

Round Hill  
Community Church

## The News Letter

December 2009

### *Catching the Spirit of Round Hill*

#### **Recapturing the Wonder of Christmas**

The author David James Duncan has described the plastic shepherds from those nativity dioramas of his youth as having “slack-jawed expressions of wonder.” When I recall the days of my own youth, I well remember how those stories surrounding the birth of Jesus left me in a similar state . . . with the awe and wonder I felt inside somehow present on my “slack-jawed” face.

No matter how many times I heard my father read those familiar stories from the pulpit, no matter how many times I read them myself, no matter how often I heard the season’s carols or viewed television specials and movies based on the unique joy and life-changing gifts of Christmas, no matter how often I would be a part of a pageant or concert during December, I would feel my heart racing a bit with gladness and anticipation. I suspect most of us can remember the childlike excitement of the Christmas season we experienced once upon a time ago, as well as the sacred narratives’ stirring impact on us when we were young.

Somehow, though, as we grow older we sometimes lose the eyes to see or the ears to hear, or maybe even the heart to wonder in the Christmas season, too often overwhelmed with the hectic busyness and fevered pitch of life to which we fall prey year after year. And in the process, we may find ourselves wistfully yearning to recapture a slack-jaw sense of wonderment that we see upon the faces of those who are young in their years . . . and are young at heart.

Recently, Kathy gave me an early Christmas present in the form of a little book entitled *Touching Wonder: Recapturing the Awe of Christmas* by John Blase. Blase confesses that he found himself yearning to recapture a greater and deeper sense of wonder during

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### **Christmas on Round Hill**

**Saturday, December 5, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**



**Free Magic Show at 12:00 and 2:00 p.m.**

**Photos with Santa in His Sleigh**

**Train Rides on the Round Hill Express**

**Treasure Trove and Handcrafted Gifts,**

**Jewelry, and Fine Art Gifts**

**from “Artists Among Us”**



### Advent Workshop

Approximately 50 of us gathered to celebrate the Advent season in our newly renovated Community House. This year we decided to celebrate by making Gratitude Houses, which are gingerbread houses with a hole in the chimney. The families are asked to write notes about what they are grateful for and drop the notes down the chimney. This is done throughout the month and then on Christmas or New Year's Day families break open the house and read the notes aloud.



The first note I wrote was how grateful I was for how many families came to the event. We had great music, a roaring fire, hot cocoa, cider, and chicken soup to keep us warm. We began by decorating our houses and found that we have a lot of talented and enthusiastic young decorators. The icing was flowing and the candies were flying both onto the houses and into their mouths.



When the houses were finished, Shannon and Tom performed a skit about a conversation between God and Santa Claus; and yes, Shannon played the part of God while Tom's age immediately qualified him for the role of Santa.

Then Bob led us all in singing some of our favorite holiday carols. Finally, we witnessed the lighting of the tree outside the Community House. It was truly a beautiful evening and we hope everyone had as much fun as we did. Thank you all for coming and we hope to see all of you and a few more next year!

– Roland and Alison Kistler

### Christmas Pageant Sunday, December 13

Our annual Christmas Pageant will take place on Sunday, December 13. Rehearsals will be Sunday, December 6, during Church School and Saturday, December 12, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

An outstanding cast has been assembled, which will be supported by beautiful angels and energetic shepherds. If you or your child would like to be in the pageant, contact Helen O'Malley, Eileen Brehm, or Tom Mahoney. The church school program will not meet on Sunday, December 27. Childcare will be provided.

### Tom Mahoney Moves On

Tom Mahoney will leave as Director of the Church School program at the end of the month to finish a thesis for a masters degree in public health.

### January Classes

Our next round of church school classes will resume in January with Alison Kistler and Alice Fisher teaching about the Old Testament.



## YOUTH DISCUSSION GROUP



Please come to the next Youth Discussion Group session (for post-confirmands) on Sunday, December 20, from 5:00 to 6:15 p.m. Chex Mix and water (the staples), will be provided, as well as ice-breaker games and engaging discussion. Bring a friend!

– Stephen Duennebier

## MEN'S GROUP



**Please reserve the evening of Saturday, February 27, for our Winter Ball.** The Men's Group is planning an evening of warmth and good cheer. Bring your friends. Invitations will be mailed in January.

The Men's Group has also scheduled a Sunday morning breakfast in late January. The topic for discussion will be "Significant Eye Problems in the USA."

– Ron Wilson, Co-Chair

## BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

**The Angel Tree** project matches poor families in Norwalk with "angels" from our church. I contact the parents and get specific gift requests from them. Most of these families are single parent families or children being raised by grandmothers. All of these families live in housing projects or other low income areas in Norwalk. Many have been helped over the years by RHCC, which has had the Angel Tree for close to 20 years.



I could talk about so many of the families, but one in particular includes three children who were evicted from their home. Their mother abandoned them after that and they were left in the care of a grandparent who had no place to live either. Grandmother and children live with various extended family, but don't have a place they call "home." The grandmother requested blankets because the place they are in now has very poor heating.

Another family has four children and a single parent who works about four hours a day at minimum wage. She has no way to get around and no money for transportation, so she walks everywhere. Her children recently needed glasses. She had to wait months to get Husky insurance to pay for them. Her daughter broke her glasses and another son lost his. Under the insurance policy (the insurance is for low income families with no other source of insurance) the family is entitled to one pair each for the year; they recently had no phone because they didn't have money for minutes and at the beginning of the year, they were heating hot water for baths on the electric stove because the gas had been turned off and they had no hot water.

These are two of the many families we are helping this Christmas. Thank you so much for supporting this very worthwhile project. Merry Christmas.

– Nancy Fuzesi



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## CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

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### Bible Study

**Sunday, December 6**

**11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Meeting Room**

Following Fellowship in the Community House, Rev. Susan DeGeorge will conclude our fall Bible Study session with a look at the role of the prophet Elijah in the New Testament and current Christian and Jewish theology. If you've ever been to any of Rev. DeGeorge's classes, you know you don't leave disappointed. Please join us!

### Meditation

**December 8**

**7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Meeting Room**

Rev. Joel Baehr will guide us into Advent Season with a time of meditation. As always, we encourage you to bring friends.

### Thorne Lecture Series with David Miller

**Saturday, January 30**



Dr. David Miller is the Director of the Princeton University Faith and Work Initiative. He also has several decades in the business world, in addition to being an ordained Presbyterian minister. He is the author of *God at Work*, which looks at how the faith at work

movement developed and considers its potential value for business and society.

He is president of the Avodah Institute, which was founded in 1999 with the mission to "help leaders integrate the claims of their faith with the demands of their work."

Dr. Miller is a popular speaker both nationally and here in Greenwich through the Greenwich Leadership Forum, which gathers business leaders monthly to discuss issues of faith and ethics in the workplace. He has also appeared on television to discuss issues of corporate ethics and morality.

Following Dr. Miller's lecture, we will have a panel response as well as questions and answers with the audience. Dr. Miller will also be our guest preacher on Sunday, January 31.

Save the date and invite your friends!

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## LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY

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Richard Levine's latest exhibit, "Parallel Views," will be displayed at Les Beaux Arts Gallery November 29 through January 6, 2010.

During the last few years, Levine traveled the world painting exotic places, but his new work focuses on our country and particularly on two very different regions: the vast prairies and high desert of the West and the salty, rocky coast of Maine.

Painting has a whole new meaning for the artist, not only emulating nature's beauty but also observing and learning the philosophy behind it. He says, "I have been drawn to portray these two contrasting areas because in both, the physical features of their topography have not been conquered by the hand of man. Nature's rhythm dominates and determines the pattern of how one co-exists with the environment. In winter the rancher mends his fence, in winter the lobsterman mends his traps – parallels."



As always, Levine's paintings are strikingly real. In one group the light is bright with saturated, brilliant colors while in the second group the light is misty and diffused. The land is vast and harsh in the desert but rugged and intricate on the coast. Dwellings in the high desert are stubborn, low to the ground, and isolated, while in Maine they cluster together seeking comfort from one another.

Levine has exhibited widely on the East coast from New York to Massachusetts. In 2005 he was awarded a New York State Certificate of Merit for his exhibit "India, a Traveler's Reflections." His work is held both in public and private collections.

– Mirella Hajjar, Gallery Curator



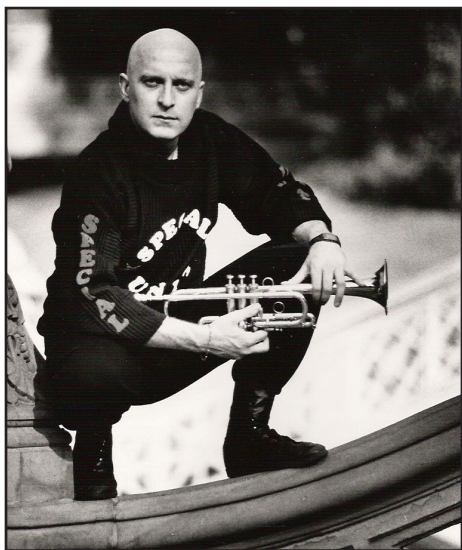
## MUSIC AT ROUND HILL

### Christmas Eve Prelude

9:30 p.m.

### Carols for Brass Quintet

The traditional Christmas Eve Prelude will begin at 9:30 p.m. with festive carols originally arranged for the Canadian Brass Quintet. *Greensleeves*, *O Holy Night*, and *Carol of the Bells* will be among the familiar favorites performed.



*Dominic Derasse*

Piccolo trumpet virtuoso **Dominic Derasse** will perform works from the Baroque period. Mr. Derasse has performed as a classical soloist and has presented master classes and lectures in Europe, the United States, Japan, Africa, and South America. Dominic Derasse has played on more than 60 motion picture soundtracks, including the Oscar-winning score to *Frida*. He has recorded commercials for more than 100 different companies and has performed numerous themes for television. Mr. Derasse was also the Founder, President and Executive Director of the New York FILMharmonic Orchestra, a 92-piece orchestra dedicated to the live performance of music written for film and television.



*Francis Poulenc*



*Daniel Pinkham*

**Francis Poulenc's** vibrant music will be represented by one of his *Motets pour le temps de Noël*. The *Quatre Motets pour un temps de Noël* (1952) are representative of the “pious” Poulenc – the composer who left behind his wit, sarcasm, and Les Six-inspired aesthetic to give sincere voice to his own Catholic faith; they were also some of Poulenc's favorite choral pieces. Written as counterparts to the earlier *Quatre Motets pour un temps de Penitence* (1939), which were quite solemn in tone, the Christmas motets are of a gentler nature, both musically and thematically. They are light in texture and exude a sense of joyful serenity.

The choir will perform the well-known Gloria movement from the **Daniel Pinkham Christmas Cantata**, composed for the New England Conservatory Chorus and Lorna, which utilizes traditional Nativity texts. Subtitled “Sinfonia Sacra,” it is inspired by the Baroque polychoral works of Giovanni Gabrielli and Heinrich Schutz, as well as Pinkham's interest in and passion for early music. “Daniel Pinkham is successful in blending the rhythmic vitality and polychoral style into a cohesive unit that is fresh and very successful in describing the text through his music.” The final movement is joyous and celebratory, with Pinkham's use of lively dance rhythms, chorus, brass, and organ to the work's conclusion.

– Christopher Kabala




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## PASTORAL MESSAGE

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*continued from page 1*

this special season, and so he set out to re-read the Christmas narratives using Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, which is a wonderful Bible translation/paraphrase that I highly recommend.

He says that in this effort he was struck by how earthy the stories are . . . how utterly human . . . and how they cannot be contained in the realm of card stock and porcelain figurines. He writes, "If these stories did not happen to flesh and blood and bone and sinew, then we of all people are to be most pitied. Peterson's renderings of these nativity verses would bleed if you cut them."

It is a lovely little book that Blase has penned. It contains his own reflections for each of the Christmas readings, in which he shares his thoughts, feelings, hopes, impressions, and dreams that bubbled to the surface as he spent time with each text.

His encouragement to us in this season is to re-read the familiar Christmas texts, perhaps using a new or different translation, and to approach them not so much to find an answer or respond, but to ponder them in your heart . . . "Mary-like."

May that be our posture in this wondrous season when we remember and celebrate Bethlehem's birth – to ponder anew the poetic truths of Phillips Brooks's carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem," whose third verse reads: "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in."

Kathy joins me in expressing our hope and prayer that you may recapture the wonder of Christmas this year, be filled with great joy and childlike awe, and know deep within a heart-felt gratitude for all that has been, all that is, and all that is yet to be.

Blessings and Peace,  
Bob Culp

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## DECEMBER SERVICES/SERMONS

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| Dec. 6  | <i>Preparing the Way</i> , Bob Culp  |
| Dec. 13 | Annual Christmas Pageant   |
| Dec. 20 | <i>This Season's True Song</i> , Bob Culp  |
| Dec. 24 | 4:00 p.m.<br>Service led by Shannon White  |
|         | 9:30 p.m. Special Music  |
|         | Traditional Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service<br><i>See What Love God Has for Us</i> , Bob Culp |
| Dec. 27 | <i>Seeking, Finding, and Being Found</i> ,<br>Bob Culp   |
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## WORSHIP

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Feedback on the November 1 Family Service has been positive. The first Sunday of Advent was November 29. During that service, and for the next four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day, church members will read traditional Bible verses and light the Advent candles.

Our Christmas Pageant will be on December 13 during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. There will be two services on Christmas Eve: a Family Service at 4:00 p.m. led by Shannon White and the Candlelight Service at 9:30 p.m. conducted by Bob Culp.

– Marion Piro, Chair

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## WOMEN'S SPIRIT RISING

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Women's Spirit Rising will be meeting at Shannon White's home in Mt. Kisco on Wednesday, December 16, at 12:00 p.m.

For details, contact Nancy Gray at 203-625-4722.



## TRANSITION COMMITTEE

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The Transition Committee, appointed by the Board of Trustees at the September meeting, has been given the task of planning and conducting a search for a new pastor. The committee meets on a regular basis and has, thus far, begun the task of compiling information for discovering new candidates and creating a profile of our church to be used during the process.

As you know, we sent a pastoral search survey to each member of our church. Nearly 40% of the surveys were returned and sent to Hartford Seminary to compile. **The committee will be sharing the results of the survey at a meeting for the congregation on Sunday, December 20, at 11:15 a.m.** After the presentation of survey results, the committee will take questions and comments and will invite members to share any other thoughts on the process during the meeting or by submitting written notes.

The Transition Committee consists of eleven members and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees serving ex officio. It is usual for a pastoral search committee to number six or seven, but the additional members on our committee have specific strengths and gifts that we felt would be valuable. Please feel free to contact any of the committee members to offer suggestions, ask questions, or make recommendations for possible candidates.

During the meeting on December 20, we will also share the document we will use as our Church Profile along with the job description for Senior Minister of RHCC. As we begin to talk to prospects, these documents, along with our website, will inform candidates about who we are and what we are looking for. We encourage you all to read and consider these documents.

Committee members have begun the process of researching possible candidates by going to church websites. Our most valuable resource, of course, will be recommendations by our members and friends. We are also reaching out to seminaries and members of the clergy who have had contact with our church in the past. We do not plan to contact or visit possible candidates until after the first of the year, after we have finished developing our Church Profile

materials and met with the congregation.

We hope to see you at the meeting on December 20 and encourage you to contact us any time.

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## NEW MEMBERS

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### Josephine Chen and Jeff Cooper

The congregation welcomed Josephine and Jeff as members during the November 15 worship service. Josephine has lived in the area for 29 years and Jeff has been here for 12 years, having previously lived throughout the United States as well as Japan, Germany, and Canada.

Jeff has worked in the finance industry for 20 years and enjoys reading, music, and film. Josephine is a speech and language pathologist currently in private practice. They share an enthusiasm for the arts and Josephine is committed to being involved in the community.

# *The News Letter*

Round Hill Community Church  
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Visit our website, [roundhillcommunitychurch.org](http://roundhillcommunitychurch.org), to view more pictures, read past sermons, learn about the activities and history of RHCC, and check the monthly calendar.

DECEMBER 2009 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH								
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
<b>LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY: “PARALLEL VIEWS” BY RICHARD LEVINE</b>		1	2 Staff Meeting 1:00 p.m.	3  Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	4 <b>Christmas on Round Hill Preview Party 6-9 p.m. Comm. House</b>	5 <b>Christmas on Round Hill 10-4 Comm. House</b>		
		6 2nd Sunday of Advent Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Fellowship in Community House Bible Study, 11:15 a.m.	7 Trustee Meeting 8 p.m.	8 Meditation 7 p.m.	9	10 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	11	12 Pageant Rehearsal 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
		13 3rd Sunday of Advent <b>Christmas Pageant, 10 a.m.</b>	14 Cooking for St. Lukes, 3 p.m.	15 Membership Mtg. 6 p.m.	16 Women’s Spirit Rising, Noon	17 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	18 <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	19
		20 4th Sunday of Advent Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Forum: Report from Transition Committee, 11:15 a.m.	21	22	23	24 <b>Christmas Eve Office Closed 4 p.m. Family Service 9:30 p.m. Candlelight Service</b>	25 <b>Christmas Day Office Closed</b>	26
		27 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m.	28 Office Closed	29	30	31 Office Closed	<b>WORSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE</b>	