



Armor Bible Church, OPC

Church Profile & Information Packet

January 2024

Email: search@armorchurch.org

Website: armorchurch.org

Armor Bible Church, OPC
5650 Powers Road
Orchard Park, NY 14127

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Pastoral Application Submittal



5650 POWERS RD. ORCHARD PARK, NY 14127

Dear Pastoral Candidate,

Armor Bible Church, OPC is recruiting our next pastor and we thank you for considering this role. The following pages will give you an overview of our church and what we are looking for in our next pastor.

If you believe that God may be calling you to ministry here, please contact our search committee at search@armorchurch.org and include:

- Cover letter;
- Resume;
- At least 2 references from each previous ministry;
- Ministry Information Form;
- Links to personal sermons

Please include your name in the filename of each attachment using the format lastname, firstname.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

In Christ,

The Pastoral Search Committee
Armor Bible Church, OPC

“Know that the Lord, He is God: It is He who has made us and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” - Psalm 100:3

A Brief History of Armor Bible Church, OPC

Armor Bible Church, OPC (Armor Bible Church; Armor) started in 1969 under the leadership of Pastor Bob Vandermey who 10 years earlier started Grand Island Bible Presbyterian Church, located 45 minutes north of Orchard Park. As a daughter church of Grand Island BPC, we took the name “Armor Bible Presbyterian Church”. In those days Pastor Bob hosted a half-hour radio program (Foundations of Faith) broadcast on Thursdays and Fridays on a local Christian station WDCX (which is still broadcasting God’s Word to this day). Some from the listening audience had an interest in associating as a body of believers somewhere in the “Southtowns” (suburbs south of Buffalo).

The church met for the first time on March 9, 1969, in the home of Don and Joan Fakler, who lived about a mile from where the church is now located. In 1970, the church began to meet in a storefront in the little hamlet of Armor, which is where the name comes from. Soon the church started to meet at the Armor Fire Hall which was within walking distance of the storefront. In 1971, the 6 acres of land on which the church now stands was purchased. At that time a parsonage was also purchased that provided a place for Sunday evening worship as well. In 1972, the first pastor, Paul Foster was called. Pastor Paul worked partly with the Armor church and partly at the Grand Island church. A short time later the parsonage was sold.

On April 28th, 1975, the church was organized as a particular church in the Bible Presbyterian denomination. Although independent with its Session, it continued to receive financial support and other ministerial support from the Grand Island Church. In 1976, another young pastor, fresh out of seminary, Russell Sukhia was called to replace Paul Foster. Russell had attended Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. That same year, the church broke ground on the first phase of the existing building on Powers Rd in Orchard Park. In August 1977, the first service was held in the new building. The church grew and five years later an assistant pastor, Bill Dickerson, was called. A year later, after seven years of fruitful ministry, Russell was called to a Bible Presbyterian church in Clearwater, Florida

The Bible Presbyterian denomination is a small one so it is not too surprising that the next pastor to be called to this work was Russell’s brother, Douglas. The people at Armor knew Doug because he had been the assistant pastor at the Grand Island BPC for four years after he graduated from seminary in 1976. When called to Armor in 1983, Pastor Doug served as a solo pastor in a BP church in Lakeland, Florida for four years. Soon Pastor Bill Dickerson left for another work and in September of 1987, Armor called Pastor Joe Keller to be the assistant pastor.

The church grew to a point where we needed to expand the facilities. So, we had a building fund and a bond issued that led to the financing of the new sanctuary and the conversion of the old sanctuary into office space and nurseries. The new building was occupied in 1990. As of 2005, the building has been completely paid for. In 1991, Matt Gold, a graduate of Clearwater College, came to serve as our youth pastor. In the summer of 1997, pastor Mark Turner joined the staff as an assistant pastor. He remained until 2005 when Pastor Steve Surprenant (an RTS Orlando graduate, former Navigators Staff, and church planter) joined the pastoral staff as an Associate. Mark Turner is currently a Senior Pastor in a PCA church in Charleston, South Carolina. Pastor. Steve Surprenant left the church in the early summer of 2016 to pursue another calling.

In the year 2000, we started to have Bible studies in the small town of Springville, about a half-hour drive from Orchard Park. This led to having actual services held in the JoyLan movie theater starting in June 2003. In May 2004 we called Keith Fagerheim to pastor the mission work in Springville as well as serve part-time at Armor. In May 2007, we left the BPC and affiliated with the PCA. Pastor Keith Fagerheim left the church in 2009. The pastors at the time were then licensed and ordained in the PCA. The reasons for the switch were primarily: the small and diminishing size of the BPC, the overemphasis on ecclesiastical separation of the BPC, and the lack of acceptance of ministerial and worship diversity in the BPC. Since "Bible Presbyterian" is a denominational moniker, we dropped the word "Presbyterian" from our name and were then known as Armor Bible Church (PCA). In May 2016, Pastor Doug Sukhia retired after 33 years as the Senior Pastor at Armor.

The Pastoral Search Committee extended the call to Jonathan Hunt on behalf of the congregation on February 26, 2017. After he and his wife Heather moved to Orchard Park, NY from Jackson, MS, his first Sunday preaching at Armor was June 11, 2017, but his official installation service was on July 2, 2017, and Dr. Ligon Duncan III (Chancellor of RTS Jackson) flew up from Jackson to preside over the installation service and give the charge. In God's good providence, and by His grace, we have been reforming according to Scripture. Just before Rev. Hunt's coming, and under the leadership of Rev. Jim Furey (who was our stated supply from 2015-2017), the "Call to Worship" was implemented. Since then, our confessional moorings have been restored. In 2021, a rigorous Westminster Shorter Catechism schedule was started for the Sunday School children (currently preschool up through junior high). Psalm-singing has been implemented using "The Book of Psalms for Worship" as our pew psalter. Hymns and other psalms have been printed in our bulletins for the congregation and, as of February 2024, hymns are sung from the *Trinity Hymnal* (1990). An evening Lord's Day service was instituted and exegetical preaching through books of the Bible was established. The church membership roll was cleaned up, as it was in dire need of housekeeping when Rev. Hunt came in 2017.

For several years, especially since the "Revoice" controversy that arose in 2018, we were very concerned about the trajectory of the PCA. There were many issues (gender dysphoria, utilizing the term "gay" Christians, women taking a more vocal role during the liturgy in some churches, etc.) that were not being handled Biblically at the presbytery level (in some presbyteries) or the General Assembly level. We were also concerned about the "big-tent" and increasingly "inclusive" nature of the PCA, leading to Armor becoming increasingly uncomfortable associating with this denomination. We officially moved into the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) in January 2023.

We have been blessed by the close geographical proximity of many faithful Continental Reformed congregations just north of the border in the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario. Even while we were PCA, the Canadian Reformed Churches (Niagara Classis) have been providing pulpit supply for us. Now that we are OPC, we have participated in pulpit exchanges. The Vineland Free Reformed Church in Ontario has been facilitating pulpit supply and exchange with us since 2018. We highly value our relationship with these gracious brethren and are encouraged by their faithfulness.

Jonathan Hunt served at Armor from July 2017 until January 2024. Following a January 3 congregational vote, the Presbytery of New York and New England approved the dissolution of the pastoral relationship effective January 16, 2024. Further information concerning the dissolution will be provided as an integral part of the search process.

At present, Armor is being served by retired OPC minister, D. Leonard Gulstrom, who serves as a ministerial advisor to Armor Session and as Armor's pulpit supply.

Who We Are, Our Goal, and Our Mission

Who We Are

Armor Bible Church is a Reformed congregation in the [Orthodox Presbyterian Church](#). We hold to the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the [Westminster Standards](#). We believe these standards to be authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture teaches.

Our Goal

To glorify and enjoy God as we seek the advancement of Christ's kingdom of grace.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of Armor Bible Church is to worship the one true God according to His Word, to build up stable Christian homes, and to engage the culture with the Truth of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, all for God's glory and the advancement of Christ's kingdom of grace.

Core Beliefs

Worship the one true God according to His Word.

1. We value worship that is firmly grounded in and regulated by the truth revealed in Scripture.
2. We value the Lord's Day as a day set apart for God's purpose and delight.
3. We value the ordinary means of grace: The reading and preaching of God's Word, prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
4. We value preaching and teaching with theological precision, based on careful biblical exegesis, with faithful adherence to the system of doctrine expressed in the Westminster Standards.
5. We value the singing of the Word of God through the Psalms and biblically-based hymns.

Build up stable Christian homes.

1. We value the building up of Christian households, according to the Biblical design, as the basic unit of the church and society.
2. We value private, family, and corporate worship of God which emphasizes the ordinary means of grace. These God has instituted to build up Christians in the faith.
3. We value relationships characterized by the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
4. We value diligently adding to our faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love so that we might be effective, fruitful, and never fall.
5. We value equipping each believer for ministry according to their gifts.

Engage the culture with the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. We value Christ's church as the pillar and ground of the truth, against which the gates of Hell will not prevail, and through which the gospel is proclaimed to every nation.
2. We value thoughtful engagement with the prevalent ideologies of our culture.
3. We value communicating the truth of God's Word in our daily lives and interactions.
4. We value the practice of hospitality as individuals and as a church community to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ as we make disciples.
5. We value active participation in the artistic and civil spheres of our community.

Vision

Armor Bible Church is seeking to build a sustainable Christian community in Orchard Park, NY. This we will do by establishing faithful worship of God, training our children in the faith, bringing people to church and teaching them to be disciples of Jesus Christ, providing leadership and service to our community, and living as faithful Christians in our homes, at church, and in society.

Philosophy of Worship

The worship philosophy of Armor Bible Church seeks to conform to the principles found in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), [*Directory for the Public Worship of God*](#) (DPW).

The Nature and Focus of Worship

We believe that worship is a meeting of God with His covenant people. God, through the government of the church, calls His people to worship. Christ, as the mediator of this covenant, is central to our worship. We are reminded of our sin and unworthiness in the reading of the Law which leads us to confess our sin. We are then offered the assurance of God's grace in Christ in the gospel promise, which leads us to respond in thanksgiving.

The Elements of Worship

The DPW outlines two parts of worship: the part from God to the people and the part from the people to God. God calls His people to worship, speaks to us through His Word, both in the reading and preaching of it, gives us sensible signs in the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and pronounces His blessing to His people in the benediction. The people pray to God in praise, confession, thanksgiving, and petition. They sing to God with understanding and grace in their hearts, with music that is fit for the nature of God and the purpose of worship. And we bring offerings to God, the first fruits of our labors, with thanksgiving and joy.

Worship at Armor Bible Church

Armor Bible Church has a morning and an evening worship service each Lord's Day. The worship is conducted by a minister of the Word with the assistance of the ruling elders. The accepted translations of the Scriptures to be used are The Geneva Bible, The King James Bible, The New King James Bible, The New American Standard Bible (1995), The Legacy Standard Bible, and The English Standard Version. The English Standard Version is our Pew Bible. We sing Psalms using the *Book of Psalms for Worship* (2011) and hymns using the *Trinity Hymnal* (1990). Our singing is accompanied by the piano or the organ, emphasizing congregational participation. We celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first morning service of every month, as well as during an evening service in months with five Sundays. Baptisms are generally performed during a morning service as needed.

Congregational Information

The statistics below are based on 2023 attendance:

Average attendance: Morning service 81
Evening service 40

Senior Adults (65 yrs+): 20%

Adults (19-65 yrs): 44%

Teenagers (13-18 yrs): 8%

Youth (5-12 yrs): 20%

Children (infant - 4 yrs): 8%

Session Profiles

Gary Goeddertz has served on the Armor Session since 2010. Gary was born and raised in the Buffalo, NY area. He went to Canisius College and earned his BS in Engineering from SUNY Buffalo. Gary and his wife, Kathy, have 3 adult children, all married, and 9 grandchildren. Gary & Kathy are both retired, enjoy visiting their children, and spending time with their grandchildren. Gary has also served on the Diaconate Board, along with teaching Adult Sunday School, and leading Bible Studies

Chris Layer (emeritus) has served on the Armor Session and the Trustees since 2000. Chris grew up on a farm in Ithaca New York. He earned a BS in Engineering from Purdue University. Currently, he is working in the aerospace industry for Moog in East Aurora. He and his wife Holly have three children. In his spare time, he is helping his son remodel his 110-year-old home. a favorite book of his is “Evidence That Demands a Verdict” by Josh McDowell.

Jonathan Bergmann was born and raised in St. Catharines, Ontario. Jonathan met his wife Jillian, a western New York native, in 2003, and two years later they were married. While engaged to be married, Jonathan and Jillian started attending Armor, and have been at the church ever since. Residing in the town of Orchard Park, Jonathan and his wife have been blessed by God with six children, and are currently homeschooling them. Jonathan is an asphalt paving and concrete contractor, which, though seasonal, keeps him very busy for several months of the year. Jonathan is very thankful to have been brought up in a Christian home and has often considered what a blessing it is that God has so graciously given him a legacy of faith. As David declared so many years ago, “For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.” (Psalm 61:5) Jonathan enjoys studying theology and helping his wife with the many tasks and responsibilities that accompany raising a family.

LeRoy Osborn began his service on the Armor Session in 2018. Following high school graduation in Arcade, NY, he attended the University of Rochester (BS Engineering) and SUNY at Binghamton (MS Accounting). He retired in 2018 after a career that included public accounting, corporate finance, and the printing industry, all in the Buffalo area. LeRoy is married to Beth and has two adult children whom he enjoys sharing time with, one of whom resides in Buffalo and the other in California. LeRoy serves as Clerk of Session, teaches Sunday School and Bible studies, as well as being a member of the Armor Missions Committee. He is ever thankful for the opportunity at Armor to grow in knowledge and love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Diaconate Profiles

Rick Weber joined the Armor Diaconate in 2015. He was born and raised in Kenmore, NY. He earned his AAS from Hilbert College, his BS from SUNY Buffalo, and attended graduate school at Canisius College. Rick is retired from the U.S. Postal Service. He & his wife Doris have 4 adult children, all married, and 7 grandchildren. Rick has led and been active in Bible studies and is currently taking Life On Life Missional Discipleship as he continues growing spiritually.

Caleb Henning grew up in a Christian home in Ohio on a family dairy farm. He is grateful to have been raised in the faith and to have gained a strong work ethic. In 2007, he graduated from Geneva College with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering, and in 2021 he earned a Master of Business Administration through online study from Geneva College. Caleb moved from Ohio to New York in 2008. He lives in Ashford, New York with his wife, Melissa, and six children. He also maintains a New York Professional Engineering license and practices Civil Engineering at MDA Consulting Engineers in Ellicottville, NY. Caleb started attending Armor in 2009. He has served the church in the Audio/Visual department where he and the AV team support the various activities in the church including Worship Services, Sunday School, and other activities as needed. He also serves as the clerk of the deacon board and helps care for the widows of the church.

Jonathan Rogers was born and raised in a Christian home in Northwestern PA. Upon completing high school, he went on to pursue a 3-2 Engineering program, earning a BS in Physics from Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA, and a BS in Engineering with a concentration in Civil Engineering from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA. After graduating in 2016, Jonathan moved to WNY and began working for a Civil Engineering consulting firm. Jonathan is currently serving as the diaconal treasurer. In addition to his diaconal duties, Jonathan enjoys helping with the audio-visual team and organizing church fellowship opportunities. Jonathan is grateful to know the Lord and is continually growing and striving to know Him more.

Office Manager

Linda Janczak - Linda started working at Armor in 2006. First as an Office Assistant and, since 2015, as an Office Manager. She is married with two grown children, whom she home-schooled through high school.

Budget History & Forecast

Description	2022 Budget	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
	(Nearest 1,000)		
Total Income	\$300	\$298	\$250
Total Personnel	148	148	127
Total Payroll Taxes & Insurance	23	25	25
Total Buildings and Grounds			
	46	53	41
Total Capital Improvements & Repair	25	20	9
Total Operating Expenses	16	12	11
Total Church Fellowship	1	1	1
Total Group Ministries & Activities	3	3	1
Total General Assembly Expenses	5	2	2
Total Training & Seminars	1	1	1
Total Youth & Children's Ministries	3	3	3
Total Worship & Ministry	3	3	6
Total Ministry Resources	1	1	1
Total Missions	25	25	20
Foreign Missions	12	10	(final allocation tbd)
Local Missions	9	9	
National Missions	4	6	
Total Expenses	\$300	\$298	\$248

Pastor Job Description

Qualifications

1. The Pastor Should:

- a. Be a model of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9
 - Mature in the faith and above reproach.
 - Monogamous, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, considerate, peaceable, and not quarrelsome.
 - Not addicted to any substances, including pornography and money.
 - Leading his household well and with a good reputation in and outside the church.
- b. Be an ordained OPC teaching elder (or be prepared to be ordained in the OPC) with God-given spiritual gifts to serve the Church (1 Timothy 3:2, 6). Preferably, with some experience as a pastor.
- c. Be in agreement with the doctrines of the Reformed Presbyterian faith as expressed in the Westminster Standards (1 Timothy 4:1, 16).
- d. Be in agreement with BCO FoG Chapter VII:
 - Pray for and with Christ's flock.
 - Feed the flock by the public reading and preaching of the Word of God; teaching, convincing, reproof, exhorting, comforting, and evangelizing, expounding and applying the truth of Scripture with ministerial authority, as a diligent workman approved by God.
 - Administer the sacraments.
 - Bless the people from God.
 - Shepherd the flock and minister the Word according to the particular needs of groups, families, and individuals in the congregation, catechizing by teaching plainly the first principles of the oracles of God to the baptized youth and to adults who are yet babes in Christ.
 - Visit the homes of the people, instructing and counseling individuals, and training them to be faithful servants of Christ.
 - Minister to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying.
 - Make known the gospel to the lost.
- e. Hold to the historicity of Genesis 1-2 and reject macro-evolution.
- f. Hold to the Regulative Principle of Worship and be committed to singing the Psalms and theologically sound hymns.
- g. Be committed to systematic, expository preaching.
- h. Be committed to two Lord's Day services.
- i. Encourage all members to use their gifts to serve the church, help others grow in faith, and build relationships with all members of the congregation.

Job Responsibilities as the Pastor

1. General

- a. Provide Biblical, spiritual leadership within the framework of the Church's overall vision, mission, and core beliefs.
- b. Responsible for preaching in the morning and evening services.

- c. Help plan and lead weekly and special worship services in conjunction with the ruling elders.
- d. Administer the sacraments as outlined in the “Worship at Armor” section.
- e. Officiate at special services such as weddings, funerals, and community events as needed and as approved by the Session.
- f. Work in partnership with the Session on spiritual and pastoral care matters.

2. Leadership

- a. Promote and implement the Church Mission and Vision.
- b. Provide oversight for vision planning/development/implementation with the church officers and develop areas where the mission and vision need to grow or change.
- c. Oversee the administration of the Church office in partnership with the Session.
- d. Preside as moderator over the Session and Congregational meetings, unless otherwise directed by the Ruling Elders, setting the agendas for the same (alongside the clerk of Session).
- e. Participate in meetings and events scheduled through the Presbytery or other OPC agencies.

3. Preaching and Teaching

- a. Zealously exposit the Bible; handling it with care and accuracy and communicating in a way that is understandable to the Congregation.
- b. Preach Christocentrically; following the overall theme of the Scriptures.
- c. Strive to have practical relevance for the Congregation within the context of the current culture without compromising biblical and doctrinal accuracy.
- d. Clearly express the confessional standards of the OPC and be consistent with the historic reformed tradition.
- e. Be committed to the *Lectio continua*, allowing Scripture to determine the topics to preach, but willing to address particular issues depending on the needs of the congregation in collaboration with the Session.
- f. Facilitate training for the elders and other approved teachers and delegate teaching responsibilities as needed.
- g. Provide support and direction for the education of the congregation, and encourage members to use and develop their gifts within the Church body and its ministry.

4. Evangelism:

- a. Encourage and exemplify hospitality in the church and the community.
- b. Be personally active in the local community.
- c. Seek to facilitate the church’s engagement in the surrounding community.

5. Working Conditions:

- a. The work of the pastor is an all-encompassing vocation that requires the minister to take pains with and be absorbed in the ministry.
- b. The pastor will be expected to spend the necessary time weekly in sermon preparation since the preaching of the word is the priority.
- c. May be required to quickly respond to crises that may arise within the Congregation.

Financial Compensation

1. The Pastor's salary will:
 - a. Be negotiated in consideration of the OPC Call Package Guidelines;
 - b. Be commensurate with experience.
 - c. Include a housing allowance
2. The Pastor's benefits will:

- a. Be negotiated in consideration of the OPC Call Package Guidelines
- b. As a minimum include the following:
 - i. Health insurance benefits for himself and his family;
 - ii. Vacation
 - iii. Retirement Plan

Community Profile

Buffalo is located on the Western end of the State of New York, on the shores of Lake Erie. Lake Erie is one of the 5 Great Lakes and is a great place to spend a sunny afternoon boating, enjoying water sports, or just relaxing on one of the area's beaches. It offers some of the best smallmouth bass fishing in the country. Families can enjoy going to parks and the Buffalo Zoo. When summer is over, Buffalo is known for the snow during the winter months, which allows you to drive 5 miles from church to go cross-country skiing, or drive a little farther and ski one of the local downhill skiing resorts. All year round Buffalonians enjoy many festivals, and other social and cultural events, as it is home to the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Shea's Performing Arts Theater. Buffalo has an incredible history of the Underground Railroad, the Erie Canal, the inauguration of Teddy Roosevelt, and much more. Buffalo is also home to the AAA baseball team Buffalo Bisons, the Buffalo Bills (NFL), and the Buffalo Sabres (NHL). When it comes to food, we are proud of our chicken wings, but we also have hundreds of independently owned family restaurants with local specialties and several farmers' markets. For more on Buffalo go to [www. visitbuffaloniagara.com](http://www.visitbuffaloniagara.com)

Orchard Park is located 11 miles Southeast of Buffalo, N.Y., with a well-maintained highway system that provides convenient travel between Orchard Park's rural setting and downtown Buffalo. Lake Erie's shores and the Peace Bridge to Canada are 20 minutes away. Niagara Falls, often called the 8th wonder of the world, along with Letchworth State Park (Grand Canyon of the East), are all within a 1-hour drive. Orchard Park is only a 15-mile drive from the Buffalo airport. For more about the region, go to <http://orchardparkny.org/content>.

According to the US Religion Census in 2020, 67.95% of the population in Erie County New York is religious ([US Religion Census \(nazarene.org\)](http://nazarene.org)). The top 5 religious groups are Catholic, Non-denominational, Muslim, Methodist, and Pentecostal ([Congregational Membership Reports | US Religion \(thearda.com\)](http://congregationalmembershipreports.com)). The [American Bible Society's 2016 study](http://americanbiblesociety.org) of America's most Bible-minded cities found that Buffalo, NY ranks 96th out of 100, and Albany, NY (our state capital) ranks 100th. This means that Buffalo is one of the top 5 most godless cities in America according to this study.¹

¹ The questions asked were: 1) Do you believe the Bible to be generally accurate? 2) Did you read your Bible in the last week?

Pulpit Committee Members

- LeRoy Osborn, chair; (716) 536-9006
- Melissa Henning
- Aaron Masters
- Bobby Walker
- Lisa Johnston
- Sandy Wiencek

LeRoy Osborn represents the Session; all others are communicant church members