

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 2009 – 2010

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? (Psalms, 42: 1-2)

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



November 29

(December 11, Friday)

December 13, 6 p.m.

(December 25, Friday)

First Sunday of Advent

(Hanukkah Begins)

Annual Candlelight Carol Service

(see below)

(Christmas Day - no CCC service)

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35th Annual Candlelight Carol Service

This year marks the **35th anniversary of CCC's annual Candlelight Carol Service**, which will be held on Sunday, December 13th, at 6 p.m. There is no charge for the event; an offering will be accepted. CCC's **Music Director, Chris Johnson**, has prepared the program of music and long-time Chelsea **neighbor and stage and screen actor Denise Lute** will read Clement Clarke Moore's "**A Visit from St. Nicholas.**" St. Peter's stands on land that was part of the Moore family estate.

A portion of the offering from the service will be donated to the food pantry at St. Peter's.

In response to the current economic crisis, this year's program of choral music (photo: rehearsal at the rectory) emphasizes simplicity and humility, presenting music from relatively humble repertoires—spiritual, folk-hymnody, Early American singing-school collections, popular balladry—in authentic, down-home styles. Spirituals include **Marshall Bartholomew's** classic setting of "**Little Innocent Lamb**" (1926), and **Charles Ives's**



brilliant harmonization of “**In the Mornin’**” (1929) in a new choral version prepared by music director **Christopher Johnson**. Singing-school and shape-note traditions are represented, respectively, by **William Billings’s SHILOH** (“Methinks I see an heav’nly host/Of angels on the Wing!”), from *The Suffolk Harmony* (1786), and “**Wondrous Love**,” in its original published form, from “**Singin’ Billy**” **Walker’s Christian Harmony** (1866). Rounding out the program are two virtual motets from the popular repertoire: “**Some Children**” (1951), the masterpiece of **Wihla Hutson** and **Alfred S. Burt**, the ‘finest jazz songwriters you’ve never heard of,’ and **Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas,”** in a rarely-heard arrangement by the eminent British composer **Andrew Carter** (1985). In addition, Johnson and accompanist **Thomas W. Sarff** will play **Aaron Copland’s “Variations on a Shaker Melody”** (1945; arr. 1985) and **Vincent Persichetti’s “Appalachian Christmas Carols (After John Jacob Niles)”**, and Sarff contributes a beautiful new **descant for the hymn-tune HYFRYDOL**.



Denise Lute has been a New York theater and screen actress for over thirty years, and was made a member of the Actors Studio by Lee Strasberg. Among her favorite roles in New York are Agnes in *Bug* at the Barrow Street Theater; Mrs. Larry in John Guare’s revival of *Lake Hollywood* with Amy Wright and Rip Torn; Richard Petty in Janet Allard’s *VROOMM!* for Arielle Tepper’s SPF. She has worked for director Arthur Penn on his sequel to William Gibson’s *The Miracle Worker, Monday after the Miracle* and also on Larry Gelbart’s *Power Failure*. She performed opposite Estelle Parsons in Elizabeth Swados’ *The 49 Years*. Denise was part of a project written and directed by the late Elia Kazan, *The Chain*, at the Actors Studio, and at the Hartman Theater. Shelley Winters directed her in *Full Moon and High Tide in the Ladies Room*, and she has acted with and been directed by Ellen Burstyn in *The Cherry Orchard*. Other New York Credits: *Room Service* and *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* with director Arthur Storch. *The Roof* and *Fear and Loathing on the Nile*, Blue Collar Theater; five plays at the Jewish Repertory Theater; *Texarkana Waltz*, and *Bold Girls* among many others. Regional theater credits include two plays for director Joanne Woodward, *The Constant Wife* at Westport Country Playhouse and *The Big Knife* at Williamstown Theater Festival. She has also worked at the John F. Kennedy Center, White Barn Theater, Bristol Riverside Theater, and Northern Stage. Film: *Lucky Days, Whiskey School, Vodka Rocks, Seven Miles Alone, The Dead of Winter*. Television: *Law & Order, Law & Order: SVU*, and *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, and recurring roles as Judge Metzger on *ED*, and Katie on *The Guiding Light*. Denise has lived in Chelsea since 1972.

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Pastoral Reflections, by Rev. John Magisano, Pastoral Counselor

Here we are in the season of Advent again, and nighttime comes early and dawn late. This is the season of the light in the darkness, the Chanukah menorah, the Advent wreath, the star at the top of the Christmas tree. In this season we often have to search for that light, as the darkness seems so pervasive as to swallow up any light. This is the story that comes to us in the Bible, that the Magi had to search for a star and travel through the darkness of Herod’s paranoid realm to find the Christ child. Mary and Joseph also had to make a journey to Bethlehem and were no doubt hoping for a warm welcome but had to settle for sleeping in a barn. (I realize I am mixing two different Gospel narratives here, but that’s what we have to work with.)



The New York Times recently had an article in the “Home” section about emotional minefields people face during visits home for the holidays. One expert mentioned that families can revert back to old, painful patterns and reopen wounds from long ago. Along with this comes the frenzy of preparations and activity, shopping, decorating, cooking, planning parties, and the general commercial mania of the season.

But in the midst of all of this, there is that light that shines in the darkness. The ability and need to love have been placed in our hearts and are the flip side of all the madness that characterizes the season. Without love, none of this

Pastoral Reflections, cont'd.

would matter. We wouldn't be concerned with finding the right gifts, making our homes festive, cooking the perfect meals, or seeing our families and friends.

My heart always bursts with love, longing, joy, and pain during this season. I miss my loved ones who have passed and those too far away to visit. I regret that I never got that cool electric toy car that I wanted so badly for Christmas when I was five. I love the fact that I know I will hear from family that I haven't seen in years. I rejoice in the fact that I am allowed to just cry, laugh, be melancholy, because it's Christmas.

My plea to all this season is the same every year. In the midst of the holiday craziness, just sit quietly when you can and feel what's in your heart. If it is sadness, be sad. If it is a funny memory, laugh out loud. If it is love, let it flood through you. It is there in that quiet space that the light will shine in the darkness. It is there that the Christ child will come. It is there that God's love will be present.

May we all have a peaceful, joyous Advent, Christmas and New Year season.

Much love to all!
John

Sacred Writing Group

For the time being, the Reading and Conversation Hour (book group) is combining reading with writing. We are exploring two Biblical writing forms, the Psalms and the Epistles. We are reading selected passages and are writing our own versions of both of these forms. As always, the group is open to anyone interested, and both the writing and the sharing of pieces are voluntary. People can come and participate in the discussion even if they do not wish to write. The group meets at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the Rectory chapel. For more information, email John Magisano at jmagi@aol.com

Annual Meeting, October 4



At its Annual Meeting following the worship service and coffee hour on October 4th, the congregation voted to adopt the budget proposed by treasurer Hilda Regier. Hilda Regier, Alana Atterbury, and Lynn Ramsey were reelected to the board, and Thad McGar was reelected Clerk. Virginia Pfeiffer was nominated and elected (in absentia) and subsequently agreed to serve the one-year remainder of Mary Sheeran's term.

The trustees met on October 25th and elected Lynn Ramsey as chair, Robert Hickey as vice chair, Hilda Regier as treasurer, and Virginia Pfeiffer as assistant treasurer. We offer thanks, especially, to Wayne

Kammerer for his two years of service as chair.



(Photos by K. Reid. Top left, outgoing Chair of the Board of Trustees, Wayne Kammerer; right, incoming Chair Lynn Ramsey. The editor regrets the failure to include announcement of the Annual Meeting in the Fall newsletter.)

CCC Community Directory of Professional Services



Our community, although small, is rich in experience and resources. The last two newsletters have included a listing of services available from members of our CCC community. If you would like to make your areas of expertise known, please contact us. Provide a brief description and a preferred way to contact you for those interested in learning more about services you can provide. We are also exploring the option of adding the directory to our CCC website.

34th Anniversary Sunday, November 1



Our good friend and former pastoral counselor, the Reverend Karen Ziegler (Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches), was guest speaker for our 34th Anniversary Sunday on November 1st. Her emotionally felt and thought-provoking sermon acknowledged her love for Chelsea Community Church and recognized the work that has kept the spirit of our community growing. She also shared the difficulties she faced in the past year at the passing of her mother. “I know it is All Saints’ Day, and often we honor the dead,” said Karen. “I am more interested in how we face our own mortality.”

She used the lessons from the day, I Kings 19: 9-18 and Luke 22:39-46 (minus 43-44), to speak about three major themes: trusting God, being awake, and finding God in the quiet of one’s own heart. Elijah’s job, in I Kings, is to nurture another generation of prophets. Elijah complains to God that he is alone and being threatened by those who have forsaken the covenants of the Lord. God tells him to “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Elijah goes to the mountain, where he experiences great wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but God is not there. It was only in the “sound of sheer silence,” following the fire, that Elijah finds God. In Luke 22, the disciples, full of grief over Christ’s destiny, have fallen asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus returns from praying and admonishes them to stay awake to listen to God.

Also on Anniversary Sunday, soprano Deborah Karpel returned to perform “Allerseelen” (1885), an early masterpiece by Richard Strauss (1864-1949), “perhaps the greatest writer for voices of the twentieth century,” according to Music Director Christopher Johnson. Chris also incorporated Strauss’s *Fünf Klavierstücke* (Op. 3, No. 1), and other music by both Strauss and Franz Liszt, and Deborah sang an unaccompanied version of “I’ll Fly Away” as the post-benediction music.



Anniversary Sunday concluded with our traditional and exceptional potluck buffet. CCC thanks everyone who contributed to this lovely service and reception, which celebrated the ongoing life and community spirit of our unique church.



Photo, far left: Kate Johnson, Joanne Downes, Jane and Malcolm Ritter, Bill Kushner, Jeffrey McLaughlin, Lynne Robinson, Mary Sheeran gather around the potluck buffet table; left center, Eng Leung, Kate Johnson, Theresa Small Smith, Mary Sheeran and Rick Carrier enjoying their meals; center right, Chair of Board of Trustees Lynn Ramsey and Kate Johnson; far right, “dishwasher poet” Bill Kushner helps with clean-up. Food by everyone; photos by Kathleen Reid.

Cathrine Kellison: July 2, 1945 – September 2, 2009



Cathrine Kellison died September 2, four years after being diagnosed with colon cancer. At a memorial service on September 13, long-time friends, students and a sister shared memories of a vibrant woman who embraced life—and who changed the name she was given at birth to one with a quirky spelling that set her apart. In a short film she posted on *youtube*, she said that when death comes, “I will have consumed every second, blessed most days, cursed a couple.”

After attending several of our Candlelight Carol Services, Cathrine and her husband, Jeffrey McLaughlin, ventured into the sanctuary one Sunday morning seeking a Sunday school for their daughters, Jonna and Simone. Within a short time she and Jane Ritter were teaching the classes for their children. A few years later, the entire family became members of Chelsea Community Church.

Cathrine joined the choir for the Candlelight Carol Service in 1992, singing tenor because that’s where her voice, which had a wide range, was needed. She continued in the choir for several years and later read Scripture at the service. She and Jeffrey hosted mid-week discussion groups during the summer and also a Maundy Thursday service. She introduced several speakers to our roster: Rev. Eric Kobell, Rev. Dr. Roy Lloyd and her father, Rev. John Clayton, a minister turned film maker.

President of Roseville Video, Cathrine wrote and produced movies about social issues. For the last 15 years of her life she was an adjunct professor of television production at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University. The family has set up a scholarship there in Cathrine’s memory. Contributions to the Professor Cathrine Kellison Scholarship Fund may be sent to: Director of Development, The Gallatin School of Individualized Study, New York University, 715 Broadway – 8th Floor, New York, NY 10012.

News of Friends

Congratulations to Paul Boddin and Thad McGar on their marriage in early October.

Condolences to Joanne Downes on the death of her brothers Harold and John, and to Kathryn Buck on the death of her brother John.

Bill Kushner’s life and work as a poet were featured in a film shown at St. Mark’s Church on October 23rd, with a brief ‘live’ reading by Bill of some of his work. There will be another full reading on January 6th at 8 p.m. at St. Mark’s (Second Ave. & 10th St.).

Bill Kushner and **Merle Lister** will be performing in a benefit for The Poetry Project at St. Mark’s Church at Second Ave & 10th St. on Friday, January 1, 2010, at 2 p.m.

Merle Lister appears in two interviews in the film about the Chelsea Hotel, *Chelsea on the Rocks*, recently screened in local theaters. In the first, from her terrace overlooking West 23rd St., she discusses choreographer Katherine Dunham, who rehearsed animals on the hotel staircase for their parts in Verdi’s *Aïda*. The second, lengthier piece was filmed in Merle’s apartment at the Chelsea and has to do with an appearance by one of the hotel’s several ghosts.

Thad McGar is back at home after a brief hospitalization in early October.

News of Friends, cont'd.

Best wishes to **The Reverend Dennis Winslow, Rector of St. Peter's Chelsea**, for his continuing recovery from multiple leg and knee fractures suffered early this summer. Please keep Dennis in your prayers.

“Jonah and the Humpback Whale”



(Photo: K. Buck)

On September 13 CCC hosted a staged reading of “Jonah and the Humpback Whale,” a short play by Chelsea resident and award-winning children’s book author Charlotte Pomerantz. The 30-minute reading included sound effects and interpretative movement. The cast, portraying Yahweh, Jonah, the whale, a sea captain, a young girl and townspeople, included narrator and professional storyteller Thelma Ruffin Thomas, Jennifer Dent, Joyce Duncan, Andy Lehrer, Thad McGar, Sharon and Jasper McGruder, Robert Murthar, and Joyce Parr.

Other Recent Services

Otto Walberg led the service for this year’s A Blessing of Animals on October 4th (photos, below, by Xris Kreussling). Martha Teichner, accompanied by Goose and Minnie (one of whom is upper left, below), read the scripture, and Phil Marsh provided special music. Steven Turtell read two poems about cats; one poem was his own work and the other was by a 19th century author.

Lynn Ramsey and Mary Sheeran have each recently led an entirely ‘lay’ service. Lynn’s service was a meditative exercise focused on finding God in the city, and Mary’s, also meditative in nature, was guided by the writings of Thomas Merton. Kathleen Reid will also conduct a lay service on November 29th.



SCHEDULE OF SPEAKERS and SPECIAL MUSIC

Worship Service, Sundays 11:45 a.m.

December 6 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. Special music will be two of composer Karen Benedetto's holiday songs, "A Chanukah Prayer" and "Behold the Night," reflecting the celebration of both Hanukah, which begins on December 11, and Christmas,
Special Music: Pamela Palmieri (with Jeff Cubeta)

December 13 Lance Lewis (nondenominational) is a case manager at Housing Works. He earned a certificate in ministry and human services in the New York Theological Seminary program at Sing Sing Prison and a B.A. in theology at New Emanuel Bible Institute in the Bronx, where he is currently working on an M.Div. degree. **Please join us after the service and abbreviated coffee hour to decorate the church for the Candlelight Carol Service to be held at 6 p.m.!**

December 20 Rev. Dr. Glorvia C. Askew (African Methodist Episcopal) is ministerial program coordinator of the New York State Department of Corrections and an adjunct professor at New York Theological Seminary. She was formerly an assistant pastor at St. Paul Community Church in Harlem. She earned an M.Div. degree at New York Theological Seminary, an M.S.W. at Fordham University and a D.Min. at Hebrew Union Theological Seminary.
Special Music: Sarah Miller

December 27 Lay-Led Service centering on Christmas carols. **Special Music: Tawnya Popoff**

January 3 Min. Yvette Vanterpool (American Baptist) is an associate minister at Memorial Baptist Church in Harlem, where earlier this year she led a workshop entitled *Discipleship 101* for 75 participants from seven churches. She also works with the Rites of Passage youth ministry and last year was development assistant for a multi-faith youth program, Face to Face/Faith to Faith, at Auburn Theological Seminary. She received her M.Div. degree summa cum laude from Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, NJ, in 2008 and was awarded The Rev. Florence Spearing Randolph Prize given to an African American woman student who demonstrates powerful preaching skill and potential for outstanding pastoral leadership. She also holds a Master of Music degree in voice/opera from Binghamton University. She has sung with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, The New World Symphony, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Texas Opera Theater and has toured with the New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera. **Special Music: Yvette Vanterpool**

January 10 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: Heather Davis

January 17 Dr. Mary Ann Cejka (Roman Catholic) is a writer, grants professional and passionate activist for peace and justice issues as well as for reform within the Catholic Church. She is also an "online professor," teaching graduate courses in multicultural psychology for the University of Phoenix. She holds an M.Div. degree from Yale and a doctorate in psychology from Purdue.

January 24 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. 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.

January 31 Rev. Susan Switzer (United Church of Christ) is campaign manager and director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving for New York Theological Seminary. She also recently served as interim pastor at Wantagh Memorial Congregational Church on Long Island. She previously served in a similar interim capacity at Emanuel United Church of Christ in Woodhaven, Queens. A former director of stewardship and fund development at Riverside Church, she received her M.Div. degree from Union Theological Seminary and is beginning work on a doctorate in multi-faith ministry at New York Theological Seminary.

February 7 Rev. Dr. John Nuessle (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: Shannon Rolbiecki**

February 14 Lay-Led Service

February 21 Sheryl Sohn (Nondenominational) is a re-entry consultant to Exodus Transitional Community. 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.

February 28 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: Martha Bernard**

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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

The Newsletter



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 Hilda Regier and Lynne Robinson for maintaining the mailing lists, to Lynne for picking up stamps, printing postal mailing lists and doing the e-mailing, to Kathy Reid for proofreading, to Robert Hickey for posting it to the website, and to all of you who “stamp and seal” at coffee hour. **Please submit material for the Spring newsletter to Kathryn Buck by February 10: blsspks@aol.com or call (212) 243-0273.**