



Movies With Spirit

*Sponsored by the Ulster County Religious Council, Kingston Area Council of Churches,
Ministers' Alliance of Ulster County and Mid-Hudson Islamic Association*

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2008–2009 Calendar

Sept. 20, THE BUCKET LIST (2007), First Presbyterian Church of Kingston, 80 Elmendorf St., Kingston — This poignant comedy drama — directed by Rob Reiner and named one of the year's Top Ten Films by the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures — tells the story of a blue-collar mechanic (Morgan Freeman) and a billionaire hospital magnate (Jack Nicholson) who meet each other in a hospital room after both are diagnosed with terminal cancer. They quickly become friends and seek together to fulfill a wish list of things they want to do before they “kick the bucket.” *Rated PG-13 for language, including a sexual reference.*

Oct. 18, GARDEN STATE (2004), SUNY New Paltz, Coykendall Science Building auditorium, northwest corner of campus, off Plattekill Road, New Paltz — Written, directed by and starring Zach Braff (best known for playing John “J.D.” Dorian on the NBC-TV comedy drama *Scrubs*), this smart, off-kilter comedy centers on Andrew Largeman (Braff), a 26-year-old Los Angeles actor/waiter who returns to his New Jersey hometown for the first time in nine years after receiving word from his father (Ian Holm) that his mother died. Numb to most emotions because of prescription drugs his father made him take since a young age, Andrew is all but unaffected by his mother's death. Avoiding his father, he reconnects with old friends and meets a local girl, Sam (Natalie Portman), with whom he begins a cautious relationship. Through the relationship, Andrew opens up and feels pain he has longed to experience after being emotionally numb for most of his life. The coming-of-age film contains many allusions to *The Graduate* (1967). *Rated R for profanity, sexual situations and drug content.*

Nov. 15, BRUCE ALMIGHTY (2003), New Progressive Baptist Church, 8 Hone St., Kingston — A comedy by director Tom Shadyac about Bruce Nolan (Jim Carrey), a frustrated TV news reporter in Buffalo who is unhappy about his lot in life, gets angry at God and ultimately meets him (Morgan Freeman). God lets Bruce try his hand at running

the universe to see if he can do a better job. Features Jennifer Aniston as Bruce's loyal girlfriend. *Rated PG-13 for some profanity, sexual situations and bathroom humor.*

Dec. 20, IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (1946), Salvation Army, 35 Cedar St., Kingston — Frank Capra's classic bittersweet comedy drama about George Bailey (James Stewart), the eternally in-debt guiding force of a bank in the typical American small town of Bedford Falls. Also starring Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore. *Not rated (suitable for all ages).*

Jan. 17 — EVE & THE FIRE HORSE (2007), St. John's Episcopal Church, 207 Albany Ave., Kingston — In this charming, award-winning film by writer-director Julia Kwan, a precocious 9-year-old with an overactive imagination, Eve Eng (Phoebe Jo Jo Kut), was born in the Year of the Fire Horse, notorious among Chinese families for producing the most troublesome children. While bad luck worms its way into the family in unexpected and tragic ways, Eve's older sister Karena (Holly Lo) explores a newfound fascination with Christianity. Soon, crucifixes pop up next to the Buddha in the family's house and Eve must contend with a Sunday school class in which her wild imagination is distinctly out of place. Caught between her sister's quest for premature sainthood and her own sense of right and wrong, Eve faces the challenges of childhood with fanciful humor and wide-eyed wonder. Along the way, she proves that sometimes the most troublesome children are the ones that touch our hearts most deeply. This intelligent, delicate and touching film was called "luminous" by Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, "a slice of delicately captured childhood" by *Variety* and "a rare gem" by *San Francisco Weekly*. *Rated PG.*

Feb. 21, DEFENDING YOUR LIFE (1991), Jewish Congregation of New Paltz Community Center, 30 N. Chestnut St. (Route 32), New Paltz — Albert Brooks wrote, directed, and stars in this philosophical comedy about a man having a hard time making a case for himself in the afterlife. When advertising executive Daniel Miller (Brooks) dies in a car crash in his brand new BMW, he's whisked away to Judgment City, where the recently dead are put on trial to decide their fate. As Daniel watches episodes from his pitiful life, he gets the impression he doesn't stand a chance of moving on — and his representative, Bob Diamond (Rip Torn), seems to agree. In the meantime, Daniel meets Julia (Meryl Streep), who seems so kind, sweet and noble that her advancement is practically assured. The two fall in love. But what will happen if they don't end up in the same place? The film includes a highly appropriate cameo by Shirley MacLaine. *Rated PG for adult language and adult humor.*

March 21, DER HIMMEL ÜBER BERLIN (THE SKY OVER BERLIN, or WINGS OF DESIRE) (1987), St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 163 Main St. (Route 299), New Paltz — In this remarkable modern fairy tale by director Wim Wenders about the nature of being alive, Daniel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander) are angels who watch over Berlin, traveling unseen through the city, listening to people's thoughts, watching their actions and studying their lives. While they can make their presence felt in small ways, only children and other angels can see them. They spend their days serenely observing, unable to interact with people and feeling neither pain nor joy. One day, Daniel finds his way into a circus and sees Marion (Solveig Dommartin), a high-wire artist, practicing her act. He is immediately smitten. When the circus owners shut the circus

down for lack of money, Damiel decides he wants to be human so he can be with Marion to lift her spirits and, if need be, to share her pain. In doing this, he also discovers that he is not alone in making the crossover and that a purely spiritual experience is not enough to satisfy anyone. Peter Falk appears as himself, revealing a secret we may not have known about the man who starred in *Columbo*. German, with English subtitles. *Rated PG-13 for some sexually suggestive material and fleeting nudity.*

April 18, EXPIRATION DATE (2006), Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran

Church, 22 Livingston St., Kingston — Rick Stevenson directed this quirky comedy, which won five film-festival awards, about Charlie Silvercloud III (Robert A. Guthrie), a young man of Native American ancestry who has a sneaking suspicion a certain family tradition will soon catch up with him. It seems Charlie's father and grandfather both died on their 25th birthdays — after being struck by runaway milk trucks. Charlie's 25th birthday is only a few weeks away, and he's starting to feel his fate is lurking around the corner. His mother, Lucille (Dee Wallace, the mom from *ET*), traces the routes of the local milk deliverymen and discovers they all converge in their neighborhood, so Charlie starts putting his affairs in order — picking out a cemetery plot, planning his funeral and ending his relationship with his girlfriend. However, he also meets Bessie Anderson (Sascha Knopf), an eccentric, beautiful girl who isn't about to let him die in peace. The film was dubbed "A *Harold and Maude* for our times" by the Spiritual Cinema Circle. *Not rated (suitable for teens).*

May 16, TOMORROW IS TODAY (2006), Temple Emanuel, 243 Albany Ave., Kingston — A compassionate drama about love, loss and survival of the spirit, directed by Frederic Lumiere. Hapless drifter Greg Jerdan (Mark Hefti, who is also the film's screenwriter) goes to the New Jersey shore to end his life. But his plans are undone when young Julie Peterson (Scout Taylor-Compton) intercedes and saves him. First thinking the near-drowning was an accident, she later learns it was Greg's desperate attempt to end the pain of losing everything that had ever mattered in his life. Julie then vows to save Greg emotionally as well. But it seems that everyone in her life — including the alcoholic police chief, a bitterly jealous admirer, her doting father and unsympathetic stepmother — is determined to stop her. Julie learns that to truly live, you must let go of the pain and embrace the future without the fear and cynicism that seems to permeate everyone's lives. Winner of eight film-festival awards. *Rated PG-13.*

June 20, SOMEWHERE IN TIME (1980), Vivekananda Retreat, Ridgely, 101 Leggett Road, Stone Ridge — In this dramatic fantasy film directed by Jeannot Szwarc, Christopher Reeve plays young playwright Richard Collier, who is approached by an elderly woman on the occasion of his first triumph in 1972. All she says to him is, "Come back to me," and leaves him with a watch that contains a picture of a ravishing young woman. Eight years later, he visits a grand old hotel and comes upon a photograph of the same woman, whom he discovers was an actress who made an appearance at the hotel in 1912. He becomes obsessed with the image and with what the elderly woman meant when she approached him. He falls in love with her as he learns more about her life and career. Then he comes upon the suggestion of his former college professor that time travel may, in fact, be possible, using an extreme form of self-hypnosis to free the person from their place in the time-stream. Richard's feelings for the woman are so strong that he succeeds, bringing himself back to the hotel on the eve of her 1912 triumph. He meets the actress,

Elise McKenna (Jane Seymour), and the two fall in love despite the machinations of her obsessive, autocratic manager (Christopher Plummer), who feels threatened by Richard's presence. *Rated PG for adult situations.*

July 18, FAIRY TALE: A TRUE STORY (1997), Woodstock Reformed Church, 16 Tinker St., Woodstock — Based on factual accounts, this film, directed by Charles Sturridge, tells the story of two young girls (Phoebe Nicholls and Elizabeth Earl) who appear to have an ability to take pictures of winged beings, which causes quite a stir in 1917 England. Everyone — except the girls who evidently think it's quite normal — is excited about this “photographic proof” that fairies exist. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Peter O'Toole), author of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries and a confirmed spiritualist, declares the photos “as genuine as the king's beard,” while illusionist Harry Houdini (Harvey Keitel), who has devoted much time and energy to exposing phony mediums and psychics, takes a more cynical view, though he too is eventually convinced the fairies are real. *Rated PG for brief mild language.*

Aug. 15, PAY IT FORWARD (2000), Reformed Church of Port Ewen, 160 Salem St., Port Ewen — Trevor McKinney (Haley Joel Osment) is a bright 12-year-old boy who comes from a troubled home. His mother, Arlene (Helen Hunt), is an alcoholic trying to hold down two jobs to support her son, while Trevor's father, Ricky (Jon Bon Jovi), left his family behind some time ago. At school, Trevor's social studies teacher, Eugene Simonet (Kevin Spacey), gives the class an unusual assignment: Think up a practical way to make the world a better place, and put it into action. Trevor comes up with the notion of Pay It Forward — doing a needed favor for three different people without being asked, and then asking them to do the same for three others. Directed by Mimi Leder. *Rated PG-13 for mature thematic elements including substance abuse and recovery, some sexual situations, language and brief violence.*

Each screening begins at 7 p.m. and is followed by a facilitated discussion. Evenings end around 10 p.m. A \$5 contribution is suggested for moviegoers over age 12. Screenings include refreshments, provided by the hosting facility.

The series is sponsored by the Ulster County Religious Council, the Kingston Area Council of Churches, the Ministers' Alliance of Ulster County and the Mid-Hudson Islamic Association. It is organized by Gerry Harrington of Humanity's Team, an international movement “awakening the world to oneness.”

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