

Summer 2015

A nondenominational Christian congregation



welcoming persons of all faiths  
and of uncertain faith,  
meeting in historic St. Peter's Church  
346 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10011  
Sundays (except August) 12:00 p.m.  
[www.chelseachurch.org](http://www.chelseachurch.org)  
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(212) 886-5463

## CHELSEA COMMUNITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

June-July-August 2015

**Special Services and Events** (All dates Sundays, 12:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted):

<b>July 26</b>	<b>Farewell Party/Brunch for John Magisano</b> after the service.
<b>August 2</b>	<b>Summer hiatus begins</b> (no services until September)
<b>Date to be set</b>	<b>Summer Hymn Sing:</b> Day of the week, time and place also to be determined.
<b>August TBD</b>	<b>Summer Group Outing:</b> A Saturday or Sunday – date, time and place to be determined
<b>September 13</b>	<b>Services resume</b>

### Pastoral Reflections – Summer 2015

When Kathy asked me to write my "swan song" reflection for this newsletter, I suddenly developed a serious case of writer's block. It meant facing how much I am going to miss all of you. It also made me reflect on this wonderful journey I have had with Chelsea Community Church, and I was overwhelmed with all the great memories and occasions.

There are so many, I cannot possibly do them justice here. But a few are worth mentioning here, like my first Christmas Candlelight Service and my first Easter sermon with you; the books we read in the book group and especially the year we spent reading the Bible; the wonderful celebrations of the lives of our brothers and sisters who passed, like Jerry Scott, June Aulick, Linda Fennimore and our beloved Thad McGar; and of course my wedding to my husband for which so many of you trekked to Brooklyn.



We have been through so many great times together, every minute of it has been a joy, even the difficult moments that forced me to grow. I have been asked why I am leaving a couple of times. I want to assure you all it is not

because I am unhappy with anything at Chelsea Community Church. Sure, there have been frustrations as with any community. But those have always worked out somehow for the best.

So why am I leaving? As I said in my article in the fall of last year, Chelsea Community Church is a gift to the world, and a gift to any pastoral counselor lucky enough to serve you. You model and teach what the Apostle Paul called the "priesthood of all believers." I have been shaped and forged by this community in ways that pastors in other churches cannot be due to the hierarchical nature of their position. Any pastoral counselor at CCC must learn to "wade in the water" WITH the congregation.

A gift like CCC cannot be hoarded, it must be shared. It is time for you to love, teach and shape someone else in the ministry the way you have done for me. As for me, God has simply placed an "itch" in me to be challenged in other ways and to take the next step in my journey, whatever that may be.

I will miss you all terribly, but that ache is only because I have been able to love you all so much.

I love you all, and will continue to do so! Please pray for me and I will pray for you always.

Much love,

John

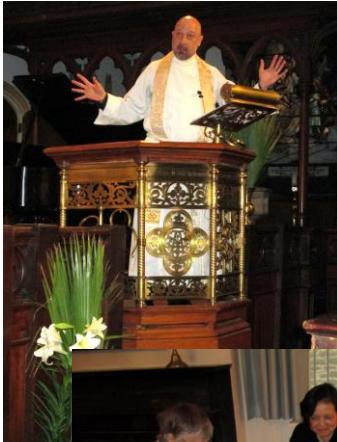
*(Note: photos above are one of the first and then the last "headshots" used of John for his column.)*

## **Have fun Memorial Day weekend and help St. Peter's – with a Jeff Cubeta concert!**

**On Saturday, May 23**, our Music Director, **Jeff Cubeta**, and Ms. Libbie Schrader, a Master's candidate at General Seminary and a singer, will do a benefit for St. Peter's restoration. The full benefit will begin at 6pm with a cookout, followed by their performance in the Church. Many thanks to both of them for their generosity, and, if you are staying in town for Memorial Day weekend, we invite you to join us for this benefit. \$10 suggested for the cookout in the garden, \$20 for the concert in the church, \$25 for both, helping to repair our beautiful host church.



## **Easter 2015 @ Chelsea Community Church!**



When the schedule of duties came out early this year, I noticed that I was listed as lay leader for the upcoming Easter Service and I thought, "EEK! Who me? The half-Jewish agnostic?" But then I calmed down.

Joanne and Hilda thoughtfully provided bulletins from recent Easter Festival Services and I got to work: I decided to compose an introit for trumpet, voice and organ based on a Bahamian folk song, "I am so glad" that I performed with Jake Henry on trumpet and Jeff Cubeta

accompanying. Tenor Scott Tucker, the featured soloist, sounded great singing two other selections.



Rev. John Magisano gave a thoughtful and inspiring service that impressed even my atheist mother who was in attendance. We all sang some great hymns and had a good time that was followed by our traditional and delicious potluck brunch. – *Paul Bodden*  
*(Photos by Kathleen Reid ©2015)*

## Our tributes to John Magisano: Farewell and GOD BLESS YOU ALWAYS!

John Magisano was a big draw in my becoming more deeply involved in Chelsea Community Church. He has been a compassionate sounding board as I have dealt with the inner pitfalls and concerns of participating in a spiritual community. And, of course, he was also an invaluable source of comfort and support to me and my husband, Thad, and my family throughout all of Thad's various hospitalizations, steady decline and eventual death. I consider myself very lucky to have him as a friend. Thank you, John, and the very best of luck in all your endeavors! With love, *Paul Bodden*

I began coming to Chelsea Community Church at the same time that John was selected. It is a tribute to him that I have continued to come throughout his time there. -- *Ginger Ray*



Chris Kreussing (farbush Gardening)

To John: Your generous spirit sheds a light on all of us. Many thanks. -- *Alison Cattan*



John, Our Blessing! The Reverend John Magisano — or “John” to us — is a man of peace, kindness, humility, wisdom, humor, transparency, and generosity. He is a good listener who has quietly and wisely guided us individually and as a church, when needed. His sermons are sometimes unpredictable but always thoughtful. Thank

you, John, you have been one of CCC's great blessings for the past decade. You will always be part of our family, and you and Kris better come visit — or else! We wish you great joy and success in your new ventures! With love, *Lynn Ramsey & Rick Carrier*

Thank you, John, for your years of service, guidance and support; best wishes for the path(s) ahead --*Kathryn Buck*

Ah, John, how much I am going to miss you and the solid support you have always given me and mine! The most vivid example that comes to mind is when my dear friend Kitty was dying and needed so badly to talk about God,



sin, her life and the future she was then facing. She trusted you and you knew what to say, and how. I am eternally grateful. You have spoken to me kindly and honestly at the same time, a gift in both senses — your talent, my treasure. You have drawn forth from me my best, sometimes wisdom I didn't know I had. I love you and you're stuck with that, PC or not! — *Kathy Reid*

I'll be short with my farewell but that does not mean I will be missing John any less. . . I want to thank John for his "Dear Lord please give So & So just what he deserves" sermon. For I too was having just an awful time with my very mean (I mean nasty mean) boss. And at the very moment John recounted his story, I prayed "dear Lord, please give Mean Boss (name withheld) just what she deserves". That following Monday, Mean Boss was leaving me alone and started to be not so nasty to me (to others yes — but not me). I thought: wow that really worked. She changed! It took me a while to realize the prayer did not change her, but that it changed ME. Saying that prayer gave me the power to release the anger I had towards Mean Boss and made working for her more tolerable. I will always be

thankful to John for showing me The Way. Thank you, John, from the bottom of my heart. — *Gloria Schöffner*

Now I have to tell you that I was never enthusiastic about the idea of having a pastoral counselor. And yet, the actual practice, the pastoral counselors we've had, proved me gloriously wrong! It has been beyond wonderful to watch John make his way through this interesting church community, and his steady, spiritual presence, his humor, his caring, his sermons, his patience, and his nonjudgmental approach to people (and his ability to change and grow) have all been wonderful to behold. Chelsea Community Church has been blessed, and we are not the same church we were before he came. I wish him all the best in his new adventures! — *Mary Sheeran*

I have especially enjoyed your leadership in our book discussion group. Thank you for sharing your wit and wisdom with us throughout these past years. — *Joanne Downes*

Pastoral counselor doesn't begin to describe what John Magisano has done for us at Chelsea Community Church for more than a decade. He has been a friend, comforter and guide. Each of us has memories of what he did for us as individuals. But few know that he has found and recommended many of our guest speakers. With his contacts throughout New York City and beyond, he has been able to enrich our services with people from varied backgrounds. Here are just a few of those he introduced to us: The late Rev. Patricia Lawson (Baptist), Rev. Tom Martinez (United Church of Christ), Rev. Dr. Lauren Hunter (American Baptist), The Rev. Chloe Breyer (Episcopal), Rev. C.B. Stewart (United Church of Christ), Rt. Rev. Mother Lynn Elizabeth Walker (Orthodox Catholic Church of America), Rev. Joanna Tipple (Reformed Church in America), Rabbi Michael Feinberg (Jewish), Min. Gloria-Jean Skeete (National Association of Congregational Christian Churches), Rev. Valerie Holly (United Church of Christ/Baptist) and The Rev. Dr. Clyde Kuemmerle (Episcopal). — *Hilda Regier*

John, it's been wonderful having you as our pastoral counselor. You have become such a part of our congregation that it will be sad not to have you around. I've enjoyed your book groups, your participation in our services, your helpfulness, and of course, your friendly personality. I will really miss you but I wish you the best as you go forward from here. — *Virginia Pfeiffer*

(Photo credits: p.3 top right Kathleen Reid, center left, middle Lynn Ramsey, right Chris Kruesling; bottom Lynn Ramsey. P.4 left Kathleen Reid.)

## News of Members and Friends

**Kathryn Buck** has been selected to participate in the DEFA Film Library's eighth biennial East German Summer Film Institute "Sex, Gender and Videotape: Love, Eroticism, and Romance in East Germany" this July. DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft) was East Germany's state-owned film institute. The DEFA Film Library is located at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



**Steve and Joanne Downes** attended a benefit celebrating 25 years of Pro Mujer, a non-profit organization helping very poor Latin-American women. Steve was among past and present Board members receiving special recognition.



*And Joanne Downes recently entered her "One Block Wonder" quilt in the Empire Quilters show.*



I won the Composting contest. We have a compost drop off on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. The NYC Compost Project ([www.lesecolleproject.org](http://www.lesecolleproject.org)) has been doing this for about two years. They had a contest in April; they gave you a card that they would punch each time you dropped off your veggie scraps for composting and after 6 punches on the card, they took my email address and I was entered. Lo and behold, I won! I got three herbs -- basil, thyme, dill -- and a 5 lb bag of composted soil plus the window box. – **Gloria Schoffner** (Photo credit: unknown)

This was a BIG birthday for **Rick Carrier** who turned 90 on April 10. CCC joined in the milestone celebration at coffee hour, topped off by a delicious carrot cake made by **Heather Kammerer**. Thank you Heather and Wayne!!

(Photo by Lynn Ramsey)



At left is a group of graduates of the Rising Hope one-year program in ministry and human services run in NYS men's correctional facilities, at which **Kathleen Reid** once taught. These are the men who came to a recent reunion. We have had a number of these graduates speak for us, such as **Chaplain Benny Custodio**, second from left.

(Photo by Kathleen Reid)

## As we complete our 40<sup>th</sup> year as a church of our own founding, we say:

When I first attended CCC, what struck me was the informality and simplicity of the church: no printed programs for each service--just a general order of service printed in the hymnals; no one person to lead the service every Sunday--but various folks who sat in the pews most of the time but who also took turns leading and shaping the service. The focus of the church was on the fellowship and worship, and not on keeping up with amenities and appearances. All that still holds true for me--along with a spirit of volunteerism, cooperation, hospitality, and acceptance, and the freedom we extend to one another to express our faith. -- *Wayne Kammerer*



*Left:: Posed at communion table on a Karen Ziegler visit, c.2005*

In a metropolis as grand as New York, it's hard to come by a group so fun, so talented, so caring, and so dedicated to their sense of community as CCC. I joined years ago when I first moved to Manhattan. Today I am proud to call myself a member, even though I spend so much time at work in Los Angeles. I communicate with my Chelsea Church Family every single week, and am so happy to have them in my life.

– *Reilly Dinius*

Attending CCC for the past 40 years has enriched my life in many ways: the variety of intelligent speakers, superb music talent, a caring congregation, thoughtful book group discussions, our support of prison ministries and the welcome extended to doubters and seekers. And then there is that magnificent Candlelight Carol Service!!! – *Joanne Downes*

I came to Chelsea Community Church as a raised/lapsed/rebellious Catholic, and the church has been a jumping off point for many spiritual and community adventures that have enriched my life. One moment captures the essence of CCC for me. Soon after I started attending, my mother passed away on a Saturday. On Sunday, I stopped in at church but could not stay, and when Hilda heard what had happened, and that I was leaving for Ohio, she said, "Do you have a cat?" I didn't, but I realized that she was being both consoling and practical in that someone would have taken care of my cat if I'd had one. That pretty much sums up the community at Chelsea Community Church. Whatever your degree of religious uncertainty, the community there is filled with friends indeed. – *Mary Sheeran*

It's hard for me to believe, if the church is 40 years old I must be,... never mind!! And for all those years a great witness in Chelsea with the most appealing tag line for a church, "For people of all faiths and of uncertain faith." What a powerful and welcoming message for this city and world. And as for me, I have been blessed to walk part of your remarkable journey for which I am grateful. Congratulations CCC, keep up the great work. -- *The Rev William Weisenbach DD*

I love being a part of Chelsea Community Church because it is just that -- a community. It's so nice to connect with people at coffee hour and the book group. And then, because so many of us live nearby it has also given me a connection to the neighborhood. I lived here for many years without knowing anyone, but now I can walk down the street and meet friends from the church. As for the worship service, I like the fact that we have such a variety speakers and guest musicians. – *Virginia Pfeiffer*

*Right: Cast of our 2010 Palm Sunday pageant.*



## **SCHEDULE OF SPEAKERS and SPECIAL MUSIC**

**Worship Service, Sundays 12 p.m.**

**\*May 24 Rev. Dana Fenton** (American Baptist) teaches sociology at Lehman College where she is a tenured lecturer. She earned M.Div. and M.Phil. degrees at Union Theological Seminary and has an M.Phil. in sociology from the City University of New York Graduate Center. She is a former pastor of churches in Long Beach and Queens.

**\*May 31 Rev. Jose M. Roman** (Christian Contemplative) was ordained into interfaith ministry in 2014 at One Spirit Interfaith Seminary, of which he is a graduate. Currently enrolled at New York Theological Seminary, he expects to receive a D.Min degree in 2016. He also holds a J.D. degree from New York University School of Law and an M.A. in economics from City University of New York. An assistant vice president at New York University, he is the senior executive of sponsored programs administration.

**June 7 The Rev. Clyde Kuemmerle** is the founder and executive director of Ecclesia Ministries of New York, a multidenominational organization that offers Sunday church services in Marcus Garvey and Madison Square Parks. He is also as an assistant priest at St. Martin's and St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Harlem, serves on the board of the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, and as a member of the Micah Institute works on social justice issues. For 13 years he was associate director of the Church of the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen in Chelsea. He earned an M.A. in theater at the University of Maryland, an M.Div. at NYTS and a Ph.D. in aesthetics at the University of Minnesota.

**\*June 14 Rev. Elizabeth A. Perry** (United Church of Christ) is a Safe Sanctuary consultant working to protect children from abuse. A lead faculty member of the University of Phoenix, she also is an online instructor of BeADisciple.com and contributes to Podcast text message Bible studies. A pastor for more than 20 years, she has served churches in Manhattan, Long Island and Pennsylvania. She holds an M.Div. degree at Princeton Theological Seminary. Ordained in the United Methodist Church, she currently has Privilege of Call in the United Church of Christ. **Special Music:** Charles and Lesley Barth Ramsey

**June 21 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. She is the author of two novels, *Who Have the Power: A Legend of the West* (2006) and *Quest of the Sleeping Princess* ( 2010). She has also created a drama, *The Gospel of Martha*, with music by Robert Perretti of Chelsea Community Church.

**June 28 Rev. J.C. Austin** (Presbyterian) is the vice president for Christian Leadership Formation at Auburn Theological Seminary. He previously served for 10 years as associate pastor for evangelism and stewardship at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church and is now a parish associate at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Currently on the board of the Presbyterian Endowment Education and Resource Network, he has been a member of the Middle East Monitoring Group of his denomination's General Assembly. He holds an M.Div. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and is a candidate for a Ph.D. in theology at the University of Cape Town. **Special Music:** Rob Mosher (saxophone)

**July 5 Lay-Led Service** Hilda Regier, founding member of CCC, is the lay leader scheduled for July 5.

**July 12 Renny Smith** (Nondenominational) is the senior deacon at Reaching Across the World Ministry in Brooklyn. He recently completed training as a New York State chaplain with qualifications to serve in hospitals and prisons. Earlier, he received a certificate in ministry and human services upon graduation from a one-year course of study in the Rising Hope program in Woodburne Correctional Facility.

**\*Applicants for pastoral counselor position at Chelsea Community Church.**

**July 19 Rilla Askew** (Nondenominational/Baptist) is a prize-winning fiction writer who has a keen appreciation for the spiritual dimension of human struggles. Her most recent book *Kind of Kin* (2013) deals with immigrants' problems. Also the author of *Harpsong* (2007) and *Fire in Beulah* (2001), she received an American Academy of Arts and Letters award in literature in 2009. She has been an artist in residence at the University of Central Oklahoma and taught creative writing at Brooklyn College, Syracuse University, the University of Massachusetts and the University of Oklahoma and taught with Rising Hope at Woodbourne Correctional Facility in Upstate NY. **Special Music:** Kathryne Langford

**July 26 Rev. John Magisano** (Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches) has been Chelsea Community Church's pastoral counselor since 2004. He is also assistant director of the Town and Gown Program of the New York City Department of Design and Construction. He earned his M.Div. degree at New York Theological Seminary and previously served as assistant pastor for development at the Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford. **Special Music:** Otto Walberg

**Our ongoing weekly book reading group**, led by our Pastoral Counselor Rev. John Magisano, meets at 10:30 a.m. on most Sunday mornings in St. Peter's rectory chapel (the Don Whelan room). All are welcome to join the book group at any time. To learn more, email [johnmagisano@gmail.com](mailto:johnmagisano@gmail.com) or after July 26, [info@chelseachurch.org](mailto:info@chelseachurch.org) .

*NOTE: We gratefully acknowledge that "Special Music" listed above with the speaker schedule is made possible through funding by the John Eggleston Legacy Fund and scheduled by Joanne Downes.*

#### **CCC Mission Statement**

An independent, nondenominational, 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.

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#### **CCC Trustees Plus**

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**The Newsletter is published quarterly in December, March, June and September.** 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 **Lynne Robinson** for maintaining and printing postal mailing lists, to **Kathryn Buck** for the email list and sharing on the website, and to her and **Lynn Ramsey** for proofreading. And for all those at coffee hour who "stuff, stamp, and seal," thank you! **Please submit material for the fall newsletter** (September, October, November) to **Kathy Reid** by **August 3, 2015:** [wkreid@aol.com](mailto:wkreid@aol.com) or call (212) 685-0190.

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