



*Round Hill
Community Church*

The News Letter

February 2009

Catching the Spirit of Round Hill

The Inaugural Address and the Gospel

Along with countless millions, this past Tuesday I watched the Inaugural Address delivered by our new President, Barack Obama. I found it contained a stirring summons to service within our country in a time that demands our best efforts as a people, both collectively and individually. And, without meaning to stretch the analogy too far, I heard in this Inaugural Address echoes of the challenging call made by an itinerant rabbi named Jesus years ago.

Listen again to some of President Obama's words:

"In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted – for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things – some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long path towards prosperity and freedom."

"We honor [our brave Americans who patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains] not only because they are the guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service: a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet, at this moment – a moment that will define a generation – it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all."

"For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than to see a friend lose their job, which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with

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25th Anniversary in Our Sanctuary Celebrated on January 4

On this special Sunday of remembrance, parishioners were greeted at the front door by a single bagpiper. As the Church bell tolled to mark the beginning of the service, the bagpiper entered the Narthex and performed a beautiful rendition of "Amazing Grace" as he slowly made his way to the altar, followed by Bob Culp and Shannon White. As he drew close to the end of the piece, he made his way back to the Narthex, so that the congregation heard the final notes played out of sight. It was a stirring moment and a lovely way to begin this service of remembrance.



Bob's sermon recalled the essence of the one delivered by Walter Wagoner twenty-five years ago. After the service, we enjoyed an anniversary cake at the fellowship hour.

During a forum that morning, a panel of members who were involved in the formation of RHCC and our new campus held a discussion in the sanctuary about why it was important to them to begin a new church and their feelings about our Church. The

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CELEBRATION OF 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN OUR SANCTUARY

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group included **Alice O’Gorman, David Fairburn, Joan Ingersoll, Anne Winston, Win Adkins, Helen Itin O’Malley, Becky Amiot Jaspersen, Banks Adams, and Everett Fisher.** We are grateful to them for the time, energy, and love they gave to create Round Hill Community Church.

A week before the service, the *Greenwich Post* interviewed Helen O’Malley. Here are some excerpts from that article:

“It’s been wonderful to see the new families that have come in over the years and allowed the church to grow,” Ms. O’Malley told the *Post* Monday. “Those of us who have been here for 25 years remember the original spirit when we started this church. We went through so much to get here and everyone worked extremely hard to make it happen. I’ve seen many families come and seen children grow from babies into young adults. It’s a real slice of life, and we have such a wonderful community here.”

At the heart of the church is its receptiveness to open discussion. Ms. O’Malley said this has always made the church stand out in town and they have a “true community congregation” because people come from all over town and also from Stamford to worship there.

“I think we’re more true to what we built on than ever before,” Ms. O’Malley said. “We have people from different nationalities and different religious backgrounds. This is an extended community. One might think of a community church being very, very local, but it is drawing from all over. People come here and are very impressed by the friendliness and the warmth of the congregation.”

The church stresses the involvement of the congregants. Ms. O’Malley said Sunday services are fol-

lowed by coffee hours where congregants bring in the food and serve it. She said participation is very important to building a strong congregation and people are also impressed by the church’s commitment to open minds. Through events like adult forums and guest preachers and lecturers the church is committed to not just paying lip service to the concept of religious freedom.

“There isn’t an absolute dogma that people must believe,” Ms. O’Malley said. “We are open to different ideas. Exploring minds, to me, is the philosophy that is most interesting about this church.”

WORSHIP

Creed Revision

At its February meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to approve a minor change in the Creed for a one-year probationary period, beginning on Sunday, February 8, 2009. As we’ve been discussing over the past months, we will change the words “one true God” to “Lord our God.” This change will not disrupt the cadence of the Creed in any way. The revised Creed will read as follows:

I believe in God, the one universal Father of all mankind, revealed supremely in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and present with us to guide, comfort and inspire in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Kingdom of God; and in the mission of the Christian Church to proclaim the Gospel to all the world, exalting the worship of the Lord our God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of righteousness, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. United in Christian love, we pray and labor for the coming of the Kingdom, the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting. Amen.

We will print the revised Creed in the weekly bulletin for everyone’s reference, and Bob will address the change from the pulpit. We thank everyone for their thoughtful responses and feedback throughout this process.

– Claire McKean and Marion Piro



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

February Lessons

Our focus this month will be on 101 Ways to Pray. At its most basic and profound level, prayer is nothing more than conversation with God. Sounds simple, right? However, many Christians find prayer to be one of the most difficult disciplines to master . . . not just learning to pray, but learning how to make prayer a regular part of our daily lives.

Our teachers for this unit will be Susanna Nielsen and Beth Wright. This dynamic team will expose students to the many different ways to pray. Children will learn the words to the Lord's Prayer and what the prayer means, as well as words to other prayers.

Like any other discipline, "practice makes perfect." Encourage your children to pray once a day, even if it is to simply give thanks.

Thanks to Laura Wack and Alison Kistler for teaching our Miracles of Jesus lessons last month. They provided excellent stories and crafts projects.

Events in the Months Ahead

March 8 – Children's Service

April 12 – Easter Egg Hunt

May 3 – Bible Breakfast

February Scripture Verses

1 Corinthians 8:1-2

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

Luke 11:9

So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.

STEWARDSHIP

As we launched our annual Stewardship appeal last October we knew it would be a difficult year to raise the funds that we use for the daily operation of Round Hill Community Church. However, we had faith that our members would, as they have so many times before, be generous in their support of our ministries, programs, and campus.

To date, we have achieved only 85% of our goal, which was itself 4% less than the 2008 pledge budget. This shortfall is due to both fewer dollars per pledge and fewer people pledging.

We feel that it is important that everyone understand the impact of this shortfall and where it will have an effect on our operations. Here are some preliminary decisions the Finance Committee has presented to the Trustees in response to this difficult economic time:

– **There will be no salary increases for staff.**

– **We will have to make across-the-board cuts that will affect personnel, administration and general expenses, education, and music. We need to find an additional \$15,000 in expense cuts, after we have already slashed expenses by 8%.**

– **We will need to use some of the maintenance reserve and also a portion of the land lease revenues that would have otherwise been used for the Community House renovation.**

– **Since we use a three-year average to calculate the distribution from the Endowment, which will certainly be down for the 2010 budget, we must be conservative this year so that we can prudently plan for the next few years' budgets.**

We thank all who have been generous with their donations this year and hope that those who have not yet pledged will understand how important their support is, no matter the size of the contribution. For those who are able, an additional gift would be very much appreciated and help to further strengthen the Church in these difficult economic times.

– Amy Minella, Chair of Board of Trustees
Ward Davol, Chair of Stewardship



CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Bible Study: The Book of Job

February 8, March 1

11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., Meeting Room

We welcome back Rev. Susan DeGeorge for our winter study of this complex book in the Hebrew Scriptures. This series of discussions will explore the eternal question: "Why is it that the innocent suffer?" We will look together at proposed "solutions" found in the prose selections, the comforters' speeches, and God's answer from the whirlwind. We will also examine what light modern retellings of Job by writers like Robert Frost, G.K. Chesterton, and C.G. Jung can shed on the biblical text.

Meditation with Joel Baehr

February 10, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Join us as Rev. Baehr leads us into a deeper awareness of the holy and our spiritual journey through meditation. We meet, as usual, on the second Tuesday of the month in the Meeting Room. All are welcome.

On Saturday, March 7, Rev. Baehr joins us for a day of meditation at the Church from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The theme of the day will be "Dissolving Pain and Difficulties with Wisdom and Love."

Joel Baehr has taught meditation and spiritual practice in a non-denominational, interfaith context for the past 25 years. His own teachers have come from many traditions: Quaker, Roman Catholic, Sufi, Hindu, Vedanta, secular, and Buddhist. For many years he has been senior student and practice leader in the Tibetan Dzogchen lineage of Lama Surya Das, Lama John Makransky, and Charles Genoud. As a Unitarian Universalist minister, he leads retreats and spiritual practice. As a psychotherapist with offices in Old Greenwich and Cambridge, MA, he integrates Buddhist understandings and practices in his work with individuals and couples.

**Check the calendar on our website
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.**

Forum: Continuing to Tell Our Story

February 15, 11:15 a.m.

As part of our ongoing 25th Anniversary Celebration, the History Committee will offer a showing of our Church's DVD, "Round Hill Community Church: The Story of a Growing Community of Faith." Win Adkins, co-producer of the film with Caroline Adkins, will lead a discussion of the making of the film and open the floor for more telling of our congregation's founding.

The History Committee is actively collecting and digitizing all formal and informal documents of the Round Hill Community Church to preserve them for posterity and improve access to them. We would be interested in obtaining photos, news clippings, committee reports, notices of events, legal or other official documents, and other items that might have archival value and would add to the Church's collection.

We will scan them into the computer and then return them to you. Please attach your name to the items you provide so we can return them to you. All items should be labeled and each of the photos should be accompanied by a piece of paper identifying the event and the persons in the photo, if possible. If you cannot name all the people, let us borrow the photo anyway as we may be able to help find people in the Church who know the persons depicted. We have a form that can be attached to each photo to assist in providing this information.

If you have such items or would like additional information about this, please contact either Win Adkins or Arto Szabo.

Ash Wednesday Service

February 25, 7:00 p.m.

Please join us to observe the beginning of Lent at our traditional Ash Wednesday service on February 25, at 7:00 p.m. Following a service of meditation and prayer in the Meeting Room, there will be a light dinner in the Parlor hosted by the Women's Gathering. This is an opportunity to share in reflection and fellowship with your church family. We ask that you bring salad, bread and butter, wine, or cookies.

Please call the Church Office at 869-1091 or email us at church@roundhillcommunitychurch.org to reserve a place.



CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

“Living the Questions” with Bob Culp

Wednesday Lenten Study Series

March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1

7:00 to 8:15 p.m., Meeting Room

Bob Culp will lead a special Wednesday evening study series based on the “Living the Questions” curriculum, which includes a 20-minute DVD segment featuring some of the leading scholars in progressive Christianity today. The format encourages discussion and questions, and we believe you will find the DVD segments to be very interesting and helpful. A useful study guide is available at each session for participants to take home.

The topics are:

March 4 “An Invitation to Journey”

March 11 “Exploring the Lives of Jesus”

March 18 “Encountering the Prophetic Jesus”

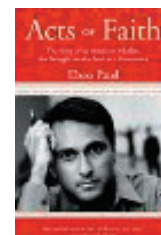
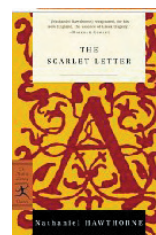
March 25 “Evil, Suffering, and a God of Love”

April 1 “Prayer: Intimacy with God”

We invite you to be a part of this special series, for we believe that you will truly be stimulated and strengthened along your own faith journey and that you will enjoy being together in a warm and accepting fellowship of fellow pilgrims along the way during the Lenten season. Please come, and feel free to bring along your friends!

RHCC Book Club: March 3, 1:00 p.m.

How better to spend a cold afternoon than sitting by a fire surrounded by friends discussing a great book you’ve just read? The RHCC Book Club, a branch of the Women’s Gathering, is in its second year of reading and fellowship. We meet approximately once a month at Edie Wilson’s house to discuss what we have just read, how it applies to our lives, and what we would like to read in the future.



We will be reading Lisa See’s *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* for our upcoming meeting on Tuesday, March 3, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. To better accommodate busy schedules, the group has decided on its next three books, allowing members to read ahead if they choose.

After *Snow Flower*, we will be reading *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne for our April meeting and *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation* by Eboo Patel for our May meeting. April and May meeting dates have not yet been set. The book club is open to all women of the Church. For more information please contact Edie Wilson or Kerri Ann Hofer.

Round Hill Community Church

Flower Fund 2009

Donor's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Donation: _____

Please use this gift:

_____ at the discretion of the Flower Committee _____ for memorial/commemorative flowers on (date) _____ with the following wording for the Bulletin:

Would you like to arrange your own flowers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you want specific flowers or colors to be included or avoided? (Be aware that there is fluctuation in availability for specific flowers at certain times of the year.)

If yes, please detail: _____

Please mail this form and check payable to RHCC to Round Hill Community Church 395 Round Hill Road, Greenwich, CT 06831



PASTORAL MESSAGE

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smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate."

"What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility – a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of character, than giving our all to a difficult task . . . This is the source of our confidence – the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny."

Indeed, such words resonate with the spirit of the One who is our Lord who spoke a challenging message, calling all who would listen to deny themselves, pick up their cross, and follow him in order to fish for people and embody the values and visions of the Kingdom of God. It is a summons that we in the church need to attend as we, too, seek to move into a new tomorrow within these difficult and uncertain days.

There is a moving scene in Jean Anouilh's play *Becket* that speaks to the powerful impact of such a sense of call. The king had appointed Becket, who was his old hunting companion and carousing partner, to be Archbishop, and then he expected Becket to cooperate in a scheme to bring the church under his royal control. What the king had not counted on, however, was that Becket would view his ordination as a genuine call . . . a summons to serve "the honor of God."

Becket, therefore, refuses to capitulate to the king's plan. The king is astonished and, reminding Becket of their wild days together at the hunts and brothels, claims that this new stance of resistance is not like Becket at all. "Perhaps," responds Becket, "I am no longer like myself." When the king presses for a reason, Becket describes the sense of call, the feeling that an ultimate claim had been placed on his life, at the time of his ordination: "I felt for the first time that I was being entrusted with something, that's all, there in that empty cathedral, that day when you ordered me to take up this burden. I was a man without honor. And suddenly I found it . . . the honor of God."

In our age, President Obama has called for all citizens to seize the duties of who we are as Americans, and to do so gladly, "firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying in the spirit, so defining of character, than giving our all to a difficult task."

In our church, our Lord calls to each one of us: "Follow me, and I will send you fishing for people . . . Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it." It is a summons for us to forsake our being our own person and to become Christ's. And when we hear it, we can be sure that the One who loves us best and cherishes our life most fully, has come near; and in the deepest of all ways, we will then realize powerfully that we have been called for.

– Bob Culp

FEBRUARY SERVICES/SERMONS

- Feb. 1 *The Astonishing Authority of Jesus*,
Bob Culp
- Feb. 8 *Overcoming Theological Amnesia*,
Bob Culp
- Feb. 15 *The Art of Doing the Simple Thing*,
Bob Culp
- Feb. 22 25th Anniversary Service: *Celebrating
Our Past, Embracing Our Future*
Rev. Lynne Kramer, Guest Preacher
- Feb. 25 Ash Wednesday Service and Dinner
7:00 p.m. to mark the beginning of Lent

Valentine Dinner Dance

hosted by the Men's Group and 25th Anniversary Committee



Friday, February 13, 2009

7:00 to 11:00 p.m.

Round Hill Community House

*Please feel free to invite your friends
\$80 per person payable to RHCC*



MUSIC AT ROUND HILL

World Premiere for 25th Anniversary Easter Sunday, April 12

The Music Committee has commissioned composer Alex Stein to write an anthem for choir, strings, and trumpet to be performed at the Easter Sunday Service as part of the Church's 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Alex Stein (b.1983) is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area. He received his Master's Degree in composition from the Mannes College of Music, where he studied with David Loeb. He holds a B.A. in music with highest honors from U.C. Santa Cruz, where he studied composition with David Evan Jones and theory with David Cope. In addition, he has studied with Paul Moravec and Jennifer Higdon. He is a winner of the 2008 Martinu Prize, the Jean Schneider Goberman competition, and the CIRCE commission at Mannes. His recent song cycle, "Three Songs by William Blake," was premiered at SUNY Stony Brook. He currently resides in New York City.

Stein was asked to set to music the E.E. Cummings poem "i am a little church (no great cathedral)." In May 1945 on VE Day, Cummings and his wife, Marion, were driving past a small white New England clapboard church as the pastor led an ongoing convocation as residents from Madison, N.H., and surrounding communities milled in and out to pray and offer thanks. The image so struck Cummings that he stopped the car and got out, standing in the shade of the tree-lined street to observe. Although Cummings had never been a churchgoing type – or much of a fan of organized religion – his writing often showed a deep reverence. Later that evening, he returned to his artist's loft and wrote one of his favorite, and perhaps least known, poems:

i am a little church (no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of hurrying cities
-i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april

my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsily
striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying)
children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness

around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection:
over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope, and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains

i am a little church (far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish) at peace with
nature
-i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing

winter by spring, i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His
darkness)

When Cummings appeared before more than 10,000 people at the Boston Arts Festival in 1957 – the largest public reading of his career – it was his snapshot of life in New England he chose to recite. For Cummings, "i am a little church" symbolized how something so outwardly ordinary could hold such importance for a community.

Save the Date for All Beethoven Concert April 26, 4:00 p.m.

On April 26 at 4:00 p.m., the choir, orchestra, and soloists under the direction of Christopher Kabala will present an all Beethoven concert in the Sanctuary, followed by a reception in the Parlor. The program will include Beethoven's Mass in C and the Romance in F Major Op. 50 with Greenwich Symphony concertmaster Krystof Witek as violin soloist.

At this concert we will welcome choristers from the Greenwich Continuing Education course "Sing a Masterpiece." Non-church members wishing to sing in the concert may enroll in the course through Greenwich Continuing Education. Tickets for the concert are \$25.00 and will be available at the door.


– Christopher Kabala

The News Letter is edited by Nancy Mazzoli,
Claire McKean, Lawrence Sterne, and Lynda Kinney

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Bob Culp
Minister
Shannon White
Assistant Minister

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.

FEBRUARY 2009 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 a.m. Worship High School Discussion Group 11:15 a.m. Confirmands Discussion	2 7 p.m. Fiction Writing Classroom 8:00 p.m. Trustees' Meeting	3 2:00 p.m. Fiction Writing Meeting Room	4	5 8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6	7
8 9:00 a.m. Worship Comm. Mtg. Pastor's Office 10:00 a.m. Worship 11:15 a.m. Bible Study, Mtg. Rm.	9 7 p.m. Fiction Writing Classroom	10 10 a.m. Greenfingers Meeting Room 2 p.m. Fiction Writing, Mtg. Rm. 7 p.m. Meditation Mtg. Rm.	11 Women's Spirit Rising 12 noon	12 8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	13 7 p.m. Valentine Dinner Dance Community House 	14
15 10 a.m. Worship	16 Office Closed Presidents' Day Cooking for St. Luke's	17	18	19 8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	20 Newsletter Deadline	21
22 10 a.m. Worship 25th Anniversary Special Service H. S. Discussion Grp.	23 7 p.m. Fiction Writing Classroom	24 2:00 p.m. Fiction Writing Meeting Room	25 7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship Service and Supper	26 8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	27	28
<div> <div> WORSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE </div> <div> IN LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY: ARCHIVAL PHOTOS OF RHCC AND ROUND HILL ROAD HISTORY </div> </div>						