



# A New Spirit

December 2010

North Kingstown United Methodist Church  
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North Kingstown, Rhode Island 02852  
401-294-9293  
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Website: <http://nkumcri.com>  
Rev. Lorene E. Eldredge, Pastor



## The Giving Tree

Our annual Christmas Giving Tree is now set up in the Sanctuary and filled with ornament tags labeled with gift requests for Project Outreach children. Please take a tag home and return each item under the tree unwrapped by December 12. Many tags are labeled with a specific age and gender. There are also gift card requests to be given to the teens who have access to a WalMart. Project Outreach has registered over 300 families who need help this year which is more than any year in the past. Therefore, in addition to new toy items, we will accept gently used toys in very good condition.

There are also yellow star ornaments on the tree requesting gift cards for members of the domestic violence group which meets in our local area.

Gift cards can easily be purchased after church in the Narthex. Please be certain the amount of the gift card is labeled and placed in the Gift Card box under the tree.

This is a wonderful teaching opportunity to take your child shopping to help another child. For the person who has everything, purchase the perfect gift for someone else in need in their honor.

Contact Charlene Price or Ellen Jacke with any questions.

## December Calendar

			1 9:45 Bible Study 4:00 Women's Book Study 4:45 Scouts 5:00 Scouts 7:00 Trustees	2 12:00 Ladies Fellowship 6:00 NK Land Conservancy 6:00 Scouts	3 7:00 AA 7:00 Scouts	4
5 8 & 10 Worship 9:15 Adult SS 5:00 Youth Group	6 6:45 Shepherding 7:00 Advent Study 7:00 NK Photo Guild	7 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir	8 9:45 Bible Study 4:00 Women's Book Study 4:00 PEO 7:00 SPRC	9 12:00 Ladies Fellowship 7:00 Finance & Stewardship	10 7:00 AA	11 8:00 Men's Breakfast
12 8 & 10 Worship 9:15 Adult SS 10:00 Sunday School <b>Charge Conference &amp; Potluck</b> <b>SPRC meets with DS</b>	13 9:30 Moms 6:30 Scouts 6:45 Shepherding 6:45 Scouts 7:00 Advent Study	14 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir	15 9:45 Bible Study 4:00 Women's Book Study 4:45 Scouts 5:00 Scouts 7:00 AdMin	16 12:00 Ladies Fellowship 3:00 Blood Drive 6:00 Scouts	17 7:00 AA	18 7:30 Angel Food Pick-Up 9:30 UMW
19 8 & 10 Worship 9:15 Adult SS 10:00 Sunday School 7:00 Blue Christmas	20 6:45 Shepherding 7:00 Advent Study 7:00 NK Photo Guild	21 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Choir	22 9:45 Bible Study 4:00 Women's Book Study	23 12:00 Ladies Fellowship	24 5:00 Family Service 11:00 Candle Light Service	25 Merry Christmas!
26 8 & 10 Worship 9:15 Adult SS 10:00 Sunday School	27 6:45 Shepherding 7:00 Advent Study	28 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir 7:00 Scout Leaders	29 9:45 Bible Study 4:00 Women's Book Study	30 12:00 Ladies Fellowship	31 7:00 AA	

# Grace Notes

by Rev. Lori Eldredge



The time has come to deck the halls! The highlight in our home was gathering as a family and going out to cut down the best tree we could find. It wasn't hard to find a tree as the woods grew all around our home, but to select the perfect one was always cause for discussion. Never did we consider a store bought tree. It had to be real, as Jesus was real. (For a few years I placed a fake tree in my living room, and even the cats turned their noses up at it.)

This year I thought I would forgo setting up a tree altogether. I want to set up my village with a zoo, church, lighthouse, family homes, people, so much that speaks of where my spirit is this Advent season. The birth of Christ was for the salvation of the world – our global village. I am not saved alone, or my family alone.

During Advent we are asked to respond to many missions, all wonderful and full of grace. They address the needs of our neighbors and hopefully make the season a little more joyful and hopeful. We do not need to be reminded of the craziness of the season as the world sees it, or of the economy, but we do need to build up one another in the hope of Christ – this includes all those Christ came to save. My lighthouse reminds me Christ's light is cast upon the waters for all mariners at sea, not just a limited few. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved." John 3: 17 In this time of Advent let us encourage one another, and whatever the custom is in your home, prepare to welcome Christ that everyone would know his light and grace.

Be sure to join in worship on Christmas Eve at our 5PM and/or 11 PM Christmas Service.

Blessings for a very Merry Christmas Season.  
Pastor Lori

## Our Pastor's Discretionary Fund

I thank God for the generosity of the church in giving to the discretionary fund. Noted in the annual report is a reconciliation of the account showing that almost \$2,600 was expended to meet the needs of the community. We received \$2262 in gifts. As we publish this newsletter our balance for mid-November is \$433.62. I encourage you to continue giving to this account that enables us to respond to the needs that arrive from time to time, most often unexpectedly. These funds have helped with emergencies, medical care, rent, heat, electricity and food.

Blessings and thanks to everyone who helps with this work.

Pastor Lori



## New Mission Opportunity

Ten year old Patrick Gannon had a dream to help hungry people. With the help of his Dad, Bill, his brother, Liam, and other members of NKUMC, he turned **Cereal Night** into a reality. Patrick asked folks to eat cereal for one night's dinner and donate the savings to the NK Food Pantry. He timed it to coincide with a non-perishable donation drive for the RI Community Food Bank. Today Patrick and his family dream of developing Cereal Night into a national drive for food pantries. A local business woman has already volunteered to set up the website. There are many other possibilities for getting involved. Bill Gannon hopes to set up a time for brainstorming. Bring your dreams, ideas, or just plain curiosity. Please speak with Bill, 294-7845, or call the office to learn more.

### **December 5 Advent II**

Text: Isaiah 40:1-8; Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

Sermon: Peace in Believing

### **December 12 Advent III**

Text: Isaiah 61:1-3, 8-11; Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:47-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Sermon: Signs of Justice

### **December 19 Advent IV**

Text: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon: Included in the Promise

## *December 19, 7PM Blue Christmas Service*

When we lose a loved one, a job, or some other tragedy strikes, we aren't always ready to worship in the traditional ways. The Blue Christmas Service is for anyone not yet ready to celebrate the holiday because of these losses. It is a quiet service offered with the hope of offering space to heal, and a time to be still. This service is offered to the Ecumenical Community and co-sponsored with Cranston-Murphy funeral Home.



## *December 24, Christmas Eve*

**Texts:** Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

5 PM Family Service  
"Last Year in Bethlehem"

11 PM Candle Light Service of Lessons and Carols

## **December 25, 2010 Christmas Day**

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

*(These scriptures are included for family reading.)*

*May you hold the love of Christ in your hearts and home, and have a Blessed Christmas Day!*

### **December 26 First Sunday after Christmas Day**

#### **Worship in Story and Song**

Text: Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

Skit: "The Visited Planet"

## **DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> CHARGE CONFERENCE**

Our annual Charge Conference will be led by our new District Superintendent, Rev. Seok Hwan Hong. We will enjoy a potluck lunch (sign-up sheet in Narthex), celebrate our ministry in 2010 and do the important business of the church as we look forward to 2011. Please plan to attend!

## **SALVATION ARMY'S CHRISTMAS KETTLE PROGRAM – A note from Ron and Brenda Grundy**

Dear United Methodist Parishioners,

The air turns crisp, as the warm breezes of Summer make way for the cool winds of Autumn, to announce the approaching holiday season and, with it, much celebration, but, for many it will not be festive as they face life's emergencies. The North Kingstown Salvation Army Service Unit addresses these emergencies and our Kettle Collection is an important source of the funds that are needed to do our work.

We thank you for your past participation in the Christmas Kettle Collection for the Service Unit and would like to invite you to participate again. Thanks to the efforts of your volunteers last year, we collected over \$7500.00 for North Kingstown people in need. Our efforts this year have a special importance, as we anticipate an increase in the number of people who will need help this winter.

**Sign-Up for this year's collection on Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 – 4:00  
at Stop & Shop on Frenchtown Road!**



**Ocean State Children's Choir**, under the direction of Paul M. Mancini, Sr., will sing on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30PM at Asbury United Methodist Church, 143 Ann Mary Drive, Warwick.

## **South Country Habitat for Humanity's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Join the festivities at 6:30PM on December 5<sup>th</sup> at Saint Andrew Lutheran Church in Charlestown! The evening will include special music, sharing of experiences and plans for the future, and refreshments. You will be joining with others to celebrate building 44 homes with families in need. As the flyer in the Narthex states, "Yes, that's 44 families in safe, affordable homes, thanks to your efforts!"

## **Home & Hospice Care of Rhode Island's Celebration of Life**

Two candlelight memorial ceremonies will give an opportunity to enjoy special music, listen to thoughtful readings and celebrate the memory of loved ones in a special way. The ceremonies are on December 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM in Wakefield at St. Francis of the Assisi, 128 High Street and December 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM in Providence at the Citizens Bank Rotunda, One Citizens Plaza. Both memorial ceremonies are free with a reception and light refreshments to follow. Additional information is on a flyer posted in the Narthex as well at [www.hhcri.org](http://www.hhcri.org)

## **Our Community ~ Our Commitment**

North Kingstown Food Pantry, 450 Boston Neck Road, NK 401-294-7608

Domestic Violence Resource Center 61 Main Street, Wakefield 401-782-3995 24 Hour Help Line 782-3990

RI Student Assistance Services 300 Centerville Road Warwick 401-732-8680 [www.risas.org](http://www.risas.org)

North Kingstown Party Tip Line 294-3316 x8411 [tips@northkingstown.org](mailto:tips@northkingstown.org) Report underage drinking.

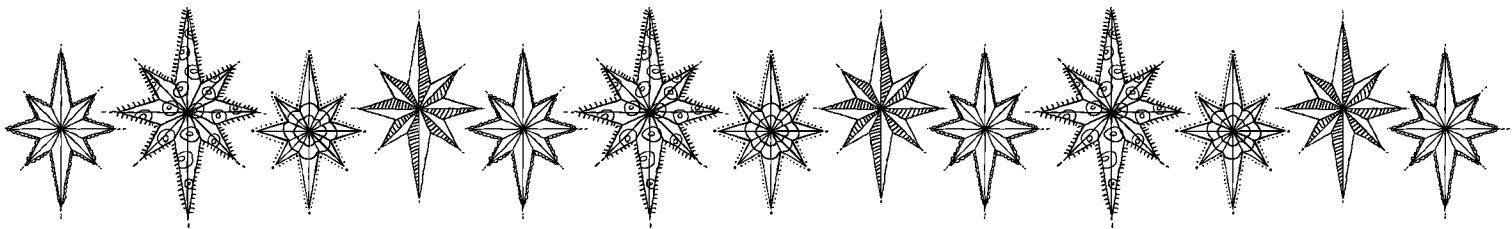
Habitat for Humanity Restore, 1555 Shannock Road, Charlestown, RI 401-213-6716

**“Not All Who Wander Are Lost”** from Robert Fulghum’s Christmas Friarworks.

I am taking a course in celestial navigation.  
Peering skyward, fumbling with sextant, muttering formulas, juggling numbers.  
There’s a certain fascination with the notion of locating one’s self on the face of the earth by relating to the stars.  
I confess that the skill I’ve acquired so far is not sufficient for putting out to sea.  
My first attempt fixed me about 12 miles east of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.  
The second time around I discovered I was standing in the water about 200 miles out in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico.  
The closest I have come to where I think I’m at is Moses Lake, Washington .  
I’ll find out where I am yet.  
I’d like to know where I am.  
I’ve spent too much time worrying about where I’m going.  
(Which reminds me of a story about the Spanish explorer, Cabeza de Vaca, who met some Zuni Indians on his search for the 7 cities of gold, and he asked them where they were going and they replied that weren’t going anywhere, they were already there. Old Cabeza said they were ignorant savages. What did he know?)  
My course in celestial navigation puts me in a Christmas mood.  
Shepherds and Wise Men come to mind.  
People have been staring at the stars and reading messages in them for a long time now.  
People have been laying this life alongside some other life up there.  
Asking – who are we, anyhow?  
Where are we headed, after all?  
What’s it all about?  
Are those good questions – I don’t know.  
But we keep asking like it might be important to know.  
And the stars?  
Well, the stars don’t say much at all.  
And my course in celestial navigation suggests that if you don’t know where you are in the first place, it doesn’t much matter where you are going, but if you do find out where you are, you have some choice as to where you go next.  
Or, as Mr. de Vaca’s Indian friends pointed out, you may discover that you are already there.  
Where you are may well be where it’s at.

(I re-read this and understand why I keep winding up in Moses Lake.)

But I ain’t lost.





### ANNIVERSARIES

14 Mark & Tricia Halloran

### ANGEL FOOD MINISTRY

The December menu is now available online at [angelfood.net](http://angelfood.net)  
Copies are in the Narthex.

The deadline for ordering by cash, check, or EBT is December 8<sup>th</sup>. The online deadline is December 12<sup>th</sup>.

**The deadline for Christmas boxes is December 8<sup>th</sup>.**

Pick-up is scheduled for December 18<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 – 9:00 AM

### BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Mason Beutel
- 5 Emily Brown  
Troy Dunning
- 8 Devon DiPalma
- 9 Ellie Brooks  
Christa Renehan
- 11 Thomas Alberg
- 12 Ashley Reese
- 15 Jessalyn Monahan
- 16 Elijah DeGraphenried  
Rev. Lorene Eldredge  
April Zaccaria
- 17 Kathy Koziol
- 18 Casey Dwane  
Jayne Laforge
- 19 Tyler Pellegrino
- 20 Susan DiPalma  
Ida Green
- 21 Adam Zaccaria
- 23 Sarah Pierce
- 24 Lauren Lindberg  
David Seekell
- 26 Ryan Cogswell
- 28 Mark Halloran
- 28 Rachel Moyer
- 29 Jesse Fisher
- 30 Christopher DeMarco
- 30 Ronald Stearns
- 30 Kiley Wright

**NEW GOODS HAVE ARRIVED FROM SIERRA LEONE** – wonderful colors and a variety of goods. The Boutique will be open on Sunday, December 5, 2010 following each service. Please check out all the new arrivals!

### UNITED METHODIST WOMEN'S NEWS

Our women's group has been active over the past two years. We have some exciting opportunities coming up and would like you to participate, even if you have not been a regular at the Saturday morning meetings. The next United Methodist Women's monthly meeting is Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 – 11:00. We meet at 9:30 for breakfast and reflection. Our business meeting usually begins at about 10:30. We would love to see more women participate and share their talents, ideas and friendship. Even if you have never come before, please make an effort to attend. We are looking forward to seeing you! If you have any questions, please call Diana Warburton at 714-5612 ([dew397@cox.net](mailto:dew397@cox.net)) or Nina Dunne at 789-3228.

**FROM WHERE I SIT** by Rev. F. Richard Garland

### **A PLACE OF FERTILE DARKNESS**

It was October 2005. We were in Baxter State Park, a vast wilderness dominated by Mount Katahdin. My son and his family were on the mountain, returning from the summit, after having completed their trek along the Appalachian Trail. I was waiting for them in a campground at the base of the mountain. It's a long hike. In October the night comes quickly. They would finish in darkness, under a moonless sky, aided only by small hiking lights.



The night sky in a northern mountain wilderness is an awesome sight to behold. The North Star shines like a beacon, a cosmic reference point for finding earthly direction. The “milky way,” now invisible to all who live near our cities, streams across the arch of the sky reminding all that there is a larger universe out there. A Psalm immediately comes to mind: “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” [Psalm 8:3-4] In the darkness of the Katahdin night one understands the words, indeed, lives them!

There is a fascinating interplay between darkness and light in scripture, particularly in the Christmas story. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” [Isaiah 9:2] An angel of the Lord appearing to shepherds in the dark of night, a new star guiding Magi to Bethlehem, or, as John puts it, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” [1:5] God uses the darkness to help us understand and appreciate the light. Hear the Psalmist: “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.” [139:12]

In an article entitled “For Darkness Is As Light,” [Weavings, Volume XXVI, Number 1] Wayne E. Simsic writes of those who intentionally seek the darkness of the desert. He writes: “answering the desert call stretches the spirit but also opens the eyes, focuses attention on the one thing most important.” He observes: “Many fear the darkness they encounter during desert times because they assume it will be negative, an experience of disintegration or even punishment. Though at first the darkness may unsettle us because it removes our comfort zone and prompts us to trust the unseen, it has the potential to become a balm for an ailing soul.”

Pointedly Simsic asks: “Are we willing to stay put long enough, to wait in the darkness, and to trust that the waiting will be fruitful? Do we believe that inner balance and even spiritual renewal can be found at a time of desolation and seeming loss of hope? Are we willing to listen to the voice of truth that releases us from cultural expectations and prejudiced ways of seeing so that we can discover a new vision?” He offers this powerful insight, that “...the darkness can be fertile, a dwelling place of God, where all is renewed.”

For those experiencing darkness in their lives, it can be, as Simsic puts it, “a soul withering desert ... that shows itself in fear and anxiety.” What fertile ground can one find in the darkness of unemployment, or broken relationship, or life threatening illness, or loss of something precious in one's life? Can we really step outside our comfort zone, even trust the unseen? It is to these hard questions that the Christmas story speaks most profoundly. On a dark night in Bethlehem a weary family became witnesses to the birth of Love incarnate. Shepherds came to be with them after a night vision of angels singing, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace.” Magi came at the bidding of a star. There is no darkness that God cannot use to show the abundance of divine love and grace!

God is present in every darkness offering the hope that gets us through the times of crisis, offering the love that transcends brokenness, offering the redeeming grace that will see us through. God is mindful of human circumstance, and cares! Cares enough to become Emmanuel! In the birth of Christ God has turned our darkness into a place of fertile darkness where hope and love can take root and grow. That is very good news indeed!

## THINKING ABOUT CHRISTMAS

As we approach the holiday season and you consider gift giving, are there people on your List who would appreciate being honored by a donation to one of the missions we support? Consider a gift through . . .

- Heifer International to help people become self-sufficient
- Church World Service or UMCOR to help people recover from disaster
- One of our United Methodist Advance Specials, a complete listing of which is in the church office.
- Preacher's Aid Society
- Home and Hospice Care of RI
- South County Habitat for Humanity

Information about all of the above is in the church office. Other possibilities include a gift to our church library or helping to sponsor one of our Community Dinners to feed the homeless and lonely in North Kingstown. Consider purchasing gift cards through our shopping card program for the Domestic Violence Resource Center, Project Outreach, or Crossroads (Women and Children in Transition).

St. Andrews Society provides alternative ways to celebrate Christmas. The following email explains:

"The Christmas season is fast approaching and soon the stores will be filled with so much holiday cheer. It's easy to let the hustle of this busy time be a distraction from the true reason for celebration. The Society of St. Andrew (Advance #801600), a national hunger-relief ministry, offers a way to celebrate the true meaning of this holy holiday through a unique Alternative Christmas Card program that helps feed Americans who are in need while honoring special friends and family.

For a minimum donation of \$12 in honor of someone special, you can provide about 600 servings of fresh food to those in need. Your gift donation will be announced with the Society of St. Andrew's (SoSA) exclusive Alternative Christmas Card, and you will also receive this beautiful card as a thank you and confirmation of how many gifts you make.

Individuals can order SoSA's Alternative Christmas Cards by mail, phone: 800-333-4597; fax at 434-299-5949; email to [card@endhunger.org](mailto:card@endhunger.org); or online at [www.endhunger.org/card](http://www.endhunger.org/card) . SoSA will send the cards and envelopes to the donor to personalize and mail, or they will send them on the donor's behalf to the recipient in time for Christmas. The minimum gift donation for each card is \$12. All gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law."

## ReStore Opportunities:

- **Driver Assistants** – needed to help out on the ReStore pick-up truck
  - Tuesday & Wednesday (8–noon)
  - Friday and Saturday (8:30–2pm)
- **In-Store Helpers** – everyone is welcome!
  - Tuesday & Wednesday (8–noon)
  - Thursday (1–5 pm, OR 4–8pm); **light supper is provided**
  - Friday & Saturday (8:30–2pm OR 12–5pm); **lunch is provided for both shifts at noon**

All volunteers must register!

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- **ReSTORE NEEDS DONATIONS!** Gently used furniture, appliances, books, cabinets, left over building supplies, etc, are urgently needed in the ReStore.
  - All proceeds from the ReStore sales help to fund Habitat’s mission of building decent, affordable homes for local families.
  - Our continued success depends on keeping a steady flow of inventory for our growing base of customers.
  - Free pick-up is available anywhere in RI.
  - Support Habitat, recycle, and reduce waste while also gaining a tax deduction.
  - ReStore is now **open 3 days a week**, so come hunt for some great bargains.
  - Please help us to **spread the word** by passing this message on to everyone you know!

**Contact ReStore at 213-6716 or email ReStore**

**[Visit the ReStore Website](#)**

- **Lunch Makers:** We are in great need of volunteers to provide and deliver lunch for our ReStore volunteers (up to 10 people) on **Fridays**. If you would be willing to help us with this opportunity, say once every 2 or 3 months, please reply to this email. **Lunch is always the highlight of the day!**

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*Thank you, as always, for your commitment to “building houses, building hope”  
in South County, Rhode Island.*

Sincerely,  
**Daphne Brown**

Operations Manager  
South County Habitat for Humanity  
[daphnebrown@southcountyhabitat.org](mailto:daphnebrown@southcountyhabitat.org)

***North Kingstown United Methodist Church  
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Return Service Requested