



Orwell Union Church



Dedicated 1845

January 2022

“The Little Church That Cares”

Edition 1, Volume 1

WHERE WE WERE WHERE WE ARE NOW

The last two years have been challenging to say the least. It started with the assignment of a new Pastor who did not fit very well with our congregation. Unfortunately his style of teaching the Word was more in the line of accusing and blaming rather than caring and forgiveness.

A result of this was the decrease in attendance. Then came the Covid Pandemic, resulting in services being totally shut down. With very little income, and the high cost of keeping a Pastor assigned with full pay, we had to release this Pastor from his assignment to our Church.

As the Covid restrictions began to ease, we returned to having services using Lay Speakers and Guest Speakers from our local community. As a direct result of this, our attendance started to rise as well as giving. This caused us to review our affiliation with the United Methodist Church.

The worldwide United Methodist Church is currently undergoing a spiritual battle between liberal and conservative approaches to Christianity. This is a battle we as a Christian congregation were not interested in being involved.

We looked back at the origins of the Orwell Union Church, which reminded us that we were incorporated in 1844 as a Union Church. The Union was a result of Methodist, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian congregations coming together and building our Church which was dedicated in 1845.

In 1966 we entered into an agreement with the Methodist Church to be affiliated with them as the majority of the congregation was Methodist. However, we would remain a Union Church where all Christian denominations members were welcome to attend and become members.

In 2020 we updated our incorporation designation with the Oswego County Clerk. Our Federal ID number, tax exempt designation, property deed and bank accounts are all assigned to the Orwell Union Church.

This seems to have had a very positive effect on us as our attendance has continued to grow and our ability to support our community and participate in mission outreach has grown as well

COFFEE HOUSE

October saw the return of the Coffee House to the Orwell Union Church. We all gathered for some great Christian music and fellowship. A great time was had by all. As Covid concerns wane we plan on having more events like this in 2022.



MEMORIAL FUND

In the last few years two of our long time members went on to their final reward and had designated that donations be made to the Orwell Union Church. We decided to honor them with the purchase of praise banners to be displayed in the sanctuary during the different seasons.

A total of 16 banners were purchased with the themes of Christmas, Easter, Summer and Thanksgiving. A special dedication was made at our Christmas Eve Service honoring the memory of Janet Minor Crast and Lois Robbins Potter.

An additional donation was received in memory of Alice Clark which was added to our Memorial Fund. It has been decided to develop a scholarship program using the Memorial Fund revenue. We will be working on developing this program in 2022.

NOISY CAN & MISSION

Several years ago we started a special collection each week that was in addition to the regular offering. We call it the Noisy Can collection as it originally was started for the youth where change was collected. It has since grown into a wonderful way to support specific needs or missions.

Each month we collectively decide what that months Noisy Can monies will go for. Here is the list from 2021:

✚ Backpack Project	\$100
✚ Operation Christmas Child	\$1,008
✚ Unity Acres	\$202
✚ Heifer Project	\$500
✚ Flowers to ill members	\$113
✚ Medical Expense Relief	\$600
✚ Pastoral Emergency Fund	\$437

We have participated the Samaritans Purse Operation Christmas Child for several years. This year we packed 112 boxes and collected \$1,008 to cover the shipping expenses for them.

The boxes are filled with personal care products, toys, pencils, paper, coloring books & supplies, and other items. These are collected and donated by our congregation throughout the year.



SEND SHOEBOX GIFTS AND THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Pastor's Corner



I am sure that you have had those vacation trips that have been long and for the most part been interesting and exciting, but have had their share of hardships and trials. I can remember, as a child, coming home from a two week vacation camping trip and thinking that my bed must be very happy because it missed me!

Coming **home** to the pulpit here in Orwell gave me the same feelings. It is good to be back to what I now consider my "**home pulpit**". It truly amazes me how the adults seem unchanged but so many things have changed. The young folks that I was blessed to have the opportunity to marry, now have grown families and those young folks have now matured into seasoned adults. Children that I used to have pie eating contests with are now in college or getting close to that age.

Life continues to go on, children experience life. Time does not stand still. There are only two constant things in this life.....God and His Love....satan and his evil. God's book, the Bible remains as important now as much as it ever has!

We have recently celebrated Jesus' birth, now we are walking with Him through His youth, Baptism and ministry. Within a couple months we will walk through Ash Wednesday, then Lent, through the dark days of Holy Week. Then that glorious Easter Sunday when God shows us that He can and will conquer the grave. I love Easter morning and this year's celebration will be awesome, I know it will be as our God is in charge.

We have grown over the past few months and I see us growing more. This will be happening both in attendance and in the part we as God's church will be playing in our community.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a few words.....Continue to pray and remember that prayer is conversation with God. Conversation consists of two equal parts. Talking *and* Listening! Don't short yourself and not hear what God has to say!

Pastor Dave

SEASON OF ADVENT



After the Janet Crast Christmas Elves magically decorated our sanctuary for the season, the talents of Judy Stucky and Doreen Macklin took over. Since we have few children at our services, Doreen took us through the Christmas story each week with this wonderful visual display of the Nativity.

A Warm Welcome

We welcome Josh Bush as an Associate Pastor.



My name is Joshua Bush and this is my wife Erica and sons Gabriel and Mason. I was raised in Central Square and I attended Church with my parents where I dreamt of becoming a Pastor someday. My beautiful family and parents have supported me every step of the way.

I love this opportunity to preach the Gospel and offer anyone that would like to come and listen and worship, no matter what your circumstances are. My family and I look forward to getting to know everyone and share out faith journey together.

OUR FUTURE

As we enter 2022, we look forward to new possibilities. In the past our strong affiliation with the United Methodist Church organization saw their focus on supporting missions on a global scale. As the Orwell Union Church congregation we see the importance of spreading our Christian faith throughout the world, but we also believe that we need to start at home first.

We have many goals we would like to strive for. The main focus is to commit our outreach efforts to our local area. The main focus will be towards growing our congregation. While more bodies in the pews is ideal we also realize that many are unable to attend due to distance, weather, or physical ability. This can be accomplished by live streaming our activities over the internet. With this, no matter where you are in the world you can participate.

Some of things we would like to acquire in the future are:

- ✚ Internet Service
- ✚ Live streaming camera
- ✚ Fire/Smoke Alarms
- ✚ Freeze detector
- ✚ Updated computer
- ✚ Printer

While it would be wonderful to have all of this right now, we want to progress the right way, not the fast way. In the true nature of a Union Church we are always open to suggestions and help in making our Church a bright light in our community.

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and to not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."