



*Round Hill
Community Church*

The News Letter

July/August 2005

PASTORAL MESSAGE

Perseverance and Discernment

A missionary who spent many years in Latin America tells the story of a small village in Nicaragua, whose access to water was difficult and complicated. However, confident that God would provide them with a source of water, they determined to begin a project. They summoned a dowser, who located the presence of water beneath the surface. The men began to dig, steadily, day after day. Within days, they struck rock. They struggled with crow bars and shovels and picks to try to break through the rock, but they averaged only eight inches a day. After days and weeks and months in the heat, at 45 feet they were forced to stop. No water.

They called in a well-drilling rig on loan from the government, but it, too, failed to produce water. A second drill hit rock and was bent terribly out of shape. They returned to digging by hand, but soon they discovered that the sides of the hole were cracking and could cave in. Once more they stopped, and still there was no water.

Finally, they tried a third well-drilling rig. Incredibly, it failed on the very first try! They were again discouraged, but they decided they would try again . . . yet one more time. This time the drill finally hit water, a vein that was large enough to provide two or three buckets of clean drinking water per family per day.

Such a true story is a study in perseverance. The goal lay deep within their hearts, but the villagers needed to discern the truth of where the water lay and what means to use to connect with it. Had they not been willing to adjust the means to each new experience, and to keep digging deeper and deeper, they would never have made the connection with the life-giving water for their village.

My sense is that we ourselves need to keep an ever-discerning eye on our own posture, our own motivation, as we guard against any fear that would keep us always sampling, prone to discouragement, and never fully committing ourselves to the goal of our heart's search not only for God, and not only for the reign of God (justice and peace and unity throughout the world); but also for the best self we are called to be as children of God. Indeed, we ourselves need to guard against getting stuck, rigid, and narrow in our beliefs and

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ANNUAL PICNIC



Our annual picnic was a busy day on all fronts this year. Our guest preacher was Tom Long, an old friend and mentor of Bob Culp's, who spoke about the 30th anniversary of Bob's ordination, among other things. Bob seemed truly touched to have him there and we have Banks Adams and Mary Ann Debnar to thank for such thoughtful planning of this event.

The adult choir combined with the youth choir to perform a very special and rousing selection of spirituals throughout the service. Our choir never fails to bring joy and beauty to our Sunday services and we are so grateful to Chris Kabala for leading this group.

At the picnic following the service, Charles Lee and Mary Ann Debnar congratulated Bob on his anniversary and talked about what he means to our church. They presented him with a book of thoughts about his ministry from members of RHCC and members of other churches he has touched. Thanks to Lawrence Sterne for compiling this moving tribute to Bob.

There was an abundance of good food and good company under a large tent that kept us shaded from the sun. Leslie Lee decorated the event in Bob's favorite colors of blue and

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ANNUAL PICNIC

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yellow. With her usual flair she made the tables and serving areas look festive and inviting. Diane Davol organized a small army of volunteers to take care of food and drink. And Art Landi and Hadi Hajjar deserve very special thanks for grilling the hot dogs and hamburgers on such a warm day.



MEMBERSHIP

On Sunday evening, June 12, we held the New Members' Dinner in the Church Parlor. All new members who had joined the church during the past year were invited, in addition to Bob Culp and the Board's Executive Committee. In all, about 20 people were able to attend – half "new" and half "old" – and we had a great time! Helen O'Malley described her reaction to the evening this way:

"As a senior member of Round Hill Community Church, I was very pleased about attending the 'new members dinner' for my husband, Hooker, and several other new members. The format with large round tables and the size of the group created a lovely atmosphere in the Parlor, where everyone was able to get to know each other.

It was Julia Boysen and Debbie Lipner's wonderful handling of this event and the warm connection with Trustees along with other 'senior' members that led me to call and volunteer my help on the Membership Committee."



We are all very grateful to Mary Elizabeth Combe for her contribution of the name tags for every member of our church. These identifying tags are particularly helpful for new members but also benefit those of us who may not have a gift for remembering names!

We are still making tags. If your name is not on a tag, please call the office.

Thank you, Mary Elizabeth.



DAY AT THE BEACH



The sound of children laughing, warm sunshine on our faces, sand under our feet as cool ocean waves tickle our ankles – and lunch provided. Please join us for one (or both!) of our annual beach days as the Benevolence and Outreach Committee again hosts an afternoon of fun for the families from the Little Sisters of the Assumption.

So many families from the Harlem-based community center want to attend this event that we have reserved two dates at Greenwich Point for them this year. Our guests consist primarily of families with young children, and many speak only Spanish. We are looking for members and families who would like to help us host this event. Although the ability to speak Spanish is a plus, we are primarily looking for members and children who will greet our guests with a smile and make them feel welcome. Lunch will be catered.

The dates for this year's event are:

Wednesday, August 3 (rain date of August 4)

Tuesday, August 23 (rain date of August 24)

If you can join us at Greenwich Point between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., please contact Kerri Ann Hofer (622-0221) for the first event, and Regina Repenning (698-2720) for the second event.



ADULT EDUCATION

FALL FORUM PREVIEWS

Thorne Lecture

October 16: Pastor Bob Culp will give an overview of the work of Dr. Frederick Buechner, who will be our Thorne Lecturer in November.

November 4 & 6: Thorne Lecture – Dr. Frederick Buechner

September 25: Elizabeth Robinson will share her work with AIDS education in Africa. This forum is sponsored by the Benevolence and Outreach Committee.

October 2: Dr. Lyn Harmon will give a seminar on Holy Listening after Worship, which will be followed by two evening sessions on Monday evenings, November 14 and December 12. Lyn has a doctorate in Psychology and Education from Boston University. She and her husband are active members of RHCC.

Listening is an essential art that seems to be lacking in our wounded nation today. Our relationships strengthen or diminish with the quality of our listening. Listening is not just hearing words but attending to the silences as well, for silence is also a form of communication. We not only listen to others but when we truly pay attention, we can hear the small still voice within that comes as a gift of God. The listener's capacity to care enough to be involved, to listen without judgment, with an open heart, calls forth a quality of grace in both. This is "Holy Listening."

Come to the first in this unique and important series and increase your awareness of how you and others listen!

November 20: "Nativity Surprises" – A group of "experts" from our congregation will explore the different nativity stories, introducing an assortment of Bible tools to assist with this process.

Continuing this fall will be the two Dinner Discussion groups, one facilitated by Rev. Anita Keire, which is exploring the development of Christianity, and the other facilitated by Dr. Carmel Tinnes, currently exploring major world religions.

During a four- to six-week period this fall, Rev. Bob Culp will be offering a book study. Check the September newsletter for further information.

"Sophia's Daughters: The Bible and Beyond," Round Hill Community Church's women's Bible study group, is on break for the months of July and August. This group will gather again beginning on September 15. They meet from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. on selected Thursday afternoons. Many participants bring a brown bag lunch to eat. This year they will be exploring the stories about women in the Bible. If you're interested in participating, let Carmel know so that the resource that the group will be using can be purchased for you.



CHURCH SCHOOL

WHY I BRING MY FAMILY TO RHCC

The Minella Family

Having four children only two years apart has always meant a busy weekend. But when the triplets finally reached five years old, I knew it was time to find a Church School that could give them a feeling of belonging to a church family, an education in religion, and a feeling of a world outside the immediate family that involved worship, music, and the sense of giving to other people that were needy. Our children have been at the church since kindergarten and the RHCC Church School has accomplished all these goals, culminating in our oldest being confirmed. The children have gotten an understanding of the Christian religion through stories and classes. They have participated in the choir, the bell choir, outreach events, Advent events, Christmas pageants, and Easter events.

As the kids reached middle school, the Church School classes became more discussion oriented. They learned how to read the Bible and relate it to their own lives. All through the years, without them even realizing it, they have become a part of the church family. The mid-high and high school youth groups reinforce this feeling and the Mission Trip experience brings this all together with the church family reaching out to a needy group in Virginia. The church is a wonderful place for children to interact with adults outside their immediate family in a safe environment.

Yes, I still have to put up with the grumblings every Sunday of “do we have to go to church?” But I know that they are getting a good religious education and, more importantly, that sense of community that will be a base to build on throughout their lives.

The Boysen Family

When we moved to Greenwich 14 years ago, we followed the recommendation of friends and joined their church. In a very short time, though, we realized we didn’t feel very much at home there. We stayed for a year and then as a family we began visiting churches to try and find the one that suited us best. Bill and I came to RHCC because we felt drawn here and spiritually at home. The children also provided their opinion . . . and they liked the Church School. So we’ve stayed here. Thanks to all who’ve made it wonderful over these years.

The Piro Family

I brought my children to the Church School at Round Hill Community Church because I was impressed with the teachers at the time and the curriculum. I liked the fact that Church School was during the service and the Children’s Message. Now, I would have chosen it for the same reasons plus the youth group opportunities.

The Feghali Family

The reasons that we bring our children to Church School at Round Hill Community Church are not only to learn and study the lessons and teachings from the Bible, but to ex-

perience a sense of belonging to a church family. The intimate settings in the classrooms provide them opportunities to voice their opinions and to listen to others’ thoughts on the subject matter as well as giving them the means to form new friendships outside of their regular school community. I hope it will also give them a better understanding of feeling connected and closer to God.

The Huley Family

I bring my children to Church School at Round Hill Community Church to educate them in the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ. I wanted a church home that would nurture their spiritual growth and surround them in a welcoming circle of faith. Long before I had children, I was a teacher in Round Hill Community Church’s Church School and always imagined my future children would enjoy all the fun and learning.

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS INFORMATION

For two semesters this year, I led the fourth and fifth grade Church School class. They explored the stories of the leaders of the Hebrew people in the stories of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). After this exploration, the group came up with a list of characteristics for good leaders. Do you think these characteristics fit the leadership of Round Hill Community Church?

Leaders . . . listen to people, care about people, respect others, protect the people, put themselves second, are responsible, are active, are smart, have persuasive tactics.

During the year, we built a “prayer wall,” attaching our prayers like people do in Jerusalem. Several of these children included prayers for their grandfathers, a friend’s dad, the tsunami victims, a cure for cancer, those who are ill, friends and relatives, people with stomach pain, people with AIDS, dogs and other animals that are sick, and people or animals without shelter or homes.

Carmel Tinnes

CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

A draft of a children’s book about worship at Round Hill Community Church was put together this year with two illustrations by Heather Sandifer and Suzy Simpson. We would like to add more illustrations, using the giftedness of this congregation. If you would be willing to do a drawing for this book, please contact Carmel.

RALLY DAY 2005

Be present to rally for the new Church School year on September 11, when the new Church School theme – God’s Covenant with us is love, our covenant with God is to “Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God” – will be explored, and new church school teachers introduced. Families will get invitations in the mail as well as theme T-shirts for all Church School-aged children to wear on Rally Day.



YOUTH



Youth Mission Trip 2005

Please keep our Mission Trip youth and their chaperones in your prayers. They will be in Lynchburg, Virginia, from August 6 to 13. Those participating from Round Hill Community Church include Jonny and Katie Duennebier, Alex and Jamey George, Mike Minella, Brittany, Heather, and Tina Pusser, Eli Running, and Carmel Tinnies.

We are looking for 10 individuals willing to be prayer partners with those from our congregation attending the Mission Trip. If you're willing or would like more information, please contact Carmel.

Gratitude from this group is extended to all who participated in the "Change for Change" program.



The Youth Groups visited Lake Compounce to celebrate their year together

A NEW MINISTRY FOR OUR SENIOR HIGH YOUNG PEOPLE

We are exploring new initiatives in the area of Senior High Ministries in our church family about which we are very excited, and we want to share with you something of the need, the emerging visions and plans, and the desire we have for your prayerful support and presence.

While recognizing that our ninth to twelfth graders are very busy with many different activities and obligations, we also have come to recognize that there is something missing for our senior highs during our Sunday morning programs. Beginning in the fall, we hope to offer a special discussion group for our senior highs during the 10:00 a.m. worship hour. Meeting twice a month, this senior high group will focus on the events of their lives and our day, and will seek to connect their meaning and personal impact to the faith we share.

Through such a program, our hope is that here on our campus they will come to experience a "safe place" for their continued journey of faith – where they can ask their questions, explore their convictions, solidify their values, and to do so within a caring place where they are known by name and are respected for the gifted individuals they are, and all before they head out for the college world.

What would it be like for our ninth to twelfth graders to gather at the church regularly in a coffee house setting complete with coffee, beverages, and donuts, listen to music, discuss the news of the day, share their concerns about various events and pressures in their lives, and to open themselves to discover how God may be moving within their world? What would it be like to open up avenues for their own creative expressions, such as forming their own band and jamming after their discussion groups, or creating their own contemporary worship experience, or hearing first-hand some of the faith journeys of others (both youth and adult), or developing service projects of their own in response to the needs God gives them to see? What would it mean for them to establish a greater awareness of their own faith convictions and values in these critical years of life formation?

We are hoping to discover "what it would be like" through such new initiatives. In particular we are looking for discussion group leaders who enjoy the presence and uniqueness of senior highs; people who have musical interests, abilities, and passions; people who could oversee the donut and beverage ministry for these young people; people who would love to engage in mission projects with senior highs; others who would be willing to remember this special ministry in their daily prayers. We ask for your prayerful support, your ideas and suggestions, and your involvement as we begin an exciting chapter in our life together.

We are excited and anxious to begin. We look forward to the positive response from our church members and friends!



RHCC AIDS FISHING VILLAGES IN THAILAND

In January 2005, the Benevolence and Outreach Committee voted to evenly distribute over \$28,000 that was contributed by our Round Hill Community Church congregation between the American Red Cross, AmeriCares, UNICEF, and direct giving (see *News Letter*, 2/05). As news reports now substantiate, to meet immediate rebuilding needs, direct aid may be the most effective because the larger organizations are moving more slowly in getting major projects in place. It has been a long process to find a way to give direct tsunami disaster assistance. But we have identified and begun to fund a project in the spirit of RHCC hands-on giving. We are very happy to report that we found an American, Susanna Bachman, currently living in Koh Lanta, Thailand (a small island south of Phuket in the Andaman Sea), who will act on our behalf to distribute \$7,100 where needed. She is a very dynamic, committed individual who happened to be living and working in Thailand when the tsunami hit. She and her friends have been devoted to helping rebuild villages on the island. They have just purchased computers for the high school and have restocked hundreds of books for the library. We received many references attesting to her work and credibility.

Right now, fishermen in the fishing villages at the south end of the island like Am Pur Kao and Ban Hua Laem have identified the need of new fishing nets as crucial to their existence. Therefore, Susanna has started using some of our funding to replace those nets and other needs in order to salvage and relaunch their boats. She will give us updates about the families she helps. According to her last email, she and one of the fishermen, Khun Meow, spent 120,000 baht (\$3,080 USD) buying fishing nets for 15 families.

The following report is an email from Susanna in the beginning of June when she first described her plans to distribute the nets. You can find accompanying pictures by going to the following website:

<http://homepage.mac.com/susannabachman/Tsunami2/PhotoAlbum39.html>

“Nets are easy and quick to buy, and once they are purchased it gives the wives and mothers a job in assembling them. A fisherman friend has informed me the best place to purchase them is in Songkla (about 200 miles away) and he will join us to help negotiate a good price. We would like to go in ten days or so from today.



Neighbors help assemble nets



Loading fishing nets into a car to transport to villages

The fishing nets aren't cheap, as they are 500 meters (yards) long; they run about 10,000 baht apiece or \$256. This is a huge amount of money for a poor Thai fisherman and greatly needed by these people. I've gathered the first list of names of families that require nets or related fishing gear to get them back out on the water:

Khun Meow (single man), Buddhist; Khun Ko Me (wife, two kids), Buddhist; Khun Ko My (wife, grandson), Buddhist; Khun Moo (wife, one daughter), Muslim; Khun Ko Nut (wife, one daughter and one son), Muslim; Khun Ya Quat (single man), Muslim; Khun Bangman known as "Maan" (wife, one daughter and two sons), Muslim; Khun Ko Loy

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FISHING VILLAGES IN THAILAND

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(wife, three kids), Muslim; Khun It (wife, one son) Muslim; Khun Jan (wife, two grown children), Buddhist; Khun Bow (wife, son), Muslim; Khun Mack (wife), Muslim; Khun Bangsert (wife and seven daughters, most grown and nearby), Muslim; Khun Bat (single), Muslim; Khun Chart (wife, two kids), Muslim.

One of my favorite expressions as an educator is the following: "You give a man a fish and feed him for a day. You teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." We, at RHCC, are now giving men the means to fish, and that is most important of all. We are extremely grateful to Susanna for helping us at RHCC to be able to use our funding in such an important way. We will continue to give you updates about individual families as we receive them and let you how your generous donations to the RHCC Tsunami Fund are being spent to address specific needs of the people of Koh Lanta.

*Nancy and Steve Fuzesi
Co-Chairs, Benevolence and Outreach Committee*



MUMS THE WORD

The Flower Committee is rallying to make the world a more beautiful place. On Rally Day, September 11, 2005, the committee will decorate the Sanctuary with chrysanthemums. The mums can be taken home and planted in your yard or grown in pots for the fall season. If you would like to take one or more plants home with you, please fill in the form below and return to the Church Office by September 1, 2005.



RALLY DAY MUMS

Donor Name _____

Phone Number _____

My Donation of \$ _____
is for _____ containers of mums.

This gift is in honor/celebration of:

Please send your check made out to Round Hill Community Church to:

Round Hill Community Church
395 Round Hill Rd.
Greenwich, CT 06831

The News Letter
Round Hill Community Church
395 Round Hill Road
Greenwich, CT 06831

ICE CREAM SUNDAE SQUARE DANCE

RHCC will be having an Ice Cream Sundae Square Dance on Sunday, October 16, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Community House. This event is for adults, children, families, and singles. The fixings for make-your-own sundaes, along with light snacks and soft drinks, will be provided. There will be no charge for this fun-filled autumn afternoon. Please reserve this date on your calendars.

Edie Wilson, Activities Chair

NURSERY ASSISTANCE NEEDED

The Christian Education Committee is looking for adult volunteers to assist in the Nursery on August 21. This is a date when all of our regular childcare providers will be out of town. If you are willing to spend a morning with our wonderful little ones, let Carmel know. We are also looking for adults willing to substitute in the Nursery when our regular care providers are ill or out of town.

PASTORAL MESSAGE

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practices . . . against refusing to open our eyes and ears to possible new insights and wider vision . . . against doggedly resisting the new thing God seeks to do within the world and within our own lives. As the villagers, we have to keep digging deeper and deeper into the Source of our own lives to find the "Living Water" whose gift of life sustains us all. And our need is to learn how to be prayerfully discerning, and to keep such vigilance as our steady companion as we walk securely and trustingly towards God and the new tomorrow into which God is leading us.

AUGUST SERVICES AND SERMONS

Bob Culp will be preaching:

July 31

August 7, 14, 21, and 28

IMPORTANT DATES

Aug. 3 Beach Day

Aug. 6-13 Mission Group

Aug. 15 Cooking for St. Luke's, 3 to 5 p.m.

Serving at St. Luke's, 5 to 7 p.m.

Aug. 23 Beach Day