

**Olympia
First
Baptist
Church**

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**The Thin Place:
Where the Sacred and the Ordinary Collide**

We are in the midst of the season of Easter or Eastertide as it is called in some Church traditions. This is a season that focuses on the joy, mystery and gift of Resurrection! Throughout the 50-days of Easter, we here at Oly First are challenged to look for the Risen Jesus in and around us. And IF we look with some intention and open ourselves up to being surprised, we may discover the Risen Jesus in people and places we'd least expect to find him! Consider that a challenge, from me to you. Look for Jesus, the Risen Christ, from the time you read this until May 23rd, the day before Pentecost Sunday. Where you might see, experience, and/or find, the Risen Christ?

There is a lot going on within the life of Oly First! Some of it you are aware of, but there is also things percolating behind the scenes with different Ministry teams as well as the Church Leadership. In this Edition of the Windows, you will read about our continuing focus on community engagement and community development. We have 2 Block Parties we are planning for this summer, the first in June, the second in August. We are also looking to offering 2 Listening Forums for Neighbors, City officials, faith communities and interested others to hear and receive feedback on what dreams, needs, wishes, etc., they have for our surrounding neighborhood with its eclectic mix of renters, businesses, government offices, Non-profits, churches, etc. What exactly our role will or should be going forward, is not clear. But it does make me think about how we want to present ourselves to others as a community of ragamuffin Jesus followers.

In one of the discussions that was had with the Community Engagement Ministry Team, we were discussing the proposed Logo Design and wondering out loud how the process would play out? Somewhere in that back and forth dialogue, a story from John's gospel came up. In John 1:35—42, Jesus encounters some men who would become some of his first disciples. But in the midst of this introductory encounter, Jesus is asked where his is staying, where is he hanging out? And Jesus replies:

Come and See!

It was an A-Ha moment for me. And I saw it on other faces around the table as well. That's our invitation, I think? Come and See! Come and see what God is doing here at Oly First! Come and See how God is working and moving and being lived out in the people that make up this flawed but loving community we call Oly First. It's that plain. It's that simple. Just "Come and See!" Get a feel for who we are, what we are trying to become and be as followers of the Risen One,

Continued pg 2...

Thin Place cont...

Jesus Christ. See the gifts of hospitality and service that we bring together. See the guests who come and are welcomed and received with love and compassion at Table Grace. Hear stories of welcome to those who are strangers in a new land, or finding their footing after being freed from their time of incarceration. Come and See! See if our words match our actions. Come and See if you can find a place amongst us to grow in your faith, to struggle with others as you grow in the ways of Jesus. Come and see who we are, who we are becoming, who we want to be for our neighbors and others that we meet and run into. Come and See if you too are open to being surprised by God and God's Spirit, sometimes in really different and unusual ways.

Come and See!

Sometimes I think we, the "Church," make things too complicated. We unnecessarily or unconsciously create barriers that keep others at a safe distance. But maybe God is doing something within us that reverses that unfortunate trend. Think about it. We close our times of Worship by reminding ourselves that each and every day we are challenged and called to Walk Humbly, Love Completely, and Live Differently! It's our riff from Micah 6:8. We also remind ourselves of the simple truth that each person we meet or may meet are Made in God's Image, are enough in God's eyes, and that they are deeply, deeply loved! Again, simple, direct, truth! Biblical truth, in case you were wondering. And now, a simple but Jesus fueled invitation:

Come and See!

Let's pray about that. If you wonder how to invite friends, neighbors, family to what God has cooking down here at Oly First, just say, Come and See! If they ask what kind of church we are, just smile and say: Come and See! Yeah, we may be Baptists, but we are a different kind of Baptist, so Come and See! Well, they may come back with some kind of test, litmus test type of question or concern and you can patiently, and kindly reply: Come and See! That's all the type of invitation and reply you will need.

Let's pray and discover together if we are a Come and See kind of Jesus loving and following community of faith.

Blessings and Joy!

Humble over Hype!

Come and See!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

History & Legacy

Olympia First Baptist Church was incorporated in 1871, when Washington was still a Territory. From Central Baptist Church to now Olympia First Baptist, the foundation for this 155-year-old legacy is a long-list of names of ordinary men and women who have gathered together as a community, because God, through Jesus Christ, made God's-self known to them. A God who said that they were enough in God's eyes. A God that faithfully spoke into their hearts, that these ordinary ragamuffins, men and women, were deeply, deeply loved, forgiven, redeemed. This is the church on the corner of 9th and Washington, that we call Oly First.

In the midst of everyday, ordinary lives, God interjects moments of surprise and wonder that reminds us, and others, that within our life with God, there is more than the everyday rhythms and practices we experience. When those interruptions occur, the faithful do their best to step through those doors of opportunity that God seems to provide. In 1879, Festus Campbell was called as Interim Pastor. Festus, African-American, was a former slave, who served the church for the next several months as their acting Pastor. In 1885, May Jones, who was ordained, was called to be Pastor and served the church in that capacity for the next 2 years. Think of that, an African-American, former slave and a woman, called to Pastor this fledgling church community before the turn of the 20th century. Surprise!

These moments of Spirit-driven surprise become a pattern over the coming decades. Scattered amongst the more usual patterns of worship, discipleship, outreach and spiritual presence to the wider community, doors of connection, hospitality and meeting people's needs occur. In 1891, a Baptist Chinese school and Sunday school were established. In 1918, the church (Central Baptist at that time) opened a night school for Chinese immigrants. Later the school became a Sunday school and drop-in space for kids after school. In the 1950's and early '60's, the church sponsored 3-different set of families, political refugees/immigrants from Eastern Europe, starting with the Dinsberg's (Latvia). 1956, they welcomed the Nagy's (Hungary), who became long-time members. In 1961, the Rauche's were the last family the church sponsored from Eastern Europe. All of these families, refugees impacted by the Cold War and living under the umbrella of the Iron Curtain of the Soviet Union. Finally, in the late 1970's/early 80's, the church welcomed the Phan family who moved into the old parsonage (now Emmaus House), all eleven of them. Again, God surprises. People respond. Lives are changed. This legacy of welcome, connection and hospitality continue today, as we support, partner, serve, minister to and with World Relief and the refugee families they help resettle here in Thurston County. To date, the church has hosted 9 families from 7 different countries.

In the 1990's the church begins making sandwiches at Bread and Roses and then the Senior Center, which soon becomes a regular activity at the Church and turns into Table Grace, with full, sit-down meals. With the arrival of Covid, the sit-down meals were shut-down and making sack lunches took its place. Today, we serve those sack lunches to anyone & everyone, who come to the church on Sunday afternoons as well as send out lunches to Quince Street Village,

Unity Commons, Lotus Court and the Union Gospel Mission.

In 1994-95, the church provided, year-round, 365-days, overnight sleeping arrangements in the Fellowship Hall for homeless men. What is now Emmaus House was also used in the late 90's & early 2000's as transitional housing for men, known then as First Step House. The 2010's we began using the old parsonage with a House church approach to reaching people, with the Emmaus House community. This included having a number of young adults living together in intentional Christian community at Emmaus. They created a neighborhood garden that folks could access as well as partnering with local non-profits as support volunteers, such as Safe Place, Mijas, and helping out at Roosevelt Elementary school events.

Today, we continue the good work of Table Grace as well as our partnership with World Relief, our involvement with One Parish-One Prisoner; Interfaith Works!; Olympia Commons; and Catholic Community Services/AJA...as well as sharing our space with a variety of community organizations.

This overview summary of Oly First is incomplete because it just skims over our history. It doesn't tell the stories of individuals, both known and unknown, who had a "God" moment/encounter/transformation because of what God was doing, is doing and will continue to do in the future. God's story, here on the corner of 9th and Washington, you see, is not over. It is not yet complete. Until God decides our time is done, we continue the legacy of what God has been up to here at Oly First for the last 155 years. Make no mistake, we are not living in the past or clinging to it. We can be reminded of it, celebrate it, be grateful and thankful for it, but we never settle down into it and just stay there. Nope! We take the best parts, the inspiring stories and the spirit of those times of God's movement and we look for God in our present, going ahead of us in our future and try to discern what now? Where is God at work and can we join in?

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Thank you "To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything."
Thomas Merton

John and Rose Nunneh want to extend their deepest joy and gratitude to their church family here at Oly First! They feel blessed, connected, and are thankful for the outpouring of love, prayers, concern, comfort and care they have received during a most difficult time. They continue to ask for your prayers as well as your loving and encouraging words. John especially has reflected on his time here at Oly First and the many friendships and relationships he has developed. He also expresses his gratitude and praise for a God who has walked with him, loved him, and has opened so many doors and opportunities for him across his lifetime. So, again, the Nunneh's want to express their thanks to you, their Church community and family!

Our Lord is with us in every breath we take... I came across this alphabet - A to Z - List of inspirational sayings so enjoy and keep on breathing as you seek to include Jesus in every moment of your life!!! Shalom, Pat

- A "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find"
- B "Be kind to one another"
- C "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you"
- D "Do not be anxious about anything"
- E Every good gift and perfect gift is from above"
- F For it is by grace you have been saved through faith"
- G God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble"
- H "He alone is my rock and my salvation"
- I "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made"
- J "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever"
- K "Know that the Lord is God, it is he who made us"
- L "Love the Lord our God with all your heart and all your soul"
- M "My soul finds rest in God alone, my salvation comes from him"
- N "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"
- O "O God you are my God, earnestly I seek you"
- P "Praise the Lord oh my soul, all my inmost being Praise His holy name"
- Q "A quiet spirit is of great worth in God's sight"
- R "Rejoice in the Lord always and say it again, Rejoice"
- S "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne"
- T "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding"
- U "Under his wings you will find refuge, His faithfulness will be your shelter"
- V "Very truly I tell you the one who believes has eternal life"
- W "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us"
- X "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ"
- Y "You are the light of the world"
- Z "Zion hears and rejoices"



Olympia Commons Day Camp – Operation Restoration
July 20th thru July 24th, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Operation Restoration: Mending God's World

Throughout this transformative week, children will step into their roles as "menders of the universe," exploring the vital daily themes of Feed, Heal, Forgive, Pray, and Rest. Running from July 20 to July 24 with daily sessions from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, we invite preschoolers (ages 3 and 4) through rising 6th graders to join us. It is a unique opportunity for young hearts to grow in faith as they play, sing, and collaborate to become active menders of God's beautiful creation.

This is a collaborative ministry among the churches that make up the ecumenical team we call Olympia Commons. Participating churches who are involved in putting on this week long VBS-style day camp are the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Hosting), Westminster Presbyterian, St. John/San Juan Episcopal, and Olympia First Baptist Church.

Pastor Mark is serving as the Lead Storyteller on Wednesday, July 22nd, of that week, focusing on that day's theme: Forgive! In addition to telling bible stories around the theme of forgiveness, he is also leading the Opening and Closing portions of the day. Olympia First Baptist will be responsible for providing SNACKS for that day as well.

That means we will need to put together a Snack Brigade to be volunteers for that day. Look for more details!

In this Edition of the Windows there is also an overview page of the this joint week long Day Camp along with **QR Codes for registering kids and for youth/adults who would be interested in being a volunteer**. Since Pastor Mark is participating on Wednesday of that week, and we are responsible for Snacks that day as a Church, if you were interested in being a volunteer but don't want to be a volunteer all week long, then maybe consider volunteering just for that one day. We are trying to be as flexible as possible in this new, collaborative ministry approach with other faith communities.

If you have any questions, about the week, or volunteering, or anything else, please talk to Pastor Mark. If he can't answer your question, he knows people who can.

Registration is already open and will remain open until July 5th. There is a cap on the number of children who can attend, so don't wait until the last minute. If you have a child, grandchild, neighbors who are interested, registration is easy to do online. If you're more comfortable with an older-fashion registration form, we have those too!



Olympia Commons Day Camp— Operation Restoration!

Olympia Commons Day Camp—formerly known as VBS—is thrilled to present this year's program, *Operation Restoration: Mending God's World*. Throughout this transformative week, children will step into their roles as "menders of the universe," exploring the vital daily themes of Feed, Heal, Forgive, Pray, and Rest. Running from July 20 to July 24 with daily sessions from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, we invite preschoolers (ages 3 and 4) through rising 6th graders to join us. It is a unique opportunity for young hearts to grow in faith as they play, sing, and collaborate to become active menders of God's beautiful creation.

Registration is open from April 12 - July 5, 2026

Scan QR code to register online:



Join Our Olympia Commons Day Camp Volunteer Team!

We are truly grateful to offer such a vibrant, high-quality faith development program to our community—an opportunity made possible only through your support. We invite anyone entering seventh grade or older to join us as a volunteer. To support those who serve, we are happy to provide onsite childcare for all volunteer staff. Thank you for your dedication to nurturing the faith of our children!

Scan QR code to register as a volunteer online:



If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us by email at:

[Olympia Commons Day Camp](#)

Community Building – Inside and Out

As a church, a faith community grounded in the good news of Jesus Christ, there is always some uneasiness and/or tension about how best to connect and engage folks who are not a part of a faith group. It's the standard outsiders-insiders dilemma. We want new people. We want people to have an encounter with Christ and become fellow followers, but, it's not easy, especially in today's culture and climate. After all, can't we find people, just like us? Who think like us and have similar interests and beliefs? Below are some ways we are exploring ways to answer those and similar questions.

This summer, we want to continue looking for ways to connect, listen and build community ties, both inside the church as well as outside. Our ICG events (Intergenerational Community Gatherings) are one way we have focused on building up our relational connections within our church community, that also nurture us, spiritually. So far, we have had 2 events, that have been received well. With that in mind, our next ICG event will be:

Saturday, June 20th, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the home of
Jarrod and Taylor Wolden

9636 Springer Lake Ln SE, Olympia, 98501

We will grill hamburgers/hot dogs, have some music as well as community building shenanigans for those gathered. We wanted to take advantage of the weather these summer months as well as the Wolden's hospitality. We hope you'll put this on your calendar, today and plan to join us on the 20th of June.

When it comes to building wider community ties outside of the Church, we have a few events and opportunities to do just that.

We will host a Block Party, at Oly First on Saturday, June 13th, from 4:00—6:00 p.m.

It will take place in the church parking lot, with food, music and space for folks to gather, talk, get to know one another and build relationships and a better sense of community.

We are inviting not only neighbors but those connected with the City, other faith communities, etc. Melissa McKee, one of our newer members has connected us with some of the Neighborhood Association key members for ideas, help, direction as well as using their resources to promote and advertise this event gathering.

The Block Party will also serve as a Bridge to our next event, which is organizing two Listening forums, where neighbors, city officials, faith communities and interested individuals will gather to share what sort of services, improvements, opportunities our part of the downtown corridor could use, to strengthen the neighborhood and/or improve it. These forums will also provide us with information that can help us discern what might be our role and/or ministry to make those needs, dreams, etc., a reality.

The first Listening Forum is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12th from 5:45 to 7:00 pm.

We are hoping to hold this forum at the Library across from the church. The second Listening Forum will be Saturday, August 15th, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., again, hopefully, at the Library. We hope by scheduling the forums at these different times, we can get a wider participation and response from folks that fit their schedules better.

With the Listening Forums wrapped up, we wanted to finish up the summer, before school starts up again, by having another Block Party on Saturday, August 29th! Time would be the same as the first, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. The only potential change might be the location. Depending on the response we get from the first Block Party as well as what the Listening Forums may reveal, we are open to having this second Block Party gathering at a different location/venue. After all, we want to be flexible and adaptable to what people are looking for as well as sharing.

Last thing! I really want to give a big shout out to John Paget and the Community Engagement Ministry Team. They have been very thoughtful, intentional, and open to different ways we might build community ties wider than the church doors. They also have been extremely open to being surprised by God and looking where God might already be working, laying the groundwork, and/or planting the seeds, ahead of us.

These are exciting times, we feel, as we prioritize our Ministry Values of deepening relational connections and finding ways to nurture each other and those beyond our church doors, spiritually. We hope you will be a part of this Jesus-led ministry of Community Building this summer.

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Celebration
— OF LIFE —
MEMORIAL SERVICE

For Merletta Roberts

From Pastor Dave Roberts

I'm taking this opportunity to let you know that a Celebration of Life service for Merletta Roberts will be held on Saturday, May 9th, at 2:00 p.m. PDT. The service will be held at the Panther Lake Community Church, 10630 SE 204th St, Kent, WA.

Merletta died at peace on New Year's Eve evening.
Not able to make it to the service in person?
It will be live-streamed.

Go to www.PantherLakeChurch.org. At the top of the opening page you will see the FaceBook's symbol — a blue square and a lower case "f" in it.

Clicking that ought to take you to stream. They usually have a "count down" beginning five minutes before the start of the service.

I appreciate your being a part, however small or large, of the constellation of people who contributed to Merletta being the person she was, in all her generous, humorous, caring self.

Peace and Joy,
Dave



2026 CALENDAR

SPRING CRAFT RETREAT

APRIL 24-26

Bring your craft project!

Director: Rona Schroeder

Fee: \$175

MEMORIAL DAY WORK WEEKEND

MAY 22-25

A volunteer opportunity!

Director: Bob Holcomb

Fee: \$0

SR. HIGH CAMP

JULY 12-18

Grades: 9th - Grad

FEE: \$375 Early Reg
\$400 Walk-In

Director: Delynnia Woitt

JR. HIGH CAMP

JULY 19-25

Grades: 6th - 8th

FEE: \$375 Early Reg
\$400 Walk-In

Director: TBA

ELEMENTARY CAMP

JULY 26-30

Grades: 3rd - 5th

FEE: \$300 Early Reg
\$325 Walk-In

Director: Dan Todd

SR. ADULT CAMP

SEPT. 14-17

Ages: 18 - 99+
All are welcome!

FEE: \$195

Director: TBA

FAMILY FISHING WEEKEND

OCTOBER: 2-4

Fun For The Whole Family!

Director: Jeff Scott

Fee: \$175

CHRISTMAS CRAFT RETREAT

NOV. 20-22

Bring Your Christmas Craft!

Director: Lori Brandt

Fee: \$175

TURKEY DAY REVIVAL

NOV. 27-29

For Middle & High School Youth

Director: Micah and Jodi Hammond

FEE: \$125

REGISTER TODAY!

www.campbethel.net / contact@campbethel.net / (360)289-3444

May 2026

SUNDAY SCHEDULE: 8:30 am Sunday School, 10am Worship, Child Care & Nursery, 3:30pm Table Grace

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3</p> <p>10:00 am Communion Sunday</p>	<p>4</p> <p>5:30 pm Chair Yoga Fireside Room</p> <p>7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room</p>	<p>5</p> <p>11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room</p> <p>7:00 pm OMT Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>6</p> <p>11-1:15 Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30 pm "Follow" class Rev. Davis Hylkema Fireside Room</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:30 am Bible Study Rm 102</p> <p>7:00pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102</p>	<p>9</p> <p>11:00 am Widows Group Library</p>
<p>10</p> <p>10:00 am Worship Service</p> <p>Mother's Day!</p>	<p>11</p> <p>5:30 pm Chair Yoga Fireside Room</p> <p>7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room</p>	<p>12</p> <p>11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room</p> <p>5:30 pm Woodturners Fellowship Hall</p> <p>7:00 pm Last Rehearsal OMT Sanctuary</p>	<p>13</p> <p>11-1:15 Staff Meeting</p> <p>12 Noon ABW Luncheon Fireside Room</p> <p>6:30 pm "Follow" class Rev. Davis Hylkema Fireside Room</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:30 am Bible Study Rm 102</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>15</p> <p>9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102</p> <p>1:00 pm Ladies Luncheon At Rivers Edge</p>	<p>16</p> <p>10:30 am Executive Leadership Team Room 102</p>
<p>17</p> <p>10:00 am Worship Service</p> <p><u>WINDOWS DEADLINE</u></p>	<p>18</p> <p>5:30 pm Chair Yoga Fireside Room</p> <p>7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room</p>	<p>19</p> <p>11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room</p> <p>6:30pm Stewardship Team Rm 102</p>	<p>20</p> <p>11-1:15 Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30 pm "Follow" class Rev. Davis Hylkema Fireside Room</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9:30 am Bible Study Rm 102</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>22</p> <p>9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102</p> <p>..... Camp Bethel</p> <p>22nd-25th Memorial Day Work Weekend</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24</p> <p>.....</p> <p>10:00 am Worship Service</p> <p>Pentecost</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Memorial Day</p> <p>5:30 pm Chair Yoga Fireside Room</p> <p>7:00-9:30 pm Voices of the Sound Fellowship Hall, Rm 102, Fireside Room</p>	<p>26</p> <p>11:00am-1pm Lions Club Fireside Room</p> <p>5:00 pm Congregational Care Team Fireside Room</p>	<p>27</p> <p>11-1:15 Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30 pm "Follow" class Rev. Davis Hylkema Fireside Room</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:30 am Bible Study Rm. 102</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9:30 am TOPS Rm. 102</p>	<p>30</p> <p>8:00 am Men's Breakfast Fireside Room</p>
<p>31</p> <p>10:00 am Worship Service</p>						

*Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.*
- Psalm 100:2 -

* May 10th
Happy Mother's Day!