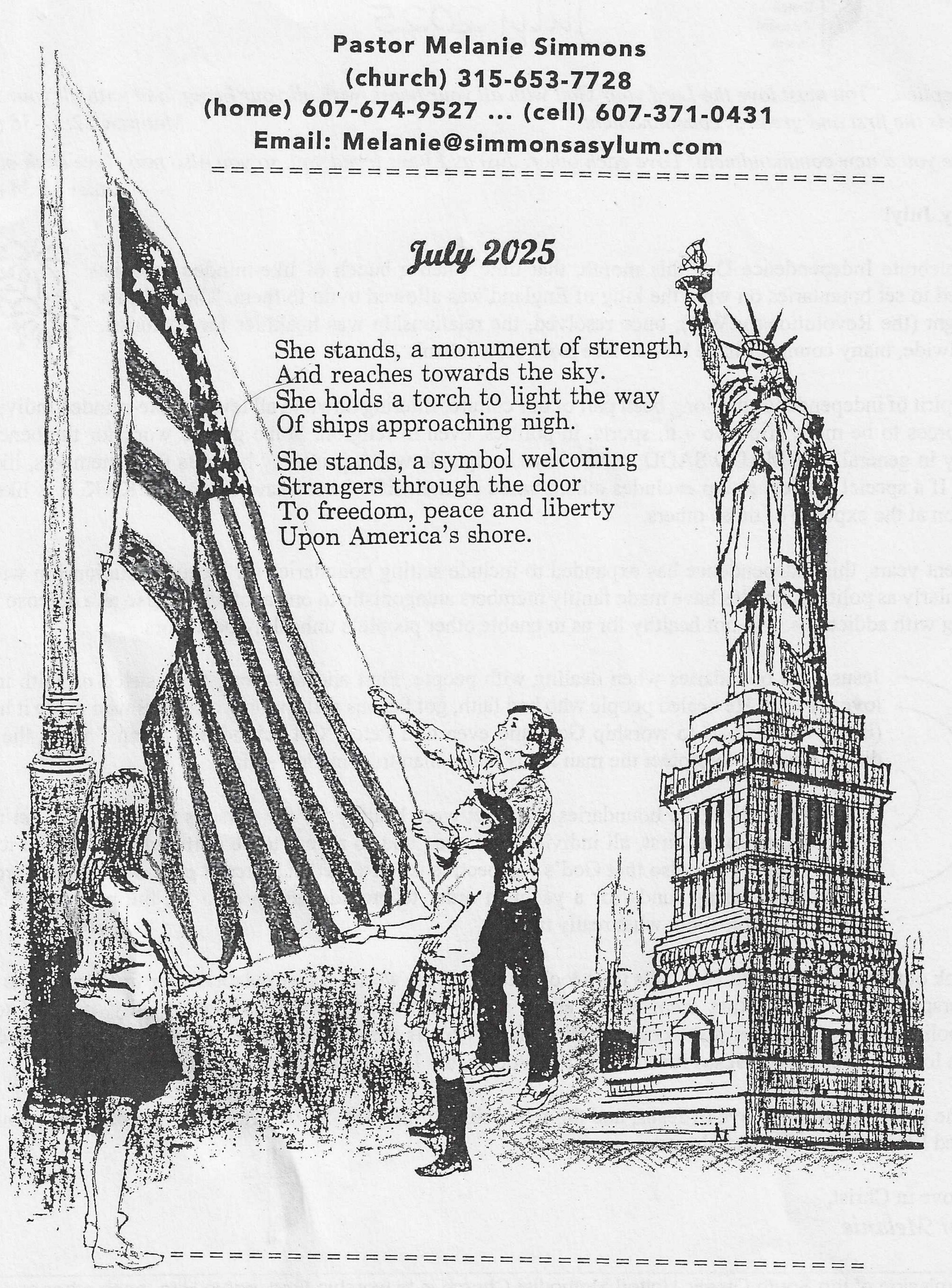
50. Otsesic Methodist News



Ann Campbell, Editor

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PASTOR ...

July 2025

"He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." Matthew 22:37-38 (CEB)

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other." John 13:34 (CEB)

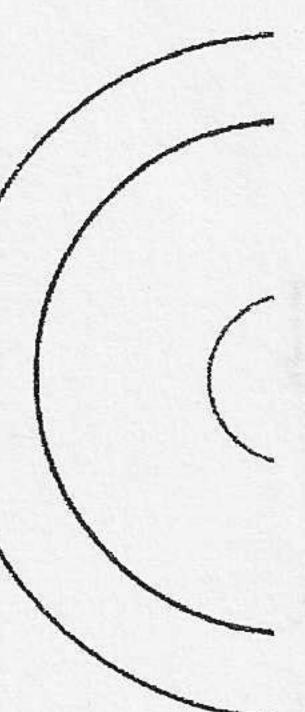
Happy July!

We celebrate Independence Day this month, that time when a bunch of like-minded colonists decided to set boundaries on what the king of England was allowed to do to them. This led to a big fight (the Revolutionary War); once resolved, the relationship was healthier for centuries. Worldwide, many countries have broken free from colonialism.



That spirit of independence has long been part of our culture, filtering down to all levels. Like-minded individuals join forces to be more effective - in sports, in politics, even in religion. Some groups work for the benefit of society in general, like MADD/SADD; others have an agenda which primarily benefits their members, like the NRA. If a special interest group excludes others based on their life circumstances, like the KKK, it is likely to function at the expense of those others.

In recent years, this independence has expanded to include setting boundaries for those in relationship with us, particularly as political divides have made family members antagonistic to one another but also as a defense when dealing with addictions. It is not healthy for us to enable other people's unhealthy behaviors.



Jesus used boundaries when dealing with people. First and foremost, He insisted on faith in and love for God. He healed people who had faith, got furious at the moneychangers who made it harder (if not impossible) to worship God, and even told Peter "Get behind me, Satan!" when the poor disciple sought to protect the man Jesus rather than trust in God's plan.

Importantly, all of the boundaries Jesus set were healthy for the persons for whom He set them. Because God comes first, all individuals matter, and so all are to be nurtured, not harmed for the sake of others. Note also that God's perspective is not aimed at material gain, but spiritual growth. A billionaire losing funds for a yacht in order to provide health care for the poor provides an important lesson about what really matters.

We look out for ourselves, but God calls us to look out for all the world. As we celebrate our freedom, let us open our perspectives - not limiting them to ourselves, not to just our family/friends/community, not just to our team/political party, not even just to our country, but to what is best for everyone. We must first love God that we can love all peoples – as Jesus loved us. In the process, the Lord brings us to greater spiritual health.

May the grace of God, the love of Jesus, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit strengthen and transform you into renewed life, this Summer and always.

With love in Christ, Pastor Melanie

"The mission of the South Otselic United Methodist Church is to worship God, serve Him, each other and our community and to share His love and actions while helping inspire and nurture followers of Christ."

Reflections

7/95

Ready for a short quiz? Ready or not, here it comes:
Question #1 - What famous sculpture among all those over
the face of the Earth, whether on display in any of the
great museums or standing watch in some local park, has
served in replica as the base for thousands of table lamps?
Question #2 - What sculpture has been both the incrination

Question #2 - What sculpture has been both the inspiration and invitation to countless millions, who gazing upon it for the first time, felt the thrill of new freedom and promise in their lives?

Question #3 - What sculpture, with true magnificance, stands firmly on its own private island while stretching skyward to a height of 305 feet, or slightly more than a football field tipped up on end?

Answer - Give yourself an "A" if your reply to any of the above is "The Statue of Liberty".

More than one hundred years ago, on July 4, 1884, this great Lady was presented to the people of the United States as a gift from the people of France at a ceremony in that country. This gift, symbolyzing the friendship existing between the two nations, came about as the result of a proposal by Edouard de Laboulaye, a French historian and writer. Laboulaye envisioned a great statue which would be a monument to liberty and to American independence, while commemorating the alliance of the United States and France.

I first heard the story of the Statue of Liberty when I was a grade-school student many years ago, but although the statue is a familiar figure to millions of people world-wide, I don't recall ever hearing much about its origin since then. I do believe that Hollywood and Television have missed out on a possible movie based on the story of this Lady of Liberty. Certainly, the romance of its history would offer many fiction possibilities...

Anyway --- When Laboulaye approached Auguste Bartholdi with his idea, the famous French sculptor was greatly impressed and immediately became an enthusiastic participant in the project. So much so, that in 1871, he traveled to the United States to investigate its possibility. During his voyage to this country, he drew sketches of different ideas for the statue but none of them suited him.

Then, while on deck on the morning that his ship entered New York Harbor, Bartholdi noticed a small island that seemed to be there solely for the purpose of welcoming him to America. As the ship passed tiny Bedloe Island, the sculptor was suddenly struck with a vision of his statue. Immediately he hurried to his cabin and sketched a rough version of what would eventually become the Statue of Liberty!

Showing his completed sketches to President Grant and other prominent people, Bartholdi received enthusiastic approval. This was repeated by his friends in France when he returned to that country. After viewing the sculptor's sketches and a clay model, Laboulaye, originator of the idea, proposed to form a fund-raising committee to finance the project.

Sculptor Bartholdi was authorized to commence construction of the statue and the committee set about raising the necessary funds. The school children of France united in giving what they could, while the committee convinced French philanthropists to donate much of the large sum essential to their goal. Meanwhile Bartholdi completed a 36-foot model of the proposed statue which was then divided into 300 sections. Each of these individual pieces was carefully measured and then reproduced into new sections four times larger.

America celebrated her Centennial in 1876 and it was then that her citizens received their first indication of the immensity of France's gift. By that time, the statue's arm holding the torch had been completed. This 42-foot arm was shipped to Philadelphia in August of 1876 for exhibition at the Centennial.

While the design and model of the statue was the work of Auguste Bartholdi, the actual construction of the finished project required the skill of an expert in steel fabrication. Thus, building the framework of the giant figure was intrusted to Gustave Eiffel who would later design the famous Eiffel Tower. The head of the statue was finished in 1878 in time to be displayed at that year's Paris World Fair.

The actual construction was all done in the courtyard of the sculptor's studio where Eiffel formed a framework of four steel supports. To this framework, wooden battens were attached and covered with a plaster cast. A skin of copper sheeting 3/32 of an inch thick was then hammered into place. As the statue grew closer to completion, it soon towered over nearby buildings. The statue was finally finished in May of 1884 and formal presentation was made to the United States representative, Minister L.P. Morton on July 4, 1884. The completed statue was then dismantled and packed into 214 crates for shipment to America by steamship.

In the meantime, the Americans had agreed to prepare a base for the statue on Bedloe's Island. This necessitated obtaining funds on this side of the ocean. Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the New York "World" newspaper, succeeded in raising the \$100,000 needed to finish the base and the long project was finally nearing completion.

The great statue was painstakingly reassembled piece by piece until at last the dream of Laboulaye, the vision of Bartholdi and the skill of Eiffel, came to fruition on October 28, 1886 amid great celebration. On that memorable day, the gift of the People of France to the People of America was dedicated by President Grover Cleveland as the French Tricolor was dropped from the face of the statue in the unveiling by Auguste Bartholdi!

Since that day, the statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World" has stood tall on the renamed Liberty Island. Proclaimed a National Monument in 1924, the Lady of Liberty holds high her torch, the world's brightest symbol for Peace, Freedom and Democracy.

George Ortiz

Treasurer's Corner

Boom - poppity pop - boom, boom, boom - the sound of fireworks means it is that time of year to celebrate our Country's freedom! I love the 4th of July! Picnics, parades, watermelon and of course fireworks! My favorites are the 'soft' pop ones they are now doing along with the twizzlers (they spin out like tops and make a fizzling sound). The grand finale is the best part with everything going off seemingly at once followed by a million booms, and then the day is over. We are so blessed to be able to celebrate our Country like this, but why can't we pull together every day and not just one day?

These days it seems like we are further apart than together, but deep down inside, I think most of us *are* together! I wish the news would stop printing, showing or writing about all the negativity and do more positivity. We as a whole Country should be on our knees, thanking the Lord up above that we can live in a place where we are not being constantly bombed, living with clean water, electricity, have food *and* a home to put that food in! What kind of a world would our fore-fathers think of all of this chaos? This is what they were trying to prevent, as they had lived in a world of tyranny and authoritarianism. I bet they are rolling over in their graves! Every night I pray that God will put common sense back into our lives, but I do not know when. None the less - we have to be thankful... and I am ... to be able to live freely... have a wonderful 4th of July! God Bless America!

Here is the report for May 2025. Please keep our little church in your prayers. In

TOTAL	4554.31	
Great America Financial Services (copier)	193.53	
Telephone	89.06	
Chris Kalin (youth roller skating)	76.20	
Copy paper & labels	66.44	
Penny Stone (trash removal)	30.00	
Apportionment	987.30	Year to Date: + 1888.84
NYSEG	200.99	
Fuel Oil	587.00	
Postage	115.94	
Tech Support	153.30	
Secretary	0.00	
Organist	0.00	
Travel	0.00	
Cont. Ed / Book	0.00	
Treasurer	153.30	Chng: 7113.87 Savings: 8912.80
Housing	1670.00	
Minister's Salary	231.25	Ending Balances:
yments:		
TOTAL	5354.66	Balance 800.35
Tr fr Ch. Ed (youth roller skating)	76.20	Payments: 4554.31
60+ rent 2nd qtr	175.00	Receipts: 5354.66
Bake Sale	530.00	
Interest (Wells Fargo)	232.00	Savings: 8912.80
Loose Offerings	4130.00 232.00	Chng: 6313.52
Envelopes & Pledges	1120.00	Beg Balances:

Up to the minute... Summer Rummage Sale!

Mark your calendars for July 10, 11 and 12 for the Sunshine Shop's Annual Summer Rummage Sale! There will be something for everyone as our rooms are full! We have Christmas items, blankets, bedding, curtains, kitchen things, a huge assortment of handbags, children's toys and baby items not to mention glass and miscellaneous items - you name it we may have it! Almost everything is a free will offering and all the proceeds will go towards purchasing school supplies for the OVCS students! We are partnering with The Mustard Seed to help even more students! This is one of our main mission projects of the year, so please, come and browse and be generous so we can help as many kids as we can! Hope to see you there!!!

Trustees Report - July 2026

Bruce, Gary and Cal installed new railings for the front entrance to the church to replace the damage from last month's windstorm. Much of the wood on the old railing was rotted. Except for the new handrail (which has been primed and painted), the new railings are made with pressure treated wood, and will eventually be painted once they've had time to weather.

Our parking lot was leveled and resurfaced with a crushed stone this past month. We are in hopes of making this a better solution than uneven ground and mud. For at least the first few days it looked fantastic - then Mother Nature intervened! The entrance to the new parking lot suffered some loss of gravel during this month's rainstorm. Cal has contacted the contractor and the Town Hwy Superintendent to ask for assistance in retrieving some of the washed-out gravel and putting it back in place. Otherwise, the trustees will ask for volunteers to help recover as much of the gravel as possible and rake it back into place.

Thanks to Suki for keeping our grounds looking beautiful by mowing the lawns and weed whacking!

News from the Georgetown UMC

We hope everyone survived the heavy rain and storms last Sunday morning. We are fortunate that we didn't have any weather like our neighbors to the north. God bless the families that suffered tragic losses and hope they are healing with God's love.

We have a new deck/porch at the church! Justin Parker from Otselic did a splendid job rebuilding it in time for Baccalaureate. We honored the 16 graduates from Otselic Valley. Two ladies did a superb job cleaning and freshening up the sanctuary. We oohed and aahed at the fresh smell, freshly washed vestments, polished pews, and the new Christian flag. We were all decked out in our finery for our guests. Betty Robinson was our guest pianist. She did a super job as usual.

We are looking forward for the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. We hope everyone has a safe and happy 4th of July filled with all of God's gifts and the enjoyment of picnics, band concerts, parades, fireworks, and family reunions then and throughout the summer.

Until next time.....

Purple Monkeys? - Striped Elephants? - Pink Tigers? "Weird Animals "!!!

If you think they sound funny, then you better check out the VBS program on 'Weird Animals'! This year our program will be August 4-8 from 12:30 to 4. A light lunch will be provided at noon. I have no idea what will happen or what will show up, but our youth have been preparing this program for a few weeks now and I am sure it will not disappoint! Creative foods, snacks, art projects, Bible lessons, music games and the list goes on ... that is what awaits during this time of having fun, but learning at the same time! Many hands make light work, and we will need some volunteers to help our VBS event. Chris will be providing a list of supplies needed and money is also welcome. Please try and give her and the youth a little of your time. You do not have to be there every day or stay the entire time, but every little bit helps. I am always excited to see what this creative group comes up with! So, mark the dates and please help Chris and our youth with this mission.

Sunshine Shop News

The annual summer Rummage Sale will be in the Fellowship Hall in July. Save the dates and the times for picking up great items: books, luggage, small household items, dishware, silverware, pots, pans, coffee mugs, toys, material, seasonal decorations, baskets, and much, much more.

During the Rummage Sale, the Sunshine Shop will also be open and having an early summer bag sale! Stock up and save big on all your summer fashions for the remainder of the summer, or next summer or your winter vacation! Shop early for school clothes! All sizes are available! Ten dollars (\$10) per bag will buy you a lot of super clothes and a lot even have their original sale tags!

Shop & Sale Dates & Times: Thurs (10) & Fri (11):10-4 / Sat (12): 9-2

Happy Birthday America!!!

Side notes Dates to remember

July 4 - Happy Birthday America!

- 11 60+ dinner at 5:00 PM at the church
- 13 Memorial Service for Mike Sheridan at 4:00 PM at the church and by zoom
- 20 Administrative Board meeting after worship service
- 25 60+ dinner at 5:00 PM at the church

August 1 - Deadline for newsletter items due

4-8 - VBS program: "Weird Animals" 12:30 to 4. Light lunch at noon.

In Memorium ...

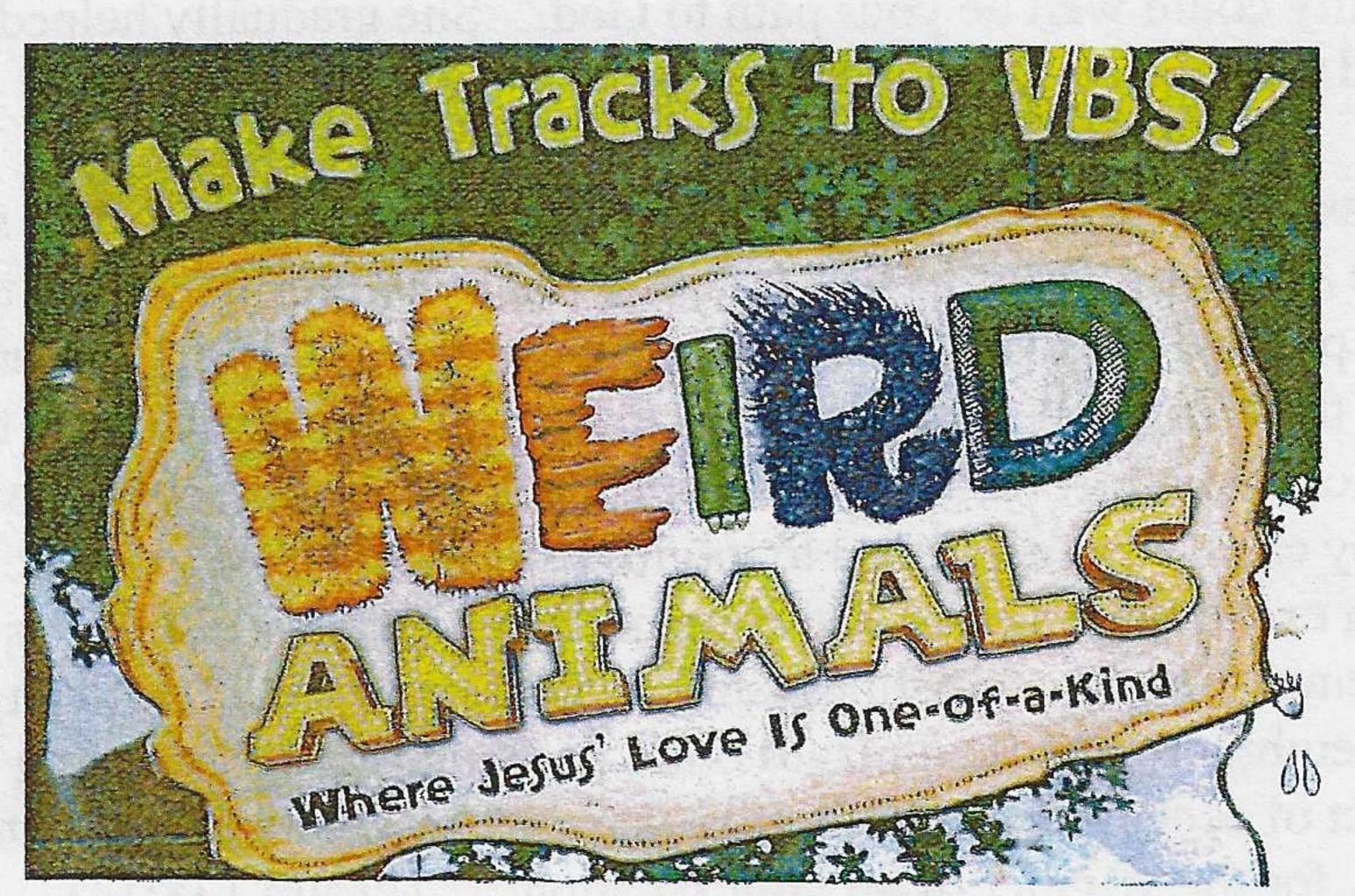
We lost a dear friend, neighbor and parishioner this past month, with the passing of Mike Sheridan. I first met Mike when participating in a St. Baldrick's event in Norwich. All the fire departments were challenging each other, and Mike was a participant, along with myself. How we laughed at each other's bald heads! After that I would see Mike at church on special occasions and as our church opened its doors to everyone, Mike became a regular face in our congregation, and we all enjoyed his knowledge and company. When he read one of our passages out loud it was like being transported to a calming space - his voice was so soothing to listen to. (He also had a lovely singing voice.) I, along with our entire congregation would invite you to a celebration of Mike on July 13th (Sunday) at 4:00 PM at the church or on zoom at: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86409156153?pwd=LEaOTglbFpbLejThWM9kLVsqicLZRj.1

I hope you take the time to read the article Mike was working on about being not only gay but being a religious person. It is very sincere, and we have to remember that God loves everyone - no matter what the circumstance. His article is on the next page of the newsletter. Thank you, Mike for being true to who you were and becoming a part of our church family. You will be missed. Our condolences to Mike's family and friends at this very sad time.

VBS 2025

August 4-8 12:30-4:30 pm

South Otselic United Methodist Church



Noon – Lunch provided prior to program

First day – parents <u>must</u> register children either in person or by filling out form on back and sending it with their child

Mission project – providing supplies to those who help animals

Many of you knew Mike Sheridan as a member of our community who attended the South Otselic UMC. He was raised as Roman Catholic, but his faith was sorely challenged in that church because he was gay. Nevertheless, he developed deep Christian faith and was glad to worship with his neighbors while treasuring his Roman Catholic roots. This is what he wrote about his faith journey for Pride Month:

The first person to teach me about the real meaning of gay pride was a cloistered Carmelite nun!

I was raised in a conservative Roman Catholic home and if any variation of the theme of human sexuality was mentioned, it was met with silence and disdain. It seems from my earliest religious training that there was a myriad of ways to commit mortal sin that supposedly meant instant alienation from God and loss of Grace. Unrepentant and unconfessed it meant consignment to hell for all eternity. This seemed especially true if one indulged in sexual pleasure of any kind in thought, word or deed. Of course, as a growing boy I did so indulge and maybe even more so as a way to find some relief from the sufferings of a toxic home life. Somehow, I had to live with the tension of trying to be good and staying in the State of Grace while feeling that I was made and destined for Hell. I began to feel this even more as I came to feel "different" and drawn to other boys my age. I think it was my struggle to "be good" which eventually meant "be straight" that might have motivated a large part of my inclination for devotion. Perhaps that was a healthy if unconscious attempt to refute something that I did not yet know was a lie.

I developed an attraction for religious life and began to explore different orders such as the Benedictines and Carmelites. Near my college there was a community of Carmelite nuns and I became acquainted with Sister Mary Paul, who served as the public face of the cloistered community. It was no wonder: She put me at ease almost at once, and aside from discussions on Carmelite spirituality, we became good lifelong friends.

In one of our conversations, she wanted to ask me a personal question with a choice on my part to answer or not. "Are you gay?" she asked. It was an instant choice on my part not so much to lie or tell the truth, but to trust or fear, once again, a rejection. I trusted her and told her everything. I told her that God made me "that way" in order to justify the creation of hell. First, she hid her face in her hands and cried a little then she reached her hand through the grills and looked at me with both sadness and love and said "No, Michael, that's not it at all! Your homosexuality could well be your path to God." She gradually helped me to understand that my being gay is not a choice and therefore in itself is not a sin.

I had expressed concern that my being gay could be an obstacle for service in the church or religious life. Not only did she assure me that this was not so, she slowly introduced me to the positive spiritual possibilities for gay people. She pointed out that the Latin word for soul was "anima," a feminine noun. Gay people are often more in touch with their internal feminine and masculine complementary traits. Gay men like me can have many characteristics that are considered feminine, such as an appreciation of beauty, tenderness, and the inclination to nurture. They can be more inclined to intuitive thinking. From a Carmelite perspective, these characteristics could make one an excellent religious and contemplative member. Religious life at its best must include the struggle to overcome temptations to selfishness and to face one's truth, and can be part of the experience of being "born again": one embraces and then places one's particular truth, including sexual orientation, in the arms of a loving God. The act of accepting oneself in this way is also a form of praise to the Creator. "I thank you for the Wonder of my being, for the Wonder of all your creation..." (Psalm 138:14)

It has taken me up to the present day to fully understand the gospel - this good news that Sister Mary Paul implanted in my heart nearly 50 years ago. As a cloistered nun, she could not leave to visit me, but through letters and phone calls she prayed for me and followed me until her death; she was always encouraging, never judging, only loving. In the ancient Spirit of the desert monks and nuns on which Carmelite spirituality is based, someone like her was called an "amma," a mother. Sister Mary Paul was and remains, very much my spiritual mother. I never became a religious nut, but as she promised, my decades-long journey of self-acceptance has been my path to God.

In 2024, the United Methodist Church General Conference approved revised Social Principles (https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124). Here is a small piece of them for your consideration this month; what action might we take with this in mind?

Special Editorial Notes: Throughout the Social Principles, the term "we" refers specifically to the General Conference and more broadly to members of The United Methodist Church. Unless otherwise stated, the term "church" refers specifically to The United Methodist Church rather than, for example, the Church Universal.

COMMUNITY OF ALL CREATION (continued from last month)

STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION (continued from last month)

D. Caring for All Creatures

We support the respectful and humane treatment of animals, who are crucial participants in God's ongoing creation and of inherent worth. We embrace biblical teachings that envision a time when humans and other creatures shall live in peace and harmony in a restored creation (Isa. 11:6).

This commitment to respectful and humane treatment of animals means, for instance, putting in place protections to ensure that animals employed in agricultural and other forms of labor are free from cruel or abusive types of treatment and provided with ample rest and nourishment. Additionally, we oppose forcing animals to combat each other.

Animals raised for human consumption should be provided with healthy living conditions and sufficient food and water. Animals raised for human consumption must likewise be reared in humane conditions and slaughtered in a manner that minimizes their overall suffering and pain.

With respect to creatures living in the wild, we urge cooperative efforts by international bodies, governments, civic institutions, churches, and concerned individuals and groups to end poaching and protect endangered and vulnerable species and preserve dwindling habitats. We decry the mass extinctions currently underway and call for the adoption of sustainable policies and practices that allow both animal and human life to flourish.

E. Protecting Space

God's creation encompasses not only the earth but the entire cosmos, including space. Our charge to be responsible stewards thus extends well beyond humankind's immediate environs and encompasses not only our own solar system but also other galaxies. Hence, we reject the exploitation, commodification and militarization of space. We express our hope that the exploration and settlement of space, including the moon and other planetary bodies, take place peacefully and cooperatively, and in such fashion that the benefits and resources of any further exploration and development accrue to all humanity.

F. Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom

We affirm the value of science and reason in providing deeper understandings of the origins and functioning of the cosmos. We also acknowledge that like all human endeavors, science can be misused and abused. We, therefore, urge all those involved in scientific investigations to adhere to the highest ethical standards in conducting research and applying their findings.

We also affirm the traditional wisdom found within indigenous communities, particularly the emphasis that native and first peoples have placed on living in harmony and balance with the earth and other animals as well as the need to protect the air, land and water.

Politicians and diapers have one thing in common. They should both be changed regularly and for the same reason.

clip and save

OVF & HA Events

Friday night July 11: Paul Heagerty will share his original collection of Grace Brown memorabilia at the First Baptist Church, South Otselic at 7pm. A short original screen play will be first followed by viewing the items. Patty Dutton will be playing piano tunes popular in the early 1900s and strawberry shortcake will be available. Grace Brown died tragically on July 11 and she attended the First Baptist Church. This event is FREE.

Sunday afternoon July 13: Loren Barrigar, a nationally acclaimed guitarist, and his son LJ will be present a FREE concert at the Heritage Hall in Cincinnatus. Concert time is 1 to 3pm.

Sunday afternoon August 3: David Moyer, President of the Chenango County Chapter of the NYS Archaeological Society, will present a FREE program on the Paleo-Indians in Chenango County. This program will be at the North Pitcher Church from 1-3.

Sunday afternoon August 24: Zach Rowland, a local OV musician, will be in concert at the Georgetown Fireman's Field from 1-3. FREE concert.

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If there is anyone that would like to be added and/or removed on our newsletter mailing list please contact:

So. Otselic Methodist News Editor: Ann Campbell

(home) 607-674-9355

E-mail: deerknoll1948@gmail.com

Sunday Worship:

10:30 AM 11:30 AM

Worship Coffee Hour

This Month:

Office hours: Wednesday 11-2 Thursday 1-4

(Bible study from 1-2 ... Sept - June)

Check us out on Facebook:

South Otselic United Methodist Church / The Sunshine Shop

The Sunshine Shop

Contact: Sarah Hite (home) 315-653-7490 (shop) 315-653-7728 Hours: Thurs: 10-4

Fri: 11- 5 Sat: 9 - noon

(Donations at back porch)

Care & Share Pantry

Contact: Deb Williams

315-653-0040 **3**rd Thursday: 3:00 – 6:00 PM

"The mission of the South Otselic United Methodist Church is to worship God, serve Him, each other and our community and to share His love in words and actions while helping inspire and nurture followers of Christ"

PRAYER LIST: (Short term) Nikko Baker, Paul Carson, Nancy Curry, Nick Curry, Doug (& Kathe) Evans, Angela Harris, John Hoffman & family, Jennifer Maglaton, Chris Marquard, Lori Marquard, Tiffany Miner, Kevin Ruane, Travis Sheldon, Melody Smith, Penny Stone, family Melissa Hortman, family of Owen Macken, family of Mike Sheridan, Middle East, flood victims, Canada fires, those affected by program cuts, political protestors, those arrested, humane immigration approach, school students/staff/graduates, ending school year

PRAYER LIST: (Long Term) Jonna Bartlett, Richard Bishop, David Boyer, Paul Carson, Margaret Chase, Ron Colasudo, Kaity Davis, Doug (& Kathe) Evans, Linda Excell, Ted Gargas, Roger Hakes, Chuck Hathaway, Patti Lamandia, Diane MacGregor, Cassandra & Chris Marquard, Chris Marquard, Maverick Mesko, Aaron Miller, Phil Mudge, Mitch Mullenax, Jenny Nabor, Elaine Perkins, John & Carole Roalef, Kate Robinson, Matt & Annette Sheldon, Cathy Silver, Normajean Stark, Kenneth Sullivan, Angela (Graves) Szlamczynski, Dave Wentworth,

Travel mercies for family and friends
Our men and women in the military World leaders & the need for peace

Ms. Elva White Ms. Dawn White 137 Hakes Calhoun Rd. Pitcher, NY 13136

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