

OCKER BRETHREN CHURCH

Serving Christ, Serving Our Community

**BOARD OF
ELDERS
MEETING**

**Wednesday,
September 11
@ 6:30 pm**



**LOOKING
AHEAD:**

September 8
Book Club
6:30 pm

October 9
Harvest Supper
6:30 pm

October 27
Annual
Congregational
Meeting

From the Pastor:

By now, school has been going for several weeks and most of us are out of our summer routine and deep into the "school-groove." For me, getting "back into the school-groove" means thinking a lot about the past year and the future of Ocker. I typically use this time of the year to write my yearly pastor's report given at the annual congregational meeting in October.... and in order to write that report, I have to spend some time thinking about all that has happened this year at Ocker....and I have to convey where we are going and what we are going to be doing for the coming year.

With all these thoughts swirling in my head this week, I started thinking about something I learned in seminary - the life-cycle of churches. I

think we have talked about it before...but it is a good reminder.

Church scholars have concluded that all churches follow a specific life-cycle:

Birth - Obviously all churches have a time and place where they formed their "birth date." Ocker, as many of you know, was established (born) in 1892. At the "birth stage" the community is formed because they share a common set of core values and a vision (where they want to "go" in the years ahead).

Growth - After the initial birth of the church, there is always a time of growth. The "growth" period could last for a few months or for years and years. People are excited about being a part of the new community... and they are passionate about the future.

Plateau - As a response to the rapid growth, the church usually establishes by-laws, a constitution and a leadership structure. Church scholars call this the "institutionalization" of the community. Similar to the previous phase, this "cycle" has no specific time frame...it varies from church to church. However, all churches will experience a leveling off of growth during this time. Passion and intensity for the community remains, but the focus shifts to controlling the passion.

Decline - As a result of trying to control the passion, the energy and joy of being a part of the community diminishes and the church begins to drop in attendance and membership.

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Again, the timeframe for how long the decline lasts will vary from church to church. I know of one church that was in this phase for fifty years.

Death – The average life cycle of a church plant in America is 3.5 years. Over 250 Protestant churches in Texas have closed their doors for the last time in 2023.

It is a fact...all churches have a birth date and a death date.

Except....

The churches that don't die have what is called a re-birth. At some point in the Plateau or Decline phase they recognize they are going to die unless they do something. So, they go back to where it all began, and they re-form over a common set of CORE VALUES and a new Vision. Church scholars call this a Re-Visioning. Usually, it is a very exciting time in the church. I know of many healthy churches who have had five or six Re-visions and "rebirths." It is a really neat thing to see.

I wonder, what phase of the cycle do you think Ocker is in right now? Do you think we need a re-birth? Should we re-examine our Core Values and reassess our Vision or are we in the first two phases of the cycle.... or are we in the two healthy phases where our core values are clear and our vision for the future is solid?

Food for thought...

Next month (October), we are going to have our annual meeting...I hope you will come, so we can talk about who Ocker is, where we are and where we are going in the future.

Honored to be your pastor,

Brad

Churches Touching Lives for Christ is looking for some volunteers to help with its clothing ministry. CTLC offers free, gently used clothing from 9:00 am to noon each Thursday to all residents of Bell County. Clients include homeless individuals as well as many young families with children. Volunteers for this program work on Wednesday mornings to sort clothing donations and/or on Thursday mornings to check in customers and count and bag their items when they are through selecting them. It would be particularly helpful to find some volunteers who speak Spanish, because there is a significant number of clients who speak only Spanish. If you would like to get involved in this worthwhile ministry, please call CTLC at 254-778-6885 and leave your name and phone number, or email Paula Tanner at ptctlctemple@gmail.com. Thank you!

Sunday School Breakfast Sponsors

September – Standard Adult Class

October – Life Application Adult Class

November – Books of the Bible Adult Class

December – Potluck

January – Standard Adult Class

February – Life Application Adult Class

March – Books of the Bible Adult Class

April – Potluck

May – Muffins with Mom

June – Donuts with Dad

July – Potluck

CHRISTIAN SISTERS

Christian Sisters August meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be September 17 at 11:30 am in the Youth Building. Plans for the Harvest Supper and the October Craft Retreat will be discussed.

Matthew Bible Study

After a long summer break, what better way is there to go than to jump back into the scriptures? We are ready to get back to study with you. We will start again on Wednesday, September 11, at 6:30 pm. We will pick up again with Chapter 18. Everyone is welcome! Come join the fun.

Maggie

**Thank you
church for
your help and
your prayers
to make VBS
a success!**

Donations Needed:
We are collecting non-perishable food items and school supplies until September 22. Food items will be donated to the Rogers food pantry, and school supplies benefit Operation Christmas Child.

Mark your calendars now for SUMMER CAMPS 2025!

Encounter (2nd-4th grades) - June 15-18

Alpha (5th- 6th grades)- July 13-17

Pioneer (7th-8th grades)- July 6-11

Discovery (9th-10th grades)- June 8-13

Hus Camp (11th grade-college freshmen)- June 20-28

*** We need staffs for all camps. Staff apps open in January. Begin to pray now about how God might use you at camp, and visit with Jordan Barbisch if you are interested.

BYF – 6th grade and up

- Meeting on Sunday, August 25 after the spaghetti meal to make plans for the year.
- Youth will meet on Wednesdays in September from 6-8pm. Dinner provided.
- State Retreat dates are Sept. 14-15; Nov. 9-10; Jan. 4-5; Mar. 7-9, coinciding with State Kid's Rally on March 8. The summer volleyball retreat is tentatively scheduled for July 19-20. [Registration for the September 14-15 retreat is due to Jennifer no later than Wednesday, September 4.]
- Youth will lead children's games at the Harvest Supper on Wednesday, October 9. Times to be determined.
- Youth Volunteers for Children's Church are needed each Sunday. Youth are asked to sign up on the calendar in the youth building. No more than 4 youth per Sunday. Curriculum, activity, and snacks are provided.
- Make sure to join Ocker BYF on GroupMe to get updates, reminders, and communications for youth activities.
- Contact Jennifer Chervenka (254)913-1244;
jennchervenka@gmail.com

**FALL YOUTH RETREAT AT
HUS ENCAMPMENT**

September 14-15

6th grade and up

**Registration deadline is
Wednesday, September 4
for BYF to pay the retreat
fee for your child.**



Operation Christmas Child

Let IT Rain!



Rain can come in many forms varying from light drizzles that last for five minutes to large scary thunderstorms that last through a whole night. When it rains, I can't help but think about how it is a symbol of our lives. Some days it feels like a drizzle, might have a few moments of uncertainty but then it's over quickly. Sometimes, we go through a long scary thunderstorm, and we just don't know when it will end. But I know that no matter what type of rain I am going through, God is working for the best. Rain provides life to the Earth. It fills our lakes, rivers, and aquifers. Rain grows our crops and cools the atmosphere. The same is for our personal storms. It can be hard to go through at the time, but when God brings us out of our storms, we are renewed. I personally like to think about Moss who spent 40 days on the ark while it stormed. He was faithful through it all. After the 40 days, Moss was gifted a rainbow, a promise from God, and a renewed Earth. So, "weather" you are currently going through or will eventually go through a storm, draw near to God. Embrace the storm through prayer and remembering to relay on God and know he is at work. God will bring his goodness in the end.

"The same God who brought the sunshine ·Is the same one who brings the rain ·Yeah, the same God ·Who made the sunshine ·Is the same one who knows my name

So let it rain, let it pour ·Lord, I need You more and more ·Let it rain, rain down on me ·Every day ·whatever You want ·Not my will but Yours, Lord ·Let it rain, rain down on me" --Let It Rain- Song by David Crowder

As we continue to pray for Texas to receive rain, Operation Christmas Child would like to reflect on the goodness God brings after a storm. For the month of September, OCC is asking for donations of

hygiene items! Each box receives one pair of socks, toothbrush, washcloth, and comb/hairbrush. **We are in great need of each of these items.** In addition, we also collect hygiene items such as hair accessories, deodorant, shoes, bandanas, and lip balm (Please no liquid items). Operation Christmas Child would like to challenge you to bring in at least one hygiene item each week of September. When placing the items into the donation box, we ask that you take a minute to think about storms within your life and how God has brought you through and reflect on the blessing he brings.

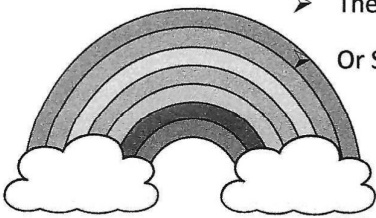
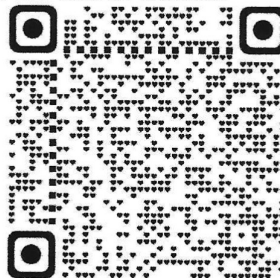
*Important Note!

Mark your calendars. We have just two months left before the packing party!! That's right, two months!!!! The Packing Party is on November 16th!

- **DON'T FORGET! OCC has an Amazon Wishlist!** Check it out at .
https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2KDH18VR04611/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_4?encoding=UTF8&type=giftlist Access this link through:

➤ The online newsletter located on the church website

Or Scan here!!



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SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 – Dianne Psencik | 20 – Leland Jungmann |
| Ashlyn Zdroik | Connor Sebek |
| Micah Wilfert | 21 – Ely Stork |
| 6 – Foster Koslovsky | 22 – Lucy Herridge |
| Hagen Tucker | 24 – Creed Pierce |
| 7 – Larry Pechal | Cristi Jungmann |
| 12 – Kirk Hutchins | 26 – Deanna Naivar |
| 13 – Sandra McAdams | 27 – Jennifer Chervenka |
| 14 – Julia Paddenburg | Brody Malovets |
| 15 – Asher Weathersbee | Kathy Harrison |
| 16 – Cash Hoelscher | 28 – Tammy Pierce |
| 18 – Gene Sousa | Blayne Hoelscher |
| 19 – Taylor Brinkley | 29 – Katelyn Erskine |

September Anniversaries

- 4 – Donald & Wynona Williams
- 7 – Robert & Kelly Stephens
- 10 – David & Jean Coufal
- 10 – Wayne & Celestia Hoelscher
- 22 – Ralph & Marcia Snyder
- 26 – Stan & Shelly Stanolis
- 27 – Michael & Frances Harper



CHOIR NEWS

The Sanctuary Choir will sing the 4th Sunday in September, October and November. We will rehearse at 10:00 am on the 4th Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. The more singers, the better. Please come out if you enjoy singing. You will be glad you did!

Regards,
Kim Dillard

September

2024

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1 First Sunday Fellowship 8:30 am Worship 10:15 am	2	3	4 Youth Bible Study 6 - 8 pm	5 Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am - 1 pm	6	7
8 FALL YOUTH RETREAT Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am Book Club 6:30 pm	9	10	11 Youth Bible Study 6 - 8 pm Matthew Bible Study 6:30 pm BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING 6:30 pm	12	13	14 FALL YOUTH RETREAT
15 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	16	17 Christian Sisters Meeting 1:30am	18 Youth Bible Study 6 - 8 pm Matthew Bible Study 6:30 pm	19	20	21
22 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	23	24	25 FAMILY GAME NIGHT 6 - 8 PM	26 Senior Adult Fellowship 9 am - 1 pm	27	28
29 Sunday School 9 am Worship 10:15 am	30	Looking ahead.. Harvest Supper - Wednesday - October 9 @ 6:30 pm Congregational Meeting - Sunday - October 27 following Worship				