

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

Winter 2008 - 2009



Special Services, Events, Dates

Sunday, December 14

34th Annual Candlelight Carol Service, 6 p.m.

*Happy Holidays and
Best Wishes for the New Year!*

CCC Prepares 34th Annual Candlelight Carol Service

Choir rehearsals have been in progress since late October in preparation for our 34th annual Candlelight Carol Service on Sunday, December 14th, at 6 p.m. Broadway, film, and TV star David Costabile, a resident of Chelsea, will read Clement Clarke Moore's famous poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas."

Mr. Costabile has recently been seen in three TV hit series, "The Wire," "Damages," and "Flight of the Conchords." He has also appeared in "Without a Trace," "Law & Order: CI," and "Will & Grace." His film credits include *Cradle Will Rock* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. On Broadway he was in *Caroline, or Change*; *Titanic*; and *The Tempest*. His off-Broadway credits include *Mr. Marmalade* at the Roundabout; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; *Henry V*; and *Troilus and Cressida* (Public Theater). Mr. Costabile received an MFA from the Graduate Acting Program at NYU.





Under the direction of CCC Music Director Christopher Johnson (former Director, Music (USA) at Oxford University Press) and accompanied by Tom Sarff, organist-choirmaster of Christ Episcopal Church New Brighton, Staten Island, the choir will perform an unusually broad range of anthems, hymns, carols, plainsong, and spirituals, including recent compositions and arrangements, and Adolphe Adam's "Cantique de Noël" (1847) in its original form, with Placide Cappeau's powerful French text. Many other traditional materials will be presented in new guises: a tender version of the French carol "Whence is That Goodly Fragrance Flowing?" by Mack Wilberg, associate conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir; Hugh Thomas's achingly beautiful expansion of the hymn "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"; Robert L. Morris's gently swinging arrangement of the spiritual "Glory to the Newborn King"; and Antony Baldwin's conflation of "O'er the Hill and O'er the Vale," a Victorian poem about the Three Kings, with the Renaissance hymn "In vernale tempore." The service will conclude with a performance of Glenn L. Rudolph's "The Dream Isaiah Saw" (2001), in which the audience will be invited to take part. This visionary setting of Thomas L. Troeger's contemporary take on the Peaceable Kingdom, composed in memory of those who died on September 11, will have special resonance for New Yorkers.

The service will be followed with our traditional reception in the rectory with hot cider, eggnog and homemade cookies, coordinated by Virginia Pfeiffer.

Pastoral Reflections

Greetings all!

By the time you read this, Advent will be upon us and with it the joy of the season, along with the anxiety and stress that accompany it. The downside of this season may be exacerbated by the economic uncertainty and other social disruptions we are facing. The upside (for some) may be enhanced by the "regime change" we are going to see in the new year. Either way, the season always carries an abundance of contradictory feelings; joy mixed with anxiety at the prospect of seeing family members; a desire to reconnect with loved ones and friends and a painful longing for those who are no longer with us; a happiness at the chance to be festive along with an emptiness at the heart of holiday commercialism.

My advice to all as we move through the season of Advent and Christmas, is to let your heart sing with joy when you feel it, and let it break with the longing that cannot be fulfilled. Feel all of it as fully as you can, for all of it comes from the ability to love, which God has placed in us from before we were conceived. Move through this season with a heart full of all of these emotions. Drink deeply of this love from God, and for the down moments, don't try to "shop" your way out of them. I wish a rich and full Advent and Christmas for us all.



Much love,
John

Book Group

The Book Group of Chelsea Community Church is currently reading *Head and Heart: American Christianities* by Garry Wills. The book is available at a substantial discount from Overstock.com or can be obtained from the NY Public Library, which has over 75 copies. The Book Group meets three Sundays a month at 10:30 in the Rectory Chapel. All are welcome. If you would like more information, please speak to John Magisano at church or email him at jmagi@aol.com.

CCC Recipient of St. Peter's "Golden Grain" Award



Chelsea Community Church was one of several recipients of St Peter's *The Golden Grain Award* for "individuals and organizations whose spiritual and material support have sustained the mission of Saint Peter's Food Pantry." On Sunday, November 16, CCC Board Chairman Wayne Kammerer accepted the award on behalf of CCC at the St. Peter's 10 a.m. service, which also featured a visit and sermon by The Right Reverend E. Don Taylor, Vicar Bishop for New York City, who is retiring next fall. Information on St. Peter's food pantry, and how you can support it during these increasingly difficult economic times, is below. (Picture, bottom of page 5.)

Canned Food Drive

CCC is currently collecting canned and nonperishable foods for the Food Pantry (see above). Donations are needed as the demand for emergency food rises and government support is being cut citywide. Please bring your donation to church and place it the large basket at the back of the Sanctuary. The Food Drive will continue through the holidays.



Annual Meeting Report from Wayne Kammerer

Many thanks to all who attended, and participated energetically, in our 2008 Congregational Annual Meeting last Sunday. It was a lively and productive meeting, to be sure. Additional thanks to those who were with us in spirit and contributed their input by email. I am very happy to announce the elections of David Robinson and Lynn Ramsey to the Board of Trustees, David for a full 3-year term and Lynn for a partial one-year term. Their stepping forward means a lot to me and the other Trustees. On behalf of the congregation, I gratefully acknowledge the service of Kathy Reid and Robert Mitchell Jr. as they go off the Board. Kathy, especially, has been a mainstay, either as Clerk or Trustee, for years. We could always count on her good cheer, practical knowledge, wise counsel--and hugs--at the Board. The meeting also reelected Thad McGar to another year as the Clerk, and Lynne Robinson and me to three-year Board terms. Thank you, Thad and Lynne, for taking the plunge again. In the brief Board meeting that followed, the Trustees reelected Lynne Robinson to Vice Chair, Hilda Regier to Treasurer, Alana Atterbury to Assistant Treasurer, and me to Chair.



Hilda presented a very thorough and thoughtful budget, which the meeting approved, for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. You will probably learn more about it in a future newsletter or at church. John Magisano, our Pastoral Counselor, reviewed the Strategic Planning process of the past year. As an outcome of that process, we tentatively scheduled a community, as opposed to congregational, meeting for February 2009. With input from you, the Trustees will work out who will preside and what the agenda will be. This meeting should be a more relaxed and informal counterpart to the congregational meeting. Lastly, Mary Sheeran presented some options for a congregational retreat and detailed what such a retreat might entail. The idea is probably somewhat foreign to many. She is continuing her research on the possibilities, and you will hear more about it.

Peace, love, and understanding.

Wayne Kammerer, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Anniversary Sunday ...

Sunday, November 2nd, was Anniversary Sunday at CCC. Sister Carol Perry (Roman Catholic) returned as a guest speaker and her sermon topic, "Streaming the Dream" was based on passages from Nehemiah 2 and 6. Hilda Regier was lay leader for the service. The music marked All Saints' Day (November 1), the feast of All Faithful Departed (November 2), as well as our anniversary, with pieces honoring the past and looking to the future: an arrangement of the spiritual "Deep River" by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor; a transcription by Charles Ives of another spiritual, "In the Mornin'" (also known as "Give Me Jesus"), and Aaron Copland's "The Resting-Place on the Hill." Also in honor of Anniversary Sunday, Mary Sheeran, Lynne Robinson, Thad McGar, and Wayne Kammerer sang a traditional setting of the Twenty-Third Psalm, in a metrical translation from The Scottish Psalter.

... and Traditional Potluck!

As the hospitality committee person I heartily thank everyone for their participation in our recent Anniversary Sunday potluck brunch on November 2. Potlucks are down home by nature, but this one seemed especially so, a real throw-back. Perhaps it was because most of the potluckers sat at the two tables set end-to-end in the rectory parlor, what you might call the big people's, or grown-ups' table. A few of us sat at a smaller table, off ways in the adjoining chapel, what David Robinson jokingly called the kids' table. Anyhow, there was room at the tables for everyone--no sitting in a chair against the wall and trying to balance your plate in your lap and eat at the same time! Maybe eating at a table is better for the appetite because there were fewer left-overs than usual--or maybe the food was just that good. Merle Lister, sitting at the lively but well-behaved kids' table, proclaimed: "The



best food ever--no kidding--really!" There was quite an array of dishes and desserts--I apologize if I leave out anyone's contribution. Some dishes have become synonymous with certain folks: Thad McGar's unsurpassed church supper bean casserole, Virginia Pfeiffer's delectable stir-fried green beans, and Rick Carrier's patented mac'n cheese



(delicious always, but a real masterpiece this time--a beautiful golden crust with swirl pattern on top and great texture!) Healthy and somewhat exotic fare is fast becoming David's trademark--he came through with delicious stuffed zucchini, Turkish-style! Joanne Downes brought a potluck classic--the green bean and mushroom soup casserole--which totally disappeared. We also relished



[*So to speak !! -Ed.*] Hilda Regier's Caribbean chicken stew, Gloria Schofner's green salad, Lynne Robinson's broccoli and pasta salad, John Magisano's bean salad, Mary Sheeran's pumpkin pie, Greg Farrell's wraps, Kathy Reid's cookies--and the treats Chris Johnson and Merle brought in. Additionally, we had slaw showdown--Lynn Ramsey's cabbage slaw and my (actually my wife Heather's) carrot slaw, somewhat reminiscent of the recent potato salad showdown at the summer outing! Ginger Ray provided the juice to help wash it all down. Speaking of wash, we had plenty of dishes to wash afterwards--the only disposables were the paper plates and napkins and plastic ware--a fairly green potluck. Rick certainly did not mind getting his hands a little wet--all that dishwashing gave his nails a good soaking, as he noted. Hilda and Gloria recently helped to further green our hospitality supply by furnishing us with some lovely glass, and ceramic, dessert plates, respectively, which we put to good use this day. We had dish-drying by committee, and then the fine art of fitting everything back into our one little cupboard--and making sure everyone got their serving spoons back! Every potluck brunch is wonderful, but this one did indeed seem "the best ... ever--no kidding--really!" -- Wayne Kammerer (Photos: Kathy Reid)

Spiritual Journey: Alana Atterbury



When Hilda had asked me a few weeks before if I would speak about my spiritual journey at CCC, I wasn't really sure what I would say. My "journey" began years before I moved to New York. I was always mentally rebelling and challenging the viewpoints held by my family regarding religion, and Christianity in particular. To my family, if one could not recite passages from the bible it was something to be ashamed of. Me? Well, the closest I ever got to flipping through the bible was the time I was given tabs to mark each chapter and I felt really proud at accomplishing something...and the book just sat on my bookcase. Then I was given a unique opportunity to start my own life with a clean slate when I came to New York. I didn't come here to earn tons of money or be on Next Top Model, but because I wanted to set up roots on my own.

I had purchased a book containing helpful hints for newcomers and, under the section of Houses of Worship Chelsea Community Church was listed. What stuck out was the line "for people of all faiths, and of uncertain faith." I called the number listed to get details and showed up that following Sunday. Everyone zeroed in on me after the service (a comforting experience for a newcomer who knew no one in her new home!) and I have been here for three years. My family every so often will recommend that I try a new church to meet new people and I always tell them that I am happy where I am. CCC has provided much love and support during my trials and tribulations and I wouldn't want to go anywhere else.

News of Friends

Alexandra Bach reports from Virginia that her health has improved and she is busy pursuing her vocal and songwriting career.

Merle Lister continues to make a good recovery following surgery in September.

Mary Sheeran will be soprano soloist at a Messiah Sing-In, Friday Dec. 14, at 7:30 PM at the Hudson View Gardens. Bring a score and sing along (Hallelujah!). For additional details, e-mail Mary at marysheeran@yahoo.com. She will also be singing with the choir for the New Year's Eve Concert for Peace at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The church has been restored to its full glory and the celebration will be special. The choir will perform the Beethoven Choral Fantasy, and Artist in Residence Glen Cortese, who conducts the orchestra and chorus, has composed a choral piece for the occasion. The service will also include interfaith prayers and blessings for peace, and will feature a vocal suite from "West Side Story" to mark Leonard Bernstein's centenary. Bernstein was the first conductor of these Concerts for Peace.

Additional elements of the program have not yet been announced, but previous concerts have included Judy Collins, Laura Flanagan, Amy Burton, and other prominent New York City artists. The concert starts at 7:30 on New Year's Eve. It is free, (reserved seating avbl.,\$55). Come early for a good seat; there's usually a long line by 5 p.m. outside the Cathedral.

Picture, right: At St. Peter's service on Sunday, November 16th, **Lynn Ramsey and Rick Carrier** (right) wore Liberian dress in honor of Wallace Ross (second from left), who was inducted into lay leadership at the service.



8th Annual Blessing of Animals Service

St. Peter's Rector Dennis Winslow and CCC's John Magisano presided at the 8th Annual Blessing of Animals Service, October 12. Fifty-five human animals, most in service of canine and feline companions, attended. The service was led by Thad McGar and Merle Lister. Cindy Green and Eric Sedgwick, provided special music.



Barking Zoo again provided treats. (Photos: D. Robinson)



SCHEDULE of SPEAKERS

Worship Service, Sundays 11:45 a.m.

December 7 Bro. Jason Rodriguez (Muslim) was ordained by United Faith Ministries. Now pursuing an acting career, he appears in two scenes in the movie *Pride and Glory*, which was released in October. While waiting for more roles, he works as a service advisor for a car dealer. Incarcerated at age 16, he spent 17 years in New York State prisons. ***Special Music: Lynne Robinson with Jerry Scott***

December 14 Rev. Lisa Hill (Presbyterian) is director of quality care for the West Side Federation for Senior & Supportive Housing. She was previously the director of the Frederic Fleming House in Chelsea, which is operated by the same agency. She holds an M.Div. degree from Union Theological Seminary. ***Special Music: Pamela Palmieri and Tracy Strong with Jerry Scott***

December 21 Rev. Brent Backofen (Reformed Church in America) held pastorates in various churches of his denomination on the East Coast before his retirement. He also served on the staff of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Reformed Church in America as an associate for church planning, development and missions. He received an M.Div. degree from New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Before attending seminary, he was involved in child care work. ***Special Music: Mary Sheeran***

December 28 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.

January 4 Rev. John Magisano (Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches), Chelsea Community Church's pastoral counselor, earned his M.Div. degree at New York Theological Seminary. He previously served as assistant pastor for development at the Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford. ***Special Music: William Safkow***

January 11 Yvette Vanterpool (American Baptist) is development assistant for a multifaith youth program, Face to Face/Faith to Faith, at Auburn Theological Seminary that brings together young people from troubled regions of the world such as the Middle East. Also an associate minister at Memorial Baptist Church in Harlem, she received her M.Div. degree summa cum laude from Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, NJ, last spring. A trained opera singer, she has sung with companies in Berlin, Delaware and Tulsa. ***Special Music: Jessica Valiente, flute, and Rick Faulkner, trombone***

January 18 Sister Carol Perry (Roman Catholic) is resident Biblical scholar at Marble Collegiate Church in Manhattan. A member of the Sisters of St. Ursula, she studied at Regina Mundi in Rome, where she earned the equivalent of a master's degree in theology. She also holds an M.A. in theology from St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind. She has retired from the faculty of John Coleman High School in Hurley.

January 25 Rev. Dr. John Nuessleu (United Methodist) is assistant general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. He has pastored a number of churches in Upstate New York and was district superintendent of his denomination's North Central New York Conference. He holds M.Div. and D.Min. degrees from Drew University. ***Special Music: Heather Davis***

February 1 Sheryl Sohn (Nondenominational) is director of the Mentoring Project at 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 in a prison. She continues to work toward an M.Div. degree from Trinity Bible College and Seminary, Newburgh, Ind. **Special Music: Shannon Rolbiecki**

February 8 Rev. Wilfried Wasserman (Lutheran) is pastor of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul in Chelsea. Prior to coming to this pastorate in 2003, he served at two congregations in Germany for 20 years. He grew up in Beirut, Lebanon where his father was administrator of an orphanage. After majoring in biology and chemistry in college, he worked in the chemical industry in Germany for several years before studying theology at Tubingen University and earning the equivalent of an M.Div. degree.

Special Music: Jessica Valiente, Amy Slingerland, Beth Rake, Catherine Sieman, Mary Sheeran

February 15 Rabbi Jill Hausman (Jewish) is the spiritual leader of Congregation Ezrath Israel, also known as the Actors Temple. Before coming to the 47th Street shul in 2006, she was with the Boro Park Progressive Synagogue in Brooklyn, first as a cantor and then as assistant rabbi. She was ordained at the Rabbinical Seminary International in Manhattan. **Special Music: Tawnya Popoff, viola**

February 22 Rev. John Magisano (see January 4)

Mission statement

An independent, non-denominational, lay-led Christian congregation, Chelsea Community Church is not a building but a people. We offer a supportive environment for people of all faiths and uncertain faith: 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 anyone to worship with us and become part of our extended Christian family.

www.chelseachurch.org

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

CCC Trustees Plus

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

Lynne Robinson, Vice Chair
Alana Atterbury, Assistant Treasurer (Publicity)
Robert Hickey (Website)
David Robinson, At Large

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

c/o St. Peter's Chelsea
346 West 20th Street
New York, NY 10011

Best Wishes for the Holiday Season!