



*Round Hill
Community Church*

The News Letter

October 2005

PASTORAL MESSAGE

In Celebration of Fall

We are just a few days into my favorite season of the year, the season of fall, when we feel a cool crispness descend upon us at the setting of the sun and when each sunrise witnesses the splashing of vibrant, sometimes even outrageous colors against the backdrop of blue autumn skies.

For me the fall season brings with it each year a flood of memories of “once upon a time ago” . . . of raking leaves into piles as deep as they were high into which we would plunge and seek to hide; of taking unhurried walks along pathways in the woods, the dry twigs crackling and crunching beneath our steps as we cast our eyes heavenward, observing the greens and yellows mixing with the oranges and reds of friendly leaves forming a protective canopy of color above us; and of sometimes picking up a single leaf from the ground and discovering afresh the delicate web of the cycle of life being held within our very hands.

When I have declared to others how much I treasure the messages and meanings of the fall season, I have been surprised at times by those for whom fall is their least favorite of all the seasons. “It’s the worst season of all for my allergies,” I am told. “Oh, I’m going to miss so much the summer’s warmth and those long days of sunlight,” others complain. “Yes,” some muse, “it’s a colorful season, but we all know what’s coming next, don’t we?” And then they recite, with some blend of anger and disgust in their voices, the litany of woes that await us; namely, the frigid cold and dangerous ice and blustery snow storms of the dreaded coming season of winter.

And yet . . . I want to protest that such thoughts of what will be are somehow tainting the indescribable beauty of what already is and what is bursting forth in all its grandeur all around us each new day. As I said in a recent sermon, Jesus invites us to consider the lilies of the field . . . “generic wild flowers – bright poppies that flourish and dazzle for just one single day, and then are thrown into the oven as fuel for the fire. These flowers have one spectacular shot at living in their lives, and in that fleeting flash, there is beauty and meaning and joy.”

So . . . my encouragement amidst these early days of fall is for us to take time to experience the rich fullness and

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NEW ASSISTANT MINISTER AT RHCC



Greetings All!

I am delighted to officially join you on staff as part-time Assistant Minister. While I am not new to the church, I take on this new role with much excitement.

Having served as pastor of North Greenwich Congregational Church from 1995 to 2001, I certainly knew of the life of the congregation from afar and appreciated the ministry of your clergy and professional staff as colleagues. My love for Round Hill Community Church has developed more deeply over the last several years as Bob Culp invited me over a dozen times to fill the pulpit during his time away. The conversations I have had with many of you, even though sometimes brief, showed me that this is indeed a special place where God is at work.

I learned to appreciate some of your journey as a congregation when I watched the DVD about the church’s history. (If you haven’t seen it, I recommend it!)

I continue to see how tremendously blessed RHCC is in terms of its resources of people. I have great respect for Bob Culp as a colleague and spiritual leader and for the vast richness of talent in the congregation. As a new staff member I am drawn to the level of theological inquiry and curiosity

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BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

Recent events have forced us to be more aware of the realities of the world beyond the security of the RHCC community. Our congregation has repeatedly risen to the challenge and given generously. We should not let this distract us from the needs of those close to home. RHCC has supported two local efforts, Neighbor to Neighbor and St. Luke's LifeWorks, for more than ten years. We have given funding in addition to those in the congregation who give of themselves by serving on boards and volunteering time on the front lines.

Neighbor to Neighbor

This nonprofit agency is Greenwich's only free food and clothing pantry. Unfortunately, the need for its services has grown exponentially. Five years ago 80 resident families were eligible for assistance with food; now over 270 are. More than 1600 families go to Neighbor for clothing, bedding, books, toys, and household items.

Neighbor to Neighbor takes in donated food and clothing to pass on to people in need. All the clients are prequalified and referred by social service agencies and places of worship. Neighbor was founded 30 years ago and has changed very little . . . until this summer. Christ Church generously gives Neighbor space in the basement of its Annex. The space is small and it is amazing that so much can get done there. Last spring the church gave up some additional space and over the summer it was transformed into the new Food Pantry.



The new pantry is radically different. In the previous Food Room – too small to be called a pantry – volunteers packed bags of food, which were given out to clients who had minimal say in what they got. Now the Food Pantry looks like a small neighborhood grocery store. Clients use a cart to choose what they need for their families. The amount of food they can take is limited by the number of people in their households. Food choices are organized along nutritional guidelines. Neighbor's food program is supplemental; a family can take enough food for every member for three meals a day for three days.

The new pantry opened a few weeks ago and it appears to be a success. Clients like the system and it is easy to understand why. It is better to make one's own choices rather than be handed a bag. It is no small difference. The volunteers also appreciate getting to know the "customers" a little.

The need to support this effort is greater than ever. Though about half the food is donated, the other half is purchased, and food expenses are up over 143% over last year, which reflects the increase in the number of people served, food prices, and less successful food drives. We hope that the congregation is willing and able to continue its monthly giving program. The Food Pantry is always in need of Parmalat milk, peanut butter, cereal, rice, canned fruit, and canned vegetables. Food is collected in the Narthex on the third Sunday of each month.

St. Luke's LifeWorks

Each month members of the congregation provide an evening meal to men and women living in shelters at St. Luke's in Stamford. We have been doing this for more than ten years. For many of us it is a way to do something quite "real" for others and to enjoy a congenial afternoon. This month, thanks to Leslie Lee, John Bennett from the Land Trust gave us a bushel of delicious apples. The cooks – Rhona Johnson, Becky Jaspersen, and I – transformed these into quite a concoction (no recipe) of sweet apples baked with other fruit. The main course was chicken cooked in a curry sauce, green beans, and a whole lot of rice. Rhona came up with an English way to cook the rice without it becoming a gooey mass. The Food Emporium had a terrific deal on croissants and so we had those, too. Julia Boysen and I served the meal to some very appreciative diners.

The third Monday of every month is our time to prepare the meal. Please join us. Contact Carrie Finlayson at 869-4661 or me, Sandy Motland, at 661-3068.

–Sandy Motland

Laurel House

Laurel House is a clubhouse community serving people from Fairfield County who are recovering from mental illness. It is more than a place; it is a concept, an attitude, a state of mind.

Simply "doing the numbers" is impressive. Laurel House currently provides and maintains supported housing for 57 people, 29 of whom had been homeless. It oversees transitional employment for 79, providing access to post secondary education for 24, and offers a welcoming environment for 85 members who spend the day there or drop in and out between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. seven days a week. There is a thrift shop and a food co-op for members (\$2 a bag).

Getting a job is vital for overcoming the stigma and isolation of mental illness. But that is a very difficult task, full of feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, occasionally interrupted by illness; Laurel House assists. When a member is hired there is a guarantee that the job will get done, no matter who or for what reason a substitute may have to step in. Marriott, Starbucks, and Stop & Shop are among the current enthusiastic employers. A typical Laurel House touch is a special dinner that honors the recipient of a first paycheck, during which he or she can report on all the details with great pride and offer pertinent advice.

The Clubhouse in Stamford is a busy scene. Staff and members together are at computers and telephones. One is

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FORUM FACTS

Forum on Frederick Buechner – Sunday, October 16

Frederick Buechner will be our Thorne Lecturer on Friday, November 4, beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Following several readings from his own works, Mr. Buechner will entertain questions from the audience. We will then adjourn to the Parlor for a special reception. On Sunday, November 6, Mr. Buechner (an ordained Presbyterian minister) will serve as our Guest Preacher at the 10:00 a.m. worship service, followed by a time of questions and answers in a special forum dealing with his pulpit message, as well as his writings and special perspectives dealing with a wide variety of faith matters.

In anticipation of Mr. Buechner's visit to our church that weekend, Bob Culp will lead a special forum in our Sanctuary after the October 16 morning worship service. At that time, Bob will share personal perspectives on the impact of Mr. Buechner's writings, will seek to share something of the depth and breadth of his works, and will distribute a brief annotated bibliography of his major works, both fiction and non-fiction.

We will begin promptly at 11:20 a.m. and will conclude by 12:00 noon. Childcare will be provided, as is the case for all of our adult forums, and all are welcome to attend and are encouraged to bring a friend!

WOMEN'S GATHERING

More than 40 women attended the first "gathering" of the year at the home of Livvy Floren. We were fortunate indeed with beautiful weather, a magnificent home, and surrounding gardens, where we lunched alfresco and had the chance to hear from Livvy. She intrigued us with vignettes from her earlier life and careers and from her numerous volunteer activities, past and present. We learned of Livvy's legislative successes in Hartford as Representative of the 149th District and her current agenda and concerns. The group was spell-bound by Livvy's lifetime of accomplishments and we thank her for sharing her thoughts and home with us.

We had five guests join us, and those who brought them deserve special thanks: Jo Ann Adams, Susan Currier, Livvy Floren, Rhona Johnson, and Susan Sterne.

Join us at 8:30 a.m. on October 23 in the Meeting Room to hear from Tina Pusser, who is leading the Middle and High School Youth programs as well as the High School discussion group on Sunday mornings. We look forward to getting to know her. Take this opportunity to bring a friend to church. Lynda is making arrangements to have child care available during the meeting. Look for details in our flyer.

—Carrie Finlayson & Dee Lewis, Co-Chairs



Speaker Livvy Floren with Carrie Finlayson and Dee Lewis



Shannon White, Joan Asrican, Betty Hogin, Betty Evans, and Jebb Agnew



Julia Boysen, Maribeth Smith, Mirella Hajjar, Susan Sterne, and Regina Repenning



Edie Wilson, Kathy Culp, and Becky Jasperson



CHURCH SCHOOL

Everyone in the Church School used fabric paints to color in the rainbows on their new T-shirts. Our theme this year is "God's covenant to us is love . . . ours is to . . . do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God."



The second to fourth grade class show off their freshly painted rainbow T-shirts



On Rally Day, Jonny Duennebier enjoyed a picnic in the nursery with Elena Debnar



A Rally Day puppet show performed by Nappy's Puppets entertained youth of all ages

YOUTH MINISTRY

High School Discussion Group

Our first discussion group on Rally Day was well attended. We had 13 enthusiastic youth join us upstairs in the Community House during the worship service. The coffee house setting was a big hit. The youth identified several topics they would like to explore for our discussions in the future.

All High School youth are welcome to come by and check it out. Our 2005/2006 scheduled meeting times are:

October 16 and 30

November 13 and 27

January 8 and 22



Carmel introduced Tina Pusser, our new Youth Coordinator, to the newly formed High School Discussion Group



It was a perfect day for a Rally Day picnic

YOUTH MINISTRY

The labyrinth cleanup in September was a big success. This event was headed by Max Wright, who is one of our High School youth. We could not have done it without him. Thanks to all of the Middle School youth and a few extra helpers' efforts (you know who you are), we were able finish the cleanup in one afternoon.



Elizabeth Green, Laurel Weill, and Perry Minella help pull weeds and roots from the labyrinth

On October 16, we will be making scarecrows to decorate for the RHCC Square Dance that day. We need all the creative help we can get. Middle School youth, please plan to be there to help us make the most original and funny scarecrows ever!



Arman Rye with Alex and Wolfi Hofer spread woodchips under the watchful eye of Max Wright



RHCC SQUARE DANCE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16
2 to 4 PM

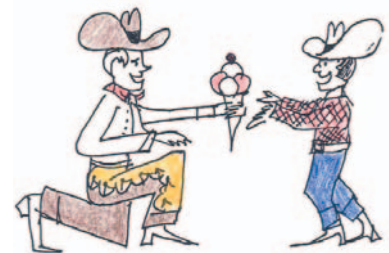
Round Hill Community House
397 Round Hill Road
Greenwich, CT 06831

RSVP by October 12
to (203) 869-1091

Church Families and Friends
Come Kick Up Your Heels One an' All!



Face Paintin'



Ice Cream Sundaes



NEW ASSISTANT MINISTER AT RHCC

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among you as you continue to ask the difficult questions facing us as people desiring to be faithful followers of Christ in our world today. Since one of my areas of responsibility is to be the staff person assigned to adult education, I look forward to asking those questions with you.

For those who don't know much about me personally, I am married to John Parks, a veterinary surgeon who has a traveling practice throughout the tri-state area. We have a six-year-old daughter, Peyton, whom many of you have met. She's an inquisitive, vivacious blonde, whose presence lights up any room. We adopted Peyton from Moscow five years ago, and there is no doubt in our minds that she is our daughter who just happened to be born on the other side of the world. John also has five other children ranging in age from 15 to 39, who live in the New York metro area. Needless to say, our house can go from a semi-quiet respite to Grand Central Station overnight!

On some of my days away from RHCC I will continue my work as a part-time reporter for News 12 Westchester. My hope, one day, though, is to do a spiritually based talk show that addresses how people change.

While my position here is part-time, I want to be available as much as I can be. I plan to have office hours on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. most weeks, and on Sundays from the morning into the afternoon. I will also be attending various committee meetings during the week as scheduled. I am always available by email at shannon@roundhillcommunitychurch.org or at 869-1091 on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

I am looking forward to getting to know you all better. There is no doubt in my mind that I will receive as much if not more than I can possibly give here. And one note . . . while I continue the process of placing names and faces together, please don't hesitate to reintroduce yourself to me!

Blessing and peace to each one of you,
Shannon White

MUSIC NOTES

An Afternoon of Chamber Music

The Chamber Players of the Greenwich Symphony will perform at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 16, in the Sanctuary. The audience will have an opportunity to visit with the musicians at a wine and cheese reception following the concert. This unusual string program features a Shostakovich octet and the beautiful Mendelssohn Octet in E-flat. The third piece is a Mozart String Quintet. This is a great opportunity to introduce young people to chamber music. Flyers with more details are available outside the Church Office. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students and may be purchased at the door.

LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY AT RHCC

Fred Mason's portraits will be displayed in the Gallery October 12 through early November. Fred's paintings are on display in most of the 50 states and in many foreign countries. They include portraits of corporate executives, education leaders, museum directors, military officers, publishers, wives, mothers, children, dogs, and horses.

A native of Salt Lake City, he began drawing seriously at age five and turned pro at age 14 when he went to work for a sign painter. While he was earning his fine arts degree at the University of Utah, he worked as a staff artist at the *Salt Lake Tribune-Telegram*. During his service in the United States Navy, he painted pictures that were subsequently hung in the officers' clubs and the Pentagon.

After the service, Fred worked as an illustrator and commercial artist while continuing his studies at the School of Visual Arts, the Art Students' League, the Brooklyn Museum of Fine Arts, and New York University.

Fred's is that welcoming face at our church who makes us feel that all is right with the world when we walk in and see his gracious smile. We are blessed to have him as a part of our congregation, and now he is giving even more of himself in the form of three magnificent portraits of RHCC ministers. He has painted and donated to the church's permanent collection portraits of Bob Culp, Ralph Ahlberg, and Walter Wagoner, which will be hung in the hallway near the Church Office.

Please take time to see his collection of portraits as well as these beautiful and enduring markers of our church's history.





MEMBERSHIP

Hasn't it been wonderful to see the Sanctuary so full each Sunday of this new Church School year? It's been a joy to be back together again after summer travels. A number of visitors have been with us, too. Please join us in extending a friendly welcome to these newcomers. Each Sunday there will be two "greeters" with name tags at the back of the Sanctuary after Worship. Bob will invite visitors to seek out these greeters for additional information about our church. The greeters will encourage visitors to attend our coffee hour and will introduce them to other members. Our goal is to have a consistent, recognizable, welcoming presence at each worship service. Join us! There is a sign-up sheet for greeters in the Parlor.

New Members to Be Received Sunday, October 23

Our church has been uniquely blessed year after year by those who have been looking for a spiritual home, and who have been led to join our family of faith. Because of our non-denominational and independent nature as a community church, we welcome individuals from a wide variety of faith backgrounds, and we receive new members by letters of transfer, by reaffirmation of faith, and by confession of faith.

Numbering now about 350 members, we are a wonderfully diverse fellowship of gifted members whose faith commitments and passions, whose concerns and interests, and whose gifts and energies combine to make warm and bright the wondrous light of God's love which we are called to share in loving ways in our area. We seek diligently to make meaningful the involvement of all our members, wherever they are along their own faith journeys.

Please let us know if you, or someone you know, may be interested in joining their hearts and hands and faith with us at Round Hill Community Church. You may call us at the church (869-1091) so that we can make proper arrangements in anticipation of the October 23 date, when we will be receiving new members in our 10:00 a.m. worship service.

—Julia Boysen, Debbie Lipner, and Bob Culp

HARVEST SUPPER

Join us for our annual Harvest Supper in the Community House on **Wednesday, October 26, at 6:30 p.m.** Neighbors in the Round Hill area have been gathering at the Community House since the 1920s for this celebration of the harvest. The tradition continues today as a testament to the importance of a community giving thanks with good food and good friends. Last year 170 people, some church members and many friends and neighbors, came together to share a meal, good conversation, and music. This year, Jane Condon will entertain us with her comedic take on life. It will be a night to remember.



Jane Condon

If you are interested in attending the supper, please contact the Church Office by October 21 with the following information:

Name _____
adults @ \$30 _____
children @ \$15 _____
Will bring dessert _____

BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

running the bank (its own for members) while others run the bistro. Members do maintenance jobs, cook, or study. They write and produce the daily *Laurel House News*. There are committee meetings, and members take turns on the "Laurel House Warm Line" phone – assisting, encouraging, or simply listening. The "Reach Out" initiative – phoning or visiting those who are hospitalized – goes on 365 days a year.

At the Clubhouse members find acceptance, companionship, a sense of purpose and community, and, of course, professional counseling when needed. They help, comfort, and celebrate each other. No accomplishment is too small to be recognized by a special gathering or meal. We have been

deeply touched by being part of many such events, small and large. See for yourself! Call Steve Dougherty, the Executive Director, at (203) 324-1816 for information. He will welcome you for a visit as will the members, one of whom will surely be your guide.

—Louise Hoffman

Winter Chills

Cold or relatively warm, there is no doubt this winter will be an expensive heating season. The church has an emergency fund that helps individuals pay utility bills during crises. The committee has set aside more money this year for these needs.

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October 2005

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

PASTORAL MESSAGE

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striking beauties that accent every single day, recognizing the advent of change all around us, yes . . . but also embracing and cherishing that which God so lavishly bestows upon us. Recognizing that tomorrow is truly promised to no one, may we taste life's goodness simply one day at a time, and celebrate its "beauty and meaning and joy."

—Bob Culp

ALL SAINTS' SERVICE

Tuesday, November 1

Our annual "All Saints' Service" will be held at the Round Hill Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. The service is brief in nature, in which Ministers Bob Culp and Bob Walker will offer prayers and readings for families and friends of members of the Round Hill Community Church and First Church of Round Hill who have died in the last year.

Save the Date:

RAISIN' HELL – STORMIN' HEAVEN

Two-part Lecture Performance by Christopher Kabala

Part I – Raisin' Hell – Friday November 11, 8 p.m.

Liszt, Sonata in B minor

OCTOBER SERVICES AND SERMONS

- Sunday 2 World Communion Sunday
A Community in Which Everybody Counts
(Matthew 3:7-10); Bob Culp preaching
- Sunday 9 *Having Faith Enough to Let Go*
(Mark 4:35-41); Bob Culp preaching
- Sunday 16 Shannon White preaching
- Sunday 23 *Joy and Generosity – A Match Made in Heaven*
(Acts 2:43-47); Bob Culp preaching
Stewardship Sunday
New Members Reception
- Sunday 30 *True Success and Heroism*
(Mark 8:34-37)

IMPORTANT DATES

- Sunday 16 Forum on Frederick Buechner, 11:20 a.m.
High School Discussion during Worship
Middle School Fellowship, 11:15 a.m.
Square Dance, 2:00 p.m., Community House
Chamber Players Concert, 4:00 p.m.
- Monday 17 Cooking for St. Luke's
- Sunday 23 Women's Gathering Breakfast, 8:30 a.m.,
Meeting Room
- Wed. 26 Harvest Supper, 6:30 p.m., Community House
- Sunday 30 High School Discussion during Worship
High School Fellowship, 11:15 a.m.