

# THE TOWER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN HILL  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
An Open and Affirming Congregation

January 2010 Volume 47 Number 1

*Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,*

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

I've had it on my mind to write this article for some time, but for one reason or another, I couldn't do it. At the risk of losing some readers at the first paragraph, I will tell you that this is about stewardship.

And then I thought to myself, "No!" What a PERFECT time to write about stewardship, because we have just started a New Year, and most of us haven't completed the list of New Year's resolutions yet. It is a perfect time because, real Christian stewardship is a discipline recommended by God for the good of the steward, not for the good of the institution, and certainly not because God needs our money.

So today I write about stewardship, because it is good for our souls, individual and collective, when we put money in its proper place. That's what financial stewardship is all about – putting money in its proper place.

If anyone were to ask me what an appropriate pledge might be, I suppose, I would have to answer, "Do the best you can." I suppose I would have to answer that way even though that phrase is fraught with peril, the peril of misunderstanding.

The fact of the matter is that most people are already giving the best that they can to the enterprise of God's Realm (Kingdom). Yet even as that is said, I also observe that there are two radically different reasons why what people give is the best that they can.

For some, what they are giving is the best that they can because they have lost control of their lives to their money. Expenses indicate that they are among the most well off in the world, yet they are constantly hounded by financial problems.

Very often, the financial problems are born of decisions made years before. Higher salaries have been spent on bigger and better houses in "nicer" neighborhoods, which also come with higher mortgages and rents, and pressures to keep up with the Joneses. Higher salaries may have been spent on fancy vacations we're still paying off, or social obligations and appearances, all of which keep us one step ahead of the bill collector. Even without the church hounding for more money, this is a miserable existence. These people really are giving all that they can!

There is another type which is giving all he/she can. These persons often give astonishingly high amounts – sometimes far more than 10% of their income.

What enables this person to give so much is that he/she has gained control over money? Somewhere along the line, a decision was made that just because more money was earned, it didn't mean that more money had to be spent.

John Wesley was a great one for recommending that a person give all that he/she could. Wesley followed his own advice. When he was in his first year at Oxford, he gave 4% of his income. It was the best he could. Over the years, his stipend at Oxford went up, and so did the percentage of his giving, until finally he was giving away 70% of his income. This too, was giving all that he could. He used of his income what he required for his needs, and he gave all the rest away!

I'd like to wrap this up by telling you about a parishioner in a church I formerly pastored. (I'll call him John.) John thought it impossible for anyone in this day and age to tithe – for anyone to give 10% of their income to God's purpose.

At the beginning of the economic downturn, John's employer cut John's job description, and salary by 25%. You can imagine, perhaps, our astonishment when, in this context, John's pledge came in SIGNIFICANTLY higher. When asked about it, he said that when he discovered that he could live without 25% of his income, it wasn't too difficult to realize that he could live without 10%. Over the next couple of years, he found he had more control over his money than ever, and he credited it to the discipline of tithing! Peace and Happy New Year!!!

*Taka*

## High School Seniors Scholarship applications due by January 31, 2010

High school seniors who are planning to further their education may submit applications for scholarship consideration. Requests should include:

- Basic biographical information
- Anticipated school for Fall of 2010
- Anticipated course of study
- Current GPA
- Overview of church activities

Requests are due no later than January 31, 2010. They may be submitted through the church office, marked ATTN: Scholarship Committee.

### 2010 Disciplines Devotional Available

The Upper Room publishes a book of daily devotionals that follows the common lectionary cycle entitled "The Upper Room Disciplines". A number of congregants have used this as an aid for their personal devotional time. If you would like to purchase a copy, I have some available. The cost is \$11 and checks should be made out to Golden Hill UMC, but given to me when you pick up your copy. Please see me if you are interested. - *Melodye Merola*

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### FEBRUARY "TOWER" DEADLINE

Our submission deadline for the February issue will be on Monday, January 11. Include your name and committee or organization with your submission. Please submit articles to the blue folder in the church office, or send via email to: [tower@goldenhill.org](mailto:tower@goldenhill.org)

The Tower is a monthly newsletter of the Golden Hill United Methodist Church, 210 Elm Street, Bridgeport, CT. Submission deadline for articles is the 11th day of the month.

*Jenny McLachlan, Editor*

Contributors to this issue: *Mary Agostino, Becki Anderson, Opal Crosdale, Shannon Dihmes, Dick Dmochowski, Sonya Green, Lillian Harcarik, Pastor Takayuki Ishii, Phyllis Machledt, Melodye Merola, Dan Pettit, Yvette Richardson, Dianne Severance.*

## Golden Hill United Methodist Youth Fellowship



For all youth entering grades 7 through 12!  
Mark your calendar to join us.

### UMYF officers

President – Daniel Gregorio  
Vice President – Matthew Bollaro  
Treasurer – Xavier Hardison  
Secretary – Aaliyah Dillion  
Grade Representatives: 7/8 Domonique Thompson, 9/10 – Akalia Chambers, 11/12 Elizabeth Martin

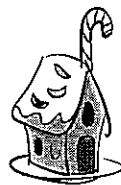
The United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) is open to all young people entering grades 7 through 12. UMYF meets at the church each Sunday evening from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. If you've never come down, plan on it, if you've been to every meeting since your first, just mark your calendar.

### Citrus Fruit Sale in January



It has been several growing seasons since the UMYF held a Citrus Fruit Sale. Many of you have asked us to offer this wonderful Florida citrus and we are able to say "yes!" this year. During the month of January, for delivery in February, we will be taking orders for Red Grapefruit, Florida Navel and Temple Oranges, as well as Tangerines. Look for a UMYF Member whenever you're at church.

### Gingerbread House Auction



Fourteen gingerbread houses were constructed by the UMYF in December and displayed for the silent auction on Sunday Dec 13 & 20. Proceeds of the auction will be donated to Habitat for Humanity. Details on the monies raised will appear in Grace Notes.

### UMYF Leads Christmas Caroling

Sixteen youth and adults braved the cold weather on Saturday, December 12th to carol at the homes of some of our homebound members. The music and spirit were lively. We were well received by all.



## St Lucia Festival Benefits Golden Hill Community Supper Program

Salem Lutheran Church hosted its 58th annual St Lucia Festival in December presented by the Salem Fellowship Club. The event benefits the Community Suppers at Golden Hill UMC and the Salem Fellowship Club's scholarship fund. Salem Lutheran also provides volunteers to serve at the Community Supper.



Join us on Sunday at 9:15 - 10:15 am - Classes for all ages

Our December 6 Intergenerational event filled Locke Hall with activity as all the children and adult classes gathered to enjoy breakfast together, and participate in Biblical themed craft activities.

Sunday school is open to children & adults of all ages and our Kid's Club is open to children from 1st to 3rd grade. Sunday school meets from 9:15 - 10:15 AM on Sunday mornings. Those children eligible for Kid's Club meet during the 10:30 AM morning worship service. There is a place in our classrooms waiting for you. Our teachers are ready to help you explore the stories of Old and New Testament people and places of the Bible, and what it means to live as Christians today. Come join us for study and fellowship.

## Buy Yours Today Trustees Continue Stop & Shop Gift Card Fundraiser



Welcome to a New Year with a chance for new resolutions. How about resolving to do your grocery shopping only with S&S Cards in 2010? It's quicker than having to sign a credit card transaction and – it helps your church!

This Current Expense Fundraiser needs YOU. So, bring your check book and do your "shopping" each Sunday.

If you're still unfamiliar with this program, stop by and ask us – better yet, ask one of your friends who is – they are all around you! It's easy! Cards are sold after chapel and before the 10:30AM service each Sunday. Melodye also has a limited number of cards available during the week.

## UMW wishes all a Happy Healthy New Year!



United Methodist Women

We are starting off 2010 with a UMW meeting scheduled for January 24 after the 10:30 service in the parlor.

You are cordially invited and we hope you can join us in fellowship and worship. ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOMED. Please contact the Co-Presidents Yvette Richardson and Diana Crosdale if you have any questions.

The UMW District Winter Gathering on February 13 will be held at Pleasant Valley UMC, Pleasant Valley, CT. For more information contact our Golden Hill members who serve as officers of the Connecticut District UMW. They are Roena Littlejohn, Connecticut District President and Yvette Richardson, Connecticut District Secretary.

## Children's Book Corner



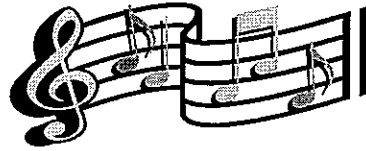
Recommended reads are provided by Becki Anderson.

*Minnie and Moo: The Case of the Missing Jelly Donut*, by Denys Cazet. Grades K-2. Those crazy cows, Minnie and Moo, are up to their old tricks as they hunt for the thief they are sure has stolen Minnie's jelly donut.

*Who is Neil Armstrong?*, by Roberta Edwards. Grades 3-5. Did you know that Neil Armstrong got his pilot's license before he got his driver's license? Learn more about this famous astronaut in this illustrated biography.

*The Postcard*, by Tony Abbott. Grades 5-7. When Jason's grandmother dies, he and his father go to Florida to sort through her things. A mysterious old postcard sends Jason from clue to clue to uncover the family secrets.

## Golden Hill Musical Notes



*Feel the spirit, and sing with joy,  
praising the Lord's might and majesty.  
Ring in the New Year  
with music at Golden Hill*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the choirs and the soloists for all their hard work for the Christmas Concert on December 13th. Congratulations on a wonderful concert.

Start the New Year musically. Golden Hill has many different groups that you can join and participate in:

**Chancel Choir** rehearses on Wednesday Nights at 7:30 p.m.

**Handbell Choir** rehearses on Wednesdays Nights at 7:05 p.m.

**Gospel / Praise Choir** rehearses on Sunday mornings at 11:45 a.m.

And coming this year is the new **Steel Drum Orchestra** here at Golden Hill. A organizational meeting will take place soon. Watch the Grace Notes and Join Us for a Great 2010! - *Daniel Pettit*

### Preparing Ahead - A Theological & Practical Perspective on Death & Dying Workshop

**12 Noon - 1:00 pm Sunday, January 10th**  
Church Parlor at Golden Hill United Methodist Church

Do you ever wonder if you are prepared for the reality of death? Don Wakeman and the Reverend Jim Stinson are prepared to lead a presentation and discussion on how to be sure you have done all you can in advance. Don has been a funeral director for 25 years and Jim has been a pastor and leader of such discussions for nearly 50 years. Don't let the topic scare you away! It can and will be an interesting and enjoyable discussion.

Everyone is welcome to attend, but advance sign-up is requested so that enough materials will be available for participants. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Narthex or you can contact the church office.

## Weekenders Update

Thanks to all who are so faithful in donating food for the weekly Longfellow School backpacks. Often our grocery lists include a large number of servings if a particular food item is on the menu. We'd like to cut down on the need to shop for 38 servings of something, by building up an inventory. Here is a list of foods we use regularly. When you're shopping, if you can pick up a few of these items, they will accumulate without anyone having to buy a lot at a time.

If it is difficult for you to shop for food items, a container will be available before and after the 10:30 a.m. service for you to contribute loose change. This money will help us purchase the needed food items.

- Individual boxes of cold cereal
- Individual packets of hot cereal
- Granola Bars
- Pop Tarts
- Individual puddings
- Individual fruit cups
- Individual applesauce (either plain or fruit flavored)
- 6-ounce juice boxes
- Crystal Light or other brands of powdered juice to add to water
- Mac and cheese—cups or packets or boxes
- Pasta with tomato sauce and meat—individual or 13-ounce size
- Rice with meat
- Hash in cans—individual or 13-ounce
- Chili—13 ounce
- Vegetables—individual sized cans
- Tuna fish—3 or 5-6 ounce cans
- Chicken—3 or 5-6 ounce cans
- Stew—microwave flat packs or 13 ounce cans
- Vienna sausage
- Ramen noodles—cups or packets
- Microwave popcorn
- Canned soups

*Thank you from  
United Methodist Women.*

# Thank You

## Christmas Concert Potluck

We appreciate everyone who brought a dish to share from their favorite family recipe for the potluck which followed the Christmas Concert. The fellowship was great, the food line was long with many choices including delightful desserts. Thank you to all who assisted and to all who came to share this time.

- *Opal Crossdale & Janice Brown*

## Our Golden Hill Staff

Congratulations and thanks to our church staff at Golden Hill for getting us through another church year and providing such wonderful support to the church programs and people in our extended church family and the community.

- *Staff Parish Relations Committee*

## Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes

The Grace-Rachel Circle of the UMW thanks all those who donated decorated shoe boxes filled with toys, clothes and goodies for our annual Operation Christmas Child Drive. Through the Good Samaritan Foundation of Billy Graham, children all over the world receive Christmas gifts and love in the shoe boxes.

This year, Golden Hill contributed 18 boxes. With the problems we all face in this economy, we think this was an extraordinarily high number and we thank each and every donor.

Christmas blessings and peace,

- *Lil Harcarik and Dianne Severance*

## GOLDEN HILL ADMINISTRIVIA

The office phone number is 203-336-0152;  
the fax is 203-336-9457

### HOW TO REACH US ONLINE!!

**Pastor  
Melodye  
Dan  
Shannon  
The Tower**

ISHll@goldenhill.org  
outreach@goldenhill.org  
music@goldenhill.org  
office@goldenhill.org  
tower@goldenhill.org



# CHURCH CALENDAR

Check out our online church calendar at [www.goldenhill.org](http://www.goldenhill.org)

- Jan 1 New Year's Day
- Jan 3 UMYF, 6:30 pm  
Tracing Our Roots, 7:00 pm, Parlor
- Jan 4 Building & Property, 7:30 pm, Parlor
- Jan 5 Church Council, 7:30 pm, Parlor
- Jan 6 Community Supper, 5 pm, Locke Hall  
Taize, 6:30 pm, Chapel  
Confirmation, 7:05 pm, Pastor's Office
- Jan 10 Preparing Ahead: A Perspective on Death & Dying, Noon - 1:00 pm, Parlor  
  
UMYF, 6:30 pm
- Jan 11 Lay Speakers, 7:00 pm, Parlor
- Jan 12 Staff Parish Relations Committee, 7:30 pm, Parlor
- Jan 13 Community Supper, 5 pm, Locke Hall  
Taize, 6:30 pm, Chapel  
Confirmation, 7:05 pm, Pastor's Office
- Jan 17 UMYF, 6:30 pm
- Jan 19 Finance, 7:30 pm, Oak Room
- Jan 20 Community Supper, 5 pm, Locke Hall  
Taize, 6:30 pm, Chapel  
Confirmation, 7:05 pm, Pastor's Office
- Jan 24 UMW meeting 12 noon  
District Resourcing Day, 3-5 pm  
UMYF, 6:30 pm
- Jan 27 Community Supper, 5 pm, Locke Hall  
Taize, 6:30 pm, Chapel  
Confirmation, 7:05 pm, Pastor's Office

## Mark Your Calendars

UMYF Citrus Sale: youth taking orders during month of January with scheduled February delivery.

January 24 Connecticut District Resourcing Day will be in Bridgeport at Golden Hill UMC from 3-5 pm  
Details of workshops to be available soon.

## Society & Missions collaborates with NY Conference on Immigration Issues

Golden Hill's Society and Missions Committee will be joining the NY Conference Task Force in doing some programs in early 2010 on the need for serious immigration reform. The tentative date for the first film, "Made in L.A.", is Monday, Jan. 25 at 7:30 pm.

The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society has published a Faith & Facts brochure on U.S. Immigration - civil & human rights. An excerpt which appears in it comes from the UM 2008 Book of Resolutions, "Welcoming the Migrants to the United States". The document reminds us that "Welcoming the migrant is not only an act of mission, it is an opportunity to receive God's grace. At the center of our Christian faithfulness is the call we have been given to love and welcome the sojourner."



The following scripture passages may be familiar to you.

- ✠ *I was a stranger and you welcomed me.* - Matthew 25:35b
- ✠ *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.* - Hebrews 13:2

The Faith & Facts brochure on U.S. Immigration suggest these ways to take action for justice:

- Urge your church and churches in your area to sponsor a Justice for our Neighbors legal clinic through United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Learn more about how to make this happen by visiting the website: <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/umcor/work/immigration/jfon/>
- Tell your congressman that enforcement-only immigration reform does not work and that we need comprehensive immigration reform, which includes a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants, the protection of the rights of workers, and reunify families separated by migration and detainment. Take action at [www.umpower.org](http://www.umpower.org)
- Learn Spanish and other languages different from your own. Share meals, attend worship services and social events with people of other races, ethnicities and socio-economic classes than yourself.

## OUR ACTIVE SERVICE PERSONNEL



We invite you to please pray for and/or write to our active service personnel. To make changes to this list, please email the church at: [office@goldenhill.org](mailto:office@goldenhill.org) or phone Shannon at the church office at 336-0152.

*Ida Radshaw's grandson*

**PC2 Jason R. Carroll**

U.S.S. Forest Sherman  
DDG-98

FPO AE 09569-1214  
(Serving in the US Navy)

*Wyona Kaine's grandson*

**Capt James D'Elia**

Returned in Feb from 4th tour in Iraq;  
lives in Virginia  
(serving in the Marine Corps)

**Staff Sgt. Scott Croop**

(Serving in the U.S. Army)

**Lt. Scott Krasko**

**Pvt. Stephen Kennedy**

**Spc Peter Janoski**

18th Eng Bde  
CMR432 Box 226  
APO AE 09081  
(Serving in the U.S. Army,  
currently stationed in Germany)

*Lillian's Harcarik's nephew*

**Sgt Jeffrey Dick**

312 Wedgewood Dr, Apt D7  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

*Ruth Hasting's great-nephew*

**Pfc. Eric W. Petterson**

A-Co 2-14 INF  
2nd Brigade 10th MT. Div.  
APO AE 09303

## NEWS &amp; NOTES FROM

## The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport



**Happy New Year!** We give great thanks to all our contributing churches for your generous support in 2009 as we *"turn faith into action... leveraging hope and changing lives"* in your name.

The 2010 *Directory of Congregations*, a comprehensive listing for Greater Bridgeport, will be available in late January and is free to member and contributing congregations.

### The Angel Giving Guide

Remember that there are 12 Days of Christmas – still plenty of time to "Be an Angel" this holiday season! Our annual Christmas/holiday fundraiser, "The Angel Giving Guide," is on-line at [www.ccgb.org](http://www.ccgb.org). It has also been presented in many of our member congregations, offering an easy way to give a "tribute" gift to The Council in honor or memory of special "angels" in your life. Contact Patty Jensen at [pattyjensen@ccgb.org](mailto:pattyjensen@ccgb.org) or 334-1121, ext. 243 for more information.

**The CO-OP Center** (giving ex-offenders second chances at new life)

**Help with Hygiene Kits!** Supplies of toiletry items used to make up hygiene kits for clients are low, and CO-OP Center is actively seeking donations. If you are interested in helping, Program Director, Dan Braccio would like to suggest a system that has worked well in his church – collecting one specific item per week, beginning January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Week 1 (Jan. 10 - 16) – soap

Week 2 (Jan 17 - 23) – shampoo/conditioner

Week 3 (Jan 24 – Jan. 33) – deodorant

Week 4 (Jan. 31 – Feb. 6) – toothpaste/brush

Once a "critical mass" has been collected, contact Dan to make delivery arrangements at [danbraccio@ccgb.org](mailto:danbraccio@ccgb.org) or 203 367-8441 x 231.

Can you help someone learn how to use Microsoft Office applications, such as WORD, EXCEL, and PowerPoint? CO-OP Center would welcome your participation in our Computer Technology Center (TLC) as an occasional instructor. Courses are offered during business hours 9 am – 5 pm. Those with previous experience teaching new students how to operate a computer can contact CO-OP Center program director, Dan Braccio, at 203 367-8441 x 231. A small stipend is offered.

### Janus Center (caring for Youth in Crisis)

On November 7<sup>th</sup> First Church Congregational, UCC, Fairfield hosted the first "Battle of the Bands" fund raiser for the Janus Center for Youth in Crisis. Five youth bands from the Greater Bridgeport area shared their talents, enthusiasm, and energy to help other kids in crisis. This event raised \$700 to support the mission of the Janus Center. The fundraiser was so successful, that First Church will be hosting another "Battle of the Bands" in the spring. Stay tuned for more information.

### Bridge Building Ministry (community issues in light of faith)

The theme for the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18 – 25) is **You Are Witnesses of These Things**. It comes from Luke's gospel Chapter 24 verse 48. In observance, there will be a worship service at St. John's Episcopal Church, 768 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport on Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm.

### Hunger Outreach (coordinating area feeding initiatives)

The Hunger Outreach Network, coordinated by The Council of Churches, is a point of contact for food donations and volunteer service to 41 area feeding programs. Regrettably, hunger never takes a vacation. If you would like to organize a food drive or volunteer, contact Ana Cotto at 334-1121, ext. 246 or [anacotto@ccgb.org](mailto:anacotto@ccgb.org). To those who serve in community suppers and pantries not only during the holidays, but all year long, our hearty thanks.