

THE TOWER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN HILL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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Commencement is the act of starting something or a ceremony for conferring academic degrees. In the Christian church year, at Pentecost, is the time our Confirmation class members “start something” by becoming full members of the congregation as they continue their lifelong faith journey. As schools and colleges in our area celebrate graduations, several friends and members of our extended church family receive diplomas and enter a new phase of their lives. Our pastor, Taka Ishii will begin retirement in July, another new beginning in his life journey. What are you starting this summer?

Jesus gave his disciples this commission “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” Disciples then and now have found themselves living examples of Jesus’ message of love and service as they help feed the hungry, comfort the sick, provide shelter and clothing to those in need, and show love for one another.

The mission of the Golden Hill United Methodist Church,

a unique, diverse and dynamic Christian community, is to serve Christ in the city and the world through members who are ambassadors for Christ.



GOLDEN HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

210 Elm Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604

<http://www.goldenhill.org>

Join us at the ball park for Bridgeport Bluefish Baseball

Take me out to the ball game!



On August 4th, the Greater Bridgeport Cluster of United Methodist Churches will attend the Bridgeport Bluefish Baseball Game. Tickets are \$15 each, \$5 of which will go to support Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County. Game time is 7:05 pm.

As in past years, Golden Hill members & baseball fans plan to join other United Methodists in our area at the ball park for this event which will benefit our local Habitat for Humanity organization. **Reservations for the game must be made by June 26th.** Please contact Janice Brown to make your reservation at 203-384-6232 or via email at bbmaui@optonline.net.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

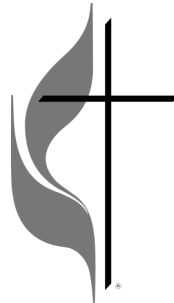
Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

Perhaps because we are in the month of Pentecost, or perhaps because I have been reading the Book of Acts of the Apostles, or perhaps because five young people will be confirmed this month, I have lately been thinking about – actually, marveling at – the Church.

Note: it is the Church with a capital “C” that has caught my attention. Too often I get so caught up in responsibilities for OUR church, or for OUR Annual Conference, or for OUR denomination, that I rarely notice the Church. But when I do, I am awed!

The Church has a unique role in this world we inhabit. Of all the other institutions, corporations and groups in this world, only the Church is charged with the responsibility of spreading the Gospel – a.k.a., the Good News – that Jesus is the Christ, sent by God to bring to the world the blessings of God.

In a way, the Church is called to be the great seductress. We are to lure the world away from its attraction to war, false idols, indifference to poverty, and hubris. We are to attract people to a life of genuine love of God and others. We are charged with daring people to dream of a better life, not just for themselves, but for the world.



The Church has, of course, been guilty of some shameful failures in this. We have railed against false pride, and then been guilty of it ourselves. We have laid guilt trips on people when they have yearned for forgiveness. We have allowed people to think that feeling good and feeling good about themselves is the same thing as salvation of soul and body. We have watered down the Gospel so that it no longer has the power to free people.

And yet, for all its blunders, the Church goes on. The Church dares to look at its past – at the Crusades and at witch hunts, at segregated pews, excluding gay people from full and equal participation,

*From the
Pastor* 

and indifference to injustice – and admit its failures.

More than that, the Church has been gifted with miracles. Some of those miracles are the grand stuff of the Bible – the blind person sees, the dead awake from eternal slumber. Most of the miracles, however, are in the ordinary stuff of life. People learn to forgive enemies instead of nurturing grudges. Our Jewish Christian ancestors looked across a great cultural divide, and imagined, to their own surprise, that God intended salvation for Gentiles, too. The rich, in the light of Christ (and with a little chastisement from St. Paul), suddenly could not bear to eat a steak and potatoes meal alongside sisters and brothers with a half-empty bowl of rice.

Without lifting arms, the Church survived not just the persecution by the Romans, but survived the Roman Empire. The Church, in its early days, saw what had always been among them, but never noticed with any degree of compassion – the vulnerability of widows and orphans – and they charged themselves with the responsibility for doing something about that!

I marvel at the Church in macrocosm, but I also adore it in microcosm. Where else in our society do young and old, joined not by birth but baptism, gather together to do the same thing at the same time? Where else do seniors worry that a church has no youth group, and kids worry about how our seniors will shovel the snow? Where else can a pastor, in one week, hold the hand of a dying woman, and bring roses to newborn babies?

I've been thinking a lot, lately about the Church, and about the church. And it brings a tear to my eye!!!

God's blessings are upon you always!!!

Taka

Make a Reservation for Taka's Farewell Celebration on June 26

Where did the time go? The weeks have passed so quickly since Taka announced his retirement, and now we are getting close to the time when we must say goodbye and prepare to welcome our new pastor. We all have mixed emotions about this moment, because it is a time of sadness, but also one of celebration as we honor Taka for the many years he has devoted to serving God in ministry.

All Golden Hillers and friends, please come and join us Sunday, June 26th for a special service and luncheon in honor of Taka for his leadership as our pastor at Golden Hill for the past four years. This is an opportunity for us as a congregation to express our gratitude and show our appreciation for the spiritual guidance he has provided; and celebrate his achievements as a servant of God.

Remember to get your responses to the Farewell Committee no later than June 3rd, so the committee can plan for a memorable occasion for everyone.

Please call the church office to make a reservation to attend the luncheon so we will know how much food to prepare and how many tables will be needed.

Opal Crosdale, Chairperson
Staff Parish Relations Committee

NY Annual Conference meets June 8-11

Several staff and members of Golden Hill will attend the New York Annual Conference sessions on June 8 through 11th at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY.

The Tower is a monthly newsletter of the Golden Hill United Methodist Church, 210 Elm Street, Bridgeport, CT. Submission deadline for articles is the 15th day of the month. *The Tower* can also be viewed on our church website at: www.goldenhill.org listed under Publications.

Editor: *Jenny McLachlan*

Contributors to this issue: *Mary Agostino, Becki Anderson, Opal Crosdale, Dick Dmochowski, Pastor Takayuki Ishii, Phyllis Machledt, Melodye Merola, Daniel Pettit, Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport*



Learn about Jesus & his followers

Our annual **Christian Education Sunday** will be **June 19** and over the next few months all Sunday school classes will be preparing for their role in the 10:30 a.m. worship service that day. Please mark your calendars for this special worship experience, and plan to attend worship as the members of the Sunday school classes lead the 10:30 AM worship service, June 19th.

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.

Sunday school is open to children, youth & 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.

Last Weekenders till fall on June 17

As the school year draws to a close this month, the last backpacks of our Weekenders hunger relief outreach will go home on Friday, June 17. Please watch for information on the Golden Hill web site at www.goldenhill.org, in *Grace Notes*, and the bulletin boards around church for our immediate needs.



United Methodist Women are grateful for your support of this much needed ministry.



In the July-August Tower, we will let you know start-up plans for the 2011-2012 school year.

Meantime, enjoy your summer. Thank you!
- *Golden Hill United Methodist Women*

Stewards in Action: Community Suppers

A little over 20 years ago, Dave and I were drawn to Golden Hill because of the opportunities to serve God in real and practical ways in Bridgeport. I believed then, as I do today, that God calls me not just to give back to God through my prayers, my tithes and offerings, and my presence at worship, but also through serving others. What I have discovered so well over the years, is that by being a “Steward in Action” for God, I receive so many more blessings than I give to anyone else through the service.

About 15 years ago, Brian Gockley asked me to be a Community Supper captain in charge of the cooking and serving once a month. I must admit that up until that point, I had never volunteered on a Wednesday night for our Community Supper program. While I was proud of what our church was doing, I had some vague fear that I wouldn't feel comfortable if I went to help. I have come to understand that is far from the case. Many of the guests who come to our church on Wednesday nights are looking not just for food, but for a chance to be a part of a community. I enjoy talking with them, catching up with some of them about how their week has gone and just in general being a friendly face.



Many of you know that the Community Supper program has played an important role in our entire family. Because our kids were so young when I first got involved, they have always viewed coming on Wednesday nights as something they look forward to. In the beginning, they would just come with me, serving desserts and beverages when they were old enough to help. When Dan was in high school, however, he decided to make the commitment to come every Wednesday to help. Sometimes this was calling numbers or serving food, but most times this meant washing dishes. Now that Elizabeth is in high school, she has made a similar commitment and you can now find her most Wednesday nights washing dishes in the main kitchen.

I cannot begin to thank Golden Hill enough for the opportunities for our family to be able to be stewards in action through the Community Suppers pro-

gram. It gives us a way to live out our faith and to show God's love for others in a practical way. It has also changed how we see the world and the people in it. When Dan would disappear from Wednesday nights due to basketball practice, several of our guests would ask where he was and how the season was going. We often will see Wednesday night guests walking around Bridgeport and as we acknowledge each other with a smile and a greeting, we feel that we are a part of the same community.

— *Becki Anderson*

Wear Red for Pentecost June 12th Confirmation Class become Church Members on Pentecost Sunday

We celebrate the birthday of the Christian church as we begin the season of Pentecost. Since the symbol of Pentecost Sunday is the red tongue of flame that appeared over those worshipping together, please wear something bright red to honor that day.

Our Confirmation Class members will be joining the church on Pentecost Sunday June 12th at the 10:30 worship service. Confirmation is a big step in a young person's life. When a youth reaches 8th or 9th grade it is time for them to renew the vows that were made for them at their baptism and to take on the promises to lead a Christian life for themselves. To assist them through this part of their faith journey we offer a 9 month class which meets weekly for one hour beginning in September.

During this class they read and study scripture, discuss the meanings of the Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer, memorize the books of the Bible and the Ten Commandments (among others), learn about John Wesley and the history of the United Methodist church, participate in the Community Suppers program and the Easter Prayer Vigil, and learn about the history, traditions and many service projects of Golden Hill. June Sibley-Prusak and our Pastor Taka Ishii lead the Confirmation group. Each confirmand also had an adult mentor.

News & Notes from the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

At CCGB's Annual Meeting on May 5th we unveiled a video that tells the story of our mission and the good work we accomplish in our community, with the support and involvement of our member churches. CCGB staff members are always eager to tell our story ~ this 7 minute video provides a perfect launch for presentations to church mission/outreach boards or to Adult Forums. Call 203.334.1121 x 243 if you would like to schedule such a presentation. The video is the culmination of months of creative filming and editing by Ellen Davis (Producer and Director) and the GE Digital Media Communications Group. We offer special thanks to Paul Bueker and Gus Serra of GE Community Relations for covering all expenses related to the project, as well as to Danny Wisneski, manager of GE Digital Media Communications and his team.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

When people give their best, The Council of Churches does its best.

If you like working with young children, you can be a mentor or tutor with **Project Learn** every week or every month. If you would rather commit once or twice a year, please consider hosting or funding a summer picnic or holiday party for our kids. Contact Sean Campbell at seancampbell@ccgb.org.

Do you have experience with computers and/or teaching? **CO-OP Center** would love to have you help with our computer training or high school equivalency classes either teaching or tutoring. Contact Dan Braccio at danbraccio@ccgb.org.

If community events are more to your liking, **Bridge Building** could use your time organizing and presenting opportunities to bring together diverse people and community around vital issues such as Poverty, Hunger, Afford-

able Housing, and Health Care. Contact Larri Mazon at lwamazon@gmail.com.

Maybe you would like to invest expertise in **Finance, Marketing, or Fundraising**. Then the Board of Director Task Forces or Sub-Committees might be just the thing. Contact John Cottrell at johncottrell@ccgb.org.

The 39 feeding programs in our **Hunger Outreach Network** are always looking for dedicated volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, email Byron Crosdale at byroncrosdale@ccgb.org.

Do you want to be an advocate for youth? **The Janus Center for Youth in Crisis** could use your help in spreading the word about the services that they offer. You could conduct periodic Safe Place audits at one of our 57 safe place sites, or you could hand out program material at a community event. To find out how you can get involved, contact Dale Holder via email at daleholder@ccgb.org.

JULY/AUGUST "TOWER" DEADLINE

Our submission deadline for the summer July/August issue of *The Tower* newsletter will be June 20. Please include your name and committee or organization with your submission. Please submit your articles via email to: tower@goldenhill.org or place in the blue folder in the church office.

GOLDEN HILL ADMINISTRIVIA

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

HOW TO REACH US ONLINE!!

Pastor	ISHII@goldenhill.org
Melodye	outreach@goldenhill.org
Dan	music@goldenhill.org
Church Office	office@goldenhill.org
The Tower	tower@goldenhill.org



To see the church calendar, view photos, read the Tower newsletter and Grace Notes online, check out our church website at:
www.goldenhill.org

Children's Book Corner



These children's book recommendations are provided by Becki Anderson, a Golden Hill member who is also a school librarian.

Kat Kong, by Dav Pilkey. Grades kindergarten-2. A giant cat is taken in captivity back to Mousopolis and creates havoc for everyone.

Dirt on My Shirt, by Jeff Foxworthy. Grades kindergarten-4. Funny poetry that might make you laugh out loud and inspire you to write your own poetry.

Adam Canfield of The Slash, by Michael Winerip. Grades 4-6. Adam and Jennifer are the new co-editors of the student newspaper for their elementary/middle school. When they come across a story they know the principal will object to, they have to make a decision to investigate it, or do as she says.

Trustees Continue the Stop & Shop Gift Card Fundraiser



This Current Expense Fund Raiser needs YOU. Are you shopping for graduation events or summertime cookouts & picnics? Many of us bring our check books each week and "shop" each Sunday by buying a Stop & Shop Card.

We average about \$900 in sales each week. It seems our entire congregation buys more Stop & Shop groceries than that each week. You get full value of the card and your church gets 5% from S&S. Please help us grow this fundraising effort – at no cost to you!

Should you have questions about this program, stop by and ask us – better yet, ask one of your friends who are doing it – they are all around you! It's easy! Cards are sold after chapel and before the 10:30 AM service each Sunday. Melody Merola also has a limited number of cards available during the week.

CHURCH CALENDAR

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|------------|---|
| June 1 | Community Supper
Taize worship |
| June 6 | Stewardship, 6:30 pm |
| June 7 | Confirmation, 6:30 pm |
| June 8 | Community Supper
Taize worship |
| June 8- 11 | NY Annual Conference at Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY |
| June 12 | Confirmation Sunday
Recognition of 2011 Graduates |
| June 14 | SPRC, 7:30 pm |
| June 15 | Community Supper
Taize worship |
| June 16 | Trustees, 7:30 pm |
| June 19 | Christian Education Sunday |
| June 21 | Finance, 7:30 pm |
| June 22 | Community Supper
Taize worship |
| June 26 | Taka's Retirement Celebration and Farewell Luncheon |
| June 28 | Church Council, 7:30 pm |
| June 29 | Community Supper
Taize worship |

IMPORTANT DATES

We will recognize graduates on Sunday, June 12th. Please submit the information to the church office.

Christian Education Sunday will be June 19th.

June 22-24 We will host a Habitat for Humanity work group from Sacred Heart Church, Waltham, Massachusetts