



FIRST WORD

October 2009

From the Pastor...

The Cole Family has continued to work with a promising young man whom they first met at Pacific House, the homeless shelter. You will appreciate this update by Chris.

R. Randy Day

Chris Cole Update

After six plus months Tracy and I started to wonder whether our Jamaican live in “guest”, Jesse, would be with us considerably longer. He fortunately had gained work, behind the scenes at the Stamford Mall’s Pottery Barn, stocking shelves, building tables, moving inventory, making a decent wage. The Federally -sponsored SRO (single room occupancy) program, which purported to give a young person a chance to obtain reasonably decent accommodations at an affordable price, turned out to be a bad joke. After spending hours and hours attempting to navigate the bureaucracy, after achieving a number on a waiting list, after being told that he was close, the “little” issue of needing to be homeless for FIVE years before one can qualify for a subsidized room came into play. You would think that this small detail, however ludicrous, would have been explained in advance. Oh well! Divine intervention worked better: after

helping a woman carry her Pottery Barn purchases to her car, this customer was so impressed with our “guest” that she offered to recommend him to a friend with a basement apartment for rent. We visited the small space a day later and our “guest” was one his own. And as pleased with himself as I have ever witnessed! Jesse had done it, successfully transitioned from homeless teenager to a renter with a bank account. Not that the bank account was more than the minimum mind you, but he could survive independently – or at least almost. First Church was kind enough to put him to work on the sidewalk and patio restoration project Ernesto orchestrated, allowing our now “ex-guest” to afford much of the security deposit for his new abode. Of course, when Jesse went to deposit the check, the bank promptly denied him the opportunity to deposit it – into his own account – because??? Well, let’s just say that we have witnessed firsthand how difficult life can be for young black men. But once deposited – with the help of one irate short white guy, to the bank’s amazement, the Church check actually cleared! Miracles never cease.

High School has proven an even greater challenge. When he arrived

here, Jesse was placed in the Junior year because he had completed three years of high school in Jamaica. This year, because his mother is unable to obtain records verifying his schooling in Jamaica, the school explained that he will be a junior again! A nineteen year old junior at that. The football coach, who snubbed him last year because he had to “work after school”, has now implored Jesse to quit work and join the team on the offensive line. It looks, however, like both school and football will take a back seat to earning a living; Jesse most likely will join a program in Stamford where he will study in the morning to take the GED and work full time every day from 2pm to 10pm at Pottery Barn. Our hope is that he can complete this then take classes at Norwalk Community College in a year or so.

Ernesto enjoyed Jesse’s work ethic, not to mention his strength. There may be an opportunity for Jesse to work on other similar projects where he can apprentice under Ernesto – they seemed to be quite a good pair! I will keep you informed, but until then, thank all of you for your support and kind words. This has been a challenging journey with, to date, a relatively happy ending.

Children's Ministries

We here in the Children's Ministry department of First Church are very excited to have the children back in the classrooms!

At each age level on every Sunday the children are invited to a faith experience. It is during this time that they can come to a better understanding of God and what God calls them to do and be. They come to know Jesus as the Son of God and take his messages to heart. They seek where the Bible speaks to them today. Our curriculum "Rock Solid" is intentionally written around this faith experience. Activities, crafts, stories, and games will contribute to this faith experience. At the end of the time together, the children will have had a chance to meet God and to open themselves for a life-changing transformation. This will be done in a variety of ways at the different age levels.

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will

be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock." (Matthew 7:24-25)"

Jesus frequently used common experiences to help people understand his message. Being a carpenter, a story using the construction of houses probably came naturally to him. A person might easily build a house in a sandy wadi (dry riverbed). But when the rainy season came, water would gush down the wadi and carry the house away because it's foundation was non-existent. A foundation of stone had to be deep and substantial. It required meticulous and intentional effort. But the house that stood atop it would resist the rains of winter. Jesus was comparing this wise builder with a life where his message was put into action. Both resulted in a strong foundation.

What this parable is saying is exactly what we want to offer our children. We want to help them build a strong faith foundation so that when the rains and storms of life assail them (and they will at some time or another), their house of faith will not fall away. It will

stand strong and give them strength and shelter.

Susanne Frank
Director of Children's Ministries

Pacific House

On Sunday, October 18th the Youth Group will prepare the meal for and serve at Pacific House. We meet at 1 pm in the parlor, depart at 5:10 pm to Stamford, and return to FCRH at approximately 7 pm. This is not only a service project for our confirmands but a wonderful opportunity for all our students to give back to the community.

MISSION GIVING

The pastor is asking each member to give prayerful thought to a "mission offering" to help First Church respond to people in need around community and the world. Please make checks out to First Church of Round Hill and note "mission." Thank you in advance for your generosity. Please drop your gift in the offering plate or mail it to the church office.

FIRST CHURCH OF ROUND HILL
464 ROUND HILL ROAD • GREENWICH CT 06831

Phone 203-629-3876 Email: fcroundhill@aol.com

•FIRST CHURCH OF ROUND HILL STAFF•

R. Randy Day, Pastor
Avery C. Manchester, Pastor Emeritus
Gwendolyn Hillman, Director of Music/Organist
Susanne Frank, Director of Christian Education
Annie Callahan, Secretary
Sandy Regan, Financial Secretary
Ernesto Damm, Property Manager

Christian community, rich in heritage, open