

**Olympia  
First  
Baptist  
Church**

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**The Thin Place:**

**Where the Sacred and the Ordinary Collide**

*So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, **wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment.***

**Never be without it.**

*Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And **cultivate thankfulness.** Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.*

Colossians 3:12–17

**The Message**

Hard to believe, but we are entering the last two months of 2025. This month of November signals and presents us with some significant opportunities within our congregational spiritual journey for formation, and growth. A quick overview:

November 1<sup>st</sup> is All-Saints Day, a time for us to pause, remember, pray and give thanks for significant people in our lives who are now in God's loving and eternal presence. Whether spouses, significant family members, and/or people who were part of your spiritual awakening, formation, inspiration, etc., this day is a day of acknowledgement that we do not walk alone or pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps or any other hyper-individualistic mythology we sometimes get trapped in.

Thanksgiving is late this year, as it falls on Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Continued on pg 2...*

This “holiday” is not a religious one, but it is also more than just football, turkey and leftovers. For those of us who follow the ways of Christ, thankfulness, is to be a regular part of our prayer life. We acknowledge the blessings, the people, the Spirit-induced surprises we encounter daily. As the Apostle Paul reminded the community of Christ-followers in Colossae, above, “***cultivate thankfulness.***”



Lastly, this November begins our Advent journey together as we get ready, prepare, anticipate, and yes, sing, for the coming gift of hope, peace, joy, and love, wrapped in swaddling cloth and lying in a manger. Advent begins on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, this year. As we participate in the story of the Christ child’s arrival and birth, we open ourselves up once again to be reminded, renewed, and yes, even changed by this story of Emmanuel, God with us! As we move into these last few months, let us “cultivate a spirit of thankfulness” for God’s presence, unfathomable grace and a mysterious, abiding love, that does not forsake us, ever.

Remember:

You are made in God’s image!

You are enough in God’s eyes!

You are deeply, deeply loved!

So, give thanks!

Blessings and Joy!  
Humble over Hype!

Pastor Mark (Rev)



From Rev. Joan Friesen

Thank you to the many, many volunteers who made our hosting of the  
Evergreen Association Annual Gathering a big success!  
We couldn't have done it without the contributions of so many.  
(Please let us know if your name was left off the list!)

Workdays—Sam Hochstatter, John Paget, Robin Paget, Bob Holcomb, Janice Holcomb, Jeri Stone, Yim Locke, Gary Baits, Mylinda Baits, Jay Nordgaard, Lola Hall, Jewel Studebaker, Russ Harpel, John Fesenbeck, Denise Alborn, Davis Hylkema, Wendy Wilson, Jeri Stone, Terry Stone, Carolyn Adams

.....

Painters—Mike Bradburn, Vern Blair, John Fesenbeck

.....

Mid-week cleaners—Catherine Cadoo, Freda Spaulding, Patti Mauerman, Mary Baker

.....

Registration—Jan Downen (team leader), Karen Wilson, Wendy Wilson, Jeri Stone, Jodi Honeysett

.....

Gatherings—Meggin Turk (team leader), Lola Hall, Sandi Swarthout, Sandy Lehman, Patti Luhr, Pat DeNeui, Jean Heidal, Emily Blair, Mike Bradburn, Danielle Bradburn, Jonathan Spatola-Knoll, Carolyn Lehman

.....

Hospitality—Joan Friesen (team leader), Bob Holcomb, Janice Holcomb, Kathleen Rambo, Jay Nordgaard, Sandy Grebbs, Davis Hylkema, Sam Hochstatter, Melissa McKee, John Fesenbeck

## **News from Stewardship & Executive Leadership Teams**

We are entering the budget forming process for 2026. That means that the different ministry teams are working on putting together and submitting their budget requests for the 2026 season. Below are important dates that you need to be aware of as this part of our overall ministry plan(s) are taking place.

### **October 29<sup>th</sup>...**

is the deadline for Ministry Teams to submit their proposals for the 2026 budget. The Church Treasurer then puts those numbers into the budget framework we use, so that we can discuss in detail any questions the Stewardship and Leadership team(s) has about the budgetary draft proposal.

### **Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>...**

the Stewardship Team will be the first group to look over and discuss the proposed draft. At this gathering, the Team will discuss, clarify, as well as change and/or approve the proposed budget. Once they come to consensus on the draft, they will move it along to the Executive Leadership Team.

### **Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>...**

the Executive Leadership Team will have their turn going over the budget draft and after discussion and dialogue, will come to consensus on modifying and/or adopting the proposed Budget for 2026.

Once the proposed Budget has been approved by consensus, we will make the Budget available to the congregation by supplying physical copies here at church as well as including them in the Thoughts and Things document(s) that Pastor Mark sends out twice a week. We want you, the congregation, to look it over and highlight areas that you may have questions about. That process will bring us to...

**A Budget Hearing that is scheduled for Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>...**

after the morning Worship service. This will be your opportunity to ask questions that you may have about the budget as well as hear the thought behind some of the decisions that were made. From this gathering, if changes are needed, based upon the discussion, and direction from those gathered, the final proposed budget for 2026 will be finalized. Again, this finalized version of the budget will be made available to the congregation and will included in the Annual Meeting booklet.

**The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>...**

after the morning worship service. We will, by consensus, approve the 2026 Budget as well as affirm the Executive Leadership Team for 2026. We will be joined by the Rev. Paul Schneider, the Executive Associate Minister of Operations and Administration for the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches. Paul will act as a “Consensus advisor” since our new consensus model is still rather novel to us. Paul will only share if there is a question and/or some confusion over the consensus process. We are fortunate to have him be with us as a resource as we become more accustomed to Consensus making decisions.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Sandi Swarthout, Moderator, Chrystal Cooper, Stewardship Team Leader, Jay Nordgaard, Church Treasurer, and/or Pastor Mark Rambo

357 is an amazing number, but that's how many dresses were made during the last year by our women. And the dresses are already on their way to mission fields both at home and abroad.

We were contacted by a mission school in Uganda. It was started several years ago with 50 students. Now there are over 600 children at the school. Dormitories and classrooms have been built and they have begun a chicken farm and also large vegetable gardens.

A number of dresses are being sent to Katrina and Kyle Williams in Thailand and also to girls in Myanmar. We also have many refugees from Myanmar that have settled in the Kent area so they also received dresses.

A big "thank you" to Janice Holcomb, Yim Locke, Jan Downen and Carol Holt for their hours and hours of sewing. A number of women also helped by cutting out dresses, ironing fabric, hemming and being encouraging support to each other. While some of the dresses were made out of pillowcases, many were made from fabric we were gifted.

What's next? We are going to make shorts for boys. Some of the women have already started, and I will keep you up to date.

November is coming and we will be meeting on Wednesday, November 12, at 12 noon. Bring your sack lunch. I heard a "rumor" that pumpkin pie may be the dessert at our meeting. I hope you will come and hear the exciting things we have planned for the new year!

Thank you to all the women who made muffins, cookies and cakes for the Evergreen Association Conference recently held here! Wonderful snacks and desserts! Many, many thanks!

If it's November then December can't be far behind. Our annual Christmas Brunch is Saturday, December 6th at 10:30, but doors will open at 9:30 for early shoppers to the Baptist Bakery and Treasure Room!

The "My Best Friends" ensemble will present a program of Christmas music and Kat Stoker will bring our message of the morning. In addition many of you are aware that our long time Minister of Visitation, Rev. Caroline Lehman retired earlier this year and we will take some moments to recognize her for her years of service to our congregation.

Tickets for brunch go on sale the first Sunday of November. Tickets are \$13 this year, in the church library after worship. You can also call me at 206-387-1492.

We have storage at the church for items donated to the Treasure Room! We already have quite a few items, but we would love to have YOUR no longer needed items for our sale. And it's time to pull out your beloved Christmas recipes to make something wonderful for the Baptist Bakery.

Thank you all for your continuing support of Women's Ministries!

**THE VIEW FROM THE DEACONS' BENCH**  
**BY**  
**VERNON BLAIR**

October 8 -12 I travelled to the deep South for my somewhat annual blues trip. I have been making this trip since 1991 annually until COVID. I decided that I wanted to do one last trip to the Mississippi Delta and urged several friends to join me. This was an eventful part of my life that I did not want to fade away; I wanted to be intentional.

Every year on the weekend before ~~Columbus Day~~ Indigenous Peoples' Day, Helena, Arkansas, celebrates the King Biscuit Blues Festival. I have seen wonderful performers there: B. B. King, Taj Mahal, Bonnie Raitt, Irma Thomas, Robert Cray and the list goes on and on. Over the last few years the talent level has been downgraded. This year the Festival lost funding from the National Endowment For the Arts so that they had to eliminate the Thursday night performance.

The Festival itself was disappointing. The crowd was probably about 25 per cent of the years before COVID. Previously both sides of main street was lined with food venders of two blocks with locals selling bar-b-que on the side streets. This year there were no local vendors and only three food trucks.

The Festival has been the occasion for a bunch of Louisville lawyers plus folks from other environs to hang out, eat Southern food, and enjoy music. The festival was disappointing, but the friends, music, and food all hit the spot, even though I didn't get to eat any bar-b-que.

The Biscuit group has been an important community for me – many long time close relationship. Although we have different religious values I find a spiritual connection with this group.

The Blues arose from the cotton fields of Mississippi, as well as from the other Southern states. It is the plaintiff cry of the oppressed, the disenfranchised. Much like the Psalms, the Blues lament loss and estrangement. It has the power of honest feeling and angst, sometimes with no resolution. "The Blues ain't nothing but a good man feeling bad." The world has turned away –your lover has done you wrong, you worked all day, all year, only to be deeper in debt, Whisky and tobacco has pulled you down. The Blues are a moan of the pain of life.

The tradition is the blues at a juke joint on Saturday night; then the same singers get up on Sunday morning to worship and perhaps find the hope the answer to their Saturday night lament. When morning comes, hope arises in the music of the gospel. However, sometime the only cure for the Blues is the Blues. Sing, Moan, Weep. Wait for the sun to rise.

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OLYMPIA

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## Church Staff

Rev. Mark Rambo, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Caroline Lehman, Visitation Pastor  
Jonathan Spatola-Knoll, Director of Music Ministries  
Lela DePaolo, Secretary  
Aaron Delaney, Interim Campus Maintenance

## November 2025 • Sermons and Scriptures • Olympia First Baptist Church

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Ordinary Time  
Guest Preacher - Pastor Dave Roberts  
Sermon Text – Habakkuk 1:1–4, 2:1–4  
(*The Message*)  
Sermon Title – "Then God answered me ..."  
The Written Word – 2 Thessalonians 1:1–4,  
11–12  
The Written Word – Psalm 32:1–7

**November 9<sup>th</sup>** – Ordinary Time  
Sermon Text – Haggai 2:1–9  
Sermon – Faith = Better Days to Come?  
The Written Word – Job 19:23–27a  
The Written Word – Psalm 98

**November 16<sup>th</sup>** – Ordinary Time  
Sermon Text – Luke 21:5–19  
Sermon Title – Rocky Road  
The Written Word – Isaiah 65:17–25  
The Written Word – Isaiah 12

**November 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Christ the King/  
Thanksgiving Sunday  
Sermon Text – Luke 23:33–43  
Sermon Title – Save Yourself  
The Written Word – Colossians 1:11–20  
The Written Word – Psalm 46

**November 30<sup>th</sup>** – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Sermon Text – Luke 24:36–44  
Sermon Title – People, Get Ready!  
The Written Word – Isaiah 2:1–5  
The Written Word – Psalm 122

You  
are so  
Loved

For God so loved the world, that he  
gave his only begotten Son, that  
whosoever believeth in him should not  
perish, but have everlasting life.  
John 3:16