



Round Hill  
Community Church

# The News Letter

December 2007

## Catching the Spirit of Round Hill

### An Advent Prayer



Pastor Bob Culp

One of my favorite authors is Ted Loder, a poet-preacher who has shared his meditations and prayers in a number of books, one of the best of them (in my view) entitled *My Heart in My Mouth*. For my message this December, I am sharing from this book a prayer called “Gentle Us

Open.” May it inspire you in your Advent waiting this year to open yourself to the wondrous and powerful mystery we celebrate in this season of expectancy and visitation.

Lord of Life and Light, help us not to fall in love with the darkness that separates us from you and from each other,  
but to watch large-eyed, wide-hearted, open-handed, eager-minded for you,  
to dream and hunger and squint and pray for the light of you and life for each other.

Lord, amidst our white-knuckled, furrow-faced busy-ness in this season,  
we realize deep within us that your gifts of mercy and light, peace and joy, grace upon grace can be received only if we are unclenched open.

So this is our prayer, Lord: Open us!  
Gentle us open, pry, shock, tickle, beguile, knock, amaze, squeeze, any wily way you can us open.

Open us to see your glory in the coming again of the light of each day,  
the light in babies’ eyes and lovers’ smiles,  
the light in the glaze of weariness that causes us to pause,

*continued on page 10*

### Catching the Spirit of Round Hill



Amy Minella

As the new Board Chairman, I am happy to report that I have certainly caught the spirit of Round Hill! We are off to a strong start in so many areas. Let me describe a few of them.

Christmas on Round Hill was again a great success.

So many people worked so hard to make it the fabulous event it was. Over 100 members and non-members of the church worked during the summer and fall and over the weekend of the event to make it a great success. Thanks to each and every one of you who participated and especially to Nancy Mazzoli for leading the effort!

I urge you all, if led, to attend some of the many wonderful forums that are being offered after church – we have been learning about the Book of Mark and we discussed Emily Dickinson’s poetry. We have also learned about what we can do to be environmentally “green.” These forums have been well attended as the topics are interesting to our members.

I am enthusiastic about our new focus on hands-on mission. We had an energetic group of adults and teenagers go on the mission trip to Nicaragua in the summer, and earlier this year two groups helped Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans and Biloxi. These mission trips not only serve to reach out and help people in need, but provide a wonderful bonding experience for members of our church.

The leadership of the church is strong as exemplified in the hardworking Board of Trustees. They are thoughtful and caring and work to ensure the church is following its policies and fulfilling its mission. The Board meets once a month from September to June.

*continued on page 4*



## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

*"A child is not a vessel to be filled but a lamp to be lit."*

### Red Ribbon Sale



*Tom Mahoney*

On Sunday, December 9, the church school children will be selling Red Ribbons on behalf of Sekolo Projects, Inc., during the coffee hour. Each \$1 contribution will make it possible to buy five meals for a child affected by or living with HIV/AIDS in Namibia.

The affected children typically get one meal a day. The church school children recently cut, shaped, and pinned the red ribbons during a class with Elizabeth Robinson, founder and CEO of Sekolo Projects, Inc. Help our church school children make a difference in the lives of Namibian children living with or affected by HIV/AIDS by purchasing a red ribbon.

### Christmas Pageant

The annual Round Hill Community Church Christmas Pageant will be presented on Sunday, December 9, during the morning worship service. Helen O'Malley is the director with assistance from Elizabeth Green, Annette Grueterich, and Alexandra Heerdt. Rehearsal is scheduled for Saturday, December 8.



### Cookies and Carols

On Sunday, December 16, the church school classes will bake cookies with the church school staff and sing Christmas carols with Jonny Duennebier, who leads the church school in musical activities once a month.



*Jonny Duennebier leads church school children in a percussion lesson*



*Nicole claps along to Jonny's discussion*





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## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

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### Toys for Nicaragua

A very, very big box of toys, given by members of our church and their children, is on its way to the small village of Nandaime, in Nicaragua. There, Josefina Gutierrez will distribute them to the children in her village when she arrives home for her annual Christmas visit.



*Josefina Gutierrez with some of the toys that were shipped to families in Nicaragua*

Josefina has attended our church with Joan Cox regularly. She has been collecting toys and sending them to Nicaragua for several years and this year we were delighted to be able to help her. Josefina is thrilled and plans to take photographs of the children receiving their toys.

Very many thanks to all of you who gave so generously.

– Rhona Johnson

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## YOUTH GROUP

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### Labyrinth Project



On November 18, sixteen members of the youth group and some parents worked with Sam Wright on his Boy Scout Eagle Project. They worked 47 combined hours hauling wood chips and spreading them. Sam is clearing the space surrounding the Labyrinth and creating a new entrance to that area as part of his Eagle Project. The Labyrinth itself was built in 2002 as a Boy Scout Eagle Project by his brother, Max.





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## SPIRIT OF ROUND HILL

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Many Board members also chair operating committees of the church. The members of those committees ensure the success of all of our programs. So many people volunteer their time to make our church a happy, welcoming, and thoughtful environment and I thank each and every one of them.

As you can tell from our newly painted Sanctuary, polished floors, and new sound system, we are moving forward with some essential maintenance and upgrades to our twenty-five-year-old building. We are going “public” with the capital campaign in the new year. Our goal is to raise \$4 million to fund three phases of improvement. Many of the first-phase tasks, which address the needs of the church building, have now been completed. We will also plan to make the handicap parking more accessible.

The second phase addresses the needs of the aging Community House. We have hired an architect and will soon be in the planning phase of this project, which will begin in the spring of 2009.

The third phase involves relocating the church offices and creating a more welcoming place for our members to take advantage of our ministers’ services.

We are truly blessed as a congregation to have two wonderful ministers, a dedicated and knowledgeable office staff, a beautiful church to worship in, fabulous music, a fun church school, and thoughtful and kind members to worship with. Whether you come to church for the beautiful music, to listen to thoughtful sermons, to make new friends, or to give of your time, we truly appreciate your presence and we together create the Spirit of the Round Hill Community Church.

– Amy K. Minella  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

**Check the calendar on our website  
[roundhillcommunitychurch.org](http://roundhillcommunitychurch.org)  
for the most current information on events  
at RHCC. Click on *Calendar* under “Topics.”  
Then click on an event for times and details.**

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## WORSHIP

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In our last committee meeting, November 11, we continued to discuss the Emergency Protocol and Procedures for ushers in the event of an illness or other concern during the service. The final recommendations for such will be presented to the Board on December 3.

We continue to gather suggestions for revisions to our Communion Service Liturgy and welcome your ideas. We continue to have liturgists who want to volunteer for our service and would welcome others who might be interested. Advent will soon be here and this year we will have a Family Service at 4:00 p.m. on December 24 as well as our traditional evening candlelight service beginning with special music at 9:30 p.m.

– Marion Piro and Claire McKean

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## WINTER SOLSTICE LABYRINTH WALK

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### **Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk** **Saturday, December 22, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.**

We invite you to take time from the noise and busyness of the season to walk by moonlight and candlelight through the labyrinth in the woods. This year we will have the benefit of a new pathway allowing easier access to the labyrinth and a new open area allowing easier access to the hot cocoa and warm fire!

Feel free to stop by between 6:30 and 9:00 p.m. The new entrance is off the cell tower access road at the end of the top parking lot. Families and friends are welcome. Please dress warmly and wear sturdy footwear. If you have any questions, contact Kerri Ann Hofer at 622-0221 or Beth Wright at 622-6338.

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## PLEASE FEEL WELCOME

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The Church Sanctuary is open for prayer, meditation, and reading the Bible every weekday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We encourage those who wish to use the Sanctuary for this purpose to do so, and to be encouraged in the disciplines of prayer, meditation, and scriptural reflection.



## CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

### **An Invitation to Prayer: “Inviting Love” Tuesday, December 4 and 18, 7 to 8:30 p.m.**

#### **Meeting Room**

In this season of Advent, you are invited to come and experience the incarnation in a quiet space. Rev. Joel Baehr will lead us in a meditative practice focusing on love . . . receiving it and giving it.

Rev. Baehr is a psychotherapist and spiritual teacher. He is a graduate of Haverford College, Union Theological Seminary (NY), and the Westchester (NY) Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. He trained in many models of psychotherapy and spiritual practice. His passion is “pragmatic spirituality” – spiritual wisdom and practice applied directly to the worlds of relationships and work.

Please come and bring your friends.

### **Family Movie Night: *The Nativity Story* Friday, December 7, 6:00 p.m.**

#### **Meeting Room**

Just out in theaters last year, this movie focuses on the two-year period of Mary and Joseph’s life that culminates in their leaving Nazareth and journeying 100 miles to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. The movie stars Keisha Castle-Hughs (*Whale Rider*), Shohreh Aghdashloo (*House of Sand and Fog*), and Oscar Isaac. It’s rated PG for a bit of violence.

All are welcome for this family-friendly film at the beginning of the Advent season. Curtain up at 6:30 p.m. with pizza, soda, and popcorn provided!

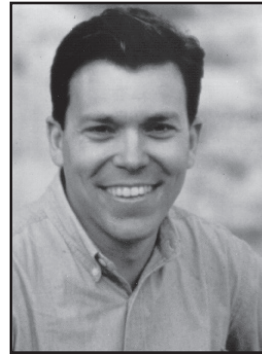
### **Preserving Your Holiday Memories: Memoir Writing – How Do I Get Started? Sunday, December 9, 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.**

#### **Meeting Room**

Writer Jessica Bram will lead us in an opportunity to think of preserving our holidays in a different way, by writing family traditions down so they can be shared with generations to come. She will discuss components of memoir-writing on a larger scale too. This workshop is geared to those with no writing experience or those who have already done some scribbling. Join us and you are sure to be inspired!

**Childcare is available for all Sunday events.**

### **Thorne Lecture with Bruce Feiler**



**Who Speaks for God:  
Reclaiming Religion  
from Extremists  
Saturday, January 26  
7:00 to 10:30 p.m.**

*New York Times* best-selling author Bruce Feiler (*Walking the Bible, Abraham*) will lead us in a discussion of this very provocative topic. An interfaith panel will discuss the issue following the lecture. Get the word out and invite your friends of all faith backgrounds. Several Greenwich congregations have agreed to share the cost of the event with us so it is sure to be a well attended and very interesting evening.

### **January Forums**

#### **Intercessory Prayer**

**Sunday, January 6, 11:15 a.m.**

Bob Culp will explore understandings of intercessory prayer, including what we believe happens in prayer to God, to ourselves, to others, and within situations and circumstances in the world. There is much mystery at the heart of such prayer, and we hope to draw near this mystery and affirm its place along our own spiritual journeys.

#### **Bible Studies on the Prophet Isaiah**

**Sundays, January 13 and February 3, 11:15 a.m.**

Bob Culp will lead two forums that focus on the prophecy of First Isaiah (Is 1-39) and Second Isaiah (Is 40-55), seeking to identify how the criticizing and energizing language within the book of Isaiah is tied to their respective historical situations and their respective spiritual needs, and seeking to identify possible parallels with our own historical situation in 2008. A rather intriguing picture of both God and Isaiah should emerge from these sessions that may speak powerfully to us today.





## ADVENT WORKSHOP



We had a good turnout of 65 children and adults for our annual Advent Workshop. The high school youth prepared a pasta dinner, with the help of Jenny Rye and Kerri Ann Hofer, and raised over \$700 to support their mission trip to Nicaragua this summer. Children made Advent calendars and wreaths, adults played Bible Scattergories with Shannon White, and everyone sang carols after the lighting of the Yule log, accompanied by seasonal readings by adult volunteers.



As always, those who attended the event felt a sense of fellowship and anticipation of the season. Many thanks to the Heerdt family for preparing wreaths, Jack McKean for leading the caroling, Annette Grueterich and Kerri Ann Hofer for organizing the event with Tom Mahoney, and to all who contributed their time to make it a delightful evening.



## CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL



After countless hours of baking, crafting, organizing, and decorating by over 100 volunteers, we enjoyed a spectacular Christmas on Round Hill in the Community House. There are too many to thank here but a few deserve a special mention.



*The homemade food was certainly fabulous*

Nancy Lane has been indefatigable and always imaginative in conceiving the plans for Fabulous Food and consistently bringing together a loyal crew to put it all together.



*Many special handcrafted items were available for sale*

Suzy Simpson, with her vision, experience, and artistry, was absolutely invaluable to the success of the handcrafted merchandise and so much more.





## CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL

Jean Bergstresser and Leigh Grant set up the most splendid and successful Treasure Trove this year with the help of a small army of ever-faithful and enthusiastic volunteers.



*An inviting area of the Treasure Trove*

Mirella Hajjar decorated the hall to look like a beautiful postcard of Christmas, and photographed eager children with Santa Claus.



*The crowd at the Friday night party*

Ron Wilson, Jr., made our lives easier in so many ways by organizing the Men's Group, who took on many crucial tasks, including setup, bartending, Santas, train drivers, and breakdown, leading up to and during the two days of the fair.



*Our café offered warming soups and sandwiches*



*Santa with a visitor*



*A ride on the Round Hill Express*

We appreciate every bit of help that so many people gave throughout the year to make this event such a success and hope to see even more join in for the fun next year.

– Nancy Mazzoli



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## MUSIC AT ROUND HILL 2007-2008

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September 9 – *Rally Day*  
Dominic Derasse, trumpet

November 11 – *Carmen at New York City Opera with Julianne Borg*

December 16 – *Handel's Messiah Sing-In*  
During the regular 10:00 a.m. service,  
Community Choristers are invited to join with the RHCC Choir.  
Rehearsal at 9:00 a.m.

Choruses: *And the Glory of the Lord, For Unto Us a Child Is Born, Glory to God*

December 24 – *Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols*  
Prelude at 9:30 p.m.  
*Fantasy on Christmas Carols*, Ralph Vaughan Williams  
Carols for Brass Quintet

### *20th-Century Series*

Choristers from the community are invited to join with the RHCC Choir at the 10:00 a.m. service on the following Sundays. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings at 8:00 p.m.

February 24	<i>Gloria (Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris)</i> , Poulenc
March 2	<i>Chichester Psalms, Psalm 131, 132</i> , Bernstein
March 9	<i>Rejoice in the Lamb, Rejoice in God, O Ye Tongues</i> , Britten

March 23 – *Easter*  
9:30 Prelude, Music of Bach

*Oboe Concerto BMV 1053*, Gerard Reuter, oboe  
*Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*

April 11 – *Opera Arias and Ensembles*

May 4 – *Music Sunday*  
*Three Magnificats*  
Bach – Monteverdi – Pärt

June 8 – *Spirituals*





## MUSIC AT ROUND HILL



Choristers from the congregation and surrounding communities are cordially invited to join with the RHCC Choir and a String Ensemble in singing three choruses from Handel's *Messiah* during the regular Sunday service. The rehearsal will begin at 9:00 a.m. sharp in the Sanctuary. The choruses to be performed are "And the Glory of the Lord," "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," and "Glory to God." Bring a score if you have one, although we will have extra music. Singers are also welcome to attend a rehearsal of the three choruses on Thursday, December 13, at 8:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room. Come one and all, and invite your friends!

### Music for Christmas December 24, 4:00 p.m.

The Senior High Choir will be providing the music for the 4:00 p.m. Family Service, performing John Goss' "See Amid the Winter's Snow" and "Caroling Caroling" by Alfred Burt.

### Christmas Eve Prelude December 24, 9:30 p.m.

Festive Canadian Brass Carol arrangements played by our brass quintet, and the Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* with soloist Patrick Hogan will highlight the musical prelude, which begins at 9:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

— Christopher Kabala



### Carols for Brass and Choir

Musical Prelude  
at 9:30 p.m.

followed by  
A Traditional Service  
of Lessons and Carols  
10:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

## *Music at Round Hill* 2007-2008

Brochure is now available on the  
Round Hill Community Church website.  
Click on *Music Ministry* listed under *About RHCC*.

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## PASTORAL MESSAGE

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*continued from page 1*

the light of truth wherever spoken and done.

Open us to songs of angels in the thumping of traffic,  
in the rustle of shoppers, the canopy of pre-dawn silence,  
in the hum of hope, the wail of longing within us,  
in the cries of our brothers and sisters for justice and peace,  
and in our own souls' throb toward goodness.

Open us, then, to share the gifts you have given us  
and to the deep yearning to share them gladly and boldly,  
to sweat for justice, to pay the cost of attention,  
to initiate the exchange of forgiveness,  
to risk a new beginning free of past grievances,  
to engage with each other in the potluck of joy  
and to find the gifts of a larger love and deeper peace.

Open us, Lord of miracles of the ordinary,  
to the breath-giving, heart-pounding wonder of birth,  
a mother's fierce love, a father's tender fidelities,  
a baby's barricade-dissolving burble and squeak,  
that we may be born anew ourselves  
into the "don't be afraid" fullness of your image,  
the fullness of a just and joyful human community,  
the fullness of your kingdom, in the fullness of your time;  
through the eternal grace of your son, our brother Jesus. Amen.

May it be so for all of us in this wondrous and glorious season of God's love made flesh. Blessings and Peace be with you and yours.

– Bob Culp

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## STEWARDSHIP

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Please remember that our 2008 budget depends on our meeting our Stewardship goal. If you haven't sent in your 2008 pledge, please do so as soon as possible. There are extra pledge cards in the Parlor, or you can call the Office at 869-1091 and have one sent electronically. Thank you.

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## DECEMBER SERVICES AND SERMONS

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- Dec. 2    First Sunday in Advent  
*The Thief Who Gives Us What We Need,*  
Bob Culp  
The Sacrament of Communion Observed
- Dec. 9    Second Sunday in Advent  
Our Annual Christmas Pageant (The Children and Young People of RHCC)
- Dec. 16   Third Sunday in Advent  
*Wilderness Doubting and Hoping,*  
Bob Culp
- Dec. 23   Fourth Sunday in Advent  
*The Unique Legacy of Joseph,* Bob Culp
- Dec. 24   Christmas Eve – Two Unique Services  
4:00 p.m. Family Service, Shannon White  
10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Lessons and Carols  
*Missing in Action?* Bob Culp's Homily
- Dec. 30   First Sunday after Christmas  
*Christmas Homecoming,* Bob Culp
- Jan. 6    Epiphany  
*Home by Another Road,* Bob Culp  
The Sacrament of Communion Observed



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## MEN'S GROUP

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Please reserve Friday evening, February 8, 2008, for the annual Men's Group-sponsored dinner/dance. Details and invitations will be mailed in early January. This year we shall be having "Dancing with the Board." Bob and Kathy Culp will get down with break dancing; Ray and Amy Minella are ready to do a cool hip-hop; Bob and Nancy Mazzoli will dazzle us with the Argentine tango; and other pairs are keeping their selections a surprise. Come prepared to perform any specialty number or ethnic dance that you would like. Please alert the dance committee of your wishes so that we can be sure to have the appropriate music.

– Ron Wilson and Michael Sandifer

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## WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

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We will be discussing *The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follett on January 15, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Edie Wilson's house.

Ken Follett says of his book:

"When I started writing, back in the early seventies, I found I had no vocabulary for describing buildings. I read a couple of books on architecture and developed an interest in cathedrals. I became a bit of a train spotter on the subject. I would go to a town, like Lincoln or Winchester, check into a hotel and spend a couple of days looking around the cathedral and learning about it. Before too long, it occurred to me to channel this enthusiasm into a novel.

My publishers were a little nervous about such a very unlikely subject but paradoxically, it is my most popular book. It's also the book I'm most proud of. It recreates, quite vividly, the entire life of the village and the people who live there. You feel you know the place and the people as intimately as if you yourself were living there in the middle ages."

Please contact Edie at 661-4449 if you would like to join the group.

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## LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY

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Works by folk painter Anne Strasberg will be on display December 1 to January 9 at Les Beaux Arts Gallery.



Impulsive joie de vivre is a signature of Strasberg's work. Her colorful pictures of serene villages, quiet meadows, and seaside activities transport the viewer for a moment to a much nicer world. Anne is a true naïve-primitive folk painter, in the traditional sense of self-taught, traveling, working painters. Anne lives part of the year in Manhattan with her husband, John Strasberg, the international theater director, actor, producer, and designer. They travel the rest of the year, mostly in Europe, and Anne always has her brushes and paints close at hand. Her paintings reflect her travels and her rich imagination, and embrace a diversity of subject and originality of colors.

Strasberg was born and raised in Paris. At a very young age, she was drawn to being a designer and painter, and dreamed of studying at the Beaux Arts. Her parents, however, decided otherwise and she studied at the Ecole de Commerce at Paris. She abandoned the idea of becoming a painter until many years later when she met a painter-interior designer who encouraged her to begin painting and not wait for classes. She began to paint her children and the Normandy countryside where her family had a weekend home. In 1983, she won a prize for second place in Art Naïf (Folk Art) in an exhibition at la Roche Guyon in France. From that moment on, Anne has painted regularly and now exhibits permanently at the Galerie de Naïf et Primitif in Paris and the Galerie Bonheur in St. Louis, Missouri.

– Mirella Hajjar, Gallery Curator

## *The News Letter*

Round Hill Community Church  
395 Round Hill Road  
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(203) 869-1091

Visit our website, [roundhillcommunitychurch.org](http://roundhillcommunitychurch.org) to view more pictures, read past sermons, learn about the activities and history of RHCC, and check the monthly calendar.

DECEMBER 2007 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	3 Trustees' Meeting 8:00 p.m.	4 "Inviting Love" Advent Meditation 7:00 p.m. Benevolence and Outreach Mtg. 8:00 p.m.	5	6 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	7 Movie Night The Nativity Story	8
9 Christmas Pageant during Worship Service  Memoir Writing 11:15 a.m.	10	11 RHCC Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Meeting Room	12	13 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	14	15
16 Messiah Sing All Are Welcome 9 a.m. Rehearsal	17 Newsletter Deadline  Cooking for St. Luke's	18 "Inviting Love" Advent Meditation 7:00 p.m.	19	20 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	21	22 Winter Solstice Walk 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.
23	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Family Service, 4:00 p.m. Candlelight Service and Prelude, 9:30 p.m.	25 Office Closed Christmas Day	26 Office Closed	27	28	29
30	31 Office Closed			WORSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE  FOLK PAINTER ANNE STRASBERG AT LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY		