



FIRST WORD

May 2009

From the Pastor...

Note to our readers:

Having been rendered nearly speechless by the selfless action taken by Chris and Tracy Cole, I joyously yield my usual space for the following article, **“The Miracle on Pacific Street, Stamford”** by Chris Cole. —R. Randy Day

Miracles are funny things. A miracle to one person may not be to another. Some are small, some large. Sometimes they are hard to see at first, or they take time to develop and make themselves known. The following story seems to be evolving into each of the above...

I have changed the name to protect the innocent, because he really is. Let's call him Jesse. Jesse from Jamaica — man. Too old, at eighteen, for much State-sponsored support. An American citizen by the fact that his father is American. Called to Stamford twenty months ago by his father, whom his mother had assured Jesse had past away when he was two. Excited to meet a father he never knew existed. Deflated to learn this same father had another wife and child. Happy to meet his stepsister. Never had one of those before. The new wife had her hands full with a five year old. The eighteen-year-old young

man had to go. To the streets of Stamford. To the Men's Shelter on Pacific Street, behind the train station. To a difficult place for all involved, a real place. Too real for a junior in high school, trying to do his homework, make class, work in the mall, stay away from bad elements, without guidance, money and now without family.

I did not think about it as a small miracle until we returned to the Shelter to clear out his locker today. A middle-aged man, a frequent “guest” of the Shelter, passed us as we entered. “Make sure you appreciate and take care of your little miracle,” the man suggested, opening his arms wide in a friendly, inclusive way. Upon leaving, Jesse echoed the man's sentiment, “man, I feel so lucky to be out of here.” Jesse was going back to our home where the night before he had been introduced to our fifteen year old son, a Greenwich HS freshman, and our yellow lab Tobey, and the first *safe* night of sleep in many months.

Jesse had arrived late for the Shelter dinner where my wife, son and I and a young couple from the First Church of Round Hill had prepared and served food for 50. He stood out for his youthful face, discomfort, and innocence. We chatted briefly. A very polite young

man. Many of the men at the Shelter are similarly polite. Reverend Randy Day, the new Minister for the First Church, had asked my wife and me to fill in for the regular crew last night. Not exactly my wife's first choice for our 23rd anniversary, but as she explained, “at least it was a night out!” That morning in Church we had sat next to one of Reverend Day's daughters, a middle-schooler in Greenwich, and one of the two children Randy and his wife Emily have adopted from Haiti. Their brood of four children lives in the historic parsonage, the Brown-Kenworthy house, next to the Church, where John Street and Round Hill meet. Randy, Emily, and family have injected a new vitality to First Church, a vitality teeming with welcomeness, caring, and global overtones. His office and home are adorned with fascinating mementos from some of the 81 countries he has visited, worked and lived in, time capsules from more than 40 years he has spent traveling to emerging countries. In fact, Randy had only just returned from a mission trip to Africa. Sitting next to his Haitian daughter, I marveled at the small miracle that had brought her to this pew, this family, this Church. What were the odds?

The odds were better because Randy and Emily sought to help, cared to care. They travel to learn and live their mission every day. Fortunately for Jesse and my family, their message got through, or at least it seems to be playing out that way.

As we were leaving the Shelter, a gaunt, small man with kind eyes, spoke directly to us with purpose and compassion. "He is too young to be here. This is not the right place for him." We know instinctively that he was right – all three of us. Maybe because of Randy and Emily's example, I do not know. But we knew that this little man was right, Jesse needed something good to happen to him, soon. Of course the same can be said for each of these Shelter "guests." I guess it was just Jesse's turn.

We will do our best. And while they do not know it as yet, the small, yet growing, community that is the First Church of Round Hill will have another community member. I invite you to experience the unique combination of traditional religion, global perspective, and down-home friendliness. Come for Mother's Day! Try us out. Please. You will meet nice people and may, just may, have a little miracle happen to you.

CE Update

A big **Thank you** to all the participants who helped make April's outreach project another success. Thank you to Katy, Josie, Nick, Alexandra, Christian, Kelly and Amanda who prepared a delicious meal to be served at Pacific House in Stamford; and thank you to Emily, Chase and J

who met us there to help serve dinner to about 60 people.

Preparing for and serving a meal at Pacific House is a wonderful service project that allows us to help those less fortunate and truly make a difference.

In Sunday school this month we are focusing on and learning about the first Christians. We will learn how they lived and what they did. One of the important things we know they did was that they shared with one another.

We will kick-off this theme by watching "Joseph of Cyprus (Barnabas)" from the **Friends and Heroes series**, an exciting new animated DVD-based Bible learning series that teaches children Bible stories, ancient history, and how to live life as a Christian.

We will end the month of May with the story of **Pentecost**. It is challenging to talk about The Holy Spirit since you can't see or hear it, you can't touch it, and you can't smell it. To simplify this lesson and make it clearer for the children to understand we have a great science experiment planned. We'll learn about something we can't see, but we can see what it does when it's at work – just like The Holy Spirit.

Susanne Frank
Director of Children's and Youth Ministries

Youth Update

The Youth Group will be working on a new video series entitled Revolution. Revolution is an innovative video series geared toward adolescence which discusses true to life situations and how to cope with them. In the month of May we will be focusing on two of the teachings... Stealing home which helps students cope with

imperfect home situations and the honor system which teaches students how to honor their parents and others.

SAVE THE DATES-YOUTH

June 6th - Car wash fundraiser

June 7th - MMRF Race for Research

June 14th - Children's service and Youth Group Pool Party

Confirmation

Our Confirmation Class is in the final stretch of their long, 8-month journey of exploring what their faith means to them. This has been an amazing class of eager students.

Together, with Rev. Day, they have explored various aspects of core doctrines of the Christian faith – baptism, sin, repentance, salvation, discipleship and ministry. They have learned about the other great world religions, as well as key current events., often gathering in front of the large wall map of the world in the pastor's office. They are truly global citizens.

They have engaged in hands-on activities such as preparing and serving food at Pacific House in Stamford, learning about homelessness in the United States.

Following a wonderful meal at a Lebanese restaurant in Greenwich, they participated in an Ash Wednesday service. They have also provided leadership in services here at First Church.

The pastor and congregation are now preparing for welcoming these students into our church family on Sunday, May 31st. A special reception will follow the 10 am worship service. Please join us!

OPEN HOUSE AT THE PARSONAGE - MAY 17TH

ALL MEMBERS of First Church are cordially invited to an Open House at the parsonage next door to the church.

Annual Meeting – May 17th directly following worship in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

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•FIRST CHURCH OF ROUND HILL STAFF•

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Daisy Melo, Youth Director
Annie Callahan, Secretary
Sandy Regan, Financial Secretary
Ernesto Damm, Property Manager

First Church of Round Hill is a Christian community, rich in heritage, open and caring, bound together by our faith.