



*Round Hill
Community Church*

The News Letter

May 2007

PASTORAL MESSAGE

Striving for Hope Amidst Difficult Days

As all of you, I was profoundly saddened by the tragedy that happened on the campus of Virginia Tech on April 16. In my sermon on April 15, I alluded to the specter of violence in the world today, and how its presence has caused more than a few of us – much like Jesus' disciples following the crucifixion – to seek out safety behind closed doors, hunkering down in fear and waiting for the violence to pass.

On April 16, there was no safe place for 32 college students and faculty members who perished in a hail of gunfire. As a result, we have all been left with a painful ache deep inside, mourning these senseless deaths with a sadness at times that has been overwhelming. In a very real way, the scope of such killings has reopened tender wounds we have experienced in the wake of other similar tragedies in our nation's recent history when innocence has been lost and the darkness of death's valley has been known.

We feel the ache of such losses. We need to discern some explanation, some consolation for our troubled hearts. And so we turn to a variety of sources for help, whether social commentators and psychologists, or candlelight vigils and services, or internet Facebook groups and counselors. But we also find ourselves prayerfully turning to God and Scripture, for we hope our Lord and those believers whose spiritual wells are deep and true may speak words that convey a healing balm and steadying peace.

So began my sermon on April 22, a sermon in which I focused upon the 23rd Psalm and the encouragement it gives us as we seek to move through the valley of deepest darkness. Following the service, I had brief conversations with two of our members who shared some of their reflections about how such deaths

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ANNUAL DINNER/MEETING



Over 80 people gathered in the Community House on the evening of April 25 for our Annual Dinner and Meeting, followed by a musical presentation in the Sanctuary with the RHCC soloists directed by Christopher Kabala.

The Church Activities committee, led by Leslie Lee, Michael Sandifer, Ron Wilson, and Marilyn Hammond transformed the Community House into an inviting and festive setting for members to enjoy one another's company and a delicious meal provided



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CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

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

In the Classroom in May

The Bible Story is Pentecost/What makes our church special? In this final month of the regular Church School year, we will focus on our own church. Children will study the meaning of Pentecost and what makes Round Hill Community Church special. They will watch the documentary about RHCC in the movie workshop, tour the building and offices, read about Pentecost from Scripture, and create artwork inspired by elements in our church.

May Leaders

Bible Skills Workshop: Lyn Harmon

Movie Workshop: Win and Caroline Atkins

Art Workshop: Laura Huley and Elizabeth Green

Special Events

Music Sunday – May 6

There will be no Church School on Sunday, May 6. The children will stay in service to enjoy the very special music our church has to offer.

Spring Fundraiser Kickoff – Sunday, May 13

The children have been saving coins in the Change for Children milk can all year and now will make final efforts to raise funds for the charity of their choosing. The next few weeks will be spent preparing for the kickoff . . . so look for their table in the hallway on May 13, and support their efforts in making a change in this world.



Palms for A Walk Through Holy Week

We Are So Blessed!

A special thank you to all who made Easter and A Walk Through Holy Week a joyous success:



Church School children performing an Easter poem during the service

To Helen O'Malley for writing and directing the Easter poem the children performed in service, as well as directing the performance of A Walk Through Holy Week;

To Annette Grueterich for creating the colorful Easter butterflies with the children;



A butterfly parade on Easter morning



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

To Hadi Hajjar for providing the authentic Middle Eastern Last Supper for the Walk Through Holy Week presentation;



Last Supper at A Walk Through Holy Week

To the Youth Group for leading the Easter Egg Hunt for the younger children;

And to all the parents who volunteered their time and support.

Thank you!

– Eileen Brehm



Herod and his servants at A Walk Through Holy Week

MUSIC AT ROUND HILL



May 6, 2007

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

Haydn, *Mass in Time of War*

**Christopher Kabala, conductor
RHCC Choir and Soloists
with Chamber Orchestra**



CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL

Faux Finishing Workshops

Thursday, May 10 and Saturday, May 19

9:30 a.m., Community House Upstairs



Workshops, whether for Something Special, Fabulous Food, or Living Greens, were the foundation for Christmas on Round Hill last year. They were a time of camaraderie, getting to know new friends, fruitful production of goods for the fair, and learning or refining skills.

Our friend Alice O’Gorman introduced us to a technique of finishing wood or metal pieces using vinegar as a glaze. She had learned the technique at a class at the Garden Education Center. It was our great luck that Ruben Teles returned to the Center this year and four of us attended an all-day class on the faux finishing technique.

This description is from Ruben Teles’s book *Folk Finishes*:

“Throughout the eighteenth century and past the middle of the nineteenth, the practice of imitative painting techniques, including graining, marbelizing, and fantasy finishes, was widespread – initially, among the colonists, and later, among the citizens of the young nation. Inasmuch as the fine woods and marble used by city cabinetmakers were too expensive for the majority, the methods of faux painting

that are discussed and illustrated in this book offered an economical means of visually transforming such modest materials as pine and maple to simulate the mahogany, rosewood, and marble that were used in high-style furniture.

Because there were no schools in early America where one might learn the techniques of graining and marbelizing, and because there were few apprenticeships with the cabinetmakers of the time, each craftsman had to rely on his own resourcefulness and imagination to discover the paints, tools, and techniques necessary to create the visual transformations. These craft experiments resulted in broad and wonderful variations on and representations of wood grains and the splendor of marble. Brushes and paints were often homemade, and the painted finishes were as varied as the minds and hands of their creators.”

We, however, have the advantage of having the paints, tools, and pieces to work with in our workshop. All we need now is your imagination. Please join us to learn this fascinating technique and make a contribution to Christmas on Round Hill. We have pieces that have been primed and are ready to glaze and all the necessary paints and brushes. There are samples of the pieces that we worked on with Ruben Teles guiding us and we have copies of his book.

If you are interested in joining us on one or both days, please contact Lynda Treadwell in the Church Office. We’re looking forward to seeing you.

– Nancy Mazzoli, Alice O’Gorman,
Suzy Simpson, Lynda Treadwell





THE CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT AT RHCC

A Trip to Israel

A group of congregants and friends from RHCC is planning to visit the current and ancient sites that are holiest within the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions.

We have been working with Illume, a travel group from Boston that facilitates groups wanting to experience the Holy Land from diverse faith backgrounds.

"Illume experts offer travel experiences that foster global community, cultural respect, stewardship of world heritage, and compassionate living through world citizenship, learning/academic study, religious/spiritual reflection, and faith heritage discovery."

This is just some of what we will do in one week (plus travel):

- Go to Capernaum, where Jesus preached the "Sermon on the Mount" and take a boat ride on the sea of Galilee.
- Visit ancient Jewish archaeological sites and the town of Safed, where the Kabala is said to have originated.
- Visit Jericho, the Mount of Olives, and the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.
- See Yad Vashem, the Children's Holocaust Museum.
- Go to Jewish and Muslim quarters of Jerusalem and talk with groups involved with interfaith dialogue.
- Visit a Kibbutz.
- Visit Masada and Qumran, and discuss the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essenes from early Christianity.
- Follow the ancient steps of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem.

For the full itinerary, we have our own website for this trip: www.travelillume.com/trc/hur (this is case sensitive).

If you want to know more, please call Shannon White at the church or email shannonjlp@aol.com.

A Plea for Help from New Orleans

Deb Corrao, the coordinator from the Presbyterian group we worked with last June, sent out an SOS asking for help in the rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Katrina:

"We are transitioning into our rebuilding phase down here in New Orleans. As we go into this critical phase, we are looking for skilled volunteers and licensed tradespeople who may be able to lead a volunteer team or participate in one. We are also suggesting some ways that non-skilled people can learn some basic skills before coming here on a work crew."

Please let Shannon White know if you are interested and want the contact information.

WOMEN'S SPIRIT RISING



Women's Spirit Rising Bible Study Group at Annette Grueterich's home for their April meeting



THE CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT AT RHCC

An Adventure in Faith: Our Trip to a Sufi Mosque

I didn't know what to expect. Shannon had been to the mosque for services and told us that there would be a time of prayers, dinner, a time for questioning, and then more prayers. But I had few preconceptions and embarrassingly little knowledge about this sect of Islam (even though my college roommate converted to Islam and is a Sufi and a publisher of important Islamic writers). I did know that Sufism is the mystical "branch" of Islam and that the Whirling Dervishes somehow play a part. Shannon likened the energy of the Sufi worship to that of Pentecostal Christian worship in the free expression during prayer and shared the poetry of Rumi with us.

Sufism is a mystic tradition that found a home in Islam and encompasses a diverse range of beliefs and practices dedicated to Allah, divine love and the cultivation of the heart.

The man-made Tariqus (Sufi orders) may be associated with Shia' Islam, Sunni Islam, other currents of Islam, or a combination of multiple traditions like Hinduism and Buddhism. Within the Sufi tradition there is an acknowledgment of the transcendent unity of religions.

The Sufi path offers a kind of structured mystical life. The follower plays an active role on the way that leads to becoming one with the Beloved.

So there I was with twelve others, including three middle schoolers, taking off from our church in the afternoon on Saturday, March 24. We did know that the service could go on for five to six hours so we traveled in separate cars so that we could leave at different times.

We went across the Hudson to Chestnut Ridge in Rockland County. The mosque is the Order of the Jerrahi of America. It sits back from the main road. There are a few small houses clustered around a wooden building with a tower. People were gathering and children were running around. The women in our group came up with a variety of ways to cover our heads with scarves. We entered. In the foyer we took our shoes off and put them in cubbies. It was later

explained that this was both to mark entering sacred space and to keep dirt out.



I walked into the Sanctuary. It was dimly lit and quite wonderful. The main space is circular and domed. The walls are covered with tiles of beautiful arabesque patterns. Persian rugs cover the floor. Lanterns hang from the ceiling, their light casting lovely shadows. This space is set off with a colonnade of slender wood columns from another simpler space. This is where the women stay. Only the Shaykh, or leader, and the men enter into the main Sanctuary.

A woman from the congregation introduced herself to us. She was very welcoming and explained the evening as it went along. (We learned later that she had been raised a Catholic, married a Jew, and then the two of them converted to Islam.) After people had gathered, it became quiet. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak entered into the domed space and the men followed. Everyone kneeled. The women kneeled together in their space. We did the same, some having more trouble than others in finding a maintainable position.

For about half an hour we listened to prayers spoken in Arabic. As a group they knelt, then stood, then bent forward, then repeated the movements. We followed as best we could. I wondered. I couldn't understand a word. Could the members of the congregation? (It turned out most couldn't but the meaning is understood. The prayers call forth God and acknowledge a person's weaknesses.)



THE CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT AT RHCC

Only Breath

*Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu,
Buddhist, Sufi or Zen.*

Not any religion or cultural system.

*I am not from the East or the west,
not out of the ocean or up from the ground,
not natural or ethereal,
not composed of elements at all.*

*I do not exist, Am not an entity
In this world or in the next,
Did not descend from Adam and Eve
Or any origin story.*

*My place is placeless, a trace of the traceless.
Neither body or soul.*

*I belong to the beloved,
have seen the two worlds as one
and that one call to and know,
first, last, outer, inner,
only that breath breathing human being*

*Jalal ad-Din Rumi, 13th Century
Translated by Coleman Barks*

After prayers, people broke for dinner in another room where places had been set on very low tables. Women sat on one side, men on the other. I sat with the women from RHCC. The Shaykh's wife, Jamila, sat with us, along with our main guide. We started with roasted eggplant, stuffed cabbage, raita, and bread. I assumed this would be all, but then the main course of rice and a delicious lamb stew was served. A few women had prepared the meal for around 100 people. Throughout, men served tea and removed dishes.

As we ate we asked questions, and our hosts were receptive and generous. I learned that the mosque had been built about 20 years ago after working out some difficulties with neighbors. After 9/11, many neighbors expressed concern for the congregation and police checked on the mosque, as it is home to Muslims from fairly far away. On Friday, the day all Muslims must attend services, many attend and not all are Sufi. Saturday, it is just the Sufis who attend the extended evening service.

Once dinner was over, the table tops were removed

and people arranged themselves to be facing toward one end of the room. Eventually the Shaykh entered and took his place in front of everyone. He is a handsome, heavyset man with an easy smile. His eyes are dark and piercing. He has an air of authority and seems comfortable with the adoration his followers clearly feel for him. Apparently Shaykhs do not go to seminaries and become ordained; rather, they are recognized by an elder shaykh. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak called for questions. We had many. The Shaykh answered them with stories, thoughtfulness, and humor. We listened as members of the congregation asked questions. These all came from the men. As I ate the baklava that had been passed, I wondered what they made of the outspoken RHCC women. It had not occurred to me that it might be discourteous.



When the questioning was over, we returned to the Sanctuary for evening prayers. After about a half hour the Shaykh indicated he had something to say and led us back into the other room. When he returned from a trip to California, he learned that some of the children were smoking. Throughout the question and answer period the Shaykh had been smoking; but he made it clear that smoking would not be accepted. He admitted to his addiction, called it a terrible habit, and called on the fathers to speak to their children and report back to him in a week. He made it clear that he knew who the smokers were and that he would make sure something was done, which was as much an admonition to the parents as to the children. He had other concerns about the young people's behavior. He was caring, humorous, and very firm. His role in the lives of the members of his



CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

congregation is powerful and he knows how to use this power. I wondered about all of this.

Once the Shaykh had his say he stood and, looking in our direction, said that we would now proceed with the part of the service we had come to see. This didn't seem to anger him; he just acknowledged our curiosity.

We returned to the Sanctuary. The lights in the domed area had been turned up. The men gathered in the center and stood in two groups facing each other in lines. The women stood in rows in their area, which seemed darker. They faced the men and were in line with Mecca. A group near the men started playing percussion instruments. This time it wasn't prayers that started. It seemed more like chanting. A leader in one group of the men began. Later this was answered by a man from the other side. This went back and forth building in intensity. Everyone moved in unison with their group. They all swayed in rhythm. The women also swayed. The pace quickened; the men formed a circle and moved as one, around and around. The women kept the rhythm with their bodies. I couldn't resist doing the same. The pace came to a climax and then stopped. The spell was broken. I'm not sure this is exactly as it happened (my memory) and I'm not exactly sure what happened. But something had transpired. Had the desire to become one with Allah occurred?

The congregation broke up and everyone started to move back into the other room. We were invited for tea, and I am sure more delicious food, but it was very late – close to 11:00 p.m. – and those of us who had stayed until this point felt we had to leave.

I am now back across the river and I have a great deal to wonder about.

– Sandy Motland

Shannon White received this letter after the visit:

Greetings. Thank you for your very kind note. We are the ones who are thankful for your visit and stimulating questions. Our members certainly profited from your presence. Our house is yours. You are welcome to visit any time you wish.

We send you our love and prayers for the well being of you, your family and your community.

Sincerely yours,
Shaykh Tosun Bayrak

LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY



Shirley Garnett

A retrospective of paintings by local artist Shirley Garnett will be on display at Les Beaux Arts Gallery, from May 3 to June 8, 2007. An opening reception will be held on Sunday, May 6, at 11:00 a.m. after the service.

Unlike her grandmother who was a painter with a degree in fine arts, Shirley chose a career in nursing and only began painting while raising her family of four sons. Upon retirement, she concentrated on developing her skills as an artist and specialized in watercolors of still lifes and landscapes; then she started working with acrylics, painting scenes from her travels. Her main inspiration is her grandmother, who was a painter herself; she admits that her style reflects her love for her grandmother's paintings, which adorn her home.

About her work, Garnett commented, "I paint to soothe the soul. The harmony of colors and brush strokes evokes a feeling of quiet; the images bring to mind memories of an era that was more at peace."

The present exhibit encompasses a variety of her works from watercolors to acrylics. Despite the fact that her style is more impressionistic, some of her works have exquisite details with harmonious colors.

– Mirella Hajjar, Gallery Curator



ANNUAL DINNER/MEETING

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by Andy Burke Catering.

As we dipped into our dessert, Board Chairman Charles Lee introduced Amy Minella, who presented a very positive financial review of the past year and the approved budget for the coming year.



The Annual Meeting in progress

Phil George, Nominating Chair, then presented the nominees for Charter and Bylaw Trustees for 2008, who were unanimously accepted:

Charter Trustees (2017)

Mary Elizabeth Combe
Charles Lee

Trustee Class of 2011

Hadi Hajjar
Claire McKean
Allan Munro
Marion Piro
Jenny Rye
Steve Winingham

The membership also approved the following people to serve on the 2008 Nominating Committee:

Nominating Committee

Charles Lee (Chair)
Carrie Finlayson (Music)
Gayle George (Human Resources)
Dee Lewis (Membership)
Marion Piro (Worship)
Bob Feghali (Trustee)
Laura Wack (Trustee)
Rhona Johnson (Member at Large)
Michael Sandifer (Member at Large)



Charles Lee

With the official business of the evening accomplished, Charles Lee spent some time reflecting on this past year with the help of pictures of events like the Blessing of the Animals, Christmas on Round Hill, and Holy Week. He informed us that the church is strong and healthy as we embark on our 25th year in the current building. Charles Lee and Nancy Mazzoli were given "Roundie" awards (engraved silver trays) for their extraordinary service to RHCC.

Eileen Brehm, Shannon White, Bob Culp, and the Church School Leaders have all worked to remodel the Church School into a new and engaging environment for young children. He encouraged all members to try to get involved in some way to see the excitement going on there.

Shannon White, Wilma Jordan Green, and Brook Calkin have put together a diverse and thought provoking schedule of events for The Center for Faith Development at Round Hill Community Church. And in the fall, there will be monthly adult Bible study classes after worship services.

As we embark on our 25th anniversary, we also enter into a capital campaign to strengthen our church and campus. Charles noted that the committee will be reaching out to members in the coming months.



The RHCC soloists performed after the meeting

After the meeting, many of us moved over to the Sanctuary for a glorious performance by the RHCC soloists, accompanied by Christopher Kabala on piano, singing a selection of arias from different operas. As always, the music was spectacular and it was a lovely way to end the evening.

*Note: Information presented at the Annual Meeting is included in the Annual Report for 2006. If you have not received a copy, please contact the Church Office.

PASTORAL MESSAGE

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in Virginia had registered upon the consciousness of our nation's citizens in profound ways, and yet how other deaths that took place during the same week somehow had not registered in the same fashion – such as the lives of our American soldiers who died, and the lives of more than 200 Iraqis killed in multiple bombings that week.

It is a sad truth that in our age we have become somewhat anesthetized or numbed in the face of so many deaths that are taking place daily within our world. Somehow we have become no longer shocked or deeply affected by such deaths that are taking place all around the world, as we turn our attention to other things, other distractions, by which to protect ourselves, by which to prevent feeling things too deeply, by which to stop it all from becoming too real.

Our faith teaches us, though, that it is crucial to open ourselves to such deep feelings, or else we cease to reflect the perfect image of God in which we were first made, and also cease to be fully human. I have no doubt that God shed (and continues to shed) many a tear at Virginia Tech, as well as in Baghdad and other Iraqi towns, as well as in Darfur . . . as well as in every place where there has been experienced the tragic loss of life and the subsequent erosion of hope and even our humanity. As we all became “Hokies” for a week or so, so must we all identify with all those others who are striving for hope amidst these difficult days. Even more, though, we are called as God's very own children to act as ambassadors for peace and justice each new day . . . allowing our hearts to be broken so that we can become God's wounded healers in a world desperately needing the faith, hope, and love we can share . . . all of us, as members of God's family.

– Bob Culp

PLEASE FEEL WELCOME

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.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

One of the recommendations of the RHCC Steering Committee last year was to update and make the signs on our campus more uniform. The first, and probably most important, sign to be replaced is our roadside sign, announcing our presence on Round Hill Road. The new sign is so true to the original design that you may not notice the change. It is beautifully executed and includes some excellent improvements: the time of the Sunday service, a separate sign below the church sign for the Community House, and capacity to hang special event announcements below the Community House sign.

Our thanks go to Art Landi and his committee who spent a considerable amount of time designing the new signage; we now look forward to having the rest of the signs completed.



WOMEN'S GATHERING

April 15 Brunch

Well, our group braved six inches of rain to turn out for one of our largest brunches ever. The final head count was 45 women plus three Minella offspring (who were there to support their mother and record her remarks for posterity).

The food was fabulous and plentiful. It was very interesting to learn about Amy Minella's background, and her ability to balance family, professional life, and contributions to church and community. It's not an easy thing and we applaud her many accomplishments.

Also many thanks to Jo Ann and Banks Adams who went to great lengths to welcome us into their lovely home and make us comfortable there. A number of guests joined in the festivities. Jo Ann received one thank you note that said, in part, "What a lovely gathering of women. You are so friendly and welcoming and terrific cooks too. I couldn't have felt more welcome and I had a lovely time with all of you." This was a great compliment to all of us.

May 11 – Dinner with Speaker Diana Deacon

Our final dinner of the year will be on a Friday night, the eve of Mother's Day weekend. Please celebrate by bringing your mother or adult daughter.

We welcome another talented member of our group; Diana Deacon is a NAAP Certified psychoanalyst in private practice in Stamford. She works with adults and children, does parent counseling, and has spoken at or held workshops for many public and private schools in Greenwich and Fairfield County, including Greenwich Academy, Brunswick, and Greenwich Adult Continuing Education. Prior to studying psychoanalysis, Diana spent 26 years as an educator. Among other positions, she was Head of the Lower School at the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, and Head of Ethel Walker in Simsbury, CT.

Diana coordinates her professional life with a love of music and travel. She studies music and has been a long-time soprano of the RHCC choir. She is on the

Board of the Metropolitan Opera Guild and is Co-Chair of its Education Committee. Please join us for a fun-filled evening and to hear more about Diana's many travel adventures: Mozart festivals, singing internationally with choral groups, and swimming with the dolphins!

– Carrie Finlayson



MAY SERMONS AND SERVICES

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| May 6 | Music Sunday |
| May 13 | <i>Living Reminders Are We</i> , Bob Culp
The Sacrament of Baptism |
| May 20 | Confirmation Sunday |
| May 27 | Pentecost Sunday
Shannon White preaching |
| June 3 | <i>The Spirit of Truth</i> , Bob Culp
The Sacrament of Baptism
Annual Picnic |

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

The News Letter

Round Hill Community Church
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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.

MAY 2007 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship and Church School Sundays at 10:00 a.m. Childcare Available		1	2	3	4	5
				8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal		
	6	7	8	9	10	11
	MUSIC SUNDAY 10:00 a.m. Service Church School Parents' Meeting, 11:15 a.m. Confirmand Dinner, 6:00 p.m., Parlor	Trustees' Meeting 8:00 p.m.	Women's Bible Study, Noon	8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6:30 p.m. Women's Gathering Dinner	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
MOTHER'S DAY H.S. Discussion Group Church School Fundraiser		RHCC Dinner Discussion Group, 7:00 p.m.	12:00 noon, 2008 Calendar Planning Session, Meeting Room	Newsletter Deadline 8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal		19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
CONFIRMATION SUNDAY	Cooking for St. Luke's			8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal		
27	28	29	30	31		
PENTECOST SUNDAY	Memorial Day Office Closed			8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal		