

# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OLYMPIA

PO BOX 533  
OLYMPIA, WA 98507

## Contact Information

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

## Church Staff

Rev. Mark Rambo, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Caroline Lehman, Visitation Pastor  
Jonathan Spatola-Knoll, Choir Director  
Lela DePaolo, Secretary

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Olympia WA  
Permit No. 198

Return Service Requested

JANUARY

# WINDOWS

2023

## Olympia First Baptist Church

### Inside this issue:

Front Page: Pastor Mark: THE THIN PLACE	
Continued ...	2
STEWARDSHIP - TIME, TALENT, TITHE	3
DEACON'S BOARD Pat De Neui	4
JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2023	5
A BOARD AND COMMITTEE TEAM BUILDING DAY	6
EVERGREEN LEADERSHIP RETREAT	7
STATE OF BELOVED COMMUNITY OLY FIRST BAPTIST & WOMEN'S MINISTRY Jean Heidal	8 & 9

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

As we enter this new year, 2023, I struggled to articulate something that could inspire us as well as remind us of the task before us – building each other up, as Christ's community, for others. It sounds so simple, but the reality is anything but. For this edition of The Thin Place, I felt led to repurpose the article I wrote for the 2022 Annual Report. It was written with this coming year of 2023 in mind, so it only seems appropriate to share it once again as we enter this new year.

*Then I saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea existed no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride and groom on their wedding day. And I heard a loud voice calling from the throne, "Look! God's Tabernacle is among humankind! God will live with them; they will be God's people, and God will be fully present among them. The Most High will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more, for the old order has fallen."*

*The One who sat on the throne said,  
"Look! I'm making everything new!"  
and added,*

*"Write this, for what I am saying is trustworthy and true."*

Revelation 21:1–5 – The Inclusive Bible

God, whether we are talking about the Past, the Present, and/or the Future, is a God of presence. God is present...always...in times of joy and celebration; during times of anxiety, suffering and deep, personal loss. God laughs with us and suffers with us. And as the end of God's story found in scripture above reminds us, God is making all things new!

### God is making all things new!

That means you! That means me! That means the faith community called Olympia First Baptist Church and that also means those who sleep on our front porch and/or alcove, to get out of the cold and rain. All of us are part of God's plan/design of being made new. Regardless of who we are now and/or who we were in our past. God is at work, creating us to be breathtakingly new and different. And then, just in case you or me are a tad skeptical, John the Revelator has the audacity to remind us that his inspired writings of newness, are trustworthy and true!

That's good news!

Continued on page 2...

## January 2023 • Sermons and Scriptures • Olympia First Baptist Church

### Sunday, January 1st—Christmastide

Text: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23  
Sermon: PG (Parental Guidance)  
Rev. Mark Rambo

### Sunday, January 8th— First Sunday after Epiphany

Text: Titus 3:4–7  
Homily: The Gift that Keeps on Giving  
Rev. Mark Rambo

### Sunday, January 15th— Second Sunday after Epiphany

Text: Matthew 3:13–17  
Sermon: Re-Fresh  
Rev. Mark Rambo

### Sunday, January 22nd—Third Sunday after Epiphany

Text: I Corinthians 1:10–18  
Sermon: Like-Minded  
Rev. Mark Rambo

### Sunday, January 29th

Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany  
Text: Micah 6:1–8  
Sermon: Humble Over Hype!  
Rev. Mark Rambo



*Thin Place continued ...*

We continue to move forward as a congregation. We move forward, knowing that things will go slower than we want them to. We move forward, laying a foundation, hopefully, for sustainable and healthy growth. We move forward knowing that we don't have all the answers and even that we don't have all the right questions. But, we have this God, who is slow to anger and full of steadfast love; who walks with us, encourages and prods us toward being light, God's light to others in this life we share. And when we get lost; when we forget whose we are and how we should navigate through the barriers, minefields and obstacles we encounter and/or create, there is the Holy One, God's own child, Jesus Christ. In Christ, we are provided a way of living and being that is counter-intuitive to the world around us and how it tells us to be, and who we should embrace and/or discard.

Because of Christ we are being made new.

The way of Christ is challenging. It requires faith, sacrifice, service and lots and lots of love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, and self-control. Easy? No. Daunting and at times intimidating? Yes. But again, you and I, we, are not alone or left on our own. We have one another...we have God's mysterious Spirit...we have the Redeemer, Christ, and we have this creative architect/potter/artist/creator who molds us, shapes us, breathes into us and makes us NEW.

What God has in store for us in 2023 is anyone's guess. What I do know with 100% certainty is that we will not be alone. We will be loved, guided, forgiven, reconciled to, and inspired by the Author of life and faith. And we will do our best, to live out and reflect the good things that bring people, all people, some good news, some hope, and a place of belonging we call the beloved community.

Keep moving, forward, with Christ as your guide, as you:

Walk Humbly! Love Completely! Live Differently!

Blessings and Joy!

Humble over Hype!

\*To expand our understanding of what it means to be the church beyond the walls and windows of this structure...

\*To be the hands and feet of Jesus and instill Christ's sense of love, sacrifice and service to our children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors...

I don't know what the future holds...but I feel God at work. I see it in you; in others; in our guests; in those who sleep here...

I don't know if we can do "church" like we use to, anymore...

I don't know what an alternative might look like...

I just know that God is faithful...loving...patient...

I hope we can figure it out, together.

I'm excited, scared, tentative and raring to go...

But I know, you and I, we, are held within God's Story...

It's the greatest story ever told and we're a part of it...

That's pretty cool...so take heart; pray, as we

Walk Humbly Love Completely Live Differently

Pastor Mark

.....  
**Women's Ministries**

**Jean Heidal**  
.....

Let's try something different?  
(But we've never done it this way before!)



I'm referring to Ladies Night Out which we hold every year in January. For several reasons I'd like to have this event on Saturday, January 28th at 12:30 pm. We'll have pizza, you bring a salad, appetizer or dessert. We'll have some entertainment and play card or table games. I hope you will join me for something new, and bring a friend to "Ladies' Day Out."

There aren't enough words to say thank you to all the people who helped with the Christmas Brunch. So many women stepped forward to help and we were blessed with a wonderful day.

*You're amazing!*

The project this year is to pay for the installation of a playground set at Camp Bethel. The equipment was given to the camp, but they have not had the funds to set it up. We are well on our way to the \$2500 goal. \$1900 was raised from the brunch. We are looking for small donations of \$5 - \$10 to make up the balance. This playground set would be a great addition to the camp property and provide an activity for young children who come with their parents for retreats/ conferences. We would like to have all the money in hand by the end of February.

Thank you for your faithful support of Women's Ministries. We are looking forward to what we can accomplish in 2023!

## State of the Beloved Community – Olympia First Baptist

Below, is what I shared with those in attendance at the Annual Meeting in November.

I was asked by a couple of people, to share it with the wider church community. It summarizes, hopefully, some of my biblical foundations for how and why I do ministry as well as the challenges and opportunities before us. Remember, we are striving to build a strong foundation for a sustainable future as part of Christ's Church, here in Olympia.

-----  
Mark 2:1–12 – Luke 4:16–30 – Matthew 5–7  
Romans 12 – I Corinthians 13 – Galatians 5:22–26 –  
Ephesians 3:14–19 – Philippians 2:1–11 – Colossians 2:6–7  
Colossians 3:12–17

These are my guiding principles. Stories, sermons, teachings about relationship(s) with God and others, with Christ as my example and guide. We, you and me, and others, are to embody the values, characteristics, practices that spill out of these 10 passages.

They have the power to set us on a path into a sustainable future.  
They provide for us, I think, a foundation for us to build upon.

At the very least they give us a point of conversation; a jumping off point for prayer, for discernment, for discovering, what in the world God has in mind for us...

We are coming out of an unprecedented time – a pandemic that has turned our world, our lives, our ordinary ways of being and doing, into an upside-down fruit salad of uncertainty, and/or \_\_\_\_\_ (fill-in-the-blank). Even the church is not immune from its effects/affects.

After so much time away to protect one another, many of us are not so sure we really need the church anymore. Withdrawing has been a welcomed relief. Others are still leery of the unknown and want certainty and assurances that the virus has been totally negated. Others have just drifted away for their own reasons and/or needs. And then there's us. The ones who have hung in and attempted to be present. We hang in there. For reasons we might not be able to express adequately, we stay. We stay because this is "my church." We stay for the relationships that have sustained us, fortified us...saved us(?) We stay because we have a sense of God's calling, God's presence, God's want – for us to be here? Or so we hope.

### Challenges

Downtown – Transitional Housing – Mental Health – Addiction – Homelessness – Poverty – Human Trafficking – Domestic Violence – Anti-Family Friendly Environment (perception)

### Opportunities

\*Create a Beloved Community that extends hospitality and hope to others

\*To be a house of redemption and new life

\*A community center where others with similar values can serve the needs of our neighbors

*Continued...*

## Stewardship – Time, Talent, Tithe



As we enter 2023, we need to remember that we are called to be good stewards of God's created order. That means most anything that God has molded, shaped, created. This includes the environment/the planet/our home base. It is the relationships we have with family, friends, co-workers, clients, etc. It also means the "church,"; that unique community of followers, often diverse in thought and practice, who attempt to live out the teachings and life of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

This will be a year where you will be asked to share your voice. What are the things about Christ's church that are important to you? What do you have to offer as we forge a path into the future God is preparing for us and with us? What talent are you willing to share, no matter how small or big, it may be? In the midst of family life, retirement, the overall busyness of life, how much time can you give to what we are attempting to build within this beloved community called Olympia First Baptist? God has gifted each of us, in some measurable way. This too relates to being good stewards for Christ.

Finally, stewardship is also about our commitment to tithing. Yes, there is a financial component as well. We understand, intellectually, that God has blessed us in some way or another. We try our best to give back to God for those blessings. Tithing asks us to commit to a determined amount and then consistently, faithfully, and joyfully give that financial commitment to God, to the church. It is then the responsibility of the church leadership to be good stewards of that faithful, consistent, and joyful trust. With that in mind, we hope that you have been praying about what your tithe will be for 2023. If you have never tithed, maybe this is the year you begin. Is it possible for you to increase your tithe by 1%, 3%, or more? Whatever you decide, that's between you and God. Guaranteed! We just ask that you prayerfully consider your finances as part of God's stewardship design.

Blessing and Joy!

Humble over Hype!

**DEACON'S BOARD Pat De Neui, Chairwoman**

Happy New Year... Let there be light in 2023!!!

Happiness comes from within especially when one takes a break from trying to figure everything out. We need to admit that a lot of things are beyond our understanding and control. As the scripture reads in Isaiah 55:9... "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

As confusing as the world seems sometimes and darkness or evil appears to be gaining strength, just remember that Christ is our light. That keeps on shining in all circumstances. His light will always overcome darkness whenever or wherever these two opposites meet.

As followers we want to keep the light shining bright by sharing his wonderful name and singing praises. His presence will illuminate our path and help us in multiple ways. The closer we live in Christ, the more vivid we can see the path ahead. His love for us truly gives us strength and blesses us with peace. As we spend time engaging with our Lord, he in turn guides us to shine into the lives of others. He loves us and will continue to draw his followers out of darkness into his glorious light. If we could only see how close Christ is to us and how caringly he watches over us on our behalf, we would never again be doubtful.

As the scripture reads in 2 Corinthians 5:7... "We walk by faith, not by sight!"

Please help us Lord to trust in your mysterious, majestic presence. Help us to help others discover the glorious good news—the free gift of eternal life for all who believe in our Lord, Jesus Christ! He is the light of the world!!!

Shalom,  
Pat

Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

## **Evergreen Leadership Retreat**

**"Responding to the Times  
February 9<sup>th</sup>—11<sup>th</sup>, Camp Burton**

Lead by Rev. Sam Kim, Associate Executive Minister of Innovation and Design

From the Evergreen Ministerial Team:

*"We want to invite our Evergreen Family into a weekend of exploring what holy innovation looks like. While the word "innovation" can be daunting, it's really about asking the right questions at the right time and finding the best way to respond. The theme is "Responding to the Times" where we'll use ideas taken from human centered design and agile management to think about how our ministries can respond meaningfully to an ever-changing world – whether it be through creating something new, renewing, transforming or...all of the above! We can't wait for you to explore with us as we reflect, process, pray and fellowship together.*

*Looking forward to seeing you there!*

This retreat will be based heavily on active discussion and group reflection so we have designed this retreat to be done in teams. If you are considering enrolling for this retreat **we recommend that you bring a "Ministry Team" ideally consisting of your Lead Pastor and 2 or more lay leaders** who have a role leading the vision of your church/ministry. Individual representatives of churches are still welcome to join and we will be putting you in a group to help you best process the weekend.

Here is the breakdown of the different tracks that are offered:

**Clergy – February 9<sup>th</sup>—11<sup>th</sup>:**

Focused on reflections for clergy starting with lunch on Thursday with unpacking theology and praxis of innovation, then joining your laity team for Friday dinner.

**Lay Leaders – February 10<sup>th</sup>—11<sup>th</sup>**

You'll join your pastor on Friday, right before dinner. With your team, you'll practice group work methods that you can bring back to your local churches and ministries.

**How to Register: Three Ways**

You can contact Rev. Paul Schneider at the office by phone – (253) 859-2226

Email – [paul@ea-abc.org](mailto:paul@ea-abc.org)

Online via the Evergreen website – <https://ea-abc.org/leadership-retreat-2023>

The website above also has retreat details and full schedule.

**Fees/Cost:**

As part of the Evergreen Association, your stay & program fees are covered by the Region.

Pastor Mark is going to this retreat and has invited the new church moderator and another younger leader to be part of this retreat. If this is something you are interested in attending, please talk with Pastor Mark, so we can coordinate and be on the same page as a team before the retreat begins. This is an exciting and important opportunity for us as a congregation.