



# THE *Next* CHAPTER

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MOUNT KISCO, N.Y. | May, 2019

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

### SUNDAY

9:15 a.m., Choir Practice

10:15 a.m., Worship followed by fellowship, coffee and snacks in Halstead Hall.

6 p.m., Iglesias Cristiana Fe Y Esperanza, Sanctuary, Education Room, Halstead Hall

### MONDAY

6:30 p.m., Overeaters Anonymous, Halstead Hall

### TUESDAY

4:30 p.m., Interfaith Food Pantry, Halstead Hall

7 p.m., Bible Study at Panera Bread

### WEDNESDAY

8:30 a.m., Interfaith Food Pantry, Halstead Hall

### THURSDAY

8 p.m., Amway, Education Room

### FRIDAY

1 p.m., Co-Dependents Anonymous, Education Room  
6 p.m., Iglesias Cristiana Fe Y Esperanza, Sanctuary and Education Room

### SATURDAY

8 a.m., Wellness Wins (formally Weight Watchers), Halstead Hall  
9 a.m., Golden Crown Driving School, Education Room (third Saturday of each month)  
6:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Halstead Hall

## Waiting for God's New Thing

*<sup>18</sup> Do not remember the former things,*

*or consider the things of old.*

*<sup>19</sup> I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

*I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

*<sup>20</sup> The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert,*

*to give drink to my chosen people,*

*<sup>21</sup> the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise. – Isaiah 43:18-21*

As someone who has moved around a lot in her life – whether in the newspaper business or as a United Methodist pastor – it's always an adventure to discover what each season will bring in the landscape

of my new home and community. I've been observing the daily changes in creation as I'm out on my multiple walks with Bella. She

may be following the scent of whatever critters or dogs have passed by, while I get to take in the blooms and aromas bursting forth from the trees and flowers.

And with spring there is so much to notice and appreciate. Many of the flowers bordering the driveway along the parsonage are all too familiar – daffodils, jonquils, grape hyacinths, tulips, irises, sedum. The onion grass is certainly making itself known throughout the lawn. And the dogwood blooms are a marvelous pink color.

As we are greeted each day with the appearance of some new growth, I am reminded that God is always up to

something new; the one who created us and our world is always at work creating and recreating all around us.

Although we'd like to know all about what God is planning beforehand, new things and change usually come to us in fits and starts. Sort of like

BENEATH THE  
*Spires*  
Rev. Joanne S. Utley

peeling an onion, the new is revealed one layer at a time.

I've been thinking a lot about God's re-creative powers as the United Methodist Church has been dealing with the aftermath of the special-called General Conference in February, and the Judicial Council ruling about the constitutionality of the "Traditional Plan" at the end of April. The denomination is in an extended state of turmoil and I don't see it ending anytime soon. The Traditional Plan approved in St. Louis not only upholds the Book of Discipline's ban on same-sex marriage and the ordination of gay clergy, but also stiffens the penalties for those who refuse to abide by such exclusionary language.

What pain and heartache have been inflicted by the denomination upon LGBTQIA+ persons and their allies by the words and actions that declare "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" - words that became part of the UMC lexicon in 1972. It seems that those words crafted by human minds are far more important than Jesus's message of love, grace, and inclusion for all.

How often have I heard congregations and pastors say that all LGBTQIA+ persons are, of course, welcome to worship in their church. But yet the door is slammed when questions of membership, and marriage, and a call to ministry arise in



those individuals. You're welcome, but . . .

Some individuals and families - both conservatives and progressives - will choose to leave the UMC and seek spiritual care in places that are more aligned with their views. Some churches may decide to leave the denomination, too, and strike out on their own - a plan to allow for such exits was also approved at General Conference.

Bishops, clergy and laity from across the connection (and in the New York Conference) have made public that they will not abide by the continuing exclusion. The trustees at Baldwin Wallace University voted to break ties with the UMC because of the Ohio school's commitment to inclusivity. A confirmation class of 8<sup>th</sup>-graders in Nebraska declined to join the church in order to make a stand against the UMC's rules about homosexuality. Maybe the little children will indeed lead us?

Here in Mount Kisco, I've been having conversations with some members of the congregation who are seeking answers and more insight as to the coming days of the UMC and our community of faith. Personally, I have been hoping and praying for a path marking a new way through what feels like a deep, dark wilderness. I have been longing for rivers to spring up bringing new life to those that have been pushed to the margins, and relief to a parched and wounded world.

I whole-heartedly trust that God is indeed doing a new thing in our denomination for those who choose to follow Jesus and John Wesley, even though we cannot yet fully perceive it. In the meantime, we will continue in our ministries to follow the loving example Christ set, and live into Wesley's mandate to do no harm, do all the good you can, and stay in love with God.

Friends let's continue to be (or start to be) in dialogue about these matters of full inclusion in the life of the church and in this congregation. It does affect us all. Please let me know what concerns and questions you may have as we inch our way forward into God's new creation. I am anxious to see what will spring forth!

In God's care and service,  
*Pastor Joanne*





## Celebrating The Risen Christ

Although it was a little damp, Easter Sunday was a glorious day for our visitors and members.

A few started the day at the 6:30 a.m. sunrise service at Cross River Reservoir Dam with Katonah UMC.

Later, we enjoyed a beautiful Easter service with some 100 people in attendance. At the close of the service, Pastor Joanne invited us outside to place a flower on the wooden cross as a symbol of the new life we are promised through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Following the service, we were treated to a fabulous Easter brunch with everything from egg casseroles to coconut cake cooked up by members of the congregation. And the Sunday School kids enjoyed an egg hunt on the back lawn.



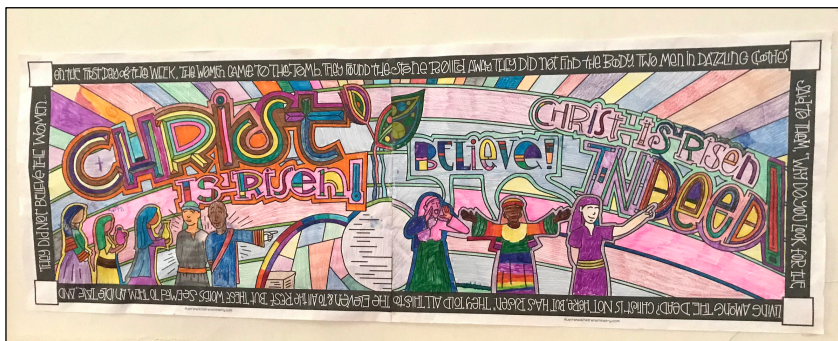
Above, a delicious dessert offering at brunch.

At left, the Clintons with Lena Pitt after the flowering of the cross.



## Easter Gratitude

Thanks so much to the choir and director Paul Martinez for the incredible music on Easter Sunday. All your hard work was evident! Thanks also to those who played a part in the service running so smoothly and in the 5-star brunch that followed.



## ***Pastor Joanne On Spiritual Leave***

Pastor Joanne will be away from May 7-13 for spiritual formation leave and some vacation time. In case of a pastoral emergency, please contact the church office. Don McCann and Dave Visaggio will lead worship.



**Tuesdays at 7 p.m.:** Bible Study at Panera Bread.

**May 18:** Spring Flea Market (Vendors Only)

**June 2:** Faith In Action Sunday

**June 6-9:** New York Annual conference at Hofstra University on Long Island

**July 12:** Fireman's Parade

**December 7:** Christmas Fair

## ***Plant Sale Cancelled***

We will not be holding our annual plant sale this year. Instead please support our local nurseries for your spring gardening needs.

## ***"Faith in Action" Sunday Planned for June 2***

While we hope that our faith is visible each and every day, our congregation does take one day a year to celebrate its work as the hands and feet of the Body of Christ.

On Sunday, June 2, we'll gather at 10:15 a.m. in Halstead Hall for a short time of worship that will include Holy

Communion. Afterward, everyone will be dispatched to work on a specific project. The projects planned include:

- The assembly of hygiene kits for UMCOR in Halstead Hall.
- Writing and making cards for our shut-ins and/or those who are incarcerated in area prisons
- Spring cleanup at the Fox Senior Center on Carpenter Avenue
- Yard cleanup or other small projects at the homes of congregation members.

After the work is finished, we'll gather back at the church for a pizza party to talk about our experiences.

There will be more details as the date gets closer, but there will be projects for every age and skill level. We'll have signup sheets for each project. Please plan to dress appropriately – old clothing, gloves, hats and sunscreen – for the outdoor work. We may also ask you to bring gardening equipment.

Questions and/or project suggestions should be directed to Dave Visaggio or Ross Porter.



**May 9:** Miranda Kent

Our monthly birthday parties are usually held on the first Sunday during fellowship.

## ***220th Annual Conference***

Clergy and laity will gather June 6-9 for the 220<sup>th</sup> sessions of the New York Annual conference. The Thursday-Sunday gathering will once again be at Hofstra University on Long Island.

This is the opportunity to conduct the business of the annual conference and also to celebrate retiring clergy and newly ordained ones, in addition to remembering the clergy and laity that have died in the last year. At this session, we will also be electing clergy and lay delegates for the 2020 General and Northeastern Jurisdictional conference.

Joanne Hall will represent our congregation as lay delegate and will also be delivering the hygiene kits that we assemble. Pastor Joanne will attend as clergy and also report about the event as conference communicator

## ***Health Kit Mission***

As I get ready to attend the Annual Conference in June, as our church lay delegate, I am praying we can surpass the number of health kits that we have done in the past two years! This is something we can all be part of as these health kits are delivered to areas where UMCOR is helping those who have suffered with floods, tornadoes, typhoons, hurricanes or any other disaster.

The kits include one each of a washcloth, hand towel, toothbrush, nail clipper or file,



comb, bath-size bar of soap, and 10 adhesive bandages. These are all rolled in the towel and put into a gallon-size re-sealable bag. We will send \$1 for each bag to cover the cost of toothpaste that UMCOR will purchase.

I have researched items in bulk at Amazon and I am willing to shop for other items at local "dollar stores", I pray you are able to donate to this mission effort. Cash can be given to me or if you prefer to write a check to the church, I will get those funds from our treasurer.

Jesus said we are to love God and our neighbors as we would like to be loved. I pray we may never need a health kit, but how good to know they are available!

Peace and prayers,  
*Joanne Hall*

### ***Your Quiet Time Place With the Lord***

Renowned Pastor Rick Warren has this to say on your morning quiet time:

*"Wherever you decide to meet with the Lord, make it a special place for you and Him so as the days go by, that place will come to mean a lot to you because of all the wonderful, loving, intimate and special times you have spent there with Jesus Christ."*

My quiet time and place with the Lord is usually every morning between 6-7 a.m. in Joanne's mother's room where I get ready for the day ahead – after I bring Joanne her morning coffee. Sometimes

during this hour, I am tempted to check emails, or some other distraction arises, but I want to give the God the time He deserves, nothing less. I am always encouraged by the Old Testament verse:

*"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."* (Psalm 37:4)

May your quiet time with the Lord in the morning bring you the peace and confidence you need for the day ahead.

Amen & Amen,  
*Dave Visaggio*



The church is in need of volunteers, especially folks to help Andre with some of Art's chores while he is recuperating at home.

We could also use some folks to help with refreshments for fellowship time. A box of doughnuts, a gallon of milk, or a bowl of fruit just helps our table look good.

We are still looking for extra tellers to help count the offering each week after worship. If you could spare some time for any of these ventures, please give the office a call.

### ***Donate to the Church While You Shop Online***

If you could automatically donate to the church when you

shop, wouldn't that be a great thing? Well, you now can do just that every time you shop at AmazonSmile.

When you shop online at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the same selection and prices as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that a portion of the purchase price is donated by AmazonSmile Foundation to the charity of your choice. The donation does not cost you anything extra. And our church is now listed as one of the charitable organization options at AmazonSmile.

To shop at AmazonSmile, go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may want to bookmark the website for further use. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you'll be asked to designate a charitable organization before you begin shopping. Search for the United Methodist Church of Mount Kisco. The website will remember your selection, and .5 percent of the price of eligible purchases will be donated to the church.

You might be amazed at what you can buy on AmazonSmile: from groceries to electronics, books to furniture, and clothing to cars. These small donations can add up and allow us to continue to share the love of God with our congregation, our community, and in our world.

If you have any questions, please speak to Leanne Summers.



## *Fools for Christ*

Pastor Joanne introduced the church to the ancient tradition of "Holy Humor Sunday" the week after Easter.

The resurrection of Christ turned the world upside down, so we did the same with our worship, which included joyful hymns, unexpected choir songs, funny hats, backwards clothes, knock-knock jokes in plastic eggs, and a rubber duck in the baptismal font. We celebrated God having the final laugh over the forces of evil.



## **Need to Contact Us?**

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**Website:** [www.mountkiscochurch.org](http://www.mountkiscochurch.org)

**Church office hours:** M-F 1:30-4:30 p.m.

**Administrative assistant:** Marianne Baldwin

**Pastor:** Rev. Joanne S. Utley

**Pastor's email:** [kiscorev@gmail.com](mailto:kiscorev@gmail.com)

**Pastors office hours** W& F 10 a.m.-3 p.m.