



*Round Hill  
Community Church*

## *The News Letter*

*July/August 2006*

### **PASTORAL MESSAGE**

#### **If a Horse Can Melt Our Hearts . . .**

Having lived in the Baltimore area for eight years in the 1990s, I became a fan of the annual horse race in the month of May known simply as "the Preakness." Always, there was an interest in this race as the middle leg in a possible triple crown winner, and certainly this year there was special excitement because the winner of the Kentucky Derby, Barbaro, had won the race in such decisive fashion. Along with millions, my heart sank when Barbaro broke down in the very early stages of the Preakness, causing me to remember the time when the filly Ruffian fractured her leg in a match race against Foolish Pleasure, and eventually had to be euthanized.

Rather amazingly, Barbaro has survived complicated surgery so far, with advanced surgical artistry having pinned his leg together. While his racing days are over, time will tell if he will be able to live a productive and fairly normal life as a retired racehorse.

Jane Schwartz, who has written a wonderful book on Ruffian, framed an interesting question in the days that followed the Preakness, reflecting on the flood of gifts and cards and carrot goodies that came in for Barbaro: "Why do people care so much about the fate of an animal to which they have no personal connection?"

Recognizing that a serious injury sustained at a high speed often spells death for a horse, and that such horses struggle to "settle down" enough for healing to take place, Schwartz offered this observation that seems to bring us to the edge of a wondrous mystery, prayer, and perhaps even a sermon: "In victory and defeat, and every day in between, horses remain wordless creatures. To those in the sport who spend their days caring for them, these thousand-pound thoroughbreds are like children – not in any sentimental sense, but in the sense that they cannot take care of themselves. They need people to provide them with water, food, shelter, exercise. The good ones are treated the way every child should be treated – with the mixture of care and discipline best suited for that particular individual."

Bill Tully, Rector at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City (whose newsletter article inspired this message), observes that our animal companions have a significant impact upon our lives – improving our lives, giving us comfort,

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### **BEVEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH**



*Suzy Simpson, Victoria Portscheller, Kara Pellegrino,  
Jewel Schindler, Shannon White, Tina Pusser*

#### **Post-Katrina Alcoholism**

As I ran along the beautifully tree-lined streets near my home yesterday with houses intact and families enjoying the July 4th weekend activities, I couldn't help but have flashbacks to such a different scene just a few days ago of neighborhood after neighborhood in New Orleans and Mississippi that looked like virtual ghost towns. How could this be . . . now ten months after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita? Witnessing such mass destruction makes it easy to want to shut it out as a result of overload . . . and be glad to return home.

But many can't do that; we met folks who told us of widespread depression and introduced us to a new term – post-Katrina alcoholism.

Everywhere we went we heard their stories, still horrifying, still desperate, still needing to be told to anyone who would listen. It began for me on the airplane from St. Louis to New Orleans: Seegrid lost everything – her house and her business as a home health care provider. She decided to return and begin again because the people that worked for her needed jobs. But she said she thought the entire city was or should be on antidepressants.

You heard some of the other stories that seem over-

*continued on page 4*



## CHURCH SCHOOL

### Behold, I am doing a new thing!

– Isaiah 43:19



*Eileen Brehm with Church School youth*

It may be summer, but plans for next year are under way! We have chosen our annual theme and we are actively working out the curriculum. Each year the Church School uses a phrase from the Bible that becomes the running theme for classes and activities. Bulletin boards, lessons, outreach activities, and special events are directly tied to this theme to bring continuity for students and teachers. In Isaiah 43:19, the Lord declares, “Behold, I am doing a new thing!” We love the possibility of this statement and think it is a positive, energetic, and wonderful phrase to use as this year’s theme.

In the spirit of “a new thing” there will be a change to the teaching schedule as well. This year we will use the idea of “less is more” and concentrate on nine stories from the Bible – one story for each month in the school year. Classes will focus on that Bible story for four Sundays in all grade levels. Volunteers will sign up for a month at a time, teaching one story throughout that month. There will be several curriculum sources for selecting teaching materials for the four lessons. Students will learn each Bible story at a much deeper level than before. More time will be spent on each story and they will be learning through several approaches, including discussion, art activities, role playing, songs, passage memorization, and community outreach activities. There are many advantages to this in-depth approach:

- Teachers commit to teaching one month at a time, and may choose the months (and stories) that are best for them.
- Teachers are focused on only one Bible story at a time, which will give them greater focus on how they want to

explore the story. Many lessons will be provided, and they may select the lessons they are most comfortable teaching.

- Students will retain more of what they learn since they are exploring fewer stories for a greater length of time.
- All students in the Church School (pre-K through eighth grade) will be exploring the same Bible story each month, ensuring continuity to the curriculum – but each grade level will be working on lessons that are age-appropriate.
- Students missing a particular Sunday will not be lost when they return, as they will know what story is being explored each month.
- Students will feel a greater sense of community knowing they are all exploring the same Bible story.
- Teachers will have dialogues about lessons as they may share ideas with each other surrounding a story.
- It is well documented that students learn in a variety of ways, and by offering different lesson options, there is a greater chance that at least one will resonate with each child.
- Bob and Shannon will still be able to tailor the Children’s Message to the Bible story of the month, sharing insights into the monthly story.

I am confident this new structure will help our children learn the Bible stories better, foster a greater sense of community among them and the congregation, and help the volunteer teachers plan their classes with greater ease.

Shannon White and I are in the process of selecting the nine Bible stories that will make up next year’s curriculum. However, please call or email me now if you would like to teach next year and know which month(s), September through May, you prefer. I will work my best to accommodate everyone’s month and grade level choices.

Have a wonderful summer and I look forward to all the “new things” we will discover together in the coming year!

– Eileen Brehm, Church School Director







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## BEACH DAY 2006

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Now that the temperatures have finally hit 90 degrees and the kids are out of school, it's time to start thinking about summer activities. Please consider joining us at the beach on Monday, July 17 (rain date Tuesday), when the Benevolence and Outreach Committee hosts our annual Beach Day. This will be the twenty-first time we have invited members of the Little Sisters of the Assumption community center in East Harlem to join us for a day of sun, fun, and relaxation.

We are expecting approximately one hundred mostly Spanish-speaking children and parents to join us at Tod's Point. To make this day a success we'll need a cadre of volunteers to set up, greet guests, help serve lunch, and clean up afterwards. Of course there will be plenty of time to enjoy the beach and lunch will be provided. If you can help please contact Kerri Ann Hofer at [kerriann@mac.com](mailto:kerriann@mac.com).

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## CHURCH SCHOOL

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### A Thank You from Our Youth

Our Church School youth wish to thank the members of the congregation for their generous support of our Save the Rainforest Project. We combined the youth offering money with funds raised through the sale of our "trees" and animal stickers to total a fabulous \$4,100. Definitely a job well done!

We are splitting the money between two reputable organizations, the Rainforest Alliance and the Rainforest Action Network. Our funds will be used to save rainforest acreage, assist indigenous people, and promote sustainable practices.

Saving the rainforest has long been a topic of interest to the Church School children, who translated this year's Church School theme of "walking humbly with God" into stewardship of the environment.

On behalf of the tree frogs, toucans, squirrel monkeys, jaguars, and rainforest trees, we thank you.

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## ANNUAL PICNIC

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On Sunday, June 4, RHCC members younger and older enjoyed the good food and fun of our annual picnic on the front lawn. Members of the Men's Group cooked the hot dogs and hamburgers while Gabriele Eggenschwiler and Leslie Lee provided a festive decor for the tent. For dessert we enjoyed make-your-own ice cream sundaes.

Special thanks go to Eileen Brehm for organizing the children's activities. Lynda Treadwell, Steve Dunleavy, John Novak, and many others helped with arrangements, setup, and clean-up. A big thank you to all.

— Ron Wilson



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## MUSIC NOTES

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### The Chamber Players Return to RHCC!

Once again, The Chamber Players of the Greenwich Symphony have reserved four dates at our Church for concerts on Sunday afternoons, starting at 4:00 p.m. Concerts feature principals of the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra and occasional soloists. They are followed by a wine and cheese reception where the audience has the opportunity to visit with the musicians. Please place these dates on your calendar: **October 15, 2006; November 5, 2006; March 4, 2007; and April 1, 2007.**

— Carrie Finlayson



## BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

whelming to hear, and yet somehow there is gratitude and hope, even in the midst of such chaos.

There were countless people everywhere along the way who, when they found out why we were there, said, “Thank you so much for taking the time to come down here to help . . . it means so much.”

I had hope in seeing groups of people like ours showing up – many with young people on summer break – weathering temperatures in the mid 90s with high humidity, to give service; it was the best of humanity.

This time we used some of the money from Benevolence and Outreach to purchase a power lawn mower for the camp that was desperately needed. I had hope to see the power of what a lawn mower can do to bring a bit of normalcy to the look of a house – and a smile on the homeowner’s face.

I had hope in hearing folks like Percy, who despite tremendous odds, are moving ahead to rebuild and are encouraging others in the neighborhood to do so also.

I had hope in the power of our little group’s efforts. According to Jewel Schindler, after one day of our work on her house she had hope for the first time since the storm, and even though she *may* demolish her house, she now at least has the choice.

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to go to the Gulf Coast region, once again to be part of the recovery process. Thank you for sending another group. We need to keep hearing the stories because they aren’t going away. We need to keep praying for the people because they need it, and we need to remember them.

We need to keep giving to relief efforts, because every dollar is desperately needed and appreciated. And we need to keep going – because we can – and in our going perhaps we ease their burden ever so slightly.

– Shannon White

### The Importance of Our Work

From the airport we drove directly to camp, where we found a small compound of blue and white tents, and one large canopy tent that we later learned was the mess hall and recreation center. We took a brief tour, settled our belongings into our pod – fortunately there was enough space in camp for us to each have our own – and then we headed out to see downtown New Orleans and the Ninth Ward.

After our quick tour we returned to camp with energy and confidence that our work was necessary and vital to the rebuilding of New Orleans. We attacked the house our first day with a wave of energy, determined that by the end of the week only two-by-fours would remain.

The second day became a challenge as we began to question our service; it was a dead neighborhood where people might never move back, and there was a deadline for demolition for all of the other houses – why rebuild just one if the others will be demolished? Then at the very end of the day a group of construction workers came by to survey the house we had been working on for complete demolition.

The strength we needed to continue working changed from physical to mental as we all worked to put aside our doubts about the importance of our work, and began to see that what was more important was giving hope to those who have none. People could see this house and know that a work group had come down to fix it and that maybe little by little the neighborhood could be rebuilt, as a first, small step to rebuilding New Orleans.

Our work was by no means unimportant, and the stories we heard and the destruction we saw has given us completely different perspective with which to view our own lives. And at the end of the day, even if the house is never rebuilt and all we gave was hope, then we were successful.

– Kara Pellegrino



*Kara Pellegrino putting the new lawn mower to use*

### The Work Site

Monday morning we arrived at the home of Jewel Schindler in St. Bernard Parish. The windows were broken, doors removed, there was a tree on the roof, and the grass and weeds were overgrown; the neighborhood had been under ten feet of water. On the front of the house (and every house in the Parish) was a cross with the date the house was searched after the storm in the upper right hand corner, and various circles with dots and slashes in other quadrants. We were not able to find information about the symbols, but most likely they were indicating whether the rescuers found people, pets, or bodies. Mrs. Schindler, a sweet southern 80-year-old woman, greeted us with a smile. She told us how her brother had built the house for her in the early 1950s, about her decision to evacuate, and then coming back to claim whatever personal items she could find. She admitted a few days later that she was quite surprised, and somewhat apprehensive, to think that five females would be able to tackle such a monster project.

After getting Mrs. Schindler’s permission to enter, Shannon checked to be sure the power, gas, and water had been turned off. We didn’t want to demo the house by blowing it up because of a gas leak. The personal items had all been re-





## BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

moved, as well as, luckily for us, all the smelly water-soaked carpets. We donned our blue hard hats (to match our shirts), leather gloves, goggles, and dust masks. Armed with crow-bars, a #35 sledge hammer, regular hammers, and shovels, we went at it. Tina and Kara, with mighty muscles, started breaking down the sheet rock, removing some kitchen appliances (stove and a water heater still filled with Katrina water), and cabinets. Shannon and Tori joined in the demolition fun, while I did some nail pulling, baseboard stripping, debris shoveling, and wheelbarrow dumping. Kara attacked the bathroom. We have a great picture of her carrying her prized toilet that she had just ripped off the floor. There was some mold at the ceiling line, and some bits of insulation that were in the walls that was rather gross. We didn't get to the ceiling. Good luck to the next team with all that disgusting water-soaked insulation yuk falling on their heads. In four days of work, we managed to have a pile of debris out by the street that was approximately 5 feet high by 10 feet deep by 30 feet long.

The house is brick and approximately 1000 square feet. It has a living room, dining room, kitchen, family room, three bedrooms, and two baths. A FEMA team came by on Tuesday to check about demolition. It was optional for people with brick houses to take advantage of a free demo before the end of August. Mrs. Schindler lives in an apartment now and will not be coming back, but after seeing the work we were doing, her hopes brightened that she would be able to sell instead of having the house taken down. There are others who are trying to pick up their lives and rebuild in the neighborhood. On Wednesday the abandoned SUV in front of the house was towed away. On Thursday, we purchased a shiny new green 6HP lawn mower for the group. It got its first test on Mrs. Schindler's yard. What a difference.



The piles of debris in front of the homes send two messages. One is a reminder of the disaster and how lives have been thrown into great turmoil. The other is one of hope. The

debris shows that people care. The two teams from Round Hill Community Church, along with the support of other churches and organizations, do make a difference. There are beautiful pink impatiens in front of Mrs. Schindler's house. They too are determined to show that the neighborhood can recover. We gave Mrs. Schindler a radio as a parting gift. She missed the music.

– Suzy Simpson

### Let Love Rule

Going to New Orleans, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was going there to help . . . I knew *that*, but what I saw once I got there made me realize that being there was important not only for me, but for the people who needed help.

On a building in the Ninth Ward, I saw the phrase "Let Love Rule" written in large letters, and I realized what people needed to cope with the devastation was love . . . to know someone cared for them and they were not alone.

As we drove through the city and viewed the unbelievably extensive damage caused by the hurricane, I thought of the people whose homes, businesses, and properties had been destroyed, but more important, the lives that have been lost. It seemed as if we were driving in a "ghost town." No one was living in what remained standing of the houses. There were trees on the top of the roofs, broken glass everywhere, total destruction all around me.

The third day we drove to Bourbon Street – a totally different area from what I had seen the previous day. Here was this place completely rebuilt, people partying and drinking, while in another part of New Orleans the situation was one of devastation. I thought it was odd that this could be happening when there was still so much help needed.

At the end of my time in New Orleans I felt proud that I had gone to help rebuild, but there is a lot more to be done.

– Victoria Portscheller

### Thank You!

The five of us who just returned as ambassadors to New Orleans from Round Hill Community Church know that we were surrounded by the love, prayers, and support of the community. We thank you and were strengthened by you.

We thank the Benevolence and Outreach Committee for providing some of the funds to help us to go. We also say "thanks" for enabling us to purchase a power lawn mower for the camp so that many in the area can benefit from freshly mowed lawns. We thank Art Landi for providing mosquito netting so we would not be bitten at night. We thank Hadi Hajjar for donating a box of stickers, and the Pellegrino family for donating other toys for the children of the area. We thank Ray (friend of Victoria) for providing extra gloves and masks for our work site.

Most of all, we thank everyone who prayed for us. We needed it!

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## PASTORAL MESSAGE

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allowing us to feel needed and loved, and even saving our lives. They inspire in us some of the deepest feelings of which we are capable.

Why, then, Tully asks, do we fail all too often to provide “food, shelter, and exercise,” along with promising possibilities in nurture and education and service, for the wordless child whose family has broken down while racing just to live? Where are the carrots? Where are the programs and support systems within our society?

Tully writes, “The church is the community gathered before God, in Christ’s real presence, with the Word challenging our every priority. All God’s creatures, all God’s children, deserve our caring – and more than caring. The ‘poor in spirit’ and ‘the least of these’ trump our sentiments and our sports, among other vanities. The powerless are blessed and ‘will inherit the earth.’ That’s God’s promise. It’s our job to keep that straight. And a clear-eyed church can help with that. If a horse can melt our hearts, how much more should a child of God?”

Amen. And amen! Have a wonderful summer that makes clear your own eyes in the ways of the Lord.

– Bob Culp

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## COOKING FOR ST. LUKE’S

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### All Generations Join In

On June 19, the third Monday of the month, we got together at my house to produce the monthly meal for St. Luke’s in Stamford. We cooked up barbecued chicken, mac and cheese, salad, rolls, watermelon, and cookies. Some “sides” were a very popular rice salad created by Rhona from a previous St. Luke’s dinner and baked ham and guacamole and chips left over (ahem) from a Chamber Players Benefit concert. The meal was a big hit and, as always, graciously received.

The cooking crew included many of our steady volunteers: Jo Ann Adams, Robin Browning, and Rhona Johnson. The serving group was multigenerational. Kerri Ann Hofer and Jenny Rye joined us with their talented offspring – Alex and Wolfgang, Arman and Sonali. It was obviously dinner hour and these kids were starving, so it must have been difficult for them to watch everyone else eat and return for seconds and thirds. But they were great and kept working away. We look forward to their help next month when Sandy Motland is planning a cookout.

– Carrie Finlayson

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## WOMEN’S RETREAT

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(front row) Susanna Nielsen, Erin Waterman, Shannon White, Annette Grueterich, Kerri Ann Hofer  
(back row) Beverly Ahlberg, Lyn Harmon, Gloria FitzSimons, Gayle George, Beth Wright, Rhona Johnson, Woodie Stevenson

Twelve women from the church, including Beverly Ahlberg, gathered at the Mercy Center in Madison, Connecticut, for a two-day retreat in early June. We stayed in a private house overlooking Long Island Sound on the Mercy Center property. The theme of this retreat was inspired by a book by Anne Morrow Lindbergh called *Gift from the Sea*. We explored her message of 50 years ago, which is still relevant today; the importance of simplicity and solitude.

We spent our time walking the beach, meditating, doing yoga, reading, “playing” with shells, and being present with each other.

We have another Women’s Retreat planned for January 24 and 25, 2007.

– Beth Wright





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## CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT AT RHCC

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### Coming This Fall: The Center for Faith Development at Round Hill Community Church

In response to the findings of the Steering Committee, the "Center" was formed as the educational arm of Round Hill Community Church.

The Center for Faith Development at RHCC nurtures an inward journey of prayer and study along with an outward journey of worship and engagement to deepen our understanding of God's purpose in our lives. We seek to follow Jesus Christ together and individually through:

- Interactive Forums and Brown Bag Lunches
- Family Series
- Thorne Lecture Series
- Dinner Discussion Groups
- Small Group Studies
- Mid-Week Studies
- Church School
- A Church Library for all ages

Here are some of the things to watch for this year:

- Interfaith series of lectures and visits to houses of worship of different Christian denominations and different faiths
- Sponsorship of "Peace One Day" movie, discussion and reflection on the International Day of Peace
- Movie nights for the whole family
- Bible Study
- Engaging forums such as "Media and Values," "Living Wills," and "Religion and Science"
- Thorne Lecture Series on "Corporate Ethics" with Sherron Watkins, the Enron whistle-blower

Please keep watching for details.

– Shannon White

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## CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL

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**Workshops** have begun with Suzy Simpson leading a pinecone wreath making session on July 12 and Nancy Mazzoli demonstrating how to make fabric and bead ornaments on July 13. If you are interested in learning some crafts and contributing items to the Fair, please contact Nancy Mazzoli or Lynda Treadwell. There will be many more workshops offered this fall, publicized in the News Letter and on the website.

We are looking for great Silent Auction items. If you have tickets for an event, access to a fabulous getaway, or service, or any other ideas, please contact Hadi Hajjar or Lynda Treadwell.

### THORNE LECTURE SERIES

#### Sherron Watkins on Corporate Ethics

Friday, January 26, and Sunday, January 28



In a time unlike any other, corporations such as WorldCom, Tyco, Adelphia, and Enron have hit the headlines not as business leaders, but as culprits of ethics issues.

The 2007 Thorne Lecture Series will focus on "Corporate Ethics" with guest speaker Sherron Watkins, former Enron V.P., credited with

blowing the whistle and starting the process of uncovering one of the greatest corporate fraud cases in history.

Ms. Watkins will be with us for a lecture from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday and respond to questions on Sunday morning at 11:15 following our worship service.

Please bring your friends and join us for what is sure to be a memorable weekend. Both lectures are free, but reservations are encouraged.

Reserve at [church@roundhillcommunitychurch.org](mailto:church@roundhillcommunitychurch.org) or call the Church Office at 869-1091. Childcare will be available with a reservation.

The Thorne Lecture Series was established in 1986 for the purpose of bringing distinguished leaders to the Church and our community who will explore the interface between spiritual values and contemporary culture.

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## COMMUNICATIONS

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### "What RHCC Means to Me"

Those of us who are fortunate enough to be involved with Round Hill Community Church know what makes it such a special and welcoming place. Why keep this treasure a secret when we can broadcast the news to our community?

Starting in late summer, we hope to add a personal element to our communications outreach efforts via testimonials from our members and friends. Through a series of ads in our local newspapers we hope "What RHCC Means to Me" will convey the spirit, personality, and community that are uniquely ours.

As we did for "What Bob Culp Means to Me" on the occasion of Bob's 30th anniversary, we ask that you submit your thoughts – a sentence, a paragraph, or whatever you're comfortable with – from which we can draw our material. While each contributor will remain anonymous, our collective voices will speak to the essence of RHCC.

Please email your contributions to: [feedback@roundhillcommunitychurch.org](mailto:feedback@roundhillcommunitychurch.org) or mail it to the church at 395 Round Hill Road. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the office at 869-1091. Thank you in advance for your participation.

July/August 2006

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Greenwich, CT 06831

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## RHCC DISCUSSION GROUP

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The RHCC Discussion Group meets the third Tuesday during the months of September through November, and January through May from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Participants come from diverse religious backgrounds. All seek to learn more about the Christian faith, its history, scripture, tenets, doctrines, and theological perspectives and their present-day equivalents.

We have a few openings for new participants. Summer reading for members will be Paula Fredriksen's *From Jesus to Christ*, Second Edition, and Bart D. Ehrman's *Misquoting Jesus, The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. If you are interested in being a part of this group beginning in September, please speak to me after church or call me in the next few weeks at (203) 661-2977.

— The Rev. Anita E. Keire

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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.

## JULY/AUGUST SERVICES AND SERMONS

### July

- 16 *Upward Mobility*, Lynne Kramer
- 23 *The Quest for a Blessing*, Shannon White
- 30 *Healing Touch*, Shannon White

### August

- 6 *The Joy of Summer's Discoveries*, Bob Culp
- 13 *Staying in Touch with Faith's Story*, Bob Culp
- 20 *The Healing Within God's Kingdom*, Bob Culp
- 27 *Staying Alive to Wonder*, Bob Culp

### September

- 3 *Working to Live, or Living to Work?* Bob Culp

## IMPORTANT DATES

### July

- 17 Beach Day at Greenwich Point  
Cooking for St. Luke's

### August

- 5-12 Youth Mission Trip to Lynchburg, VA
- 21 Cooking for St. Luke's