



9:30 AM: Sunday Worship

11:00 AM: Faith & Fellowship for All Ages

AT FIRST BAPTIST

Senior Pastor

James P. Balson, Jr.

Secretary

Clarissa Spiller Ivan

Audio Visual Specialist

Casey Sage

Minister of Music

Sue Neely VanBrunt

Organist

Jeanne Gross

Custodian

Rachel Green

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SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETINGS

Sunday, September 6 at 12:00 PM - Diaconate

Tuesday, September 15 at 6:30 PM - Trustees

Sunday, September 20 at 12:00 PM - Christian Mission

Sunday, September 27 at 6:30 PM - Advisory Council

OFFICE CLOSED

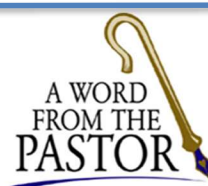
The Church Office will be closed Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day.



"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." - Matthew 6:33

Join us for **Rally Day on Sunday, September 13**, as we begin a new season of Christian education, worship, fellowship, and service. Worship begins at 9:30 AM, Faith & Fellowship meets at 11:00 AM, and a fellowship lunch will be held at noon.

During Faith & Fellowship, children will enjoy a carnival while the adult classes continue. Teachers will give brief class presentations, and Clay Anderson and Maddox Keim will receive Bibles.



SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Rally Day theme chosen by the Board of Christian Ed this year is Matthew 6:33. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

When Jesus says, "all these things" he's referring to the things mentioned just a bit earlier, the things that people naturally worry about. Verses 25-31, we worry about our life & health; we worry about food; we worry about our clothes; we worry about our body image. Then Jesus reminds all His followers that such cares and concerns are normal for those who don't know Him (vs. 32), but for we who follow Him, God will take care of it all. Stop worrying, get your focus back on what's truly important. Matt. 6:34, "Therefore do not worry..."

At the heart of all this is the realization that all the stuff the world worries about is temporary and fading. You are alive now but one day you'll go to glory. You have your health, but in a split second you catch the flu. You bought some new shoes, but just wait 20 years to see how they look. You got a plate of hot food at the restaurant, but in 20 minutes all that's left is crumbs and the bill. It's all temporary, so it's pointless to mentally anguish so much over it all. It's with this understanding that Jesus tells us to seek and focus on the things that will really last and are therefore truly important.... The Kingdom of God... The Righteousness of God.

The Kingdom of God is the realm where God's rule is recognized. Jesus says you enter that Kingdom by

being born again (John 3:5). It's as Kingdom citizens that we learn to live in a way that reflects our heavenly citizenship (Eph. 4:1). The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that as the people of God we are in this world as pilgrims (Hebrews 11:13). In the words of the old hymns, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through..."

As we live in this way, seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, there will be some practical results:

1. Anxiety will have no hold on us as we see that the things we worry about are all temporary. We can roll them all over to Jesus and receive the peace He gives. (Phil. 4:6).
2. We will gain new opportunities to share the Gospel as our unbelieving friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers see that we are not tossed and thrown by every circumstance, news item, and difficulty, but remain constant and even-keeled.
3. We will have a new relationship to our possessions and money. It's all temporary so we won't grip it too tightly. If God blessed us with abundance, we won't boast of it or become proud. And we surely won't put our trust in the temporal stuff of this world. Rather we will use the stuff of this world to glorify God.

Our church Trustees, seeing Matt. 6:33 was the theme for Rally Day, thought it would also be an excellent theme for our annual stewardship campaign. As we consider the temporal nature of the things of this world and want to use them to "lay up treasure in heaven" (Matt. 6:19-21), dedicating a portion of our income to the Lord's church is one important part of "seeking FIRST the Kingdom of God." Start praying now about your commitment to God and what you'll be giving to Him through the offerings at Olean First Baptist Church.

May God help us, in every aspect of our lives - how we live, spend our time, invest our money, make our plans, and pursue our goals - to Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness!

Pastor Jim

Rev. James P. Balson, Jr.

Senior Pastor

THOSE LITTLE PINK ENVELOPES

Donations made through the pink pew envelopes help church members facing urgent needs, such as groceries, utilities, or medical costs.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

The Stewardship Campaign begins September 27 and concludes with Commitment Sunday on November 1.

This year's theme is Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Please begin thinking and praying about the commitments of time, talent, and financial support you will make toward the ministries of Olean First Baptist Church.



Psalm 100 says: "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!"

As a congregation who wants to serve the Lord with gladness, we are encouraged to make a joyful noise, singing as we come into His presence. Hopefully this summer you heartily sang the songs and choruses that you chose as your favorites!

A word of thanks goes out to the summer vocalists and instrumentalists: Yvonne Perry Clark, Michael Schultz, Jim Molyneaux, Dave Deitz, Dave Taylor, Jeanette Butler, Karen Goodwin, VBS Kids, Sharon Boser, Alex Freer, Deb Stavish, Cheryl Smith, Ken Boser, Beth Deitz and Jeanne Gross. Their time and talents were so appreciated!

Now we look forward to musical sharing for the fall! Our Senior Choir will resume rehearsals on Thurs. Sept. 10th at 6:30 pm in the Chapel. If you like to sing and can find the melody (or harmony!), then you are qualified to join in! If you haven't sung in the Choir 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 come - and make 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 ringers would love to have you play (or learn to play - yes, beginners are welcome!) starting on Wed. Sept. 9th at 7 pm in the sanctuary. Hope to hear you then!

'Sing'cerely,

Sue Neely VanBrunt, Minister of Music

MISSION NEWS

MISSION TRIP NEWS WANTED

Have you participated in mission service this year? Please send your stories, photos, or reflections to the church office for a future issue of At First Baptist.

MISSIONARY UPDATE

Dave and Joyce Reed remain on Sabbath Rest through September 30. During this time, they will not respond to ministry-related emails or messages. Please continue to hold them in prayer.

WHITE CROSS:

MEETING GLOBAL NEEDS WITH CHRIST'S LOVE

For centuries, IM has responded to needs worldwide with the love of Christ by fulfilling specific requests for goods and supplies from global servants and partners. White Cross focuses on the small, everyday things that people need, like toothbrushes, baby supplies, bandages, and vitamins. **The White Cross Offering will run through the month of September, and envelopes will be available in the pews.**

Your gifts purchase practical everyday necessities that promote health and wellness, education, and help put an end to global slavery. Gifts can provide books, uniforms, hot lunches and school supplies; medicines and essential medical supplies; and practical support that helps restore dignity and build new lives.

WORLD MISSION OFFERING IN OCTOBER

The World Mission Offering is an annual campaign that raises funds and awareness for International Ministries' global work. It supports global health and wellness, efforts to combat global slavery, and economic and community development. This year's World Mission Offering will be conducted throughout October. **Envelopes will be available in lobby mailboxes or the pews, with more information in the October AFB.**

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

FBC's participation in Operation Christmas Child requires year-round planning and preparation. OCC barrels remain in the church lobby for donations at any time, and fall school sales are a good opportunity to purchase useful items. The cost is \$10 per shoebox to help with shipping, handling, and ministry materials. **This year's OCC dates are November 16-23, 2026.**



THE ASSISTANT MODERATOR'S VIEW

Bicentennial Planning Committee Being Formed

By Deb Wuethrich

Good golly, we blink and 200 years have passed! Well, not really, but that's how long Olean First Baptist Church has been a congregation come the year 2030. Since our nation is celebrating its 250th birthday, that means our country was only 50 years old before a group of individuals gathered in Olean to form our church. That's pretty special. While churches come and go and, sadly, even the survivors decline in membership, Olean First Baptist has been a tradition in our community.

The last history in print was "The Ever Widening Way," prepared in 2005 when 175 years was celebrated. It is full of photos, facts, and information about our church's history.

2030 may seem a long way off, but it is only a little over four years away. Pastor Jim, Deb Wuethrich, Jim Molyneaux, the Diaconate and Advisory Council have put out a call for those interested in serving on the 2030 FBC Bicentennial Planning Committee.

If you think you might enjoy being part of this planning committee, there is a sign-up sheet on the office window. **The first meeting will most likely be in October**, just so we can get our bearings. There will be other opportunities to get involved as we draw nearer to 2030.

We welcome you to prayerfully consider being part of this planning committee and the upcoming events. Four years can go pretty fast!

LAST CALL FOR ADVENT DEVOTIONS

By the time this edition of AFB comes out, production will be underway for the in-house prepared version of the 2026 Advent Devotional. Several individuals have submitted devotions for this special project; however, we could still use a few more.

If you might yet have a devotion to submit, please leave it in **Deb Wuethrich's lobby mailbox ASAP, or submit it by email to deborahmarcein@gmail.com.** This booklet will include some older devotions from past editions, but we want to see current offerings as well about a faith-life with Jesus Christ and how He impacts us in everyday situations as well as the uncommon ones.

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

A Familiar Place, A New Role



Clarissa, age four, at Olean First Baptist Church.

Stepping into the role of Church Secretary has meant stepping into some

very big shoes! I am grateful to follow someone as dedicated as Penny. She left behind a strong foundation, which I appreciate more each week.

A new person also brings a different set of eyes. As I settle into this role, there will be some changes in how I organize and share information. I simply hope you will receive new ideas with an open mind and extend me grace as I grow into this ministry.

Romans 12:2 calls us to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” while Isaiah 43:19 reminds us, “Behold, I am doing a new thing... do you not perceive it?” We can honor what came before while remaining open to what comes next.

Serving this church is especially meaningful because Olean First Baptist has been part of my life since birth. As a little girl, I admired our longtime finance secretary, Bonnie Kettle.

I grew up within these walls through youth group, Christmas pageants, and American Baptist Youth conventions. My grandfather, Clarence Spiller, served here as a dedicated deacon. I sang “The B-I-B-L-E” upstairs with Sue Neely VanBrunt more times than I could count, and I loved every minute of it.

Life later carried me away from Olean. I worked aboard cruise ships as a production singer before returning home to raise my family. Now my children know these same halls and even play with some of the toys I remember. Yes, little barn play set, I see you!

There is something wonderfully full-circle about sitting in the church office today. I hope to honor this church’s history while helping it move confidently into what comes next. Most of all, I hope to serve you, our ministries, and our community, with Jesus as my guide. Thank you for the patience, encouragement, and grace you have already shown me.

Clarissa Spiller Ivan
Church Secretary



WORSHIP AND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAYS

Worship - 9:30 AM

Faith & Fellowship for All Ages - 11:00 AM

Worship at The Pines - 9/27 at 2:00 PM

MONDAYS

Morning Bible Study - 9:30 AM

TUESDAYS

Ladies’ Breakfast at Perkins - 1st Tuesday at 9:30 AM

Ladies’ Breakfast at Friendly’s - 3rd Tuesday at 9:30 AM

Prayer with the Pastor - Pastor’s Study at 11:00 AM

Men’s Lunch at Perkins - 11:30 AM

WEDNESDAYS

Bible Study, beginning 9/16 - 9:30 AM

Pause for Power - 5:30 PM

In One A-Chord Handbell Choir, beginning 9/9 - 7:00 PM

THURSDAYS

Senior Choir, beginning 9/10 - 6:30 PM

SATURDAYS

AA Meeting - 1:00 - 2:00 PM

STAY CONNECTED AT OFBC

Please check your Church Family Mailbox outside the office for newsletters and other communications. This helps save postage. Please do not store personal items in your slot.

The information tower near the office window holds board minutes, forms, applications, and other church materials. If something is missing, **leave a note in the Secretary’s mailbox or email ofbc133@gmail.com.**



THE FAMILY OF GOD

Share your church-family news

Have a milestone, mission experience, graduation, award, new baby, anniversary, ministry update or other church-family news to celebrate?

Please send it to the church office for a future issue of At First Baptist. Photos are welcome, too. Our newsletter is strongest when the congregation helps tell the story of what God is doing in and through our church family.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all my church family for all your prayers, visits and beautiful cards during my stay at OGH & Pines for rehab. I am truly blessed.

*Love to all,
Gwen Dyke*

DIRECTORY UPDATES

John Heckman: Please remove from your directory.

Melinda Normandin: 716-307-2288

Frank Snyder: Allegany, NY

The church office will continue updating the master directory as changes are received. Please make these changes in your own copy.

GENESIS HOUSE: WISH LIST

Women/Men/Children

Personal Care Items: Deodorant, Razors, Shampoo,
Soap, Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Body Lotion
Diapers

Clean Winter Coats

Household and Move-Out Items

Cleaning Supplies, Paper Products, Dish Soap, Laundry
Soap, New Pillows, Bath Towels, Wash Cloths, Dish
Towels, Brooms, Mops, Working Vacuums, Pots, Pans,
Crockpots, Spices, Dishes, Silverware, Cooking Utensils,
Blankets, Sheet Sets

AND Volunteers to meet a variety of needs

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 Birthdays!

- 1 Randy Samuelson
- 2 Shelly Woods
- 4 Jodie Martin
- 4 Rachel Green
- 5 Sharyn Garey Hornburg
- 8 Dave Anderson
- 18 Mike Funden
- 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 Schultz-Piche
- 16 Paul & Lindsay Cummings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Monthly newsletters are distributed by email to reduce costs, placed in lobby mailboxes for those without email, and mailed to shut-ins and long-distance members. Guest copies are available on the entry table.

OCTOBER SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Information and articles for the October edition of At First Baptist are due no later than:

Thursday, September