



*Round Hill
Community Church*

The News Letter

January 2009

Catching the Spirit of Round Hill

The Challenge in 2009 to Become a “We Community”

This past year we saw seismic shifts in the political arena of our country, as well continuing economic turmoil and uncertainties, the full impact of which we will be dealing with well into the foreseeable future. There are economic programs and political strategies that are already in place, being planned and tested, that will be refined and adjusted as we move through these months ahead. We all hope that we begin to see what it will take for us as a nation to move forward into the new tomorrow that is the “legacy of promise” woven into the fabric of America.

Such profound shifts and uncertainties have affected us as a church family in a number of ways, as our members and friends have been making adjustments in their own personal budgets, their plans for the coming year, and their priorities and lifestyles amidst the recession in which we now find ourselves. Some of these changes have been quite painful and disruptive, as they have been accented by the wonderment and fear associated with the sense of dislocation. Other changes have been welcomed as opportunities to begin anew, to reset personal agendas and focus upon new goals and dreams.

Beyond such dimensions, though, my sense is that an increasing number of us are “rediscovering as if for the first time” the importance and value of being a part of a caring and compassionate church family. Indeed, in a growing number of conversations I have had with members and friends, people have shared with me the fresh realization that we truly need one another and that the journey ahead of us is one we need to be making together, rather than alone.

Sue Monk Kidd tells of reading Elie Weisel’s *Night*, which is the chronicle of his suffering in a

continued on page 6



Help celebrate the beginning of our 25th anniversary in our beautiful sanctuary with a special service on January 4. Rev. Bob Culp will have a “dialogue” with the very first sermon preached by Dr. Walter Wagoner January 1, 1984. A bagpiper will provide special music prior to the 10:00 a.m. service and a forum will follow in which a panel of Church members will reflect on their struggle for religious independence. Historical photographs and other documents will be on display in Les Beaux Arts Gallery.

continued on page 3



*The ceremonial march to the
new Sanctuary in January, 1984*



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

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

Toys for Nicaragua

Thanks to all who gave toys for the children in Nicaragua. Your generosity made Christmas a wonderful day for the children in Josephina Gutierrez's home village. We will be showing the video of the day sometime this month.

Gingerbread Houses

The gingerbread house making was a huge success thanks to the generosity and guidance of Roland and Allison Kistler. More than 35 children participated in this event decorating their houses with candy, icing, and a lot of love and enthusiasm. This will be an annual Church School event.

Thanks, Roland and Allison.



The Kistler family lighting an Advent candle

Christmas Pageant

Our annual Christmas Pageant was “the best pageant ever” thanks to our directors Helen O'Malley, Perry Minella, and Alexa Salame who encouraged and inspired our outstanding cast. We are grateful, too, for the behind-the-scenes support and assistance of Laura Wack, Annette Grueterich, Sophie Grueterich, and Amy Minella.

January Scripture

Matthew 14:19-20

Taking the five loaves and two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the crowds.

Mark 9:37

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.

January Lessons and Teachers

The next series of lessons will focus on the Miracles of Jesus. Many of the stories we know about Jesus are based on his miracles, but have we ever thought about how it would feel to be touched by God? What does it say to us today that Jesus was willing to be with the sick, the needy, the broken – instead of the powerful, the elite?

During this cycle, children will explore several of Jesus' miracles and talk about what the miracles might mean for us today. These inspirational lessons will be taught by Laura Wack and Allison Kistler. The first session is scheduled for Sunday, January 4.





RHCC 25TH ANNIVERSARY

continued from page 1

A Little History

Founded in 1810 when Round Hill Road was little more than a cow path, our church served the entire local population, from farmers to estate owners to workers and servants. Over time, the congregation incorporated, codified principles, and hired ministers. Little did they know that the 1921 takeover of an abandoned parish at the corner of John Street and Round Hill Road would, some 57 years later, lead to a showdown over who had the right to appoint the minister – the parishioners or the Bishop. The legal logjam finally was settled in 1983, with Round Hill Community Church retaining its name and the structure known as the Community House, in which services were held during construction of a permanent sanctuary. On New Year's Day, 1984, the congregation made a ceremonial march from the Community House to its new place of worship – a new sanctuary whose elegant simplicity and lofty angles reflected in a modern fashion the New England spirit of rugged individualism and its sturdy belief in the freedom of religion. The procession was led by a bagpiper, Dr. Walter Wagoner, the Church's minister, and David Fairburn, chairman of the Church's board of trustees.

sermon as he shares from Dr. Wagoner's sermon of January 1, 1984 (the very first sermon preached in the new sanctuary), and reflects on the unique ministry and history of our Church. A bagpiper will provide special music outside the sanctuary beginning at 9:45 a.m. as we gather for the worship service, seeking to bring forth echoes of that festive march of some 25 years ago. Following the service and fellowship time, a special forum will be held with a panel of Church members reflecting on the Church's special journey toward religious independence.

Throughout the first half of 2009, the Church will continue to mark its 25th Anniversary through additional Sunday special services, with former ministers sharing sermons on the theme of "Celebrating Our Past, Embracing Our Future." Preachers include:

Rev. Lynne Kramer on February 22

Dr. Richard Griffis on March 22

Dr. Ralph Ahlberg on May 10

A festive Anniversary Dinner and Program will take place the evening of Saturday, May 9.

Les Beaux Arts Gallery

To celebrate our 25th anniversary, Les Beaux Arts Gallery has organized a special exhibit running from December 21 through February 26, 2009. The show will cover the history of the Church from its construction to the present in photographic images.

With the help of Arto Szabo, the photographs were assembled from the archives of the Church and then scanned, digitalized, and enlarged. The curator was able to make a comprehensive selection of very interesting photographs that were not seen before. Among the images are old views of the Round Hill Road area and the old farm buildings.

All prints are for sale. Matted prints are \$50 each and framed prints are \$100 each.

– Mirella Hajjar, Gallery curator



1982, May 23
Choir Sunday, Community House

Anniversary Plans

On Sunday, January 4, 2009, we will observe the beginning of our 25th Anniversary of worshiping in our sanctuary. Bob Culp will deliver a special "dialogue"



CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT



Forum: RHCC Beginnings

January 4, 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

As we begin our 25th anniversary celebration, we invite you to come and hear from a panel of some of the members who remember it all and invite your recollections, too. Participants include Banks Adams, Alice O’Gorman, Win Adkins, David Fairburn, Helen O’Malley, Becky Jasperson, and Ann Winston.

Meditation with Joel Baehr

January 13, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Bring in the New Year in peace! We meet, as usual, on the second Tuesday of the month in the Meeting Room. All are welcome.

Bible Study: The Book of Job

January 18, 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.

WOMEN’S GATHERING

Our next Gathering will be supper in the Church Parlor on Friday evening, January 30, at 6:30 p.m. Do mark your calendar. Invitations will go out the first week of January.



Shannon will be the speaker and she will talk about another facet of her life – that of a TV journalist. She calls her talk Spirituality and the Media. She will focus on “how stories have the potential of touching the depth of the human experience and thereby release compassion and healing within and among people. I will show some of the stories I have had the privilege of working on over the last few years that have gotten some recognition for storytelling.”

So that as many women can participate as possible at this and future Gatherings, we plan, whenever possible, to have childcare available. On Friday, January 30, there will be childcare and a movie and pizza in the Meeting Room.

This promises to be a wonderful evening. There will be a simple supper of soup, salads, and dessert. Do let Lynda know promptly if you will attend and also if your children will come.

– Rhona Johnson



STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

The family of the Round Hill Community Church has faithfully and generously served as its stewards for many years. As we embark on the 25th anniversary of the Church at its present site, we find ourselves in difficult and confusing economic times that may remind us of how unpredictable life can be. What is predictable, though, is that we will be able to enter the Sanctuary on Round Hill Road each Sunday to experience:

- Thoughtful, inspiring, and comforting sermons delivered by Bob and Shannon during a worship service designed to help bring us some moments of peace, introspection, and understanding.

- Music performed by Chris Kabala and our splendid choir and soloists, often accompanied by world-class instrumentalists.

- A safe, nurturing, and enlightening Church School for our children to attend during the worship service.

- An opportunity to visit with old friends and meet new ones during the fellowship hour.

- Intriguing and educational programs offered before or after the service ranging from Bible Study to explorations into relationships.



As you may imagine, meeting the fiscal needs of Round Hill Community Church for the coming year is posing quite a challenge. However, our congregation has pulled together many times in the course of our special history, and we can rise to the occasion again during this period of economic instability. The Board of Trustees will have to make hard decisions to balance the budget, and if we do not meet our Stewardship goal for 2009, as we are currently trending, we will have to make across-the-board cuts.

We want to express heartfelt thanks for those of you who have already pledged or given gifts for the

coming year. Since our primary source of income is contributions, we hope that you will consider making a donation if you have not, or making an additional contribution if you are able to. Right now, we are estimating that we may have a budget shortfall of as much as \$75,000 in 2009. Although we will still certainly continue to meet during our Sunday services, we would most likely see a change in:

- Our ability to feature special music programs with instrumentalists joining our choir.



- The amount of funds for Benevolence and Outreach to distribute to needy causes.

- The number of speakers and workshop leaders that the Center for Faith Development could hire for forums.

At this point we are 35% shy of our stewardship goal. Please, if you have not sent in your pledge yet, won't you sit down right now while it is fresh on your mind and get it in the mail today? It is important that we receive 100% participation, especially at this difficult time. If you have any questions or would like to speak with me personally, please feel free to call at (203) 531-7635. With your support, we will carry on as a strong community for many years to come.

– Ward Davol, Stewardship Chair

**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.**



PASTORAL MESSAGE

continued from page 1

Nazi concentration camp, in which she came upon a story that spread before her a metaphoric picture of what it means to live in what she calls the “Compassionate We” as a community of faith. Nazi soldiers herded the Jewish prisoners out of their barracks before dawn one day into a thickly falling snow in order to wait for a train that would transport them to another camp. Having been without food and drink for three days, the Jews stood in the snow until the evening, forbidden to sit or even bend over. The snow formed a layer on their shoulders. One thirsty man took out his spoon and began to eat the snow that had accumulated on the shoulders of the person in front of him. That act began to spread along the line until that collection of separate individuals, each of whom had been struggling alone with their pain, became a community sharing their suffering together.

Kidd writes, “The image of that scene burned into my mind, and I knew that in some way this is how we would survive as a human family – by becoming a place of nourishment for our brothers and sisters, by quietly shouldering their pain and their healing. We would survive as we became a We Community, sharing our sufferings in a great and holy act of compassion.”

Our church family is a place of grace where such compassion is preached and taught, and where it is embodied, cultivated, and deepened in our shared life and ministry. As God’s own family, we are called to look with the eyes of the heart at all God’s creatures, great and small, walking gently upon this bruised planet in this bruising time, sharing tough times and joyful times with one another, shouldering one another’s sufferings, rejoicing in one another’s healings, and daring to live out the promise of becoming God’s “We Community” in such challenging times filled with such wondrous opportunities. May we embrace that promise together in 2009!

– Bob Culp

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

JANUARY SERVICES AND SERMONS

- Jan. 4 *The World as Sanctuary*, Bob Culp:
A “dialogue sermon” between Bob Culp
and Dr. Walter Wagoner, using Walter’s
first sermon preached in the new sanctuary
25 years ago
- Jan. 11 Shannon White preaching
The Sacrament of Communion
- Jan. 18 *God Still Speaks*, Bob Culp
- Jan. 25 *The Lord and Life We Share*, Bob Culp

Please join us for our annual

Valentine Dinner Dance

*hosted by the RHCC Men’s Group and
the 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*

Reservation deadline is Friday, February 6
For additional invitations or information
contact the Church Office at 869-1091



CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL



A “Merry Little Christmas on Round Hill” was had by all who attended this year’s Preview Party and fair. The party on Friday was a great kick-off to the holiday season and the perfect opportunity for greeting old friends and new. The return of the Silent Auction was a great success. The fair on Saturday featured pictures with Santa, crafts for children to make and take home, and rides on the Round Hill Express. Throughout both events, there was shopping for everyone on your list with several Member Vendor booths with items handcrafted and baked by our members and backcountry neighbors, and of course, Treasure Trove.



Thank you to our wonderful community of volunteers who give this event life each year. Thank you to our graphic designers and publicity gurus. Thanks to all who organized, set up, decorated, priced, and then put it all away on Sunday. Thank you to those who made frozen foods, “puds,” and sweet and savory items for sale. Thanks to the bustling bartenders, musicians, Silent Auction organizers and contributors, salespeople, and Treasure Trove crew. Our thanks to



jolly Santas and their elves with cameras, and Round Hill Express engineers. And a very big hug to the merry band of elves who attended workshops every week since last March to create beautiful handcrafted items for Something Special. It is because of *all* of you, that this event continues to be such a special holiday tradition.



We will have a meeting in early January to discuss the future plans for Christmas on Round Hill. If you would like to take part in this discussion, please watch for an email announcing the time and date. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather with friends and think outside the box to create an exciting new tradition at Round Hill Community Church.



The News Letter

Round Hill Community Church
395 Round Hill Road
Greenwich, CT 06831
(203) 869-1091

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.

JANUARY 2009 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WORSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE IN LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY ARCHIVAL PHOTOS OF RHCC AND ROUND HILL ROAD HISTORY				1 Office Closed New Year's Day	2 Office Closed	3
4 25th Anniversary of 1st Service in Sanctuary 10:00 a.m. Forum: History of RHCC, 11:15 a.m., Mtg. Rm.	5 Trustees' Meeting 8:00 p.m.	6	7	8 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	9	10
11 10 a.m. Worship High School Discussion Group Worship Committee Meeting, 11:15 a.m. Prayer Service, 5 p.m. Meeting Room	12	13 Meditation 7 p.m., Meeting Room	14 Women's Spirit Rising 12 noon	15 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	16	17
18 10 a.m. Worship Forum: Bible Study with Susan DeGeorge 11:15 a.m.	19 Office Closed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Cooking for St. Luke's	20 Keire Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m. Meeting Room	21	22 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	23 Newsletter Deadline	24
25 10:00 a.m. Worship High School Discussion Group	26 Fiction Writing 7:00 p.m. Meeting Room	27 Fiction Writing 2:00 p.m. Meeting Room	28 Finance Meeting 9:00 a.m.	29 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	30 Women's Gathering Dinner 6:30 p.m., Parlor	31