



New Paltz United Methodist Church

May 2025

Words from the Pastor

Rev L. Grace Harmon

By the time you read this, New Paltz UMC and Memorial UMC, Modena will have become one. After careful thought on the part of Administrative Council of each church together, henceforth we will be known as **New Connexions United Methodist Church**. Sometimes there is a lot in a name.



Connexion is how John Wesley referred to our movement. We were different from church, because we transcended any congregation.

Methodists exist not to be another denomination, largely indistinguishable from the others. We exist to be the builders of connexion: from our stated beliefs to our everyday actions; from our church doors to our communities; from those cast aside to those with influence. Our foundational commitment to connexion made us the builders of hospitals and schools, the founders of prison ministries, the first church that opposed slavery from its inception. Our connexion is our superpower, our sacred inheritance. We should celebrate and foster it – but for far too long, we have stifled and ignored it.

Perhaps, as we take strides toward living into the founding principle of Methodist Connexion, we are reclaiming some of the world-altering secret sauce of Methodism. And, like in the movies, when the hero diffuses the bomb with two seconds to spare, we are right on time – not a moment too soon.

Our world is a divided place. War, famine, ideological rifts, the greatest income inequality in history, and an epidemic of loneliness. I don't say this to depress us – I say this to galvanize us. The needs are obvious. And we have the means to address them – if we can only embrace our inheritance – our passion for reaching beyond ourselves to foster new connexions.


While we may not be able to make significant progress on the global needs, at least not alone – we can foster connexions that make such change possible. And we can meet the needs that do present themselves locally: we can grow our community building ministries and projects like our recent pot-luck, Sans-Cyber Space and Social Justice Sing-a-Longs. We can register the increasing need for Free Fresh Food. We can commit to growing the HEARTS dementia ministry and support the work of Plutarch for Refugees. We can embrace our place on Main Street in a college town and our reputation for being a safe place to hold challenging conversations with love and care.

The choice to merge a church is not an easy one. It's a brave choice to make. For the folks from Modena it means leaving the place they have called home and taking a tremendous leap of faith that their new home and enlarged church family will come to have the same safe familiarity. For the folks here in New Paltz, it means letting go of a bit of ownership, making space. For all of us, it means a season of gentleness and welcome. How convenient that shared sense of purpose is a key to building connexion – as I've said, there are a tremendous array of purposes begging for us to fill them right now.

There can be a lot in a name. We have chosen the older spelling of connexion on purpose. First of all, it is a hallmark of Wesley's writing and vision. It also contains the cross. The cross, the purpose of which was to break down the walls between us and between us and a loving God. What's more, X marks the spot, the place from which our strength and belief flow. And New Connexions transcends our physical location – as our church has come to do as well. We are more than a community church – we are a collection of believers choosing to reach out in love while the world retrenches in fear. We are choosing connexion. And if we keep choosing it, we are right on time.

Let's Play Jeopardy

1. **The answer is:** In our merger with Modena Memorial Church, we merge with their history. Their church windows are part of that history. Name the church that was the source of the their beautiful stained glass windows. See page 4 for the question.
2. **The answer is:** H.E.A.R.T.S. is a ministry founded on Love, Joy and Community. These words describe what each letter stands for. See page 6 for the question.



Presents:

SOCIAL JUSTICE MUSICAL SING-A-LONG

Musicals have always been agents of social change.
Sing the change you want to be.
Popcorn provided, voices needed.
Shows start at 6:30.

3/25 - Wicked
4/15 - Jesus Christ Superstar (the Easter Edition)
5/13 - Cabaret
6/3 - Rent (the Pride Edition)
7/8 - Hamilton (the Independence Edition)

New Paltz United Methodist
1 Grove Street



INVITES YOU TO

SAN-S-CYBER SPACE

Drop your phones at the door
for a few screen-free hours with
old friends and new.
Puzzles, games, good company & light
refreshments provided.

Last Wednesday of the month,
drop in 5 to 9 p.m.
3/26, 4/30, 5/28, 6/25, 7/30

NEW PALTZ UNITED METHODIST
1 GROVE STREET

Potluck Dinner Fun

We had a potluck dinner in May at the New Paltz UMC. There was good food, good conversations, and good connecting.



Merger Issue Update

Submitted by Jane Ruback

May 2025: Better Together

Jane Ruback, Steve Rappleyea - Lay Leaders

If you have been following the newsletter or you have learned in other ways about the steps that have been taken over the past months regarding the possibility of merging with the Modena Memorial United Methodist Church, then you will be glad to learn that the process has come to a happy ending.

On May 18th, 2025 congregational members from New Paltz and from Modena, all voted in favor of merging our two churches together. Each church conducted its own Charge Conference, facilitated by DS Karen Monk, and votes were unanimous in each church to join together. All agreed on a new name for our newly formed church - New Connexions United Methodist Church. This name is a good reflection of our connectional denomination and our Wesleyan roots. Check in Wikipedia for more detailed information about this [Why do Methodists call themselves a connexion.](#)

Many people from both Modena and New Paltz have wrestled with the “pros and cons” of proceeding in this way. Ultimately the “pros” were clearly seen by all involved. The agreement to merge and to sell the Modena property was unanimous in each church.

So, now what, you ask? A newly formed trustee group including members from both churches will oversee the process set forth by our Book of Discipline to sell the Modena property. We must not lose sight of the impact such a sale will have on the members of the Modena congregation. Although everyone was whole-heartedly in favor of the merger and of the decision to sell the Modena property, it is a sad experience to end a long-standing connection to a spiritual home. It has been the place of weddings, funerals, baptisms, community meals and all things sacred. One of the positive features of choosing to merge, as opposed to closing, is that the church’s history will carry over to the newly formed church. Over the next months we will be considering how we will honor the Modena Memorial legacy and celebrate its continued ministries.

The Modena Memorial Church has been a vital part of the community since the 1800’s. It has experienced several mergers and connections with other Methodist churches over the years. Its beautiful stained-glass windows came to the sanctuary from the Plattekill UMC. Modena Memorial has known changes and it has maintained its valuable role in Modena and nearby towns and hamlets. We expect this to continue as our shared community expands to include these places and we find ways to carry on the important ministries it has provided.

The Jeopardy Question

What is Plattekill United Methodist Church?

The answer

In our merger with Modena Memorial Church, we merge with their history. Their church windows are part of that history. Name the church that was the source of their beautiful stained glass windows.

As you can see, this is an important milestone in our church history. We are poised to take stock of our place in the community today, and the place we would like to see ourselves in the future. How do we move forward? We hope it is with a spirit of hope and confidence that we can make a difference in the lives of everyone around us for years to come. Together, joyfully, we extend the invitation to share God’s love and blessings to an even wider audience. We hope you will be part of our new future.

Remember to check out...

- Announcements that are sent out weekly with the Sunday worship information to find out about current activities
- Our church website that contains all kinds of information and is frequently updated



H.E.A.R.T.S

Eileen Daunt

H.E.A.R.T.S. is a ministry that is both for and with persons who have dementia, their care partners/caregivers, and their family. The fact is that they all are living with dementia. So many changes, some in unexpected ways that makes flexibility and love and support needed right from the very beginning of the disease.

H.E.A.R.T.S. meets 10 am to 2 pm each week on Friday in Modena and on Monday in Ellenville. We meet year-round except for major holidays and an occasional weather day. We share the same closings and delays as the local schools.



We gather as friends as we share in all activities together. The volunteers help to guide and assist; the participants are engaged in helping in ways that they can be successful. It is a real ebb and flow to see it all in action. As they walk alongside each other through-out the 4 hours.

Everyone is welcomed as they arrive, sign in and get their name tag. They make their way to the gathering table for a morning snack. Conversation and catching up takes place. When everyone has gathered, we break in singing some good ole songs (secular and sacred), ones that may connect to the theme of the day. Very quickly all our mouths are moving and joining in singing. Time now for movement. We gather at the large circle of chairs, sometimes with a scarf or two, ribbons or a couple of wrist bells. Our “exercise time” uses some very interesting music as we move to the beat or not. Our concern is not so much that the exact movement is being completed, but to get the persons to move in ways that will be helpful to keep them agile longer through the disease. There are moments when it breaks into a dance party feel. We make it fun during the movement time. Daily, there is either an activity or craft that pertains to the theme. ALL the friends are partnered up and work together to create, design, and



complete the project. Game time fun is essential. Whether it is playing a type of concentration, penny games, using a ball, balloon and paper plates as paddles, using a parachute, or pool noodle tennis volleying a balloon the time is full of engagement and FUN. The noon meal is enjoyed by all with soup, sandwiches, fruit, beverage, dessert and lots of chatter about the table.



Everyone that attends or volunteers feels like they are part of a community of friends, who are accepted for who they are and received as equals in all respects.

H.E.A.R.T.S. brings JOY to the lives of those who attend, volunteer and their families. LOVE is expressed as we pray for concerns as they arise and offer thanks for the meals and one another.

There are special times we invite families/caregiver/care partners to come and join us for lunch and afternoon hours. They get to see and experience their loved ones as they interact with each other and the volunteers.

H.E.A.R.T.S. was founded on sharing LOVE bringing JOY and building community in a safe place by offering these foundations for the things we achieve in this ministry:



- **Hope** seeing that the loved one with dementia is still there and with the right setting they reappear for some moments.
- **Encouragement** for the loved one that they can still find connection and participate in a group, for the caregiver that they see the engagement that happens.
- **Activities** that engage, reinforce cognitive connections, allow creativity, provide movement and stimulation of body mind and spirit.
- **Respite** is a two-way street. Four full hours of time to break away to do whatever for the care partner and for the participant four full hours away from the home environment.
- **Trust** is built between everyone as we care for each other and know that a safe place is provided and maintained.
- **Support** is given to the participant during their time at HEARTS. A monthly caregivers/care partners support group is provided for families and friends.

Through all of these we are providing a safe environment that all persons are either a disciple or discipling others in love that Christ calls us to do as we live and care for one another. *“By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”* John 13:35

There is a tremendous need for this type ministry as our population ages.

- Currently, 7.2 million Americans aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer’s dementia. 75% are 75 years old or older.
- 1 in 9 persons age 65 and older (11%), and 1 in 3 persons age 85 and older (33.4%) have Alzheimer dementia.

These figures were taken from the Alzheimer’s 2025 report. They do not account for all the over 100 dementia diseases where persons are living with dementia.

The need for respite ministries and care for this disease is ever growing.

For more information on H.E.A.R.T.S., contact Eileen Daunt at 845-287-9459 or Hearts@nyac-umc.com.

The Jeopardy Question

What is Hope, Encouragement, Activities, Respite, Trust, Support?

The answer

H.E.A.R.T.S. is a ministry founded on Love, Joy and Community. These words describe what each letter stands for.

Wings of Faith

Anna Louise Bates, Church Historian

The Wings of Faith was a Christian folk group formed at the New Paltz United Methodist Church during the pastorate of Stephen Bauman during the early 1980s. The group's membership shifted over time and included multiple talented musicians from the New Paltz congregation. Melissa Bauman was the primary founder. Other star members included Susan LoVerso, Karen Moeller, Barbara Collins, Arla Clouser, Kay Rowe, Anne Albiez Clocher, Lisette Holmes, Janet Salt Frommer, Betsy Haight, Kerry Kiphart, Pat Fisher, Audrey Shaver, Joanne Regan, and others.



The group performed progressive hymns and spiritual songs accompanied by guitar and piano, with occasional additions of other instruments such as tambourines and dulcimers. They met for weekly rehearsals, wherein they planned music for upcoming services and concerts. Kay Rowe recalled the annual evening concerts held at the church.

The group possibly drew its name from Charles Wesley's hymn, "Give Me the Wings of Faith (to rise above the veil...)." Kay Rowe remarked that the songs the group chose seemed to give them spiritual wings: "it was uplifting." Rowe also mentioned that the group performed cutting-edge hymns not found in the traditional hymnals of the 1980s. She recalled the songs "Be Not Afraid," and "On Eagle's Wings," both of which are now standards in our worship services. They also performed spiritually charged songs that were not actually hymns.

The Wings of Faith performed during church services at NPUMC and at venues throughout the New Paltz community. The group continued into the 1990s until it faded around 1995.

Music has always been a vital part of the New Paltz congregation. The church is currently undergoing significant changes. Once the dust settles on the organization of the church and its affiliated congregations, perhaps some of our musically talented parishioners might follow in the footsteps of the Wings of Faith. We would welcome a vibrant music ministry!

Still keeping Ukraine in our prayers



If you would like to add a financial donation to your prayers, see [GIVE - New Paltz United Methodist Church \(newpaltzumc.org\)](https://newpaltzumc.org) for "Give to Ukraine".

New Paltz Play School News

Nancy Vance, Director

Happy Arbor Day! Playschool children got to help Mark Maseo plant a beautiful tree on the Grove St lawn. Thank you Mark for this generous donation.

School is almost over as this year certainly flew by. We have 45 children who are part of our Playschool family.

Looking ahead....school starts again in September and that means our delicious spaghetti dinner will be back in November! We have had very successful fund raising events during this current school year and we look to repeating our success!



Trustees

Our trustees are always busy keeping our church property in good shape. Their latest major accomplishment was getting the roof on the Education Wing replaced.

They also give a big “thank you” to all those who donated to the No Chicken Chicken Dinner. This provides greatly needed funds for building maintenance.



The May Charge Conference voted in a new Board of Trustees to include representation from the Modena UMC.

Class of 2025: Daniel Ruback, Alex Bialy, Art Brooks

Class of 2026: Hank Vance, Karen Seyfert, Eileen Daunt

Class of 2027: John Bautochka, Bethany Goldpaugh, Joseph Watson

Financial News

Margaret Howe

Well this has been a busy – at times stressful – at times joyous time for both New Paltz UMC and Modena: Memorial UMC. And after much work the two congregations voted unanimously to merge and become ONE – we are better together – and I look forward to the growth and love and sharing and fellowship and discipleship sharing that can emerge from this action. Forward we move.



This merger will mean that – once all the required paper work is completed – approved and signed all of the finances will fall under one umbrella. The Finance Committee(s) – New Paltz and Modena will make that happen in a very smooth transition. In the meantime we continue to operate financially as we have been.

In this Newsletter (And by the time you get to this finance article) you have read much about this merger – the new name – and the anticipation of a bright future.

For New Paltz – our financial picture through first quarter is a bit below projection. You can help by giving your weekly or monthly contribution. I realize under times of stress and turmoil in a church some folks just stop giving until there is something new – whatever that new might be. In the Methodist denomination we are not subsidized by the greater church – we develop our own financial budget and work to maintain it. And as Methodists we make a membership vow to serve our congregations through our prayers, presence, service, gifts and witness. I hope that the something “new” for us might be this merger and new name. Let us see what surprises are on the horizon.

Some updates since the last Newsletter

- We have a new rubbish/recycling contractor – County Waste – Our costs went from average \$850 per month to \$160 per month. Huge savings in our budget. So please, when you take trash out – make sure it goes into the correct can and make sure the lid is securely closed. Pastor Grace and Art will make sure the parsonage and church cans are put to the curb each week. PlaySchool will make sure their cans are put out each week.
- Our utility bills - electric and gas – continue to be read monthly – this is a wonderful thing as it means we have actual readings and not estimated readings – better able to track usage for budget purposes. The cost of utilities continues to increase. If you read the recent articles in the local newspapers you know that Central Hudson is planning another huge increase – which impacts our accounts. What can you do – turn off lights when you are the last to leave a room – turn down (at least check) the thermostat when you are the last to leave the room.
- NYAC continues to upgrade their billing system for the payment of Pastor’s Health Benefits and Pensions. That system is up and running – that monthly bill is paid online – no check is written. The next upgrade will be for Apportionments to be paid the same way. We currently make a monthly payment.
- Organ Repairs Update – to keep you informed. The technician will be coming to review the scope of work from the earlier proposal. We are working with calendars to come up with a date. As Lee is not able to discuss the scope of work with the technicians we have a former organist who is willing to meet with the technician. Working out the date is in process. Will keep you informed. This will be exciting to get this back on track.

If you know your John Wesley history – you know that May 24, 1738, known as Aldersgate Day – at a prayer meeting on that day – Wesley felt his heart “strangely warmed” – he experienced assurance of God’s love and went on to share that love with all. Want some Methodist history read more about John Wesley. Why do I share this – because we are in May – much has happened to us at New Paltz – and although my heart is still financially a bit heavy – I do feel a warm spirit of potential growth and renewal – not to the past – instead to the future – we have much work to do to embrace our sustainability as a church, a parish, a district and a conference

– we have opportunities- let’s grab hold – and with enthusiasm move.....doing good, doing no harm and staying in love with God.

The Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table of the United Methodist Church recently unveiled a new vision statement – “love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously”. Bishop Bickerton reminded us of this statement at our recent gathering with him. May it be so!!!!

With love,
Margaret





Let's Celebrate



Happy Birthday!

June 2	Nathan Roper
June 6	Stephanie Parsons
June 16	Mary Edwards Ransom
June 17	Linda Loomis
June 18	Millie Meyer
June 19	Daniel Ruback
June 21	Emily (Bautochka) Czaplicki
June 28	Ann Craig
June 30	Leah Rae Harding
July 1	Jane Ruback
July 2	Anna Bates
July 2	Dana Gutierrez
July 4	Matthew Roe
July 5	Ava McGinnis
July 10	Evan Steiler
July 12	Theo Lundin
July 14	Nancy Steiler
July 16	Joan Gallagher
July 18	Gabi Costley
July 18	Rene Ramos
July 25	Will Sheckler
July 28	Marilyn McNamara
July 30	AJ Buchanan
July 30	Nari Kim
July 31	Eileen Domer
July 31	Dianna Smith

Happy Birthday!

August 3	Jeff Salt
August 11	Kaitlyn Harding
August 13	Silas Roe
August 15	Jackson Rogers
August 25	Bethany Goldoagh
August 28	Vinnie Gallagher

Happy Anniversary!

June 3	Dan and Jane Ruback
June 4	Joan and Vinny Gallagher
June 5	Nancy and Hank Vance
June 21	Carol and Alex Bialy
July 11	George and Kathy Weiss
July 19	John and Nani Bautochka
July 25	Charley and Linda Loomis
July 26	Lee Pritchard/Margaret Howe

We welcome your feedback. Email the church at newpaltzumc@gmail.com. It will be forwarded to Brenda Beane and Kathy Weiss, current newsletter editors.