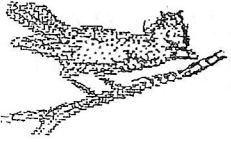


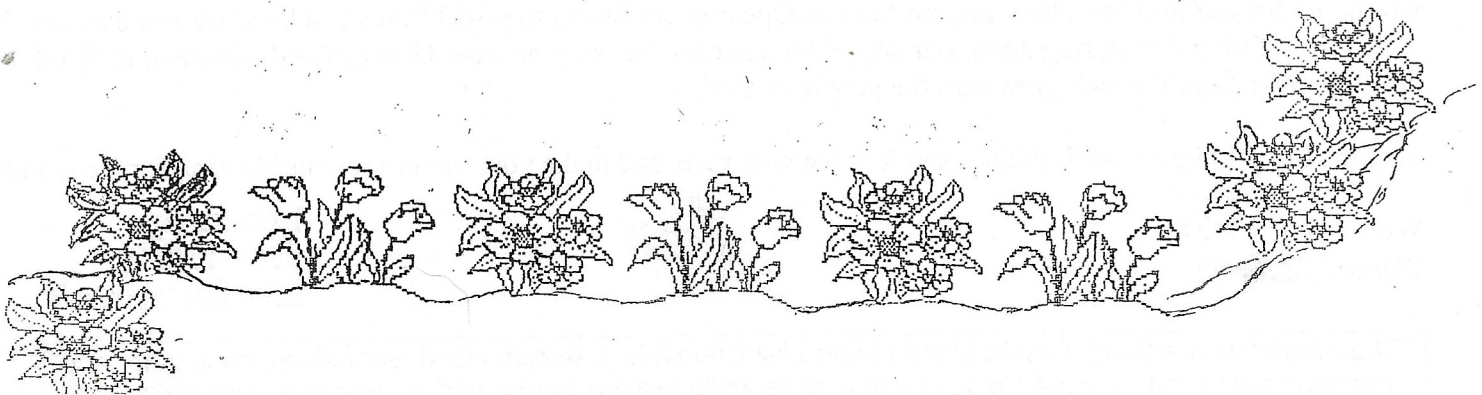
# So. Otselec Methodist News

Pastor Melanie Simmons  
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June 2026



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*Ann Campbell, Editor*



## MESSAGE FROM YOUR PASTOR ...

### June 2026

*"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."*

*Genesis 12:2 (NRSV)*

#### Happy Summer!

We are into the season of longer sunlight, warmer days, and more outdoor events. Many thanks to those who kicked off those events with participation in the Otselic Valley Fishing & Heritage Day and the Memorial Day parade! I had my house full during Memorial Day weekend with family visiting from across the country, and I know I was not the only one.

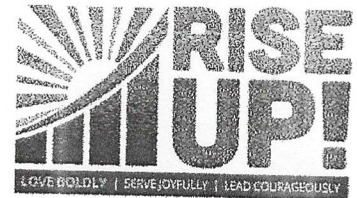
It was great to see people I have not seen in a long time, to get to spend time catching up in person and just being present with one another. I think we forget sometimes how important socializing is, especially without electronic distractions. We build relationships of love and genuine connection through direct interactions with one another.

Speaking of connections, May ended with the Upper New York UMC Annual Conference meeting. Hundreds of us United Methodists were at the Oncenter in Syracuse for worship, prayer, and holy conferencing. We took a look at where we are today and how we want to move forward, with a theme of "Rise Up!" (with hope and courage) to "Love Boldly!" It was wonderful to form stronger bonds with our siblings in faith and to hear the interesting ways in which God's love is being shared across the state.

I really enjoy our lively bishop (Rev. Héctor A. Burgos-Núñez)'s leadership as he works to enable stronger connection and support between local churches.

Bishop Héctor asks us to focus on three questions:

1. How are you loving God?
2. How are you loving the people God places in front of you?  
*(Note: these are not necessarily the people we tend to look at or want to notice.)*
3. How are you inviting others to embrace the hope of Christ in their lives?



Bishop Héctor also asks us to think about this follow up question: "What does love require of us, in our community, in this season?" We need to look at who and what God has placed in front of us, at this time, and intentionally respond with abundant grace - for God has already gifted us with grace beyond measure. Past programs met needs of the day for which they were created. How do we modify what we are doing to meet the needs of today? Would change to current methods enhance or detract from our ability to meet those needs?

Lately a saying has been circulating on the internet about how, instead of telling God how big our problems are, we should tell our problems how big our God is. Opening our hearts to possibilities can be scary and exciting. It seems very fitting that during June, our scriptures have us focusing on how God enabled Abraham & Sarah to develop into a family which grew into the people of God.

May the Lord find your work faith-based & filled with love, and make your name a joyous blessing for the world!

With love in Christ,  
*Pastor Melanie*



**Love Boldly**  
**Serve Joyfully**  
**Lead Courageously**

"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~~

DAD 5/97

Yesterday, when I mowed my lawn for the first time this year, there were a few dandelions scattered about its green surface. Today, I can see thousands of tiny golden faces peering up through the short grass. (No, Pharsalia is not that far behind Nature's flowering schedule for this area! I am writing these words during the first few days of May. By the time you read them, I am sure it will be closer to the middle of the month.)

My reason for mowing grass yesterday was twofold. First, it was starting to have the shaggy look of Spring's early growth. But secondly and most important, the TV weather-guessers had forecast a rainy session for the coming week! I knew very well that if the grass wasn't mowed before the rains came, I probably would never catch up with it during the rest of Springtime.

Many years ago when I lived downstate, April was the month that was associated with showers. "April showers bring May flowers" was relevant and believable. Moving upstate, I soon became aware that it's the "MAY showers that bring May flowers"! Usually, what April showers bring is more snow.

An old local saying, "A wet, cold May means a barn full of hay" is actually the one most likely to rule. I'd like to propose another -- "Without a sunny sky, the lawn is soon one foot high". At any rate, my lawn is mowed for the time being, and if the sunshine comes back within a reasonable time, I may be able to keep it that way.

I've heard people say, and I'm sure you have too, "Why do you stay here where the winters are so long?"

Now, if you're reading this while in a warmer clime, you've already worked out your own answer to that question. Very likely, you may even be the one asking the question.

However, over the years I've heard several good answers to that question, and the other day I saw one. Yes, it was something I saw:

Heading up to Syracuse on Route 81, I was blessed with mile after mile of one-lane traffic. 81 was, as it has been ever since opening, in a state of repair. Signs were posted reducing speed from 65 mph to 55 mph. This was no hindrance since no one was doing 65 anyway. They simply carried their 70 mph speed into the one lane.

Compacting two lines of traffic into one lane moving at high speed has a huge advantage -- no one worries about a speeding ticket! With but a dozen feet or so between vehicles and no room alongside, stopping anyone in that solid line would be the equivalent of attempting to flag down an express train at its middle car!

Anyway, after completing my errand and returning to the point at Nedrow where I usually re-enter Rt 81, I decided to pass up the express trip back and opted instead, for a leisurely journey along Route 11.

I hadn't been on this part of Rt 11 for many years and was pleasantly surprised with its good condition. Rt 11, of course, parallels Rt 81 all the way down the valley from

Syracuse to Binghamton and was once the main highway between those two cities before Rt 81 took over that chore.

To say one route parallels the other is a rather loose definition. While the mighty 81 more or less plows down the center of the corridor, 11 tends to follow a course that wanders a bit. Rt 81 recognizes each town along its route by an exit sign and convenient off-ramp. Rt 11, on the other hand, makes a personal appearance in each, often going right through the center of its business section.

The route between Nedrow and LaFayette follows a narrow valley wherein the two highways are never far apart. Leaving LaFayette, both gradually ascend a hill for a mile or two. It is at this point that my reason for telling of this trip begins...

Rt 11 has been gaining altitude since LaFayette, while Rt 81 has dropped almost to the valley floor. The traveler on 11 suddenly finds himself looking out over a deep valley with miles and miles of spectacular scenery in several directions! Far below, Rt 81 is now so distant that it seems no more than a string of moving toys.

The wall of steep hills bordering the valley is broken on the far side where a second valley joins this one, extending the view for at least a dozen miles in another direction. I've often admired this particular section from Rt 81, but from up here on Rt 11, its beauty is doubled or even tripled. I doubt that any spot in this state presents a more breath-taking sight!

Before long, 11 drops down to the floor of the valley, bends east for a ways, and then turns ninety degrees in the center of Tully. Shortly it passes the old Tully Central School, a place etched in past memories, for here I spent a night back in the early seventies along with a hundred or so others. All of us forced off Rt 81, and marooned by a blizzard that dumped three feet of snow on the area.

But today is a pleasant day in early May and I am enjoying a homeward trip on an empty highway! From Tully to Homer, Rt 11 stays on the valley floor. On either side, we pass large farms spread out across the level valley, all prosperous looking, all neat and orderly.

In a few more miles we enter the village of Homer where 11 becomes Main Street and is bordered by beautiful old homes dating from a more gracious era. Here I enter Rt 81, travel another mile of one-lane and then leave at Exit 11 for lunch at Arby's.

Should you be returning from Syracuse some day, and have a little time to squander, I recommend that you veer off onto Route 11. No, you won't be able to travel at 65 or 70 mph. You'll go through the center of LaFayette, Tully and Homer, maybe even have to stop for a traffic light. And if you do have to stop for that traffic light, it will only be symbolic -- there won't be any traffic!

Try it. I think you'll like it. And you may find one good reason why people stay here -- even if it is The Land of Taxes!

George Ortiz

# Treasurer's Corner

Oh my - half of the year is upon us. It seems like yesterday that it was only January! Life seems to change with a blink of an eye. Funny how life does that to us - we can have or make plans, but God has the eraser! I was working on a show recently and on the Monday of show week our lead actor, only 32, passed away suddenly. It was a total shock as many of the cast and crew had known him since high school and it was a devastation that I hope not to repeat any time soon. As the entire cast sat and reflected on his passing - we also had to think of what to do next. Do we continue to have the show? Cancel or try to reschedule? So many ideas, thoughts, consoling and grief all taking place at the same time... but in the end it was decided that Craig (our lead) would want the show to go on. So, we contacted some of our talented local high school thespians and one was available to help us out! He only had 3 rehearsals, would be reading from the script during the actual performances and worked on where he had to be on the stage all the time. He was marvelous!!! Then after the Friday night's performance one of our other men fell down at home that night and landed in the hospital! So once again another performer was asked to fill in and after only 1 1/2 hours of rehearsal he too, was on the stage with script in hand and moving like he had been there for weeks! How blessed this show was - even through the darkest moments I have ever experienced working on shows, this show turned into a highlight due to sheer determination and dedication and doing the best during the worst time, ever. In a blink of an eye everything changed, and life as in theater - you have to be ready for plan 'B'. God never promised everything to be wonderful all of the time. Sometimes we have to work for it. We did it Craig, may you be at peace!

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

*Ann P Campbell*  
*Pres.*

| <i>Receipts:</i>                          |              | <i>Beg Balances:</i>     |                              |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Envelopes & Pledges                       | 4705.00      | Chng : 5977.40           |                              |
| Loose Offerings                           | 498.00       | Savings: 8921.72         |                              |
| Int on Savings                            | 2.20         |                          |                              |
| Interest (Wells Fargo)                    | 1184.97      |                          |                              |
| Easter Bake Sale                          | 463.50       | <b>Receipts: 6893.67</b> |                              |
| Easter Flowers                            | 40.00        | <b>Payments: 5740.83</b> |                              |
|   |              | <b>Balance 1152.84</b>   |                              |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>6893.67</b>           |                              |
| <i>Payments:</i>                          |              | <i>Ending Balances:</i>  |                              |
| Minister's Salary                         | 312.00       | Chng: 7083.94            |                              |
| Housing                                   | 1670.00      | Savings: 8921.72         |                              |
| Continuing Education                      | 0.00         |                          |                              |
| Treasurer                                 | 169.00       |                          |                              |
| Travel                                    | 0.00         |                          |                              |
| Organist                                  | 0.00         |                          |                              |
| Secretary                                 | 0.00         |                          |                              |
| Tech Support                              | 156.99       |                          |                              |
| Postage                                   | 0.00         |                          |                              |
| Fuel Oil                                  | 702.00       |                          |                              |
| NYSEG                                     | 213.73       |                          |                              |
| Apportionment                             | 1005.11      |                          |                              |
| Telephone                                 | 89.09        |                          |                              |
| Copy Paper & labels                       | 66.92        |                          | <b>Year to Date: +530.78</b> |
| Penny Stone                               | 30.00        |                          |                              |
| Website                                   | 19.00        |                          |                              |
| US Treasury (1st qtr - FICA)              | 164.17       |                          |                              |
| Bill Wentworth (12 snow plows)            | 240.00       |                          |                              |
| Lightwell Ins.of NY (work's comp 2nd qtr) | 82.31        |                          |                              |
| Envelopes                                 | 26.73        |                          |                              |
| Ponto's Greenhouse (Easter flowers)       | 492.10       |                          |                              |
| So. Otselic Water District                | 116.00       |                          |                              |
| Great America Financial Services (copier) | 185.68       |                          |                              |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>5740.83</b>           |                              |

## Up to the minute...

### Sunshine Shop News

May was a busy month for the Shop! Customers enjoyed the "new inventory" of spring and summer clothes for the whole family. It is always amazing the distance the customers travel to shop! Fishing & Heritage Day provided extended shopping hours on Saturday May 16 and ran a surprise BOGO sale! It was well accepted, and the Shop was extremely busy all day.

In May, the Otselic Valley Central School District was provided with scholarship applications for graduating seniors going to trade school or to college. Applications must be completely filled out and returned by June 3rd to the Sunshine Shop! It is an award of \$1,000 to be awarded after the first semester is completed with a GPA of 2.5 or higher. The monetary amount goes directly to the school. Best of luck to all the graduates and their decisions for the future!

In June, the Shop will be open the 1st and 3rd weekends of the month. On the 18th of June, not only will the Shop be open, but there will be a free lunch in the Fellowship dining room. The menu has not yet been decided. Speaker for that day will be Deedrick Bertholf who will provide an important update on AI. We look forward to his presentation.

Also, on that date, the Share and Care Food Pantry will be open. It's a great opportunity to visit South Otselic for the day. If you need another reason to visit South Otselic, try the Fish Culture Center and check out the fish being raised in the tanks and learn about landlocked Atlantic salmon!

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### Trustees Report – June 2026

Estimates have been received for painting the Sunshine Shop roof and that of the church basement entrance. Low bid is \$5,750. Includes fastening all loose shingles, caulking all dormer windows and sealing the chimney flashing.

There was a problem with one of the motion detector lights outside the church kitchen entrance. Despite adjusting the settings, the lights remained on 24 hours a day. Finally, due to creative investigative work by members of the Brain Trust, the problem was resolved.

Due to the cost to treat all of the church's stained-glass windows, options for grant funding is being explored, and reconsideration of reducing the scope of the project.

The estimate to convert the outdoor church sign to an LED one is \$13,305.50. Financing is available at 25 percent down plus ten interest free monthly payments at \$997.88. (Or we could hire someone for \$25 to manually change the information once a week for 12.8 years; or once a month for 55 years. Just saying.)  
☺

No estimates have yet been sought for the church basement lift chair.

If anyone is interested in joining the 'brain trust' - just come on Thursday morning at 9 and the fellas will find a job for you. We are blessed to have just a dedicated group of men that help keep His house and grounds looking clean and bright!

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### Georgetown UMC News

Greetings from the Georgetown United Methodist Church. We had a productive month of May! Our Kiddie Fishing Pool at Fishing Heritage Day was a HUGE success again this year. 76 children were able to catch magnificent "fish" that again garnered ear to ear smiles. One little girl jumped up and down exclaiming "it's Arabella, it's Arabella!" - whoever Arabella is. It meant a lot to that little girl. We think she will be back next year! Speaking of next year, we are already making plans. A huge shout out goes to the Clothes Basket in Morrisville for their enormous help in procuring items to fill our "fish" bags for our booth. Special thanks to Judy Griese who was instrumental in sorting out appropriate items that children would enjoy. We can't wait until next year!!

We will again donate to the graduation fund at Otselic Valley Central School to honor the 26 graduates this year. Every little bit helps to send these fine young adults off into the world!

We are planning a church picnic on July 19th. Ann Parkhurst has graciously agreed to hold this event. We hope many will be able to join us.

Enjoy the sunshine and promising warm weather. Until next time.....

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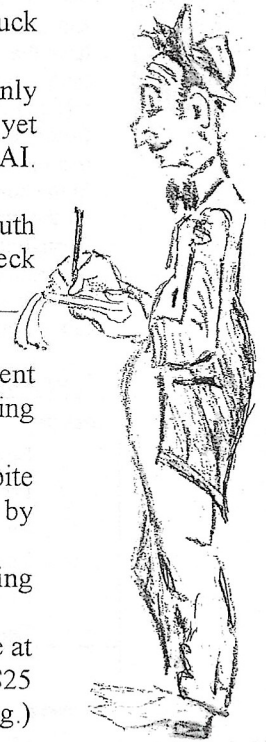
### Cards - - - Letters - - - Notes

We are planning on giving Dave Wentworth cards, notes and letters when we visit on June 14. If you would like to help us fill 'the box' please mail your well wishes/thoughts to the church:

So. Otselic UMC / PO Box 47 / So. Otselic, NY 13155. Helps make his day even more special!

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## Happy Father's Day !



# Side notes

## Dates to remember

June 4 - Free luncheon 12 -2 at the church

14 - Worship with Dave Wentworth at the Vet's home in Oxford at 11:00! (dish to pass afterwards)

18 - Free luncheon 12-2 at the church: Speaker - Deedrick Bertholf on AI updates

21 - Father's Day

25 - Baccalaureate at 6:30 at the church

26 - Graduation at OVCS at 7:00

28 - Administrative Board after worship service

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July 4 - Happy 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday America!

### *OVF & HA Review*

A special thank you to everyone in the church and in the community, who participated in making this year's 17th annual event a huge success. No matter what your job was for the event, it made the day successful. There were several new activities this year: a larger and expanded kid's carnival game area, the Powerhouse from Cornell, a Kettlecorn vendor, lacrosse presentation at the Pole Barn, three new musical groups, and much more!

Don't forget to order, or stop by, and get your 17th special cancellation stamp at the South Otselic PO in person. It is only available for 30 days and that began May 16th. Charity Gipp was this year's featured artist! Thank you!

Thank you again to everyone! Your part, no matter how small or large, contributed to the success of the day!

We are looking forward to the 18th annual in 2027!

### *Thank You - from the women of the UMW*

The day turned out to be gorgeous and the crowds were steady all day long. We saw many familiar faces and even met some new folks that were seeming to have a good time. We, the ladies of the UMW, want to thank everyone for their time, pies, donations and support for the Fishing & Heritage Day festivities. We sold almost all of our famous fried dough - had very few plants/flowers left over, and we even had a few pie slices left to celebrate with the church on Sunday at fellowship time! All of the proceeds will help support our mission for the free luncheons being offered during the year as well as other community support. We thank each and every one of you for your generous support.

### **Save the Date!**

On July 19<sup>th</sup> we are planning a 'joint' picnic with our sister church, Georgetown, at the home of Ann Parkhurst! More details to follow in next month's newsletter, but it will be a dish to pass for sure. It will be nice to hold fellowship with all of us together, so mark your calendar and we hope to have a great turnout!

**Love Boldly**  
**Serve Joyfully**  
**Lead Courageously**



Our online giving at  
<https://www.sotselicumc.org/>  
now has a QR code:



*Congratulations to all the 2026 graduates!*

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](mailto: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  
3<sup>rd</sup> 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):** Lee Cole, Marjorie Davis, David Dunham, Darlene Engle, Lonnie Hakes, Fran Knickerbocker, Vaughn Sayles, Neda Swords, family of Craig Natoli, family of Marshall Sepello, Maine silo fire victims, Nelson UMC, healthcare system needs, homeless people, graduates, travelers, Memorial Day personnel

**PRAYER LIST: (Long Term):** Jonna Bartlett, Richard Bishop, David Boyer, 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, Jim Slocum, Harvey Stalker, 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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