

*Olympia
First
Baptist
Church*

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The Thin Place:

Where the Sacred and the Ordinary Collide

The season of Advent is upon us. From Sunday, November 30th through Christmas morning, Thursday, December 25th, these 26 days attempt to call us to something unimaginable, mysterious, and life-altering – the Incarnation – God in human form.

Advent. Is the **beginning**. Not just of the new church calendar year, but much more importantly, the beginning of God changing course and doing a new thing.

Advent. Is about the mystery, confoundedness associated with **birth**. It doesn't just happen. It is a process of being formed, bit by bit – piece by piece, into something beautiful and full of hope.

Advent. Is about **longing**. Having a strong desire for something that usually feels unattainable. Longing is deep, thoughtful, heartfelt. Each of us long for something – real, tangible.

Advent. Is about **waiting**. Waiting is associated with patience, with emphasis on “associated.” Reality is the opposite. Try telling your kids, grandkids, nieces or nephews to wait just a little bit longer on Christmas morning. But in Advent, we wait, hopefully, expectantly, anticipating that God will reveal God's self in some shape and form.

Advent. Is about **making room**. The world around us is chaotic and feels, often, out-of-control. Add the consumer-driven frenzy of the season and the call to buy, buy, buy, who has time or the mindset to slow down and get ready? To make room for whatever God is going to do?

Advent. Is about **welcoming**. Welcoming is throwing open the doors of our hearts, our spirit, our souls, to something bigger than ourselves. That takes some prayer. That takes some quiet and stillness. That takes, hmm, taking a deep breath and getting into a decent head/heart space. Welcoming—what needs to come into your life; it just needs an invitation...

Advent. Is about **God-with-Us!** What does that mean for you? How does that fit into your everyday, ordinary life? How does it

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make a difference, if any? In the midst of this season where some can get uptight on whether you say Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays, does this notion of God-with-us, give you hope or is just one more thing to feel guilty about because, well, _____. (Insert a shrug, eye-roll, favorite emoji, sigh, etc.).

The choice, as usual, is up to you. You have a choice, a voice in how you engage with this season of Advent. You determine the pace of life you want in the midst of the frenzy of those around you. You have an opportunity to find yourself within this story of waiting, longing, participating, etc., and to discover how God speaks to you in the midst of it. Brothers and Sister, get ready...

Emmanuel – God with us, revealed in us...

Blessings and Joy!

Pastor Mark (Rev)



2025 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Olympia First Baptist Church will be Sunday, December 7th, after the morning worship service, in the Sanctuary. We will, through consensus, approve and/or amend, the financial Ministry Plan for 2026. We will also approve the slate of names brought to us by the Nominating Committee to fill the open positions on the Executive Leadership Team.

The Annual Meeting is the culmination of the work done by the Stewardship Team, Executive Leadership Team and the Nominating Committee in preparing, discussing, and seeking input and voice from each other as well as from the congregation. The intention is to affirm and celebrate what God is doing in our midst and to look forward to another year of advancing the mission and ministry of Olympia First here on the corner of
9th and Washington.

We hope you have seen God at work, not only in your own life but in the wider life of our faith community. We move forward, always, together, relying upon the guidance, encouragement and challenge of the Holy Spirit. In addition to affirming the 2026 Ministry Plan and Team members, Pastor Mark will also share some of the new things on the horizon we are looking at exploring and doing for the coming new year.

We hope you will be a part of the Annual Meeting this year on Sunday, December 7th, after the morning worship service.

ADVENT PHOTO-A-DAY 2025

Each day during Advent, we will post a word of the day. We invite you to pause, reflect and post a response on Instagram or Facebook. Your post should illustrate how you perceive each word of the day. No explanation needed.

You can share a photo, poem or even a simple thought.
Tag your post with #AdventPhoto

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 30	READY	AWAKE	PROCLAIMING	PREPARE	CONFESSING	WORTHY	POWERFUL
December 7	BAPTIZE	TELL	HEAR	SEE	BLESSED	MESSENGER	GREAT
December 14	LEAST	FOUND	RIGHTEOUS	SPIRIT	NAME	SAVE	UNTIL
December 21	LIGHT	DEEP	JOY	RESTS	Forevermore		

★ #AdventPhoto ★

More Advent Shenanigans/Opportunities

Even though we encourage people to take a breath and slow down during what can be a hectic season, there are opportunities during Advent that you might want to take special note of. Below are a few suggestions for you as well two worship services you might want to highlight...

Back by popular demand is the **2025 Advent Photo-a-Day**. Thanks to our United Methodist friends, this year's calendar of words is provided through their gracious sharing of the season. The idea is pretty straightforward—each day of Advent, find a photo, a poem, or your own thought, that reflects that specific word. Post it on your own Facebook wall, Instagram or the church Facebook page, Oly First Baptist (Community).

Christmas Caroling – Monday, December 15th, we gather in the Fireside Room at the church at 5:45 p.m., to get organized into our caroling teams and then off we go to sing some songs of the season to those in our church community who are more housebound and/or experienced significant loss this past year.

Christmas Cantata – Sunday, December 21st, as part of the morning Worship Service, the Choir, under the direction of Dr. Jonathan Spatola-Knoll, will bring the message of this Advent season in song, through this year's Cantata:

“A Great and Mighty Wonder... Celebrating the Messiah's Birth”
(Tom Fettke)

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – Wednesday, December 24th, 7:00 p.m.

We hope you will join us Christmas Eve night as we gather to worship, thru song, story, candlelight, reflection and wonder, the gift that God gives to the world, in the form of a baby...Emmanuel, God-with-us.

THE DEACON'S CORNER

Pat De Neui

God is good!

Just think about all the blessings we have received from God! He is beside us every step and every breath. He is always near and watching over us. We are never alone. His love for us is so secure, trusting and caring... what gifts!

Jesus is the perfect gift of salvation. His presence surrounds us with comfort, support, strength, and courage. Just think about all the gifts we receive from God every day... truly amazing!

His creation and the wonder of it all, his son Jesus, and his teachings. What gifts has he blessed you with? Enjoy your blessings!

He is always uplifting, faithful and true!

Shalom, Pat

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

Jean Heidal, Chair

Plans are complete for the women's brunch on December 6th. So many people are involved in the planning and organization of the day. It is also our major fundraiser for the year which enables us to support various missions and ministries.

Our new project for the year will be "britches for boys". They are shorts for boys that will be sent to many of our mission support stations around the world. Some shorts are already being sewn and if you would like to help, see Jan Downen, she has the pattern in 3 sizes.

I'm looking forward to a new year of service and growth for our women's group.

I hope you will join us!

Worthy of love
Let all that you do be done in love — 1 Cor 16:14

A Legacy of Love: Honoring Those Who've Served

Following God's call often comes with sacrifice. Many retired ministers, missionaries, and their widowed spouses have served faithfully, yet often lack the resources to fully prepare for life's later seasons. Health challenges, the loss of a spouse, or isolation.

These are the people who have poured into our lives. Pastors who prayed with us, missionaries who served where we could not. Their dedication helped shape the American Baptist Churches USA into the vibrant, faithful community it is today.

Your offering is more than a donation, it's a heartfelt expression of love and gratitude. It allows us to provide emergency assistance and a "Thank You" check to those who have devoted 15 or more years of their lives to God's service.

Thanks to your generosity, in 2024 we raised \$932,122, resulting in 3,331 checks sent to retired ministers, missionaries, and widowed spouses.

These gifts meet real needs and offer comfort in life's most vulnerable moments:

"I am so humbled and thankful for your generosity. I was so surprised when I checked my account and saw your kindness displayed. I will remember my family in Christ and the love you've shown."

— Retiree from Ohio

"Thank you for the RMMO gift. An unexpected and generous blessing. Thank you for all you do in Jesus's name."

— Retiree from California

"Thank you so very much for the Thank You check from MMBB. What a lovely gift—just when my laptop was on its last legs. It couldn't have come at a better time. Thank you! Our affiliation during these 40-plus years has meant more to me than you could imagine."

— Retiree from Virginia

Each time a check is received, it's more than financial support, it's a reminder that they are still part of a loving church family that sees them, remembers them, and honors their service.

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

December 2025 • Sermons and Scriptures • Olympia First Baptist Church

Advent 1 – November 30th, '25

Sermon Text – Matthew 24:36–44
Sermon Title – Ready, Set, Go!
The Written Word – Luke 1:68–79
The Written Word – Psalm 46

Advent 2 – December 7th, '25

Sermon Text – Matthew 3:1–12
Sermon Title – Prepare
The Written Word – Isaiah 11:1–10
The Written Word – Romans 15:4–13

Advent 3 – December 14th, '25

Sermon Text – Luke 1:46b–55
Sermon Title – Proud Mary Sings
The Written Word – Isaiah 35:1–10
The Written Word – James 5:7–10

Advent 4 – Cantata Sunday – December 21st, '25

Homily Text – Matthew 1:18–25
Homily Title – Anticipation: It's Making Me Wait
The Written Word – Isaiah 7:10–16

Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24th, '25

Homily Text – Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)
Homily Title – The Eagle Has Landed
The Written Word – Isaiah 9:2–7
The Written Word – Psalm 96

First Sunday after Christmas – December 28th, '25

Sermon Text – Matthew 2:13–23
Sermon Title – That's Not How the Story Goes?
The Written Word – Hebrews 2:10–18
The Written Word – Psalm 148

