



Sunday Worship: 9:30 a.m.
Faith & Fellowship for All Ages: 11:00 a.m.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW SENIOR PASTOR – REV. JIM BALSON



On Sunday, July 27, 2025 the Olean FBC congregation voted to accept the unanimous recommendations of the Pulpit Committee and Advisory Council of Rev. James Balson as the next Senior Pastor of Olean First Baptist Church.

Pastor Jim has served as a senior pastor for 32 years in two Baptist congregations in New York State.

Pastor Jim and his wife, Nancy, will relocate from Elizabethton, TN to the Olean area. They have a family of eight children and thirteen grandchildren. Pastor Jim's parents live nearby in Rushford, NY.

We will hold an Installation Service for Pastor Jim at 3:00 pm on Sunday, September 28. Light refreshments will be available during a reception following the service. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this important event in the history of Olean FBC!

AT FIRST BAPTIST

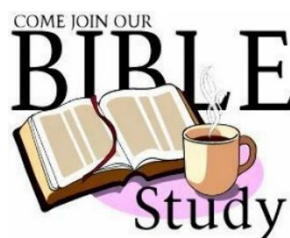
Senior Pastor
Jim Balson
Secretary; Keyboards
Penny Sorokes
Audio Visual Specialist
Casey Sage

Minister of Music
Sue Neely VanBrunt
Custodian
Rachel Green

PHONE: 716- 372-5151
EMAIL: ofbc133@gmail.com
WEBSITE: oleanfirstbaptist.com
FACEBOOK: [oleanfirstbaptistchurch](https://www.facebook.com/oleanfirstbaptistchurch)



On September 14, Rally Day will feature the “Made to Magnify God” theme from VBS. This summer Cheri will work with the children on a banner to be displayed on Rally Day. Paige will receive a Bible, and three students will move up to the youth class. The teacher gifts will be “Magnify God” bookmarks. During the Sunday School time, there will be a carnival for the children. At noon we will have the Rally Day all-church picnic, with board members bringing meatballs or pulled pork and others asked to bring a dish to pass.



The Monday Bible Study meets in the Board Room at 9:30 am and is led by Laurie MacNeill.

The Wednesday Bible Study led by Rita Wymer resumes on September 4 @ 9:30 am in the Board Room. All are welcome to join these groups, not just women.

FAREWELL, PASTOR BISCUIT-MAN!!!

Sunday, August 31st was Pastor Ivan Crossno's last official day after serving as our interim pastor for 18 months. During the search process preceding his hiring, Pastor Dan McDowell suggested that we would not find a more perfect interim minister for our church. Truer words were never spoken. Pastor Ivan has been a tremendous blessing, and he leaves an indelible mark on our church and so many in our congregation. His thought-provoking sermons, knowledge of Biblical history, commitment to visitation, sense of humor, super-friendly and welcoming demeanor, and love of food (except kale and spinach) were exactly what Olean First Baptist Church needed as we searched for our new senior pastor. There are no words to properly express our gratitude for what Pastor Ivan has done for our church. We understand church protocol but sincerely hope that he will stay in touch with all his new friends and admirers here in Olean... and hope that, someday, we can break biscuits together!



Fall is just around the corner, and it will soon be time to kick off our **2025 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**. Your Board of Trustees has chosen the theme "New Beginnings". Our focus will be on the new things that God might bring to our church over the next year! These include a new pastor, new ministries, rebuilding trust within our congregation, and a commitment to renew our efforts to spread the Gospel in our community. The Board of Trustees is currently working with the Minister of Music (Sue Neely VanBrunt) to select Sunday worship service music that supports the theme. We will soon be asking you to make a commitment on how YOU will support God's ministries at Olean First Baptist Church. And that commitment should go beyond your financial offerings and include donations of your time and your talents. The campaign will kick-off on Sunday, September 28th and you will receive a letter from the Board of Trustees soon after the kick-off providing more details on the church's needs. So... it's not too early to start thinking and praying about the commitments you will make for 2026.



"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts"

This verse from Colossians 3:16 is one of many verses that encourages a singing church. Hopefully you were able to express your gratitude to God and were encouraged by the music during our summer services.

A word of thanks goes out to the summer vocalists and instrumentalists: Jim Molyneaux, Jeanette Butler, Karen Goodwin, Casey & Matt Sage, Penny & Jim Sorokes, the VBS Kids, Kate Eifert, "Final Harvest", Dave Deitz, Lindsay Cummings, Sharon Boser, Mike Schultz, Ken Boser and Yvonne Perry Clark! Their time and talents were so appreciated!

Now we look forward to the musical sharing that continues into the fall! Our **Senior Choir** will resume rehearsals on **Thurs. Sept 11th at 6:45 pm** in the Chapel. If you like to sing and can find the melody (or harmony!), then you are more than qualified to join in! If you've not been part of this group before and would like to see what it's all about - come and sit in on a rehearsal any week. We'd love to have you - and your joyful noise!

And...for those of you who can read a bit of music, you might enjoy ringing handbells with the **In One A-Chord Handbell Choir**, Kate Eifert and crew would love to have you come to play (or learn and play) beginning on **Wed. Sept 10th at 7 pm** in the sanctuary. Hope to hear you then!

'Sing'cerely, Sue Neely VanBrunt, Minister of Music





THE PASTOR'S PARAGRAPH

As Nancy and I are preparing for our move from Tennessee to New York, I started thinking about another family that moved a similar distance in Bible times. God called Abram to pack up his family and leave Ur of the Chaldees in order to go... somewhere. God didn't tell him where or how long the trip would be. There was no Google map on the display counting down the miles and time until he reached his destination. God said go. Abram trusted God and he went.

In Hebrews chapter 11, Abram (Abraham) is held forth as an example of genuine faith. He believed God though it meant leaving all he knew behind, though it meant he had no idea where he'd end up, and though it would mean he would henceforth be a stranger and a pilgrim (Hebrews 11:13). He believed God's Word and acted upon it. If one reads all the examples given in Hebrews 11 it will be evident that this believing without seeing, and acting accordingly, is the essence of real faith.

In verse 6 of that chapter we read...."But without faith it is impossible to please God... At one point in his earthly ministry Jesus asked his disciples, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25).

What if He asked me? What if He asked you? Do you believe the Bible and are you acting upon it? The encouraging note is that our faith can grow! According to Romans 10:17, faith will increase as we spend more time in God's Word. May all of us have a growing, vibrant faith as we daily feed upon the spiritual meal Jesus sets before us in His Word!

Semper Sola Gratia!
(Always Grace Alone!)
Pastor Jim

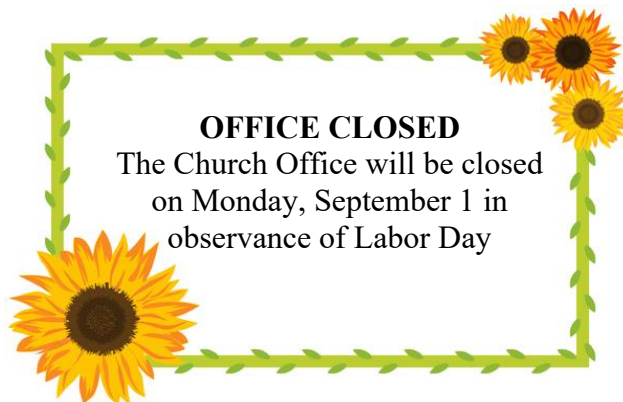
MISSION BOARD NEWS

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Yes, it's almost that time as well! FBC's participation in OCC requires a year-round commitment of planning, preparing and then putting it all in motion to assist children around the world through Samaritan's Purse. OCC barrels have remained in place in the church lobby for donations at any time. Fall school sales are a time to find bargains for items we may take for granted, but impoverished communities would love to have for their children. The cost of \$10 per shoebox is still in place to help shipping and handling needs and growing ministry costs to provide evangelism and discipleship materials to recipients. Donations are critical to transporting and delivering shoeboxes into the hands of a child in need. It also provides ministry materials such as cardboard shipping cartons, The Greatest Gift gospel booklet for children, and the Ministry Partner Guide for local outreach event training. This year's OCC dates are Nov. 17-24 2025.

WORLD MISSION OFFERING IN OCTOBER

The World Mission Offering is an annual campaign which focuses on raising funds and awareness for International Ministries' global work, including the efforts of their missionaries and partners. The Offering enables ABCUSA's International Ministries to support global health and wellness, combatting global slavery, promoting economic and community development, and more. The offering will encourage churches to participate in the transformative work God is doing around the world. This year's World Mission Offering will be conducted throughout the month of October. Envelopes will either be in lobby mailboxes or the pews and more information will be provided in the October AFB.





THE MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

So much for best laid plans!!!

How many times have you had a very well laid out plan that you've worked on for weeks only to have something happen that completely disrupts nearly everything and turns your best laid plan into chaos? Or maybe putting it another way, you have a plan, but God has something else in mind! Well, that's what happened to Penny and me in early August. We had a very well laid out plan to travel to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. We were going to leave on Wednesday evening, August 6th, and drive through the night to avoid the gnarly traffic typically found on Interstate-95 between Washington and Richmond. All was going well until mid-day on the 6th when I suddenly began running a high fever and my lower right leg became bright red with an inflammation I had seen before. Yes, out of the blue, I had a cellulitis attack. I had had it before but somehow this was different this time... more intense... more debilitating. As the afternoon wore on, my symptoms got much worse, and I became somewhat incoherent. At this point, Penny drove me to the hospital and my condition deteriorated further. It seemed I was also dehydrated and the attendants in the E.R. had a very difficult time finding any veins to insert an IV. After much effort, they ended up putting in three IVs to pump fluid into my system. I learned later that the whole situation was very serious, but they eventually got me rehydrated and were able to bring my fever down... it had been as high as 104°. They were also concerned with my blood pressure, which was extremely low and my heart rate, which was very high. I was admitted to the hospital, the very first time in my 71 years!! I spent the next three and a half days in room 224 fighting the fever and getting the rest of my cardio-vascular system back to normal. Needless to say, this is not at all what I had planned! Thankfully, my condition improved to the point that I was discharged on Sunday morning and we were able to depart for the Outer Banks. The trip down went smoothly. Thankfully, my son and daughter-in-law met us there and were able to help us during our stay. Unfortunately, because I was on anti-biotics and needed to keep my leg elevated as much as possible, I couldn't do many of the activities we had planned. We did get to some of our favorite restaurants, but I never once set foot on the beach that was only about 250 feet from the house where we were staying. Still, I was grateful for the time away (more about

this later) and that my health issues were not more serious.

Returning to my hospital experience, we quite often hear horror stories about the Olean General Hospital and how many refuse to go there because they claim the care is so poor. Well, that was not at all my experience. I received excellent care from the emergency room personnel, the PAs, nurses, and other caretakers. They were knowledgeable, supportive, and clearly had my best interests at heart. They did everything they could to keep me comfortable and informed during my stay. I would not hesitate to seek health care at OGH in the future.

Speaking of the future, I understand that rumors have been spreading that Penny and I are moving away. While this is not the way we had hoped to make the announcement, the grapevine or rumor mill has left us little choice. Bluntly, the rumors are true. The house that we stayed in recently on the Outer Banks is actually OUR house... our home... and will be our permanent residence in the not-too-distant future. The exact date for our move to North Carolina is unclear but it will likely be sometime after the Christmas holidays... or possibly sooner. Obviously, we will be stepping away from the various roles we play at the church, and I am confident that God will find folks to fill those voids. Please know that we did not take this decision lightly, but the Outer Banks have become a home away from home for us and we decided it was time to make this move while we were still young enough to enjoy it. I'm sure there are a few who will be overjoyed by our decision while there are some who will be frustrated or upset. We have always tried to use our God-given talents for the betterment of Olean First Baptist Church. Sometimes



we were successful... sometimes not. Please know that this church and the relationships that we've developed here will always be important to us and we plan to stay in touch with many of you after our move. We will share the address of our new home later, but for now, if you have any questions about any of this, please talk with Penny or me.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

-Jim Sorokes, Asst. Moderator

THE FAMILY OF GOD



We extend our Love and Sympathy to Carol and Jim Molyneaux on the passing of Carol's sister, Laura, on August 22.

THANK YOU!

"Thank you to the congregation for all the beautiful cards, the well-wishes, and for attending our 60th wedding anniversary celebration in July at the Century Manor. It was a wonderful day and we appreciate and love all of our First Baptist Church friends.

Beth and David Deitz

Thank you to the congregation for all of the donations and support that is given to the Hospitality Committee.

Nancy Taylor

I want to thank you for all the prayers on my behalf. They are working!! I feel so much better now than when I got out of the hospital in early May. Keep them coming please. I'll be moving into Aspen Towers, hopefully August 12. Thanks Sharyn Hornburg for the help getting in so soon.

Once again, Thank you everyone.

In Christian love, Vi Pettigrew

DIRECTORY UPDATES:

Vi Pettigrew

350 Front St. Apt. 630

Olean, NY 14760

716-373-1935

Glenda Coykendall

716-307-6098

Deb Wuethrich

Delete 716-379-8702

Keep cell: 517-605-4712

Member/Friends Directories are available in the Church Office

Snowbirds

Please let us know in the office when you plan to fly south for the winter months so that you'll continue to receive your church mailings and we won't incur fees for returned mail.



SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, September 14 @ Noon

Board of Christian Missions

Diaconate

Monday, September 15 @ 5:30 pm

Board of Christian Education

Tuesday, September 16 @ 6:30 pm: Trustees

Tuesday, Sept. 30 @ 6:30 pm

Advisory Council



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Randy Samuelson
- 2 Shelly Woods
- 4 Jodie Martin
Rachel Green
- 5 Sharyn Garey Hornburg
- 8 Dave Anderson
- 20 Louise Croft
- 22 Sheila Faulds
- 24 Molly DiCapua
- 25 Sharon Anthony
- 26 Sam Longo
- 29 Linda Kennemuth



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Sam & Linda Longo
- 5 Ben & Heather Shultz-Piche
- 16 Paul & Lindsay Cummings

The Rev. Jerrod Huguenot will be installed as the ABC/NYS Executive Minister on Saturday, September 13, at 10 am at the Cuba First Baptist Church. All are invited to attend.