

The Church Herald

Stony Brook Community Church (United Methodist), Stony Brook, New York



STONY BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Please send updates and information to
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"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NIV)

As we make the transition from Christmastide to Epiphany and beyond into these weeks before Lent, I would like to ask you to consider the following. In these winter months, as the days slowly start getting longer, we are approaching a season of deep reflection and renewal as we move toward Lent. But in these current weeks our living in faith and preparation for that new season continues and is all important. Just as our church seems to have turned a corner and is transitioning into a new season of hope and renewal, the time leading up to that revival is filled with important work, both practical and spiritual. Work is being done to help determine the ways in which we carry out our vision and mission as Christ's holy church, God's mission outpost in this place that we call Stony Brook and the Three Village area. As our teams work toward that goal, God's word from Jeremiah states, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Yes, God has been preparing a future filled with hope for SBCC and that process has begun over the last few years through the work that we have been doing together.



But there is more to that quote from Jeremiah 29. Jeremiah declares on behalf of God, *"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.*

As we live into this season of preparation it is absolutely imperative that we call upon God and come to God in prayer. We must spend time every day seeking God and listening to where God is leading us individually and together as the people of God in this place. For God says, "you will seek me and find me when you ask me with your heart." If we do that we will find God together and discover where God is leading us together. That is a promise from God's word.

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NYAC VISION STATEMENT

The New York Annual Conference, through the grace of God, embodies a beloved community of hope, building up a healthy Body of Christ, with heartwarmed United Methodists in mission for the transformation of the world.



All that we do together as we move into this new season as a church – as we make difficult decisions – must be steeped in prayer as we call upon God to make our way clear. This is why I have chosen book studies this year that are focused on prayer. Both our current sermon series and our upcoming book study *Before the Amen* are to help us become a praying church so that the actions we take are guided and strengthened by prayer and time with God. I invite you to be more intentional about your prayer life and sign up for our latest study leading up to Lent.

Think about it this way. Prayer is the simplest form of communication that we have with God. It is during times of reflection and quietness that we hear God speaking to our hearts and renewing us in God's presence. Although prayer is a special time of expressing our love and relationship with God, confessing our sins, and expressing our own needs to God, it is also a time to ask God to be working in the world around us and through us.

There is no more important time in the history of our church than now! This is true for many reasons. We are praying that God will send a wave of spiritual growth across our community, our nation, and the world. And please remember to keep our church, our community, and our world in your prayers every day.

One other thing: don't worry about using the right words. Simply offer God what is on your heart. God already knows what is there. For you are loved with an everlasting love that only God can offer. Enrich that loving relationship; nurture it by making an appointment to be with God today. You matter more than you could ever imagine to God, and your prayers matter during this important time.

If you have already signed up for our new study by Max Lucado, Thank You! You will not regret it! If you have not yet taken this important step, please prayerfully consider doing so this week. Your life and our church will be blessed by your participation.

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday. In the meantime, may God bless you and keep you in love with God.

In God's love, joy and humor

Pastor Chuck

"Whenever God determines to do a great work, [God] first sets the people to pray."
C. H. Spurgeon

UMW VALENTINE WORKSHOP

Save the Date – February 5, 2019

The Annual UMW Valentine Workshop will be held Tuesday Evening, February 5, at 7:30 in the Community Room (rain/snow date February 12). All the women of the church and friends are invited to attend. Please bring glue stick, scissors and colored pens. If you have any doilies, stickers, ribbon or scrapbooking materials that you think might be useful, bring those also. We will provide the paper and the trimmings. Valentines will be created for congregants over 80 and for those who might enjoy some sunshine or a thank you. No artistic talent is required, just the desire to cut and paste and enjoy some good fellowship and camaraderie. For more information, please contact Gail Chase-glch2oclrs@optonline.net.



Lectionary for February 2019

03 FEBRUARY: Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6 (UMH 794)
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

10 FEBRUARY: Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany

Isaiah 6: 1-8 (9-13)
Psalm 138 (UMH 853)
1 Corinthians 15: 1-11
Luke 5: 1

17 FEBRUARY: Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1 (UMH 738)
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26

24 FEBRUARY: Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 (UMH 772)
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

03 MARCH: Last Sunday After the Epiphany/Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 34:29-35
Psalm 99 (UMH 819)
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

SBCC Youth Group

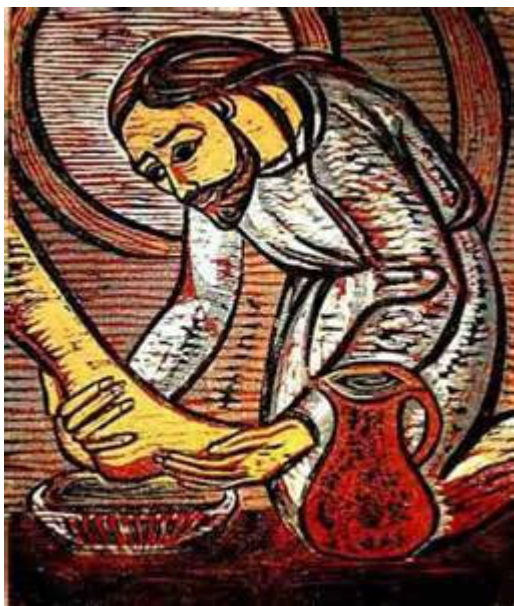
The SBCC Youth Group has been busy with fun trips (bowling), activities (board game night), community projects (Souper Bowl of Caring boxes) and rehearsing music for our newly acquired Choir Chimes. Upcoming events include a Spaghetti Dinner, Empty Bowls project, Mystery Trip and Choir Chimes Sunday. Open to all SBCC youth (grades 4 – 12) and friends! Feel free to contact Dr. Karen Van Houten at DrKVanH@optonline.net or Shantel Sellers (231) 871-1466 with any questions.

FEB Calendar.....

Feb 1 – Youth Group (Parsonage, 7 – 9 pm) (decorate Souper Bowl of Caring boxes, elect Officers)
Feb 3 – Youth (“Super Bowl”) Sunday (10 am) (youth serve as ushers/help with service)
Feb 8 – Youth Group (Parsonage, 7 – 9 pm) (discuss Empty Bowls project)
Feb 15 – Youth Group (7 – 9 pm) (possible Mystery Trip)
Feb 22 – Youth Group (Parsonage, 7 – 9 pm) (discuss SBCC Food Drive, Board Game Night – Part 2)
Feb 24 – Choir Chimes Sunday (10 am) (bless and introduce new Chimes)

February 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	28 7:00 (pm) AA	29	30 1:00 and 7:30: <i>Before the Amen</i>	31 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir Chimes 7:30 Choir	1 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 MYF	2
3 <u>Souper Bowl of Caring</u> 10:00 Youth Group Sunday Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	4 7:00 AA	5 7:30 Finance Committee UMW Valentine's Day workshop	6 1:00 and 7:30: <i>Before the Amen</i> classes	7 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir Chimes 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	8 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 MYF	9
10 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	11 7:00 AA	12	13 Meals on Wheels Board Meeting 1:00 and 7:30: <i>Before the Amen</i> classes	14 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir Chimes 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	15 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 MYF	16
17 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	18 Presidents' Day: <i>Office closed</i> 7:00 AA	19 7:30 Church Council	20 1:00 and 7:30: <i>Before the Amen</i> classes	21 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir Chimes 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	22 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 MYF	23 Opening of General Conference on Praying our Way Forward
24 10:00 Worship – Choir Chimes Dedication 11:00 Coffee Hour General Conference	25 7:00 AA General Conference	26 7:30 Trustees General Conference on Praying our Way Forward	27	28 7:00 AA 7:00 Choir Chimes 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	1 11:15 AIAnon 7:00 MYF	2



Socks Drive Coming This Month!

In January we had our successful Warm Woolies drive, collecting hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves for the Three Village school children. In February we'll be collecting men's socks and underwear for the Pax Christi men's shelter. A few years ago MYF held a socks drive and several of our young people said afterwards how overwhelming it was to see the men's gratitude for something as basic as socks.

Then in late March we'll resume our food drives.



Historic Stony Brook church opens door to all faiths

- [Community](#)
- [Village Times Herald](#)

by [Rita J. Egan](#) - January 22, 2019

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Stony Brook residents Don Estes and Dan Kerr will lead a morning interdenominational prayer service at All Souls Episcopal Church in Stony Brook beginning Jan. 30. Photo from Dan Kerr

Through prayer, a Stony Brook church is connecting further with the surrounding community.

The door of All Souls Episcopal Church on Main Street is always open for all to pray or to enjoy activities such as its Saturdays at Six concerts, second Saturdays poetry readings and shamanic drumming events. Beginning Jan. 30, the church will offer a weekly interdenominational morning prayer service led by Stony Brook residents Dan Kerr and Don Estes.

"If you start your day with a reading from Scripture, and a little refreshment on Scripture, whether its Old Testament or New Testament, it gives you a framework that helps you realize that there's a bigger picture." — Dan Kerr

Kerr, a church volunteer at All Souls, said he starts every day with structured prayer time and believes the new service is a natural progression to what the church has been doing. The congregation connects with approximately 500 people from the community through its events, he said, and many have asked for something such as the new morning service.

"The vision of this is that we have a relationship with all these 500 people, but we've never invited those 500 people to come and pray with us," Kerr said.

He said the prayers and readings they will use at the interdenominational service are ones that all Christians will recognize and all religions can appreciate. Kerr said both he and Estes believe "any day that begins with prayer is likely to be a good day."



“If you start your day with a reading from Scripture, and a little refreshment on Scripture, whether its Old Testament or New Testament, it gives you a framework that helps you realize that there’s a bigger picture,” Kerr said.

Estes, a Methodist who attends Stony Brook Community Church at 216 Christian Ave. and former commodore of Stony Brook Yacht Club, said he was looking for a morning prayer service for a while, so when Kerr brought up the idea, he said he would be happy to help. Estes said starting the day with prayer every day had helped him through difficult times, especially when his wife Judy was battling Alzheimer’s disease before her passing last year.

A retired TWA pilot, Estes said he’s also been inspired by his travels around the world that allowed him to witness others’ prayer practices and his wife’s spirituality. He thinks a prayer group such as the All Souls one helps people figure out how they should be and what the day should be like for them.

“A prayer in the morning gets you started in the right direction for the day,” Estes said.

“It’s been a big help to me to meet the challenges of the day,” he said.

“In the morning, our minds tend to be the most clear and free from problems.”
— Tom Manuel

Tom Manuel, president and founder of The Jazz Loft, was pleased to hear the service would be offered.

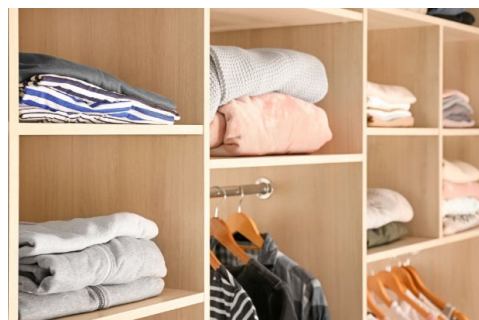
“The secret of a close relationship with our God is to prioritize our first time each morning in prayer,” Manuel said. “In the morning, our minds tend to be the most clear and free from problems. Setting our course and focus on God is a great way to commit the day ahead to him.”

Town of Brookhaven Councilwoman Valerie Cartright (D-Port Jefferson Station) said she commended Kerr and Estes for joining the community together with prayer.

“This early morning service reminds me of my grandmother who attended Mass every morning,” Cartright said. “Her devotion to starting every day with prayer has had a great positive impact on my faith. Prayer has always been such an important part of my personal and family life. It helps to keep me grounded, and it helps to keep me connected to God. Our faith communities are stronger when we can come together and pray together. Faith is one of the important ties that bind us together.”

The interdenominational morning prayer service will be held every Wednesday beginning Jan. 30 at 7 a.m. The service will run approximately 30 minutes, according to Kerr, and people of all faiths and traditions are welcome to attend. For more information, call 631-655-7798. All Souls Episcopal Church is located at 61 Main St., Stony Brook.

TIDYING UP



In a stroke of marketing genius, Netflix released the show *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo* on New Year's Day, just as people were making resolutions to clean up and get organized. When the book *The Life-changing Magic of Tidying Up* came out in 2014, it sold six million copies and became a No. 1 New York Times best-seller. It seemed like everyone was employing the KonMari method of removing clutter. The thesis undergirding the show seems to be that, by sorting, organizing, and discarding our “stuff” based on whether or not it “sparks joy,” we will have more energy, time, and space for the things that truly matter.

As with any method, every part of it is not for everyone. At times, the tone is slightly discordant — as if organizing our homes and things might somehow quell our existential anxiety in the face of the effects of climate change and growing wealth inequality.

On one hand, the KonMari method is a challenge to our typical American consumerist ethos that demands we continuously purchase more and newer things only to find ourselves surrounded by a lot of things we don't even like. It asks us to be intentional about our possessions in an era of cheap consumer goods. To that end, it gave me permission to dispose of those ill-fitting but expensive pants I never wear and those gifts I'd received that weren't quite my style but that I felt obligated to keep.

On the other hand, all of this organizing feels a bit like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. The first episode features a couple with two young kids where the father is working sixty hours a week, and the mother is the primary caregiver and housekeeper on top of working part-time. Both of them appear overwhelmed, with an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with their lives and each other. This is about more than their possessions; it's also about the unending demands on their time and relationships.

From a faith perspective, what might Marie Kondo teach the church? Some of our churches have become dumping grounds for things that no longer “spark joy,” that we feel obligated to hold on to “just in case” or out of fear of offending a donor. Or we might be clinging to items that remind us of a more robust era in the community, like outdated Sunday School curricula when the youngest member is 48. In other words, it isn't just our homes that are drowning in “stuff.”

More broadly, we might ask if involvement in faith communities is something that “sparks joy” in the lives of people. Joy is not necessarily the same thing as happiness, but in a world where the people in our pews are overwhelmed by the demands on their time and energy, the church needs to be something besides another obligation for overworked individuals struggling just to keep their heads above water. The church can be a place to experience the transcendent, a helpful community where members pitch in to help one another, and a place where we are reminded of God's grace no matter how messy our houses are.

Like Kondo does in her show, the church needs to meet people where they are right now, not the imagined, idealized world of fifty years ago. The decline of trustworthy institutions and existential fears about the future of our economy and our planet weigh heavy on the minds of people who are being asked to do too much to prove their value. As we move into post-Christendom, it is more important than ever that the church not replicate the ways of the world but stand distinct from them as a place of grace, peace, and joy.



KIRA AUSTIN-YOUNG

The Reverend Kira Austin-Young is an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Tennessee with a Master of Divinity degree from Vanderbilt University. She is the author of [Pro-Choice and Christian: Reconciling Faith, Politics, and Justice](#). In her spare time, Kira trains for triathlons and marathons, writes, and spends time with her cats.