

POUGHKEEPSIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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The Journey September 2026

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The Deadline for the October Journey is September, August 16



AI, Power, and the Question of the Human Soul, Part 3

In Our Image, or God's?

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

— Genesis 1:26

Over the last two months, we have been exploring some of the big-picture questions posed by artificial intelligence. First, I suggested that AI reflects the moral and political culture in which it is built. Last month, we explored the question of what God requires of us: justice, kindness, and humility.

This month, we finish this introduction to what will surely be an unfolding conversation about AI, power, and the question of the human soul.

Genesis tells us that human beings are made in the image of God. This constitutes a central assertion of the Christian faith regarding humanity. We are not merely consumers, citizens, workers, voters, organisms, or bundles of desire. We are creatures made by God, loved by God, accountable to God, and called into relationship with God and neighbor.

That conviction changes how we think about power.

In Genesis 1, humanity is given dominion. But dominion is not domination. Human beings are not given the world so that we may exploit it without limit. We are given responsibility under God. We are stewards, not owners. We exercise power as creatures, not as gods.

This matters greatly for AI.

AI will optimize toward whatever we teach it to value. If we reward profit, it will serve profit. If we reward control, it will serve control. If we reward outrage, it will serve outrage. If we reward national superiority, it will serve national superiority. If we reward desire without wisdom, it will serve desire without wisdom.

The nightmare is not simply that bad people will use AI badly. The nightmare is that whole civilizations will build AI in their own image and then worship the image because it works.

That is an old temptation in a new form.

Human beings have always been tempted to make idols. We take something made by human hands, give it power over us, and then act as though it cannot be questioned. AI may become one of the most impressive tools humanity has ever created. But a tool must remain a tool. It must not become an idol.

This does not mean Christians should retreat from technology. Nor does it mean that every new tool is a threat. The question is not whether we can avoid the future. We cannot. The question is whether we will enter the future with wisdom.

We need engineers, scientists, policymakers, and business leaders who understand the power of what they are building. But we also need theologians, pastors, teachers, parents, philosophers, historians, and ordinary people of faith who are willing to ask older and deeper questions:

- What is a human being?
- What is freedom for?
- What does justice require?
- What must never be done, even if it can be done?
- Who is my neighbor?
- Who or what is worthy of worship?

The future of AI will not be decided solely by code. It will be decided by anthropology, by worship, by virtue, by law, by courage, and by restraint.

A society that no longer knows what people are for will have a hard time building machines that serve people well.

For Christians, the answer begins here: human beings are made by God, loved by God, fallen yet redeemable, and called into communion with God and neighbor. Any technology that

serves that calling may be received with gratitude. Any technology that diminishes it must be resisted.

The question Jesus asked through the parable of the Good Samaritan still stands before us: Who is my neighbor?

That question may become more important, not less, in an age of intelligent machines.

Because the more powerful our tools become, the easier it may be to forget the wounded person on the road.

The machine might calculate the path.

But someone still must name the destination.

Yours in Christ, Gregg



Children's Ministry News

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

A Note from Karyn

I will be taking a vacation from Monday, September 21 through Friday, September 25. I am looking for volunteers to cover the office on those days, especially in the morning. Please contact me through email (poughkeepsieumc@gmail.com) or call the office (845-452-2933) if you can help.

Bible Study Opportunity

Are you interested in joining a women's mid-week Bible/book study? Next new study will begin on Wednesday, September 16 at 1:00. Contact Nancy Marrine if you are interested (845-380-4887)



Hymn Background Jenn Harmer



Every month there is usually something that sparks in my brain and leads me to a hymn to choose for this article. This month as I prepared for September's post, I wasn't sure what to do. Then in church we were praying for teachers, teaching assistants, nurses, and all those who work in a school doing something and I thought about "Back to School." Now, there may not necessarily be a "Back to School" hymn, but when I searched Google for "hymns for back to school" one of the first ones listed was "Be Thou My Vision" because it "Asks God to be the central focus and wisdom for the days ahead." A good thing for people associated with school to seek, as well as the rest of us!

"Be Thou My Vision" was written by Eleanor Henrietta Hull (1860-1935) and translated by Mary E. Byrne (1880-1931) in 1905. Unfortunately, there was not much about either woman on Hymnary, so I did a bit of digging. According to the Dictionary of Ulster, Eleanor Hull was born in England and educated at Alexandra College in Dublin. Hull was a journalist and scholar of Old Irish – which is the language she wrote "Be Thou My Vision" in, "Bí Thusa 'mo Shúile." Mary Byrne was born in Dublin spent a good deal of her time working on the Irish dictionary of the Royal Irish Academy. The translation of "Be Thou My Vision" first appeared in the journal, *Erin*, Volume 2.

The tune used for "Be Thou My Vision" is a tune named SLANE that is listed as written by an anonymous author but is considered an Irish melody. According to 101 More Hymn Stories, the tune was originally used with a secular text, "With My Love on the Road" but was then associated with the hymn in the Irish Church Hymnal of 1919. The tune name comes from a hill, ten miles from Tara, in County Meath.

The hymn acts as a prayer to God that He would be the first that we seek after and regularly refocus the direction of our own lives. There were originally five verses, and most hymnals today include verses 1, 2, 4, and 5, with verse 3 excluded. It is a hymn that can be used in any of the lectionary years, typically during Ordinary Time but can be used in Lent as well. "Be Thou My Vision" can be found in 205 hymnals and is number 451 in the United Methodist Hymnal.

(References from Hymnary.org, newulsterbiography.co.uk, ainm.ie – translated into English, and 101 More Hymn Stories by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

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!

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## Notes from the Choir Room

"DONA NOBIS PACEM"

Traditional canon of German origin

"GRANT US PEACE"

Welcome, dear readers, to news old & new, as our choir returns to the choir room. We will begin our regular Thursday night rehearsal schedule on September 3<sup>rd</sup> at our regular time of 6:59pm.

My thanks to ALL choir members who provided special music during July and August. I love singing in Fellowship Hall during the summer! There is something so special hearing all our voices raised in song. Not that we don't sing in the sanctuary, but because we are "spread out" our voices get lost. Which takes me back to my challenge of many years- COME SIT CLOSER TO THE FRONT...FILL THE PEWS CLOSER TO THE ALTAR!!!

And finally, our choir would love to have more singers! Just speak with any member, with our organist, or myself. Blessings to all, Polly James

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A Note About Worship

Weather permitting, Sunday Worship will return to the Sanctuary on September 13th.

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 845-240-451 pat.sightandsound@gmail.com

Strength and Balance

Strength and Balance will meet 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 or you can just show up beginning Tuesday, September 15.



Fellowship Discovery Luncheon

Our September Fellowship Discovery Luncheon will be on Tuesday, September 22 @ 12PM.

Captain Mike Capuccelli of the State Police (retired) will be giving a presentation on "Personal Safety in an Insecure Age" Please let us know (by Thursday, September 17) if you plan to attend by scanning the QR code or as always you can contact the office.





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.

Hope On a Mission Ministry

On the third Saturday of every month we provide a meal for the HOAM ministry in the city of Poughkeepsie. We are seeking additional volunteers to help prepare the meal and deliver it to Cannon St around 5:30 pm. Volunteers are also needed to serve the food three nights a week. Preparation is usually Saturday mornings at our church. Please contact Pam (845-240-4564) or Nancy (845-380-4887) if you are willing to help any time.

Altar Flowers

September, October, and November are almost fully available for altar flower donations. Please sign up in the narthex or contact the church office to reserve a date. The cost is \$50.



Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle meeting is Monday, September 14. Our speaker will be Muriel Horowitz who has served in leadership in many community-based action groups. She will speak about her involvement in Reunite Migrant Families. All are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served.



SEPTEMBER

Important September Dates

Wednesday, September 2nd – Church Council @ 7pm

Thursday, September 3rd – Choir Resumes @ 7pm

Saturday, September 5th - Memorial Service for Allen Stacey @ 1pm at Hyde Park UMC

Monday, September 7th – Labor Day – Office Closed

Social Justice @ 3:30pm

Sunday, September 13th – Sunday School Resumes

Worship Returns to the Sanctuary

SPRC @ 11:30

Monday, September 14th – Friendship Circle @ 1pm

Ted Talk Watch Party @ 7:30pm

Wednesday, September 16th – Journey Deadline

Saturday, September 19th – Arlington Street Fair

Hope on a Mission Meal Delivery

Sunday, September 20th – Worship Ctte @ 11:30

Tuesday, September 22nd – Fellowship Discovery Luncheon @ 12pm

Friday, September 25th – Collate Journey @ 8:30am

Fill The Truck!

Love INC Donation Drive



Saturday, September 12, 2026
2-4 pm Rain or Shine

Love INC Connection Center Parking Lot

748 Freedom Plains Road, Poughkeepsie, NY

Help support our Love INC Ministry Classes by stopping by and donating these resource items that will be distributed to our class attendees!

Paper Goods

- Toilet Paper
- Cube Size Box of Tissues
- Paper Towels

Laundry

- Liquid Laundry Detergent (32 oz - 64 oz)
- Dryer Sheets (80-100 count box)

Shopping Cards

- \$15 and \$20 Grocery Store Cards with activation slips (Stop N Shop & ShopRite)

Household Items

- Liquid Dish Soap (14 oz or higher)
- Disinfectant Cleaner (32 oz)
- Disinfecting Wipes
- Liquid Hand Soap (pump bottle)
- White Tall Kitchen Garbage bags (13 gallon)
- Pair of Rubber Cleaning Gloves (REUSABLE only, size Medium or Large)

Hygiene Items

- Body Lotion
- Body Wash
- Deodorant (men or women)
- Lip Balm
- Disposable Razors (men or women)

Grocery Items

- Can (12 oz) Chicken Meat
- Low Sodium Chicken Broth (box)
- Can (10 oz) of Rotel Diced Tomatoes

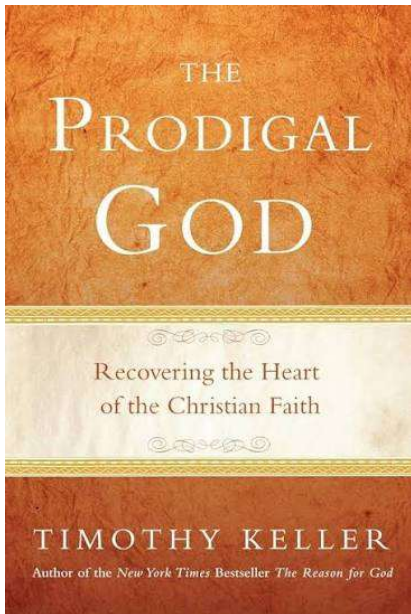
Misc

- Standard-sized Bed Pillows, only **new** in original packaging



Contact Mid-Hudson Love INC at 845-471-0102 with questions

Fall Book Study



Title: *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*

Author: Timothy Keller

Amazon Description:

“The *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Prodigal Prophet* uncovers the essential message of Jesus, locked inside his most familiar parable.

Newsweek called renowned minister Timothy Keller 'a C.S. Lewis for the twenty-first century' in a feature on his first book, *The Reason for God*. In that book, he offered a rational explanation of why we should believe in God. Now, in *The Prodigal God*, Keller takes his trademark intellectual approach to understanding Christianity and

uses the parable of the prodigal son to reveal an unexpected message of hope and salvation.

Within that parable Jesus reveals God's prodigal grace toward both the irreligious and the moralistic. This book will challenge both the devout and skeptics to see Christianity in a whole new way.”

Dates: Tuesdays @ 10am, starting October 6, 2026 through November 17

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## Arlington Street Fair

The Arlington Street Fair is Saturday, September 19 from 12pm – 6pm. Our church will have a table to reach out to our community neighbors and to share the good news about our church and Jesus. Volunteers are needed to sit at our table and visit with the community. Please see the sign-up sheet on our church mission board.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM ENLIGHTENMENTS

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## NEW ADDITION TO ONLINE GLOSSARY OF TERMS<sup>1</sup>

### ***Averred***

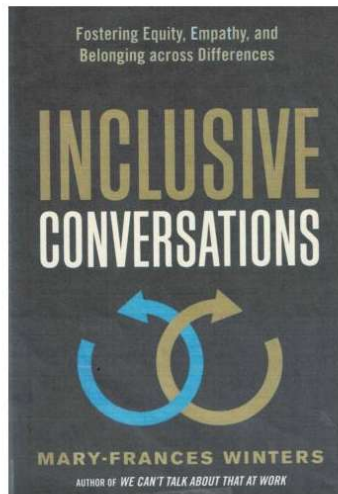
the past-tense form of the verb "aver," which means to state or declare something in a strong, positive, and confident way. It comes from Latin roots meaning "to declare true".

### **Meaning and Usage**

- **General meaning:** To claim that something is definitely true, often used in a formal or serious context.
  - **Legal meaning:** To formally assert or allege a fact in a legal document or court pleading.
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## BOOK OF THE MONTH<sup>2</sup>

Inclusive Conversations  
Written by *Mary-Frances Winters*



“Effective dialogue across different dimensions of diversity, such as race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation, fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion, which in turn leads to greater productivity, performance, and innovation. Whether in the workplace, faith communities, or educational settings, our differences can tear us apart rather than bring us together if we do not know how to communicate.

***Recognizing our collective responsibility to earnestly address our differences and increase understanding and empathy will not only enhance organizational goals but will also lead to a healthier, kinder, and more compassionate world.”***

— *Porchlight*

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> This book is located in the Social Justice Library in the church's Lounge for you to sign-out and read.





## **PUMC "Autumn Fair"**

**Saturday, October 17 &  
Sunday, October 18**

### **September reminder - what we will be needing**

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

**Handmade with Love** - We hope you are using your creativity this summer to make/create items for our "homemade" booth. There is still time!! Quilts, Small pillows, Aprons, Placemats, Knitted or Crocheted items such as hats, scarves, mittens. We welcome your talent!!

**Questions?** Please contact **Lynne Deverman**

**Gift Baskets** - how about creating new items ? such as - Soup Mix in a jar (like those 15 beans), a Lovely Container or Jar with Cookie Mix , Cocoa Mix with fancy spoon in a special container, A Cutting Board with spreading knife & add Crackers/Cheese, A Fun Movie Night snack basket, An Italian Dinner night, Homemade Granola Mixes, Basket of Salsa & Seasoning Salts, Jam & Jelly baskets, Your Favorite Brownie box in a 9 x 9 pan (maybe extra chips & icing) Ice Cream Toppings in basket (hot fudge,, caramel sauce etc) Presentation of Traditional or Watermelon Pickles. All these Items that can be gifts for the Hostess, Birthdays, Thanksgiving or Christmas. Surprise us with your own idea!!

**Sandy Pullinger     Betty Harrel**

**Jewelry Boutique** - Are you making room for new? Necklaces, Earrings, Bracelets -- Please let us enjoy those you don't wear anymore? We even sell small purses, lovely silk scarves, vintage evening gloves, pretty hair clips If you have questions:

**Carla Vinson Elaine Eaton**

**Bake Shoppe** - great time to review your recipes!! Please bake for us your favorite Cookies, small Loaf Breads (zucchini, banana, fruit, etc), Pies - small & large (apple, pecan, lemon meringue etc) Brownies, Dessert Bars. We do not have requests for Cupcakes or Muffins. Baked items may be dropped off all day Friday 10/16 or Saturday by 9am.

**Cathy Close Kathy Betz**

**Delicious Dessert Takeout - Homemade - Please**

Suggestions: Cheesecake, Cakes, Pies: Apple, Pecan, Pumpkin, Lemon Meringue or use a favorite family recipe.

Please label all desserts & use disposable packaging

Drop off: Friday, 10/16 (all day) - Saturday, 10/17 (by 9 am)

**Questions: contact Joan Schmidt**

**\*\* for all bake goods -- please label them & note if containing nuts or fruit. Also please use disposable packaging or call and discuss with us your item!**

