

# THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church

*A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action*

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## Pastor's Page

### Destroy Kryptonite, Superman!!!

I shouted it while jumping off from a dresser in my parents' bedroom. Then I heard my mother yelling at me. You must know what I'm talking about. I can't forget the scenes of Superman lifting up a school bus and a plane, freezing a lake with breath, cutting off a metal door with laser eye beam, turning around the earth to take time back, showing up over Niagara Falls carrying a child, of course flying around. The list can go on!



But the most shocking scene was where the Kryptonite came out. I thought Superman was invincible. But as soon as Kryptonite came out, Superman became weak, actually weaker than a child. I cannot forget the moment when Superman fell into the swimming pool.

Superman isn't from this world. He possesses supernatural powers that normal human beings don't possess. He fights evil. He protects and liberates those oppressed by villains. He draws his strength from the Sun. We as children of God are not of this world. We are supernaturally empowered in ways those of this world are not. We fight evil. We guard the weak and set captives free. We draw our strength from the Son (of God).



But there is only one thing that can stop Superman:

Kryptonite. It not only neutralized Superman's otherworldly abilities, but it also made him weaker than a mere human being. God created us beautifully and wonderfully. There is a Kryptonite which keep us from manifesting and revealing our true identity and our possibility as the children of God. It has traditionally been called "sin" or a "sinful nature."

PSALM 29:11, NRSV

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# Prospect United Methodist Church

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Nowadays it might be called weakness or mistakes. Whatever it's called, it cannot be denied that there is something that hinders us from living out our faith and our identity (who God says we are). Easter is the day when God destroys the Kryptonite through Jesus Christ. Imagine Superman soaring up into the sky after overcoming the influence of Kryptonite and defeating the bad guys. Jesus flies and we fly on Easter morning.

So During Lent, I encourage you to think about what is your Kryptonite, what steals your strength and what blocks us from becoming who we are, living out our God-given possibility. Then destroy the Kryptonite. Our Lenten sermon series, "Destroy Kryptonite," begins on March 10th.

***Let's fly!***  
***Pastor Kim***



- **March 24:** Pretzel Sunday
- **April 14:** Palm Sunday, Processional
- **April 18:** Maundy Thursday, Soup and Bread Supper (Communion) 6:30 p.m.
- **April 19:** Good Friday Service, 7 p.m.
- **April 21:** Easter Service, 10 a.m.

# Worship Announcements

## ■ Tower Lights

Worship Chair Mary Rogers announces, "You may honor or memorialize someone or some occasion with the Church Bell Tower Lights by paying for the weekly cost of running the lights. Submit a payment of \$15 with a description of the reason to the church office. The bulletin for the week will then detail who has requested the Honor/Memorial and why. For example, I submit a check with a note that I wish to memorialize the 100th anniversary of my mother's birth and ask that the notation be in the February 3rd bulletin."

## ■ Third Wednesday Lunch Bunch

The Nurture Committee sponsors a luncheon in Sessions Hall at 11:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. This month on March 20th the Nurture Committee will sponsor a pasta luncheon. Each participant should bring in a part of the luncheon which includes pasta, sauce, meatballs, salad, bread and butter, dessert, or beverages. If you are interested in participating, you can sign up in Sessions Hall or call the office (860) 582-3443.

### ORDER YOUR EASTER FLOWERS

Orders are currently being taken for Easter flowers. These flowers will adorn our altar Easter morning. The cost is \$10 each. For those wishing to take the plants home, they will be available after the worship service on Easter Sunday.



This form must accompany payment. Please submit orders during worship service or to the office no later than April 14th. Thank you.

In Honor of	_____
In Memory of	_____
Number Requested	_____
Given by	_____

## Middle Ages Group

### ■ Save the Date for Relay For Life

Relay For Life will run from Friday, June 7th, starting at 2:30 p.m. to Saturday, June 8th, to 8 a.m. Middle Ages Group's Luisa Gladu, event chair for Team Prospect, reports,

"Team PUMC will be participating in the

Bristol Relay for Life on beginning Friday, June 7th, at Memorial Boulevard.

Join us as we honor our survivors and remember those we lost to cancer. Our team will be setting up the PUMC Pâtisserie, (a fancy French word for pastries/bakery), to raise money during the event. We will be selling Iced or Hot Coffee and delicious baked goods. We usually sell out!



"Closer to the event I will ask for some help baking brownies and Rice Krispie treats, which we will turn into delicious gourmet baked goodies. Our team already has been entered into the Bristol Relay, so please consider joining. We hope to have someone walking the laps throughout the night and if you are really brave, join Gary and I as we "camp" out on the field.

"On Saturday, Feb. 9th, my sister and I put on our Annual Valentines Dinner Dance fund-raiser in memory of our mother, Patty Orefice. It was well attended and we raised \$1,012 which will be split between Team PUMC Bristol and Team Patty's Pride Plainville.

"We are \$506 towards our goal so far! We all have been touched by cancer one way or another. Relay for Life brings us all together to give each other hope and support. We laugh, we cry and we Relay. I will keep everyone posted as to the theme and plans for this year."

### ■ Renaissance Dinner Update

Luisa Gladu, event chair of the Middle Ages Group's 2019 Renaissance Dinners, has announced the cancellation of this year's event

"due to circumstances beyond our control. We do not have enough volunteers and support to make this event happen this year. Thank you to those who did sign up, We hope we can count on you in the future."



## Mission Corner

### ■ Walk-a-Thon Success

The January Walk-a-Thon sponsored by Volunteers in Mission to help defray costs of the recent mission trip to help Puerto Rico rebuild was a whopping success with \$1,737 raised. The 11-member team included Jilll Wilson from Prospect Church along with volunteers from the New Milford UMC, Hamden Plains UMC and Memorial UMC, Avon.

The team divided into two work groups. Their work assignment included installation of windows, doors, electricity lines, tiling, bathroom fixtures and painting. With the guidance of a foreman at each site and an interpreter, the two sites were completed ahead of schedule.

The team deeply thanks everyone for their prayers and donations. The project was certainly greater than the 11 that made the journey. A video and more photos from the mission trip are available on our web page, [anewprospect.org](http://anewprospect.org).



## Souper Bowl of Caring Hunger Quiz

### 1.) True or False?

The United States has the highest wage inequality of any other industrialized nation?

#### True

*People can work full-time at minimum wage and still not make enough money to maintain a basic standard of living—buying food, paying their rent and medical bills, buying clothes for their children and affording a car so they can travel back and forth to work. Bread for the World ([www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org))*

### 2.) What percent of US children live in hungry or food insecure households?

a) 5 % b) 11 % c) 17% d) 25 %

#### C-17%

*The US has the highest child poverty rate of any other industrialized nation. (The Food Research and Action Center: Household Food Security in the United States 2005)*

### 3.) True or False?

Many clients of America's Second Harvest (the nation's food bank network) must make difficult choices between paying for food and other basic necessities?

#### True

*42 % must choose between food and utilities, 35 % between food and rent or mortgage, and 32 % between food and medicine or medical care. (America's Second Harvest: Hunger in America 2006)*

## History Corner

### ■ Reclaiming Pretzels For God

Pretzel Sunday is a staple for Prospect's Sunday School classes close to Easter. This year's Pretzel Sunday will be March 24. Atlas Obscura's Gastro Obscura ([atlasobscura.com](https://atlasobscura.com)) provides fascinating background on the history of pretzels in Christianity.

"In 1974, Maureen McCauley, a devout Jesuit and former circus performer, addressed the assembly at the 34th Annual Convention of the National Pretzel Bakers Institute. 'God has been cast aside. The old immorality is now the new morality,' she told the gathered 'pretzel men.'

"In her speech, McCauley argued that America needed a potent religious symbol, something to rally Christians to rediscover prayer and penance. America, she believed, was in desperate need of the pretzel. Only a year before, McCauley had launched Pretzels for God (PFG) from St. Francis Xavier Parish in Phoenix, Arizona. Under the impression that the pretzel had Christian origins, she and other members made the baked good the centerpiece in a movement to restore faith and commitment to God. They offered family-friendly activities and pretzel ceremonies, all under the

auspices of a spiritual patron who would go on to be canonized as the first Native American saint.

"With ancient origins in the Gaulish region of Europe that once spanned numerous modern-day nations, the pretzel is now firmly rooted in the baking traditions of German-speaking areas. From Bavaria's lye pretzels to the Rhineland's pudding pretzels, the baked good became a common everyday snack, as well as a festival food eaten during carnivals and on

religious holidays such as Easter, Palm Sunday, and Lent.

"According to the PFG, their movement was busily restoring the pretzel to its rightful place in the history of early Christianity. The

food, many Christians believed, was not just rife with symbolism but had actually originated at the hands of a monk in a southern French monastery in 610 C.E. As legend has it, the long-ago monk folded leftover strips of dough to resemble arms crossed in prayer, and left three holes to represent the Holy Trinity. He then handed out to his creation to his pupils as a reward for learning their prayers.

"Since pretzels are made with a simple recipe of flour, water and salt, European Christians in the Middle Ages ate them during the 40-day fast period of Lent when eggs and dairy were forbidden. ... During this period,





the pretzel also began showing up in medieval religious art and prayer books, including an 11th-century depiction of the Last Supper and the 12th-century encyclopedia Hortus Deliciarum, compiled by the German nun Herrad of Landsberg.

"But the PFG movement came at a time when the Catholic Church was at a crossroads. Profound changes in the Church, including the celebration of mass in vernacular languages instead of Latin, coincided with a growing trend towards secularism in American society. Congregants began leaving in ever greater numbers, with 7.5 million members no longer identifying with the Catholic Church in 1975. Many who remained faced a sense of insecurity about the institution and its role in their spiritual future.

"Pretzels for God was a reaction against this mounting disillusionment, one that looked to a simple, tasty foodstuff to reinvigorate the faith of both young and old. The pretzel, claimed McCauley, would be effective in helping put America in order. For spiritual guidance, the PFG tapped Kateri Tekakwitha, a Catholic historical figure, as their pretzel patron. Tekakwitha had no relationship to the pretzel; it's debatable whether the baked good had even reached the shores of the Americas by the time of her death in 1680."

[This history of Pretzels and Christianity continues in the April Tower History Corner.]






## Make a "Prayer Pretzel"



Pretzels were first made by monks in Rome during the 5th century. The shape looks like a person's arms folded in prayer. You can make your own pretzels.








### *You will need:*

-  A roll of refrigerated bread stick dough
-  One egg yolk
-  1 1/2 tablespoons of milk
-  Cookie sheet
-  Coarse salt



### *How to make them:*

-  Shape each piece of dough into a pretzel shape.
-  Place on cookie sheet.
-  Brush with a mixture of the egg yolk and milk.
-  Sprinkle with salt. (You can use parmesan cheese, if you prefer.)
-  Bake according to package directions.

**RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH THAT WAS HELD FEBRUARY 23<sup>RD</sup> THROUGH 26<sup>TH</sup>.**

By Timothy J Krauss

**Note:** *This is a version of the message delivered to the congregation on Sunday, March 3, 2019, edited for The Tower.*

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” {Rom 1:7} This article is to share some information about the decisions made by the recent Special General Conference. In case you are not familiar with the function of the General Conference, it is the primary governing body of the whole denomination and the only body with the authority to alter the rules of the church contained in our Social Principles, Book of Discipline, and Book of Resolutions. The General Conference normally meets every four years and the next regular session is next May. The purpose of this Special General Conference was to act on proposed plans concerning the denomination’s rules related to sexuality. This article is to share what we know thus far about the outcomes from the Special General Conference and to speak with the love of God on behalf of the lay leadership of this congregation in this time and place.

At this Special General Conference, over 800 delegates from the United States, Europe, Africa, and the Philippines considered four possible plans to maintain or alter the language in the Book of Discipline related to human sexuality and 78 petitions to handle related issues and the impact of any changes. Some of you may be wondering what this language is and why there was a need for a Special General Conference. To answer these questions, I quote a few sentences from a document published by the United Methodist Church.

“The United Methodist Church stretches across four continents with a membership of nearly 13 million. We include people of all nations, races, ages and sexual orientation and identity. Our diversity is a source of strength — and a source of sharp differences. We are not of one mind on all things. Questions about human sexuality continue to divide Christians everywhere. The United Methodist Church in its Social Principles states that all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, are persons of sacred worth and urge their inclusion in the church's ministry. What we don't agree on is what that inclusion looks like. For some, their understanding of scripture calls them to affirm all of God's people and include them in all of the church's ministry regardless of their sexual identity or orientation. Others believe, based on their interpretation of scripture and its authority, that all are welcome to be part of the church but would limit the participation of self-avowed practicing homosexuals.

Despite these differences, we have for decades remained in ministry together, making new disciples, bringing good news to the poor and advocating justice for all humanity. We are committed to sharing God's love with the world.”

The major action of the General Conference was to approve one of the four plans. The plan approved is called the Traditional Plan, which proposes to strengthen the existing language in the



Book of Discipline and add new language and penalties for clergy who do not follow the rules. It was approved by a narrow margin. Some of you may have heard about this event in the news after the end of the General Conference. Some of your friends and neighbors probably heard about it too, and those who know you attend a United Methodist Church might ask you about it. Please know and please share with anyone who asks, that this decision by the General Conference is not about excluding anyone from participation in the life of the church. Although the decision limits the involvement of some persons in professional ministry, it does not change who we are as a congregation. Nothing has changed about the relationships we have with each other in this family of faith. Nothing has changed about our love for each other and how we welcome everyone who comes to our doors. Nothing has changed about the fact that all persons are welcome at our Communion table. Nothing has changed about our mission to share God's love and light with the people of Bristol and the world beyond.

What will this decision by the General Conference mean for us? We don't know yet. I am not including details of the plan because we don't know how much of the plan will become reality. Parts of the plan do not comply with the Constitution of the United Methodist Church and may not be implemented. The New York Annual Conference will review and discuss the potential implications at a special session on March 16. Jeanette Baker and Susan Thayer are your elected representatives who will be attending that Conference and Tim Krauss will be attending as a visitor. As new information becomes available from the Annual Conference and General Church, we will keep you updated.

What should we do now, while we wait for more information and firm decisions? I encourage you to pray, keep practicing your faith, and keep doing ministry.

“... don't let anything get in the way of loving your neighbor. Pray for our church and our denomination. Pray for all those who are in pain or feeling anger or grief at the moment. Be kind and loving toward those with whom you may disagree. Follow [John] Wesley's General Rules:

Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.”

Also, please read the Pastoral Letter from our bishop, which is available in the Church Office and on the New York Annual Conference website at <https://www.nyac.com/newsdetail/pastoral-letter-from-bishop-bickerton-about-gc2019-12764636>. Regardless of any decisions, we expect to have opportunities here for discussion, listening, and learning about this subject in the coming weeks and months. And, remember that in this place, in this family of faith, we leave behind the labels of the world and come together as one in Christ. AMEN

{Source for quotes: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/preaching-and-talking-about-general-conference-2019-points-for-pastors> }

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