

So. Otselec Methodist News

Pastor Melanie Simmons

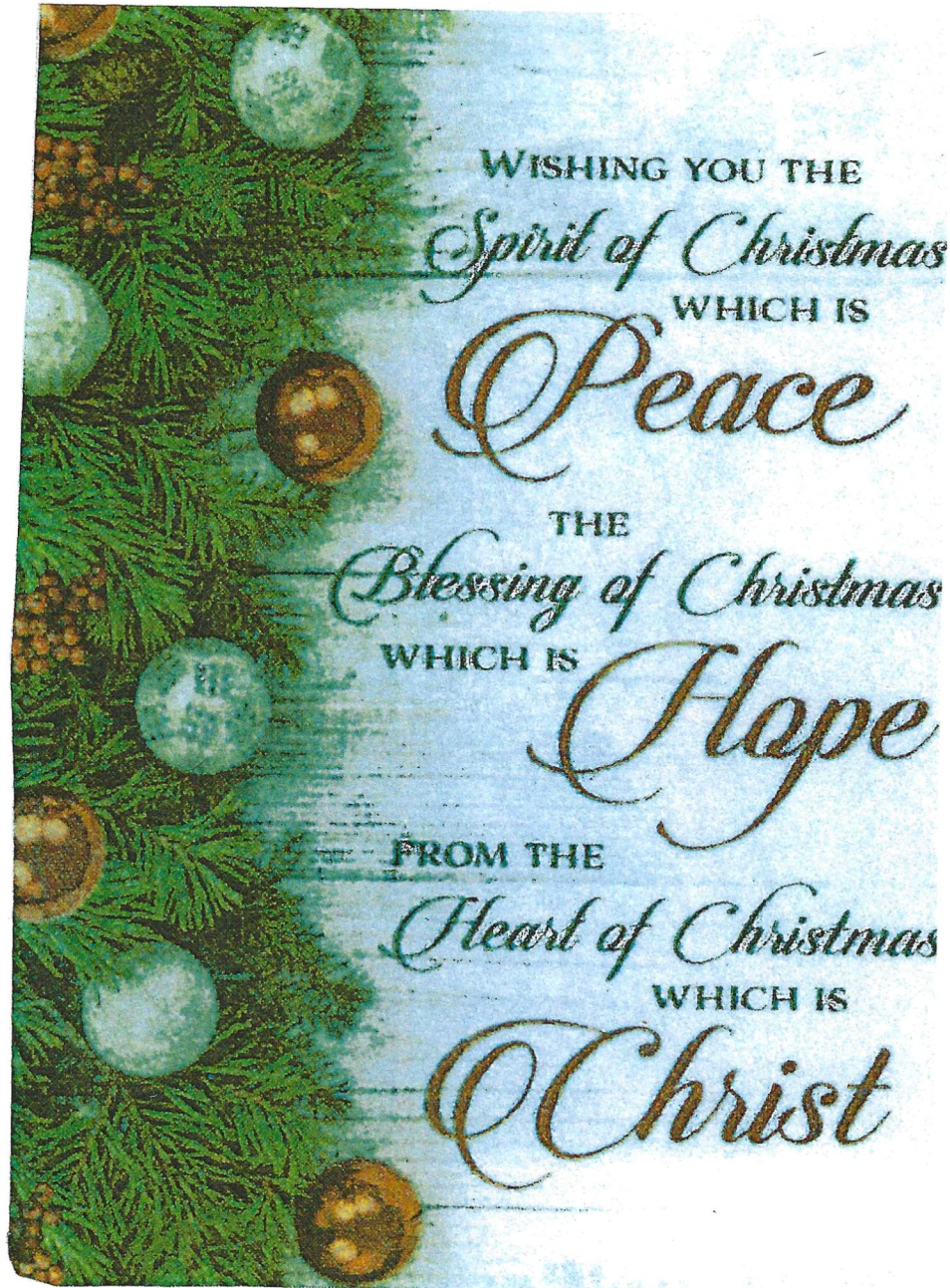
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December 2025



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Ann Campbell, Editor



MESSAGE FROM YOUR PASTOR ...

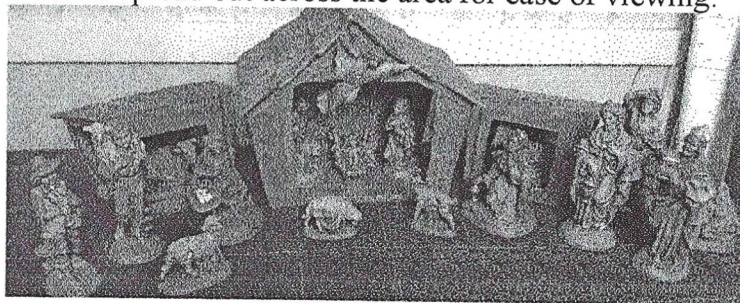
December 2025

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

Isaiah 2:3 (NRSV)

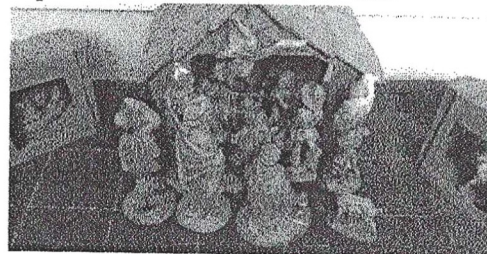
Happy December!

'Tis the season of joyous anticipation, awaiting news of the birth of the Son of God. Most of us pull out our Christmas decorations and set them up: lots of greenery, bright lights, and festiveness. For those of a more traditional bent, we pull out our nativity scenes and arrange them something like this, with the characters spread out across the area for ease of viewing:



This year, I had my two-year-old granddaughter help me set up the scene as I told her the Christmas story. When done, she had arranged it like this:

From her perspective, everyone was coming to see the baby, so they had to crowd around the entry to the stable. Also, the cow and horse were tucked behind Joseph and Mary in the stable because the animals were there first.



I got to thinking about how our traditions often do not reflect the literal reality of events and why they become traditions. With the characters spread out across the nativity scene, we can move them in to see the baby Jesus as the birth story of our Savior is told, then put them back into their original place to make room for the next ones that come – especially since they were not all there at the same time. It is a tool for teaching, dating back to the time when literacy was low.



The Hanging of the Greens service with which we begin Advent explains how some of our other holiday traditions came about. What special traditions do you wonder about? What ones do you cherish, and why? The ways in which our traditions touch our hearts are as unique as each of us are. I hope you find joy in passing on those heartprints to future generations.

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

With love in Christ,
Pastor Melanie



"The mission of the South Otselec 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 Reflections



The Old Chair stands in the same spot it has occupied for many, many years. One might think that its unusual size alone, could cause it seemingly to be out of place. And yet, it fits -- fits so well into its space and time, that the casual observer may not notice it at all...

Space and Time -- strange words to use in connection with something so obviously ancient. Space? Yes. Surely from the long-ago moment of its construction, it was intended for just such a space in a big old kitchen. And Time? Again yes. For in its former time, that big "kitchen" was likely to be the only room in the home. In fact, the very word "kitchen" would probably not make its appearance for many decades.

I doubt not that The Chair first entered service within the log walls of some long-departed cabin, perhaps near the hearth of a huge fireplace or at the head of a rough plank table. A home far different from its present one wherein electricity, propane, and fuel oil are all needed to fulfill the duties once performed by a single log fire.

Oddly enough, the present home of The Chair was once without those same modern inventions, for it too, is very aged; but for now, the two mark the passage of time together. One within the other, one to soon count its two-hundredth year, and the other probably already beyond that mark.

I wish that I could say that they have always been together for those two centuries. A piece of furniture staying in its original home for that long a time would be a rare and wonderful phenomenon. However, their camaraderie dates back for only a quarter-century, for it was about then that The Chair joined our household after being purchased from the estate of a 96 year-old gentleman.

Emerging from an attic hiding place in that estate, it presented a rather forlorn sight with one arm missing and covered by a coat of faded, dust-dulled white paint. As sad as that sounds, it was to my good fortune, for other prospective buyers ignored such a sorry specimen, which then fell to my bid at a truly bargain price. An after-purchase examination revealed a second stroke of luck -- beneath the grime, and with the exception of the missing arm, the old Chair was as tight and solid as it had been when first built. To this day I remain surprised that no collector or restorer showed interest when it came on the block -- especially since the auctioneer was a supposed expert on antiques!

Days later, as the drab layers of white slowly yielded to an onslaught of solvent and scraper, the golden glow of natural wood surfaced once again. A pattern taken from the remaining arm simplified replacement of the missing one. Then, beauty and dignity restored, the Ancient Chair once more resumed its long career of service.

What, you may ask, makes this old chair so special when there are really so many of its peers around? That's easy to answer -- although it's huge, by far the largest of its

genre I have ever seen, it was superbly built by a long-departed craftsman who had a rare talent for combining beauty and structure, resulting in a delicacy of form despite its size.

The sturdy legs, set into a two-inch thick pine plank seat, give it the strength that has endured two centuries of use. But the gracefully rising back, comprising fully two-thirds of its total height, is where the mark of a master craftsman shows. Long, slender spindles reach from seat to crest, spreading further apart as they rise, finally meeting the crest in a shape much wider than the seat from where they started. The final touch of a skilled builder is in the gentle curve built into each tapered spindle, designed to cradle the user's back in comfort.

The above detailed description may give the impression that this is a piece of furniture designed for formal parlor use. Not so! It was meant to be used hard and long. The fact that it also happens to be a simple, yet truly graceful object is a tribute to the unknown country artisan whose skilled hands created it...

The very early chair-makers in rural America had an abundance of wood for construction material. In fact, practically nothing but wood! The first real country chairs were simply thick slabs of wood with holes bored at the corners for the insertion of hand-whittled legs. This was the crude beginning of what we now know as the plank-bottom chair, listed in present auction bills as PB Chairs.

A dedication to simplicity and function by the Shaker craftsmen of the last century produced furniture and other handmade items that have become almost priceless objects sought avidly by today's lovers of antiquity. Rather than fancy carving and turning, the simple design of Shaker handiwork resulted in a beauty that has outlasted and outshone most competition!

There are differences between my Chair and Shaker chairs that seem to disprove any relationship. True, the sturdiness of construction that has withstood probably two hundred years of useage is Shaker-like. However, the method of joinery seems to predate the Shaker era. Moreover, Shaker chairs were hand-assembled of lathe-turned parts while the oldest plank-bottom chairs were totally hand-made.

Several times in the foregoing lines, I've used the term "my Chair". This is not strictly true. The old Chair has been around more then a century longer then I have, and barring castrophe, should be around for a least that long again. I am merely a guardian of this period of its existence...

And anyway, my oldest daughter placed claim to its future ownership many years ago -- a claim of which she reminded me a short time ago.

Merry Christmas to all! May it be the best ever!

George Ortiz

Treasurer's Corner

Merry Christmas! I love this time of year. It seems like people seem to be a bit kinder, at bit more friendly and a bit more understanding. I don't know why we cannot do this all year long, but we can accept these features when we get them! Every year I talk about the angels of this wonderful little church that I am proud to be a part of! They go quietly going about their business, doing the work they do: cleaning the church, placing flowers, taking care of the food needs for the less fortunate, doing up the finances, doing coffee hour, making the computer work during the Sunday service, mowing the lawn, getting the word out monthly, putting together the summer VBS program and holding youth meetings. Those that take care of luncheons when needed and those that step up for special events such as Fishing & Heritage Day and meetings. This church has angels that purchase almost all the needs for His house: paper towels, soap, paper tissues, kitchen necessities, you name it - they provide it! How blessed we are and if I forgot any special angels, I apologize. These folks ask for nothing, do not get paid back for any of it and together we make the most wonderful church family! I love this little church!!! I hope you all have a blessed Christmas no matter if you are staying home or traveling. Remember 'Christ' is the reason for the Season!

Here is the report for November 2025.

Ann F Campbell
Pres.

<i>Receipts:</i>			<i>Beg Balances:</i>
Envelopes & Pledges *	3895.00		Chng: 6495.64
Loose Offerings *	340.00		Savings: 8917.27
Interest (Wealth Management)	210.64		
60+ rent (4th qtr)	175.00		
	TOTAL	4620.64	Receipts: 4620.64
<i>Payments:</i>			Payments: 4498.02
Minister's Salary	231.25		Balance + 122.62
Housing	1670.00		
Treasurer	153.30		<i>Ending Balances:</i>
Travel	0.00		Chng: 6618.26
Organist	0.00		Savings: 8917.27
Secretary	0.00		
Tech Support	153.30		
Postage	44.99		
Fuel Oil	702.00		
NYSEG	154.36		
Apportionment	987.30		
Dawn White (website)	19.00		Year to Date: + 1832.18
Telephone	89.16		
Copy paper	39.99		
Penny Stone (trash removal)	30.00		
Lightwell Insurance	46.27		
Great America Financial Services (copier)	177.10		
	TOTAL	4498.02	

- This does not include the offering for November 30th.

Up to the minute...

Trustees Report - December 2025

A second estimate for the exterior doors to the church basement has been received from Madison Windows and Doors. Also, contractor Mike Kmetz of Earlville will be submitting an estimate.

The owner of Brennan Stained Glass Studio has submitted a quote for the repair of the stained glass windows. The estimate includes a breakdown of the scope of work for the large and small windows, plus the round window in the front of the church.

We also anticipate an updated estimate, following a scheduled on-site visit by the Willet Stained Glass Studios, who submitted an estimate 4 years ago.

Two requests for use of church facilities were received and reviewed by the Trustees.

Sunshine Shop News

The November 8th combined rummage sale, luncheon, bake sale, and mission basket day was a tremendous success. To everyone involved working, selling, cooking and cleaning up, the Shop shouts out a huge THANK YOU! It was a monumental task for a one-day event and the challenge was met!

In December, the Shop will be open the 1st and 3rd weekends: the 4th, 5th, and 6th, and then again on the 18th, 19th, and 20th. There are many warm clothes still available. The hat and mitten tree is again on the Shop porch and sports clean warm items! Stop by and pick some up for yourself or a friend or a neighbor!

Christmas decorations are also available at the Shop! Check out the beautifully decorated stockings, candles, tree ornaments, and garlands.

During the month of January, the Sunshine Shop will be closed, but the free books as well as hats and mittens will be restocked as needed. If you need anything, please leave a message on the church answering machine or call me, 315-653-7490, for an appointment to go to the Shop.

Merry Christmas to everyone and a safe and blessed New Year!

New from Georgetown UMC

Greetings from the Georgetown United Methodist Church. We were able to send nine Samaritan's Purse boxes to children who need a little pick-me-up for the holidays. They were taken to the church in New Woodstock as that is the closest drop-off point in our area.

We are getting a nice assortment of hats, mittens, scarves and socks to send to the Neighborhood Center in Utica. We'll send a picture once everything has been collected.

We are also collecting non-perishable food items for the Mustard Seed. We will also donate money towards vouchers for milk at the store to the Mustard Seed. We try our best to help folks in our community who may have food insecurity, especially at this time of year. Every little bit helps.

Our Hanging of the Greens service was enjoyed by all. Lorraine did a fantastic job of organizing it, as always. The sanctuary looks so beautiful at this time of year as we anticipate celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas from Georgetown. We hope you have a healthy and safe holiday season and a very Happy New Year!

Until next time and next year!

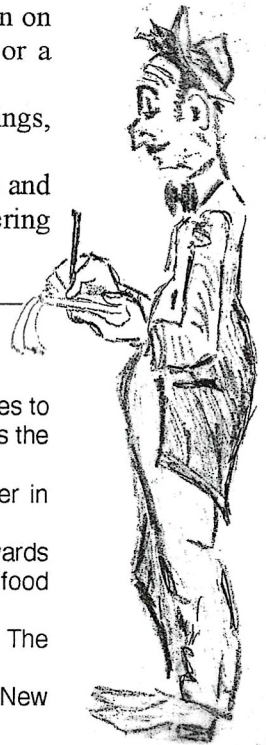
Good News 60+ LUNCHEONS being planned ...

With our County discontinuing the 60+ meals in our area starting in 2026, the Administrative Board voted to try and have LUNCHEONS two (2) times a month! We are looking at *Thursdays*, when the shop and food pantry will be open. We hope to have soup and sandwiches to begin with along with games, puzzles, possibly guest speakers and just warm and good conversations! The exact time will be announced very soon - so stay tuned!

News from the 'Hook'!

If you have not completed baked goods yet, there is still time to have some all ready made for you! The Hook ladies will be holding their annual Christmas bake Sale and craft show on Saturday, December 6 from 9 to 3. They have quite a variety of foods and vendors lined up so mark you calendars and visit the Hook this Saturday!

Oh, Come let us Adore Him!



Side notes

Here we come a Wassailing ...

If you enjoy singing. Please come and join us on December 19th at 5:00 PM. We will meet at the church and walk the village, cheering up those inside! You do not have to be a professional singer - we do not care - just come and make a joyful noise! Hot chocolate will be provided afterwards - we hope to see you there!!!

Blue Christmas

Our 'Blue Christmas' actually falls on Sunday, December 21st this year and it will be our Sunday service at 10:30! If you have never been to this service, you are in for something special. It so touching and moving. Yes, it can be a bit sad, but it goes deeper than that. It is more of a time of quiet reflection and remembering. Maybe we need more time like this - quiet reflection and remembrance...

O Come all ye Faithful

The air is warm, and the church is all festively decorated in seasonal decor. The candles are ready to be lit and all that is left is you! We will be celebrating the birth of our Savior on December 24th at 7:00 PM. This is the most beautiful time of the year and our little church does not disappoint. As for me, I could just sit in silence and soak in the beauty and so can you. Come and join us on the 24th and be a part of this special time of year!

Caution ... Caution ... Caution ...

With winter fast approaching, please do not park close to the fellowship room in the parking lot. Snow that may accumulate of the roof can come off very quickly and damage your vehicle if parked too close!

A Small Request

We would like to ask that the children do not sled down the back bank as it damages the shrubs. They are more than welcome to go down over the grassy area - next to the ditch.

Thank You Church Family

The Scott Bartholomew family wants to send a very dear thank you to all. These past two weeks have been a hard and trying time for our family, for Pastor being there on the phone the night that it all started for us, for all the prayers and kind words that were spoken to us and for the cards that were sent to us. Thank you, Pastor, for allowing us to make the service the way we thought it would be a fit for Scott. On the day of the service our family came together to heal and say goodbye. The Liturgy was amazing to what Scott was over the years. We heard that many that came to the service really enjoyed it. We even had family come that we have not seen in years. The service in the cemetery was very special also. The group that put on the meal thank you so much, it was all very good and allowed us to have time to visit and catch up. Again, thanks to all the church family as we go through this hard time of loss of my mom's and her sister's baby brother. God Bless You all.

Dates to remember

December 6 - Bake Sale & Craft Fair at the Pharsalia Hook Church from 9 - 3

21 - Blue Christmas for Sunday Service

24 - Christmas Eve Service: Georgetown at 5:00 / So. Otselic at 7:00

25 - Christmas - Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus!

28 - Administrative Board after worship service

January 1 - Happy New Year!

3 - Deadline for newsletter items due

8 - 60+ fellowship LUNCHEON ... time to be announced

Merry Christmas !

In 2024, the United Methodist Church General Conference approved revised Social Principles (<https://www.umcjustice.org/documents/124>). We are presenting brief summaries instead of the full text of some of them for your consideration; what action might we take with these in mind?

THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY (continued from last month)

OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES

- A. *Substance Abuse, Alcohol, and Tobacco* – addiction has devastating impacts. The UMC supports programs and policies comprehensively addressing causes and cures, and calls society to help rather than to judge addicts. The UMC urges members to refrain from use of anything that fosters addiction or that may result in long-lasting damage of any kind.
- B. *Bullying and Other Forms of Violence* – we decry bullying in any form and seek to safeguard everyone from bullying. Anti-bullying policies and programs should include consideration of the maturity levels of both victims and perpetrators.
- C. *Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and Their Consequences* – the UMC acknowledges a messy history of Methodism tied to colonialism. Recognizing that the church is not innocent, the UMC calls on members to educate themselves about our troubling legacy, to repent of contributions to colonialism-based oppression, and to seek reconciliation with victims/descendants of such crime.
- D. *Death and Dignity* – life is sacred and all mortals die. The UMC supports the right of dying individuals and their families to make informed decisions about what kind of legal medical care they choose. We are to bear witness to God's enduring love and grace; we affirm the benefits of palliative care and advance medical directives. The UMC does not condone euthanasia or suicide, yet recognizes God's grace as all-sufficient; thus, we provide compassion and support to survivors and family members affected by euthanasia or suicide.
- E. *Gambling* – the UMC rejects gambling because of its monetary focus, enrichment of a minority at the expense of the majority, and its addictive nature. Rather than judging those who are involved with it for economic survival, we vow to work toward eliminating poverty in order to reduce the appeal of organized gambling.
- F. *Gender Equality and Diversity* – the UMC supports gender equality; the UMC decries current and historical sexism and misogyny in the church and society. We urge everyone to afford all members of society equal opportunities for leadership, access, and protections.
- G. *Media and Communication Technologies* – the UMC supports the freedom of members of society to express their opinions and insists media companies show respect and adhere to established standards of journalism. The UMC deplores hate speech and is concerned about media monopolies, because media and communication technologies should be open to all, promote civility, and protect the dignity and worth of all people.
- H. *Pornography* – the UMC views pornography as an affront to the precious gift from God that is human sexuality. The UMC opposes pornography and laments its destructive impacts on cultures, families, and individuals. The UMC supports eradicating child pornography as well as adult exploitation/enslavement. We are to offer nonjudgmental support, rehabilitation, and care for those adversely affected by pornography.

Twelve Christmas Angels



Twelve Christmas Angels, with gifts they did bring
To welcome a Savior, the birth of a King
One Angel brought Joy, the next one brought Love
Another brought Blessings, all sent from Above
One offered Comfort, one offered Peace
One offered Mercies, which never will Cease
One brought Kindness, one Goodness, one Trust
To share with each other, and always be Just
One Angel brought Strength, the next one Compassion
Rejoicing and Praising, in God's only Son
The last one His Light, brought down from on High
To shine in us always, like stars in the Sky.





ANNUAL
**CRAFT FAIR &
BAKE SALE**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6
9 A.M. - 3 P.M.**

PHARSALIA HOOK CHURCH

LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF STATE HWY. 23 AND BILLY BROWN RD.

NEW & RETURNING VENDORS!

A variety of homemade crafts and products for sale - jewelry, corn bags, gnomes, all natural products such as lip balm's, creams and salves, cards, ornaments, wreaths and much more!

RAFFLE BASKETS!

BAKE SALE!



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

So. Otselic Methodist News
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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
3rd 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) Eric Bowers, Janet Brown, Laurie & Dana Brussel, Gail Evans-Burpee, Jay (& Patsy) Graham, Kevin Grewe, Lonnie Hakes, Angela Harris, Deena Johnson, Gordon Kupiec, Mathilda MacKenzie, Marcia Pagett, Justin Sheldon, Ella Simmons, Janice Trass, Wenda West, Lolita White, family of Scott Bartholomew, family of Betty Law, Georgetown UMC, holiday travelers

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

Travel mercies for family and friends

Our men and women in the military World leaders, our country & the need for peace

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