

So. Otselec Methodist News

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January 2026



*Wishing You
A Great '26*

Ann Campbell, Editor



MESSAGE FROM YOUR PASTOR ...

January 2026

"I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness." Isaiah 42:6-7 (NRSV)

Happy New Year!

I would like to express deep gratitude for the lovely gifts I received from each church this Christmas. Your thoughtfulness and generosity are overwhelming! I am extraordinarily honored to be serving as your pastor, for I see the beauty of our Savior in you everywhere I turn. Thank you so much for bringing so much joy into my life and into the world!

2025 was one heckuva year, was it not? I am so grateful for a fresh start with 2026 – I pray the Lord helps us have a better year this time around.



How many experiences do we go through that leave us feeling that way? That we are relieved to be done with whatever we experienced, and able to move forward with hope for the future?

We celebrate after Christmas how the light of God was revealed to the world through Jesus. It is a time of new beginnings; whatever we have been through before, God comes to us anew as a child, inviting us into a new life of love. Jesus's baptism serves as an invitation into community with God and with one another. We can move forward into the future with hope because God is with us, filling our lives with grace.



So, what do we do, now that the light of the Lord is with us? God calls us as followers of Jesus to be holy people, to bear that light to all people. It is a great responsibility, and we need to be mindful of the way in which we bear that light: There is a great difference between carrying a torch to light the path for someone to find their own way (and perhaps warm themselves a little) versus using a torch to insist they go in the direction you deem fit (and burning them with the fire if they disobey).

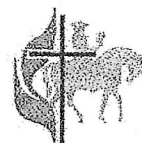


That said, there is carrying the torch for others to be done, and it may clash with those seeking to oppress them. It may involve stopping a bully from picking on someone, or preventing someone from pushing their way forward without regard for their effects on other people. It may involve calling our politicians to complain about hurtful situations that need government intervention.

More often, we carry the light of Christ by providing for people in need, such as food, clothing, rides to appointments, a listening ear, or simply our presence so they do not feel alone. However you bring it, share God's love fully and freely that this world may be better for all.

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 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 Reflections

202 1/95 2025

The stillness of the winter night was broken by a familiar sound, one often heard by this writer during those wakeful hours when night-owl tendencies rule. From another room the tall-case clock, in measured cadence, had begun its count of the passing hour...

This would be full count, for it also marked the passing of another day --- One, two, three, four -- the melodic notes of ancient Westminster chimes slowly rose and fell sixteen times -- then began the long series of twelve booming strokes of the gong. This lengthy fanfare proclaimed to any who might be listening, that the hour of midnight had just come and gone. *(see note at end)

But much more than that, this time it signalled the demise of one year and the birth of the next. For, at the first chiming stroke, 1994 ceased to be, and in the same instant, 1995 burst forth upon the world! By the time my faithful clock completed its message, Year 1995 was well underway and already aging rapidly...

Having reached 1995, we are now halfway through the decade of the nineties. It doesn't seem possible that 1990 is already five years in the past -- and of course, this means that the year 2000 is only five years away.

This mention of the halfway mark reminds me of the tale of the two inebriated imbibers: When the contents of their bottle was half consumed, the happy one said with a big grin, "the bottle is still half full", and his dour companion replied in a very sad voice, "no, the bottle is half empty".

My only excuse for telling that little story is to show that the approach to most situations is determined by one's outlook. For instance: Junior looks at those remaining five years of the nineties and thinks, "Wow, that's a long way off!" Senior looks back at the five years just past and thinks, "Boy, where did the time go?"

The aging of any year is a phenomenon that seems to be directly connected to the age of the individual beholder. I well remember, from my long ago grade-school days, how the length of certain months obviously differed from what the calendar claimed. Any red-blooded American schoolboy knew that the months from September to June were each much longer than they were shown to be; while July and August were somehow short-changed in their apparent length.

In reverse manner, this inconsistency between the printed calendar and the one that records the events of our lives, becomes more noticeable with each succeeding birthday. Where once the pages turned slowly, and months took their time about becoming years, it now seems that weeks, months, and years can hardly wait to be dismissed! One who has seen the passage of many years wonders where they have gone.

Time, itself, is a mysterious element. We can't prevent its happening -- nor can we make it happen. We can't slow it down -- nor speed it up. We can't see it -- we can only see its results. We can't feel it -- we can only feel what its passing has done to us. Although it is frequently

wasted, no one willingly gives it up. No matter how much of it we have, it never seems to be enough -- and if we're not using it, we might seem to have too much!

An old saying states: "Time and tide wait for no man". Ocean tides follow the course of the moon around the earth, using the moon's gravitational pull to cause a continual rise in the seas as it traverses the globe. Since every such journey takes thirteen hours, the tide rises and falls one hour later each time around -- always has and always will. Man's inability to halt this action of the sea is just as absolute as his inability to halt the passage of time...

Another saying: "Take time to smell the roses". Here, we are simply advised to enjoy the good things we may encounter as we travel along life's pathway. Too often, as we, in the hurry of our modern pace, strive to get the most out of this particular journey, we pass unseeing by the little things that could be the difference between an enjoyment or just an enduring.

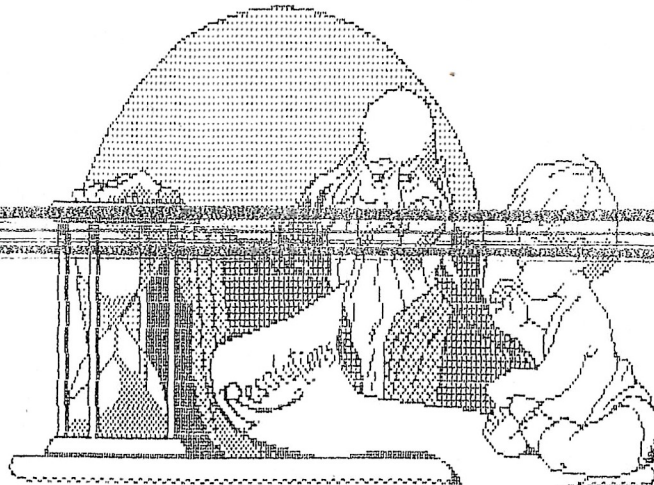
If we are slow to accept new ways, we may be considered "behind the times", however if we are quick to embrace new ideas, we may be "ahead of our time". Between those extremes, we could be stalled "from time to time", or even "for the time being".

I'm afraid there are dozens, maybe even hundreds, more ways to abuse that word, so I'll simply end my wasting of your share, with this frivolity: "The banker can give you time -- on the other hand, so can the judge".

My wish for 1995 is that you and I, may find Peace, Good Health, and most of all, Happiness, during every one of its 365 days. This, with God's blessing!

George Ortiz

*Note: (The frequently used phrase, "the hour of midnight" is actually a misnomer, for there is really no such thing. Midnight is that none-existent space of time between the last second of one day and the first second of the next -- hardly an hour! Properly, I should have said "the hour during which midnight occurred".)



Treasurer's Corner

Happy 2026! What beautiful year it has been so far! Although I do not really enjoy driving on the snow-covered roads, I love looking out and seeing the quiet beauty of our countryside. Tree branches bend gently to the weight of the snow and the land lays covered with no tracks, no footprints, no snowmobile trails just as God intended - a quiet beauty!

On the other hand, I am hoping 2026 will be a good one for all of us. It seemed like 2025 was filled with a lot of issues for everyone! Lots of illness, lots of doctor appointments and lots of anxiety seemingly on everyone. There were sparks of wonder and happiness mixed with small trips and time with grandchildren, which warms my heart to no end. This new year also promises to be that of excitement, too! My daughter is about ready to open her own medical practice and my granddaughter is going to be in a gymnastic competition in Florida, which I am going to join them - what a thrill that will be! I also keep in my prayers that everyone that has been feeling poorly will also feel better, including Hank. Life is just so unpredictable. As one once said - we make plans, but God has the eraser! Happy New Year to one and all!

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

<i>Receipts:</i>				<i>Beg Balances:</i>
Envelopes & Pledges	4488.25			Chng: 6888.26
Loose Offerings	582.00			Savings: 8919.52
Interest (Wealth Management)	210.63			
Int. on Savings	2.25			
Rental	150.00			
	TOTAL	5433.13		Receipts: 5433.13
				Payments: 5605.51
				Balance -172.38
<i>Payments:</i>				
Minister's Salary	231.25			<i>Ending Balances:</i>
Housing	1670.00			Chng: 6713.63
Treasurer	153.30			Savings: 8919.52
Travel	1158.35			
Organist	0.00			
Secretary	0.00			
Tech Support	153.30			
Postage	47.54			
Fuel Oil	702.00			
NYSEG	177.83			
Apportionment	987.27			Year to Date: + 2251.81
Telephone	89.16			
Dawn White (website)	19.00			
Penny Stone (trash removal)	30.00			
Great America Financial Services (copier)	186.51			
	TOTAL	5605.51		

Pray for our country

Up to the minute...

Lunch is served!

On Thursday, January 15th we will be hosting a free lunch from 12 - 2. It will consist of soup, sandwich and a light dessert and a drink. We are in hopes of having our 60+ group help us get started as we wanted to continue some sort of a meal plan for our community. In the future we hope to have board games, card games and maybe a guest speaker once in a while! We are flexible, but we have to start someplace and everything is subject to change. Please inform your 60+ friends and help us help you! Hope to see you on the 15th! If you are interested in joining us, please call 315-852-9780 on or before January 12th so we can have a rough count to prepare for that day.

Christmas Recap

Christmas Season is about over now, but memories feel like we are still in the moment!

Our 'Blue Christmas' was held at our regular service, December 21st and everyone got to participate in remembering the past and the present. This has become one of my favorite services. It can be sad, but it is goes deeper than that. It is just about reflecting within your inner self. You get to light small candles, place blue ribbons with your thoughts written on them and then tied onto the 'blue' lit tree ... giving all of those feelings to God. A really awesome feeling!

We had almost a full house on Christmas Eve and it made His house warmer than it already was, although someone forgot to actually turn up the heat! It just made all of us cozy up and sing a bit louder and make our own heat! The weather cooperated, so driving was not a major factor, so a night to rejoice in our Saviour's birth was almost perfect!

News from Georgetown UMC

Greetings from the Georgetown United Methodist Church! The holiday season has come and gone but the snow remains! It is pretty if you don't have to drive in it!

We had a lovely Christmas Eve service. There were 58 in attendance. We were filled to the rafters!! We had several children come with their parents which was nice to hear their chatter, especially since our average age of folks on a Sunday morning is 72. Even the snow held off for the evening.

We have been collecting non-perishable items for the Mustard Seed to support our community. In addition to the non-perishable items, we will donate \$100 to that organization for vouchers for fresh milk at the local store.

We wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year! Until next time.....

Trustees Report - January 2026

Approval was given to proceed with the bid for the church basement doors received from Madison Windows & Doors.

No further contact received from either contractor regarding the stained glass window restoration. Cal will follow up, again.

Jason Albertina replaced a zone valve in the church heating system in before the holidays.

The 60+ dinners, provided by the Chenango County Area Office of the Aging, have been discontinued, starting January 2026.

We encourage you NOT to park close to the fellowship room or shop due to falling snow and/or ice.

The Sunshine Shop News

Happy New Year to everyone! The ladies at the Shop are taking a winter break during the month of January. Christmas decorations are put away and by February 5th, 6th, and 7th (when the Shop reopens), warm clothes will be restocked and be available.

The ladies are grateful for the donations and the ability to help others with these generous amounts of items.

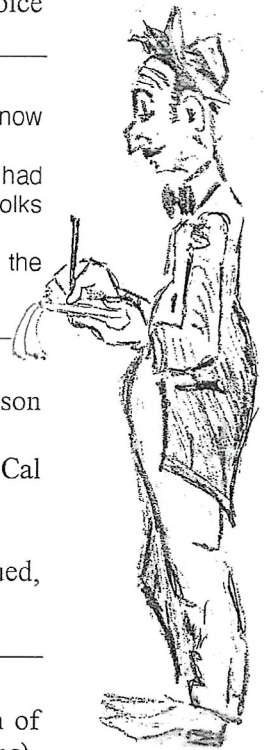
During December, many local folks were in need of clothes due to fires. The Sunshine Shop provided clothes for family members as well as bedding, and the food pantry helped to provide food.

December was a month when the community united together to provide gift cards for food and for gifts to 28 families here in the Otselic Valley. Funds for these cards were donated from private individuals, the Otselic Valley Teacher's Association, The Sunshine Shop, The South Otselic United Methodist Women and the Mission Fund, and the Otselic Valley Fishing & Heritage Association. This is what the Valley does: it comes together in time of need. Let's continue this generosity into 2026 and beyond

In 2026, the Sunshine Shop will continue with previous years events such as celebrating Anniversary month, Fishing & Heritage Day, Customer Appreciation Day, a summer rummage and fall rummage sale, and Christmas sharing. All good clean donated clothing and small household items provide the revenue for the Sunshine Shop to help!

Thank you! See you in February!

Happy New Year!



Side notes

Notes of thanks...

To my church family. Thank you for the gift you gave me on Christmas Eve. I really enjoy doing this for all of you each week. This year has been a challenge for me but doing this work for the church has helped me through the bad times. I love hearing people enjoying the videos I play before church. I look forward to this new year 2026 and all the great things the Lord will do for me and this little. God Bless Each of you. Dawn

My sincere thanks to all of you for the Christmas gift I received on Christmas Eve. I love this little church and I plan to pay this forward - going towards gifts for the Holiday bazaar at Sherburne Earlville school. My heart is blessed to be a part of this church family. Thank you again. May all of you have a wonderful 2026! Annie

Dates to remember

January 15 - Free Lunch: from 12 -2 at the church

25 - Administrative Board after worship service

31 - Deadline for newsletter items due

February 5 - Free lunch: from 12-2 at the church

14 - Valentine's Day

10 SIGNS YOU'RE DOING WELL IN LIFE:

- 1.) You have a roof over your head.
- 2.) You ate today.
- 3.) You have a good heart.
- 4.) You wish good for others.
- 5.) You have clean water.
- 6.) Someone cares for you.
- 7.) You strive to be better.
- 8.) You have clean clothes.
- 9.) You have a dream.
- 10.) You're breathing.

Be Thankful For The Little Things ♥

Live your Life ... and forget your age.

If God closes a door ... He usually opens a window!

Why go to Church?

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

He wrote: "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time, the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all".

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column. Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals.

But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

When you are DOWN to nothing, God is UP to something!

Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible & receives the impossible!

Thank God for our physical and our spiritual nourishment!

IF YOU CANNOT SEE GOD IN ALL, YOU CANNOT SEE GOD AT ALL !

B I. B L. E. simply means: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!

When you are about to forward this to others, the devil will discourage you. So go on! Send this to people who are DEAR to you and TRUST GOD.

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)

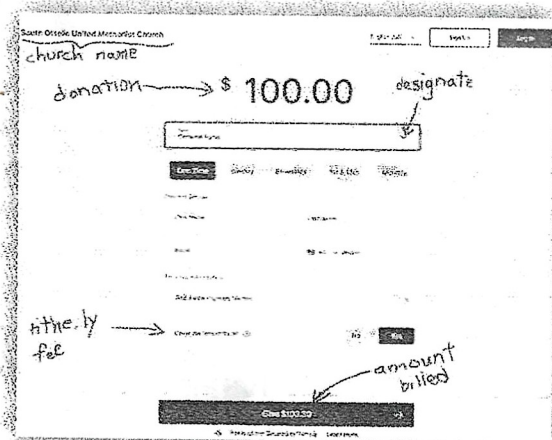
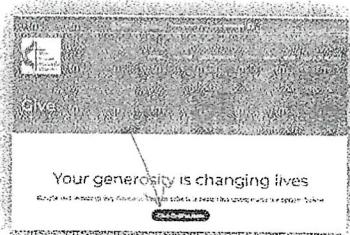
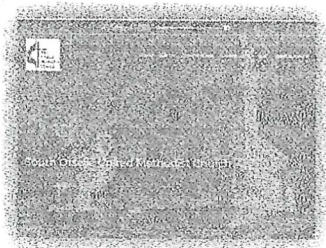
OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES (continued from last month)

- I. *Medical Experimentation and Research* – the UMC supports bioethically run procedures to eliminate illness/disease and/or to improve/extend quality of life. Oversight and fair inclusion of all populations is important.
- J. *Organ Donation and Transplantation* – the UMC strongly supports voluntary organ donations for transplant. Privacy of donors and recipients is important. Buying or selling organs is anathema.
- K. *Reproductive Health and Abortion* – the UMC supports age-appropriate sexual education and access to affordable contraception. Abortion should not be used as birth control unless the mother's life is in danger; however, those who have terminated pregnancies are not to be bullied. Ethical reproductive health services should be made available to all people of childbearing years, particularly young women.
- L. *Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism* – the UMC condemns any practices setting one group of people as superior to or inferior to any other groups of people. Exclusion, discrimination, and violence are rejected.
- M. *Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault* – the UMC sees these as grave violations of behavior, both within the church and our larger society. Sexual exploitation of minors is particularly deplored. Clear policies and practices preventing/addressing any form of sexual harassment, abuse, or assault are to be implemented.

We have enabled online giving for South Otselic United Methodist Church! To use it:

1. Go to <https://www.sotselicumc.org/> and select "GIVE".
2. On the next screen, click "Give Online Now".
3. You will then be at the give.tithe.ly screen for the South Otselic UMC (it should say our church name in the upper left). Fill out the amount you wish to give at the top, choose to designate the funds if you wish, put in your info as appropriate (including payment method), choose whether or not you want to cover the tithe.ly fee (varies with donation amount), and click the "Give \$---" button at the bottom which shows the amount you will be billed.

Please note that this requires you to have an email address and a means of making online payments (e.g., credit card). Our Financial Secretary and Treasurer will include the donation amount in the record of you giving to our church. In whatever manner you donate, thank you for supporting our little church!



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

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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)

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)

Check us out on Facebook:

South Otselic United Methodist Church / The Sunshine Shop

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) Nikko Baker, Brad Bates, Linda Ellis, Aaron Judge, Gordon Kupiec, James Prentice, Lolita White, Littlejohn family, family of Leroy Closson, family of Dana Brussel, family of Gloria Gormley, family of Jay Graham, family of Danica Jones, people with flu/illness, people displaced by fire, Asian victims of cyclones/flooding, victims of earthquake (Japan), flood victims (Washington state), victims of mass shootings (Australia, Brown University), snowplow drivers, holiday travelers, 2026

PRAYER LIST: (Long Term) Jonna Bartlett, Richard Bishop, David Boyer, Paul Carson, Margaret Chase, Ron Colasudo, Kaity Davis, Doug 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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