JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020 "Striving to be the Church of Jesus Christ Where Every Member is a Minister"



AT FIRST BAPTIST

JASON HLADIK Senior Pastor

MILLARD COOK Asst. Pastor Senior/Adult Ministries/Interim Pastor

PENNY SOROKES Church Secretary

BONNIE KETTLE Financial Secretary SUE NEELY VANBRUNT Minister of Music

ROBERT FAULDS Organist

CASEY DEGROFF Audio-Visual Technician/ Social Media Specialist

JIM THOMPSON Custodian

MUSIC MINISTRY CHRISTMAS PARTY

The annual Music Ministry Christmas Party will be held at 6 PM on Thursday, January 9, at FBC. All members of the Senior Choir, Praise Team, and Bell

Choir are invited to attend. The meat and table service will be provided; please register for the event at your group rehearsal by January 1 and bring a dish to share....and a guest!!



We'll be un-decorating the church on Sunday, January 12, following Sunday School. Please plan to stay and help us put away the decorations that have made the Christmas season so festive.



As required by our Constitution and By-Laws, the congregation will gather after worship on Sunday, January 19 to go over the reports of all the church staff members as well as our boards and committees and to pass a budget for 2020. A quorum of 50 active members is required to carry out these procedures and we need your input, so please make your best effort to join us.

PAGEANT PICS



Sympathy

We extend our **LOVE AND SYMPATHY** to the family of Kevin Hanchett who passed away on December 5; to Gordon and Mary Ellen Olson and Jim and Penny Sorokes on the loss of Mary Ellen's brother Glenn Wetzel on December 6; to Pastor Jason and Tiffany and their family on the sudden loss of Jason's brother Jeff on December 8; and to Diane Gilbert on the passing of Jon Shauf on December 8.

CONGRATULATIONS:

...to Josh and Stephanie (Skinner) Keim who were married in our sanctuary on December 21.

...to Nick Sanders who graduated with honors from St. Bonaventure University on December 8 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. Nick plans to continue his education in the Fall.

...to Jim Sorokes who was honored with the 2019 Hydrocarbon Processing "Lifetime Achievement" Award on November 6 in Houston TX. The awards ceremony seeks to recognize and honor the compressor industry's top innovations and innovators.



of beloved members of our church family who went home to be with their Lord in 2019:

Wilma Anderson – 2/8/19 Mel Cunningham – 3/3/19 Don Anderson – 10/16/19 Jon Shauf – 12/8/19



RADIO MINISTRY

If you would like to be a part of this important ministry at Olean First Baptist by sponsoring a \$55 radio broadcast in 2020, please telephone the church office at 372-5151 or available dates. This is such a nice way to honor or remember someone on a special occasion.



During Worship on January 26, we'll celebrate the dedication and ministries of our nonpastoral and ministry support staff members. Our Fellowship Committee will provide a special fellowship time following worship in honor of our staff. Please be sure to join us in worship that morning and take this opportunity to thank each of them for their service to our church and God's Kingdom.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Matt & Jeanette Butler 508 W. Sullivan St. Olean, NY 14760

Ashley Sage & Matt Franklin 334 Madison St. Wellsville, NY 14895

Larry & Layla Selph 47 Sandpiper Ave. SanClemente, CA 92672



More than 30 years ago, the **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** began with a simple prayer. "Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat." Our teens

will partner with the Mission Board to promote this and place labeled boxes in the church foyer on Sunday, February 2. Thank you for sharing your blessing by your continued support of this important project. Proceeds will go to the Olean Food Pantry.



JOIN PASTOR MILLARD AT PERKINS RESTAURANT IN OLEAN AT NOON ON THURSDAYS FOR A WEEKLY MEN'S LUNCHEON. THANK YOU TO BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We extend our thanks and appreciation to the following members who have completed their terms on their respective boards and committees: **Moderator:** Jim Sorokes **Assistant Moderator:** Casey DeGroff Board of Christian Education: Casey DeGroff, Jeanette Butler Board of Christian Missions: Rita Wymer, Vi Butler, Linda Kennemuth Diaconate: Nan Torrey, Maunie Ketchner, Heather Schultz-Piche, Laurie MacNeill Trustees: David Taylor, Lori Funden Memorial Committee: Heather Schultz-Piche Music Committee: Carol Molyneaux, Pam Nutt Pastoral Relations Committee: Geoff O'Dell, David Taylor Nominating Committee: Lori Funden, Nancy Taylor, Pam Nutt, Michael Schultz, Heather Schultz-

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

Piche

The 2019Annual Congregational/Corporate Meeting of the Olean First Baptist Church was held December 1, 2019 for the election of 2020 officers with Moderator Jim Sorokes presiding. Those elected include: Moderator: Jim Sorokes Assistant Moderator: Casey DeGroff Church Clerk: Penny Sorokes Assistant Church Clerk Deb Wuethrich Trustees: Lori Funden, David Taylor Diaconate: Laurie MacNeill*, Maunie Ketchner*, Dave Torrey*, Donna DeLong, Yvonne Perry-Clark, Karen Woodring Board of Education: Casey DeGroff*, Jeanette Butler*, Carol Molyneaux, Karen Moore Board of Missions: 3 open positions Communications Committee: Vi Pettigrew, Pauline Glenn, Gwen Tyler, Molly DiCapua, Paul Geise, Dave Anderson, Darlene Selph, Casey DeGroff, Chris Rosel, Katie DeGroff; Memorial Committee: Penny Sorokes, 1 open spot Music Committee: Pam Nutt, Bev Firth Pastoral Relations: Geoff O'Dell, David Taylor Ushers: Paul Cummings, Larry Firth, Vi Pettigrew, Willie Milton, Linda Kennemuth, Faith Boyce, Jack Crowley, Eli Rust, Dana Boser, Chris Clark, Lonnie Renninger Fellowship Committee: Nancy Taylor, Nan Torrey, Maunie Ketchner, Jean Kwiatkowski, Rita Wymer, Faith Boyce, Cheri O'Dell, Ila Felt, Sharon Anthony Nominating Committee: Lori Funden, Nancy Taylor, Pam Nutt, Jack Crowley, Deb Wuethrich

(*Filling unexpired terms)



During the long winter months, remember our home-bound and shut-in members and friends. Take time to make their days special with a visit, card, or phone call.

Bob Faulds: c/o Anthony Mason; 50 Marsdale Rd.; Cheektowaga, NY. 14215

Bruce Dodge: 204 Coleman St. Olean

Gladys Hirsch: 220 Southwestern Drive; Apt. 102 Lakewood, NY 14750

Harriett Wilday: 2744 Olean-Hinsdale Rd. Olean 372-7917

Louise Croft: 1304 Old Rock City Rd. Olean 372-7764

Jim Bartlett 317 N. 9th St. Olean 373-5405

Jim Molyneaux05B3258CCF-MainP.O. Box 2001Dannemora, NY12929-2001

Jim Rockey: 3996 Rte 417; Allegany 14706

Mary Anne Kirkpatrick 200 Jefferson Ave. Allegany 373-0443

Marilyn Piepho: 1979 Dugan Rd. Olean

EDEN HEIGHTS	THE PINES -OLEAN
161 S. 25 th St. Olean	2245 W. State St. Olean
Diane Buckley	Joan Mitchell
Emily Jordan*	Elizabeth Snyder*
Gordon Olson	
Mary Ellen Olson	
ABSOLUT-	ABSOLUT-ALLEGANY
HOUGHTON	2178 N. Fifth St. Allegany
9876 Luckey Dr.	14706
Houghton, 14744	Peggy Ertell*
Paul Horton	John Sawaya*
	Wayne Skinner*
	Keith Wingard*
	BRADFORD MANOR
	50 Langmaid Lane
	Bradford, PA 16701
	Jim Clark
	Helen Smith

SWEET VOICE OF NICHOLE NORDEMAN FILLED OFBC SANCTUARY DEC. 8

From the moment Dove-award winning artist Nichole Nordeman took the stage Sunday night, Dec. 8, the audience knew they were in for some heartfelt and, at times, soul-stirring music.



Her first words were to offer an opportunity to, "Quiet the chatter, clear the clutter and just make some room for the Lord to say something to us," in this busy season. Her first song was the

familiar, "O Holy Night," sung in a sweet but strong voice that masters both high and low notes. When Nichole goes high, it's almost like hearing the soft sound of eagle's wings soaring in the atmosphere, a whispered lyric that reaches down into the soul.

The artist shared backstories on the songs as well as some things she has learned as an ever-growing Christian. For one, her insight on how people come with "so much context and nuance and brokenness and history" is something to be learned from. She sang "What If?" and how it came from discussions with a college friend named Pat who was an atheist and could defend his stance. The song was her way of working something out where words and discussions could not and move from argument and discussion to the privilege of loving each other. This famous song asks, "What if there's hope you never dreamed of hoping for?" and that it's in the arms of Jesus.

Nichole told the audience that the way she writes is to come up with an idea first, then know what the chorus is going to say, making a sort of road map for the song. One of her new album originals came from thinking of families around the table for the holidays. Not all are picture-perfect settings with everyone behaving.

"With the song, I just asked, 'can't we just set aside our differences and really focus on the beauty of the manger and the Christ child for this moment?" She didn't want it to be a preachy, song and struggled with it. After some last-minute time alone just before finishing the work in the studio, she came up with the words, "You and I are complicated," and had a different song than she had intended. "Sometimes you just have to run out of gas before He says, 'it's over here," she said. The song about

brokenness in one of her own relationships and the need for forgiveness is now resonating with others.

She also told stories of her family, sometimes with humor, such as a moment on the beach when she finally realized a father "with Rod Stewart-hair" helping her and her children build sand castles actually was Rod Stewart. Her "Slow Down" left people needing the tissues in the



seats as the song describes wanting to freeze moments in time that move too fast.



OFBC Women's Ministry and many helpers worked hard to bring this event to Olean and nearly 200 tickets were sold. Those

present enjoyed a cookie reception afterward while

the artist met with fans and signed her new Christmas CD, "Fragile." Nichole was more than gracious in making this event possible.

"If the world wants peace at Christmas," Nichole asked near the end of her performance, "Could it not begin with us?"



-Review by Deb Wuethrich

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? THINK ABOUT BOARD OR COMMITTEE SERVICE By Deb Wuethrich Nominations Committee Rep. As a church body, there are so many things to be done. Our structure needs upkeep and maintenance. We want to do outreach through missions and begin the spiritual formation of our children—and maintain and grow our own. And the spiritual health of our congregation is very important, with each person feeling cared for and loved as they learn more about God and His provision.

Someone will do this. Right? But has that someone ever been you? While it's true, membership is a requirement for our boards, committees are open to anyone. There are numerous tasks that need to be done that even individuals can do, often or just occasionally or seasonally.

We recently held an annual meeting where we approved nominations for Olean First Baptist's various boards and committees. It is good to see people have stepped up. Some are long-time members who have agreed to new terms (if they are eligible). Some will return after a break of a year or two while others will move over to other ways to serve. And some are new to this type of commitment.

As a Nominating Committee member this year, I am so happy to see new people agree that they will give these tasks a try. I'm thrilled a few have said, "Okay, I can do this one more term." As I reach the final year of my second term as a Diaconate member, I understand how we can feel that we need a break. I can understand how members can "burn out." My hope is that in these cases, they can take a little time out or try something different, refresh—and come back. That's what I did when it happened to me a couple years ago.

It was Pastor Dan who first asked me to become a deacon. Like many, including Moses, my question was, "Who? Me?" I felt inadequate, not equipped enough and scared. Pastor Dan gave me that first nudge and I know I'm better for it. Soon, I was serving in various capacities. Before he left, he once paid me a spirit-lifting compliment that I always keep in mind. He said, "You are really a Barnabas encourager." At the time, I had to look up the experience of Barnabas, who traveled with the apostle Paul to get the context, but it's something I'll never forget. Even when I feel harried, spent, burned out. Our Nomination Committee did a wonderful job working through our lists to find people with various gifts and talents who might be candidates to serve on these boards and committees. Unfortunately, we still have a few spots. For instance, there are two openings yet on our Diaconate. It's not too late to step up and serve in one of the many capacities at OFBC.

Some will decline because they think they are too busy. They might get sick and miss a meeting. They might be traveling a bit. While it is always the hope that members will attend as much as possible, things do happen. I, and others, have participated in meetings by phone. Others have caught me up after some. The key is to stay involved and offer whatever you can. I have found that the benefits far outweigh any inconvenience and occasional fatigue.

Christ made our church a body. We are all called to be parts of this body. We are all needed to keep things moving along as they should, for the Glory of God. Don't worry. If you feel inexperienced, it won't be long before you're an old pro at some type of service. We learn from each other. We learn by being willing to act in the faith we have been given. We gain far more from the experience, especially in the fellowship of doing it together.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT BEGINNING JANUARY 17

During the months of January through April, the Board of Christian Ed and the FBC Women's Ministry are sponsoring an evening of movies for children and for adults on the third Friday of each

month. We'll begin each event at 5:30 pm with a pot-luck supper and fellowship. At 6:30 (or so) movies will be



offered for children and for adults.

January movies are: Mitch Albom's "Have a Little Faith" starring Laurence Fishburne, Bradley Whitford and Martin Landau and Mary Poppins



THE PASTOR'S PAGE

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Psalm 56:8

Our little Abigail came into this world all tiny and helpless. She needed help to stay warm and at times had a bluish tint to her skin. She didn't know how to eat properly, which comes as an

instinct to most newborns. She was plugged into monitors and couldn't be taken out of the nursery. The one thing she did know how to do was cry.

Babies are thrust into this cold, confusing world and their instinct is to cry out to anyone who can hear them. They cry because they are hungry, scared, lonely, dirty, hurt or tired. There are times when a baby's cry takes on a hint of desperation or even anger.

Sadly crying isn't a condition we grow out of. Adults will cry when they too feel lonely or hurt. Some of us may feel we have cried so much our tears just won't flow anymore and others feel their tears may never stop. We are in a world that is chaotic and harsh and our instinct is to cry out because something is wrong.

We cry because we want to be heard. Research has shown people are four times more likely to cry at a sad movie when they are with other people than when alone. Crying is a form of communication understood the world over, but only by humans. Animals do have tears which lubricate their eyes, but only humans cry tears when they are sad.

In the ancient world tears were collected in tear jars called lachrymatories. The Persians believed that the collected tears of loved ones could be used as a medicine to aid a dying relative. In Psalm 56 King David speaks of God collecting our tears and recording every one. Even when we are alone, our crying is heard by God and will be accounted for. Crying starts as one of our first instincts, develops out of necessity to call our parents to our side and continues into adulthood as a way to express our emotions and needs. God created us with the ability to cry, but not only in sorrow. Oddly enough we may also cry when we hold our babies in our arms for the first time, or are overwhelmed with joy for other reasons.

As we enter the New Year, I could pray that there would be no tears, but that's not realistic. I pray the tears of joy will strengthen you that the comfort of God will see you safely through the tears of sorrow. One day God will wipe away every tear, but until then let us support one another and find His peace.



MIDWEEK PAUSE FOR POWER RETURNS!

Resuming Wednesday evening, January 8 from 5:45-6:45, we will gather for a time of sharing the cares and joys of our hearts, followed by prayer, hymn sing and Bible study to be led by Dave Torrey. Please plan to join Dave in the chapel and invite others who might be looking for a midweek worship/study opportunity to join us as well!



Pastor Jason is leading a **THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY** using the book "All the Stories of the Bible" by John Walsh. A free electronic PDF

copy of the book can be downloaded at <u>www.bibletelling.org</u> or the book may be purchased from Amazon for \$20.00. Purchase of the book is not necessary to attend our class as the author has given permission to copy pages for each bible study lesson. Our class begins at 5:45 pm and ends with enough time for choir members to make it to practice at 7:00 pm



HE LEADETH ME

"He Leadeth me beside the still waters ...He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his

name's sake" (Ps. 23:3-2).

As we begin a new year what better goal or desire then that the Lord will lead us throughout this coming year. Or it might be better said, that we would listen to and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. For He is there to teach and guide if we will but listen and follow.

There are three thrilling truths in our text concerning the Good Shepherd's infallible leadership. First, the Good Shepherd is identified as heaven's infallible leader. Second, the Good Shepherd is declared to be a capable leader. Third, the Good Shepherd is of necessity a dependable leader.

I The Good Shepherd is our leader. - "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

1. Meditate for a moment on these words: "He leadeth me."

a. He is the creator of the heavens and the earth

b. He is the one who upholds all things by His power.

c. He is the unerring, unchangeable, all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful One, and "He leadeth me".

- The Good Shepherd leads rather than drives. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:4). -The Good Shepherd will not ask His sheep to go anywhere that He Himself does not go.
- 3. How does the Good Shepherd lead?

a. He leads by example

b. He leads by the direction in the Scriptures, the revealed will of God

c. He leads by the counsel of a Christian friend

d. He leads by the message of a lesson or sermone. He leads by the inward impulses of the HolySpirit.

II The Good Shepherd is a capable leader

Our Text tells us that the Good Shepherd is a trustworthy, capable, competent leader. David said, "He leadeth me in the path of righteousness." The Good Shepherd helps us to go on the path of straightness that leads to the right destination. A little book loved by children tells the story of a playful locomotive. The locomotive got along wonderfully as long as it stayed on the tracks, but one day it noticed the butterflies out in the fields smelling the flowers and decided that it too wanted to go out into the pasture to smell the flowers. When the little locomotive got out into the pasture to smell the flowers it mired down and was unable to roll like it did when it was on those steel tracks.

The psalmist says that the Good Shepherd helps us to stay on the track so that we can get to the desired destination in life. The Good Shepherd will never lead us astray.

III The Good Shepherd is of necessity a trustworthy and dependable leader. - "for his name's sake"

- The good name of God is involved in the leadership that the Good Shepherd offers to His sheep. The integrity of God is at stake. The very character of god is involved in where He leads those who trust Him and obey Him
- 2. The Angels could not give worship and praise and respond with deep adoration to a God who would mislead His people. By the quality of the leadership and by the destiny to which He has led, the Good Shepherd has maintained the respect and the appreciation of His followers throughout the ages.
- 3. The Good Shepherd will never do anything that is inconsistent with divine integrity. He will never lead His people down a dead-end street; He will never lead them to waste their energies or to make bad investments. Someone has casually said, "God maintains an excellent credit rating." He values the integrity of His name, for His name stands for His person and character.
- 4. The Good Shepherd will lead you right in the here and now and lead you to the heavenly home in the hereafter if you are willing to trust Him and follow Him.

Who is your leader? Do you follow the crowd? Do you follow the whim of the

moment? You would be wise to follow Him who said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in

darkness, but shall have the light of life," (John 8:12).

~Pastor Millard





THE MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

Let me begin by wishing everyone a Happy New Year!! May God bless you

abundantly in 2020 and beyond!!

As I look back at 2019, I have to say it was a very mixed bag, full of many highs and lows. The lows included the death of my Dad and two very good friends... Jim Maguire and Harry Miller. Actually, Harry was more like a brother to me. I was also saddened by the deaths of so many others... but comforted in knowing that I will be seeing most of them again someday. I cannot say that I will be seeing them all because, in some cases, I do not know if they had accepted God's gift of salvation. Sad but true!

The lows also included several challenges faced by my extended family... both on the Sorokes and Olson side. I will not go into details on these as many have requested that their trials remain private. However, I am very thankful for those willing to raise prayers for unspoken requests. I also am concerned for the future of our country, given the hostile, uncompromising and mean-spirited nature of most of our political leaders. I can't help thinking that, in large part, it is because our country has turned away from God. We ignore history... and scripture... at our own peril.

However, lest you fear this article is a Book of Lamentations, I also have taken great delight in the many highs experienced throughout 2019! Most notable were: a trip to Yellowstone Park, winning a lifetime achievement award (more on this at a later date), our extended trip to Houston, the Allan Scott Band summer concert and, most recently, the incredible concert in our sanctuary by Nichole What an incredible blessing Ms. Nordeman. Nordeman was to those who attended! Oh, there were many other highs... way more than lows... like the Seekers Sunday School class, seeing Chip Ingram in person, visiting with family, watching Selah (our German Shepherd) chase a football, playing with our grandson Owen, attending the Amy Grant concert and shows at Shea's, going to breakfast with Larry or lunch with Matt, learning to play a new song on the guitar, singing with the praise team and choir, leading worship services, listening to Cari talk about Uganda, a hug from Yvonne, discovering a really good restaurant in Hornell... Hmmmm! Seems like a lot of highs, eh?

Were there really that many? Uh... yes, there were!! You see, it's all in how you look at life. Even little things can bring you great joy. And I believe God brings many of these little things into our lives hoping to lift us up! Do we let them?

Returning to Nichole Nordeman, as many of you know, Penny and I drove her back to Buffalo after the concert on Sunday. Keeping in mind that I've never met this woman before in my life and that she is a renowned Christian artist, I wasn't sure exactly what to expect conversation-wise. Well, my apprehensions were completely unfounded as we had a very enjoyable 90-minute ride. As evidenced during the concert, Nichole is a very down-to-earth, run-of-the-mill person who God gifted with amazing musical talents. The neat part is that she knows and admits that! She told us of how she was originally going to become a psychologist or counselor... but God kept closing doors and opening others... guiding her to her now successful career in music. Yes... like so many of us... she had a plan and was going to control her life... and God had other ideas! When will we ever learn??

I can't end this article without commenting on our congregational meeting in December. Those who attended know that it was touch and go as to whether we'd have 50 members present to conduct the meeting... and many thanks to those who braved the less-than-stellar weather to be there. Thanks, as well, to those who were willing to fill most of the openings we had on our Boards and Committees. As I write this article, we still have two openings on the Diaconate and two on the Board of Christian Missions, but all other positions have been filled. Hopefully, God will touch the hearts of four more of our members so that all of our Boards will be complete.

Finally, I am constantly amazed by the truth of Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." For many, many years, I had trouble believing that this scripture could possibly be true, but I doubt it no longer. It is impossible to "out-give" God!! You don't believe me? Then give it a try and let Him prove you wrong!!

God is good!!! \bigcirc

~Jim Sorokes

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Kaitlin Taylor Young Cheri O'Dell
- 8 Jess Anderson
- 11 Cari Matejka
- 13 Brandyn DeLong
- 15 John Samuelson
- 17 Steve Rosel
- 20 Pam Nutt
- 22 Gaylord Sage
- 24 Gloria Spiller
- 27 Larry Firth
- 30 Lylah Butler

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Megan Sorokes Sneed
- 3 Miesha Brown
- 6 Lenny Brown
- Mary Ellen Olson
- 7 Alison Kane
- 9 Darlene Selph
- 12 Dana Boser Nan Norton
- 16 Katrina DeGroff
- 17 Jacob Peck
- 24 Brian Sanders
- 28 Elizabeth Spiller





Articles and Information for the March issue of At First Baptist is needed in the church office Thursday, **February 13**. The Newsletter Committee will meet @ 1 PM on Tuesday, February 25 to prepare the newsletter for mailing to

homebound/shut-in members without email addresses.

JANUARY BOARD MEETINGS

Sunday, January 12 @ Noon Board of Christian Missions

Tuesday, January 14

 @ 6:30 pm – Board of Christian Education Diaconate
@ 7 pm – Trustees

> Tuesday, January 28 @ 7 pm Advisory Council



Many church communications including the newsletter are now being emailed to save time, paper and postage costs. If you make a change to your email address or if you

have recently added email to your home, please give us that updated information in the church office. Copies of the newsletter are available at the church for those who do not have home computers and will continue to be mailed to our homebound/shut-in members without email addresses.