

POUGHKEEPSIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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The Journey April 2026

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The Deadline for the April Journey is Wednesday April 15



"We love because God first loved us."

1 John 4:19

Scholar, teacher, novelist, and poet Robert Penn Warren once told a reporter that "a young man's ambition is to get along in the world and make a place for himself. Half your life goes that way... then, if you're lucky, you make terms with life and you get released."

That word *released* captures something profound about the Christian life. For much of our lives we feel the pressure to prove ourselves, to build something that will last, to secure our place in the world. Yet the deeper truth we eventually discover is that life's real meaning is not found in the legacy we construct for ourselves, but in the relationships we nurture, the love we share, and the good we leave behind for others.

In other words, the life that matters most is a life shaped by love.

The Christian faith tells us that love is not merely a virtue among many others. Scripture goes even further. In the First Letter of John we are told that **God is love**. Love is not simply something God does. Love belongs to the very nature of God's being.

But God's love is different from the love we often see in the world. Human love sometimes becomes self-focused. We love because it makes us feel fulfilled or affirmed. God's love moves in the opposite direction. God loves not for God's own benefit, but so that the beloved might flourish. As Jesus says, God's desire is that we might "have life, and have it abundantly."

Easter is the ultimate expression of that love.

On the cross we see the depth of God's self-giving love, the One who lays down his life for others. In the resurrection we see the power of that love, a love stronger than death itself. Easter tells us that life shaped by love is not wasted. It is eternal.

The church exists to live out that love in visible ways. As the hands and feet of Christ, we are called to embody a different vision of life than the one offered by a restless world. In this community we learn to care for one another, to serve our neighbors, and to practice the kind of self-giving love that reflects the heart of God.

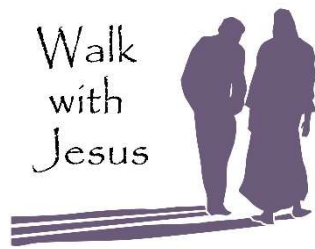
And when we live this way, something remarkable happens. We discover that we ourselves are “released.” Released from the endless pressure to prove ourselves. Released from the illusion that life is about securing our own place. Released instead into the freedom of loving as God has loved us.

May God bless you and your homes this Easter season. May the peace and joy of the risen Christ fill your hearts as you gather with family and friends. And may we remember always that we were created in the image of the One who is love, and that in loving one another we reflect the very life of God.

Yours in Christ,
Kregg



Holy Week



Each evening during Holy Week we gather for a brief, quiet service that invites us to walk with Jesus through the final days of his earthly life. These half-hour services are intentionally simple and reflective, centered on scripture, prayer, and calm music. The focus is not on the leader but on the Christ candle, which begins the week among the congregation and gradually moves down the center aisle toward the altar, symbolizing Christ’s journey toward the cross. By Good Friday it rests alone on the altar, and its flame is finally extinguished as we remember Christ’s death. These services allow us to slow down and enter the story of Holy Week more deeply, so that when Easter morning comes, we feel not only the joy of resurrection but also the weight of the love that made it possible.

Each service begins at **7:00 PM** and lasts about **30 minutes**.

Children's Ministry News



Children's ministries is happy to announce our annual Vacation Bible School! PUMC and CDA will once again this year be combining forces for a fabulous three evenings of fellowship and praise for the children in our community. We are currently looking for adults volunteers to join forces with the volunteers from CDA. Date: July 9-11

Sunday May 31st is Children's Day! Our Sunday school will be leading the worship service on that day so the children will be spending a lot of time practicing.

Thank you
Angela White, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Fellowship Discovery Luncheon - April 28



Our next Fellowship Discovery Luncheon will take place on Tuesday, April 28 @ 12pm. A representative from Hudson Valley Hospice will be presenting a program about Advanced Care Planning. Please reserve your spot no later than Thursday, March 23.

If you or someone you know has something that you would be interested in presenting at a Fellowship Discovery Luncheon please reach out to Pastor Kregg or Karyn in the office.



The Church Council met on Wednesday, March 4. Highlights included:

- Programs at the Tubman Terrace Academic Skills Program are going well. Most grants for 2026 have been received.
- The Community Nursery School is actively seeking new families for the fall program and has ramped up social media marketing.
- Plans are in place for the Easter event on March 28th as well as the Children's Day service on May 31st. Planning for Vacation Bible School has already started.
- The Finance Committee is seeking auditors and has moved their meetings to the second Wednesday of alternate months. Negative ordinary income is lower than at this time last year.
- The staff is stable, doing an outstanding job, and appreciative of the raise they received.
- The Youth Ministry programs are well received, and youth will be involved in several upcoming programs.
- Meaningful discussions have been held on current issues and the ways they relate to the Old Testament in the adult Bible Study classes.
- Confirmands recently visited St. Gregory's Orthodox Church and are starting to work on their Statements of Faith.
- Holy Week and Easter services plans are in place, with a few more volunteers needed.
- A discussion on being intentional about making the church a welcoming space for people of all ages was held, with many suggestions for ways to reach out to others.
- The next Council meeting has been moved to Wednesday, April 8th so it will not conflict with Holy Week services.

Notes from the Choir Room



*"Spring has now unwrapped the flowers, day is fast reviving,
Life in all her growing powers towards the light is striving.
All the world with beauty fills, gold the green enhancing;
Flowers make glee among the hill, and set the meadows dancing."
Piae Cantiones, 1552, translated by Percy Dearmer, 1928*

AND SO, we begin the celebration of CHRIST'S RESURRECTION! We welcome EASTER and the full bloom of SPRING! I am sure that-especially after the storms of March- our hearts are singing HALLELUJAH, CHRIST IS RISEN! The tradition of singing this music from Handel's Messiah will once again fill our sanctuary. EVERYONE IS INVITED TO SING!!!! Music will be an insert in our bulletin. Anyone who wishes to come to the chancel and sing with the Choir is welcome! MESSIAH scores with marked pages await you!

*"Praise the Maker, all ye saints; He with glory girt you,
He who skies and meadows paints fashioned all your virtue;
Praise Him seers, heroes, kings, heralds of perfection;
Brothers, praise Him, for He brings all to resurrection!"*

Piae Cantiones, 1552, translated by Percy Dearmer, 1928

IN CHRIST'S SERVICE, Polly James



Hymn Background
Jenn Harmer



When this article is read, we will likely be in the middle of or just at the end of Holy Week. This past Sunday, our closing hymn was "Lord of the Dance," which is one of my favorites – as well as several members of my own family. I have great memories of singing this song in various locations – including with youth group while we were away for a week on a mission trip, where my dad was one of the chaperones. While singing it this past Sunday, I thought – what a great idea for my Journey article!

But then I hit a snag. I can tell you who wrote the hymn, how long the hymn writer lived, and when the hymn was written – no problem! “Lord of the Dance” was written by Sydney Carter (1915-2004) in 1963. But then I was met with the following sentence from my usual resource, Hymnary.org, “Hymnary.org does not have biographical information about this person.”

So, I put my research skills to the test and went about finding some additional information about Sydney Carter. Unlike many other hymn writers, Carter was a historian by training as well as a poet, songwriter, and folk musician who lived in London. The music he wrote was a mix of music that was both religious and non-religious with his performances starting from humble beginnings in pubs and clubs to singing with names like Pete Seeger and Judy Collins.

The hymn tune used in “Lord of the Dance” is called “SIMPLE GIFTS.” It is attributed to Joseph Brackett (1767-1882), who was an elder of The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, also known as the Shakers. The tune SIMPLE GIFTS was an adaptation of Aaron Copland’s ballet “Appalachian Spring.”

What I find so unique about this hymn is how it goes through, in just a few verses, Christ’s birth, mission, death, and resurrection. Maybe that is why we sang it at mission trips when I was in youth groups – what an easy way to share Jesus, and hope that someone would be willing to ask more. “Lord of the Dance” fits in any time of the Christian Year in all three lectionary years.

“Lord of the Dance” is found in 55 hymnals and if you are looking for it in our hymnal, you can find the text of on page 261.

(References from Hymnary.org, Stainer & Bell - <https://stainer.co.uk/composer/sydney-carter/>, and The Guardian - <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/mar/17/guardianobituaries.religion>)

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 or phone or you can even catch me at church!



Youth Group

We are in the season for school concerts and plays. Our youth group contains talented musicians, thespians, and artists, and we have enjoyed catching as many of their events as we can, with more to come in April!



Speaking of April, here is our upcoming schedule, with all meetings being Saturdays from 5-7pm unless otherwise indicated:

Sat, April 4th - No youth group, have a Happy and Blessed Easter!

Sat, April 11th - Hope on a Mission meal preparation

Sat, April 18th - Lesson & Games

Sun, April 19th, 2pm - Play "Frozen" at Arlington High School; leaders plan to go this day, but the play is showing Friday thru Sunday; more info to follow

Sat, April 25th - Holy Week Escape Room at PUMC

Let us explain this last event just a bit more. First, April 25th is NOT Holy Week, but with Holy Week also being spring vacation, we found that our attendance would be light, so we leaders wanted to plan this very special activity for a time that was better for everyone's calendars. Second, yes, it really will be an on-premise escape room event with challenges that are Holy Week themed. There will be fun, there will be team-building, but there will also be much opportunity for learning and reflection during this special experience.

PUMC youth group is open to all youth in grades 6-12. We meet on Saturdays, 5-7pm. Friends are always welcome!! Please contact Gwen or Patty for more information.

REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Our members: Steve Allen, Barbara Bates, Cheryl Cass, Ron Cole, Dylan Coughlin, Sue Davis, Sandra DeGuzman, Irene Feller, Veronica Gordon, Emily Griess, Doris Hammel, Gwen Higgins, Pat Hughes, Donna Jonnigan, Danny Jones, Samson Marrine Lee, Betty Longobardi, Lizzy Merolle, Millie Milkovich, Kathleen Nicodemus, Michelle Olavarria, Ray Polivka, Karla Quinlan, Lorraine Ricci, Robert Schmidt, Diana Silverman, Michelle Simonis, Catherine White, Sarah-Grace White, Gaynelle Zehnacker-Coon, Marilyn Zier.

Friends of our church in your prayers: Georgia Kustas-Beurket, Cris and John Burke, Joshell Coleman, Jordan Fidler, Allison and Chad Hagner, Scott Kara, Edgar Martinez, Hilary McAllister, Rob Post, Jean Slater, Wayne Surico, Ronald Tomaso, Jackie Triguero, Clifford Zier. All the innocents affected by wars and conflicts around the world.

Members of the military, active and/or retired, in your prayers: Michael Clear, Staff Sergeant in the Army, Joshua Lord, 1-69 Infantry Medical Platoon Sergeant, NYC; Randal Middleton, Naples, Italy Naval Base, Major Jason Oliver, Texas.

Please look over the “Remember in Our Prayers” list and contact the office (845-452-2933) with any names that are out of date.



Thank you!

Dear Friends,
My sincere thanks to all of the PUMC sisters and brothers who prayed for me, sent cards and notes and cared for me during my recent illness. The doctors say that I am healed and I am so grateful. With Much Love, Sand Pullinger

Thank you for supporting the Mid-Hudson Love INC Cookie Walk. Love INC appreciates the use of the church as well as the many bakers and volunteers that helped make the Cookie Walk a success. \$6,620 was raised for Mid-Hudson Love INC to help those less fortunate in our area.

Important April Dates

Wednesday, April 1st – Calligraphy Class @ 2:30 pm

Worship Service @ 7pm

Thursday, April 2nd – Worship Service @ 7pm

Friday, April 3rd – Worship Service @ 7pm

Saturday, April 4th – Somber Prayer Walk @ 10am

Sunday, April 5th – Easter Sunday – He is Risen!

Wednesday, April 8th – Church Council @ 7pm

Monday, April 13th – Friendship Circle @ 1pm

Ted Talk Watch Party @ 7pm

Wednesday, April 15th – Journey Deadline

Wednesday, April 22nd – Trustees @ 7pm

Friday, April 24th – Collate Journey @ 8:30am

Tuesday, April 28th – Fellowship Discovery Luncheon @ 12pm



The Stillness & Ink Calligraphy Gathering

Presented by Jim Bennett

Learning graceful letters with gentle guidance

Beginning Wednesday, April 1 @ 2:30pm in Room 33

A welcoming fellowship for new learners and experienced calligraphers. Our first session will introduce the basic materials and the beautifully simple EZScript letters. Whether you're picking up a calligraphy pen for the first time or returning to a familiar practice, you're invited to join us for a calm, creative hour of beautiful writing together. Jim will provide the marker pens for the first class. The class will meet on Wednesdays @ 2:30pm.



Holy Week Schedule

Saturday, March 28

Kid's Easter Event "Stepping into the Spirit" @ 1pm

Sunday, March 29

Palm Sunday

Monday March 30, Tuesday March 31, Wednesday April 1

Worship Service @ 7pm

Thursday, April 2

Maundy Thursday Service @ 7pm

Friday, April 3

Good Friday Service @ 7pm



Saturday, April 4

Somber Prayer Walk @ 10am

Sunday, April 5

Easter Sunday