POUGHKEEPSIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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The Journey

December 2025

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DIRECTOR OF HARRIET TUBMAN ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER

The Deadline for the January Journey is Wednesday December 10

"'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')."
Matthew 1:23

There is perhaps no more disparaging feeling than the feeling of loneliness—the feeling of being alone. I'm not talking about being bored or simply missing those we love; that happens to all of us now and then and can usually be eased by a phone call or a movie. The loneliness I'm referring to is the aching lack of understanding and commitment surrounding us and supporting us.

Our most obvious connection to this kind of "alone-ness" comes when we lose a loved one, lose some of our independence, or when catastrophic illness isolates us from the rest of society. At such times we truly know what it means to be alone—to the point where silence hurts more deeply than any noise ever could. The fact is, when others stand beside us, we can face any hostility or overcome any barrier. But when we are utterly alone, even the smallest hurdle becomes impossible.

For me, the most wonderful message of Jesus' nativity is that we never need to be alone when we suffer or feel challenged in life, for God, and God's saints (yes, that means you too!), are with us always. Christmas is the ultimate time of promise and hope because the very Author of Creation came to us so that God might assure us of understanding and acceptance in God's Kingdom. Jesus, God incarnate, the Word made flesh, came among us so that no shame or lack of ability should ever isolate us from love and commitment. What a wonderful event! What a wonderful light has dawned upon us!

In discouraging times, when we feel little understood or appreciated, or wonder what is going to happen next, we have the assurance that God is with us, because God came to us in Jesus and dwells among us in the Spirit, giving us peace and the reassurance of God's presence in our loneliness. With that kind of acceptance, with that kind of support, how can we help but be confident in the future? How can we not reach out to each other in courage?

Rejoice! Unto you a child is born! Unto you, God gives a world of life and hope!
Have a merry Christmas season!

Yours in Christ, Kregg.

Children's Ministries

Our annual Christmas pageant will be held on December 14th during our 10:00 a.m. service.
There will be a rehearsal on December 13th at 2:00 p.m.

All Aboard the PUMC Express! – After the Christmas Pageant rehearsal on December 13th we will be having a "Polar Express" themed Christmas Party @ 3pm. Join us for games, music, crafts, cookie decorating, a hot cocoa station, and all-around fun and fellowship.

Thank you and a Merry and Blessed Christmas to all,
Angela Soto- White, Children's ministry coordinator

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Friendship Circle

Our December meeting will be on Monday, December 8. We will be having Christmas fun with games and a low/no cost gift exchange game. Please bring a small wrapped gift of something you already have hanging around your home like an unused candle, vase, picture frame, ornament, piece of jewelry, etc. or an item of less than $5 for a game to exchange presents. We will also be collecting new unused socks for Hope on a Mission.

Fellowship Discovery Luncheon

The December FDL will take place on Tuesday, **December 16 @ 12pm** (Please note this is the 3rd Tuesday in December). After a delicious luncheon, there will be a Christmas Carol sing-a-long. Please let us know by **Thursday, December 11th** if you plan to attend.
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Church Council Highlights

The Church Council met on November 5th. These were the highlights:

- The Community Nursery School and Harriet Tubman Academic Skills Center are both going well and have full enrollment.
- Christmas Eve Services will be held at 6:00 PM and 9:00 PM. There will also be a family Christmas story service held at 4:00 PM.
- A tentative 2026 budget was approved and will be finalized in December.
- New signs have been put up by the Trustees within the building and in the parking lot as part of our Protecting Our Rights policy.
- Many churches are dealing with large buildings which are not energy efficient. Our furnaces are old and small for the building, but upgrading them would be very expensive.
- A need that was recognized is a transportation ministry. Some people need rides in order to attend church services.
- There are currently 103 families on the list to receive Thanksgiving baskets.
- Substitute counters are still needed.
- The Council will hold a special Zoom meeting in December to review the budget and will meet again on January 7, 2026.

Thank You

I want to thank our loving church family for the many prayers, cards, and get well wishes that I received during my hospital stays. Thanks be to God. Lorraine Ricci

A huge thank you to Will and Cheryl Cass, who faithfully gather all the food donations each month and deliver them to the Veterans' Food Pantry at Castle Point. This ministry is incredibly meaningful, yet so often goes unrecognized. We are deeply grateful for their quiet, consistent service.

Notes from the Choir Room

Lord, before this fleeting season is upon us. Let me remember to walk slowly. Lord, bless my heart with Love and with quiet. Give my heart a leaning to hear carols. Grace our family with contentment, And the peace that comes only from You. Lord, help us to do less this busy season; Go less; stay closer to home; kneel more.

-Maryann Jindra (c 2000)

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS! Our choir room is alive with music! So what's new? I say that with "tongue in cheek". There are so much music for this busy season. Four Advent Sundays-one grand Children's Pageant-Christmas Eve-two Sundays after Christmas-Season of Epihany which lasts through January! Three file drawers of choral music holding about 75 pieces for this "fleeting season".

We add handbells-Joyful Ringers for adults, Halo Bells for children, Vocal Solos and duets, flute, piano, organ. Just deciding who, what, where to fit in one little choir room is daunting-thankfully we won't have every group at one time!!

We pray, plan, and do our very best to celebrate a Blessed Birth!!
Always In Christ's Service, Polly

Hymn Backgrounds
Jennifer Harmer

The other day I was talking with someone about one of the people who was our Minister of Music at Wappingers, and how at the end of every choir rehearsal, she read something about a hymn – it was either and informative bit about the hymn, similar to what I've been writing or a devotional focused on the hymn. She seemed to really like

reading about the hymns written by Isaac Watts. So, as we are headed into Advent and Christmas and singing all those favorite Christmas hymns I thought I'd write about a very popular Watts hymn, "Joy to the World."

Isaac Watts wrote "Joy to the World" in 1719. Watts (1674-1748) was born in Southampton and by the age of seven was writing respectable verses. When he was sixteen Watts went to London to study at the Academy of the Rev. Thomas Rowe. He eventually became assistant minister of the Independent Church on Berry Street in London and became pastor in 1702. In addition to being a pastor, Watts wrote many sermons, treatises, poems, and hymns. His first publication was done in 1720. Several of his hymns were written to be sung after his sermons, giving expression and meaning to whatever text he had preached on.

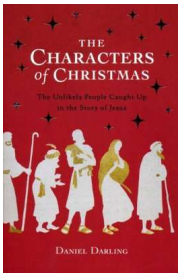
"Joy to the World" was written as a paraphrase of Psalm 98 and it was published in Psalms of David Imitated in 1719. In the mind of Watts, stanzas 1 and 2 focus on heaven and earth rejoicing at the coming of the king. Stanza 3 speaks of Christ's blessings extending over the realm of sin. Finally, Stanza 4 celebrates Christ's rule over the nations. The tune used for "Joy to the World" is called ANTIOCH and was composed by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) and adapted by Lowell Mason (1792-1872).

While we most associate this hymn with Christmas, the original intent was not written for Christmas. Even though it is a suggested hymn during Advent and Christmas for all three lectionary years. Hymnary writes, "Raised eyebrows at singing 'Joy to the World!' in July will lower as soon as the relationship to Psalm 98 becomes clear."

"Joy to the World" is found in 1,924 hymnals and if you are looking for it in our hymnal, you can find the text of on page 246.

(References from Hymnary.org)

Do you have a favorite hymn that you would like to know a little more about? All you have to do is let me know the name of the hymn. If you want to share something personal about your connection to the hymn, you can share that too. You can reach out by email (angelamidala@gmail.com) or phone (845-702-7290) or you can even catch me at church!



Advent & Christmas Sermon Series:
The Characters of Christmas

Beginning November 30th and continuing through January 11th, we'll journey together through The Characters of Christmas by Daniel Darling, a series that invites us to see the Nativity story with fresh eyes. Each week, we'll step into the lives of those who found themselves drawn into God's great story, Joseph and Mary, shepherds and wise men, Zechariah and Elizabeth, even Herod and the innkeeper, most of them ordinary people through whom God revealed extraordinary grace. Their stories remind us that Christmas is not only about a baby in a manger, but about the God who enters ordinary lives to bring light to the world. Join us each Sunday as we rediscover the wonder, hope, and joy of the season.

Angels – Angels- Everywhere!

Are you an angel? You are if you find it in your heart to help make a child's wish come true for Christmas. Time to dust off those wings- although we know you have all been busy providing for others all year.

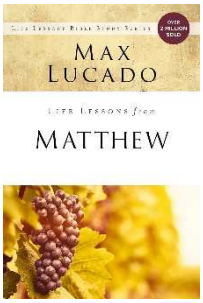
Just stop by The Narthex or Fellowship Hall beginning Sunday (**Nov 23, 2025)** pick an ornament from the board, put your name on the tag, **return it into the basket**, take the ornament that accompanies and fill a wish. Return your gifts to Fellowship Hall wrapped and marked with the Angel Tag by **December 10th**. Enjoy the holidays knowing you have brought a smile to a special new friend.

Please make sure to provide only one 'toy' and one clothing item. (Gifts are opened at a party and families find it difficult to explain why some gifts are more extravagant than others consider choosing more than one child if you want to provide more.) If you prefer- I would be glad to shop for you just let me know.

Please make checks payable to PUMC. You can give it to me directly or send through the offering marked accordingly. Thank you. For more info call Pam Terwilliger

Pastor's Book Study

Pastor's Book Study will resume in January on Tuesdays @ 10am. We will be reading



Life Lessons from Matthew: The Carpenter King
by Max Lucado.

Matthew accepted Christ's invitation to follow him and never turned back. He spent the rest of his life convincing folks that this carpenter was the King. Jesus gave the call and never took it back. The relationship Jesus had with Matthew can serve to convince us that if Jesus had a place for Matthew, a tax collector, he just might have a place for us, too.

Books are available in the office for $8.00. It is also available on Kindle Unlimited if you are a subscriber of that program.

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Share Your Favorite Christmas Carols!

We're preparing for our Christmas season by finding out what carols PUMC loves to sing. We would like for you to take a few minutes to make a couple of selections. Scan the QR code below or visit the link to select up to four of your favorite carols. You can also contact the office and let Karyn know your favorites. We will be singing Christmas carols during Advent and the weeks after Christmas, as well as December's Fellowship Discovery Luncheon. Get your requests in now!

https://gaborhome.com/christmas-carol-form
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Important December Dates

Monday, December 1st – Karyn Away through Friday

Wednesday, December 3rd – Finance @ 7pm

Monday, December 8th – Friendship Circle @ 12pm

Wednesday, December 10th – Trustees @ 7pm

Journey Deadline

Saturday, December 13th – Christmas Pageant Rehearsal @ 2pm

All Aboard the PUMC Express! @ 3pm

Sunday, December 14th – Christmas Pageant

Tuesday, December 23rd – Fellowship Discovery Luncheon @ 1pm

Tuesday, December 24th – Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 25th – Christmas Day

Tuesday, December 31 – New Years Eve

Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

4:00 pm – Christmas Story Service
led by Barb Adams

6:00 pm – Family Worship Service

9:00 pm – Traditional Worship Service

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

Deadline is Monday, December 8th

Given by

_____

(CHECK ONE) ☐ In loving memory of

☐ In honor of

_____

_____

Telephone _____

Number of poinsettias _____x $13 each = $ _____

Will you be taking your Poinsettia after the last Christmas Eve Service?

(CHECK ONE) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Return this form to the church office or call (845)452-2933 to order.