



# THE *Next* CHAPTER



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MOUNT KISCO, N.Y. | AUGUST 2018

## This week's calendar

### SUNDAY

9:15 a.m., Choir Practice  
10:15 a.m., Worship followed by fellowship coffee and snacks in Halstead Hall.

### MONDAY

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

### TUESDAY

9:45 a.m., Mediation Yoga, Education Room  
4:30 p.m., Interfaith Food Pantry, Halstead Hall

### WEDNESDAY

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

### THURSDAY

9:45 a.m., Mediation Yoga, Education Room  
8 p.m., Amway, Education Room

### FRIDAY

1 p.m., CODA, Education Room  
4:30 p.m., Iglesias Cristiana Fe Y Esperanza, Sanctuary and Education Room

### SATURDAY

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

## *Learning a Lesson from the Trees*

*“You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.  
<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn bush will  
grow the juniper,  
and instead of briers the myrtle  
will grow.  
This will be for the LORD’s  
renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
that will endure forever.”—  
Isaiah 55:12-13 NIV*

*Greetings in the name of our  
Creator God!*

We hardly need to check the calendar to know that a change is upon us. We sense it in the overnight temperatures dipping into the 50s, the waning hours of daylight, and the first leaves that have fallen from the trees.

Though many will lament the coming of fall as a precursor to winter, I for one welcome the change. Fall is my favorite season and I think my fascination with trees is a direct result of that. I find something comforting in the transition that occurs with the autumnal equinox.

As a kid, I loved climbing trees – especially as a way to escape my siblings. And there were those walks to school with the crunch-

crunch underfoot, and the little storm of leaves kicked up behind.

As I got older, I began to marvel at the science of trees – the rhythm and pattern of their growth, their roots constantly stretching out in search of life-giving water. The tree grows from the inside out, adding a new layer in a burst of inner growth each year. Trees live in community, taking part in the creative energy in the world around them. They breathe in the toxins of the environment and, in exchange, produce clean, fresh air.

When I became a homeowner on Long Island, I took on the task of nurturing two scraggly, long-neglected trees outside my kitchen window.

The trees turned out to be an amazing study in contrasts. The one, a sassafras, provided a great show of color as the leaves turned from green to yellows and reds before a final splash of burgundy and bronze. Before the mitten-shaped leaves dropped, the tree has already set visible buds that that would become the next summer’s greenery.

The other tree, a pin oak, was quite shy in comparison to its showy companion. It was almost as if the tree had an off-and-on switch; one day the leaves would be green, the next day brown. But the pin oak held most of its leaves

through the cold winter, letting them go only to make way for the new growth of spring.

Each of the trees, in its own way, casts off the old in order to prepare for the new. Fall is the chance for the trees to put up one great blast of spectacular color before entering a state of dormancy in preparation for spring. The dropping of the leaves is not an end, but part of the life cycle, a vital step in the ecosystem in which they survive. There is hope in those buds that have been set on the trees.

My fascination with trees makes the Isaiah passage above one of my favorites in the Hebrew Bible. I think of the autumn colors as the joyful face of the trees. I think about the complete level of joy required to make the mountains sing and the trees clap. Every bit of creation is joyfully praising their Maker. When was the last time I felt like that in my relationship with God?

In those two verses, and in fact, all of chapter 55, the Prophet Isaiah is attempting to speak a life-giving word of hope even when all the events seem to make that an impossibility. The Hebrew people had taken a huge hit when the Babylonians carried them off into captivity: their city is destroyed; families torn apart; houses demolished; their country lost. No wonder they questioned whether they still believed in the God of their ancestors.

They had little or no hope, but Isaiah was doing his very best to provide some. So, he turns to the created order to paint a visual image for them. The Word of God is like water in a parched land, it is life-giving and life-sustaining. He reminded them that they could count on the steadfast Word of God, that God had always been with them even when it seemed otherwise. God's people would be delivered from destructive things

and replenished with all divine graces and blessings.

And that promise of healing and peace also embraces the trees of the field; the mountains and the hills will joyfully proclaim that the destructive powers have been defeated.

There are times in our lives when we feel that even the last ounce of hope has been drained from our hearts. But what our faith exhorts is to hold fast to what we know to be the true Word of God until things change around us – until the promised healing seeps into our lives.

In the words of another prophet, Jeremiah, it is the faithful who are compared to trees, *“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.”* – Jeremiah 17:7-8

Trees are rooted in the creative force of our world and survive or adapt to the ebb and flow of life. Their roots are always growing both thicker and longer, stretching toward the source of life-giving water. Trees are ever reaching skyward, to the sun and the heavens above. The sun is their life force, just as the Son of God is the life and core of our faith.

The cycle of a tree is similar to the patterns we embrace in the Christian church: the cycle of preparation, expectation and anticipation, the spreading of hope, and the realization of living into new life.

What an incredible possibility Isaiah is offering us! He is delivering an invitation to abundant life. The Israelites – and all who read these words – are invited to come and sustain themselves on the nurturing word

of God. God offers us an abundant life.

We need to give ourselves some time to soak in the Word of God, and a time to be “dormant” in a place of reflection and meditation where we can discover the glimmers of hope. That quiet time – that down time – gives us an opportunity to tune in to what God is saying.

This fall, may you take special note of the trees around you, and be startled by the beauty of our natural landscape. May the Word of God be like life-giving water, to nourish and sustain you. May you find a time of “dormancy” to rest and reflect in the presence of God in preparation for what the coming days will hold.

In God's care and service,  
Pastor Joanne

## Need To Contact Us?

Pastor: Rev. Joanne S. Utley  
Music director: Paul Martinez  
Head ushers: Andre Ferrara, Art Covey  
Lay leaders: Bobbie McCann, Ross Porter  
Administrative assistant:  
Marianne Baldwin  
Sexton: Art Covey  
Phone: 914-666-5014  
Website:  
[www.mountkiscochurch.org](http://www.mountkiscochurch.org)  
Church office email:  
[office.umcmk@gmail.com](mailto:office.umcmk@gmail.com)  
Church office hours  
Mon-Friday 1:30-4:30 p.m.  
Pastor's email:  
[kiscorev@gmail.com](mailto:kiscorev@gmail.com)  
Pastors Office Hours:  
Wednesday & Friday  
10:00-3:00 p.m.



**Saturday, Sept. 22:** UMCMK Fall Tag Sale, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendor tables are available to rent for \$35 by contacting the church office. The church will be offering food and drinks for sale for both breakfast and lunch. If you'd like to help with the preparations or cleanup, please contact the church office or sign up in Halstead Hall.

**September 14-16:** Pastor Joanne is on vacation. Rev. Clayton Miller will be the guest preacher.

**September 18-October 15:** Pastor Joanne will be on medical leave as she recovers from knee replacement surgery. Guest preachers will fill the pulpit for the four Sundays of her leave, including Rev. Emily B. Hall, Tom and Wendy Vencuss, Marie Bell, and some of our very own lay speakers. In case

of pastoral emergency during this time, please contact the church office.

**September 30 11:00-1:00p.m.** Eagle Scout Candidate Max Mallett will be hosting a Pancake Brunch for church members and any outside members that are interested. Max will present a 5-minute presentation about his Eagle Scout Project at Abbott House

**October 10** The Pumpkins will be delivered around 4 P.M. We will have plenty of volunteers to unload the truck. We will have a schedule available in Halstead Hall beginning Sunday, September 23.

**October 11-31** The Pumpkin Patch will be open and ready for business. We will need volunteers to work selling and collecting money. Once we have the schedule it will be published for all to sign up.

**Saturday, Nov. 17:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Laity Convocation with speaker, Rev. Sue Nilson Kibby, a leader in the missional church initiative serving in the UMC's West Ohio Conference. Kibby's greatest passion is "breakthrough prayer," which she explores in her book, "Flood Gates: Holy Momentum for a Fearless Church." Participants are encouraged to read the book beforehand. Cost is \$30 if you need her book sent to you; \$25 without the book. Continental breakfast and lunch are provided. Location: Tarrytown House Estate on the Hudson, 49 E Sunnyside Lane, Tarrytown, N.Y. Register on the "calendar" on the New York Annual Conference website ([www.nyac.com](http://www.nyac.com)). Also, please speak to Pastor Joanne if you're interested

**Bible Study Quiz:** We're making plans for fall and Advent Bible studies and need your help! What time of day would you attend a Bible/book study? Late morning, afternoon or evening? Please call the church office at 914-666-5014 with your answer. Thanks



THE MOUNT KISCO  
*Interfaith*  
**FOOD PANTRY**

You can also help regularly by donating breakfast cereal, pasta, rice, canned food.

Please make sure cans are not dented and are not out of date.

If you would like more information, please contact or speak with Lisa Porter on Lisa's email is [wrporter115@verizon.net](mailto:wrporter115@verizon.net)

**UMCMK is responsible for staffing the Interfaith Food Pantry on the following dates: 10/10, 11/14, and 12/12. If you are available to help out please contact Lisa Porter.**



SEPTEMBER 2018

3<sup>rd</sup> Judy Launhardt  
7<sup>th</sup> Carol Zarley  
9<sup>th</sup> Donald McCann  
12<sup>th</sup> Jude Tidmus  
13<sup>th</sup> Bryan McCann  
21<sup>st</sup> Sharon Haught  
23<sup>rd</sup> Joe Cacciola  
30<sup>th</sup> Betty Davidson

**Does the office know when your birthday is? Please let us know if you haven't done**

**CoDA**



We welcome you to Co-Dependents Anonymous, a program of recovery from codependence. The only requirement for membership is a desire for healthy and loving relationships. We have all learned to survive life, but in CoDA we are learning to live life.

<http://nyc coda.org/>

Held here Fridays at 1pm in our Education Room. For more information please contact [lddance@gmail.com](mailto:lddance@gmail.com).



**With many fall projects starting up either at the church or in your community, please think about volunteering your time. The rewards are many: meeting new friends, gaining new work experience, feeling a sense of reward for yourself, And it's an eye-opening experience to realize that doing even small things can have a big impact on you and others.**

**Groups in the village of Mt. Kisco that are looking for volunteers:**

**My Second Home  
Fox Senior Center  
Neighbors Link  
Interfaith Food Pantry  
United Methodist Church Mt. Kisco  
Boys and Girl Club**

