

Newsletter of the Orchard Park Presbyterian Church

May 2026 Issue



The Grapevine

Confirmation Sunday
April 19, 2026



Congratulations
Confirmands



A Message from the Pastor

Dear Friends,

“It’s May! It’s May, the merry month of May!” I’m revealing my age, but I can still hear the pure soprano of Julie Andrews singing that song from *Camelot*. Somehow, coming through the long, cold months of winter, May is the most welcoming of months with the earth turning to full bloom in places we least expect. Even the grass, which is brown and spotty after winter, comes back to life, lush and full and green.

In May, we are reminded of the abundance of nature, that offers, unsolicited from us, her jaw-dropping, living-color beauty. The recent moon shot reiterated how miraculous our planet is—orbiting in space, this tiny blue ball, bursting with life, singular in its status as a living entity in the vast cold universe. In the 19th century, before the doctrine of evolution was discovered by Charles Darwin, the English population became fascinated with the natural world. Weekend naturalists claimed that we can see “the hand of God in nature” in what appears to be the design of creation—plant and animal life that reproduces of itself, adapts to physical surroundings to secure food and partners, and accommodates to the order of the seasons.

I have found recently that getting a bike ride in during late afternoon is a great mood lifter. The rides in and around Orchard Park are spectacular. Chestnut Ridge is a local treasure. I hope you are finding time to get to the garden or walk through the village or on a Chestnut Ridge trail. A recent podcast reminded us that a consistently positive mood is an important indicator of long life. Here’s hoping you are stimulating your endorphins getting out of doors, exercising or planting or playing some game with friends and family. How blessed we are to inhabit this planet. You might even take a few minutes to read the first three chapters of Genesis and be reminded that all of this comes from a Creator God who placed us at the pinnacle of the created order, little less than the angels (check out Psalm 8 as well!), co-creators with the One who brought life into being. Then sing or say a prayer of praise for the next breath you are so privileged to take.

All good wishes,

Tom



Celebrating the journey from Palm Sunday...



...to Easter

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed!

In this Issue

Worship & Congregational Life

Confirmation Camp & Confirmation Sunday
Palm Sunday & Easter Highlights
Worship Notes
Invitation to Celebrate Mrs. B

Faith Formation

Thank you to our Teachers!
Church School Littles & Bigs

Mission

Mission Matters
Camp Duffield

Community Life

Easter Egg Hunt Pictures
Rummage Sale Update
Quarter Notes from Barry & Heather
feat. Broadway Night
Book Group - May 19
Pray Rake Eat - May 31



Worship Notes

As we enter the month of May, our worship life at OPPC will be shaped by moments of gratitude, remembrance, and joyful service. On **May 3**, we will dedicate the Memorial Garden in memory of **Alma Scully**, giving thanks for her many contributions to the life of OPPC. This moment of reflection offers us a chance to honor Alma's legacy and the beauty she helped nurture among us.

Later in the month, on **May 17**, we will celebrate the ministry of **Linda Babcock**, our Director of Education and Mission, as she concludes **31 years** of faithful service. During worship we will recognize B's leadership and the countless ways she has shaped our congregation. A reception will follow as we share our appreciation, honor her remarkable ministry among us, and bless her in the next chapter ahead.

On **May 31**, we will come together for a **single service at 9:30am**, followed by **Pray, Rake, Eat**, a wonderful opportunity to care for our church grounds and enjoy fellowship around a shared meal. As we move through this month of meaningful gatherings, may our worship help us notice the quiet ways God continues to strengthen and knit our community together.

See you in church!

Confirmation Boot Camp

Six youth said "yes" to the journey of faith



OPPC's tradition is to confirm youth but the "how" and "when" are driven by a compilation of family, church and staff scheduling as well as available space. This spring we had six 8th graders who had been asking to be confirmed for a couple of years and so the CE Ministry Team thought it would be a good idea to answer their call.

The timeline was a tight one but 5 of the 6 youth had a Friday off school and so we planned "Confirmation Boot Camp" where they met for 12 hours on a Friday, 6 hours on the following day and then met with Membership to be approved by session on Monday evening - all before Easter Break!

On Sunday, April 19 those six youth led the worship service (reading the Prayer of Confession they wrote) and said "YES" to the very personal journey of being a follower of Christ.

Their spiritual gifts of **Mercy, Prophecy, Giving, Teaching, Leading and Encouraging** will serve the youth, OPPC and the larger church. They have energy, imagination and love, and we pray they will find creative ways to spend it all on OPPC and its ministries. Thanks to Xanda Weiss and Mrs. B for shepherding the youth and to Pastor Tom for his leadership.



A Psalm 23 Prayer by Devin Mania
 The Lord is my guide. I shall not be afraid.
 You make me calm. You lead me with care.
 You restore my best self. You lead me in paths of
 righteousness for your name's sake. Even though I
 walk through the valley of darkness, sadness and the
 unknown, I shall fear no evil because you are with me.
 Your love, grace, spirit and kindness,
 they comfort me.
 Amen.



At Sunday, April 19th's 10:30 Worship

Six Young Hearts Embracing God's Love

Became Members of OPPC's Faith Community

OUR 2026 CONFIRMANDS

Nora Knodel • Jack Kowalik • Devin Mania • Dylan Mania • Richard Pallante • Anya Prabhaker
Put Their Faith Right to Work Helping Lead the Morning's Worship Service



Nora called us to worship just as faith was calling to her and her fellow Confirmands.



Devin shared the reading of the morning's scripture passages with Pastor Tom.



Dylan received a personal blessing just as the other five Confirmands did.



Richard led congregation members in the service's Prayer of Dedication.



Anya and **Jack** led us in the Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer.



Passing Down the Light of Faith
In a special intergenerational *Children's Time*, our about-to-be-confirmed "Bigs" sat across from our anxious-to-know-more "Littles" and previewed for them the personal faith journey that they too may one day take.



Looking Back As They Looked Ahead
All six Confirmands sat eagerly absorbed in an inspiring, enlightening and occasionally funny video — lovingly crafted by Mrs. B — that recapped some of the special moments they shared on the road to church membership.



Standing Up for What They Believe
Pastor Tom formally asked the Confirmands the questions constituting the Profession of Faith that all aspiring Presbyterians must make to be officially received into church membership.



In Search of Spiritual Meaning
Just as they had studied and learned together during Boot Camp, the six young, determined Confirmands stood again as one in preparation for becoming members of our faith community.



Have Faith, We Have Your Backs
OPPC members who have been ordained to serve as Elders or Deacons came forward for the traditional "Laying on of Hands," welcoming the new members and pledging to support them throughout their spiritual journey.



Congratulations and Blessings
As congregants departed worship on April 19th, they took time to stop and individually greet OPPC's 2026 Confirmands, offering them their heartfelt encouragement to actively embrace and explore the power of their faith.



Friends and Fond Memories
The benefits and rewards that participants in a shared experience like Confirmation Boot Camp gain — things like closer friendships, heightened awareness of your values and deeper, stronger faith — will be with them for a lifetime.



FAITH FORMATION
 This Spring, the Bigs began a more in depth look at the **Bible** while the Littles began a unit on **The Lord's Prayer**.



With Heartfelt Thanks

We give thanks for our dedicated Christian Education Volunteers and Staff. The adults who demonstrate their faith are key to a child's spiritual well being. While parents are a child's first teacher, they cannot do it alone. OPPC has a long and strong history of supporting families by creating and sustaining programming for Littles and Bigs, which provides a safe and loving foundation for them to grow.

The CE Ministry Team, teachers, chaperones and facilitators show up on cue every Sunday for 9 months out of the year to be part of this important work of the heart.

Thank you to the following folks for your energy, imagination and love:

Littles @ 9:30

Lynn Morgan & Jennifer Noah

Bigs @ 9:30

Pastor Mario & Kurt Graulich

Pray & Play

Kaitlyn Woodard, Christie Putnam, Lisa Quinn, Sydney Grabau, Dorcasse Eugene, Amy Kilpatrick & Sarah McBride

Family Faith & Food + Sunday Morning Hospitality

Theresa Sherer, Don Schmid & Tanis Berry

Youth Chaperones

Anne Helfrich, Lynn Morgan, Xanda Weiss, Pastor Mario

Sunday Morning CE Assistant

Amanda Putnam

Adult Education

Dave Brummer & Robert Mustard



May 17: A Celebration of B's Ministry

For 31 years, **Linda Babcock** has nurtured faith, encouraged imagination, and helped generations grow in love and service.

Join us May 17 for worship and a reception as we celebrate her extraordinary ministry and offer our thanks.

MISSION MATTERS

The Mission Ministry Team allocated **\$3,000** to Providence Farm Collective's **Everybody Eats Lunch Program** for the Summer of 2026.



Here is some background about the program.

In June of 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, **Providence Farm Collective** established its Farmer & Youth Lunch Program to provide PFC farmers and their children working on the farm with a hot, culturally relevant midday meal. When the organization moved to its 37-acre home on Burton Road in 2021, the program continued, with a goal of supporting PFC farmers with a meal between their paid work and their farm work.

For the youth who work at the farm, this is often their first meal of the day.

PFC honors the fact that its farmers travel to the farm in Orchard Park at their own expense and between the responsibilities of jobs and family to grow food for Western New Yorkers.



During the winter of 2026, PFC staff closely examined the lunch program to see how it could be redefined and expanded to provide multiple mission-aligned benefits and opportunities. Through this examination, the lunch program was reenvisioned and renamed: PFC Everybody Eats Lunch Program. Everybody Eats weaves together several layers of opportunities that in addition to supporting farmers and youths with a meal, support Providence Farm Collective as it works to diversify revenue streams and develop earned income avenues for both the organization and farmers.

In light of decreased federal investment in small and mid-scale agriculture and food systems, PFC is working for financial sustainability by examining how they can build into their core programs layers of opportunities that support both “arms” of their mission.



THE GENESIS CENTER



The OPPC crew serving the March 20 & April 17 meals at The Genesis Center. OPPC serves the meal every **3rd Friday of the month from 3:45 -6pm**. Contact Linda Babcock at lindab@oppchurch.org for more information.



The next **SANDWICH SUNDAY** is **MAY 17**.

Sandwich Sundays are the third Sundays of every month. YOU bring an individually wrapped sandwich(s) to worship with you and WE (Mission Team Volunteers) deliver them to St. Luke's Mission of Mercy for folks who are hungry. **Thanks to Deb Galloway and Barb Olandt for staffing and delivering the 77 sandwiches for April.**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>May 3</p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:15a Sermon Discussion 9:30a Church School 10:30a Worship w/Memorial Garden Dedication 3p Girl Scouts</p>	<p>May 4</p> <p>1p PWCT-TMP 7p Co-Op Board-TMP</p>	<p>May 5</p> <p>9a TWT</p>	<p>May 6</p> <p>10a Friendship Circle 10a Staff Meeting-CR 10a Mission Workshop-TMP 6p Yoga-IIR 6p Bell Choir-S 7p Choir Rehearsal-CH</p>	<p>May 7</p> <p>6p Quaker Quilters BOD-RR 6:30p Worship MT-CR 7p Quaker Quilters-RR 7:30p AI-Anon-IIR</p>	<p>May 8</p> <p>10:30a Music with Miss Sarah-UC 5:30p Alcoholics Anonymous-IIR</p>	<p>May 9</p> <p>12:30p Quaker Arts Music Program Recital-S</p>
<p>May 10</p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:15a Sermon Discussion 9:30a Church School 10:30a Worship</p>	<p>May 11</p> <p>7p MDO Board-MDO</p>	<p>May 12</p> <p>9a TWT 1p Communications Committee-CR 6:30p A&F MT-CR 7p Mission MT-IIR</p>	<p>May 13</p> <p>10a Staff Meeting-CR 10a Mission Workshop-TMP 6p Yoga-IIR 6p Bell Choir-S 7p Choir Rehearsal-CH 7p Christian Ed MT-CR</p>	<p>May 14</p> <p>2:15p Orchard Heights Service w/Communion 5p BNYC Rehearsal-S 7:30p AI-Anon-IIR</p>	<p>May 15</p> <p>10:30a Music with Miss Sarah-UC 3:30p Genesis Center 5:30p Alcoholics Anonymous-IIR</p>	<p>May 16</p> <p>10:15a Daisy Troop-Ed Wing</p>
<p>May 17 <i>Sandwich Sunday</i></p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:15a Sermon Discussion 10:30a Worship w/Celebration for Linda Babcock 2p Buffalo Niagara Youth Choir-S/RR</p>	<p>May 18</p> <p>2:15p Orchard Heights Service 6:30p Deacons-TMP 7p Session-TMP</p>	<p>May 19</p> <p>9a TWT 4p V. Well Nutrition- FHK 7p Book Group-IIR</p>	<p>May 20</p> <p>10a Staff Meeting-CR 10a Mission Workshop-TMP 6p Yoga-IIR 7p Broadway Night-S/RR</p>	<p>May 21</p> <p>7:30p AI-Anon-IIR</p>	<p>May 22</p> <p>10:30a Music with Miss Sarah-UC 5:30p Alcoholics Anonymous-IIR 7p Sarah Maybee Recital-S</p>	<p>May 23</p>
<p>May 24</p> <p>8:30a Worship 9:15a Sermon Discussion 9:30a Church School 10:30a Worship w/Baptism</p>	<p>May 25 <i>Memorial Day— Office Closed</i></p>	<p>May 26 Grapevine Deadline</p> <p>9a TWT</p>	<p>May 27</p> <p>10a Staff Meeting-CR 10a Mission Workshop-TMP 5p MDO Ice Cream Social- MDO Playground 6p Yoga-IIR 6p Bell Choir-S 7p Choir Rehearsal-CH</p>	<p>May 28</p> <p>3p Fox Run Service 7:30p AI-Anon-IIR</p>	<p>May 29</p> <p>10a Grapevine Mailing-CR 10:30a Music with Miss Sarah-UC 5:30p Alcoholics Anonymous-IIR</p>	<p>May 30</p> <p>10:15a Daisy Troop-Ed Wing</p>
<p>May 31</p> <p>9:30a Worship 10:30a Pray, Rake, Eat 3p Girl Scouts-UC</p>	<p>June 1</p>	<p>June 2</p> <p>9a TWT</p>	<p>June 3</p> <p>9a Staff Retreat 10a Mission Workshop-TMP 11a Friendship Circle Spring Luncheon-RR 6p Yoga-IIR 6p Bell Choir-S 7p Choir Rehearsal-CH</p>	<p>June 4</p> <p>6p Quaker Quilters BOD-RR 7p Quaker Quilters-RR 7:30p AI-Anon-IIR</p>	<p>June 5</p> <p>10:30a Music with Miss Sarah-UC 5:30p Alcoholics Anonymous-IIR</p>	<p>June 6</p>

**Location Legend: S—Sanctuary; RR—Reception Room; CH—Choir Room; GR—Green Room
CR—Conference Room; IIR—Irene Irving Room; FH—Fellowship Hall; UC—Undercroft;
MG—Memorial Garden; PW—Presbyterian Women; TMP—The Meeting Place; EC—Ed Wing Classroom**

Our calendar sometimes has changes after the GV goes to print, stay up-to-date by viewing the complete [calendar](#) on the church website.



RUMMAGE SALE UPDATE

*Terrific Volunteers – Great Fellowship – Huge Crowd
Successful Sale!*

Many thanks to everyone who helped make this year’s rummage sale such a success. Many individuals generously donated items for the sale and **51 great volunteers** (church members, family and friends) helped with various aspects of this event – setting up, sorting and pricing items, working at the sale and cleaning up. Special thanks to Tanis Berry, Dan Hay, Mary McKinley, Wendy Mohrman, Xanda Weiss, Meredith Wilson, Nancy Wilson, and Sharon Zulinke who devoted many hours to this project. Our salespeople of the year were Wendy Mohrman and Dan Hay.



This year the sale made a record- breaking \$4,679 after expenses. Fantastic!

The funds generated will allow Presbyterian Women to support various mission projects and to provide for some of the needs of our church during the coming year. During the past year Presbyterian Women made contributions to Family Promise, Friends of Kenya Rising, Feed My Starving Children, Camp Duffield, Providence Farm Collective and Bread of Life Outreach Center.

Again, thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this year’s sale and helped to continue the tradition of a rummage sale which started in 1952.

Sue Sager, Chair



Quarter Notes

Our music department is presently working very hard on BROADWAY NIGHT, which will be presented at the church on **Wednesday, May 20 at 7pm**. We're rehearsing songs to be sung and played by the choir, joined by many guests from several local church choirs, and the bell choir. You'll also be entertained by solos and ensembles featuring our own church musicians and friends. Jim Wilson has been working for months on a fabulous back drop which will transform our beautiful sanctuary into a Broadway set for the evening.



We really hope to have a large audience of church members and friends for this wonderful FEEL-GOOD night of family entertainment. There is no admission charged but we will accept donations to benefit Family Promise of Western New York.

So cancel your plans and join us for a fantastic night of entertainment!
You'll be very glad you did.

Barry & Heather Dietsch



Pray, Rake, Eat

Wear your work clothes!
Bring your gloves!
Bring your rakes and clippers!

On **May 31**, after the single worship service at 9:30am, we will rake leaves, clean out the playground, the boiler room stairwell, gutters and window wells, and bring out the outdoor benches, tables and chairs for the summer.

There will be a supervised kids' activity. Lunch will be provided.



If you are looking for a meaningful camping experience for your kids, then look no further than 45 minutes south to **Camp Duffield** in Delevan, NY.

On Sunday, April 26, OPPC member **Timothy Kolek** shared his 11-year camping experience with the Littles during Children's Time. There are brochures at the Welcome Center and information online about the variety of camping experiences from First Time Campers to the Night Owls camp geared toward teens. If you are interested in a scholarship for camp, please contact Lynn Morgan, Chair of the Christian Education Ministry Team.



Transition Update

The search team for the Interim Minister began its work a couple of months ago. The team is carefully reviewing dossiers from potential candidates. The search team members are David Saintz, Dolores Battle & Doug Carpenter with guidance from the Presbytery and Administrative Commission.



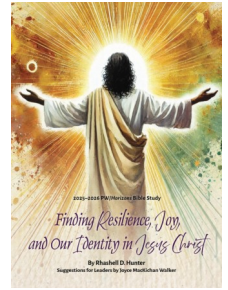
Presbyterian Women's Coordinating Team will meet on **Monday, May 4 at 1pm** in The Meeting Place.



Friendship Circle will meet on **Wednesday, May 6 at 10am** in the **Irene Irving Room.**

Ladies, you are cordially invited to join us for fellowship and Bible study. Lesson Eight of **Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ** will be discussed.

For more information, please call Barbara Roberts or Sue Sager.



Mission Workshop

We would like to invite anyone who sews, knits, or crochets to join us on Wednesdays from 10 am until noon in the Meeting Place. We are a casual group - just come when you can! We make items to donate to many local charities and would love to have you join us!



MISSION WORKSHOP



Thanks to a Later Date and Great Weather,
 Things Were **REALLY HOPPIN'** at This Year's
Easter egg hunt



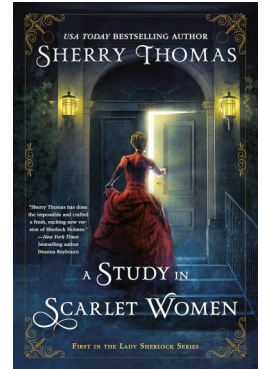
Sponsored by OPPC Since 2012,
 This Free Community-Wide
 Event Is Presented by Our
 Hospitality-Fellowship
 Ministry Team



OPPC Book Group Presents

A Study in Scarlet Women by Sherry Thomas

Tuesday, May 19 @ 7pm in the Irene Irving Room



May is Mystery Month! Bestselling author Sherry Thomas turns the Victorian detective story upside down by reimagining Sherlock Holmes as a woman, the first novel of a riveting mystery series.

Charlotte Holmes lives with her parents and sisters Livia and Bernadine, but refuses the life expected of her in upper class Victorian London. She chooses a path that causes her to be an outcast, fending for herself. Charlotte loves to eat, especially plum cake and madeleines, and is incredibly intelligent, able to identify intimate details about a person at a glance.

When the city is struck by a trio of unexpected deaths, Livia and her father are suspects, and Charlotte must find a way to absolve them. Posing as Sherlock Holmes' sister, she is helped by a kindly widow, Inspector Treadles, and her childhood friend Lord Ingram Ashburton.

The cast of characters is confusing - how are these people connected to each other? Did all three victims die of a chloral overdose? (Chloral is a medication used for severe insomnia.) Is arsenic involved?

From Sarah Wendell's review about NPR's Best Book of the Year: "You want to read this book. You want to reserve at least a few hours of uninterrupted time to read it. If you're standing between me and my copy, you should probably move out of the way." Dive in to this book and join us for a lively discussion.

June 16, 7pm: TBD

The **Deadline for the June Grapevine** is

Tuesday May 26, at 9am. Please send any submissions to Xanda at xanda@oppchurch.org. If you would like to receive the Grapevine by email, please reach out to Xanda at the same email address.

TUESDAYS WITH TOOLS

Tuesdays
9am—Noon

Bring your tools and come join the crew. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Wilson.

The Church Office will be closed on **Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day.**

Mark Your Calendars!

Sunday, May 17 is the last day of the Sunday Morning program year for Littles and Bigs.

Worship Bags will be available in the bin on the table in the Reception Room, and the service will be livestreamed in the Nursery for families who may welcome a little extra space for children to move while still staying connected to worship.

Mark your calendars for **Welcome Back Sunday on September 13** (Labor Day is very late this year!). Classes for kids will resume on September 20.



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OPPC PROUDLY PRESENTS

BROADWAY NIGHT

Wednesday, May 20th • 7:00 p.m.

In the OPPC Sanctuary

A Family-Friendly Feel-Good Night of

Show Tunes

Performed by the

OPPC Sanctuary Choir

with Guests from Local Church Choirs

Featuring the

Wilson Memorial Handbell Choir

As Well As Solos, Ensembles and a Singalong