

# The Shorelight – May 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

#### *EASTER TIDE*

Spring is here, flowers are coming up, soon the conditions will be right, and all will spring forth. We talk about how we love this time of year with everything fresh and new. As Christians, and believers, we have waited from Christmas to the anticipation of Easter where our focus was on Jesus' birth and then the cross. We know to answer the call and pick up the cross, to follow Him. Jesus went before us, preparing the way. He willingly gave His life for our sake, rose victoriously and we are called to follow Him. Because He has gone before us, we are taught how to, for His sake, as we follow Him into the world.

At this time between Easter Day and Pentecost give some thought to what Paul said. "I have been crucified with Christ...." He did not say that he was determined to imitate Christ or to make an effort to follow Christ. He said, "I have identified with Him in His death." Once there is acknowledgement and action upon what Christ has accomplished for "me" it becomes accomplished in "me." We become Identified with Him in His death. A total commitment upon which the Holy Spirit then has the opportunity to grant the "holiness of Christ". To live a faith that only comes from the Son of God. Amen!

*Nancy Barber*  
*Worship Director*

\*\*\*\*\*

The average Worship attendance for the month of April was 50. The budget for 2026 is \$120,230. Offerings to date total \$34,945.

#### **Summary of April 12<sup>th</sup> Special Congregational Meeting**

At the Congregational Meeting, the quorum of members approved the proposal to seek a traditional interim, pursue self-evaluation, and to begin the search for a permanent pastor as soon as possible and the composition of the Search Committee unanimously.

#### **Amber Congregational Church Search Committee**

In response to the approval by the congregation a Search Committee was assembled. The Search Committee met for the first time on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> and again on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

The committee members are: Michael Wetherell (Chair), Nancy Barber, Cheryl Curtis, Travis Field, Gail Frary, Andy Henderson, Cheryl Schulte, Dawn Grace Simmons and Cathy Smith.

The team will focus their time on the filling the immediate need for an interim pastor while concurrently initiating the search for a full-time permanent pastor. It was also agreed that communication to fellow church leaders and the congregation is important and regular communications via church announcements and the Shorelight will be used to keep the church family apprised of activity and progress.

The team will meet every two weeks, more frequently if/when necessary.

## Christian Education

### **WHAT IS THIS THING WE CALL CHURCH?**

As you read the title of this article, what came to mind? Our beautiful, old church building located on the shores of Otisco Lake? The list of almost 100 people who are named in the annual report as “members” of this church? Or the list of living members plus all the folks who attended here and have gone to be with the Lord sometime in the last 40 years (as so beautifully represented by the ribbons we display on “Covenant Sunday?”) Any of these answers would be correct but in fact, the church is much larger than that.

Our adult Sunday school class will begin exploring some of these bigger questions in the next “Right Now Media” series, “What is this thing called church?” This series of short videos presented by Derwin Gray will serve as a springboard for discussions about ‘our church’ and how it fits into the larger picture of the Christian Church across history and throughout the world today. The word in the New Testament that is usually translated as ‘church’ refers to those who are ‘called out’ or ‘called forth’ for a distinct purpose. During our classes we will explore the purpose(s) of the church in general and our particular purpose(s) here in Amber.

The English word “church” comes from the Greek ‘kirika’ meaning “of the Lord” and tells us who the church belongs to, the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes the Bible describes us as the bride of Christ, sometimes as the body of Christ, sometimes as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Each of these terms tell us something about the rich history, function, and purpose of this curious thing we call church. Our purpose in discussing these questions is not to arrive at some dry, historical understanding of ‘church’ but to explore together the rich tapestry of meaning that links us to the little band of disciples

who gathered in Jerusalem after Jesus’ death to receive the Holy Spirit. Our hope is that these conversations will refresh our vision for the future of our little band of believers worshipping and serving Christ here in the Otisco Valley.

*Won’t you join us?*

*Sue Ellen Harris  
Sunday School Leader*

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***Bible Study***

As a reminder, Friday morning Bible Study is currently paused.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Outreach

### **Participation in Baby Bottle Fundraiser for New Hope Family Services**

In May and June, Amber Church will be raising awareness for New Hope Family Services with baby bottle piggy banks set up at church. This will be part of their **BABY BOTTLE FUNDRAISER.**



A quick “About Us” for New Hope Family Services – they are a pregnancy resource center and a New York State authorized adoption agency. Their free services include counseling, education, pregnancy options, and resources to women and men facing pregnancy decisions.

From Mother’s Day to Father’s Day, supporters and churches are being asked to give to their online Baby Bottle Campaign.

## Outreach (continued)

While you can fill the virtual Baby Bottle by giving online, the church wants to add increased visibility and fun to this by having the piggy banks set up at church. Add your coins and bills to the large bottles and let's fill them to overflowing.

Matching funds are also available. For funds placed in the baby bottles, there will be a match up to the first \$250 to boost our support to \$500. Let's not stop there and make it a fun challenge to stuff the bottles and focus on this mission during the two months where we celebrate Mom's, Dad's, and families.

Here is the link to make a donation online:  
<https://www.newhopefamilyservices.com/baby-bottle-fundraiser>

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

However, don't forget the chance to throw your change or small bills into the bottles at church. Our giving makes their mission possible. More info will be provided throughout the months to highlight what important services are provided - free pregnancy tests, free ultrasounds and baby supplies just to name a few.

Their ministry is 100% donation-driven through the generosity of the community and churches like Amber.

*Cathy Smith  
Outreach Director*

## ***Okay God – I get it. A story to think about***

A woman drives up to the window of a drive thru. The name of the establishment is Drive Thru Prayer –

On the Menu board, with the title *Chatting with God*, there are only two choices.

One marked #7 – Your plan and your timing and the other Marked #11 – God's plan and His Timing.

A grandfatherly voice says "What is your request today?"

The woman says I'll do the Number 7

The voice replies – Number 11?

The woman says 7

The voice replies Number 11?

The woman laughs nervously and says a little louder - 7!

The voice says 'sorry I didn't hear you'

The woman says it's okay, Number 7, very loudly.

The voice replies, got it Number 11.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Trustees Notes and News**

***We hear you!*** We know the sound system is in need of repair and/or replacement. We have been trying various fixes over the past year, and now on a weekly basis. We are investigating all options and hope to have our sound system operating properly very soon.



*We appreciate your patience at this time.*

**Trustees Notes and News (continued)**

A very **BIG THANK YOU** to those who came out to help at the Spring Cleanup Day on Saturday, April 18th.

A few tasks remain (in addition to many ongoing projects). Please check out the list on the bulletin board in the Kish Room, or ask a Trustee how you can help.

Please check out the no longer used furniture items we have downstairs. These are available for a donation (thank you). A list of the items available is posted on the bulletin board. Feel free to ask a Trustee to bring an item upstairs if you are not able to navigate the stairs. We are happy to help.

*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**

- Sugar
- Mayo / Ketchup / Oil
- Condiments / Salad Dressing
- Canned Pineapple
- Kids Cereal
- Microwave Popcorn
- Individual Snacks
- Spaghetti O's (flip top)
- Jarred Spaghetti Sauce
- Jello / Pudding
- Sandwich Bread
- Conditioner / Feminine Care Products / Lotion

*Gail Frary*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Good News to Share - Update**

Ryan has safely arrived at Fort Benning and will be there for the next 18 weeks. If you would like to send him a note, here is his address.

***Note: Ryan receive letters only, no packages.***

Private Swierk, Ryan Francis Joseph  
3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, B TRP  
5-15 Cav, 194<sup>th</sup> AR BDE  
Fort Benning, GA 31905

\*\*\*\*\*

## Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

**Friendship Luncheon** – The Friendship Luncheon is held the first Wednesday of each month. The next is **Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>**. Lunch is served at **noon**.

Anyone wishing to help please contact Linda Henderson. 315-378-7305.

**Supper Club** – Please join us and bring your favorite dish to pass. We gather on the second Saturday of each month. We hope to see you on **Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.**

**Men's Breakfast – Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> – 8:00 a.m.** – at the Milkhouse.

**Women's LYFE Conference – Friday & Saturday May 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>** (see details below)

**Mars Hill Network Walk Worthy Women's Conference – Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup>** (see details below)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Women's LYFE Conference**

#### **IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP –**

**LYFE 2026 Conference Friday & Saturday May 29-30** at the First Baptist Church in Johnson City, New York (all on one floor, same site as last year, about an hour from Amber).

Join us for LYFE and experience inspiration, laughter, and worship—and leave refreshed, strengthened, and ready to live your faith every day.

The keynote speaker is Lina AbuJamra. Check her out on the LYFE site (see below). There is also a list of 2026 breakout speakers on the website.

The cost for the conference is \$250 per person. The conference includes lunches, Friday dinner, snacks, breakout sessions and main sessions. If you register and can't go, let LYFE know by **May 23** and you can send a substitute. There is also Friday or Saturday only prices.

We will need to obtain hotel rooms, so please let me know when you register so I can know how many are going. Last year the rooms (double occupancy – two queen beds) cost \$78 per person.

Any questions, please call or text me at 315-391-6443 or email [gailfrary@gmail.com](mailto:gailfrary@gmail.com). Hope you will join us!

PS, please tell your friends! The more, the merrier.

Info & register at: <https://lyfeconference.org/>  
Group: Amber Congregational Church  
Group Leader: Gail Frary

### **Walk Worthy Women's Conference**

Mars Hill Network presents its Walk Worthy Women's Conference on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Northside Church in Liverpool. Author and Bible teacher, Erin Davis will share with us, as we focus our hearts on our theme from Colossians 1:10 “...walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” Enjoy morning and afternoon sessions with Erin (lunch provided). Conference Cost: \$40 + fees. Check out this website for more information.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/walk-worthy-womens-conference-tickets-1981799482601>

\*\*\*\*\*

## In the Kitchen at Amber Congregational Church

This recipe is from the April/May 2016 issue of *Taste of Home*. I hope you will enjoy it.

### **Rhubarb & Strawberry Coffee Cake**

#### *Fruit*

- 1 ½ tsp cornstarch
- 3 Tbl sugar
- ¾ cup chopped fresh strawberries
- ¾ cup chopped fresh (or frozen) rhubarb
- 1 Tbl water



#### *Filling*

- 1 pkg (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 large egg

#### *Cake*

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ cup cold butter, cubed
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 large egg, beaten
- ¾ cup fat-free sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

1. Line the bottom of a greased 9-in. springform pan with parchment paper; grease paper. In a saucepan, mix cornstarch and sugar; stir in strawberries, rhubarb and water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 6-8 minutes or until thickened, stirring occasionally. For filling, in a small bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Beat in egg.

2. Combine flour and sugar; cut in butter. Reserve ¼ cup. Stir baking powder, soda and salt into remaining flour mixture. Whisk egg, sour cream and vanilla; stir into flour mixture.
3. Spread batter onto bottom and ½ inch up sides of pan. Spread filling over crust, leaving a ½ inch border. Spoon strawberry mixture over top; sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture.
4. Bake at 350° for 50 minutes or until edges are golden. Cool 20 minutes. Loosen sides from pan with a knife. Let cool then serve.

Do you have a family recipe to share? Please pass them along to Cheryl Curtis.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Monthly Church Calendar

- May 2, Saturday, Elders Meeting
- May 6, Wednesday, Friendship Luncheon at noon
- May 7, Thursday, Trustees Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- May 9, Saturday, Joint Leadership Meeting  
(Elders and Trustees) 9:00 a.m.
- May 9, Saturday, Supper Club 6 p.m.
- May 10, Sunday, Mother's Day
- May 15, Friday, Ladies Game Night 7 p.m.
- May 16, Saturday Men's Breakfast 8:00 a.m.
- May 31, Sunday, Coffee Hour 10:45 a.m.

June 3, Wednesday, Friendship Luncheon at noon. – This is the last gathering till September. Please join mark your calendar and join us!

Every Wednesday Choir Practice 7:00 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Attendants**

May 3 – Mark Henderson  
May 10 – Tom Schmidt  
May 17 – Mark Henderson  
May 24 – Travis Field  
May 31 – Mark Henderson

**Greeters**

May 3 – Roxanne Pikarsky and Penny Case  
May 10 – Cheryl Schulte and Tom Fetterman  
May 17 – Dawn Grace Simmons and Adele Reagan  
May 24 – Nancy Seeley and Tom Schmidt  
May 31 – Laura Isgar and Mark Henderson

**Acolytes**

May 3 – Dawn Grace Simmons  
May 10 – Laurie Just-Torrance  
May 17 – Linda Henderson  
May 24– Mark Henderson  
May 31– Laurie Just-Torrence

**Psalm Readers**

May 3 – Psalm 113 – Laurie Just-Torrance  
May 10 – Psalm 119:9-16 – Penny Case  
May 17 – Psalm 119:65-72 – Sherry Persad  
May 24 – Psalm 119:121-128 – Deb O’Brien  
May 31 – Psalm 120 – Cheryl Curtis

**Nursery\***

May 3 – Darlene Field (Cheryl Ferris)  
May 10 – Dawn Grace Simmons (Cathy Smith)  
May 17 – Cathy Smith (Dawn Grace Simmons)  
May 24 – Cheryl Ferris (Darlene Field)  
May 31 – Dawn Grace Simmons (Cathy Smith)

*\*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!*

\*\*\*\*\*

**May Birthdays and Anniversaries:**

Neil & Karen Bailer (4)  
Cahal Donovan (5)  
Dave & Kristin Heath (6)  
Brad & Cindy Casler (7)  
Joe Hannus (8)  
Kim Vile (13)  
Deb Southard (13)  
Matthew Henderson (14)  
Jim Seymour (15)  
Deborah O’Brien (15)  
James Vespoli (15)  
Ethan Smith (16)  
Faith & Jack Stopyro (20)  
Chuck & Sue Ellen Harris (22)  
Gail Frary (22)  
Mike Fish (26)  
Andy McVicar (27)  
Nancy Seeley (29)  
Doug LaFrance (30)  
Charlotte D’Aiutolo (30)  
Dahlia Schultz (31)