



Round Hill
Community Church

The News Letter

January 2012

Catching the Spirit of Round Hill

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.

Words attributed to Jesus
in the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas

There was an article in the newspaper about a family who lost a daughter in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Following her death, her parents stored her belongings, including her laptop computer, in the basement of their North Dakota home. Because, as her mother stated, "It was just too painful," the laptop computer sat unopened and unused for years. Then one day last fall the mother turned on the computer and began viewing its contents. There were pictures stored in memory, and there were computer games like Solitaire and Hearts. The mother soon found herself playing some of the games and cherishing the memories she had of times spent with her daughter. It gave her a certain measure of solace, and playing on the computer became a regular afternoon ritual. Even though she had noticed a file labeled "Top 100," she never bothered to open it, assuming it was a music file of favorite tunes.

A couple months ago, for some unknown reason, the mother opened the "Top 100" file. What she found was not a list of favorite songs, but a catalog of her daughter's goals in life, a testimony to her commitment to things serious and things frivolous, and to enjoying life in abundance.

- #1 Be healthy.
- #2 Be a good friend.
- #3 Keep secrets.
- #4 Keep in touch with people I love.

- #5 Make a quilt.
- #11 Never be ashamed of who I am.
- #18 Volunteer for a charity.
- #25 Appreciate money, but don't worship it.

What a wonderful gift this daughter gave unwittingly to her parents. By reading her goals, they learned some new and wonderful things about their daughter. And more than that, I assume that they were also reminded of what is good and right in life . . . the valuable things that we so easily forget in the normal course of living, unless we intentionally remember them or are reminded of them by some event. The article concluded with an observation by the mother that the list was a way that her daughter communicates with her when she is most in need. The list was a precious legacy, a gift from one who had passed on to those who remained behind.

The term "ethical will" refers to a message one leaves to loved ones, often written, sealed, and labeled "To be opened after my death." Writing an ethical will is, I believe, a valuable and worthwhile exercise for the writer as well as for the recipients. It is a spiritual exercise intended to set forth what is best about us and within us.

– Douglas Miller

Difficult times have helped me to understand better than before how infinitely rich and beautiful life is in every way and that so many things that one goes worrying about are of no importance whatsoever.

– Isak Dinesen



CHURCH SCHOOL



“A child is not a vessel to be filled but a lamp to be lit.”

Meet Georgette Huie Director of Christian Education



For the past four years Georgette was director of youth ministries at Saugatuck Congregational Church in Westport. While there she started a middle school youth group that met weekly and a monthly high school youth group. She led mission trips for youth and participated in worship. She has experience in leading Bible study groups, retreats for women, and other adult education offerings.

Georgette will be responsible for oversight of the Church School curriculum and resourcing teachers.

We are pleased to welcome Georgette Huie as our new part-time Director of Christian Education. She is an experienced Christian educator, having served churches in Fairfield County for the past eight years. She has a B.A. and M.S. in mathematics from California State University and an M.Div. degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. Prior to graduation from seminary in 2002 Georgette spent almost 20 years at IBM in sales and marketing. A native of San Francisco, she taught mathematics for a couple years at San Francisco State University.

At Round Hill Community Church Georgette will be responsible for oversight of the Church School curriculum and resourcing teachers. She will meet with Church School families and promote our Church School to the community. In addition, she will work with the Center for Faith Development on adult education programs. She will participate in worship before the young people leave for Church School and preach the sermon on occasion.

*The News Letter is edited by Nancy Mazzoli,
Claire McKean, Suzy Simpson, and Lynda Kinney*



CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

This past fall, that fountain of biblical inspiration, Susan DeGeorge, conducted an enlightening three-part series on Isaiah, divided, conveniently, into a discussion of the three (at least) voices of the Prophet. As Elaine Pagels, whose new book on Revelation has a planned release in March, is scheduled to deliver our Thorne Lecture next year, Rev. DeGeorge will return this fall to conduct a four-part series on this controversial book so we are well prepared for Professor Pagel's lecture on November 3.

Elaine Pagels, whose new book on Revelation has a planned release in March, is scheduled to deliver our Thorne Lecture next year on November 3.

Forum: Film

***Inside Sing Sing's Prison School*
Sunday, January 22, 2012
11:15 a.m., Meeting Room**



On Sunday, January 22, Bon Jaspersen will coordinate an after-church service forum discussing his DVD *Inside Sing Sing's Prison School*. The film's producer will join Bon for this interesting exchange. The film has been edited

to a half hour and discussion will follow. We will have a light soup, salad, and bread for those wishing to linger.

In the ensuing months, two additional film discussions are on the calendar by two other Church members, Michael Sandifer and Kristina Copeland, and a fourth is in the works.

Watch out also for a soon-to-be-announced book club gathering on *Speaking Christian*, a new release from Marcus Borg.

— Michael Sandifer

WOMEN'S GATHERING



**Festival of Epiphany
Friday, January 6, 2012
6:00 p.m., Church Parlor**

The ladies of the Round Hill Community Church will continue their tradition of convening to share friendship and ideas and to explore areas of interest with a meeting early in the new year. Women's Gathering co-chairs, Bunny Prokop and Libby Cryer, invite ladies of the Church and their friends to come to the Church Parlor for supper, fellowship, and a celebration of the Festival of Epiphany on Friday, January 6, at 6:00 p.m.

The Gathering will provide an opportunity to get to know the Church's Christian educators. Special guests will be Georgette Huie, the new Director of Christian Education, and Connie Blunden, a member of the Church School staff. They will share ideas about the direction Christian education might take at RHCC and perspectives on education in general. They have suggested that this be a conversation, not a presentation.

The Gathering will begin in the Church Parlor at 6:00 p.m. A supper buffet will include chili (both traditional and veggie), salad, cornbread, hot cider, and wine. Guests are invited to bring appetizers or dessert, if they wish. Attendees are asked to contribute \$10 to help defray costs.

To reserve, please contact Lynda in the Church Office at 203-869-1091 or send her an email at lynda.kinney@roundhillcommunitychurch.org. Reservations can be made up until January 3.

— Bunny Prokop and Libby Cryer



TRANSITION COMMITTEE

We had our first open-to-the-congregation meeting of the Transition Committee on Monday, November 28. We began the meeting by updating each other on the different strands of our activity – Community House policies and use, enhancement of Youth Ministry, revision of By-laws. We also spent time discussing the issue of engagement in our Church's life, and ways this engagement can be increased.

We spent the bulk of the November 28 meeting on prioritizing the use of the remainder of the Capital Improvement funds, which totals approximately \$400,000, and which is held in cash-equivalents on the Church's balance sheet. We began by exploring what restrictions there are (if any) on the many very generous gifts that were made to the Church during the Capital Campaign. We also discussed whether the capital expenditure plans currently under consideration by the Buildings and Grounds Committee, led by Tim Wright, are consistent with the proposed expenditures described in letters and memoranda related to the Capital Campaign.

Those Church members who raised the approximately \$2 million that resulted from our congregation's generosity, and those Church members whose stewardship of these funds resulted in much-needed renovations to our Church's campus, in particular to the Community House, did absolutely superb work.

We have more work to do to complete our recommendations to the Trustees on use of the remaining Capital Improvement funds, but we expect to be in a position to make these recommendations to the Trustees at the January 9 Trustee meeting. It is, however, abundantly clear that those Church members who raised the approximately \$2 million that re-

sulted from our congregation's generosity, and those Church members whose stewardship of these funds resulted in much-needed renovations to our Church's campus, in particular to the Community House, did absolutely superb work. These Church members – and there were many – deserve our deepest gratitude.

On Sunday, January 29, after services, the Transition Committee will lead a forum on our work and plans. All Church members are encouraged to attend.

On Sunday, January 29, after services, the Transition Committee will lead a forum on our work and plans. All Church members are encouraged to attend not only to help us think through the operating issues we have been asked to address, but also to help us explore issues related to engagement. On Monday, January 30, at 8:00 p.m., we will have our next open-to-the-congregation meeting, this focused on policies for the Community House.

We thank you for your interest, encouragement, and support.

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Helen O'Malley

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Dick Bergstresser, Doug Miller,
and Tim Wright (*ex officio*)



REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN



With a very successful Christmas on Round Hill fair, the introduction of our new Director of Christian Education, Ms. Georgette Huie, and a good start for Advent, I am sure that we will all look back on the 2011 Christmas season as a wonderful time. However, I really want to call everyone's attention to the primary task facing us – which is to transition our Church into the future.

We are a congregation of widely different religious backgrounds who come together to enjoy an accepting, tolerant environment where we build lasting friendships.

We are a congregation of widely different religious backgrounds who come together to enjoy an accepting, tolerant environment where we build lasting friendships. The motto in our entryway says it all: “The Important Thing about the Various Religions Is Not What Distinguishes Them from Each Other but What They Have in Common.”

The transition process is difficult because we are essentially challenging the way we have operated and are looking for possible improvements in the way we operate and govern the Church. Change is never easy and sometimes not needed. But this is the ideal time to test the status quo and see if we can improve upon it. There will always be disagreements as we move forward and, given our diversity, ample room for discussion.

It is much easier on the incoming minister if this process precedes his or her arrival so that the task of change is borne by a transitional minister, in our case, Rev. Douglas Miller. To assist Doug in the process, we have set up two new committees. One is the Pastoral Relations Committee, which is composed of Bruce Dixon, Grada Herrick, and Michael Sandifer. They have been appointed to provide a means for Church members to convey to the minister any matters or concerns they may have.

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The other is the Transition Committee, led by Ken Bartels, with Mary Ann Debnar, Steve Fuzesi, Caroline Lazzara, and Helen O'Malley, and with Dick Bergstresser, Tim Wright, and Doug Miller as ex-officio members. Their responsibility is to primarily focus on governance issues.

That being said, I am concerned that, at times, individuals are not coming forward with their concerns but are instead either withdrawing from participation in the Church or discussing their issues with others without coming to those responsible to address the problem. In the first case, whatever the problem is, it will not be identified and consequently not addressed. In the second case, it may involve factually incorrect information that can be exaggerated to the extent that it makes a minor problem into a major one.

I ask everyone to help us by utilizing the processes that we have put in place to communicate their concerns, which will help us to resolve them. I am always available to discuss any concerns you may have, now or in the future.

Thank you in advance,
Dick Bergstresser



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

We arrived at Church on the morning of Sunday, December 18, to a group of different kinds of greeters. They were dressed in desert garb; possibly they were shepherds from a different time and place. And so began our journey back to the eve when Jesus was born.



During this service, a simple, multigenerational Christmas Pageant unfolded before our eyes, under the watchful and very capable direction of Helen O'Malley. The preparations for the morning began weeks earlier as Helen and Eileen Boland sorted and assigned costumes and parts to the children and men and women of the Church.

Steve Dunleavy, John Novak, and Roland Kistler spent several days unpacking and constructing the beautiful set that was long ago designed by Ann Winston and that replaces the pulpit for the few weeks before Christmas. It is never an easy task, and we are grateful that they take such great care of all of the elements of the complicated yet gracious display.



Narrators were chosen with care and they kept us apprised of the goings-on of the time with a clear and steady recounting of events.





CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The task of finding a Baby Jesus is sometimes a challenge. This year, the part was played perfectly by Biz Merrow, granddaughter of Easy Kelsey, who has many friends in our Church. Lucy Saleeby played Mary with amazing grace, confidence, and good humor, and Alexander Piper gave a convincing portrayal of Joseph.



The parts of shepherds, angels, and kings were filled by a wonderful range of ages from pre-school to way beyond. What a perfect way to unite the members of our Church community.



With beautiful music supplied by Chris Kabala and our extraordinary choir, this was, as Helen declared at the end, the best Christmas Pageant ever!



BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

A Special Afternoon

It was an adventure. On November 30, Alice Fisher and Roland Kistler led Julia Boysen, Bunny Prokop, and Sandy Motland down to St. Ann's Episcopal Church in the South Bronx. Roland had already put together the walls of about 60 gingerbread houses, and we had bags and bags of candy for the decorating. We were to share all this with children in an after-school program.

Mott Haven, St. Ann's neighborhood, is the heart of the poorest congressional district in the country. St. Ann's addresses the urgent needs of its neighbors and provides an effective church presence.



St. Ann's was founded over a century and a half ago. The landmark church takes its name from Ann Morris—among other things a descendant of Pocahontas. The church houses excellent examples of late 19th-century stained glass. Now St. Ann's is a vital community center. Mott Haven, St. Ann's neighborhood, is the heart of the poorest congressional district in the country. St. Ann's addresses the urgent needs of its neighbors and provides an effective church pres-

ence. Its remarkably successful afterschool program for elementary school children has been featured on "Oprah" and in Jonathan Kozol's books *Amazing Grace* and *Ordinary Resurrections*.



Over all this presides Martha Overall, or "Mother Martha." She is one of the best-known urban priests in America. She is also a boarding school friend of Alice Fisher's, and before becoming a priest in 1991, she was a corporate attorney.

Our caravan of cars arrived at St. Ann's early in the afternoon. We got the gingerbread houses and candy and Roland's mixer into the building. The room we were going to be using was serving as a food pantry when we got there. There was a little bit of confusion but Roland got it and us sorted out.





BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

It is easy to go on about children, but these kids seem to have found a place to be safe; one where they can be open to newcomers like us.



Once people had finished getting their food, the room became the space where the second and third graders came after school for their healthy snack and to do their homework. It was amazing to see that even with guests there and with the gingerbread houses clearly visible, the kids still settled down to do their homework. They worked quietly, and often you could see one child helping another.



Finally it was time to do the decorating. Once the first batch of houses was completed, the third and fourth graders had a chance. Everybody – kids, staff, and us – had a great time. It was a remarkable adventure. It is easy to go on about children, but these kids seem to have found a place to be safe; one where they can be open to newcomers like us.

It was dark when we left St. Ann's. The air was crisp and the sky clear. Christmas did not seem so far away.

– Sandy Motland



Neighbor to Neighbor Is in Urgent Need



Cereal, Canned Fruit, Pasta and Sauce, Peanut Butter and Jelly, Rice, Dried Beans, 100% Juice, Soup

Please reach out to help others in the Greenwich community. You can drop items off in the boxes located in the RHCC Narthex, or deliver them to Neighbor to Neighbor in the Christ Church Annex at 248 East Putnam Avenue. Many, many thanks!



CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL

Christmas on Round Hill was a great success this year. Not only did we exceed our financial goal, but dozens of Church members and even some non-members participated in creating a fun event for the whole community.

The Preview Party on Friday night was once again a wonderful affair with over 150 people attending. Everyone had a fun time, the vendors had interesting items to sell, and the food was amazingly good (loved those bacon appetizers). Mirella Hajjar, taking the lead in decorating, did an outstanding job at making the Community House look like a winter wonderland with masses of pure white snowflakes hanging from the ceiling.



Thanks to Dolly Mayer and Mairead O'Sullivan for organizing the Silent Auction – it was a creative selection of items that everyone enjoyed bidding on! And this year, Heather Sandifer had the innovative idea of running a raffle with the prize of an impressive centerpiece consisting of four plants and a tall topiary. The happy winner was Kristian Nielsen. Harold Kuplesky and his merry elves ran an entertaining bar providing drinks throughout the night. A good time was had by all!



The Saturday event was also a great success. Many neighbors came throughout the day, both young and older. Thanks to Hooker O'Malley, Bon Jaspersen, Michael Sandifer, and Bill Herrick for Santa duty assisted by our intrepid photographer, Arto Szabo. The children enjoyed their time with Santa (at least some), the train rides, and the crafts table run by Caroline Lazzara with the aid of Beth Wright and her merry band of Girl Scouts, who helped the children make glitter ornaments and did expert face painting that thrilled young customers.



As always, our Treasure Trove had wonderful items that everyone enjoyed looking at and many bought. Thank you to Jean Bergstresser, Leigh Grant, Alice Fisher, and their many helpers for making it such a success! Our Something Special team of Molly Cook, Caroline Lazzara, Marilyn Kinney, Alice O'Gorman, Jan Ziemba, and their helpers created beautiful handmade one-of-a-kind items that sold well.





CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL

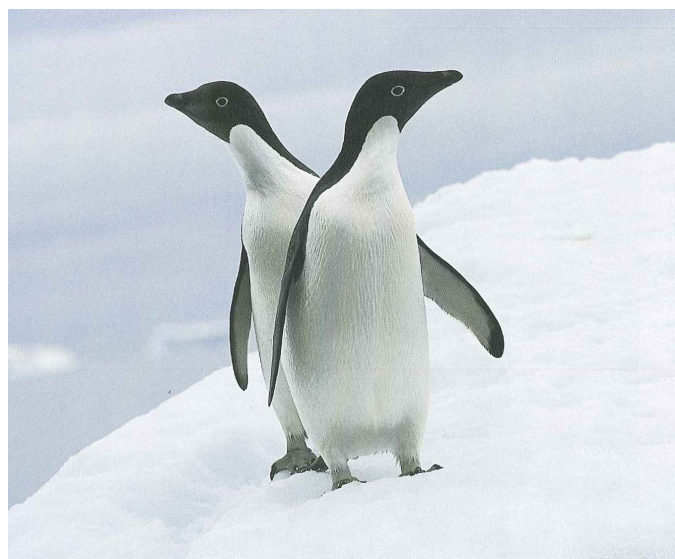
Other people who deserve commendations are Suzy Simpson, Nancy Mazzoli, Julia Boysen, Jan Ziemba, Dee Lewis, Rhona Johnson, Frank DeNicola (for providing the food Saturday), Andy Burke (for providing the food Friday night), Craig Lazzara (Treasurer and train conductor) . . . and on and on.

Besides the leadership of the committee members (listed below), there were dozens and dozens of volunteers, the office staff of Lynda, Ron, Steve, and John, and some hired help that made this event work so flawlessly. Thanks to all who baked cookies, swept floors, set up and hung posters, and on and on. We thank all of you who volunteered to make this such a successful event!

– Diane Davol, Amy Minella, and Nicole Piper

Chairs	Diane Davol, Amy Minella, Nicole Piper
Invitation	Heather Sandifer, Nancy Mazzoli
Mailing List	Lynda Kinney
Publicity	Nancy Mazzoli, Suzy Simpson
Staffing	Amy Minella
Preview Party	Harold and Sok Nam Kuplesky
Decorations	Mirella Hajjar
Silent Auction	Dolly Mayer, Mairead O'Sullivan
Treasure Trove	Jean Bergstresser, Leigh Grant, Alice Fisher
Fabulous Food	
Baked Goods	Jan Ziemba, Dee Lewis
Frozen Food	Julia Boysen
Puddings	Rhona Johnson
Living Greens	Heather Sandifer
Something Special	Molly Cook, Marilyn Kinney, Caroline Lazzara, Alice O'Gorman, Jan Ziemba
Vendors	Diane Davol
Children's Activities	Caroline Lazzara, Beth Wright, Connie Blunden
Santa Pictures	Arto Szabo
Treasurer	Craig Lazzara

LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY



Les Beaux Arts Gallery ushers in the new year with a stunning photography exhibit by Charles C. Kingsley. The show will open on Sunday, January 15, and will run through February 22, 2012.

Kingsley's series of photographs from the Antarctic and Arctic regions are nothing short of a breathtaking vision of a luminous ethereal world where wildlife animals thrive totally oblivious of the rest of the planet. For Kingsley, a practicing attorney and lover of arts, photography is an escape, a reason to spend quiet and reflective time in the wilderness. "I have learned to see with new eyes the magic of the world in which we live," he explains. "Wildlife photography has become for me a passion. To be among wild creatures is to feel more alive. To see! To connect! To fall in love! There is something about wildlife photography that tells me who I am."

The present retrospective is the result of 30 years of expeditions to the Arctic region of Alaska, Canada, the Eskimo lands of Nunavut, Greenland, and the Antarctic peninsula, where millions of penguins live.

Kingsley concludes that "The Antarctic and Arctic have become metaphors, not only for wilderness itself but also for the myriad significant things about the earth's wild places that cannot be expressed by words. My polar photographs can help open our eyes to the infinite possibilities of life on earth."

– Mirella Hajjar, Gallery Curator

The News Letter

Round Hill Community Church
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(203) 869-1091

Visit our website, roundhillcommunitychurch.org, to view more pictures, read past sermons, learn about the activities and history of RHCC, and check the monthly calendar.

JANUARY 2012 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m.	2 Office Closed	3	4	5 Meditation 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	6 Women's Gathering 6:00 p.m. Church Parlor	7
8 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. with Communion	9 Trustee Meeting 7:30 p.m.	10	11 Round Hill Craft Studio 1-4 p.m.	12 Meditation 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	13	14
15 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m.	16 Cooking for St. Luke's, 3 p.m.	17 Worship Comm. Mtg., 7:00 p.m.	18 Round Hill Craft Studio 1-4 p.m.	19 Meditation 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	20 Newsletter Deadline	21
22 Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m. Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Forum: Prison Film with Bon Jaspersen 11:15 a.m.	23	24	25 Round Hill Craft Studio 1-4 p.m.	26 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	27	28
29 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Forum: Transition Committee, 11:15 a.m.	30 Transition Comm. Open to Congregation Meeting, 8 p.m. Meeting Room	31	WORSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY: PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLES C. KINGSLEY			