

THE VALLEY VOICE
Highland Mills United Methodist Church
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July-August 2010

This newsletter is in memory of
Stephen's father and brother
given by Stephen's family



June 21, 2010

Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Living Lord, Jesus Christ!

Please imagine that you are reading my words as you sit on a soft white sand beach along the Gulf of Mexico. Warm salt water is lapping at your feet as birds hop in the water ahead of you and fly off, glistening in the sun. Now blink, and look again. This time you see a blob of brown oil on your right...and left. You make a mental note not to step in it. Then a bird slowly hobbles by, bogged down with thick oil on its wings. Suddenly you realize that the catastrophic oil spill you've heard about for over 60 days is real. And you pray.

So, what can we do as children of God who know we are responsible for caring for God's creation? I suggest two actions.

First, make yourself REALLY aware of the many aspects of this situation...how and why such wells operate, what exactly is happening along the coast, and what fish and related jobs are being lost- perhaps forever. Who is cleaning the birds, and how are they doing it? Just how much of the Gulf is affected...and how far might the oil travel if a hurricane slams the coast and it gets caught in a northern moving current?

Second, PRAY. Yes, prayer is the best force we have. We read in the Bible to, "Pray unceasingly." (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Do so for those whose families have lost loved ones, for the injured, for those whose lives are being ripped apart like sea oats from a dune, and for creation itself as it groans in agony from poor human stewardship. This action of praying is being lived out as I write. Today, as I write this, a Prayer Vigil is taking place in our sanctuary. We have prayer partners in church from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Interestingly, when we chose June 21 we did not realize that June 21 is the longest day of the year which means we have the most sunlight this day. Perhaps this day we will have the most illumination to understand what is happening. It also means we begin losing daylight tomorrow, June 22. It may be an insignificant amount lost at first, but that's the way we have, for far too long, felt about God's creation. If we cut down trees from a mountainside...or removed a mountain top...there were always enough trees, and certainly enough mountains, right? If we dumped chemicals into the Hudson River...who would be hurt? Wouldn't it all get washed out into

the ocean? Wouldn't the salt take care of it? And, don't we already dump garbage in the ocean? Won't it float away and rot? NO! No is the answer to each of the misguided thoughts. Did you know all of the plastic ever made is still with us? Did you know we already have garbage swirling the ocean that will still be there for years to come? So many of our assumptions have been wrong! The riches of God's creation are not limitless. Every human being, every living creature, and every plant is connected as we live each day wasting more and more of what will someday be gone. We are meant to be the honest caretakers of our planet...yet we continue to fail miserably.

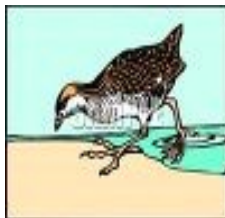
Realizing how important it is for us to be as aware as possible of this earthly catastrophe, we here in church sought a response that would also be an outreach and invitation to the community. Once the goal was in place local churches were contacted by mail. The almost 70 United Methodist pastors who shepherd churches in our NY/CT District received e-mails inviting them to join in prayer as we are doing. Simply putting, the kernel of care and concern in the minds of others is an outreach we are carrying out in the name of Jesus Christ.

From here on we will keep a visual reminder from the Prayer Vigil where we will all remember our responsibility to be good stewards of God's earth. Our worship bulletin covers will be illustrations of God's good creation. We must remember! We must remain aware, and most of all we MUST PRAY!

In the love and hope of Jesus Christ,

Reverend Darlene E.R. Resling

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it... I Corinthians 12:26.



Lay Leader's Lowdown – Sunday, June 20, 2010 – NY Annual Conference 2010

Pastor Darlene suggested that we each write about the recent New York Annual Conference (NYAC) for our church newsletter this month. I'll share with our church family from my perspective, and she will share from hers.

(It may seem a bit confusing, as the name of the *group* of United Methodists from this part of the state of New York and part of Connecticut is called the "New York Annual Conference", and the annual *event* at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY on Long Island is also called the New York Annual Conference.)

In my position as the Vice President of the Finance Division of the Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CF&A), it is my job to be the keeper of the excel spreadsheet that contains the annual budget for the Conference. Much of the work is done ahead of time, before we even arrive at the Conference at Hofstra. In fact, we begin by asking all of the relevant groups to submit a formal budget request to CF&A in early February, so that we have ample time to discuss all of the requests, and make sure that the overall budget is not too onerous on all of the local churches.

I'm happy to report that this year's Conference budget went rather smoothly. We restored the previously approved pay raise to the District Superintendents that they relinquished last year. In fact, not only did they not accept the raise for 2010, but they went back to their salary of 2008. There was one item that came up that caused us to modify the budget somewhat, but it was not a big deal. It did mean, however, that I needed to reprint the budget for the Conference to vote on it. The Bishop and the Conference agreed to hear the new budget-affected proposals first, so I could have time to make the necessary copies before our Legislative Section 7 reported.

We had been running behind time-wise, so I was shocked when we were able to complete all 7 Legislative Sections in a record-setting time of less than 3 hours. Perhaps it was the idea of returning to the arena at 10 pm Friday night, after the ordination service that brought everyone together so quickly.

Lay Leader's Lowdown (cont'd):

I was glad I wasn't there to hear some of the potentially more controversial matters. One person later remarked that they wished people would pay as much attention to things like world hunger, as they do to some other items. One joy for me was to spend some time with a much more relaxed person from a previous church I attended. It had been many years since we last spoke & I was glad to see a much calmer person!

It's been my pleasure to represent Highland Mills United Methodist Church at NYAC. Thank you for bestowing that honor on me these past few years. By your grace, I hope to do it for years to come. Thank you!

ANNUAL CONFERENCE THROUGH YOUTHFUL EYES

On Friday night and Saturday I attended the Annual Conference at Hofstra University as part of CCYM (Conference Council on Youth Ministries). Friday night we went to the ordination. It was very moving. I knew two of the pastors who were ordained. The speaker, Bishop James Swanson, was very powerful.

After the service we went back to the Hicksville United Methodist Church where we had dinner and a meeting. I was appointed chair of the missions team for CCYM. On Saturday morning we helped set up the tent for the Momentum of Ministry Festival. We had carnival games for kids and I folded washcloths for health kits. We had everything set up so that people could assemble health kits. Bishop Park was dancing with the people from Ghana. That is a happy man.

I saw the tool trailer from when I went to Biloxi, and a couple of people I met on other mission trips. We had a very nice lunch. Then we went back to the arena for another service. Pastor Darlene carried the banner in the parade of banners, and Bishop Park did more than 100 pushups. I am glad I went, I had a great time.

Raymond III

Annual Conference Special Events

Several special events took place during Annual Conference. These were scattered throughout all the regularly planned seminars and legislative hearings. The first was recognition of Ernest Swiggett who is retiring as treasurer of the NYAC. Bible studies were offered each morning at 8:30, and Communion services were planned and led by various groups. Pastor Darlene's Compass group offered Communion to about 100 at 6:15, Saturday morning. Friday evening the retirees were recognized on stage by Bishop Park, and during another session Missions were honored. The ceremonies of being licensed, being commissioned, and ordained were all together on Friday night because of needing time on Saturday for the tent festival. As a result there was streamlining of various events. Miraculously, the reports of the legislative sections were completed in three hours!

On Saturday, the bulk of the day revolved around having approximately 5000 people in attendance who came to participate in the Mission and Ministry Tent Festival and to hear the afternoon speaker. All were able to walk through 3 large blue and white stripe tents to view exhibits. The Youth and Children tent had displays from the Boy Scouts, Conference Council on Youth Ministry (of which our Raymond Hanaburgh III is Missions Chair), UM Army, UM Camps, Youth Ambassadors in Mission, Health Kits (where 3000 more were assembled), and inflatable objects for children. The Mission Tent had displays from Biloxi, Bolivia, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Haiti, Mozambique, and PET (Personal Energy Transportation.) The Ministry Tent had exhibits on Archives and History, Board of Laity, Camp Epworth, City Society, 5 Point Mission, the Learning Center, Immigration, MFGSA, MIND, Religion and race, UMW, and VBS. Box lunches were available and musical entertainment was scattered throughout the tent area.

The day was concluded by all returning to the arena to participate in (or to view) a parade of banners. Pastor Darlene PROUDLY flourished the banner that was made by Andrea. Both Highland Mills and Mountainville were represented on this sharp and durable banner. (You can see it today hanging over the balcony in church. Next we heard how new churches are being started up by rethinking church (like we've been talking about and will continue to...) and then concluded with another rousing message from Bishop Swanson. He ended with a call to come to the front...filling the arena with an electricity with which many departed for home.

Our Prayer Team

One of the many offshoots of our E-Team (Evangelism Team) is the formation of a prayer team. These individuals are available to pray with you at the end of church at the altar, during visitations such as in hospitals, and during special worship times such as healing services, prayer vigils, and Taizé services. They are: Dorothy and Tom Pray, Tracie Orozco, Bev Powell, Sissy Tomer, and Stephen Siew. All prayers are confidential. Please remember that we also have a prayer page on our web site. Prayers left on the site may be anonymous.

Habitat Update

On May 4th, the representatives from area churches involved in the Methodist & Friends build of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh met at Mountainville United Methodist Church. There was great appreciation for Highland Mills becoming part of the group.

Following the 2nd Methodist & Friends home dedication, which was held on April 18th, the group's current focus is fundraising and planning for the 3rd Methodist & Friends build. Churches shared fundraising ideas, including noisy offerings and bandana sales. The results of our church's Men's Ministry car wash and flea market/bake sale fundraisers, \$241.00 and \$396.50, respectively, will be presented at the next meeting.

The next major fundraiser for Habitat Newburgh is the Pete Seeger and Friends concert on July 3, 2010 at Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh. Tickets are \$10 each, \$15 at the door. Children under age 12 are admitted free with a paying adult. For more information or to purchase tickets, see www.habitatnewburgh.org.

"Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" bus tours are scheduled for Saturday, July 17 and Wednesday, August 18. The tour is a wonderful opportunity to see firsthand the great work Habitat is doing.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 14th at 7:30 P.M. at Grace United Methodist Church in Newburgh. All are invited! Anyone wishing to attend should contact Pastor Darlene or Nicole should they have any questions.

Getting the Word Out

Thanks to God and the movement of His Holy Spirit in this church, we have SO MUCH happening! During this past year individuals have prepared their own flyers and then shared them with the community. Pastor Darlene addressed the June Administrative Board with the request that future written communications include specific information.

A special form has been prepared for such flyers. ALL future flyers must go through the main office where the secretary will type it up, add requested illustrations, copy it, and send it / make it available for distribution. This will be after Pastor Darlene approves it. With so much good news to share it will be in all our best interests to conform to this plan. Blank flyers are available in the narthex, front of the church, fellowship hall, and main office.

In addition, all newspaper information that anyone hopes to submit to local publications must be approved by Pastor Darlene. Feel free to e-mail her the material or to leave it in her mailbox outside her door. With all we have going on, and with all the Spirit surely has in store for us in the coming year, it is imperative to keep getting the word out as expeditiously as possible. Please see Pastor Darlene with any questions or suggestions.

Focus Meeting for ALL Sunday school teachers...

and ANYONE interested in our children's Christian education:

Wednesday, July 21

6-7 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Please come with comments/ideas from this year's sessions. Bring thoughts about children and church during the summer, program ideas/new ideas/values/family projects/your visions, and ideas for ways to more fully integrate all children in all areas of the church. The children who swelled our Sunday school ranks this year are real evidence of hope for His church! Each child is a blessing whom we are each responsible for guiding in God's love. Thank you for your continuing support!

Questions: Please contact Scott or
Pastor Darlene

Miracles are happening!

When the Lord moves his mighty hand, Miracles happen! As I sit here pondering the amazing blessings that the Lord has provided, I cannot help but smile. It has been an exciting couple of months for our church family. In May we joined in our first annual "Sowing The Seeds Of Love Day" where we provided random acts of kindness to our local community. This event warmed the hearts of all who participated and attended and allowed us to be a reflection of God's love to all. It is moments like this where we truly are the hands and feet of Christ, reaching out in a world that seems to be a bit shocked about receiving anything for free. I believe that as we show our compassion to others we are also providing a platform to share in the Good News of our Risen Lord. On Monday June 21st, our congregation joined together in prayer and lifted our voices to Heaven in a twelve hour prayer vigil on behalf of the Gulf crisis. I am a witness to the love and faithfulness of our congregation, and the passionate devotion we have for our Lord. As I participated in the event, I noticed many truly wonderful moments of silent prayer, candle lighting, scripture reading, audible prayer and claiming God's word, dancing and clapping, group prayer while holding hands and fellowship. It is wonderful to see that we can pray in so many different ways, and know that we are all unique and are all called by God's Holy Spirit to pray without ceasing for this tragedy on our earth. I love the way our congregation welcomes our differences without judgment, truly knowing that we have been given gifts and a loving place to share them in. I welcome you all to come forth and share in any promptings that the Holy Spirit places on your heart for future events in our church and pray that you listen and are obedient to the callings on your lives. May the Lord Bless You All and keep you safely tucked under his wing.

Your sister in Christ, Tracie
E-Team



WOMEN'S GUILD

All women of the church are members of the Women's Guild. We welcome all women to join us.

Our July meeting will be Monday, July 12th due to the July 4th holiday. We will meet at 7:00 p.m. We start our meeting with spiritual food. We have been watching a wonderful CD. The topic for July is "Defeating the Enemy". (Mark 1:21-28)

In August we will not have an evening meeting. We will have a morning board meeting on August 9th.

We continue to meet Monday mornings at 10:00 for crafts and baking. Please join us! Any questions! See or call Debbie.



MEN'S MINISTRY
CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2010*

- Sun., July 18 6:30 PM --- Movie Night
- Sat., August 14 10 AM – 3 PM --- Car Wash
- Sat., October 16 4:30–7:00 PM --- Spaghetti Supper

**More details on some of these events will come later.*