

CONNYECTION

CONNECTICUT/NEW YORK DISTRICT

BISHOP ERNEST S. LYGHT, BISHOP

REV. JANE ALLEN MIDDLETON, DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

BARBARA STINSON, EDITOR

NOVEMBER 2002 VOL. VXII NO 5

FROM AN ANONYMOUS DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Friends,

I work out at the Y most weekday mornings. I do a variety of training programs in classes with an instructor. I've been taking classes at a particular Y for about ten years.

My instructor has been Lucy*. She is really excellent: quite tough, very knowledgeable, careful with form, constantly changing so that her students don't get bored, kind. But when I returned from my renewal leave I learned that she has another job and another instructor has taken over. Joan* is very different from Lucy*. She isn't nearly as exacting and her style and routine are unlike the ones I'm accustomed to. Her voice is much softer. She simply is not teaching the class in the way I'm familiar and comfortable with.

Of course, I now recall that a few years ago when Lucy* replaced Carol* I spent a few unhappy months. Carol* had been very outgoing and congenial and I was very familiar with her routine. It's true that it didn't vary much but it was comfortable. When Lucy* began she seemed remote and the exercises were

much more challenging than I was accustomed to. I suspect it was at least six months before I really began to appreciate her.

I am not happy. I could just quit going but if I did I wouldn't have the opportunity to exercise. I wouldn't be taking care of my body. I could exercise on my own but my experience in doing that is that I don't work nearly as hard and don't really have the expertise to know how to get the most out of exercising. I would also miss the others in the class whom I've gotten to know through the years.

The whole episode reminds me of something...

Grace and peace,

Julie*

**Names have been changed to protect the innocent/guilty.*

CLERGY & SPOUSES CHRISTMAS PARTY

Clergy and spouses, retired and active, will once again gather for the District Christmas Party to be held at the District Parsonage on **Friday, December 6th**, beginning at 6 p.m. The evening will include a delicious meal, Christmas carols and wonderful fellowship. Please make reservations by contacting the District Office at (203) 348-9181. The cost is \$10 per person. Retired clergy and spouses are guests.

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WE ARE ON THE WEB!!

New York Conference United Methodist Church

Come visit us at www.nyac.com

Stay abreast of all the current appointment listings.

See what's happening in the Conference and beyond using the Conference calendar for 2002-2003.

See who is on our conference boards/agencies/committees and get contact information for each Conference board/agency/committee.

Click on Camping & Retreat link for maps to our UM camps and summer camp opportunities.

Check out Educational opportunities through the Learning Center.

Receive advice form the NY/CT Foundation.

Read the Bishop's monthly message in "Let's Go Pilgrims".

CT/NY VOLUNTEER IN MISSION TEAM NEEDS YOUR HELP

The CT/NY Volunteer in Mission Team which will be in Cochabamba, Bolivia, from February 14 to March 1 is collecting school supplies for the children. Last year the fourteen suitcases full of goods donated by our district were quickly delivered to the Methodist churches in Bolivia. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Needed are lighter, easily portable items, especially pens pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers, rulers, erasers, glue, sharpeners, finger paints, tape. Minimally packaged items (plastic bags rather than boxes preferred), as more will fit that way. No reams of paper, although donations of money are very welcome so that we can buy paper in Bolivia.

We would also welcome lap top computers in good working order.

You may deliver your items to the District Training Days, which will be held at First UMC, Stamford on **Tuesday, January 14** , or at Danbury UMC on **Wednesday, January 22**, or contact team leaders Bob & Ginny Stevenson, (203) 3890-8622 or manofnotes@snet.net or Jane Middleton, District Superintendent, (203) 348-9181 or cny@nyac.com for other delivery sites.

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CONGRATULATIONS FIVE STAR UNITS

The following UMW groups are five star units: Bethel (1st year), Brewster (1st year), Golden Hill, Bridgeport (3 years), Summerfield, Bridgeport (10 years), Danbury (11

years), Huntington (11 years), Newtown (10 years), East Avenue, Norwalk (9 years), Norwalk, Norwalk (10 years), Pawling (5 years), Jesse Lee, Ridgefield (4 years), Stevens Memorial, South Salem (3 years), Stratford (1 year), Nichols, Trumbull (10 years), Westport (4 years), and Woodbury (5 years).

The qualifications for a Five Star Unit are: making a pledge; presenting a Special Recognition Award to a deserving person in the church; making a gift to mission; making a gift in memory of someone and a giving to the World Thank Offering.

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GOLDEN HILL UMC TAKES NEXT STEP IN INCLUSIVITY

The Golden Hill United Methodist Church, Bridgeport, took one more step forward for human decency and respect.

The Church Conference, supreme legislative body of a local United Methodist Church, unanimously approved "A Covenant of Openness and Affirmation." The covenant says in part;

"We affirm each individual as a child of God and celebrate the uniqueness of each person including his or her race/ethnicity, culture, economic reality, gender, age physical/mental ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. We commit ourselves to work towards ending ignorance, fear, hatred, prejudice and discrimination against people considered to be different, including our lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender sisters and brothers."

This action follows four years of study and reflection. Golden Hill used United Methodist-approved curriculum, "The Church Studies Homosexuality" in three separate study sessions with its congregation. At the invitation of New York Area Bishop, Ernest S. Lyght, they participated with 23 other churches in discussing these study experiences. Golden Hill subsequently offered a Bible study, a congregational survey, a forum with leaders of open congregations, and a series of "Talk It Over" conversations within the church to develop consensus.

The church's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Brian Schofield-Bodt, observed, *"Our denomination's media slogan now is 'Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.' We see this statement as an important declaration that we are truly open to all people. It is one more way of describing our racially and culturally diverse congregation. By specifically saying we are open to all regardless of sexual orientation, we are confronting what some have called, 'the last socially acceptable prejudice.'"*

For further information, please contact:

The Rev. Dr. Brian Schofield-Bodt, Pastor or
Ms. Melodye Merola, Director of Outreach Ministry
(203) 336-0152.

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LECTIONARY DAY APART

NOVEMBER 19TH

9-3 P.M.

9:00 a.m. Arrival, "Coffee And", Registration

9:30-10 Opening Worship

10-12 Noon The Rev. Larry Snow

"The Advent & Christmas Gospels in Times of Trial and Terror"

A review of the Advent & Christmas Gospels in light of
today's headlines.

Expected Reading - The Advent & Christmas

Gospels for years A,B, & C

Suggested Reading -

The New Interpreters Bible

Commentary on these Advent & Christmas Readings

Chris Hedges, War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning.

James McPherson, Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam

12-1 p.m. Catered lunch by "Food For Thought"

1-3 p.m. "It's Not About Iraq" A slide presentation & dialogue facilitated by John Humphries

Cost: \$30 per person - Make checks payable to New Milford UMC

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COUNCIL OF FRIENDS AMBASSADORS WANTED

The United Methodist Home/Wesley Village is seeking Ambassadors for the "**Council of Friends**." As an Ambassador you would represent Wesley Village in your local church. The United Methodist Homes is doing wonderful work on behalf of the Methodist Churches ministering to residents of all denominations. If you want to learn more, call 203-925-4952 or attend the next meeting of the "**Council of Friends**" on Thursday, December 5th at 11 a.m. in Wesley Village.

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FACE OF COURAGE

November 3, 2000

Dear Fellow Christians,

I would like to share with you the ways in which God has blessed me with strength and peace. In 1995 I was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer. I had just turned forty years old and I was happily married with two young children. During the last six years as my health has repeatedly failed me, God has repeatedly stood with me, blessing me with the love of family and friends. When Paul writes to the Philippians, "for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content," I feel that God has also brought me to this place in life. Only He knows what the future holds. My task as a Christian is to live my life as well as I am able, to love and care for others, to accept with grace that which God bestows on me.

My illness has taken away from my life, but it has also added to my life. I can no longer participate in sports with my children, but I have increased patience with them. I am unable to pursue my career, but I have been able to facilitate a support group for ovarian cancer patients. I spend a great deal of time on the phone reaching out to women who are trying to come to grips with their cancer. I contribute less to our household in many ways, fewer chores, no second income, periods of time when my husband and children must care for me, but I have learned that my family's love is not based on what I can give to them. I am able to do a good deal of parenting from the couch, and my children are growing to be responsible and empathetic young people.

Each day as I pray, I thank God for another day with my family, another day that I have been able to spend with my husband, another day that I have been able to watch my children grow. I thank God for the strength He has given me and He has given my family. I love life, but I do not fear death, for God has promised me eternal life, and that promise is what allows me to live life joyfully, even in the face of sadness.

May God bless you with the spirit of contentment.

Nancy

(Nancy M.. Riss November 29, 1954 -

September 3, 2002)

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AROUND THE DISTRICT

Round Hill Community Church held a program entitled "Understanding Islam". Issues from the nature of the Koran to the history of the Taliban were explored. **Newtown UMYF** held a brunch to raise money to build homes in Bolivia. It has pledged \$1500 to the Bolivian Project. **Fairfield Grace UMC** has a special five minute introduction to the church available for first-time guests. The CD is available on a display on the *Information Table* near the sanctuary entrance. **Stratford UMC** holds a "Praise & Pizza" evening every Friday. A contemporary praise service begins at 6:30 followed by a pizza supper. **Westport UMC** is holding an Advent Family Fellowship beginning with a dinner, followed by tree lighting & caroling and a holiday craft workshop. Congratulations to **Westport** for raising \$12,500 for missions at the "Rabbit Hill" dinner and auction. **Monroe UMC** held an Apple Harvest Festival Service Auction to raise money for church projects. **Summerfield UMC**, **Bridgeport** Missions/Evangelism Committee is collecting old and unused eyeglasses for world-wide mission and winter clothing for the Bridgeport Rescue Mission. **Golden Hill UMC**, **Bridgeport** is collecting food to fill Christmas Baskets for people in the Bridgeport community. Last year it provided food and toys for 129 families. Churches providing shoe boxes filled with toys for "Operation Christmas Child" are **First UMC**, **Greenwich**, **Valhalla UMC**, **Long Hill UMC**, **Minters Group**. The Midnight Run is supported by churches such as: **Pound Ridge Community**, **Zion's Hill UMC**, **Wilton**, **Armonk UMC**, **First UMC**, **Greenwich**. **Woodbury UMC** will be preparing and serving Thanksgiving Dinner at the Waterbury Soup Kitchen.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Nov. 19 Lectionary Day Apart- New Milford UMC

Dec. 3 District UMM Breakfast - First UMC, Norwalk

Dec. 5 Council of Friends – Wesley Village

Dec. 6 Clergy Christmas Party 6 p.m. District Parsonage

Dec. 15 District UMM Caroling at Wesley Village

Keeping in Touch:

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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