

The Shorelight – July 2026

Amber Congregational Church Newsletter

Loving relationships that are committed to God, accountable to each other,
involved in Christ's transforming work in our world.

Worship News

Question: What is one way you are going to intentionally grow spiritually this summer?

During the summer most of us tend to drift and coast, taking time off from various things and activities. Taking a breather. To answer the question, "How can I grow spiritually this summer?" is not difficult. To increase in relationship with Jesus, have a love for His Word, and to build your life around Christ so you can be spiritually strong in the next season are great goals. Here are some ideas from Deeper Christian to help get started in July.

1. Read the Classics + biographies
2. Read the New Testament and/or Bible this Summer (90-day plan)
 - create a "90-day Bible reading plan" – take the number of pages in your Bible (or New Testament), divide by 90, and it will tell you how many pages you need to read daily to finish by the end of the summer
 - set an amount of time to read – set aside 30-60 minutes to read and read as far as you can in that amount of time (not worrying about how many pages). See how many times you can read through the New Testament or how far you can get through the Bible.
 - consider reading chronologically or using a different Bible translation
3. Entertainment Fast (movies, video games, tv, phone apps, whatever you spend a lot of downtime on)

4. Watch a Christian/edifying movie
5. Pick a book to study and to saturate in this summer
6. Operation Secret Things (give notes, gifts, etc.)

Nancy Barber
Worship Director

The average Worship attendance for the month of June was 51. The budget for 2026 is \$120,230. Offerings through June 28th total \$57,664.

Thank you to our June guest speakers.

June 7th – *Living Like Christ Died* – Jose Solar, Guest Speaker – Syracuse Teen Challenge

June 14th – *Why is Psalm 1 Such an Important Psalm* – Reverend Dave Pilch

June 21st – *Free to Follow* – Kristin Wetherell, Guest Speaker

June 28th – *The LORD Jesus, Our Shepherd through Faith* – Reverend Darren Smith

Amber Congregational Church Search Committee - Update

The Search Committee meets regularly on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, plus a few extra Zoom calls with candidates. We have had four official candidates for the permanent position with varying levels of experience and qualifications. None of these candidates have progressed beyond initial conversations with the team. As we continue to trust God in this process, we will keep the congregation updated as much as possible. Please join us in praying for the pastor that God is preparing for Amber Congregational Church.

On the interim front, we have completed conversations with IPM (Interim Pastor Ministry) and are ready to move forward with them once we complete a conversation with an individual who has come our way that may be a fit for the interim role from outside of IPM. More to come soon!

Christian Education

Two Simple Truths

In our Adult Sunday School class, we have been studying the 23rd Psalm. This is a portion of scripture that most of us know well and can readily understand—Jesus is our Good Shepherd and He leads us every day, through the challenges and joys of life. In fact, this psalm may be so familiar to us that its great promises can sometimes sound rather ordinary, but they are not!

The last verse, “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” summarizes the promises and realities outlined in the Psalm. The first great promise here is that God’s goodness and mercy are always with us. The second is that we can live in the continual presence of our Triune God, Father, Son and the Holy

Spirit. Our three-in-one God has made a way for us to be vitally connected with the Father through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and, when we accept this truth and commit to following our Good Shepherd, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit—God living in our hearts all day every day forever.

Getting to know the Holy Spirit and cultivating a sense of His presence takes some practice but our awareness can grow over time. In fact, the Holy Spirit begins to work in us even before we become Christians. It is the Holy Spirit that awakens in us a desire to know God. It is also the Spirit that alerts us to the need to change our ways (convicts us of sin) and it is the Spirit that moves us to confess our need for Jesus and commit to following Him.

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is depicted as fire, water, and wind — each incredibly powerful when harnessed for good. That power enables us to follow Jesus even when we don’t know where to go or we would rather go another way or we are afraid of the way that lies ahead. The Spirit is our guide and comforter, empowering us to follow our Good Shepherd so that the promises of the 23rd Psalm become real to us.

As we head into the summer months with all of their excitement and challenge, let’s ask the Spirit to show us more about who He is and how He works within us show us how His goodness and mercy are following us in our daily lives (the Message describes this as “running after us”) and how we can dwell in the presence of the Lord today and every day forever. If you are curious to know more about the Holy Spirit, check out one of the four video series on “Right Now Media” that address this topic. Or join us in the Adult Sunday School hour and “vote” to study this intriguing topic together later this Fall. See you there.

Sue Ellen Harris
Sunday School Leader

Bible Study

Please join us every Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. as we continue our study of the Book of John.

Outreach



Baby Bottle Fundraiser for New Hope Family Services.

Thank you to all who supported the bottle fundraiser. The Outreach committee placed two colorful large size baby bottles

for collecting donations and our church family came through. Over \$400 was collected and an additional \$250 matching funds brought the amount to just over \$670.

The bottles were out from Mother's Day to Father's Day. We will be presenting the check to New Hope Director, Annette Davies, on July 19th when she is our guest speaker for Sunday worship.

An additional note - New Hope is still collecting funds through their online donation link for a couple more weeks. Here is the link to make a donation online if you didn't get a chance to throw some change in the bottles but still want to support a needed and wonderful organization.

<https://www.newhopefamilyservices.com/baby-bottle-fundraiser>

(On their website – hover over Contact to see the Fundraiser listed)

Supporting New Hope helps provide free services like pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, pregnancy and pre-natal counseling, adoption services, and resources to people facing unexpected pregnancies, ensuring they have access to accurate information and

support without pressure. New Hope operates independently, offering compassionate care. Amber Congregational Church has been a longtime supporter of this mission.

Outreach and Mission Snippets

Pray for these organizations and the people involved

His Mansion Ministries in New Hampshire- A Faith based addiction recovery program - Hooray for Graduation for 4 residents who have completed the yearlong recovery program - Keep them in your prayers for continued growth in their relationships with the Lord and for wisdom in their future plans.

Our Daily Bread Ministry - Did you know our Daily Bread has a podcast? We all love the little booklets but if podcasts are your thing - you can get your daily devotional that way. Under 5 minutes on Spotify or Apple Podcasts

Here is the link

<https://www.odbm.org/en/podcasts/our-daily-bread-podcast>

A Modern Parable - by Jacob Sahm

(<https://mustardseedthoughts.com/2013/02/19/modern-day-parable-21713/>)

Jesus told stories - Parables - to “warm us up” to ideas, helping us deduce and figure out meanings on their own. He used parables to help us consider belief, prayer, witnessing, serving, loving our neighbor, and seeking forgiveness among other things. Jesus didn't belabor his listeners with deep theology and troublesome words, but rather settled on stories to shine a light on what God was really like and how people could understand the Kingdom of God.

Consider this variation on the Parable of Wise & Foolish Builders (Matthew 7:24-27)

Two contractors set out to build houses in a beautiful neighborhood, where the asking values were high and the would-be owners had deep pockets. Both of them had received significant training by apprenticeships, and both had the instructions on how the houses should be built specific to the location. One of them set out carefully to establish the ways the house should be laid out, spending time and energy to make sure that the foundation was just so and that the materials had been gathered correctly. The other told his workers to set the foundation with haste, knowing no one would see their workmanship when it was covered by flooring, insulation, and the beauty of the house, and hurried off to grab the cheapest materials he could find to reduce overhead and increase his profit. When the day came for the owners to survey their new houses, one was mightily pleased and paid a bonus to his contractor, who had taken the time to make sure that everything was just right; the other took his contractor to court for faults found in the crawl space foundation, for faulty fixtures, and for a general lack of workmanship that showed throughout the house.

The core story: doing the hard work to establish central and essential values vs taking the easy way out for immediate gain and comfort. If we have a firm foundation, we have a grounded and joyful relationship with God.



Wise Builder - takes time to dig deep to be anchored in the Lord, building a church community with like-minded believers, studying the word that will guide you in making strong decisions

Foolish Builder - Takes shortcuts following shaky paths, bypassing real expertise and investing in superficial and untrustworthy people and ideas that leave you lost in times of crisis.

Hope you enjoyed this modern take on a beloved parable.

Cathy Smith
Outreach Director

Trustees Notes and News

The Trustees extend a very big thank you to Travis and Darlene Field for planting and maintaining the flowers in the southside garden. They look beautiful.

If you have time, skills (carpentry, painting, gardening, plumbing, etc.) and would like to help with projects at the church or parsonage, please let a Trustee know. We have a list of projects to address this year.

Doug LaFrance
Trustees Chair

Food Pantry News and Needs.

The Marcellus Food Pantry is always in need of donations. Here are some ways to donate:

AMAZON

Go to: Registry & Gifting, then Registry
Enter: Jen Tedesco & New York
Click on Marcellus Food Pantry, then select items.

OR use this link

<https://www.amazon.com/reg.../gl/guest-view/1Q3HVPYP1X07H...>

VENMO@MarcellusFoodPantry (Last 4 of the phone # 1428)

Donations can be dropped off in the yellow donation bin at the Presbyterian Church North Street Entrance. Same doors that the daycare uses.

DROP OFF DONATIONS TO AMBER CHURCH

- Baked Beans
- Salad Dressing / Mayonnaise
- School Snacks
- Gluten Free Foods
- Ramen
- Sandwich Bread
- Chef Boyardee
- Apples Sauce Pouches
- Juice, Juice Boxes
- Conditioner / Sun Screen
- Dry Cat Food

Thank you,
Gail Frary

New in the Library

Books by Richard D. Chaffee

*(The titles for the most part are self-explanatory although I did add an additional informational comment after some of them. Most of these are available on Amazon.com although two (marked with a *) were published with a different online publisher and are no longer in print. I am planning to republish them with Amazon but until I do, I still have some extra copies available if anyone is interested.)*

Lessons and Reflections: Pastoral Thoughts for Church and Family*

(Things I Wanted to Be Sure to Say to My Family and Church)

A History of Amber Congregational Church, Volumes 1 & 2

Volume 1 (1824-1999) 175 Years and Growing

Volume 2 (1984-2024) One Pastoral Perspective

Pastoral Preparation for Teaching

(Old Testament Outlines and Overviews)

Volume 1 – Foundations of Covenant

(Genesis to Joshua)

Volumes 2 & 3 –

Search for the King (Judges to Esther)

Prayers and Wisdom (Job to Song of Songs)

Volume 4 –

Corrective Attempts (Isaiah to Malachi)

The Book of Judges: Lessons in Political Essentials

The Hallelujah Psalms: Praises to a Personal God

The Psalms of Asaph, Moses and Solomon*

“To the Tune of...” Psalms with Tune Titles

The Book of Proverbs: Virtuous Wisdom, Relational Ethics

The Song of Songs: Pastoral Reflections on the Relationships of Love

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John: Gospel Outlines and Overviews

Seven Biblical Covenants: An Outline for Relational Theology

Faith, the Faith, and the Faithful: A Pastoral Perspective

(Essays and Papers on Theology, Scripture, and Church)

Poems and Prayers and Promises

(Collection of Personal Writings from 1970 to 2025)

Wrestling with Abuse

(The Struggle of Dealing with Sexual Abuse)

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “*You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts*” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Many of you have asked me if I am enjoying retirement, to which I respond that I am; and then the usual follow-up question is about what I’m doing to keep myself busy. Well, let me tell you about that in this brief notice.

In November 1979 I took the vows of ordination to the Christian Ministry. One of the vows taken then was this: “Will you diligently give yourself to the study of the Holy Scriptures that all who hear may be instructed?” I responded to that question by saying, “I will.”

Retirement did end my responsibility to study Scripture, and what I have been doing for the last two years is collecting, writing, and editing the things that I have written over the years as a result of my study. Most of these were prepared for you, and in fact, most of what I have written you have already heard me state in either Sunday sermons or Bible studies.

I do not consider my writings to have a broad appeal. In other words, I’m not going to get rich selling them. But I have self-published through Amazon.com. I am putting a copy of each of these books in our church library in order to make them available to all of you, my primary audience. There are sixteen volumes at present, and I am still working on others. The titles should be self-explanatory, and I have posted a list of them on the bulletin board in outside the library in the Kish Room. If you have any questions, I would be happy to try and respond to them. Thank you all for aiding me in my pursuit to fulfill my calling in Jesus’ name.

Rick

Fun Committee Events

We still have seats available for an evening cruise around Otisco Lake on Thursday July 9th @ 6:30 (rain date July 26th). Passengers should meet at the Trendowski camp on Wheeler DRIVE (*not to be confused with Wheeler Terrace*)!

We have a group of (7) attending Daddy Long Legs on Friday July 24th @ 7:30. If interested, bring a picnic dinner and meet at Cortland Repertory Theater (Little York Lake) @ 6:00. The Fun Committee is contributing \$10/ticket.

The annual Otisco Valley Road garage sales are coming up on Saturday August 1st. Please drop your donations off between Sunday July 26th and Wednesday July 29th to allow time for set-up. All items are priced at “name your price/pay what you feel is fair.” Some larger items/higher value items may be placed on Facebook Marketplace. All clothing left after the sale are donated to Cortland United Methodist Church; all other items are taken to Rescue Mission/Goodwill. Donations will be used for future Fun Committee events.

Kayakers be ready: We will be planning an evening paddle on Otisco Lake kayaking in mid-August. Extra kayaks/paddles are available. All levels welcome.

Save the date: Sunday September 16th is Grandparents Day. Stay tuned for details about a special service.

Any questions/suggestions, please reach out to Lynn LaFrance, Cathy Smith, Nancy Barber or Kristen Heath.

Good News from the Pews!

Congratulations to Harper Patterson on her recent graduation from Marcellus High School. Harper will attend Smith College in Massachusetts this fall to study biology.

Afghans crocheted with the loving hands of Mary Santee were presented and prayed on for Brenda Henderson, Bill (a patient at St. Camillus Rehab), Dawn McDonough, and RaeAnne (a friend of Mary's daughter).

Monthly Church Calendar

July 2, Thursday, Trustees Meeting 7 p.m.

July 11, Saturday, Elders Meeting 9:30 a.m.

July 17, Friday, Ladies Game Night 7 p.m.

July 18, Saturday, Men's Breakfast 8 a.m. at the Milkhouse

July 26, Sunday, Coffee Hour 10:45 a.m.

Bible Study – Friday mornings at 10:30

Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

Fun Committee Outing - Friday, July 24th – Cortland Repertory Theater – *Daddy Long Legs* performance at Little York Park, Preble.

Otisco Valley Road Garage Sale – Saturday, August 1st

Friendship Luncheon – The next luncheon will be **Wednesday, September 2nd**. Enjoy the summer! Anyone wishing to help please contact Linda Henderson. 315-378-7305.

Grandparents Day – Sunday, September 16th. More info to follow

Amber Church Annual Retreat – This year's annual retreat will be held **Saturday, September 26th** at the **Baltimore Woods Interpretive Center** in Marcellus. Our Guest Speaker will be Dr. Doug Cullum.

Doug Cullum is one of the founding faculty members of Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College and has been a part of the pastoral team at Community of the Savior since 2007. *His ministry seeks to blend the practical and academic, with a focus on renewing the local church through a fresh recovery of biblical and historical faith.* Doug has led prior retreats for our church in the past and we are blessed and happy to have him return. Please mark your calendars and watch for more details.

Attendants

July 5 – Andy Henderson
July 12– Travis Field
July 19 – Mark Henderson
July 26 – Tom Schmidt

Greeters

July 5 - Dawn Grace Simmons and Adele Reagan
July 12 – Doug and Lynn LaFrance
July 19– Jack and Janet Seymour
July 26 – Nancy Seeley and Tom Schmidt

Acolytes

July 5 – Laurie Just-Torrance
July 12 – Andy Henderson
July 19 – Dawn Grace Simmons
July 26 – Laurie Just-Torrance

Psalm Readers

July 5 – Psalm 5 – Penny Case
July 12 – Psalm 12 – Dawn Grace Simmons
July 19– Psalm 18:25-50 – Cheryl Curtis
July 26 – Psalm 25 – Sherry Persad

Nursery*

July 5 – Cheryl Ferris (Darlene Field)
July 12 – Cathy Smith (Dawn Grace Simmons)
July 19 – Darlene Field (Cheryl Ferris)
July 26 – Dawn Grace Simmons (Cathy Smith)

We are looking for additional volunteers to staff our nursery. Please contact Nancy Barber if interested.

**If you are unable to do the scheduled date, please contact one of the others to substitute or trade with. Hopefully there will be more participating upon which the schedule will be revised.*

Thank you for serving the Lord in this capacity as our church begins to grow with children. Truly a blessing!

July Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Teal Trendowski (2)
Dorothy Herold (2)
Dan Wheeler (4)
Briana Wolf (4)
Tom Schmidt (4)
Cathy Smith (5)
Josh Brewer (6)
Chuck Donovan & Kim Vile (7)
Mark Henderson (10)
Brogan Donovan (10)
Matthew Southard (11)
Jason & Megan Wright (12)
Dominic Wood (12)
Hugo & Margaret Isensee (14)
Jeff & Jenn Schultz (15)
Tom Fetterman & Cheryl Schulte (16)
Jim Frary (23)
Dan & Adele Reagan (26)