

POUGHKEEPSIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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The Journey August 2026

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The Deadline for the September Journey is Wednesday, August 19



AI, Power, and the Question of the Human Soul, Part 2

What Does the Lord Require?

*"He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?"*

— Micah 6:8, NRSVUE

Last month, we began our non-technical discussion of the rise of AI as a struggle between competing visions of the human person. One vision says, "You are what you desire." Another says, "You are what the state requires."

This month, we continue by introducing a third vision, one I believe offers a needed corrective: What does God require of humanity?

The Christian faith says something different from both consumerism and authoritarianism. Human power is accountable to God, who requires justice, kindness, and humility.

This understanding is more significant than we might assume. If human beings are accountable to God, then a society cannot reduce them to economic value, political usefulness, genetic survival, national identity, or preference. The weak, elderly, disabled, unborn, foreigners, enemies, and inconvenient persons all matter.

One of the profound endowments of Christianity to the West's moral framework is the notion that authority must acknowledge something beyond its own influence. The state is not divine. Neither is the market. And the universe's center is not to be found in the ego. Even kings are not God. When rulers forget this, their legitimacy erodes. History is filled with kings losing their crowns and revolutions beginning.

In its most admirable state, the West has upheld a spirit of self-denial, believing life finds its completeness not solely through self-preservation, but through offering oneself for principles that are genuine, virtuous, and sacred. Christians see this most clearly in Jesus Christ, who did not grasp at power but gave himself for the life of the world. As Christ gave

himself for us, we are called to give ourselves for others. But here is where our present danger becomes clear. We still use words like justice, freedom, compassion, dignity, and rights, even as we disagree about what anchors those words.

G. K. Chesterton once warned that when society cuts the virtues loose from one another, they do not innocently disappear. They wander unrestrained and cause damage. Justice without mercy becomes vengeance. Freedom without virtue becomes appetite. Compassion without truth becomes sentimentality. Tolerance without discernment becomes surrender. Courage without humility becomes fanaticism.

When we lose the anchor, the virtues do not vanish. They become untethered. They become tools in the hands of whoever holds power, has the loudest voice, or has the most effective technology.

Hence, AI is more than just a technical problem. It is a spiritual issue.

AI will not only answer questions. It will also amplify assumptions. It will reflect what we reward, what we tolerate, what we desire, and what we worship. If our society no longer knows what justice is for, or what freedom is for, or what mercy is for, then our machines will not magically know either.

Micah reminds us that God does not begin with efficiency, dominance, or appetite. God asks for justice, kindness, and humility.

Justice, kindness, and humility are not theological abstractions or insignificant referents in Scripture; they are complex and central concepts that shape Christian moral meaning.

Justice asks: "How responsible am I for my neighbor?"

Kindness asks, "How do I show mercy to my neighbor?"

Humility asks: "How do I remember I am not God?"

These are reasonable questions to carry into the age of artificial intelligence.

Next month, our attention will shift to the fundamental concept underlying these ideas as we consider the significance of proclaiming humans as created in God's likeness.

Yours in Christ, Gregg

Church Wide Yard Sale

Due to lack of interest we will not be having a church wide yard sale on August 22.



The Church Council met on Wednesday, July 1. Highlights included:

A special meeting was held on Zoom on July 1st.

- The possibility of expanding the Narthex to provide a social area and parent viewing area was approved. A proposal will be presented to the Trustees with the suggestion of appointing an Ad Hoc committee to investigate the project.
- Approval was given to consider developing a Memorial Garden in the Courtyard in memory of several of our members. Suggestions included low-maintenance bushes and a bench on hardscape.

Joyful Ringers & Halo Bells

The handbells will ring again soon starting mid-September!



Joyful Ringers is for adults mid-teens to 100! We will rehearse for an hour Tuesday evenings starting either 6:00 or 6:30. Halo Bells is for children 4th grade to mid-teens. We will rehearse after Sunday services for 35-45 minutes.

Anyone interested please contact me or the PUMC office. If you are curious but not sure, I can meet you in the choir room and let you check out the bells and see how our music is marked. If you know left from right and can count to four then you can do it!

Pat McCullough 845-240-6451 pat.sightandsound@gmail.com



Hymn Background Jenn Harmer



Several organists I follow on TikTok have lately been playing various national anthems as teams succeed, or not, in the World Cup. This got me thinking about how sometimes the same tunes are heard as hymns and as national anthems.

“Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” was written by John Newton (1725-1807) in 1779. Newton was born in a Christian home, but when he was 7, his mother died. This led to joining his father at sea and eventually grew into an abandoned and godless sailor. However, a chance reading of something by Thomas à Kempis and the influence of his future wife, Mary Catlett, led to his return to Christian faith. When he turned 39 Newton entered regular ministry as the Curate of Olney and in his life wrote numerous published works consisting of sermons, letters, devotional aids, and hymns – saying of his hymns that they were “the fruit and expression of his own experience.”

The tune used for “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” was written by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) in 1797 and is entitled AUSTRIAN HYMN. Haydn began his musical career as a choir boy in Vienna, as well as becoming a music teacher, composer and eventually served as music director for the Esterhazy family from 1761-1790. The tune itself was originally written as a birthday gift to Emperor Francis II and was originally the Austrian imperial anthem and now today serves as the tune for the German national anthem.

Psalm 87:3 is quoted in the opening line of the hymn and the theme of each of the stanzas but also has references to many scriptures including Isaiah 4:5-6 and 33:20-21. It fits during Ordinary time in all three lectionary years. “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” can be found in 1,378 hymnals and is number 731 in the United Methodist Hymnal.

(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.

Notes from the Choir Room



**"All things shall perish from under the sky.
Music alone shall live, Music alone shall live,
Music alone shall live, Never to die."**

Traditional German Round

Sunday morning and the choir is warming up-checking we are all the same page. The room's AC is on; we try to stop laughing; we try to focus; Stephen S. plays a starting note; suddenly music fills the air!! After a week of no singing (horrors!), we breathe and begin. OH NO-NOT ANOTHER ROUND..... So begins our forty-minutes of "getting our act together".

Rounds, also known as canons, have been around for centuries. There are sacred, secular, silly, rounds and most easy to learn. I once tried to make a list of all the rounds I've learned-gave up at about thirty.

In the middle of August, I will again return as Music Honcho to Singing Eagle Lodge. Someone always brings us a new round. Or, a familiar round with new words. Ask me about verse three of "I Love the Mountains".....HOWEVER, "Dona Nobis Pacem" is my all-time favorite-second only to "All Things Shall Perish". You can join in singing this round with the choir during August!!

Until then, tell me your favorite round!
Always in Christ's service! Polly

Fellowship Discovery Luncheon



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



Children's Ministry News

There will be no Sunday School during the month of August. We will resume classes on September 13th.

On September 13th we will be celebrating the beginning of the 2026-2027 Sunday School year with a brunch immediately after worship.

Happy summer!

Angela White, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Strength and Balance

We are hoping to restart our Strength and Balance class on Tuesdays and Fridays @ 9:00am. We decided to change to Tuesday mornings so that people who would like to can stay for Pastor's Book Study @ 10am. Please speak to Kaye Schrock, Geri Hoernes, or the church office if you are interested.

Love INC



Saturday, September 12, 2026

2:00-4:00pm

More Information about needed items coming soon.



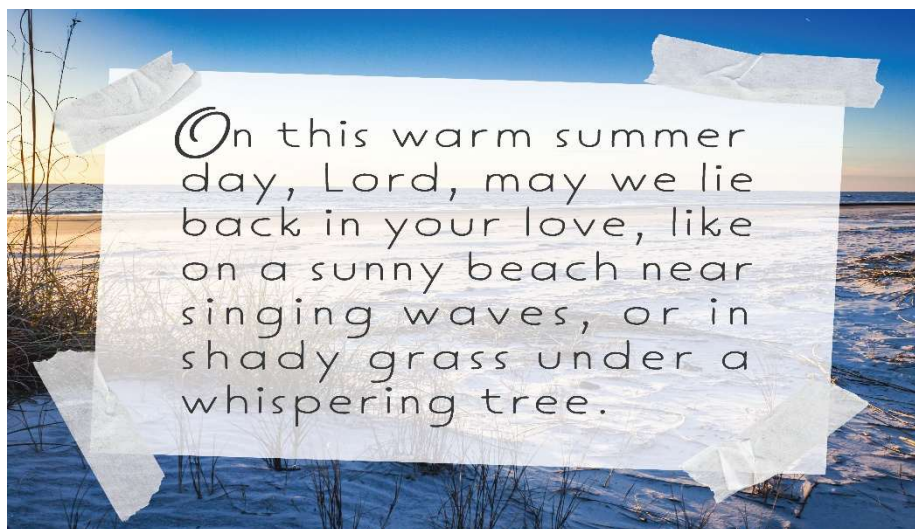
REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Our members: Steve Allen, Barbara Bates, Cheryl Cass, Ron Cole, Dylan Coughlin, Sue Davis, Sandra DeGuzman, Irene Feller, 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, Robert Schmidt, Michelle Simonis, Sarah-Grace White, Marilyn Zier.

Friends of our church in your prayers: Georgia Kustas-Beurket, Cris and John Burke, Joshell Coleman, Jordan Fidler, Allison and Chad Hagner, Lorry Hetzer, Scott Kara, Edgar Martinez, Hilary McAllister, Rob Post, Jean Slater, Wayne Surico, Ronald Tomaso, Jackie Triguero, Elaine Wintergreen, Harold White, 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 let Karyn (845-452-2933 or poughkeepsieumc@gmail.com) know if there are any outdated names on this list. Thank you very much.



SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM ENLIGHTENMENTS

NEW ADDITION TO ONLINE GLOSSARY OF TERMS ¹

habeas corpus

A writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, especially to secure the person's release unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention.

Article I of the United States Constitution deals with the legislative branch of government. Section 9, Clause 2, of this Article provides that "The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or invasion the public Safety may require it."

The writ has been suspended only four times in U.S. history:

- When President Abraham Lincoln did so during the Civil War in an action that Congress, which had not been meeting at the time, later vindicated.
- During the violence that accompanied congressional Reconstruction after the Civil War, in some South Carolina counties.
- During an insurrection in the Philippines in 1905.
- In Hawaii after the Japanese attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor.

remigrate

Dictionary Definition

At its core, remigrate (verb) or remigration (noun) simply means to move back. For example, a person who emigrates from their home country to work abroad and later decides to return permanently to their native country is said to "remigrate".

Political & Government Usage

The term is increasingly used in political discourse to describe government-pushed efforts to have immigrants and asylum-seekers return to their countries of origin. This can range from formal deportation programs to policies encouraging voluntary departures or "self-deportation"

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.



PUMC "Autumn Fair"

Saturday, October 17 & Sunday, October 18.

Faith in action!! Would you like to help us in any way? Please let us know! A great time to fellowship with others.

Summertime reminder - what we will be needing

Homemade - We hope you are using your creativity this summer to make/create items for our ""homemade"" booth. There is still time!!

Baskets - how about creating new items such as - a lovely container with traditional pickles or watermelon pickles, soup mix in a jar (like those 15 beans), cookie mix in a pretty jar, cocoa mix in special container with spoon to use, cutting board with spreading knife & Crackers/Cheese, the fun Movie night snack basket, Italian dinner night, homemade granola mixes, salsa & seasoning salts, Jam & jellies, favorite Brownie box mix in a pan (maybe extra chips & icing) ice cream toppings in basket (hot fudge,, caramel sauce etc) Items that can be gifts for the hostess, birthdays, Thanksgiving or Christmas. Surprise us with your own idea!!

Jewelry - Making room for new? Those you don't wear any more? Also we like small purses, scarves, vintage evening gloves,

Bake Shoppe & Dessert Booth - great time to review your recipes - bake us your favorite cookies, small loaf breads, small and large pies, brownies, dessert bars. We also need special desserts: cheese cake, pecan pie, lovely cakes, homemade cream puffs, lemon meringue pie