

Olympia First Baptist Church

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The Thin Place:

Where the Sacred and the Ordinary Collide

The first week of June marks the waning of the season of Easter, for the Church. This 50-day season focuses upon the Resurrection of the Risen Christ; the new life that resurrection offers to each of us; as well as the signs of life all around us whether it be nature, family and friends, or those surprising "Spirit" moments that catch us unaware. Through it all, even during difficult and trying times like we are experiencing now, life, yes, even new life, is all around us. Moving, shaping, bringing with it hope, joy, encouragement, laughter and love. Those things can carry us through our times of struggle, despair, anxiety and worry. The good news, we must remember, always, is that resurrection is not confined to those 50 days. Easter, is never a one and done day. God is a God of resurrection; of finding ways to roll back the stones of our individual tombs, and call us out into the light of a new day, with new challenges and new opportunities to live and share in the love and grace of God's Kindom. You need some hope in your life? Try that on for size. See how that feels. See if helping others, being kind and thoughtful, looking for the best in others, doesn't give you a sense of purpose, of connection with God and with those around you.

Remember:

He is Risen!

This is true every single day of your and my life, together!

As we get ready to leave this season of Eastertide and Resurrection, we are reminded that we are never out of God's sight and care. On Sunday, June 8th, we step into the next season within the Church of Jesus Christ, Pentecost, where we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is hard to explain as well as contain. Let's just say the Spirit of the Living God is, um, well, surprising!

In case you have forgotten, it was a year ago, last Pentecost (2024) that we committed ourselves to do our best to be OPEN to the movement of the Spirit. To OPEN ourselves to being surprised what the Spirit was doing in us, around us, for us, and yes, despite us.

I think it's fair to say, that as a congregation, we have become more Spirit-aware. Sure, some of the things we have experienced seem to be mere coincidence but then again, with the eyesight we are given because of the Risen Christ, maybe, just maybe, what we are seeing, and experiencing is more than meets our eyes. It is God at work through the Spirit. Hmm. Regardless of how you think the Spirit works or doesn't work, it still seems like a good idea to continue to OPEN ourselves up to being surprised. Each and every day, God is at work. God is loving, changing, healing, forgiving, giving out grace, mercy, second and third chances. God is working at making God's Self Known. How can we not be open to being surprised by what God is doing? As summer comes upon us, let us keep our eyes open to what the Spirit is doing in our midst and all around us.

Blessings and Joy!

Humble over Hype!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

State of the Church – Part 2

The Year of Transitions – 2024-25 – Again

2024 became, unofficially, Phase One – the year of Transitions.

We began by starting the process of rewriting, repurposing and changing the way we make decisions as well as our governance model. The task of rewriting our church By-Laws and Constitution fell onto the wide and steady shoulders of Mike Cooper and Jodi Honeysett.

They worked tirelessly for 9-months, getting input, questions, etc., thrown at them and handling it all with grace and an openness that cannot be dismissed. All of that work; all of our gathered times for conversation and questions around this move to provide more flexibility and adaptability within our structure, led to the adoption of new By-laws and Constitution at the Annual Meeting!

Even though this year of Phase 1 emphasized transitions in structure and governance, we continued to be opened to God's Spirit and being surprised by that same Spirit. Community engagement was a priority and emphasis and this led to hosting two block parties for the neighborhood during the summer of '24. We also saw a continuing and deepening of our new partnership with World Relief and using Emmaus House as transitional housing for incoming families. We also had the privilege of exercising our hospitality gift by hosting World Relief's Thanksgiving Potluck, where 150 plus folks gathered in our Fellowship Hall with a cornucopia of food, laughter, stories, testimonies, and dancing! We also had the privilege of hearing and learning about the ministry of reconciliation for those incarcerated through One Parish-One Prisoner and embracing that ministry as well. We now have a OPOP team of 7 people who are building a relationship with a young woman, who is looking at being released sometime this year. Additionally, we also have seen more and more new faces in worship, with many of those folks very much interested in becoming members and a vital part of the mission and ministry of Olympia First Baptist Church. To top all of that, our biggest joy was witnessing four baptisms this past Easter.

God is good – all the time – God is good!

We are now, just on the other side of the first quarter of 2025, what I sheepishly called, Phase 2, to the Executive Leadership Team. This year we are still in a process of transition. We have a new structure in place, with a new leadership team and ministry teams that will be taking their maiden voyage together and discover/see if any of it will actually work, cohesively. We think it will but we do anticipate some bumps in the road throughout the year. We will continue to listen to God's voice and direction as well as opening ourselves up to being surprised by God's Spirit in the midst of it all. This means, hopefully, being able to pivot when we discern that God is pointing us in a different direction or area of ministry.

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One of our unforeseen challenges in 2025 is that our giving is down. Currently we are \$25,000 down in our giving. Though no one is excited or happy with that number, we are not in panic mode. We recognize that we have lost some of our incomes are pretty fixed and so we are not necessarily able to give as much as we might have been able to in the past. Plus, we also recognize that our current economy and the uncertainty as to what some of the new economic policies in place and the ramifications of them, has many of us concerned and downright scared. When fear and uncertainty get a hold of us, we tend to hold back, just in case what comes next looks more like scarcity than abundance. As church leadership, we get it. We really do. However, we are a people who also have experienced and been on the receiving end of God's abundance. And because of that, we remain faithful. We give as best we can. And for those of us who are able, we check ourselves and see if we can give more. Whatever your circumstance; wherever you might find yourself in this season, we just ask that you be prayerful, be faithful and give as you feel called, without shame or guilt. God loves you. We here at Olympia First love you too!

Last thing!

This year we are also hosting the Annual Meeting of the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches, October 9, 10 and 11th. As we prepare for that event, it reminds us that we need to be working on making our facility and property a bit more welcoming and accessible for people, whether through our work and ministry of community engagement, and/or hosting our region family in October. That will mean clearing out some of the clutter that has accumulated over the years in most of the rooms. We are also going to give the second-floor hallway a new paint job that will brighten up that space and make it a bit more, warm and welcoming. We are also putting the final pieces together that will lead to an ADA compliant bathroom downstairs, outside of the Fellowship Hall and Fireside Room. We are turning that bathroom from a Women's bathroom into a "family" style bathroom that will accommodate those with disabilities and/or family needs. This is part of making our church more accessible to all who come. We are also planning on putting in new bathroom doors in the upstairs bathrooms as well as an ADA complaint toilet in the upstairs women's bathroom. We know that improvements to the property is not always views as being ministry-centered. However, if our vision and goal is to be more engaged with our neighborhood and surrounding community, we need to make sure that the space we are welcoming others into, is indeed, warm, bright, welcoming and accessible for all who choose to come and explore life with Christ within our faith community.

Next month – Part 3 – Vision: What does the future hold?

Pastor Mark

Senior High Camp

A summer camp for 9th
graders through graduate.

Date: July 13th - 19th
Cost: \$325 (Pre Registrations)
\$350 (For Walk-ins)

Junior High Camp

A summer camp for 6th
to 8th graders.

Date: July 20th - 26th
Cost: \$325 (Pre Registrations)
\$350 (For Walk-ins)

Elementary Camp

A summer camp for 3rd to
5th graders.

Date: July 27th - July 31st
Cost: \$250 (Pre Registrations)
\$275 (For Walk-ins)

Camp Bethel Summer Camps**Senior High Camp – July 13th—19th**
(9th grade to Summer after Graduation)**Theme: Compassion**

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct,
in love, in faith, in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

\$325/person (Pre-Registrations)
\$350/person (for walk-ins)

Junior High Camp – July 20th—26th
(6th Grade to 8th Grade)**Theme: Compassion**

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in
love, in faith, in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

\$325/person (Pre-Registrations)
\$350/person (for walk-ins)

Elementary Camp – July 27th—July 31st
(Entering 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade)**Theme: Compassion**

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct,
in love, in faith, in purity.”

1 Timothy 4:12

\$250/person (Pre-Registrations)
\$275/person (for walk-ins)

*Scholarships are available. Check with Pastor Mark if you are interested in scholarship help.

Save The Date

It's never too early to do a bit of planning ahead. So, with that in mind, here are some dates that you might want to have and begin thinking about participating in...

2025 ABC/USA Biennial Mission Summit

July 3rd—6th, Omaha, Nebraska

(Technically, this is part of Pastor Mark's summer plans, however, your prayers for this denominational gathering are needed)

Taste of Evergreen – Saturday, July 26th

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Panther Lake Community Church

More specific information will be in July's Windows, but this is one of our Evergreen Region's annual events where we get to taste and enjoy a variety of foods from our different ethnic caucuses. There is also a desert auction around 1:30 that serves as an added fundraiser.

Evergreen at the Ballpark – Faith and Family Day

Saturday, August 2nd – 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Our hometown 9 will battle the Texas Rangers on Faith and Family day out at T-Mobile park. Ticket information will be forthcoming soon. We will share that in the July Windows as well as Thoughts and Things.

All-Church Potluck – Sunday, August 10th!

12:30 to 4:00 p.m. @ home of Pat DeNeui

Back by popular demand, we will be offering a potluck community event, hosted by Pat DeNeui, after church on Sunday, August 10th.

Get this on your calendars now! More details about food, games, etc., to come in July! It is good to come together as community and enjoy a good meal, share some stories, and laugh and enjoy the weather and one another.

Sacred Spaces

Your Executive Leadership Team would like to share with you a document that they have worked on through our new process of consensus. The origin of this document actually came from Interfaith Works, which Olympia First Baptist is a member of. Interfaith also went through their own process of crafting their original "Covenant to Protect the Sanctity of Sacred Spaces." While the Leadership team, as a whole, supported the spirit of the covenant, we were uneasy that some of the language was too political and potentially divisive. What we have for your eyes, is our reworking of Interfaith Works' "Covenant to Protect the Sanctity of Sacred Spaces."

We feel that our document better reflects, not only our congregation, but also one of our major Baptist distinctives: Separation of Church and State. The document also reflects our own established practices at Olympia First, in relationship with our ministry with Table Grace, that civil authorities should not have unlimited and/or unannounced access to the church, whether it's during worship and/or a specific ministry on the church property. This document is not policy, but rather our statement of belief that all sacred spaces need to be honored and protected from unwarranted civil authority actions, especially when the public and/or those gathered is not in danger.

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“A Covenant to Protect the Sanctity of Sacred Spaces”

First Baptist Church of Olympia, recognizes that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. In solidarity with the Program Council of Interfaith Works and its members, we here at Olympia First believe and affirm the sanctity of sacred, shared spaces for worship, prayer, meditation, and the practices that awaken, nurture, and sustain our spiritual lives. These spaces go by many names: church, temple, synagogue, mosque, zendo, monastery, meeting house, spiritual community and more.

For centuries, a hallmark of all but the most brutal of societies has been in the principle that sacred spaces, and those seeking refuge in them, must remain beyond the coercive presence of civil authorities. Even when not explicitly enshrined in law or regulation, this principle has been widely respected, except in the most dire emergencies where immediate threats to life and public safety exist. For the past 36 years, Table Grace, a feeding ministry of Olympia First Baptist, has maintained and practiced, that law enforcement should not and cannot just show up to issue warrants and/or arrest individuals when people are on the church property. This is done, for everyone’s protection, given the logistics and number of persons gathered for a shared meal and/or other activities, within confined spaces.

In response to any threat of violation in our sacred spaces, we pledge that:

We will treat any invasion of one of our sacred spaces as an invasion into the sacred space of every one of us.

When called upon, we will respond and bear witness to such invasions within our broader community, sharing notice through word and image with our congregations, local and state authorities, and the public. We will urge our elected representatives at all levels to speak out against these policies and advocate for the protection of these sacred spaces for the well-being of our communities.

We will educate ourselves and our leaders on the legal and constitutional means available to protect all who seek refuge in our sacred spaces. We commit to teaching and exercising our 4th and 5th amendment rights in solidarity with the most vulnerable.

We will coordinate our efforts with educators, healthcare professionals, and state and local authorities who have committed to using their resources to protect all our neighbors through the enforcement of local, state, and federal law.

We will urge those in our regional and national denominations to adopt similar policies.

We stand together in unwavering commitment to the sanctity of our sacred spaces and the dignity of those who seek refuge within them. Our faiths call us to compassion, justice, and protection of the most vulnerable, and we will not falter in this sacred duty.

Olympia First Baptist is proud of its legacy of embracing all people, from calling Festus Campbell, a former slave, as Interim Pastor in 1879 as well as calling Mrs. Mary Jones as Pastor from 1885 to 1887. Welcoming immigrants and refugees from around the world, whether from China at the turn of the 20th century, to those fleeing Communist aggression in Eastern Europe in the 50’s and 60’s to a family from Vietnam in the 70’s, Olympia First Baptist has embraced a practice of hospitality in the face of hostility over its long history as a faith community. May our collective resolve serve as a beacon of hope and shield against injustice, ensuring that no house of worship is turned into a place of fear.

Deacon's Corner
from
Meggin Turk

Life begins when we learn to live in Peace

If we believe in God completely, we know that He is involved in each moment of our lives. We live in a fallen world, abnormal and full of sins against humanity. We get frustrated and we yearn to find joy and peace. When we desire God with the deepest desire of our hearts, our yearning will be fulfilled! This June, let's pray for peace together!

"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you"

Isaiah 41:13

.....
WOMEN'S MINISTRIES
.....

Jean Heidal, Chair

Clean...Clean... CLEAN...

It's time to clean the church kitchen so please join us on Wednesday, June 11th at 12 noon for a "cleaning party"! You don't need a lunch, we will provide a salad buffet and then get to work! Come, bring a friend. There will be a job for everyone!

As we move into the summer months and the "clean up bug" comes to your house remember our Treasure Room in December. We have space to store your items and can accept them anytime. Jan Downen will be the lead person again this year so contact her if you have any questions.

The Women's Conference was held the last weekend of May at Camp Bethel and Kyle Williams was the missionary speaker. He was able to take 40 dresses with him back to Thailand. What a blessing to be able to send these dresses on their way to a region impacted by floods and devastation. These dresses, made with love, will be gratefully received.

And lastly, we said good-bye to our dear sister-in-Christ Tia Pennell. She was a long time member of this church and active in Women's Ministries. It was an honor to host the memorial reception after the service.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OLYMPIA

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Contact Information

360-357-3881
Email: olyfbc@aol.com
Web: fbcolympia.org

Church Staff

Rev. Mark Rambo, Senior Pastor
Rev. Caroline Lehman, Visitation Pastor
Stephen Price, Director of Music Ministries
Lela DePaolo, Secretary
John Fesenbek, Campus Maintenance

June 2025 • Sermons and Scriptures • Olympia First Baptist Church

June 1st Ascension/Communion Sunday

Sermon Text – Luke 24:44–53
Sermon: Up, Up and Away
Written Word: Ephesians 1:15–23
Written Word: Psalm 47

Sunday, June 8th – Pentecost

Sermon Text – Acts 2:1–21
Sermon: Here We Go Again...
Written Word: Romans 8:14–17
Written Word: Psalm 104:24–34, 35b

Sunday, June 15th – 1st Sunday after Pentecost/Trinity Sunday

Sermon Text Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31
Sermon: Pronouns
Written Word: Romans 5:1–5
Written Word: Psalm 8

Sunday, June 22nd – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Text – Luke 8:26–39
Sermon: What's Your Name?
Written Word: Galatians 3:23–29
Written Word: Psalm 22:19–28

Sunday, June 29th – 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Text – Luke 9:51–62
Sermon: Follow the Leader
Written Word: Galatians 5:1, 13–25
Written Word: Psalm 16

Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous. Do not be
afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord
your God will be with you. wherever you go.”
Joshua 1:9

