

THE TOWER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN HILL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation

July/August 2010 Volume 47 Number 7

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

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

On Saturdays, I used to enjoy, and sometimes benefit greatly from reading the sermon titles of the Manhattan churches that are advertised in the New York Times.

I once ran across sermon titles that seemed to bespeak much that may be wrong with churches today. The minister of one church, for instance, was preaching a sermon entitled, "Live Your Dream." I feel compelled to be fair, and admit that one cannot always tell the quality of a sermon from the title. This sermon might have been a very good one.

The title, however, leaves me cold. It seems to me that it is the responsibility of churches to call people to God's dream. It is the responsibility of churches to point out to members how often human dreams are too small.

Too often, human dreams are self-centered, or perhaps, parochial. Human dreams tend toward wanting better lives for "me and mine." It is the church's task to call people, NOT to live their own dreams, but to use God's dream. If Jesus had felt called to live his OWN dream, it might have included all the healings and teachings and good things that he did. I doubt that it would have included the Cross. His ardent prayer in Gethsemane that God remove the cup from him is testimony to that!

When Jesus tells us that we must give up our lives in order to gain life, he probably means that we must give up our parochial dreams in order to live the ultimate dreams, which is God's. So, let's be done with sermons that tell us that Christians can find some special power to live their own dreams. Instead, let's preach sermons that call us to live God's dream.

The second sermon title that did not sit well with me was "Prayer Made Practical." I've learned many things in my years in the church. One of those things I've learned is that prayer is essentially about a relationship with God – about a conversation with God. I suspect we'd be offended if we heard of a sermon that was entitled "Relationships Made Practical." Relationships that are practical are usually marketplace deals, or worse, exploitive connections. When most of us think of relationships, we think of give-and-take associations built on trust and fidelity and mutual joy in the relationship. Good relationships are sheer joy and a celebration of community that may exist between only two,

Relationships can never be built on the goal of practicality. We miss so much if relationships are merely utilitarian.

The same can be said of prayer. Prayer is, at its best, about the joy of a relationship with God. I enjoy prayer most when I have nothing in particular to ask for. I enjoy prayer most when I just find quiet time to listen to and talk to and build my relationship with God.

Let me propose an agenda for this summer. It is a modest agenda. First, in the relative leisure of this season, let us take some time to learn more about God's dream. It is exquisitely detailed in the Bible. Set a goal for yourself. May I suggest that it be to read the "Gospel of Luke!" As part of the agenda too, take time to pray, not for anything in particular, but just for a good conversation with God!

Happy Summer!!!

Grace and Peace!

Taka

School's out: Weekenders Program takes Summer Break

The last backpacks for this school year went home on Friday, June 11. UMW is grateful for your generosity! Now you have a chance to shop for your own families for a little bit!

School starts August 25. Since the first week is a short one, we probably won't start backpacks until shortly after that. We hope to increase the number of children we can serve starting in September. The exact number will be determined when UMW meets in July.



Look for Weekenders in the Grace Notes in late July/early August. If you have suggestions or thoughts about the Weekenders program, please come to the next UMW meeting on July 18 after 10:00 AM worship, or speak to any UMW member. The co-presidents of our UMW unit are Diana Crosdale and Yvette Richardson.

Again thank you for helping Bridgeport children and their families. They need and appreciate the help at all times. In the current economy, the need is especially great.

Enjoy your summer!

Golden Hill Unit of United Methodist Women

Our summer schedule continues through Labor Day weekend with 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. worship services. Check out other summer opportunities at Golden Hill ranging from Vacation Bible School to Steel Band Camp and more listed in this issue of The Tower. We will worship God in the beauty of nature, in Wheeler Park across the street from Golden Hill on Sunday, July 25 and Sunday, August 29. Invite friends and family to bring a lawn chair and join us in praise and worship. Watch the Grace Notes for details.

We continue collecting food & monetary donations to support St. Luke's Food Pantry as part of our Christmas in July food drive. (see page 7)

On Homecoming Sunday, September 12th, worship hours will return to 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. and Sunday school will start at 9:15 a.m. with an Intergenerational Event in Locke Hall (see page 4).

Stop & Shop Card Fund Raiser Continues



Those Lazy, Crazy days of summer – are here! The kids are off from school and your family may go away on a vacation for some R&R. But – please don't forget S&S. Remember to bring your check books and "shop" each Sunday by buying a S&S Card.

Your picnic hamburgers, brats, rolls, soda, mustard and relish are all at Stop & Shop waiting only for the swipe of your S&S card. This Current Expense Fundraiser needs YOU. Perhaps you should put an extra card in your wallet for spur of the moment summer fun.

Should you have questions about this program, stop by and ask us – better yet, ask one of your friends who participates – they are all around you! It's easy! Cards are sold after chapel and before the 10:00 am service each Sunday. Melodye Merola also has a limited number of cards available during the week.

CROP Hunger Walk Results are In

Many thanks to the 22 Golden Hill members who walked in the 2010 CROP Walk, and all the people who sponsored them. This year we raised \$1,470 to help feed people in Bridgeport, in the rest of the United States and around the world. Great things happen when we all work together!

For all steel drum band fans.....There will be a FREE concert of the Roylety Steel Pan Band from Bridgeport on Sunday, July 25 from 4-6 pm at the Gazebo at the Easton Community Center, off the driveway to Helen Keller Middle School.

Stewardship For the Long Run...Returning God's Gifts

In May I reminded the church, during a Stewardship Moment, about what the Task Force mentioned concerning our financial situation, and the Stewardship Committee's plan called "For the Long Run" to get an early jump on the 2011 operational budget. With the help of God and the congregation's willingness to work together for the remainder of this year, we can attempt to move in the positive direction by using God's gifts, raising additional funds and continuing to maintain what Golden Hill has accomplished over so many years.

We will need to reassess what we, as a church, will actually require financially to continue to provide our ministry and outreach. As a congregation we need to create a strong sense of spiritual and a shared vision for the life of our church and deepen our financial commitment to our annual giving. We must also remember that God always provides us with what we need to accomplish the work he gives us. The mission, ministry and outreach have been given to Golden Hill to perform God's ministry. Together as a church we will succeed.

When I was asked to be a member of the church's Task Force, SPRC and the Stewardship Committee and presently the Stewardship Committee Chair, which includes the Church Counsel and the Finance Committee, I was not sure if I would be able to handle these commitments to serve the church because of my job and travel obligations but I realized that God will not give you more than you can handle. I wanted to contribute to the continuation of Golden Hill's success and be an integral part of its growth. I pray the members of this church have the same aspiration as I do and will continue to be good stewards of Golden Hill.

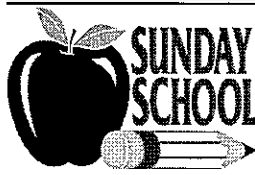
This summer is also the time for us to begin preparing for our pledges for 2011. The annual pledge campaign will begin on September 12th this year. Our pledges are the primary source of revenue for the church. Stewardship is our celebration of the gifts we have



been given and our expression of gratitude to God. Through giving, every member participates in the life and ministries of Golden Hill United Methodist Church. The church's present financial situation is going to require us, as a congregation, to really commit to digging deeper and pray that we will be able to continue what Golden Hill has accomplished for years.

I encourage the congregation to pray about stewardship along with Taka and continue to provide strong spiritual support to help us reach the goals that has been set to move into the upcoming years. Together we will be successful.

Allen Corry, Stewardship Committee Chair



Golden Hill's **Christian Education Sunday** worship services on June 13 were lead by members of the Sunday school classes from all age groups. Thanks to the class members and to all who helped with rehearsing the children's parts and preparing them for their role in this ministry experience.

Please plan to attend our evening **Vacation Bible School** this summer for all ages: children, youth and adults. The dates are August 2 through 6 at 5:30 to 8:00 pm. More details will be available soon in Grace Notes.

Golden Hill Sunday School is on break for the summer, but Kid's Club continues. However, please mark your calendar or post a note on your refrigerator door for the date Sunday School resumes in September with a **Christian Education - Intergenerational Event on Sunday, September 12, 2010** from 9:15 am - 10:15 am. in Locke Hall.

Greetings and Welcome to all to our next intergenerational event. Again, it is open to all who want to be a part of Christian Education this coming Sunday school year. Children and adults are welcome. We have classes for all ages! Our kick off event will be our Intergenerational Event beginning with a light breakfast meal together, followed by fellowship time and fun activities! Please come!

♪ Golden Hill Musical Notes ♪

Feel the spirit, and sing with joy,
praising the Lord's might and majesty.

In appreciation: Special Thank you To Sandra Neubert, Lorraine Papa, and Bob Iannotti for their years of service as Golden Hill's Section Leader/ Soloists.

Summer Music Opportunities

Steel Drum Band rehearsals continue in the summer after the 10:00 worship service on Sunday starting July 11th.

If you are interested in **Sharing Special Music** this summer during the 10:00 worship service please e-mail Dan at music@goldenhill.org or speak with him.

Special Music for July

July 11th- Roena Littlejohn

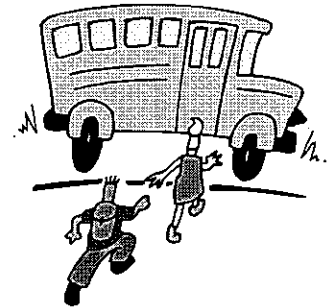
July 18th- Reginald Roberts

Steel Drum Camp offered in August

Golden Hill is offering a Steel Drum Camp to Junior High age and up August 23rd-27th from 5:00-8:30 p.m. Tuition is \$30 and there are scholarships. available. Please see Dan if you interested.



Golden Hill is offering an evening Vacation Bible School (VBS) this summer for all ages: children through adults. The dates are August 2 through 6 at 5:30 to 8:00 pm. We will serve a light dinner from 5:30 until 6:15 then we will have age appropriate VBS until 8:00 pm. Walk ins are welcome.



Our VBS theme is "Get On The Bus" and is family-oriented (but you don't have to have your family to attend). Please bring yourself, family and friends to join with your church family for this fellowship experience.

We will be going to the Bluefish Baseball game that Thursday night with other area United Methodists to benefit Habitat for Humanity!

If you have any questions or you would like to be a teacher or volunteer please contact Lisa Nelson or Melodye Merola.

NEWS FROM The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport



The Watkinson Prisoners' Aid Society of Hartford recently awarded CO-OP Center a 2010 Matching Grant of \$2,000.00. CO-OP Center Program Director, Dan Braccio, said that the funds would help in the development of an expanded computer technology learning center at The Council of Churches. "This will enable more students to participate in the ongoing GED preparation classes that are offered three days per week, as well as improve their computer application skills through the free computer courses that are offered each month." Mr. Braccio said.

The Watkinson grant requires that CO-OP Center raise an additional \$2,000.00 in "new" money, i.e., donors who have not contributed to CO-OP Center directly in the past. The deadline to raise these funds is November 1, 2010.

It costs less than \$50 per student (or about \$8/hour)

to train someone in the use of a Microsoft application like WORD, EXCEL, or POWERPOINT at CO-OP Center. Each of these computer skills increases the chances that one of our former offenders will find sustainable employment. Students have expressed their deep appreciation for the opportunity to learn new computer skills in our technology learning center (TLC) because of the quality of the volunteer instructors.

Your contribution of \$500, or \$50, or \$5 will help us move closer to our goal of \$2,000.00. Thank you for making a contribution toward the Watkinson grant challenge by sending a check payable to The Council of Churches (please put "Watkinson" on the memo line), or by going to the JustGive link on the ccgb.org home page. For information, contact Dan Braccio at 203 367-8441 x 231 or danbraccio@ccgb.org. Thank you for your support!

Donate to Help Others with 'Christmas in July' Food Drive!

"With the difficult economy and the closing of St. Charles' Food Pantry on the East Side, St. Luke's Food Pantry in Bridgeport has seen a huge increase in requests for food and has even had to close on some days recently because they ran out of food. The Society and Missions Committee is doing a Food Drive called "Christmas in July", starting June 27 and continuing through the month of July. According to St. Luke's, July is usually the month with the fewest donations, so they really need our help.



Please bring canned goods or make a donation for St. Luke's when you come to church. Items that are needed are: tuna fish, rice, canned beans, cereal, pasta and pasta sauce, peanut butter, jam, canned meats, soup, macaroni and cheese, canned fruit and juice. You may leave the non-perishable items in the narthex in the designated "Christmas in July" box or in a similar box by the chapel.

Monetary donations are also very welcome, especially since St. Luke's has made arrangements to buy frozen meat at very discounted prices. If you write a check, make it out to "Golden Hill United Methodist Church", with "St. Luke's Food Drive" in the memo.

Thanks for remembering that the spirit of Christmas is needed all year long!

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

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



CHURCH CALENDAR

NOTE: Sunday morning summer worship hours continue through September 5 with 8:30 am and 10:00 am services.

- July 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
- July 5 OFFICE CLOSED
- July 7 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:00 pm
- July 13 SPRC, 7:30 pm
- July 14 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:30 pm
- July 15 Investment, 7:30 pm
- July 18 UMW meeting, Noon
Japanese Special Ministries, 3-5 pm
- July 21 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:30 pm
- July 25 Outdoor Worship Service, 10 am
- July 28 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:00 pm
- August 2 Building & Property, 7:30 pm
- August 2-6 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL,
5:30-8:00 pm
- August 4 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:30 pm
- August 10 Church Council, 7:30 pm
- August 11 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:00 pm
- August 12-15 Mission Academy
- August 15 Japanese Special Ministries, 3-5 pm,
- August 17 Finance, 7:30 pm
- August 18 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:30 pm
- August 19 Trustees, 7:30 pm
- August 23-27 Steel Drum Camp (evenings)
- August 24 Church Council, 7:00 pm
- August 25 Community Supper, 5:00 pm
Taize Worship, 6:00 pm
- August 29 Outdoor Worship Service, 10 am

Children's Book Corner

Becki Anderson recommends these for summer reading.

Good Night, Good Knight, by Shelley Moore Thomas. Grades K-2. A knight finds three baby dragons that need to be tucked in for the night. (a learning to read book)

My Lucky Day, by Keiko Kasza. Grades K-2. A hungry fox thinks it is his lucky day when a pig shows up at his door by mistake, but he will have to work hard before there will be a treat.

The Lemonade War, by Jacqueline Davies. Grades 3-4. Summer is drawing to an end and soon Evan and Jessie will be heading back to school, but because Jessie is skipping a grade they will both be in the same fourth grade classroom. Before that can happen, a war of who can sell the most lemonade breaks out.

Hot Hand: A Comeback Kids novel, by Mike Lupica. Grades 3-5. Billy Raynor is one of the best players on his basketball team and is trying to stay focused on helping them win the championship. But with his father as his coach and his parents in the middle of getting a divorce, things get complicated.

First Light, by Rebecca Stead. Grades 4-6. Generations ago Thea's community escaped persecution in England and settled underground in Greenland. This new world is now becoming too cramped and, unbeknownst to them, threatened by global warming. Their future might depend on help from those who live above.

Elephant Run, by Roland Smith. Grades 5-7. In order to protect her son from the London bombings during WW II, Nick's mother sends her son to live with his father in Burma on the family teak plantation. Unfortunately, shortly after Nick's arrival in Burma, the Japanese invade Burma and Nick is caught up in the war again.

The Red Pyramid, by Rick Riordan. Grades 5-8. The author of *The Lightning Thief* begins a new series with this book about Ancient Egyptian mythology. Those who loved the first series will love this one and if you missed the first series, you will love them both! (review by Elizabeth Gregorio)

Mom: A Celebration of Mothers from Storycorps, edited by Dave Isay. Grade 10-Adult. This is a celebration of mothers told through oral histories of people from a variety of walks of life and who live all over the country.

OUR ACTIVE SERVICE PERSONNEL



We invite you to please pray for and/or write to our active service personnel. To make changes, please email the church at: office@goldenhill.org or call the church office at 203 336-0152.

Pfc Jerome Beckford
HHC 1-102 DIN "MTN"
FOB MEHTAR LAM
APO AE 09354
(Serving in Afghanistan)

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
(serving in the Marine Corps)

Lt. Scott Krasko

Pvt. Stephen Kennedy

Spc Peter Janoski
39 Indiana Ave.
Ft. Leonard Wood, MO 65473
(Serving in the U.S. Army)

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

Polly Torrence's Nephew
Pierce Torrence is a midshipman at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD



Happy Summer !!

As we approach the halfway mark of the year, here is a recap of what's been happening in our local unit. Our **Weekenders Backpack** program is doing so well that we have increased our commitment for next year. I want to take the time to thank everyone for your generosity in helping the Longfellow school in Bridgeport. Many Thanks to the volunteers who help in the packing and organizing every week.

Next UMW meeting at Golden Hill is July 18 after the 10:00 AM worship service. Please plan to join us then. Watch for a reminder in Grace Notes. If you want to know more about UMW, please contact Yvette Richardson or Diana Crosdale, the Co-Presidents.

Health Kits Update: At the New York Annual Conference held at Hofstra University in Long Island, we put together 3,000 Health kits and all together shipped 13,000 of the kits to Haiti. Golden Hill participated in assembling over 100. And also over 100 were sent to Assembly.

Golden Hill Women's Retreat, Sept 17-19, 2010, Becki Anderson is coordinating the retreat. Details will be printed later in Grace Notes.

News from the Connecticut District UMW
We had a wonderful Spring Day Apart at Simsbury UMC this April where Mrs. Ruthann Lobo was the speaker. Her speech was very energetic and uplifting in her testimonies of her faith journey in her time of need as she went through her cancer. What a wonderful day – over 100 persons attended, representing more than 23 churches. We look forward in seeing you at the next gathering, All women are welcomed, for more information contact Roena Littlejohn (President) or Yvette Richardson (Secretary).

Looking Ahead: UMW Dates to Remember

- July 22-24, 2010 School of Mission, Western CT
University, Danbury CT
- Oct 16, 2010 CT District UMW Fall Gathering,
Meriden First UMC
- Oct 23, 2010 NY Conference UMW Annual Meeting, Golden Hill UMC, Bridgeport, CT

Have a wonderful Summer and May God continue to Bless you! – *Yvette Richardson*



2010 NY Annual Conference
For those who could not join the group who traveled by bus to Hofstra University on June 12, here is a glimpse of what took place. Whose faces can you recognize? And how would you know they were from our church?

Golden Hill Members attend New York Annual Conference

Golden Hill UMW represented at UMW Assembly in St. Louis, MO

Editor's Note: Golden Hill UMW members who attended the UMW 2010 Assembly were Roena Littlejohn, Melodye Merola and Diana Crosdale.

United Methodist Women assemble every four years to celebrate, to lift up, to learn, and to return to their communities better equipped for mission. Tens of thousands of women have been meeting in this fashion since 1942 in a unified effort to stay at the forefront of the work being done both locally and globally, both systemically and in charity, to improve and sustain the lives of women, children and youth.

This year, over 7,500 United Methodist Women arrived in St. Louis, MO for the quadrennial UMW Assembly: Faith, Hope, Love in Action. We were welcomed with banners in the airport and along the streets of the Gateway City.

It was wonderful to be with so many Methodist women (and men!) in the same place worshipping God and sharing the same experiences. We were all united throughout the event in worship and music. Of course, there were workshops in the spirit of learning and advocacy for social, racial, gender-economic justice, education and other ministries of interest.

I participated in an Early Childhood Education workshop where I learned about **the plight of the school systems** for many families in the Midwest. We live in the most affluent part of the country and we take our education and wealth for granted. The UMW Assembly compels us to give back to the community by participating in God's mission. It is our responsibility and calling!

We also joined with the local community in St. Louis to march for immigrants' rights and were pleased to have the honorable Mai H. Gray with us 32 years after she presided over the 1978 assembly's march for racial justice which was also in St. Louis. As a UMW member at the time, she helped create the organization's current Charter for Racial Justice. Sadly, she fell prior to the march and died in St. Louis. She was a champion of justice and will surely be missed.

I hope and pray that you will continue to grow spiritually and learn how to put your faith into action. Prayerfully consider attending the next Assembly where you can connect with other women of faith.

For those of you who could not be part of this event, please check out the photographs, video and other news from this event located on the UMW website at:

<http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/UMW/assembly/>

You can also view a video clip *Assembly Action for Immigrant Rights* and photographs under *Serving the City of St. Louis* (Ubuntu Day of Service) both of which include images of Golden Hill's Roena Littlejohn.

—Diana Crosdale

Remembering Mai H. Gray 1922-2010

The General Commission on Religion and Race joins with United Methodist Women and the entire United Methodist Church in remembering the racial justice legacy of Mai H. Gray. Mrs. Gray suffered a fall while attending the Assembly of United Methodist Women and died a short time after.

When the 2010 Women's Assembly opened April 29 in St. Louis, Gray was there, just as she had been at every other assembly.

But she fell during the event, suffering a head injury, and died May 6, at the age of 88, in a St. Louis hospital.

Mrs. Gray will be remembered as the president of the General Board of Global Ministries Women's Division (1976-1980) who led United Methodist Women to create and adopt the Charter for Racial Justice, adopted by the 1980 General Conference of the United Methodist Church.
