

A nondenominational Christian congregation



for persons of all faiths and of uncertain faith
meeting in historic St. Peter's Church
346 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011
Sundays, September – July, 11:45 a.m.

www.chelseachurch.org

(212) 886-5463

THE CHELSEA COMMUNITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

Special Services & Events (all dates Sundays unless otherwise noted)

Weeknight, June or July, TBA

Summer Hymn Sing

It took Cole Porter to rhyme “old hymns” with “bare limbs” in *Anything Goes*, but when it comes to our traditional heat-of-the-summer hymn sing, we’ve got lots of each as well. We’re hoping to welcome Lany McDonald as well as our own Southern-born-and-bred music director Chris Johnson. Call or write sometime in early June for details if you’re not already on the e-mail announcements list!

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Celebrating Membership Sunday and Pentecost ... and Mother’s Day



May 11th was Membership Sunday and CCC was honored to receive Lauren Silva and Seth Laughlin into our membership. Speaker for the service, which also marked the celebration of Pentecost, was Kate McCormick, and special music was provided by Tawnya Popoff, principal violist with the Vancouver Opera, accompanied by Christopher Johnson (photo, p. 6). Mary Sheeran was lay leader and, in recognition of

Mother’s Day, had invited those attending to bring pictures of their mothers to place on the altar during the service.



Pastoral Reflections

Spring has finally sprung, but it's raining steadily today. I'm still reluctant to put the heavy coat away for the season because I think that as soon as I do, we'll have a night in the 30's once again. The world sometimes seems reluctant to change from one season to the next, and we humans have the same tendency. I find myself wondering about the next phase of my career; will I go back to fulltime ministry or continue with my consulting career? Perhaps I should go to graduate school or enter a professional certification program.

All the while I ponder my next step, life is shifting, changing, growing in me and around me. God's plan is revealed in tiny increments. Perhaps one day I'll have the whole picture. All of my agonizing about next steps is as if all of it were up to me. But the truth is that I have been guided every step of the way. One of the joys of this "holy uncertainty" is the ability to have a loving community in Chelsea Community Church around me as transitions work themselves out.

Chelsea Community Church itself is experiencing natural transitions, growth and change. Some of this change has been facilitated by our lengthy strategic planning process, (see my report below) and some of it is simply part of the natural lifecycle of the church.

My prayer today is "Order our steps," paraphrasing the gospel hymn.

Happy Spring to all!
Much love,

John

Strategic Planning Process Wrap-Up

Two years ago, the congregation of Chelsea Community Church embarked on a strategic planning process to develop a vision that will carry us into the future. We began this process by looking at the history of the congregation, the current state of the church, and what we – individually and as a congregation -- hope for the church.

In the course of this process, we distilled all of the information from the surveys and the “wish lists” into four strategic goals for:

- Worship
- Outreach and Membership Growth
- Spiritual Growth and Education
- Community Life

Worship: A key outcome of the work around worship was the emphasis on encouraging lay leaders to experiment with the liturgy, and to try new things with different art forms. This has also led to a concerted effort to broaden the pool of people willing to serve as lay leaders and has led to a “team approach” to help mentor new lay leaders.

Outreach & Membership Growth: This was one of the key concerns of the group involved in the planning process because the small size of the congregation creates stress among those who carry the most responsibilities for week-to-week and long-term functioning of the church.

Spiritual Growth and Education: This strategic area is focused on exploring and fostering spiritual growth among members of Chelsea Community Church. Possible strategies discussed were retreat days, Sunday school for adults and children, continuing education offerings with speakers on particular topics, and increased awareness of education offerings by other churches.

Strategic Planning, cont'd.

Community Life: This strategic area encompasses the health of our community in terms of the ability to deal with conflicts, as well as enhancing our general cohesiveness and communication. In this area, one proposal was to establish a **Pastoral Committee** to deal with conflicts that arise between members to help negotiate solutions. This committee has been created and is headed by Mary Sheeran.

One concrete improvement that has come out of the discussion of community life has been the newly instituted weekly email to all people for whom we have addresses to let them know about upcoming Sunday services with the readings, speakers, and music program. Many people have indicated that they appreciate it, and that it helps them keep in touch with the community. This is true even of people who have left the NYC area but still have a strong connection to Chelsea Community Church.

This process has resulted in or contributed to some real progress in several areas. Among them are:

- a renewed focus on the role of the lay leader in worship;
- a renewed focus on our life together as a community;
- a renewed focus on reaching out beyond our small circle to offer the gifts of Chelsea Community Church to the whole community, and an appreciation that our unique mission of welcome “to people of all faiths and of uncertain faith” has a special place in the world.

This has been an exciting process. I am very grateful for the time, energy and thought that all participants have put in over the past two years. One of the joys of this process is that we can never foresee all the possibilities, and that new opportunities will present themselves that we never expected. But through some planning and preparation, we can be ready to take advantage of them to help grow our vital community when they come.

Blessed be all who participated!

Much love,

John

Changes to Order of Worship

The Worship Committee has been working on a revised Order of Worship that would include gender neutral versions of the Gloria Patri and the Doxology. At its May 11 meeting, the Board of Trustees adopted a version that the church will try for six months.

The revised wordings are below, printed as they will appear in the revised order, with the traditional language in parentheses so that either version may be sung. Hymn numbers for these sung prayers will also be provided.

Gloria Patri

Glory to the Creator (be to the Father), and to the Christ (Son), and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Doxology

Praise God from Whom all blessing flow. Praise God (Him) all creatures here below. Praise God (Him) above, O (ye) Heavenly Host. Praise God (Father), the Christ (Son), and Holy Ghost.

The Board also revised the note, “Congregation Standing” to “Please stand, if able.” Alert readers may note an additional line asking that worshippers return hymnals to the usher at the end of the service.

Any comments about this revision may be addressed to any member of the Board (see p. 6), and these comments will be taken into consideration when the Board revisits the issue.

CCC Finances

Each and every gift to CCC is valued and appreciated; bequests, weekly offerings, special donations and everyone's volunteer efforts are all necessary in making the existence and work of CCC possible. At the May meeting of the Board of Trustees, the quarterly financial report indicated that we are below budget projections in our weekly plate offerings and face increased expenses in a number of categories. Since we now enter our summer quarter, with no services in August, your gifts are especially important. Thanks to each of you for your continuing generosity.

The Greening of CCC

More greening is going on at CCC! Hilda Regier has donated some classy glasses for serving juice during coffee hour (reception hosts can find them stacked behind the coffee mug basket in our hospitality cupboard). Also, we are going to try using the saucers in the cupboard next to the refrigerator instead of disposable dessert plates, except for special occasions like potluck brunches. The saucers are a motley mix that should go well with our motley set of coffee mugs! At right, Joanne Downes talks with new member Lauren Silva, while each enjoys a 'first and last use' of the disposable dessert plates.



News of Friends

Michael Campbell was promoted to Director, Sales and Marketing at Graphic Arts Center Publishing, Portland, OR, as of January this year.

Milton Garcia recently exhibited a cartoon series "Coffee from Around the World" at Café Grumpy on West 20th St. One of his cartoons is at Schroeder Romero Gallery (637 W 27th) until June 15th in "The Sparky Show." He will celebrate his 38th birthday on June 13th.

Tracy Strong Lantz and Greg Lantz are the parents of a baby boy, Cooper Raymond, born April 4th.

Merle Lister hosted coffee hour on April 20th and we all helped her celebrate, cake included, her 70th birthday. Merle also prepared three of her late husband Lee Levine's photographs for exhibit at the Chelsea Hotel in honor of its 125th birthday, May 9-11 (below, r.). Among other CCC visitors, **David Robinson** was there with his video camera (below, l.) to help document the exhibit, works and photographers – as well as the history –featured.



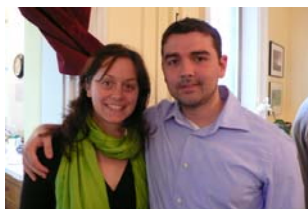
Thad McGar is recovering well from his second fall and broken arm and wrist. He's even doing well enough to resume his duties as clerk at the CCC board meetings.

Kathy Reid has been hospitalized for two weeks and is recovering from additional surgery to treat an infection at the site of the earlier ankle surgery. She welcomes calls at her home number(s).

Mary Sheeran has finished recording her CD and is talking with the Lung Cancer Alliance about the possibility of listing it on their site with a percentage of any sales going to the Alliance as a donation in honor of both her mother and John Eggleston. Mary will keep us posted as plans develop.



New members **Lauren Silva and Seth Laughlin.**



SCHEDULE of SPEAKERS

Worship Service, Sundays 11:45 a.m.

- June 1** **Ronald Hall** (Christian) was released from a halfway house in February after serving time at the Raybrook Federal Correctional Institute. He has availed himself of the services of Exodus Transitional Community and is currently studying air conditioning and refrigeration at the Apex Technical School. *Special Music: Shannon Rolbiecki*
- June 8** **Rev. Clifford Frasier** (United Church of Christ) is campaign coordinator of field sites for the Communications Center of the Service Employees International Union. He is also clergy liaison to the Ordination Committee at Riverside Church. He has been coordinator of Presbyterian Welcome, a program encouraging inclusivity, associate pastor of Jan Hus Presbyterian Church and a member of the social justice staff at Riverside Church. In 2003-04 he spent six months in prison for civil disobedience at Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly School of the Americas). He earned his M.Div. at Harvard Divinity School. *Special Music: Alexandra Bach*
- June 15** **Rev. Dana Fenton** (American Baptist) teaches sociology at Lehman College and at Yeshiva University. She earned M.Div. and M.Phil. degrees at Union Theological Seminary. She is working toward a Ph.D. in sociology at CUNY and has completed fieldwork research for her dissertation on the conservative movement in the Episcopal Church. She is a former pastor of churches Long Beach and Queens.
- June 22** **Esther Sohn** (Presbyterian) is on the ordination track of her denomination. She is working toward a D.Min. degree at New York Theological Seminary, where she earned her M.Div. She served as a youth pastor in her native Korea and now works with a nonprofit organization to improve the quality of life in her Queens neighborhood, particularly that of immigrants who do not have the support services of a church
- June 29** **Rev. John Magisano** (Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches), Chelsea Community Church's pastoral counselor, is director of training and client services at Nonprofit Connection, a firm that provides capacity-building technical assistance to nonprofit organizations in New York City. He earned his M.Div. degree at New York Theological Seminary and has served as assistant pastor for development at the Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford.
- July 6** **Lay-Led Service**
- July 13** **Rev. Dr. William Weisenbach** (Presbyterian) is the senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Katonah in Westchester County. Previously pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Philipstown in Cold Spring, NY, he earlier was vice president for academic affairs and professor of church management at New York Theological Seminary. He earned his D.Min. degree at the seminary and was awarded an honorary D.D. after his 24 years of service to the institution.
- July 20** **Lay-Led Service**
- July 27** **Sheryl Sohn** (Nondenominational) is the Mentoring Project director for Exodus Transitional Community, matching life coaches with ex-offenders and their families. Incarcerated herself for 26 years, she became active in prison ministry, working with chaplains to conduct worship services and offer Bible study. While in prison she earned a B.S. degree from Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, and participated in the first clinical pastoral education program offered

Schedule of Speakers, cont'd.

in a prison. She continues to work toward an M.Div. degree from Trinity Bible College and Seminary, Newburgh, Ind. *Special Music: Mary Sheeran*

August **No services**

September 7 **Services resume**



CCC Trustees Plus

Wayne Kammerer, Chair (Hospitality)
Hilda Regier, Treasurer (Worship)
Kathryn Buck (Newsletter)
Kathleen Reid (Benevolence)
Mary Sheeran (Education, Pastoral)

Lynne Robinson, Vice Chair
Alana Atterbury, Assistant Treasurer (Publicity)
Robert Hickey (Website)
Robert Mitchell, Jr. (Website)

Thad McGar, Clerk John Magisano, Pastoral Counselor Christopher Johnson, Music Director
Joanne Downes schedules special music. Virginia Pfeiffer schedules ushers, lay leaders and hospitality hosts.

Chelsea Community Church Statement of Mission An independent, non-denominational, lay-led Christian congregation, Chelsea Community Church is a people not a building. We offer a supportive environment for people of all faiths and of uncertain faith. Our mission is:

- ❖ to enable each individual to define personal religious beliefs,
- ❖ to worship in prayer, music, reading and interpretation of Scripture with speakers from a variety of backgrounds,
- ❖ to nurture each other in spiritual growth, while respecting and accepting a diversity of beliefs,
- ❖ to share with and support each other in the daily and extraordinary events of our lives,
- ❖ to help those in need both inside and outside our congregation.

We welcome all to worship with us and become part of our extended Christian family.

Please submit material for the next newsletter by August 15: blsspks@aol.com or call (212) 243-0273.



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