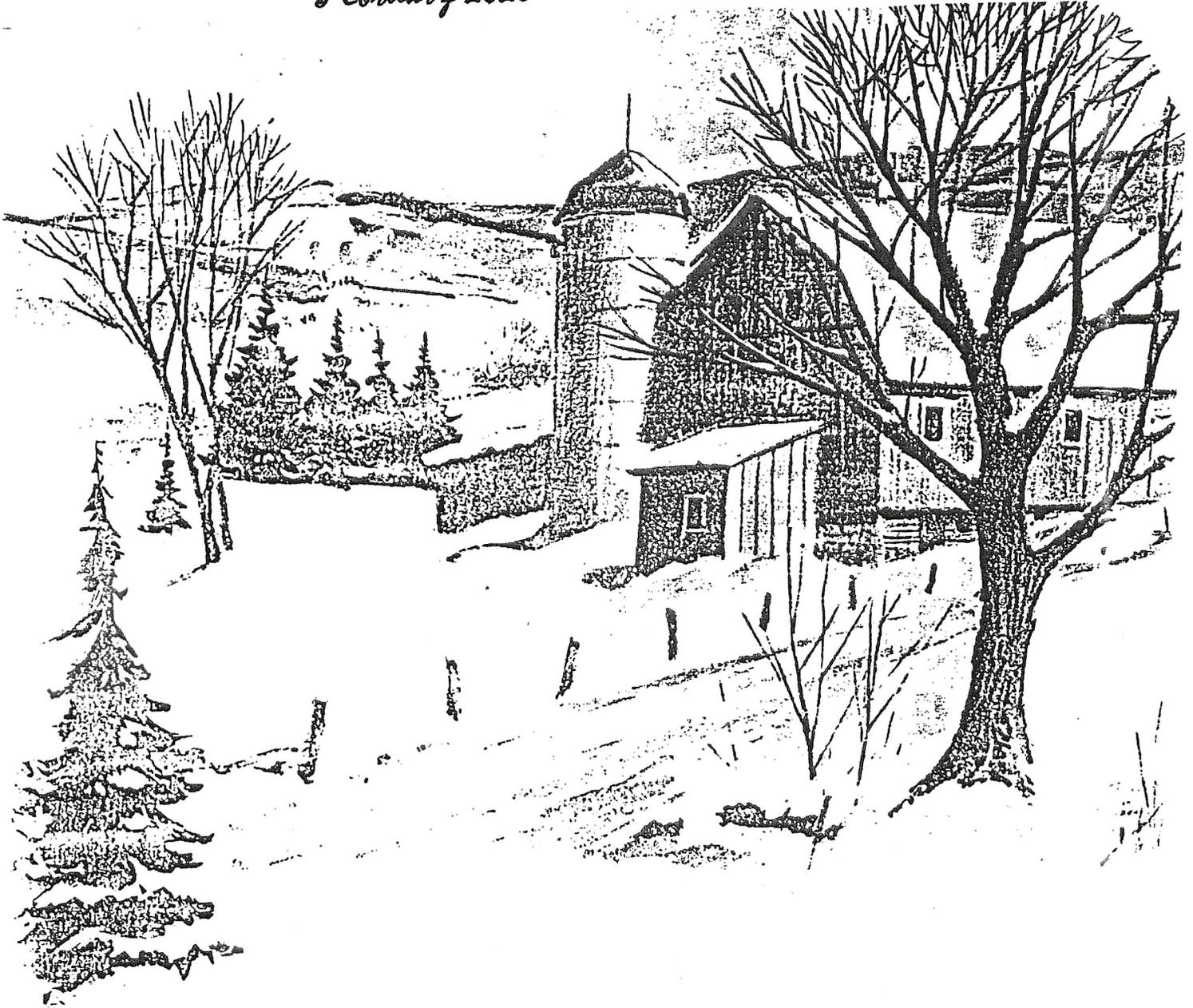


So. Otselec Methodist News

Pastor Melanie Simmons
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(home) 607-674-9527 ... (cell) 607-371-0431
Email: Melanie@simmonsasylum.com

February 2026



Ann Campbell, Editor



MESSAGE FROM YOUR PASTOR ...

February 2026

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
Micah 6:8 (NRSV)

Happy February!

January was a tough month, with wintry weather and political chaos on top of life's usual post-holiday struggle to get back into routine. I really hope there is more love and less violence throughout our country and the world. From what Jesus taught, I do not think it is right for those armed with military weapons to use lethal force against people only bearing cell phones, snacks, and handwarmers.



Some may consider me as getting political when I decry ICE activities, but it is really about basic human decency. You know I have been putting in a summary of some of the United Methodist Church social principles each month; take a look at them this month, for we are up to "The Political Community." Every government is to be held accountable for the welfare of people.

Jesus never advocated violence against people. Even when He overturned tables and made a whip in the temple, the whip was to drive out the sheep and cattle – the text does not say He ever used the whip on any person or caused anyone physical harm. Rather, Jesus taught love and forgiveness, giving people the opportunity to make decisions for themselves about how to live.

February is often thought of as the month of love due to Valentine's Day. However, showing love is more than simply not harming others. It goes beyond not neglecting them too: love is an active choice to strive for what is good for all involved. (That includes taking care of yourself so that you can serve others, for you need strength to nurture and support others being their best.)

If we are to choose love, what does that mean for our larger society? In Minnesota, it meant showing up in -20°F weather to show solidarity with neighbors being targeted by masked men bearing military weapons. Perhaps for us it involves showing up at rallies. Perhaps we may be calling our legislators daily to demand peace with justice. Perhaps it involves delivering meals and other needed items to our neighbors when it is dangerous for them to go about usual daily activities.

As a woman, I would not want to blindly obey orders from an unidentified masked man demanding that I go with him; would you feel safe, confronted that way? I also know that Jesus teaches us to live in love, for it drives out fear. So, I will try to live as Jesus taught, showing God's love for all people, to build stronger community and enable the power of the Holy Spirit to let God's kingdom be more fully realized on this earth. What will you do?

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

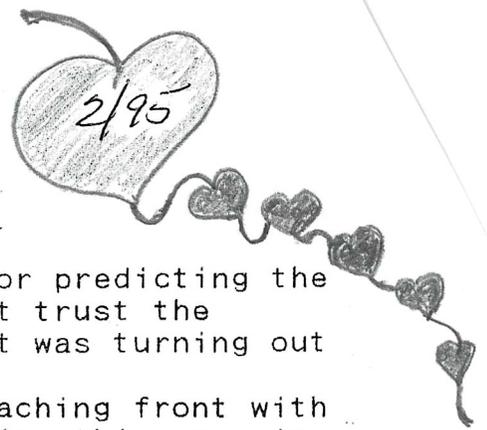
With love in Christ,
Pastor Melanie



"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



With all the modern technical advances for predicting the weather, it's getting so a person can almost trust the nightly TV forecast. This mid-January night was turning out to be one of those times...

The TV weatherman had warned of an approaching front with strong winds and turbulent conditions reaching this area in the very early morning hours. Now at 3:00am, this prophesy was being fulfilled in a decidedly boisterous manner!

With window-rattling force, an insistent wind was attempting to penetrate the outer walls of my abode, while the winter-bare branches of a too-close tree performed a wild tapdance on its threatened clapboards. Having endured many such battles over an almost two century lifetime, the old building once again stood firm. Well, almost firm -- there was a little creaking and a quiver or two -- but not enough to cause the loss of any of its dignity...

Now, there's nothing strange about any such display of nature's fury at this time of year. After all, it was the middle of January, a time once known as "deep winter" or even "the dead of winter", a time for wind-storms and blizzards!

But I sensed something out of character for this winter storm, something that had also been predicted in the forecast! Wide awake now, and knowing I would stay that way for awhile, I got up, and as is usual, headed for the kitchen and the refrigerator. On the way there I peeked out the window at the outside thermometer, curious to see if it agreed with the prophesy of the TV Weatherman. Yes! The red column in the glass tube had stretched itself until it had almost climbed to the 60 degree mark!

As everyone knows, we almost always have a thaw for several days in either January or February -- usually February. But that small winter break is simply a brief time when the temperature rises from its "zero neighborhood" to a somewhat more elevated one of about 35 to 40 degrees. Sort of a chance to catch one's breath before the red line sinks to single digits again!

But this was no common January thaw! The winds, howling and raging without, carried no driven snow nor icy blast. Instead they brought a rare, but none-the-less welcome, warming blanket of air, delivered from the Southland through an obliging Jet Stream whimsy.

And so, for several wonderful days in the midst of what has so far been a very decent winter, we enjoyed Spring-like weather! Temperatures hovered around the 60 degree mark, far higher than our customary January readings. This spurt of unseasonal warm weather, coupled with the general mildness of the winter to date, has even brought reports from several people of planted bulbs being fooled into sending forth shoots of green.

Those plants, along with the rest of us, were brought back to reality when January finally decided "enough was enough" and ended its realm with a few days that dipped below zero. Anyway, with "Ground Hog Day" upon us, we can

start counting the days until Spring! May it come soon and stay long!

At any rate we are not likely to experience anything such as the infamous "Year without a Summer" that happened so long ago.

I believe it was in the year 1816 that the "Year without a Summer" occurred. What brought it to my mind was the fact that it had a beginning similar to our recent unusual weather. I'll tell the story as I remember from my reading about it some years ago:

During the month of February in the year 1816, the weather turned very warm. In fact, the temperature was so Spring-like that people allowed their fires to die out and opened their windows to enjoy the warm air. For awhile it stayed like this and everyone happily began to plan for an early planting season.

But as the month of March reached its mid-point, the weather suddenly turned cold again. Not just a normal early spring cold, but as if it was once again mid winter.

It remained bitterly cold during April and May. June wasn't much better and when July arrived it still hadn't been warm enough for crops to grow. Some grass finally grew, but sparingly, and farmers managed to cut a little hay in August, although they did so while wearing overcoats!

Historians report that every month in the year 1816 experienced a killing frost at some point of time. Even today with the abundance of commercial seed available to present-day farmers, such a situation would be very serious. In 1816 farmers depended on the present year's crop to provide the next year's seed as well as food for their families. A crop-less year was nothing less than disastrous!

With little food being grown during the hard summer, the following winter of 1816-17 was a time of severe deprivation and hardship. And of course, when it was time for the next spring planting, not much seed was available. Most of the farms in this area had been forest land just a few years prior to that time and I expect that those families survived by living off the forest as they had when first they arrived.

And survive they did! Many of the families in this area today are descendents of those pioneers who lived and labored during the "Year without a Summer"!

As to that year -- I've read the opinions of some researchers who believe that disaster was caused by massive volcanic eruptions whose clouds of dust encircled the earth, blocking out much of the sun's heat. Just as here, the farmers in Europe and around the globe suffered the same conditions.

And now here we are, half way on our journey to Spring! Every day is one day closer and is the first day of the rest of your life! Live it well!!

George Ortiz

Treasurer's Corner

Well, the first month of 2026 sped by so quickly it is hard to remember anything overly eventful! One is for sure - it has and still is an old-fashioned winter -so far! We all have had plenty of snow - some more than others, but this cold has been just brutal... brrr. But now February is upon us and it is supposed to be the month of love. What is love? I think it can be many different things to many people. Some of us like big expensive things for Valentine's Day - others not much at all. Some just like a card or maybe quiet time with those that mean a lot to them. I think love is what you *make* it to be. For me - being home with Henry, watching TV or just reading is just fine with me. I love sharing my life with someone and it does not mean we have to be involved each other's interests, but just having another human being there to share what you each have is plenty for me. Another thing that warms my inner soul, is spending time with my granddaughters. They each have their own distinct personalities, but they also share a lot of common things. Both like gymnastics, art, swimming and would you believe makeup! At ages 6 & 9 - makeup!!! Not only do they enjoy that - they are actually very good at it! But their 'love' of makeup is offered freely to me when I visit. I get tutorials, lessons and a spa treatment, if time allows - so love can come in many various ways - it all depends on how you want to look at it. For me, love is as simple as having my fingernails painted in 3 different colors on each hand... What is it in your life that you love?

Here is the report for January 2026. Please keep our little church in your prayers.

Ann F Campbell
Pres.

<i>Receipts:</i>			<i>Beg Balances:</i>
Envelopes & Pledges	3700.00		Chng: 6713.63
Loose Offerings	190.00		Savings: 8919.52
Rental	100.00		
Interest (Wells Fargo)	753.46		
	TOTAL	4743.46	Receipts: 4743.46
<i>Payments:</i>			Payments: 6123.12
Minister's Salary	316.00		Balance - 1382.66
Housing	1630.00		<i>Ending Balances:</i>
Treasurer	172.70		Chng: 5330.97
Travel	0.00		Savings: 8919.52
Organist	0.00		
Secretary	0.00		
Tech Support	166.23		
Postage	47.45		
Fuel Oil	702.00		
NYSEG	188.39		
Apportionment	1005.11		
Telephone	89.16		
Penny Stone	30.00		Year to Date: - 1306.47
Brotherhood Mutual Ins Co (1st)	1030.75		
Dave Cruikshank (6 snow plows)	240.00		
So. Otselic Water District	116.00		
U.S.Treasury (FICA 4th qtr)	152.38		
Great America Financial Services (copier)	239.95		
	TOTAL	6126.12	

Up to the minute... **Community Luncheon update...**

Free community luncheons will be at the South Otselic UMC on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. These days were chosen because the Sunshine is open the 1st and 3rd Thursdays, and the Food Pantry is open the 3rd Thursday of each month.

The 1st luncheon was held January 15th with 12 in attendance. Each lunch will feature a different menu. The thought is to have a speaker/program TBA after the lunch on the 1st Thursday, and the 3rd Thursday will be puzzles and games after lunch. Future program thoughts include a demonstration/participation of fire extinguisher use, a trip to the South Otselic Fish Cultural Center, and a visit to the Old School and Weaving Center at the Grange Hall. Any other ideas are greatly appreciated!

This Friday February 5 at noon will be our 2nd lunch. **After lunch at 1 pm**, Deedrick Bertholf will present a great program on AI. It is very eye opening and informative! Please attend and invite your friends and family!

Reservations are urged for the lunch by February 3rd, call Betty at 315-852-9780, or come to the church at 1pm for the program!

Trustees Report - February 2026

The bid by Madison Doors and Windows was accepted for the replacement of the exterior church basement doors. Installation is anticipated sometime in March.

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 are still waiting on a follow up visit by the Willet Stained Glass Studios so an estimate can be made for repair to some of the church stained glass windows.

The church received the survey for the church property, initiated by Annie on behalf of the Trustees, which was shared with the Administrative Board and filed in the Pastor's office. A copy was also filed in the Chenango County Clerk's Office.

The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging may be donating their refrigerator to the church.

The Sunshine Shop News

The ladies are well rested and enjoyed their month off and ready to welcome customers!

The Shop will re-open on February 5th for the regular schedule of the 1st and 3rd weekends of the month. Fridays will go back to the original time of 10 to 4.

Please stop by and say hello and see what's new and warm for the remainder of this cold winter!

Free hats and scarves are still available on the front porch, as well as free books for your winter reading pleasure!

Days: 1st and 3rd weekends

Hours: Thursday and Friday: 10 to 4; Saturday 9 to noon.

News from the Georgetown UMC

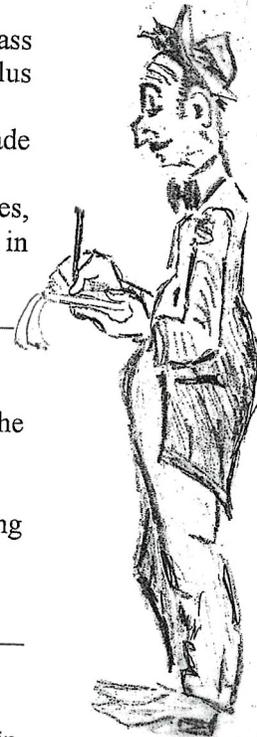
This month we sent a large box of hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, etc. to the Neighborhood Center in Utica. We thank everyone who contributed to this project including the Sunshine Shop who provided almost as many items again as we had collected.

We also collected non-perishable food items for the food pantry at the Mustard Seed. A donation was made to them to provide milk vouchers as well. Another church member made a sizeable donation to Predmore's Store to be used to help folks who could use a little extra assistance with food purchases.

This winter has been a tough one for all of us. We hope everyone is staying safe and warm and are not overdoing it as we work our way through this season.

Till next time.....

*and now abide Faith, Hope, Love, these three;
but the greatest of these is LOVE!*



Side Notes

Dates to remember

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

8 - Administrative Board after worship service (January's meeting)

14 - Valentine's Day

18 - Ash Wednesday - ashes will be given during office hours

19 - Free lunch from 12-2 at the church

22 - Administrative Board after worship service

28 - Deadline for newsletter items due

March 1 - Valley Lenten Ecumenical Service at 4:00 PM - 'Christian review of the Seder'

5 - Free lunch from 12 - 2 at the church

Wreath 'ring' return...

For those of you that purchased a Christmas Wreath from us, please remember to return the metal ring. We reuse these to help keep the cost of the wreaths down. If you do not have a place for the boughs, then return your wreath/s in a plastic bag and put it in the choir room and we will take care of it for you! Thank you in advance.

Sympathy & Condolences...

It is with great sadness that we express our sympathy to the family of Bill Bowers, Sr. He along with his wife Helen and son Bill were a part of this community for many years. He was a respected breeder for almost all of the dairy farms in the area and many happy stories were shared on those visits! He loved his garden, flowers and taking care of his lawn. Arrangements are being handled by Sharp Funeral Home and services will be at a future date.

Think 'Spring'!!!

Yes - even during this very cold weather we have been experiencing we need to 'think spring'!! Easter is April 5th this year and I have already contacted our Easter flower supplier. Ordering time will be very short as I our supplier usually needs 3 weeks prior to Easter. As soon as he gives me the price list for this year, I will be emailing it out so you can plan ahead.

(Remember - we need 16 lilies for our Lenten Cross.)

NYS benefits through Cornell Cooperative Extension!

Dear Community Partners,

As part of the New York State Health Equity Reform (NYHER), the state has implemented the development of Social Care Networks (SCNs) across regions. These networks are tasked with delivering Health Related Social Needs (HRSN) services to the Medicaid population. By bringing together health care systems, community-based organizations, and behavioral health providers, SCNs aim to expand access to critical unmet needs.

For our region, Care Compass Collaborative has been selected as the Social Care Network lead entity, serving Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tompkins, and Tioga Counties.

In Chenango County, one of the agencies providing a social care navigator is Cornell Cooperative Extension. We are available to help all Medicaid clients complete a free screening. If the screening shows that additional assistance is needed, we can connect clients to community-based resources such as transportation, health, nutrition, and housing services.

Medicaid clients: If you are in need of a free screening and support, please contact the **Cornell Cooperative Extension office at 607-334-5841, ext. 1121.**

Together, we can strengthen our community by ensuring that everyone has access to the resources they need.

Happy Valentine's Day



I'm multitasking, I can listen, ignore and forget all at the same time!

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 POLITICAL COMMUNITY

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

"Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment." – John Wesley, "The Circumcision of the Heart"

The UMC acknowledges that love requires responsible political action aimed at promotion of the common good. The UMC believes in the inherent worth of all people and calls all members to protect the dignity and worth of all humans, to honor basic freedoms and right of them, and to work for the well-being of all God's creation.

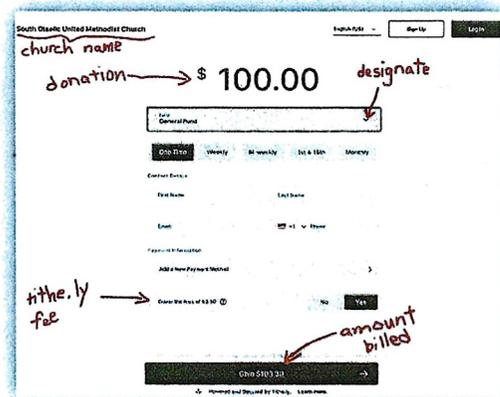
- A. *Church and Governments* – Both church and government have vital and distinct roles in society. Every government is to be held accountable as stewards for the people, natural world, and economies over which they have authority. The UMC rejects governmental coercion and violence to silence political opponents or objections to practices which are immoral or illegal under international law. The UMC advocates speaking out boldly on social issues from a gospel perspective and equipping members to be effective justice advocates.
- B. *Civil Disobedience* – the UMC supports those who nonviolently protest or disobey unjust or immoral laws while upholding the worth of all concerned. The UMC asks governments to train responding personnel to use restraint in order to protect people's basic rights and to minimize emotional or bodily harm.
- C. *Restorative Justice* – the UMC urges government justice systems to focus on restoring relationships; this includes prioritizing the victims in repairing damages, righting wrongs, and healing. Counseling and training to enable criminals to rejoin society is urged, as well as partnering with law enforcement for restoration.
- D. *The Death Penalty* – the UMC opposes the death penalty. Families who have lost loved ones to violent crimes are to be ministered to without judgment as they navigate demands of justice, compassion, and healing.
- E. *Criminal Justice* – in keeping with Wesleyan heritage, the UMC affirms the rule of law, the guarantee of civil liberties and rights, and equal access to justice for all people. The UMC condemns discriminatory enforcement and any abuse of power. The UMC supports measures that prevent or eliminate crimes, particularly those addressing the root cause of crime and rehabilitating criminals.
- F. *War and Military Service* – the UMC deplors war and urges peaceful settlements, insisting that every nonviolent and diplomatic means of resolution be exhausted before use of arms begins. United Methodists are asked to examine their conscience and to seek God's guidance in matters of military service; the UMC honors and offers support to those whose convictions lead them to serve in the military, requesting that they perform their duties in accordance with the Christian faith and the Geneva Conventions. The UMC opposes the draft, honoring and supporting those whose conscience limits them to noncombatant roles or nonmilitary service.

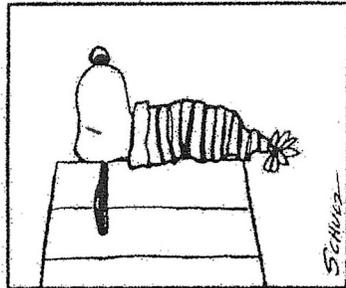
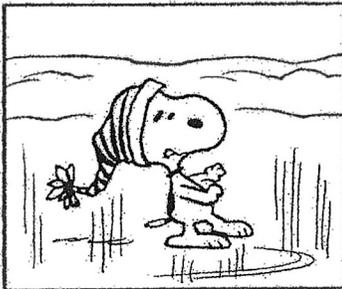
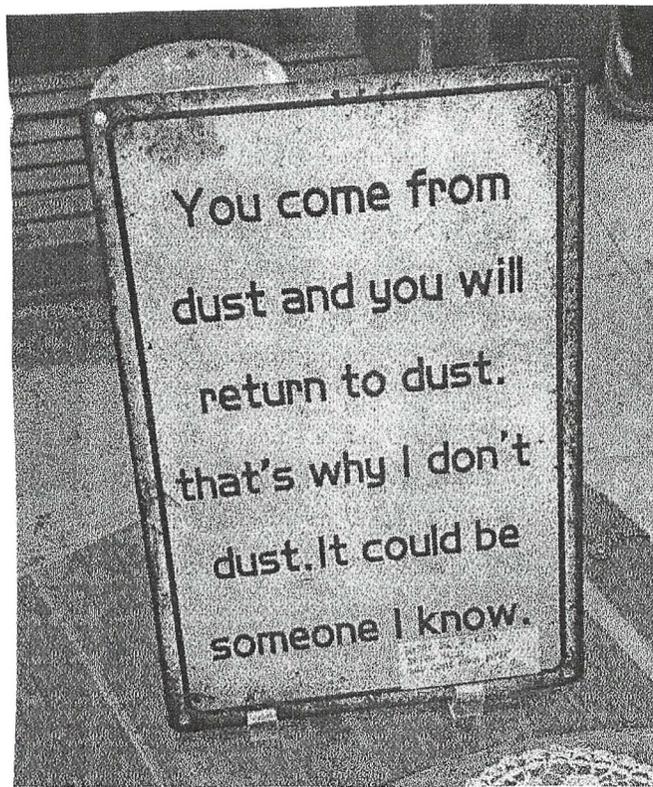


We have enabled online giving for South Otselic United Methodist Church! To use it:

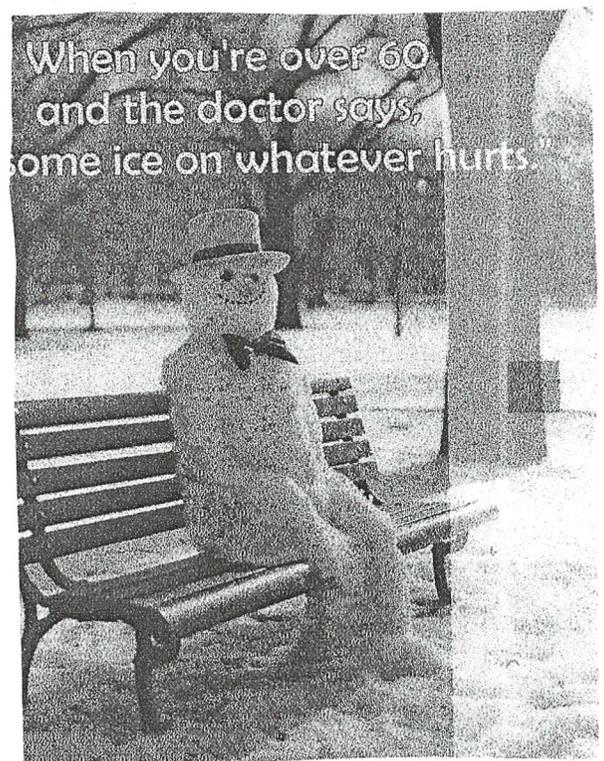
1. Go to <https://www.sotselicumc.org/> and select "GIVE".
2. On the next screen, click "Give Online Now".
3. You will then be at the give.tithe.ly screen for the South Otselic UMC (it should say our church name in the upper left). Fill out the amount you wish to give at the top, choose to designate 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!





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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: 10 - 4
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) Bob Engle, Edith Goldschmidt, Chris Marquard, Jim (& Heidi) Moore, Ed & Debbie Slocum, George Lott & Wenda West, family of Bill Bowers, family of Matthew Brooks, family of Renee Good, family of Rufus Green, family of Kodianne Lynch, family of Alex Pretti, family of Eleanor Price, family of Margaret Chase, people with flu/illness, homeless/without shelter, travelers/victims of storm, Minnesota, our country, world peace, 2026

PRAYER LIST: (Long Term) Jonna Bartlett, Richard Bishop, David Boyer, Paul Carson, Ron Colasudo, Kaitly 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) Szymczynski, 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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