



Orchard Park United Methodist Church

WEEKLY

NEWSFLASH

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

John 15:4

The Old Testament is full of imagery where Israel is referred to as God's special vine, often texts of admonition because of Israel's failure to fulfill its calling. Isaiah 5 is a love song to a vineyard that has produced bloodshed instead of justice. The imagery is being repeated in John 15 to an Israel that now includes Gentiles.

The point is that the imagery carries with it the idea of community. Within the context of the church, we cannot read this text and find ourselves wholly devoted to our individual salvation for that, by its very definition, separates us from the vine that is Christ. As branches of the vine, our fruitfulness does not depend upon my individual effort, or someone else's individual effort, but rather it is wholly dependent upon the nurture provided by the vine. Members of the church community are known for the acts of love they do in common with all the other members in union with Christ.

God, the vine-grower, determines what is fruitful. God holds all members of the community accountable to one standard of fruitfulness, which is based, for us, in love. And we must be ever mindful therefore, that the community is not comprised of individuals with individual gifts working toward individual salvation, but the mutual working out of love. This is the mark of a faithful community: not who its members are, but how it loves.

When we understand the unbreakable connection of the vine and that we are called to a life of fruitfulness, we begin to understand that the cross itself was not the instrument that made it possible for God to love us, but instead, the cross is evidence and testimony to just how much God already loved us and God's promise to be with us through all things. We are not disconnected from God. We are not ever disconnected from God.

*continued on page 2*

## May 2 Worship Participants

Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM

Worship Service 10:30 AM

*Pastor: Rev. William Russell*

*Musician: Dan Liggett*

*Liturgist: Carolyn Wrinn*

*A/V Operator: Margot Ip*



## Upcoming Events

May 2 @ 9:30 AM:

**Adult Sunday School**

May 2 @ 10:30 AM:

**Sunday worship**

May 3, 9:30 AM-1 PM:

**Sewing Circle**

May 9: **Blanket Sunday**

May 11: **KY Gives Day**



Christ's words in this story are a promise that we are ever connected to the Vine, we are a part of Christ's community. Beloved people of the vine, we must with every breath we have, work to ensure that the connection we have to Christ is a connection that others have to Christ. We have to understand that when others are made to feel cut off from the vine, that is not a failure on God's part, that is not a failure on someone else's part. That is a failure on *our* part. We must commit to restore that connection, to ensure that no one is made to feel tired of being cut off. We must be the ones to restore, not break. We must be the ones to offer hope, not despair. We must be the ones to offer the unbreakable connection to the community of Christ.

The unbreakable connection brings us together in community with one another and draws us deeper into relationship with God. The unbreakable connection is God's grace, available to us all. The unbreakable connection is Jesus Christ, the word of God. The unbreakable connection is the Holy Spirit, strengthening and empowering us, and drawing us closer to God. The unbreakable connection will enable us to bear much fruit. devotion by Peter Mantell, M.Div, Pastor of Kingwood & Frenchtown UMCs in New Jersey. <https://www.kingwood-frenchtownumchurches.com/the-story-of-jesus-the-true-vine>



Over the years, OPUMC has participated in a **Blanket Sunday** by having a Special Offering. This year's Blanket Sunday will take place on **May 9**.

When difficult times happen, a kind and loving response can make all the difference. That's why the Church World Service Blankets program was created—to give a kind, loving and tangible response to someone facing a difficult time, reminding them that they are not alone.

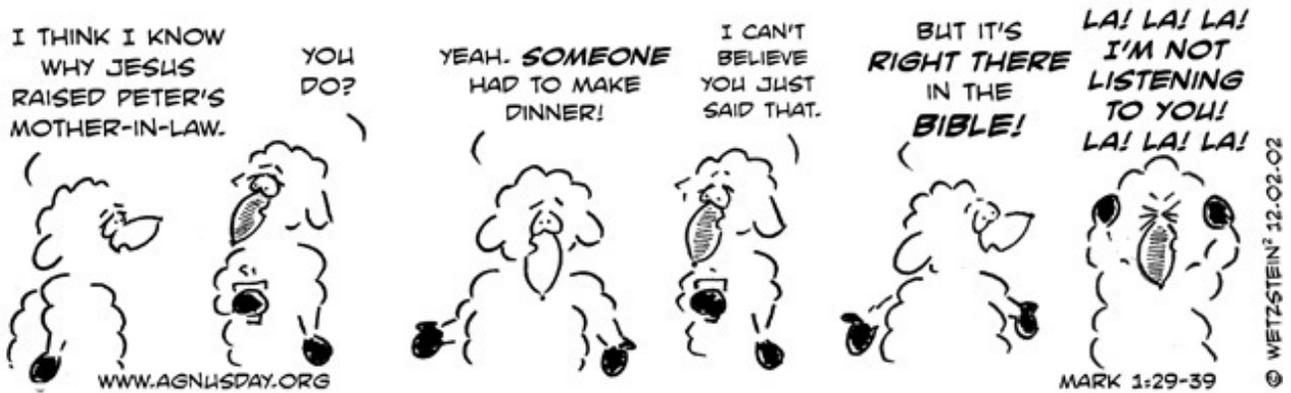
Through the generosity of CWS partner organizations, congregations and individual supporters, our most vulnerable neighbors around the world can feel safe and keep warm with fresh linens and clean sleeping quarters. When our neighbors are in need, even \$10 for a single blanket goes a long way.



Most summers, volunteers from OPUMC travel to Beverly, Kentucky to serve the people in the Appalachian Mountains through Red Bird Mission. Red Bird Mission has participated in **KY Gives Day**, a focused day of online giving to raise support for Kentucky nonprofit organizations, since it began.

A matching grant fund is being offered to match every dollar given online for KY Gives Day on **May 11**. At present, RBM has \$10,000 pledged to match dollar-for-dollar every gift given as part of KY Gives Day 2021. See the enclosed form to submit your donation.





## Prayer Requests

### May Birthdays

Carolyn Wrinn (5/12)  
Scarlett Spinelli (5/13)  
Rosalind Slotman (5/16)  
Caleb Liggett (5/16)  
Kathy Babcock (5/20)  
David Marcus (5/21)  
Magdeline Hayman (5/22)  
Jordan Spinelli (5/30)  
Thomas Stamm (5/31)  
Alice, Jeremy & Mara Pugh (5/31)

- Pray for *Pastor Jennifer* who is out on medical leave.
- Pray for Dan and Shannon's friend, *Christy*. She has been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia and has begun chemotherapy and will be at Roswell for 4-6 weeks. Christy is married and has 3 young children.
- Pray for Candy and Joe's neighbors: Roger, Debi, and Scott.
- Pray for Lurly Hunsberger.

Have a prayer request you'd like to share? Has God answered your prayer? Email [opumc@verizon.net](mailto:opumc@verizon.net). We will include your prayer request or praise report in next week's NewsFlash.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James 5:16

### Thank you to this month's St. Pauly's Clothing Shed volunteers!

Art Cooper (5/2), George Slocum (5/9),  
Dan Liggett (5/16 & 5/23), Ed Nuse (5/30)



*Orchard Park United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation.*

We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more. We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed.

#### Orchard Park United Methodist Church

3700 N. Buffalo Street  
Orchard Park, NY 14127  
phone: (716) 662-7912  
email: [opumc@verizon.net](mailto:opumc@verizon.net)  
website: [www.opumc.com](http://www.opumc.com)

#### Pastor Jennifer Stamm, CLM

phone: (716) 603-4470  
email: [jendstamm@gmail.com](mailto:jendstamm@gmail.com)