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# WINDOWS

# 2024

***Olympia  
First  
Baptist  
Church***

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*The Thin Place:  
Where the Sacred and the Ordinary Collide*  
**“Faith Along the Way”**

The season of Lent is upon us once again. This year it comes to us a few weeks earlier than we are accustomed to. Lent represents the forty days leading up to Easter that mirror Jesus' time in the wilderness. It is a spiritual season and practice that began in the Fourth Century as a way to prepare followers of Christ for the holy day of Resurrection, Easter. It also was used as the time to prepare and disciple converts through the waters of baptism. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> this year, which also happens to be Valentine's Day; and concludes on Holy Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. In case you're doing the math, Sundays are not counted as part of the 40 days. Instead, think of Sundays during Lent as a mini-Easter. For those who give up something as part of their spiritual practice during Lent, Sundays can be considered as a free day.

Our theme this year is entitled: “Faith along the Way”

Lent is a journey we take not only as individual pilgrims of the faith, but as a community. We travel together on this road of connection and reconciliation, where the reality of our lives are both exposed and healed; where we confront our own pain, grief and/or suffering and allow God's Spirit and fellow travelers to walk with us, comfort us, encourage us, and just be with us. We will need one another as we encounter the hard truths of our broken bits and pieces that at times feel huge and jagged. Lent is a journey that requires the support and presence of one's community. We need our collective faith along this path toward Jerusalem and the cross. Remember:

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction  
of things not seen.”  
Hebrews 11:1

We will begin our Lenten journey with an **Ash Wednesday service on February 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.**

This time of worship marks our beginning of faith along the way. Thru prayer, scripture, reflection, song, silence and interaction, we prepare ourselves to face the realities of the world around us as well as the inner struggles we face each and every day. Lent asks us to be vulnerable and honest about our present realities. We end our time of worship by making the sign of the cross on our foreheads as a symbol of our limitedness in this life...from dust we came, from dust we will return.

In this edition of the Windows, you will find an article on some of the different ways, options, and/or opportunities for you to consider as we explore our “faith along the way” during this season of Lent.

## Blessings and Joy!

## Humble over Hype!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

**February 2024 • Sermons and Scriptures • Olympia First Baptist Church**

**February 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**February 4<sup>th</sup> – Pastor Mark**  
**“Giving It All Away”**  
**Scripture – Mark 4:21–25**

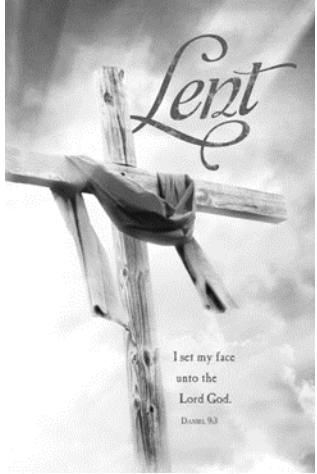
**February 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Pastor Mark – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
**“Boundaries”**  
**Scripture – John 4:1–42**

**February 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**Rev. Joan Friesen, Guest Preacher**  
**“A Tale of Two Elijahs”**  
**Scripture – Mark 9:2–9**

**February 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Pastor Mark – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
**“Friends”**  
**Scripture – Mark 2:1–12**

A word cloud of Lenten observances and themes. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'Lent' and 'Christ' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'repent', 'cross', 'pray', 'confess', 'savior', 'forgiveness', 'prepare', 'good Friday', 'ash Wednesday', 'fast', 'repentance', 'absolution', 'sacrifice', 'death', 'holiness', 'sins', 'Lord', 'Jesus', 'wilderness', 'blood', 'everlasting', 'black', 'contemplate', 'living', 'violet', 'Saturday', 'meditation', 'life', 'abstain', 'crucified', 'hope', 'faith', 'God', 'Man', 'ground', 'palms', 'holy', 'grave', 'dust', 'tempted', 'Wednesday', 'concession', 'time', 'training', 'conferment', 'fast', 'buried', 'devotion', 'shed', 'man', 'sins', 'forgiveness', 'prepare', 'good Friday', 'ash Wednesday', 'fast', 'repentance', 'absolution', 'sacrifice', 'death', 'holiness', 'sins', 'Lord', 'Jesus', 'wilderness', 'blood', 'everlasting', 'black', 'contemplate', 'living', 'violet', 'Saturday', 'meditation', 'life', 'abstain', 'crucified', 'hope', 'faith', 'God', 'Man', 'ground', 'palms', 'holy', 'grave', 'dust', 'tempted', 'Wednesday', 'concession', 'time', 'training', 'conferment'.

Lenten Opportunities  
“Faith Along the Way”



**Ash Wednesday Service** – February 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary, Olympia First Baptist.

**[www.katebowler.com/BlessThisLent](http://www.katebowler.com/BlessThisLent)** -- For those who are more comfortable with technology, clicking onto this link will connect you to author Kate Bowler’s website where you can download a guide/devotional that can be a resource for you during Lent.

For those who enjoy the feel of a book in their hands, we recommend:

**The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days**

by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie

In the back of the book is a Lenten Guide that correlates to different “blessings” throughout the book. Each “blessing” becomes a part of your daily devotion during Lent.

**Sermon Series** – During Lent, Pastor Mark will be doing a series along our theme of “Faith along the Way,” using gospel stories of Jesus, as our guide. These stories of connection and reconciliation reflect the possibilities of new beginnings, change and/or transformation available to all of us because of the road Jesus walked on our behalf. Join us every Sunday, for a time of worship (mini-Easter) at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary and/or on the Facebook livestream.

**Photo-a-Day Challenge:** Faith Along the Way – You will find within this edition of the Windows a Lenten calendar that provides a word for each day of Lent. Your challenge is to find a picture that reflects that word, for you. No explanation needed. Go to the “Oly First Baptist (Community)” on Facebook’s Groups page and upload your picture there. #Lent #photoaday

There are a few more things that are in the planning stages. Once they are put together, we will make them known through Thoughts and Things and/or the Sunday Worship services.

**WOMEN’S MINISTRIES**

**Jean Heidal, Chair**



One of the suggestions Art Mize made at our November meeting was to journal as a way of expressing our thoughts about grief or other issues in life. I have never journaled, unless you count my grade school diary filled with writing about mean boys on the school bus, punishment for talking in class, and news from the latest Mickey Mouse Club episode.

So in February we are going to learn about journaling and then spend some time trying it out. Rev. Mylinda Baits is going to give a brief overview of the benefits of journaling. We will have small journals for

everyone to get you started. After that it can become a notebook for your grocery list or whatever you want it to be. We meet on Wednesday, February 14th at 12 noon. Bring a sack lunch. Lane Clausen and Jeri Stone will provide a scrumptious dessert. Yummm

On March 9th, 12 noon, we are going to have Ladies' Day Out. ABW will provide the pizza and beverages and you are asked to bring a salad or dessert. "My Best Friends" singing group will provide entertainment. We'll have an organized game and then play card/board games as long as people want to stay. Bring your favorite game for a fun afternoon.

On April 10th Art Mize will come to talk more about the grief process. More details to follow next month.

Then on April 19&20 we are going to have our big spring sale. If you have items to donate bring them now! Friday night, the 19th, will be for the congregation only. Saturday the sale will be open to the public.

The Friday sale will be for a couple of hours in the evening.

(On a personal note:. Thank you for the cards, calls and prayers while I have been a captive of the very fine Olympia medical community. Hopefully, by the time you read this I will have been "sprung" and can get back to business.)

## Celebrate!

Friends!

All of our interactions have spoken of the great losses we have been through over the past year! And it's true, we have been through much darkness! But sometimes, in that darkness, we are able to find solace and even though it seems bleak, we must take time to just breathe. We need time to think about nothing! Take time in the dark days of winter to rebuild your faith and your hope and all that you love!

After you rebuild, share with others. Take time to make a phone call, text or send a greeting card. Remember if you are warm and dry, you are blessed and you need to show up for those who are cold, hungry and perhaps lonely. That is just the way it is! You are part of a wonderful family of God and every day, someone is grateful for your being!

Let's celebrate now all those who have gone before us. Because of them, we might have a special cup we drink our coffee out of each day. We might hear a song on the radio and smile because of them. We may be sitting at the red light and remember a joke they told us and laugh out loud! They have had an impact on all of us and we are grateful for all the kindnesses they left behind!

Friends! It's February!

Blessings to you all!

Until further notice, Celebrate Everything!



Celebration can be an act  
of worship and an act of  
hope and perhaps, in a  
way, an act of joyful  
rebellion against fear.

KATHERINE WOLF  
Episode 94

## Stewardship – An Overview

As we enter a new year, we want to bring you up-to-date on our finances and the transition we have made with our bookkeeping. As most of you know, Carolyn Adams, our dedicated and hard-working Treasurer over the last 20 years, is off to Australia for the next 6-months. Carolyn's shoes are hard to replace, so after a lot of discussion, prayer, looking at different options and resources, the Trustees entered into conversation with the CPA Firm, MacQuigg Financial, out of Seattle. MacQuigg came from a recommendation from our Region Office of the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches. MacQuigg is used by some of our sister, Evergreen churches as well as by the Region, itself. The Executive Council approved the Trustees recommendation and a Letter of Intention was signed.

The other change is that Sue Shannon was appointed Treasurer. Sue will be the face or frontperson for us as a church. She will go over financial reports with the Trustees and Executive Council and will be the person to address questions at church meetings, gatherings, etc., regarding finances.

MacQuigg will be our bookkeeper. Sue will be and has been working with MacQuigg during this transition. We are confident that this is the best option for us as a church community at this time. We will also be changing our bookkeeping software from Power Church to QuickBooks at MacQuigg Financials direction. If you have any questions about this change you can contact Sandi Swarthout, President of the Corporation, Russ Harpel, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Sue Shannon, Church Treasurer, and/or Pastor Mark.

### 2023 Spending Plan

We just finished up our end-of-the year financial statement. The good news is that it's mostly good news! Unfortunately, we ended 2023 in the Red (negative). The good news is we were in the Red by only **-\$601**. Now, you need to remember that we pay all of our 2024 Insurance premium in December of 2023. This is a long-held practice/commitment for as long as I have been here at the church. We also show that our giving/income for the year was **\$287,001**. It's important to remember that we wanted our Spending Plan to reflect our current reality and not a "we-hope-so" kind of budget. The good news is that we set our 2024 budget at \$275,00. Our giving in 2023 shows that we are in a good place, stewardship wise, and that we have growth potential to increase our spending plan for mission and ministry this coming year. We have talked about opening ourselves to being surprised by God this year. I was surprised by this financial summary. I was expecting a larger deficit.

However, your faithfulness, your generosity, in being good stewards of what God has blessed you with, is humbling and fills me with optimism and excitement.

What other surprises has God in store for us this year?

I can't wait to be surprised some more!

Blessings and Joy!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

# FAITH

ALONG THE *Way*

FEBRUARY 14 Treasure	FEBRUARY 26 Laughter	MARCH 9 Testimony	MARCH 21 Encourage
FEBRUARY 15 Light	FEBRUARY 27 Conviction	MARCH 10 Love	MARCH 22 Purpose
FEBRUARY 16 Listen	FEBRUARY 28 Sign	MARCH 11 House	MARCH 23 Endure
FEBRUARY 17 Cover	FEBRUARY 29 Cornerstone	MARCH 12 Water	MARCH 24 Understand
FEBRUARY 18 Promise	MARCH 1 Holy	MARCH 13 Darkness	MARCH 25 Enter
FEBRUARY 19 Save	MARCH 2 Handiwork	MARCH 14 Compassion	MARCH 26 Proclaim
FEBRUARY 20 Ready	MARCH 3 Zeal	MARCH 15 Empathy	MARCH 27 Cloud
FEBRUARY 21 Wilderness	MARCH 4 Foundation	MARCH 16 Clean	MARCH 28 Bread
FEBRUARY 22 Distinction	MARCH 5 Strength	MARCH 17 See	MARCH 29 Crushed
FEBRUARY 23 Reckoned	MARCH 6 Prayer	MARCH 18 Glory	MARCH 30 Suffer
FEBRUARY 24 Remember	MARCH 7 Blessing	MARCH 19 Servant	MARCH 31 Life
FEBRUARY 25 Deny	MARCH 8 Forgive	MARCH 20 Remnant	

www.facebook.com/LentPhotoADay  
#(word of the day) • #lent2024 • #faithalongtheway

## Photo-a-Day Challenge

## A word for each day of Lent

## MISSION BOARD

Ruby Mitchell, Chair

We are entering into a brand new year full of possibilities and hope. We experienced so many changes and challenges last year.

Thank you to our congregation for supporting our annual offerings. We were blessed to support our Retired Ministers with the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering in December.

I do hope as a congregation, we can continue to support our Global World Servants in their ministry. We have the Williams in Thailand and the Matos in Mexico. Mylinda Bates is also such a blessing for the work she does.

### The First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain

The Food Justice Program of the First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain, operated through our non-profit The Centre for Faith, Art & Justice is a vital community ministry serving thousands of our neighbors who face food insecurity.



An effort that began as small sit-down meals on Wednesday and Saturday grew exponentially during COVID to serve 700 meals and provide groceries for over 340 households a week. And, most amazingly, this food was delivered to recipients' homes by hundreds of volunteers.

The Greater Boston Food Bank estimates that 1.6 million citizens of Massachusetts do not get enough to eat. While some aspects of the pandemic have subsided, food insecurity is not one of them. With little publicity we have a waiting list of 100 households and there are people still signing up.

We focus on serving individuals who are historically marginalized populations disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and unhealthy diets, including low-income families, seniors, and members of the Latinx community. Our goal is to collaborate with partners across our city and state to provide as many people as possible with access to healthy food because we believe that good food heals.

Funds received from grants provided by America for Christ will allow us to sustain the work of distributing healthy food to our neighbors. Please give today!

We are coming up on the America for Christ offering next month. Your support is so greatly appreciated and needed to help our missionaries.

We talked about having a table at Women's Ministry Spring Bazaar coming up in April. It would be great to raise some money to help the ladies group in Ecuador fight the oil company upsetting their way of life.

Our community could use some local help, as we have lots of places that can use volunteers and financial help.

There are so many ways we can impact our community. Table Grace provides food and comfort to our vulnerable guests, which is just one way, as a church, we are helping.

Thank you again everyone for your continued support and have a blessed month!

**AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2024**

**Please give today! | [www.abhms.org/afc](http://www.abhms.org/afc)**