

THE TOWER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN HILL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation

March 2010 Volume 47 Number 2

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

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

A number of close friends have me on their mailing lists (or, more accurately, on their church's mailing lists). In "ordinary time," I am glad about this. These communications are often sources of good ideas.

Being on these mailing lists at Easter time is a different matter. This is the season when pastoral crankiness rears its ugly head, and gets put down on paper in newsletters and Easter epistles.

The reason for the crankiness is anticipated low attendance at the worship services between Palm Sunday and Easter. Pastors go to extraordinary lengths to persuade Christians to attend the services of Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) and Good Friday.

Some pastors lay guilt trips (that's what I intend to do in this article). Some pastors note that Judas, Peter and the other disciples deserted Jesus on the first Good Friday, drawing a veiled comparison between parishioners who don't come to the somber services and the disciples at their most cowardly and reprehensible.

Some pastors throw pot luck suppers, and call them Upper Room Meals or Seders (the latter drives our Jewish friends mad!). Some tell their congregations that Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are among the most moving and meaningful of any in the Christian calendar.

Almost always, what these pastors write is true and worthy. Almost always, what these pastors plan in order to get better attendance is a worthy commemoration of the events of the week.

What fills me with regret is that pastors have to beg people to attend these services, which are so important to our faith and hope. How can resurrection possibly seem much more relevant than Easter baskets and Easter bunnies when Christians fail to wonder again, at the great sacrifice God made to claim them from death? How can our faith possibly sustain us in our own dark days, when we have not reminded ourselves of God's own confrontation with evil, sadness and death?

Do you know what the events of Holy Week guaranteed? They guaranteed that our salvation is "in the bag," whether or not we attend these services. So we don't have to come to these services in order to "get into heaven." Under such circumstances, coming to these services seems to like the best we can do!

Blessings! *Taka*

The Stewardship Corner

What activity have you done for your part in Stewardship of God's gifts today?

Stewardship is the use of the gifts God has given each of us to fulfill God's purpose to care for each other with love and respect. It is one way to support the Church by committing an honest portion of our time, our skill and our money for the work and support of our Church and God.

It is a fair way to give because it enables each of us to give according to how God has blessed us. We all have been blessed with gifts from God. Let each one of us become good stewards of Christ by joyfully sharing of these gifts we've received from God. Remember, our talents and our abilities are God's gifts to us. How we use them is our gift back to God. Stewardship is not only about money, but how we use everything with which God has blessed us. It is about how we live and how we give.

I ask again, have you committed a stewardship activity today?

There will be a stewardship comment in "The Tower" monthly. Feel free to share your message with us about what stewardship activity you've done or what it means to you.

— *Allen Corry*

During March, Golden Hill has a busy schedule that leads us through the Lenten Season and involves us in the life of our community. Invite a friend and plan to attend the Society and Mission film series focusing on immigration issues March 1. Support the Young Glory Singers as they participate in the Choristers Guild Choral Festival, March 6. Set clocks forward one hour Sunday, March 14, 2010 at 2 a.m., as Daylight Saving Time begins. Whether you regularly attend Sunday school or not, plan to attend our next Intergenerational Sunday School gathering on March 21 in Locke Hall open to all ages. Check out the Lenten Opportunities schedule, prayer vigil sign up, Palm Sunday & Easter services. We invite you into the fellowship at Golden Hill. Check out our weekly and Sunday activities in this month's articles and on our calendar of coming events.

APRIL "TOWER" DEADLINE

Our submission deadline for the April issue will be on March 15. 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

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: *Becki Anderson, Shannon Dihmes, Dick Dmochowski, Sonya Green, Pastor Takayuki Ishii, Phyllis Machledt, Melodye Merola, Dan Pettit, Polly Torrence, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport*

Explore the New Testament

Short term discussion of the Gospels

The Tracing Our Roots study group invites you to join them as they begin a short term discussion group of six sessions, meeting once every two weeks, covering the New Testament Gospels. The first meeting will be March 14 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in the church parlor. We will end promptly at 8 p.m. for anyone whose children are in the youth group, and wishes to join us. Please contact Jenny McLachlan or Mize Johnson at 203 445-1676 if you wish to participate or if you have questions.

This study is a sampler for a study of the New Testament that will continue in the fall.

Souper Bowl Sunday Success!

A special thank you goes to everyone who donated food or money to the Souper Bowl Sunday Food Drive for Community Suppers and St. Luke's Food Pantry. We collected 111 food items and \$115 this year. As of Feb. 10, over 5000 Souper Bowl Sunday groups raised \$6,060,249 nationally!

Spring Work Day Coming Soon

Soon it will be time to spruce up the church property - indoors and out after the winter months. This is coordinated by the Building and Property committee at Golden Hill and accomplished with the help of church volunteers. Further information will be published in Grace Notes as to day, time and projects that will need workers.

Golden Hill United Methodist Youth Fellowship



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

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.

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

30 Hour Famine - March 13-14

Once again our Golden Hill youth group will participate in the hunger awareness event known as the 30 hour famine. Our energetic church youth are giving up food for 30 hours during Lent to raise money for several organizations.

The 30 hour famine is an international youth movement to fight hunger. Today, 25,000 kids under age 5 will die - most of them from preventable causes like hunger, poverty, and disease. That's one child every three seconds. The empty stomach our youth will experience during this 30 hour famine raises awareness and can help make a difference in the world. See Grace Notes for details on how you can sponsor the youth and to find out what organizations will benefit.

IGNITE ...my...spirit...soul...self

Golden Hill's UMYF members attended the IGNITE 2kX event January 29-31 in White Plains, NY with other youth groups from all across the NY annual conference for a weekend of Fun, Fellowship, Praise Music, Workshops and Worship. Ignite 2kX was sponsored by the New York Annual Conference Council on Youth Ministry.

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 10:30 AM service each Sunday. Melodye also has a limited number of cards available during the week.



Join us each Sunday for study; Next Intergenerational Gathering scheduled for March 21

Come learn about Jesus & his followers

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.

Spring Intergenerational Sunday School Event

Plan to participate in the March 21 Intergenerational gathering in Locke Hall at 9:15 - 10:15. Classes of all age groups will meet in Locke Hall to share a lesson and craft activities together. You do not have to be a member of a Sunday school class to join us for this event. All are welcome to this fellowship time. Students and teachers will go directly to Locke Hall instead of their classrooms on this date. We will begin the time with a light breakfast together.

Children's Book Corner



Recommended reads are provided by Becki Anderson.

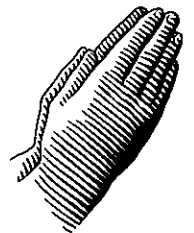
Those Darn Squirrels!, by Adam Rubin. Grades Kindergarten-2nd. No matter what Old Man Fookwire tries, he can't get the squirrel to leave his bird feeders alone!

Rapunzel's Revenge, by Shannon and Dean Hale. Grades 3-6. This graphic novel takes the classic story of Rapunzel and twists it in a new and captivating way.

Easter Prayer Vigil 2010

From 3 p.m. on Good Friday until 6 a.m. on Easter morning, we will hold vigil in prayer, awaiting Christ's resurrection. The church sanctuary will be available for prayer throughout this 39 hour period.

Sign up boards will be available on each floor of the church. A schedule of one hour time slots is available for your selection. You may put your name down for more than one hour if desired. Some people like to pray alone, some with a companion or the whole family, all are good choices. The church is always staffed; parking in the lot will be available, someone will greet you and provide some prayer "helps" if desired. We hope you avail yourselves of this opportunity for prayerful reflection during Holy Week.



For more info, contact Melodye Merola.

FOR ANYONE WHO WISHES TO DONATE TOWARDS THE UMCOR'S HAITI RELIEF EFFORTS place your check in the offering plate with "Advance #418325" in the memo line. Please note that 100% of gifts will go to help the people of Haiti.

Take Part in these Lenten Opportunities

Our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper was cancelled on February 16 due to wintry weather and road conditions. Ash Wednesday worship services were held February 17 at noon and 7:30 p.m. There are more Lenten opportunities scheduled at Golden Hill in the days leading to Easter.

"Celebrate the Risen Christ", a Lenten study with group leader Roena Littlejohn, is offered Sundays 9:15 a.m. in the church parlor; Mondays 6:30 p.m. at Roena's home, or Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. in the church parlor.



Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 28

8:30 a.m. Palms distributed; Passion Narrative

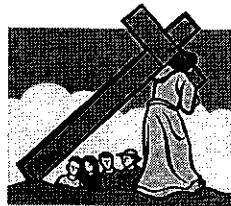
10 a.m. Gather in Locke Hall for Procession

10:30 a.m. Triumphal Entry, Palms will be distributed; Passion Narrative

Holy Thursday, April 1

7:15 p.m. Footwashing Service

7:30 p.m. Worship Service



Good Friday, April 2

10:30 a.m. Walking the Stations of the Cross - Gather at Golden Hill

Noon to 3:00 p.m. Community Good Friday Service

Easter Prayer Vigil, April 2

Prayer vigil will be held from 3 p.m. on Good Friday until 6 a.m. on Easter Day.



Easter Sunday, April 4

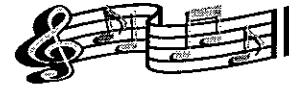
6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service at St. Mary's by the Sea

8:30 a.m. Celebration of the Resurrection

10:30 a.m. Celebration of the Resurrection

Hallelujah, He is Risen!

Golden Hill Musical Notes



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

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

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

The Young Glory Singers will be attending the Choristers Guild Choral Festival at Fairfield University on Saturday March 6th. The festival involves youth choirs from all over Central Connecticut. There are rehearsals and clinics in the morning followed by a combined youth concert in the afternoon.

Please support the Young Glory Singers by attending the concert on March 6th at Fairfield University. No admission.

Young Glory Singers Calendar

- March 5 Practice 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- March 6 Choral Festival at Fairfield U
- March 26 Practice 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- March 28 Palm Sunday sing in church

Steel Drum Workshop Feb 28

Join us for the kickoff for the Golden Hill Steel Band. Following the 10:30 a.m. worship February 28, coffee hour will be in Locke Hall featuring Caribbean delights and snacks with an introduction to the new Steel Drums that will become the newest part of our music program.

Those interested in being part of Golden Hill's Steel Band will have an opportunity to learn more about this form of musical expression. Golden Hill is a truly diverse congregation, so while the steel band is rooted in the Caribbean culture; we welcome all to learn how to play the steel pans to enhance and expand our worship experience.

Immigration Film Series Continues

Bring your friends to a movie series at Golden Hill. On January 25, 40 people came to view the movie, "Made in L.A." and discuss immigration issues with Ximena Varas, the co-chair of the NYAC Task Force on Immigration, and Alex Arevalo, an Immigration Counselor from Catholic Charities. An entire ESL class from the Bridgeport Parent Center attended. People gave donations of \$118 to the NYAC Task Force on Immigration.

The next film, "Farmingville" will be shown on March 1 at 7:00pm and is free. The film takes place in Farmingville, Long Island and presents the increasing tensions between the residents of a suburban town and an influx of Hispanic day-laborers. The film will be followed by a discussion of possible solutions to some of the problems. The public is invited. You are encouraged to come and bring friends! Contact Phyllis Machledt at 203-268-8737 for more info.

Since 2010 will be a year when immigration reform bills will be introduced in Congress, please try to attend. We all need to learn what the current laws and practices are and what we can do to encourage sensible and compassionate immigration reform. To learn more about the New York Annual Conference Immigration Task Force and their work, check out the website at www.nyacimmigrationtaskforce.org

IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER or other conditions there are several ways to find out if our worship services or meetings have been delayed or cancelled. You can either call the church voicemail and press option #8 to hear weather related information or through WTNH News Channel 8 and WICC (600AM).

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**

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



CHURCH CALENDAR

- March 1 Stewardship 6:30 pm
Lenten Study (Roena's home) 6:30 pm
Society & Mission 7 pm
Building & Property 7:30 pm
- March 3 Lenten Study 11 am
Community Supper 5 pm
Taize 6:30 pm
Confirmation 7:05 pm
- March 7 Lenten Study 9:15 am
UMYF 6:30 pm
- March 8 Lenten Study (Roena's home) 6:30 pm
- March 9 SPRC 7:30 pm
- March 10 Lenten Study 11 am
Community Supper 5 pm
Taize 6:30 pm
Confirmation 7:05 pm
- March 11 Poster Judging Contest 10 am
- March 14 ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
Lenten Study 9:15 am, Parlor
UMYF 6:30 pm
Tracing Our Roots 6:30 - 8 pm
- March 15 Lenten Study (Roena's home) 6:30 pm
- March 16 Finance 7:30 pm
- March 17 Lenten Study 11 am
Community Supper 5 pm
Taize 6:30 pm
Confirmation 7:05 pm
- March 18 Investment Committee 7:30 pm
- March 21 9 am Sunday School Intergenerational Gathering
Noon Soup & Sandwich Luncheon
UMYF 6:30 pm
- March 22 Lenten Study (Roena's home) 6:30 pm
- March 23 Church Council 7:00 pm
- March 24 Lenten Study 11 am
Community Supper 5 pm
Taize 6:30 pm
Confirmation 7:05 pm
- March 28 PALM Sunday
Lenten Study 9:15 am, Parlor
UMYF 6:30 pm
- March 29 Lenten Study, 6:30 pm
- March 31 Lenten Study 11 am
Community Supper 5 pm
Taize 6:30 pm
Confirmation 7:05 pm

NEWS & NOTES FROM The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport

Project Learn (turning students into scholars)

Project Learn's Trumbull Gardens Center will be moving to Our Lady of Good Counsel at 163 Ortega Street in Bridgeport at the beginning of March. With this move and great new space comes a wish list of items to help make this center functionally efficient and cozy. Please contact Sean Campbell at 203.334.1121. x 244 or sean-campbell@ccgb.org if your congregation can help us out with some of these items:

- (4) Mobile Computer Carts
- (2) two-shelf Bookcases
- (1) five-shelf Bookcase
- (2) Storage cabinet with lock and key
- (4) Bean bag chairs or cozy reading chairs
- (4) Letter trays
- Big cup supply organizers
- Puzzles
- Board Games
- Construction Paper
- Art supplies
- Flash Cards
- (6) Plastic Shoe boxes

CO-OP Center (creating second chances)

CO-OP Center will host its Fourth Annual Art from Prison Auction from March 15-26 at Housatonic Community College's Beacon Hall gallery on the second floor. All artwork is donated by inmates participating in CPA's Prison Arts program, and proceeds from the sale of the artwork will support CO-OP Center's college scholarship program at HCC. There will be a reception on Friday, March 26 at Beacon Hall beginning at 4:30 pm. The auction will close at 6 pm. For more information, visit The Council's website, www.ccgb.org.

Janus Center (caring for youth in crisis)

Janus Center's program director, Dale R. Holder was asked to speak at the United Methodist Church of Westport/Weston's Martin Luther King Celebration service in January about the services that Janus Center provides and the impact on Greater Bridgeport area youth and families in crisis. The congregation took up a special collection which thankfully raised over \$700; all of which will go directly towards offset-

ting the cost of providing these critical services. If you are interested in having Dale come talk to your congregation, contact him at 203.334.1121 x 221.

Hunger Outreach (coordinating area feeding initiatives)

HUNGER – The problem can't be solved without YOU! The Hunger Outreach Network, coordinated by The Council of Churches, is a point of contact for food donations and volunteer service to 37 area feeding programs. Please consider organizing a non-perishable food drive - the list of registered feeding programs with contact information can be found at www.ccgb.org.

Bridge Building Ministry (fostering dialogue to build understanding)

The 2010 Annual Youth Conference, designed to engage members of your senior high youth groups, will be held Sunday, April 25, 2010 from 2 to 5 pm, at University Commons, Sacred Heart University, 5151 Park Avenue, in Fairfield. Through facilitated dialogue, the teens will explore the difference between Want and Need. Refreshments and pizza supper provided. There is no charge for this event. Contact Richetta Joyner to register or for information at richettaj@ccgb.org.

Save the date! "Last Days of Spring Fling," fundraiser, Thursday, June 17, 6 p.m. at the Downtown Cabaret Theatre featuring the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." More to follow.



From the Lighter Side...

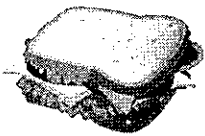
A Quilt: One Sunday after church, a mother asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the mom was perplexed, so later in the day, when the pastor stopped by for tea, she asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

Postal Service: There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments," answered the lady.

Reserve your spot for March 21st Soup & Sandwich Luncheon

Help Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2010 by coming to the annual soup and Sandwich Fund-raiser on March 21. What you may not know is that Habitat had its first meeting at Golden Hill in 1985. The first Habitat office was also at our church. Over the past 25 years Golden Hill has also hosted over 6,500 people from many different Habitat work groups and has participated in sponsoring 3 Habitat houses with the Methodist cluster churches. In 2010 we have already hosted a group from Bentley College and will host Providence College team Feb. 28 to March 5.

Thank you for your support of Habitat over the past 25 years. You have helped Habitat build 148 houses in Bridgeport and Stratford!



This annual Soup and Sandwich fundraiser luncheon goes from 11:45 am to 1:30 pm March 21 and is sponsored by Golden Hill's Society and Missions work area. The



luncheon will benefit Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County. We will have at least five kinds of homemade soup from which to choose!

If you can't attend the luncheon, you can order "take out" quarts of soup for those busy night suppers. Habitat homeowners will share their experiences at the luncheon. See order form in this issue of The Tower. Make your Reservation now or fill out the Takeout Order form. Don't miss out! The reservation and take-out order deadline is March 18.



The new website for Habitat for Humanity of CFC highlights its ReStore facility located in Stratford which sells new and gently used donated items, including furniture, appliances and building materials. For more information on shopping, donating or volunteering, go to the website at www.fairfieldcountryrestore.org

Help provide Easter Flowers for Chapel & Sanctuary area

Easter falls in early April this year. Once again, we want to adorn our altars in the Chapel and Sanctuary with plants and flowers for Easter Sunday, April 2. If anyone would like to donate for Easter foliage and flowers, please complete the form below and return to Ruth Hurd by March 21. Any amount will be accepted with thanks. Please call Ruth Hurd with any questions at 929-0292 or see her at church.

Volunteers are needed to deliver Easter flowers to shut-ins following the 10:30 worship service on Easter Sunday. Please contact the church office if you are able to assist with delivery.

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Easter Plants & Flowers Donation

Deadline: March 21, 2010

In Memory / In Honor of (circle one)

Please print the name of person(s) to be remembered or honored

Given by _____

Amount Given: _____

