that it was St. Valentine of Terni, a bishop, for whom the holiday was named, though it is possible the two saints were actually one person. Another common legend states that St. Valentine defied the emperor’s orders and secretly married couples to spare the husbands from war. It is for this reason that his feast day is associated with love.”

Lent, and therefore Ash Wednesday, is also about love. It is about the love of God that invites us into deep, holy relationship, a relationship that changes us from the inside out. Lent—leading us to the Cross and the Empty Tomb—shows us the heart of God, full of compassion and mercy, willing to, as the Apostle Paul puts it, “bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.” The spirit of Lent can hardly be better summed up than in the words of the hymn “O Love that Will Not Let Me Go,” penned by George Mattheson, a Scottish minister, in 1882:

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee.
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.

O Light that follows all my way,
I yield my flick’ring torch to thee.
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine’s blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee.
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee.
I lay in dust, life’s glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red,
life that shall endless be.

All love is a gift of God for God is love. St. Valentine, St. Paul and saints through the ages have always said so.

Grace&Peace, Rev. Jan

Worship Services in February:

Sunday, February 4 – Mark 1:29-39

Halfway through chapter 1, Jesus' ministry is already full speed ahead! After the first couple of miracles, Mark says "the whole city was gathered around the door" (of where Jesus was staying). But Jesus takes this moment to slip off by himself to pray. The next morning when the disciples come looking for him to attend to the crowds still waiting, he instead informs them he is moving along to the next town, "for that is what I came to do." How often do we let what someone once called "the tyranny of the urgent" set our direction? How might prayer and solitude reground us in who we are what our true priorities should be? How do we keep first things first?

Sunday, February 11 – Mardi Gras/Jazz Sunday/Transfiguration – Mark 9:2-9

Every year, the Sunday before Lent is celebrated as Transfiguration Sunday, a story of light and vision before Jesus' path turns toward Jerusalem and the journey to the Cross. This year at KCC we are celebrating this special Sunday with a jazz service! The Block Island Sound Quartet will be joining us with traditional jazz worship music (think: "When the Saints Go Marching In" and "Precious Lord") and more. We will revel in the glorious mountain top moment Jesus shared with his closest disciples before we, too, begin our Lenten journey.

Wednesday, February 14 – Ash Wednesday – 7:00

The holy season of Lent begins today, marking our forty-day journey to the Cross and the Empty Tomb. At this service we share in the assurance that "From the earth you came, to the earth you will return. In God's hands you will remain." Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes are celebrated. Our music comes from the Taizé Community, featuring short, melodic, repeated prayer choruses that lead us into meditation.

Sunday, February 18 – First Sunday of Lent – Luke 5:1-11 and Psalm 25:1-10 - *Jesus Sought Me*

For the season of Lent, we are again using worship resources from A Sanctified Art Worship Arts Collaborative. The theme for the season is "Wandering Heart." Here is how the authors of the resource describe this year's Lenten focus: *"Like many of us, Peter has a wandering heart. His journey is not polished, or linear, or perfect, but he is always tethered to the love of God. When you look closely at Peter's story, you find Jesus at each step along the way—offering him abundance, catching him when he begins to sink, challenging him when he stands in the way, washing his feet, predicting his betrayal, and offering him agapē love. This Lent, we're joining Peter in figuring out faith. We're not idolizing or vilifying him; instead, we're hoping to wander alongside him, open to what we might learn about Jesus (and ourselves) by stepping in his shoes."* Each Sunday will also borrow a line from the beloved hymn, "Come, O Fount, of Every Blessing." This first Sunday of Lent we'll join Peter in the fishing boat when Jesus invites him to cast his nets deeper—with amazing results.

Sunday, February 25 – Second Sunday of Lent – Matthew 14:22-33 and Psalm 22:23-31 – *"Rescue Me from Danger"*

From A Sanctified Art: *"As a new disciple, perhaps Peter wants to prove himself. Boldly, in the middle of a storm, Peter steps out of the boat to join Jesus who is walking on top of the waves. He, too, walks on water until the wind shakes his trust and he begins to sink. Many of us know what it feels like to be thrown off balance, to feel as if we're sinking. Maybe this looks like doubt, unexpected change, too-busy seasons of life, devastating grief, or distance from God. In this story, we empathize with the desperation Peter feels as he cries out, and we pray for God to save us when we sink."*

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

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

Super Bowl Sunday

Feeling the mid-winter cabin fever? Join us for hot chili and warm fellowship on Super Bowl Sunday, February 11, following worship. We will be serving chili, salad, beverages and dessert in Fellowship Hall. Sponsored by the Board of Fellowship. Questions? Please contact Cindy Anderson at rhodymom3@gmail.com.



NEW Circle Launching in February!

On second Sundays a new KCC Circle will be starting up. KCC Circles meet for two hours monthly for six months, spending half their gathering in fellowship and half in faith sharing. The group decides together the focus of its second (faith sharing) hour. Each Circle is hosted by one member and facilitated by another. Circles are designed for 8-10 members who will commit to monthly attendance for six months. After six months, members can "re-up" or graciously depart. The

aim of the KCC Circles ministry is to offer smaller, more intimate community within the larger KCC community, to allow deepening of friendships and faith.

Second Sundays, starting February 11: Hosted by Cheryl Wilga; facilitated by Frank Lenox (Kingston).

If you are interested in participating in this Circle or want to be notified when the next starts, please contact Rev. Jan at revjan@kingconchurch.org or by calling the church office.

Director of Christian Education



It is with a lot of gratitude and a little sadness, we bid Cindy Dowgiallo goodbye as Director of Christian Education. Her last Sunday is/was January 28. We wish Cindy all the best in her full-time work in the South Kingstown School System and her personal endeavors. Thank you, Cindy, for all you've given us in the year and a half you've ministered with us as Director of Christian Education. Your practical organization, your warmth and your good humor have been a gift. We will miss you!

ACES: 2024 Journey of Transformation

As a church community who cares deeply about social justice, let us turn to our closest neighbors, the Narragansett people for inspiration. Our intent is to create an opportunity for a Journey of Transformation, both personally, as a church and as a community. A transformation that brings us closer together to our Narragansett neighbors in the Beloved Community we all strive for. A transformation, which is based on a love for, and a deeper understanding of all indigenous people. Our team has discussed a few ideas and we welcome your ideas:

- In February, an ACES book study led by the board of Christian Education
- In April, the Missions board is planning an Emig lecture focused on social justice for indigenous people today.
- This spring, we will study a UCC-recommended book, "*The Land Is Not Empty*" about Christianity and the Doctrine of Discovery.
- This summer, we plan to visit the Great Swamp monument, Tomaquag Museum, and the annual pow wow on Narragansett tribal lands
- We may even host a food tasting, hopefully catered by Sly Fox Den, too - a James Beard award winning Indigenous restaurant here in Charlestown.
- This fall, we will learn why Columbus Day and especially Thanksgiving, is a proclaimed "Day of Mourning" for the Indigenous people.
- A church Land Acknowledgement statement and use policies will be created.

We hope you will join us as we begin this journey, on each of the four Sundays in February, right after church, as we discuss this book, "*A Race to the Truth, Wampanoags and Colonization*." It is our hope that the author, Linda Coombs, will be our Emig lecturer in April. It's an insightful and quite lovely book that helps us to understand pre-colonization indigenous culture and also the negative effects that came with colonization, as well as some of the struggles that still exist today. Please see Jean Miller, if you'd like her to order you a book!

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship was cancelled due to the snow on January 7th. We will now plan to meet in the Library after church, at **11AM Sunday, February 4th**. All women in the church are invited. Please bring an item of significance to you, such as a "family treasure", and share with us what it means to you or a story about it. We look forward to learning more about each other through this experience. Connie Fitzelle and Cindy Buxton will host this meeting. We hope to see you then!

Knitters needed!

For many years now we have knit prayer shawls/lap robes for our confirmation class (and many of our graduating seniors). This year we have six confirmands and only four knitters. Some of us can do two before May but it would be nicer if we had help!

If you are interested or want to know more about it, please call Helen Rowe Drake at 789-8910.

Announcing the Winter Beneficent Banquet!!

The next Beneficent Banquet will be "A Night in Provence"! That's right, we have a real French Chef, Jean Marie Carret - a relative of Carol MacKenzie and Marilyn Mooney - who will be leading us in a French Cuisine Experience. (Oui! Oui! C'est Magnifique!!)

The date and time is still being settled, but watch for the announcement and tickets will be sure to sell out quickly! See Michelle G. if you'd like to volunteer. (We have one spot left.)

Join us at Kingston Congregational Church

Sunday, 6:00 p.m.

January 28

February 25

March 31



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

*"Better is a dinner of vegetables where love is
than a fattened ox and hatred with it." ~ Proverbs 15:17 NSRV*

As we prepare for our 2024 Community Dinner series, consider joining us. Whether you help by shopping for ingredients, cooking the meal, setting the table, sitting in conversation with our neighbors, or even just coming at the end to help clean up, it all matters.

With love from your KCC Meal Team Captains,
Rev. Jan, Carolyn E., Tracy H, Judy P., Michelle G. and Cindy B.

From Ms. Cindy

As most of you know, I have resigned as the Director of Christian Education and my last day was on Sunday, January 28th.

Thank you so much for welcoming me back to KCC and supporting me for the last 1 1/2 years. It was greatly appreciated.

KCC Concerts for March and April

KCC Concerts are exciting, eclectic, and always enjoyable. Open to all ages. Come experience great performances in a welcoming spot close to home!

On Friday March 1 at 7pm, KCC Concerts welcomes South County's own **Josh Schurman**. You may have seen Schurman play with bands like Greyhound Dream and Biscuit City; you may have caught one of his shows at Pump House Music Works or the Tavern Hall Club. A singer/guitarist for over fifty years, Josh Schurman has performed all over the USA. He draws on American country blues and folk traditions, which he has been mining since the early 1960s. Influenced by artists like Robert Johnson, Hank Williams, and Mississippi John Hurt, Schurman blends these styles into his own unforgettable songs. He'll be playing bluesy, country covers and his own great originals in our Fellowship Hall. Our KCC choir and instrumentalists will join Josh for some tunes.

Coming up Friday, April 5, 7pm: This month's KCC Concert features our Minister of Music **Eden Casteel**. She'll perform her one-woman cabaret show, "Kahn Artist: Madeline and Me" with pianist **Jim Rice**. It's the story of Eden's life, and how she was forever changed by watching a 30-second commercial featuring actress/singer Madeline Kahn. An open-mic follows the show.

At KCC Concerts, we'll be collecting canned goods/nonperishable food for Rhody Outpost on the URI campus. We'll also have snacks and drinks for sale to benefit Rhody Outpost.

Tickets on sale after services at KCC, and online via Eventbrite.



THE SEASON OF LENT AT KINGSTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Ash Wednesday, February 14:

- **“Ashes to Go” – 7 am to 9 am – KCC Parking Lot**
On your way to work or school, drive through for an Ash Wednesday blessing.
- **Ash Wednesday Worship – 7 pm – Sanctuary**
Taizé service featuring simple prayer songs that encourage deep reflection. Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes offered. Let’s begin the Lenten journey together!

Lenten Devotional for Individual Use:

Beginning with Ash Wednesday, this weekly devotional follows the scriptures of the *Wandering Heart* series through the Second Sunday of Easter. Each week offers: commentary, poetry, visual art, written reflections, hymns, and reflection prompts. Access online version [here](#). If you prefer a printed version, contact the church office.

A Zoom gathering will be offered on Monday nights, 7-8 pm for those who would like to share their thoughts and experiences with this Lenten devotional. Zoom meeting link: [here](#).

Sundays in Lent:

For the season of Lent, we are again using worship resources from A Sanctified Art Worship Arts Collaborative. The theme for the season is “Wandering Heart.” Here is how the authors of the resource describe our Lenten focus: “Like many of us, Peter has a wandering heart. His journey is not polished, or linear, or perfect, but he is always tethered to the love of God. When you look closely at Peter’s story, you find Jesus at each step along the way—offering him abundance, catching him when he begins to sink, challenging him when he stands in the way, washing his feet, predicting his betrayal, and offering him agapē love. This Lent, we’re joining Peter in figuring out faith. We’re not idolizing or vilifying him; instead, we’re hoping to wander alongside him, open to what we might learn about Jesus (and ourselves) by stepping in his shoes.” Each Sunday will also borrow a line from the beloved hymn, “Come, O Fount, of Every Blessing.”

NEW! “Simple Soup and Song” Tuesday Evenings in Lent: 5:00-6:30 pm in the Fireplace Room
(Starts February 20 through March 19)

Come enjoy a simple meal (a bowl of soup and bread) and a short vesper service featuring simple, prayerful songs and shared readings. All ages welcome. Rev. Jan and Eden Casteel leading.

THE SPIRE

February 2024

**Kingston Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
2610 Kingstown Road
Kingston, RI 02881**

Return Service Requested

Dated Material – Please Deliver Promptly

Mission Statement of the Kingston Congregational Church

**“We are a Christian Church that supports each person's spiritual journey
through the communal pursuit of worship, learning, and service.”**

(Voted on and approved by the Congregation on April 27, 2008)

Worship and Church School

9:30 am

Ministers

All members

Senior Pastor The Rev. Jan Gregory-Charpentier

Minister of Music

Eden Casteel

Communications Coordinator

Jillian Seibold

Office Administrator

Shirley M. Schock

Sexton

Andy Cournoyer



Donate

**Don't forget to bring your
canned goods
on February 4th,
Communion Sunday.**

Telephone: (401) 783-5330

Email: office@kingconchurch.org

Web address: www.kingconchurch.org

Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/kingconchurch

**Deadline for March *Spire*
Articles is February 15th.**

**Office Hours: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Monday - Thursday**

What happened to the musicians who misbehaved at the concert? They're band for life.

KCC Concerts/Greenhouse Entertainment Group presents

Barbershop tunes by **Dan, Tony, Tim and Josh**
PLUS live Interactive Pun Competition -- all in one show!

THE DAD JOKES & PUN'D IT!

How do you make a bandstand? Take away their chairs.



Me and my friends are in a band called "Duvet".
We're a cover band.



How are trumpets like pirates?
They both murder in the high C's.

Friday February 2, 7pm

Kingston Congregational Church

2610 Kingstown Rd. Kingston RI

www.kingconchurch.org

401-783-5330

\$20 General \$10 Seniors/Students

FILL THE FRONT ROW: Bring a canned good for the food pantry!

(Snacks and drinks for sale, too! What do you call a fake spaghetti? An impasta.)

