

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

Fall 2009

Special Services, Events, Dates (all dates Sundays, 11:45 a.m., unless otherwise noted)

Change: now August 29

Summer Outing to Governors Island moved to Saturday, August 29th (see p. 6 for details)

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September 13

Services Resume, 11:45 a.m., featuring *Jonah and the Humpback Whale*, a reading (see below)

October 11

Annual Blessing of the Animals

November 1

Anniversary Sunday

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**Looking forward, save the date:
December 13, 6 p.m.**

Annual Candlelight Carol Service

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**CCC Presents “Jonah and the Humpback Whale” by Award-Winning
Children’s Author Charlotte Pomerantz**



On September 13 at 11:45 a.m. Chelsea Community Church will host “Jonah and the Humpback Whale,” a staged reading of a short play by Chelsea resident and award-winning children’s book author Charlotte Pomerantz. The 30-minute reading will be presented as part of the regular Sunday service. It has been described by one reviewer as “an imaginative retelling of the biblical story that sticks close to the original.”

Jonah and the Humpback Whale, cont'd.

The cast, portraying Yahweh, Jonah, the whale, a sea captain, a young girl and townspeople, includes narrator and professional storyteller Thelma Ruffin Thomas, Jennifer Dent, Joyce Duncan, Andy Lehrer, Thad McGar, Sharon and Jasper McGruder, Robert Murthar, and Joyce Parr. There is no charge for the event; an offering will be accepted.

Ms. Pomerantz is the author of 35 children's books, including *The Mousery* (Harcourt Brace, 2000), which won the Christopher Award; *The Princess and the Admiral* (Feminist Press paperback, 1992), winner of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award when originally published in 1974; *Manga-boom* (Greenwillow, 1997), American Bookseller, Pick of the Lists; *The Outside Dog* (Harper Collins, 1993), included on the New York Public Library list of 100 best books that year. Among her children's plays are "Eureka!" (1996-97); "The Electric Gingerbread Boy" (presented at Children's Dance Theater in 1984); and "Whiff Sniff Nibble and Chew," a radio play, which aired on WBAI in 1997.

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Pastoral Reflections, by Rev. John Magisano, Pastoral Counselor

As I write this, we are in the dog days of summer. It also happens to be the 40th anniversary of the Woodstock festival. As I was only 7 at the time, my memories include only vague images of television news reports of huge crowds of people my father called "(expletive deleted) hippies." One thing strikes me whenever I think of this event: the organizers and the people attending had no inkling of its tremendous historical significance. They had no idea that it would become a generational marker, a symbol of all the aspirations of the time. We can look back on it with nostalgia for the hope for peace that was embodied in the era, or we can sneer at the naiveté embodied in that hope, but that superimposes our current assumptions on the period.



In another example of this, a good friend of mine remembers his experience of the Stonewall riots, an event for which we also celebrated the 40th anniversary this summer. He was at a neighboring bar when police raided the Stonewall, resulting in three days of riots that are considered the birth of the modern Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender movement. While he watched the events unfolding from the windows of that neighboring bar, he thought: "Those 'queens' aren't going to accomplish anything!" He now knows that he could not have been more wrong.

As people of all faiths, and of uncertain faith, with connections to a faith narrative that has unfolded over many thousands of years, we should keep this dynamic in mind. While many people of faith are certain that "the Bible says it, I believe it, end of story!" there was no such certainty while Jesus and his community of disciples were on their journey. As events unfolded, they had no idea what would happen the next day, never mind that people would still be paying attention two thousand years later, interpreting every word and action in the record handed down to us in the Bible.

Chelsea Community Church's history is somewhat like this. We have touched countless lives over the last 34 years by creating a place of seeking, of healing community, and for many, a way-station on their continued spiritual journeys. As we come back together in our homecoming this

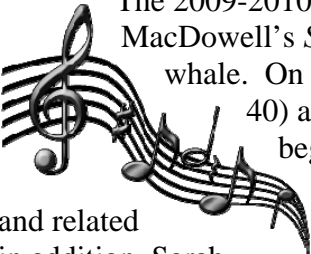
Pastoral Reflections, cont'd.

September, let us keep in mind that everything we do ripples outward like a stone tossed in a pond, that we touch people's lives in unanticipated ways. Forty or one hundred years from now, people may look back on Chelsea Community Church as a critical point in their personal journeys, or in the history of our time still to be written. Who knows? In two thousand years people may be reading our booklet of members' spiritual journeys as a different type of religious canon!

Much love to all, and enjoy the remains of summer!

Rev. John

CCC Fall Program of Music



The 2009-2010 music program begins on September 13 with three of Edward MacDowell's *Sea Pieces* (1898), framing a dramatic reading of a play about Jonah and the whale. On September 20, excerpts from Ernest Bloch's *Visions and Prophecies* (1936-40) and Darius Milhaud's *The Household Muse* mark Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the Jewish New Year 5770. The following week honors Yom Kippur with Louis Lewandowski's arrangement of Kol Nidrei (c. 1870) and related music from Franz Liszt's *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (1845-52); in addition, Sarah Miller will sing an aria from Giacchino Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle* (1863). Other soloists appearing during the autumn are Mary Sheeran, Ginger Ray, Deborah Karpel, Heather Davis, and Alice Frazier (see pp. 7-8 for specific dates). This year's Candlelight Carol Service takes place on Sunday, December 13, and the rehearsal schedule will be announced after Labor Day.

New This Fall: Writing Group

Chelsea Community Church usually conducts a book reading group in the fall and spring, but this fall we are going to try something different. Instead of reading other people's writing on spirituality, church and Bible history, we are going to explore writing from our own spiritual lives. We have ample experience with this at CCC through the booklet, *Finders, Seekers*, we produce that contains narrations of the spiritual journeys of its contributors.

In this new group, we will explore two types of writing that appear in the Bible, the psalm and the epistle. The psalm is actually a worship song or chant of praise, or a prayer to God. The authorship of many Biblical psalms is ascribed to King David. As for the epistle, the examples we have are in the New Testament, most from the Apostle Paul to the various early church communities throughout the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean world of the first century of the Common Era.

The purpose of the group will be to experiment with these forms, write from our own perspectives and experience, and to safely share our writing if we wish to. Perhaps at the end of the group, we can consider publishing a booklet of these writings for our community.



The start date is still to be determined, probably after the first of October. If you have any questions, please send them John Magisano at jmagi@aol.com

News of Friends



Rising Hope from **Kathy Reid**

Pictured here are Roger Manning (left) and Michael Wilcher (right), a former student and former faculty colleague with the Rising Hope Certificate in Ministry and Human Services program, on the occasion of Roger's preaching at CCC in 2007. Both men are parolees.

Rising Hope (www.risinghope.org) currently offers the certificate program in five New York State men's prisons, including Woodbourne Correctional Facility near my summer home. Rev. Bill Webber -- the founder of the program, an outgrowth of the New York Theological Seminary's Masters of Professional Services program at Sing Sing prison in Ossining -- preached about Rising Hope at CCC in the spring of 2004. With his encouragement, I volunteered that fall and have continued teaching there since, every summer and fall. Some may remember a lay-led service I was honored to do last spring where I spoke about this program and my summer spiritual journey writing course, during which I read from the writing of a student who is still "inside," Tony Singh. I was pleased to see Tony on August 13, in the class being conducted by Bard College at Woodbourne.

I was there to hear sermon presentations by the current Rising Hope CMHSP homiletics class, taught by Jay Anthony Taylor, whose story is included in the booklet of stories produced by my 2009 writing class. Perhaps we will one day hear one of these men preach at CCC, as Hilda Regier continues to book ex-offender preachers for us!

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While on vacation visiting with family in Orleans, on Cape Cod, **Lynn Ramsey and Rick Carrier** had the pleasure of meeting Heidi and Al Gallo. Heidi is the sister of **Dennis Winslow**, pastor of St. Peter's Chelsea. The couple raise oysters in Pleasant Bay, Orleans, and Lynn and Rick were treated to a tour of their one-acre farm early one August morning. Over a period of several years, the oysters

grow from tiny seed oysters into succulent 2"-plus oysters, which are sold to local restaurants. "It's very hard work, but Heidi and Al clearly love the lifestyle, and it was a pleasure to spend time with them out in the middle of the bay," said Lynn. Heidi is also an accomplished watercolorist whose work is shown in local galleries. At left, Lynn, Heidi and Al. At right, Al, Heidi & Rick working the farm.



Thad McGar is home and recuperating following a few days in the hospital.

CCC Community Directory of Professional Services

We know that our community, although small, is rich in experience and resources. Below is a listing of services available from some members of our CCC community. If you would like to make your areas of expertise known, please contact us prior to the deadline for the next newsletter. Provide a brief description and a preferred way to contact you for those interested in learning more about services you can provide. Here are our current listings:

Kathryn Buck Foreign language (incl. ESL) training; culture-general and culture-specific cross-cultural training; translation; consulting services re: foreign language learning (what to look for in a good course or program; what to expect when learning a foreign language; how to learn effectively and efficiently). blsspks@aol.com or 212-243-0273.

Merle Levine In-your-home care for cats (high recommendations from Sweet One and Pagoda Buck); consulting on senior citizens programming, care and creative work; planning and implementation of social, cultural and political events; dance performance for special events. C/o Chelsea Hotel, 222 W 23rd St. #717, NYC 10011 or 646-785-2550.

John Magisano In addition to his service as the pastoral counselor of Chelsea Community Church, Rev. John Magisano also provides consulting services to nonprofit organizations in the areas of grant-writing, program design and evaluation, staff supervision, board development and strategic planning. If you are interested in his services, he can be reached at jmagi@aol.com and by cell phone at 917-748-5264.

David Robinson Large or small odd jobs; woodwork, new cabinets and furniture, design and/or build; home or apartment maintenance; painting and decorating; “honey-do” lists. Contact Dave at 212-255-2757 or drpex@yahoo.com.

New! Angela Romano does cat-sitting and limited boarding. She has 13 years of experience, as well as 3 years of volunteer work at Bide-A-Wee shelter, and a deep knowledge and love of cats. She can be reached at (212) 564-4535, French Apartments 330 W 30th St., Apt. 204, New York 10001.

The Newsletter

This end-of-summer issue comes to you, with Jonah and the Whale and the oyster farm, on a ‘sea breeze’!



Special thanks are due, with each issue, to those who help put it together and get it to you – to all of you who submit news and material, to Kathy Reid for proofreading, to Hilda Regier and Lynne Robinson for maintaining the mailing lists, to Lynne for deadline reminders, picking up stamps, printing postal mailing lists and doing the e-mailing, to Robert Hickey for posting it to the website, and to all of you who “stamp and seal” at coffee hour! -- Kathryn

Please submit material for the next newsletter by November 10: blsspks@aol.com or call (212) 243-0273.

Summer Outing



Due to weather considerations, the Annual Summer Outing has been postponed from August 22nd to August 29th (please confirm plans, see below). On the off chance that we can get this newsletter into peoples' computers, and possibly even their hands, by then, here is a summary of the information, which also serves as a good introduction to the 'new' Governors Island.

This year for the annual church outing we will be venturing to Governors Island, situated only 800 yards from lower Manhattan. Meeting time will be between **11-11:30** a.m. at the GI ferry station.

Overview of the Island

Stunning views, sublime biking, verdant picnic spots, intriguing art installations, and (as of August 22) an after-dark beach bar, all a quick ferry ride away. Welcome to Governors Island.

Like a lot of New Yorkers, Governors Island is between jobs. Its career as a military installation ended in 1996, and its aspirations to become the city's next great park haven't quite taken hold. So for now it's merely a magical place to visit—a romantically dilapidated 172-acre disk of fallow real estate, a desert island seven minutes by boat from the glimmering palisade of the financial district. On a map, it resembles a watermelon pit shooting out from between the thumb of Brooklyn and the index finger of Manhattan. The views from its edge are almost preposterously vivid. If you saw a character in a movie lying on the grass, practically within hand-holding distance of the Statue of Liberty, you would swear that the scene had been digitally enhanced—unless you know Governors Island.

Much of it is a succession of ghost towns. Fort Jay and Castle Williams, both owned by the National Park Service, recall the days when the island was New York's first line of defense against foreign invasion. A historic district of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century military buildings resembles a college campus after finals—gracious, weather-beaten, and empty. Liggett Hall, a long and narrow McKim, Mead & White creation from 1929, cinches the island at its waist, and even the apartment blocks standing ready for demolition have a weedy, post-apocalyptic charm.

Eventually, the island will be cleaned up, master-planned, landscape-architected, and redesigned by the Dutch architectural firm West 8 (two principal features: a man-made mountain rising above the landfill flats and a shoreline boulevard for cycling and strolling.) Meanwhile, it feels like an artists' playground, a beguiling place to spend a summer Sunday. The arts organization Creative Time has colonized the grounds with temporary installations: a sculpture in light by Anthony McCall flickers in a chapel, and a massive wind chime by Klaus Weber dangles from a tree, clanging soulfully in the harbor breeze. On the lawn near Liggett Hall are eighteen holes of miniature golf, each the occasion for a fanciful, colorful sculpture. Wheel a bike onto the ferry or pick one up on the other side and make for Picnic Point, a shiny new emerald lawn boasting fire-engine-red hammocks and one of the most vast panoramas in town.

Travel Arrangements: Ferries leave every half hour starting at 10 a.m. at the Battery Park Maritime Museum, with the last one departing GI at 7 p.m. (subject to change). Take the 1 train to

South Ferry Station and the Governors Island ferry is right next to the Staten Island Ferry Station. If you wish to bike on the island you are allowed to bring your own.

Events: There are a number of current exhibits as well as a number of places to eat. For full information, contact Alana Atterbury at vega103@hotmail.com. Hope you can join us!

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CCC 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

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SCHEDULE OF SPEAKERS and SPECIAL MUSIC

Worship Service, Sundays 11:45 a.m.

September 13 Reading of *Jonah and the Humpback Whale*, a short play by Charlotte Pomerantz. One reviewer described the play as an imaginative retelling of the biblical story that sticks close to the original. The cast includes a narrator and readers portraying Yahweh, Jonah, the whale, a sea captain, a young girl and townspeople. A Chelsea resident, Ms. Pomerantz is the author of 35 children's books and several plays.

September 20 Rev. Patricia Lawson (Baptist) is the director of Children and Family Ministries at The Riverside Church. She came to Riverside as an intern in the Youth and Young Adults program in 1996 while studying for her M.Div. degree at New York Theological Seminary. She was appointed to her current position in 2002. Before attending the seminary, she was an actress, appearing Off Broadway and in the TV series "The Jeffersons." She was also a jazz and gospel singer, clothing designer and executive assistant.

September 27 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: Sarah Miller

October 4 Jean Coaxum (Pentecostal) is correspondence secretary at Exodus Transitional Community, answering letters from prison inmates who are seeking parole and the organization's help in re-entering society. Herself incarcerated for 23 years, she was recognized as an honor inmate. Among her activities at Bedford Hills was training guide dogs for the blind. She was released in 2006. *Special Music:* Mary Sheeran

October 11 Otto Walberg will conduct the annual **Blessing of Animals Service**. He is the companion of Bucky, a mixed breed beagle and blue tick coon hound. A tenor in the Chelsea Community Church choir, he is a singer, actor and a specialist in 19th- and 20th-century dog paintings.

October 18 Rev. James Campbell (United Church of Christ) is pastor of Broadway United Church of Christ. He earned his M.Div. degree at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio and was ordained in the United Methodist Church in 1991. He served congregations in that denomination in Ohio and New Jersey for eight years before working in the private sector for several years and transferring to the United Church of Christ. *Special Music:* Ginger Ray

October 25 Lynn Ramsey is a trustee of Chelsea Community Church and a longtime member of our church family. She has worked in public relations for the fine jewelry industry for over 20 years, including being an

October 25, cont'd.

industry spokesperson and running the Diamond Information Center and the Jewelry Information Center. She currently has her own PR consulting business in Chelsea.

November 1, Anniversary Sunday Rev. Dr. Karen L. Ziegler (Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches) is a family nurse practitioner at the Duke Diet and Fitness Center in Durham, NC. She also teaches clinical skills and ethics to first- and second-year medical students at Duke University Medical School. She was the senior pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of New York from 1979-88 and pastoral consultant to Chelsea Community Church in 1992-93. She earned her M.Div. degree at Union Theological Seminary and her D.Min. at New York Theological Seminary. She later enrolled in the Columbia University School of Nursing and went on to earn an M.S.N. at Duke. She is a Bravewell Fellow and completed a Fellowship in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona in 2008. She is also a Reiki teacher and mindfulness meditation teacher. *Special Music:* Deborah Karpel

November 8 Raymond Gombach (Presbyterian) is a member of the Network of Biblical Storytellers. He has taught master classes on telling and learning sacred stories at Yale Divinity School, Duke University and Drew University. *Special Music:* Heather Davis

November 15 Mary Sheeran (Episcopal), an associate member of Chelsea Community Church, earned an M.Div. degree at New York Theological Seminary. A writer/editor in the medical/pharmaceutical field, she also writes on theological topics. A classically trained soprano, she has created and performed cabaret acts in recent years. She is the author of *Who Have the Power: A Legend of the West*, a novel published in 2006.

November 22 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:* Alice Frazier

November 29 Kathleen Reid has attended Chelsea Community Church since 1976, often serving on the Board and the worship and newsletter committees. Semi-retired from her direct-marketing consulting business directed toward the education market, she now volunteers as a teacher in a medium-security men's prison near her summer home and also serves as secretary to the sponsoring organization, Rising Hope.

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CHELSEA COMMUNITY CHURCH

c/o St. Peter's Chelsea
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