November 2010

# Catching the Spirit of Round Hill

### PASTOR'S MESSAGE



I am writing this column less than two weeks before the mid-term elections, a time when hope runs high for candidates and supporters alike. A week from Wednesday some will be celebrating victory at the polls and others will be disappointed by the outcome. In 2004 the humorist and

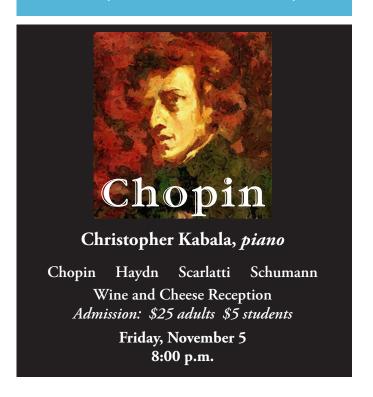
radio personality Garrison Keillor wrote about how we as a nation ought to be able to come together after a heated election and honor our life together as citizens and as human beings. He offered suggestions for those who discover that their candidate lost. Here is part of what he said:

"What will reconcile us is what always restored our sanity, and that is the plain pleasures of the physical world, our common love of coffee, the world of apples, the movements of birds, the lives of dogs, the touch of skin. Music. Dancing to music. Shooting baskets. Shooting conservatively, scoring liberally. Lacing up our skates, gliding through the dusk. Having worked ourselves into a fever over the future of Western civilization, we will now begin enjoying our oatmeal again, with raisins. The beauty of engagement is disengagement. You simply put on your jacket and walk out the door and find good health.

The neighbors are expecting a baby girl. My daughter is taking up the cello. There is wood to be cut in the family woodlot. I've been a prisoner of the news for too long and need to get loose."



Preview Party December 3 6 to 9 p.m. Christmas Fair December 4 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.





### **Church School**



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

There's an excitement building at RHCC Church School . . . and if you've talked to any of the children in our church community, you have seen it. What are they excited about? They are learning about the prophet Samuel and what it means to worship through lessons and inspirational activities . . . seeing old friends and meeting new friends each week as our children's population grows . . . participating in thought-provoking discussions that give them something to reflect on during the week . . . and enjoying the addition of music to the program.



On Sunday, October 24, RHCC children and adults came together for worship, and the children led the congregation in all aspects of the service. Well-known children's musician, Graham Clarke, led the youth in some fun-to-sing tunes, including, "Jesus Loves the Little Children," "Day by Day," and a hand-clapping rendition of "This Little Light of Mine." RHCC was one of thousands of worship services nationwide celebrating the Children's Defense Fund's sponsorship of Children's Sabbath.



There are many more exciting activities planned for November and December.

# Care Packages

# Sunday, November 7

Children will be busy preparing care packages for the RHCC college students who are away at school to tell them how much they mean to us.

# Advent Workshop Sunday, November 28

# 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Community House

At RHCC's annual Advent Workshop Alison and Roland Kistler will help children make gingerbread houses, a wonderful treat. We'll share a light supper and end the evening with carol singing and a treelighting ceremony. The event is open to the community, and it is always a fun evening for friends and neighbors to join.





# Christmas Pageant Sunday December 12 10:00 a.m. Worship Service



Preparations for our annual Christmas Pageant will take place during service on November 14, 21, and 28, with rehearsals scheduled for Sunday, December 5 during service, and Saturday, December 11 at 10:00 a.m. Thanks to Helen O'Malley for once again agreeing to direct the children in this wonderful tradition. The pageant will take place during service on Sunday, December 12.



# **Collecting Toys for Nicaragua**

The Church School is collecting small new toys for children in Nicaragua, specifically for the children who live in Nandaime, the home village of Josefina Gutierrez, the friend and companion of Joan Cox, a longtime member of our church.



Every year Josefina collects toys for the children in her village so that everyone will have a gift and she takes the toys with her when she travels home in December for Christmas. Donations of new toys, small in size so they can be carried in Josefina's suitcase, are welcomed. Church School will be collecting the toys through early December. Look for a collection box in the Narthex.

- Clare DeNicola

Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless.

- Mother Teresa





#### **Adult Education**

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.

# Men's Group Forum: "Middle East Realities and Christian Heritage" Oliver James Akel Sunday, November 7, 11:15 a.m.

On Sunday, November 7, under the auspices of the Men's Group, there will be a forum for all following our worship service. Oliver James Akel, a retired executive of an international oil company and a friend of Hadi Hajjar, will speak on the subject "Middle East Realities and Christian Heritage."

Mr. Akel has spent many years living and working in the Middle East and has written several books on the region including *Middle East Realities – Understanding the Conflict*, an easy-to-read history of a conflict that has raged for decades and is growing increasingly intrusive and costly. Time will be allowed for questions. Please plan to attend what is certain to be a most interesting and vital discussion.

- Ron Wilson

# Bible Study on the Psalms Rev. Susan DeGeorge Sunday, November 14, 11:15 a.m.

Please join us for this third and final look at the Psalms with Rev. Susan DeGeorge, whose way of presenting the material is both inspirational and intellectual. Even if you haven't come to her other sessions, no worries, please come. We'll be looking at Psalms 8, 110, and 137.

# Forum: Liz Allen Peale Sunday, November 21, 11:15 a.m.

Liz Allen Peale, Chairman of *Guideposts* and daughter of Norman Vincent Peale, will talk about her life and role at this leading spiritual magazine that has been around for decades.

#### **RHCC Book Club**

The RHCC book club is thriving! Every month on either a Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., about fifteen women gather in Edie Wilson's lovely living room to discuss a good book. We vote on the books that we read, selecting three books at a time so that those who want to can read ahead.

In September we discussed Taylor Caldwell's Lion of God. In October, it was The Help, by Kathryn Stockett. On December 8, we will meet to discuss The Moon and Sixpence by W. Somerset Maugham. This is a novel inspired by the unusual life of artist Paul Gauguin. Then after the New Year, we will convene in January or February to discuss Team of Rivals, by Doris Kearns Goodwin, about President Lincoln's cabinet.

The discussions are fascinating, not only because of the nature of the books we choose, but also because so many among us have personal experiences that overlap with elements of the books' settings or plots.

Feel free to email Edie (ediewilson06831@yahoo. com) or Kerri Ann Hofer (kerriann@me.com) if you would like to be added to our communications, and read along with us, even if you can't attend all the meetings. However, you have to attend to experience the riveting theatrical extras provided by Ron Wilson, Jr. He outdoes himself every month!





# Women's Spirit Rising

Women's Spirit Rising, our women's spirituality group, is hosting a winter retreat led by our very own Reverend Shannon White. We will stay at the Gilmor Sloane House at the Stony Point Conference Center in Stony Point, NY (www.stonypointcenter.org). We will meet from Wednesday, January 19 to Thursday, January 20.



Gilmor Sloane House

The theme for the retreat will be "Living Out of Your Authentic Self," based on concepts Shannon has studied from research from Harvard and previous retreats. She promises the retreat will include individual and group reflections, labyrinth walks, meditation time together, and lots of fun! Additionally, we will eat very well. The facility has a wonderful organic chef who will prepare healthful meals for us in the kitchen of the historic Victorian home.

All women of the Church are warmly invited. The cost for the retreat will be \$125 per person, based on double occupancy. A non-refundable deposit of \$60.00 will reserve your spot. Please make checks payable to RHCC and note "women's retreat" in the memo (due by December 30). Please R.S.V.P. to Kerri Ann Hofer (kerriann@me.com).

# **Evening Peace Vigil at the Labyrinth**

We would like to extend a special thank you to Steve Dunleavy, our sexton, for preparing the beautiful labyrinth walk and surrounding grounds in advance of the International Day of Peace on September 21. As you may know, our church has a magnificent labyrinth in the woods, just beyond the parking lot. There is a path down the hill between the Church and Community House. You'll see signs for it. It is always open.

This very special addition to our Church campus was originally designed and built several years ago by Max Wright, with the help from the congregation and our youth as part of an Eagle Scout project. In addition to the meditative walking path of the labyrinth, there are rustic benches and a picnic table nearby, and a Peace Pole (designed and donated by Sam Wright) with uplifting inscriptions in several languages.



On Tuesday, September 21, fifteen or so of us, including youth, gathered outside the Church by candle-light, as has been our practice for several years now. Doug Miller offered prayers for peace, and in turn, we read aloud the names of all the current countries of the world. Then we walked in silence down the path to the site, where Doug introduced us to the ancient traditions associated with the labyrinth. We each wound our way through the maze, on our symbolic journeys to the Source. A very meaningful evening was had by all.

- Kerri Ann Hofer and Nancy Gray



### LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY



Ilse Gordon, a prolific Greenwich artist, will show her paintings, pastels, and etchings at Les Beaux Arts Gallery through November 29.

Gordon is known for her depictions of local scenery including Greenwich Point, local parks, and gardens. Her landscapes are colorful and delicate with a sense of serenity. Her compositions are well balanced with an emphasis on open space. She got rave reviews among them Patricia Rosoff, a reviewer from the Hartford Advocate, who commented that "her images are trembling surfaces like needlework of the utmost complexity." Ann Guite, an art historian wrote that "her landscapes transcend the limits of the visible world through the sheer beauty of their color; she builds up each image with lively, quickly applied strokes and dabs of color, which not only define the form of the foliage, clouds and water, but also capture something of their constant vibrating movement on a breezy day."

A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, Gordon completed her studies at New York's Art Students' League and The National Academy, where she received a merit scholarship. She has received numerous awards including the Award for Excellence in Painting from the Stamford Museum and the Dianne Bernhard Award for pastels from the Art Society of Old Greenwich. She has exhibited extensively throughout the U. S., including at the Empire State Building, Fairfield University, the Greenwich Arts Council, and on the cover of *Greenwich Magazine*. Her work is found in corporate and private collections worldwide.

Gordon is a member of the National League of American Pen Women, the Rowayton Artist's Association, The Center for Contemporary Printmaking, The Greenwich Art Society, and the Art Society of Old Greenwich.

- Mirella Hajjar, Curator

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

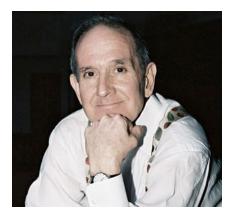


### MUSIC AT ROUND HILL

# Chopin Christopher Kabala, piano Friday, November 5, 8:00 p.m.

The fractious, mean-spirited political squabbling that has dominated this political season may be distasteful, but is certainly not without precedent. The so-called "War of the Romantics" pitted the Leipzig musical conservatives, represented by Brahms and Robert Schumann's widow Clara, against the Weimar Radicals headed by Wagner and Liszt. The passions were fierce. The Brahmsians, adhering to traditional musical forms, unleashed a torrent of criticism against revolutionary developments such as Liszt's symphonic poems. The conservative critic, Eduard Hanslick, wrote that Wagner and Liszt, "were erotic flagellants, turning all natural laws of music upside down. Liszt, being incapable of creating beauty by his own means, builds up the hideous."

Tchaikovsky, no fan of the conservative Brahms, wrote, "I have played over the music of that scoundrel Brahms: What a giftless bastard." Chopin alone, remained largely above the fray, escaping the verbal volleys that flew from both sides. Composing almost exclusively for piano, his compositions were recognized as the zenith of pianistic technique and expression and remain so, two hundred years after his birth.



Christopher Kabala will present a concert of Chopin's works on Friday, November 5 at 8:00 p.m. Pieces to be performed include, the Sonata in B Minor, Ballades 1 and 4, as well as short works by Haydn, Scarlatti and Schumann. A wine and cheese reception will follow the recital. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$5 for students, and will be available at the door.

# A Musical Celebration of Thanksgiving Sunday, November 21 10:00 a.m. Worship Service

This Thanksgiving service will include poetry and readings from ee cummings, Robert Frost, James Agee, and Thomas Paine. The RHCC choir with instruments, directed by Christopher Kabala, will perform American anthems by William Billings, Samuel Barber, Randall Thompson, and Aaron Copland.

# Chamber Players Sunday, November 14 4:00 p.m., Sanctuary



World class pianist Tanya Bannister will be the guest artist in a program of piano trios. She will be joined by cellist Danny Miller and violinist Krystof Witek to perform works by Beethoven, Chopin and Dvořák.

Tanya Bannister was the winner of the 2003 Concert Artists Guild International Competition and the 2005 New Orleans International Piano Competition. She has won praise for her performances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, London's Wigmore Hall, Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall, and the Kennedy Center. Bannister played the Mozart Piano Concerto No. 23 with the Greenwich Symphony in their October concerts and was very enthusiastically received.

Tickets are available at the door or by reservation (203-622-6611) with cash or checks only. Adults \$25 and students \$5.

A complimentary wine and cheese reception at each concert affords an opportunity to meet with musicians and friends.



# **SEARCH COMMITTEE**

We have recently made visits to hear pastors in Massachusetts, and, via boat, on Long Island, but neither was right for us. We continue to reach out through many channels and are considering options for obtaining help with acquiring names from outside firms. We are pleased that our ministers, Doug and Shannon, have offered their help in attempting to locate some candidates for our review. We continue to invite suggestions from the congregation.

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# **STEWARDSHIP**

It is time once again to consider our annual financial support of the Round Hill Community Church. As an independent, nondenominational church, we are self-supporting in every way. We depend on our member's gifts of time, talent, and financial resources in order to continue our witness and ministry to the community and to the wider world.

Stewardship is taking responsibility for the caring of something so that it may continue to grow and flourish. Even with the loss of a number of members through death, our church has grown in membership this past year. The church school is increasing, we have five young people in the Confirmation class, and the Center for Faith Development continues to offer interesting programs to the Church and the community. The newly refurbished Community House is open and active. There is much for which to be thankful this harvest season. The Finance Committee is developing a budget for 2011 that we believe is not only fiscally responsible, but also faithful to our mission. No matter how great or small, we welcome every gift in the hope and confidence that we are sharing in God's work. Your previous support and contributions have been warmly appreciated; we again ask your generous support for the coming year.

Sunday, November 14 has been designated as Stewardship Sunday. The sermon will be devoted to Stewardship and during the offering we will recognize and thank God for the support of our members for 2011. Bill Herrick, the Stewardship Chairman, and I will offer moments for Stewardship in worship and members of the Finance Committee will be available to answer your questions following worship. Thank you for your past generosity in support of the Church. We look forward to receiving your pledge for 2011.

- Art Landi Chairman, Board of Tustees

Check the calendar on our website *roundhillcommunitychurch.org* for the most current information on events at RHCC. Click on Calendar. Then click on an event for times and details.



#### BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

In October I attended two very moving events, one hosted by Ecole le Bon Samaritain and the other by Laurel House. RHCC has supported both of these organizations this year.

#### **Ecole le Bon Samaritain**

The rebuilding of the small school and clinic near Port-au-Prince, Haiti came into our sights in the spring of 2010 by way of a local front page story about the Rev. Jean-Elie Millien and his wife, who upon retirement from his ministry in Stamford, returned to their native Haiti. There, where there is no public education, they established a small school and health clinic in their own house. It grew, until at the time of the earthquake 180 children were enrolled, while hundreds were served in the clinic. When everything was destroyed, the family returned to the U.S. to raise funds to rebuild and to recruit volunteers to work in Haiti.



Some of our local churches are contributing partners, while Old St. Andrew's Church in Bloomfield, Connecticut has played a major role in supporting Le Bon Samaritain for many years. The dinner was given to honor the volunteers – clergy, parishioners, educators, doctors, nurses, college students, members of the Haitian community in Stamford/Greenwich – those who gave and continue to give so much to the relief and rebuilding effort. Almost everyone got an award (as did RHCC). The short speeches were very moving. Most all of us cried some of the

time. The room was full of love, compassion, courage, faith, and hope in the future, as well as evident commitment to continuing work. Clearly, the gift of giving overcame darkness and despair. Rev. Millien's daughter Danielle and granddaughter Christina, a fifth grader at Cos Cob School, seemed to be everywhere all at once. I nabbed the Rev. Millien to act as my guide to the "best and most Haitian" choices from the long table of home-cooked delicacies, beautifully presented to us while little Christina buzzed around us like a busy little bee full of ideas herself.

How I wish that *everyone* could have been there! It warms my heart that we are playing a small part in this project.

#### **Laurel House**

Laurel House creates an environment where people who have been marginalized by mental illness can work side by side with others in the community. They learn life skills and regain a sense of purpose. Some members graduate from high school, community college, university, and earn graduate degrees. Many are now employed. "Clients/patients" are not classified as such but rather as "members" of Laurel House – their Clubhouse – and so much more. Isn't that a more up-beat and respectful characterization? The Clubhouse provides a cheerful busy center and meals for about 85 people a day. Supported housing is located throughout Stamford.

Laurel House is only one site of over 300 world-wide that are based on what is known as the "Clubhouse model." RHCC has supported Laurel House in Stamford for a number of years. The "party" for Laurel House was a festive affair. And why not? Laurel House is celebrating its 25 years in support and recovery for people with mental illness. There were moving tributes to the founders, to the staff, to the dedicated hard working Trustees, and to the members.

Laurel House is at 1616 Washington Boulevard and they love visitors. Call 203-324-7734 to schedule a visit and see what is going on. It's good work in which to be involved.

- Louise Hoffman



# PASTORAL MESSAGE

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In planning a memorial service with a family after the death of a loved one, I am privileged to listen to them recount the events in the life and the qualities of the personality of their dearly departed. What is remembered most, of course, are the good times shared and the qualities of strength, service, and compassion. Those qualities grace each of our lives at times. We all have our moments, and it is those moments and those qualities that we memorialize in a worship service, a memorial tribute or a monument. We remember them because they are qualities that are universal and unchanging throughout time; qualities that are eternal. Those are the qualities that for thousands of years have allowed men and women of faith to proclaim with confidence that we humans are made in God's divine image.

Frederick Buechner, in an essay about remembering, distinguishes those memories that simply come upon us unbidden, triggered by a sound or a smell or an image, and those memories that we bring to mind intentionally. About the latter he writes: "We find, beyond any feeling of joy or regret that one by one the memories give rise to, a profound and undergirding peace, a sense that in some unfathomable way all is well."

November 1 is All Saints' Day, a day when we remember those who have died during the past year. We give thanks to God for their lives and their service, and we lift up memories for thanksgiving, for instruction, and for love. On Sunday, October 31, we will celebrate All Saints' Day during morning worship. The names of the following people who have been a part of our church family will be read and prayers will be offered:

Julie Grant
Nancy Tyner Gagarin
John Hill Tucker Wilson
Barbara Fairburn
Mary Elizabeth Deming Combe
Richard H. Velaj
Wayne Johnson
David Fairburn

During the worship service the congregation will be given an opportunity to mention other names of family and friends who have died this past year as we give thanks to God for the life that we share and for the memories that we have.

On Monday, November 1 at noon, we will share a brief service of prayer and thanksgiving with the First Church of Round Hill at the Round Hill Cemetery.

- Douglas Miller

## Remember Me

To the living, I am gone.
To the sorrowful, I will never return.
To the angry, I was cheated,
But to the happy, I am at peace,
And to the faithful, I have never left.
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
So as you stand upon a shore, gazing at a beautiful sea – remember me.

As you look in awe at a mighty forest and its grand majesty – remember me.

As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity – remember me.

Remember me in your heart, your thoughts, and your memories of times we loved, the times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed.

For if you think of me, I will have never gone.

– Author unknown



#### WORSHIP

Sunday mornings in October were full of thought-provoking sermons, beautiful music, and some thoughtful experimentation. Attendance has been increasing across all age groups. There seems to be a palpable stirring of the Spirit among us from the moment we arrive in the Narthex to the time we reluctantly leave Fellowship Hour! Any feedback you wish to share with the Worship Committee is welcome and so helpful in our ongoing support of the worship and fellowship elements of the Church.

Special events celebrated during Sunday services in recent weeks included:

• Blessing of the Animals, on September 26, in the Community House. About 100 of our pets joined us from as far away as NYC and Pennsylvania to be celebrated by our congregation and blessed by our ministers.



- World Communion Sunday was October 3.
- World Food Day, on October 14, was celebrated with inspiring, poetic liturgy from an Interfaith Convocation held at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., on the eve of National Hunger Awareness Day in 2005. During the liturgy, our youth brought to the Communion table physical symbols of sustaining foods from around the world.

With the blessing of the Board of Trustees, our new Interim Senior Minister, Doug Miller, our Associate Minister, Shannon White, and our Minister of Music, Christopher Kabala, have been experimenting with a slight reordering of the Sunday morning service to allow for the spiritual elements (including music, prayers and sermon) to build upon each other with fewer interruptions. All specifics of the service have been preserved, but the idea is that with a slight rearrangement, the worship experience may flow even better.

As part of this experiment, our ministers are sharing announcements and concerns of the church up front, right after the ringing of the church bell, musical prelude, and introit, to ease us into the service with the kind of friendly, casual welcome from the pulpit that we extend naturally to each other. That said, the goal remains that we all become settled quietly into the pews by 10:00 a.m. to thoroughly enjoy the choir's prelude and the full service.

Please share with any of us on the Worship Committee your thoughts and feedback about Sunday mornings throughout the fall.

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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.

NOVEMBER 2010 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Doug Miller preaching	All Saints' Day Service at RH cemetery, noon Trustee Meeting 8 p.m.	2	Christmas on RH Workshop 2-5 p.m.	Christmas on RH Cookie Workshop 2:30-4:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	Piano Recital: Christopher Kabala, 8 p.m. Sanctuary	6
Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Shannon White preaching  Men's Group Forum 11:15 a.m.	8	9	Christmas on RH Workshop 2-5 p.m.	Veteran's Day Christmas on RH Cookie Workshop 2:30-4:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	12	13
Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Doug Miller preaching Bible Study, 11:15 a.m. Chamber Players 4 p.m., Sanctuary	Cooking for St. Lukes, 3 p.m.	16	17 Christmas on RH Workshop 2-5 p.m.	Christmas on RH Cookie Workshop 2:30-4:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	Newsletter Deadline	20
21 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Doug Miller preaching Forum: Liz Allen Peale, 11:15 a.m.	22	23	24	25 THANKSGIVING OFFICE CLOSED	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 First Sunday Advent Worship, Communion, and Church School, 10 a.m. Doug Miller preaching	29	30	WORSHI CHURCH S SUNDAYS AT CHILDCARE	SCHOOL 10:00 A.M.	S BEAUX ART ILSE GOI PAINTINGS, AND ETC	RDON PASTELS,