POUGHKEEPSIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
TELEPHONE (845) 452-2933 || WEBSITE: POKUMC.COM
EMAIL: Poughkeepsieumc@gmail.com

The Journey

July 2026

PUMC STAFF

Kregg Gabor
PASTOR
Karyn Millham
SECRETARY
Polly James
CHOIR DIRECTOR
Stephen Siktberg
ORGANIST
Angela Soto-White
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES
Neal Pickett
CUSTODIAN

PUMC VOLUNTEER

Pat McCullough
HANDBELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

PUMC AFFILIATES LEADERSHIP STAFF

Kat Viebrock
COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL DIRECTOR
Kacy Sharpe
DIRECTOR OF HARRIET TUBMAN ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER

The Deadline for the July Journey is Wednesday, July 15

AI, Power, and the Question of the Human Soul, Part 1

Who Is My Neighbor?

[29] But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus,
"And who is my neighbor?"…
[36] "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to
the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" [37] He said, "The one who
showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."
— Luke 10:29, 36–37

There is a great deal of concern today about artificial intelligence. Some of it is overblown, some of it is under-informed, and some of it is probably not worried enough.

The public conversation often focuses on practical fears: Will AI take jobs? Will students use it to cheat? Will it spread misinformation? Will it become smarter than we are? These are important questions. But beneath them is a deeper one: What kind of people will be holding this power?

Technology does not arrive in a moral vacuum. The society that produces AI shapes it. A hammer can build a house or break a window. A printing press can spread scripture or propaganda. The internet can connect the lonely or inflame the angry. Artificial intelligence is no different, except that its reach may be greater and its speed far faster than anything we have known before.

A genuine threat lies in AI advancement transforming into a competition between differing political and ethical viewpoints.

In the West, AI is often shaped by consumer capitalism. I don't mean to imply that everyone participating has ill intentions. Many people working in technology are thoughtful, responsible, and genuinely trying to do good. But the system itself tends to reward profit, speed, attention, convenience, personalization, and market dominance. The danger is not always tyranny by force. It may be tyranny by appetite.

AI can learn to give us more of what we already want: more entertainment, more outrage, more convenience, more affirmation, more distraction. It can reduce the human person to a consumer, a data point, a productivity unit, or a bundle of preferences.

In authoritarian systems, the danger looks different. There AI can become an instrument of surveillance, control, censorship, military power, and national dominance. The individual is not treated primarily as a consumer to be captured, but as a citizen-subject to be managed. The temptation there is tyranny by order.

So we face two distorted visions of humanity.
One says: You are what you desire.
The other says: You are what the state requires.
But Jesus asks a different question.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus refuses to let "neighbor" remain an abstract category. My neighbor is not a problem to be managed, a market to be captured, or a subject to be controlled. For a Christian, a neighbor is the wounded person on the road, a person deserving mercy.
Objectification is why AI raises such deep questions. Any technology with this much power will eventually reveal what we believe a human being is.

- Is my neighbor a consumer?
- A voter?
- A threat?
- A data source?
- A rival? A burden?
- Or is my neighbor someone to whom I owe mercy, a relationship?

Where does this leave the average Christian?

This is the point where we will resume next month.

Yours in Christ, Kregg

~~~~~~

Church Wide Yard Sale

We are tentatively planning a church wide yard sale on Saturday, August 22. **We will not be collecting items**; but we will be "renting" a space for individuals to come and sell their items. Please contact the office (845-452-2933) if you are interested.

~~~~~~

The Church Council met on Wednesday, June 3. Highlights included:

- An interactive program is planned for Sunday School during July.
- Casa de Adoracion will sponsor Vacation Bible School on July 10th and 11th.
- Adult Bible Study classes will continue during the summer months.
- The Social Justice Committee has started interviewing long-time members and will share their stories. The books in the Lounge will be sorted and reorganized.
- Choir rehearsal will end on June 18th and the choir will meet before the Sunday service for the summer. Polly James is donating a Clarinova to take the place of the current keyboard.
- The Harriet Tubman Academic Skills Center is still seeking additional funds for their summer camp.
- A staff appreciation lunch will be held by the Staff Parish Relations Committee on July 19th.
- Consideration is being given to expanding the Narthex to create a larger, more friendly social space. An Ad Hoc committee will be established to study the feasibility and costs.
- A Parish grant will be submitted to expand the Fellowship Discovery lunches.
- The next Council meeting will be held on Zoom on Wednesday, July 1st at 7:00 PM.

From the Trustees

Please be aware that the parking lot will be resealed on Monday, July 8 and Tuesday, July 9. The church will be open, but parking will be affected.

SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM ENLIGHTENMENTS

NEW ADDITION TO ONLINE GLOSSARY OF TERMS [1]

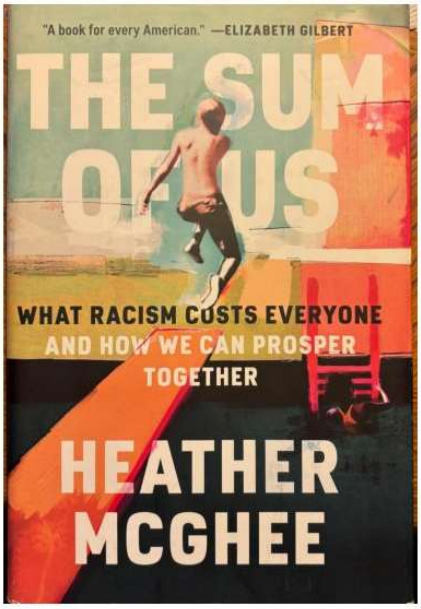
86 The slang term 86 means to get rid of, discard, cancel, or refuse service to someone [Merriam-Webster}. It is most commonly used in two ways:

- **As a noun/verb (food & beverage):** Used to indicate that an establishment is out of a specific ingredient or menu item (e.g., "We've 86'd the chicken").
- **As a verb (people):** To throw someone out of a bar or restaurant, or ban them from entering (e.g., "That rowdy customer was 86'd from the premises").

•

BOOK OF THE MONTH [2]

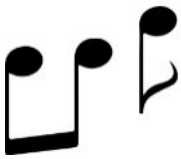
The Sum of Us
Written by *Heather McGhee*



Many of us often wonder how we, as a country, have become so adamantly divided in our views. This meticulously researched book reveals the many twists and turns that government policies and social customs have made to disadvantage one group of citizens over another. For many, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is just a dream, rather than a right guaranteed by the constitution. This book is a revealing exploration of past history in which racial bias limited everyone's ability to pursue happiness and speculates about what is lost to all of society when any group is suppressed. It is written as a series of interesting stories and interesting events that capture the reader's interest in a way one can not forget.

[1] When every there a a new addition to the Social Justice Team's *Glossary of Terms*, it will be noted in *The Journey* and the Social Justice Team's bulletin board.

[2] The book is available in the Social Justice Lending Library located in the church's Lounge.



Hymn Background
Jenn Harmer

A few Sundays ago, the choir sang an anthem to a tune called "Tallis' Canon," which has been used in several settings. When I came home from Annual Conference, I was considering writing about familiar tune names we had sung during our time in Stamford but then read the first chapter in a book my mom had bought back in 2011. The book, Presidential Praise: Our Presidents and Their Hymns, was written by C. Edward Spann and Michael E. Williams, Sr. in 2008. Mom happened to see the author, probably at the FDR Library, and had one of them (C. Edward Spann) sign in. Each chapter has a very brief biography of the president followed by their tie to music and hymns. Chapter 1, for George Washington, noted that while he himself was not very musical, he encouraged it in his grandchildren. And Washington's favorite hymn was called "How Happy Is He Born and Taught" which was set to the tune of…Tallis' Canon.

So, a bit of a change in direction for this month's entry as I mostly want to focus on the tune name.

Tallis' Canon was written by Thomas Tallis (1505-1585) in 1561. He was one of the few Tudor musicians who served during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth I. Tallis was a court organist and composer starting in 1543 until his death for both Roman Catholic masses and Anglican liturgies.

The Canon was written as the eighth of nine Psalm tunes composed by Tallis for Matthew Parker's Whole Psalter Translated into English Metre. Today it is found accompanying hymns in 447 hymnals, including "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night" in our United Methodist Hymnal on page 682. Which, if you look, you will find some familiar words in the last stanza of the hymn.

(References from Hymnary.org & Presidential Praise: Our Presidents and Their Hymns, by C. Edward Spann and Michael E. Williams, Sr.)

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.

Notes from the Choir Room

"There's a spirit of love in this place. You can't see it but, it's there just as precious as the air. There's a spirit of love in this place."

-Mark Miller, 2003

Dear reader, it's July, and our choir room is strangely quiet. No choir rehearsals on Thursdays. No bells on Tuesday or after church on Sundays. BUT, if you are very quiet, you just might hear a song or two. Just standing in the room you can feel the love and laughter that is shared by those who enter.

Then, on Sundays we gather to prepare our music for Worship. The room comes ALIVE! We miss our Thursday rehearsals; still, we are grateful for the gift of music and friendship. The quote above is from a song that I have shared with my campers at Singing Eagle Lodge. You don't have to be camper to sing this! I will have the choir learn it and sing it for you!

"There's a spirit of love in this place.
There's a presence of peace in this place.
You can't see it but it's there; just as precious as the air.
O sing with gladness! Our songs we gladly raise.
There's a spirit of love in this place!"

-Mark Miller, 2003

In Christ's service, Polly James

~~~~~~

Fellowship Discovery Luncheon

There will be no Fellowship Discovery Luncheon in July, or August. We will resume in September. If you have an idea for a speaker please contact Pastor Kregg
~~~~~~

Children's Ministry News

During July we will be taking an adventure through the desert for 3 weeks in July. Come join us on Sunday mornings for fun games, snacks, arts and crafts and other activities as we take a journey through the desert.

There will be no Sunday School during the month of August

Happy summer! Angela White, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Important July Dates

Wednesday, July 1st – Church Council @ 7pm

Saturday, July 4th – Independence Day

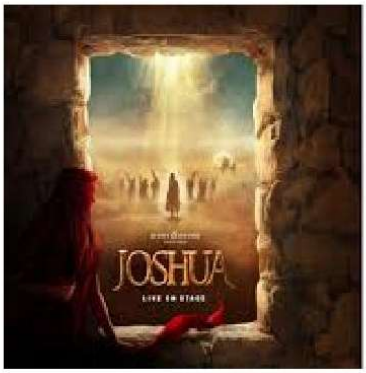
Monday, July 6th – Parking Lot Sealing

Tuesday, July 7th – Parking Lot Sealing

Wednesday, July 15th – Journey Deadline

Sunday, July 19th – Staff Luncheon

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



Bus Trip to Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA

October 28th - 29th

Sponsored by Poughkeepsie United Methodist Church

Trip Itinerary

- Leave PUMC parking lot at 8 am Wednesday morning
- Brief Rest Stop along the way
- Gourmet Box Lunch (cost included) at Kitchen Kettle Village - 2 hours for lunch and shopping
- Check in at Bird-in-Hand Inn
- Wednesday Night Dinner at Bird-in-Hand Inn (cost included)
- Wednesday Night - Optional Games and Fellowship in Conference Room
- Breakfast at Bird-in-Hand Inn (cost included)
- Thursday Matinee Performance of Joshua (cost included)
- Lunch at Rick's Amish Farm (cost included) then head back home
- Arrive back to PUMC at 8 pm

Cost

Single Room $467.00 per person
Double Room $386.00 per person
Triple Room $362.00 per person
Quad Room $351.00 per person

For more information...

Contact
Dale Borchert at Daleborchert@gmail.com
cell # 845-337-1281
or
Heidi Mills at espinozah22@yahoo.com
cell # 845-416-8543

Non-refundable $50 Deposit to hold your spot due by August 1st
Full Payment (remainder of cost) due by September 1st

Gabriela Andujar - McNeil graduated from Our Lady of Lourdes High School. She will be pursuing a nursing degree at Sacred Heart University. Gabriela is the daughter of Rosaura and Don.

Reilly Cannon graduated from Saratoga Springs High School. She will be attending the University of Massachusetts at Springfield. Reilly is the daughter of Kim and Brian, and the granddaughter of Marcy & Dennis Conners.

Brooke Davis graduated from Spackenkill High School. She will be studying Physical Education at SUNY Cortland. Brooke is the granddaughter of Tom and Mary Knickerbocker.

Brayden Davis graduated from the United States Naval Submarine School in Charleston, South Carolina. He will now be serving on the USS New Jersey in Norfolk, VA. Brayden is the grandson of Tom and Mary Knickernbocker.

Thomas John Langan graduated from Salve Regina University where he studied Political Science and Philosophy. He will be pursuing his Master's Degree in Information Science and Philosophy at the University of Buffalo after a summer residency in Austria. Thomas is the grandson of John and Debi McGarvey.

Elizabeth Lewis graduated from Suny New Paltz with a degree in marketing. She is the adopted granddaughter of Polly James.

Riley Marden graduated from Arlington High School. He will be attending Maritime College in the fall in the Marine Transportation Department. Riley is the son of Stephanie and James and the brother of Tyler and Vanessa.

Shamara Ameena Wethington Mizell graduated from Quinnipiac University with a Master's Degree in Art of Teaching. She was the commencement speaker at the graduation. She plans to pursue a second Master's Degree in Special Education while working as an elementary teacher. Shamara is the daughter of Nathesia and Dezzy and the granddaughter of Ira & Mary Wethington.

Karega Wood graduated from Dutchess Community College with a degree in Visual Arts. He is the son of Donna and Karega and the grandson of Veronica Gordon.

Daniel Jacob VanDam graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in Chemical Engineering. He is the grandson of Polly James.