



# Valhalla United Methodist Church

200 Columbus Avenue  
VALHALLA, NY 10595-1727

REV. KEVAN T. HITCH, Pastor

Phone (914) 949-6252  
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Website [www.valhallaumc.org](http://www.valhallaumc.org)

November 6, 2024

Rev. Simeon C. Law  
District Superintendent, Metropolitan District, NYAC  
20 Soundview Ave  
White Plains, NY 10606

Dear Superintendent Law,

We are writing to you as the congregation of Valhalla United Methodist Church is concerned about our future.

The pandemic severely impacted our church life, especially with regard to attendance at Sunday services. We feel we have finally recovered from the pandemic's disruption as demonstrated by the settling in of our attendance at a steady 45- 50 people each Sunday, the continuation of all of our ministries, and the beginning of new ministries.

One of the key elements of this recovery has been the continuity of Pastor Kevan Hitch's inspired leadership. For over 20 years, Kevan has provided a considered, steady hand in leading the congregation. He has handled his responsibilities in the daily life of the church in an evenhanded manner, relating to young and old(er) alike – not an easy task when dealing with varied ages and personalities. He displays an all-encompassing view when dealing with the multitude of issues which inevitably arise and need to be dealt with.

Kevan's sermons reflect this evenhanded manner. They are always well crafted and structured to not present absolutes but to provoke contemplation and consideration of options for spiritual growth and a path forward in life.

Kevan is a superstar when dealing with the children of the church (as well as our Nursery School attendees). There have been a number of occasions when the excitement of the kids during the Sunday children's chat is actually palpable – electric. Kevan is equally solicitous of the older segment of the congregation, unfailingly taking the time to ask of their well-being and to patiently listen to their thoughts and concerns. And to top it all off, he sings and plays guitar with the choir!

This is all to say that the congregation considers him not only to be at the top of his game as our pastor, but he, and his family, have become a part of the very fabric of the church, a familiar, comforting, cherished and integral part of our church family.



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As you know, Kevan is scheduled to retire at the end of this year's appointment. We plan to approach him to determine his post retirement plans, in consultation with you, in the hope that he can continue to minister to our congregation, either as a full-time or part-time pastor. We feel that his presence is a vital part of our lives, especially given the times we live in, and it is essential to our continued recovery and growth.

We face other challenges, primarily with regard to yearly operating deficits, which have been exacerbated by increasing competition for students in our Nursery School, the loss of other churches which were using our facility, and the loss of some strong financial supporters as they retired and relocated to warmer climes. Although we are blessed to have some good investment funds, we need to find ways to mitigate, and preferably halt, the yearly operating deficits that we have dealt with, as well as the anticipated major repairs to the heating system, roof, etc. which happen in maintaining a 60 year-old building.

This letter is signed by the members of the SPR Committee as well as others who have expressed their interest and anxieties about the future of the congregation, and it is the result of many hours of prayerful discussion and deliberation.

We look forward to continued dialogue with the Conference on these concerns as we move forward trying to maintain and strengthen our spiritual lives and strive to bring more followers to Christ

Respectfully in Christ,

The SPR Committee and Members of the Valhalla United Methodist Church

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SPR Committee: Mary Kovoor, Chairperson, Jackie Cureton, Claudia Lampel, Sal Vaccaro

VUMC Members: Peggy Alexander, Gabi Gold, Gina Medina, Barbara Vaccaro, Jan Wagner, Heather Johanson Wilson, Brent Harrington, Tom Kovoor, Scott McIntyre, Peter Viviano, Chip Wagner, Darren Wilson.

CC: Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, Rev. New York Annual Conference

Carmen Denise Picket Greater, Cooperative White Plains Parish Coordinator