

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OLYMPIA

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Gary Rogers, Caretaker

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First Baptist Church Dec. 2019 Tentative Preaching Schedule

December 1st

1st Sunday of Advent
Matthew 1:1–17
*Home, Church and
Our Spiritual DNA*
Pastor Mark Rambo

December 8th

Matthew 3:1–12
Preparing for Home
Pastor Dave Roberts

December 15th

Matthew 11:2–11
Come Home
Pastor Dave Roberts

December 22nd

Matthew 1:18–25
Arriving Home
Pastor Dave Roberts

December 24th Christmas Eve Service

Luke 2:1–20
*God Makes a Home, Wherever &
with Whomever, God Chooses!*
Pastor Mark Rambo

December 29th

Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23
Home is Where Christ is!
Pastor Mark Rambo



December
2019

WINDOWS



First Baptist Church Olympia

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IMPORTANT DATE FOR DECEMBER!

Christmas Eve Service Tuesday, December 24th @ 7:00 p.m. Olympia First Baptist Church

Our Advent theme this year
centers around our concept of
“Home.”

Christmas Eve will be the culmination of our journey toward
Bethlehem where we will explore, through song, scripture, and
conversation:

*God Makes a Home, Wherever
& with Whomever God Chooses!*

We hope you will come, with family and friends, to this
evening of worship, storytelling, music and candlelight!

Come Home, Tuesday, December 24th, 7:00 p.m.!

The Choir will present their
Christmas Cantata: “Joy Has Dawned”
On Sunday, December 15th
during the Worship Service

See page 8

CHRISTMAS CAROLING
Come and make a JOYFUL NOISE!
Meet at the church at 5:45 pm
on December 17th.

We will go caroling to a number of church members and return back to the
church for hot chocolate. Bring a plate of goodies to share and a flashlight.



Mark's Meanderings

Advent is upon us. Not only does Advent signal the countdown toward Christmas and the birth of Christ but it is also the beginning of a new church year. The historical church “calendar” begins with the season of Advent. That makes December 1st, 2019 not only the first Sunday of Advent but also the first day of this coming church calendar year. So, think of Advent like it is the first day of a new year! What does this “new year” that Advent inaugurates offer us who follow this infant child we call Jesus? Here is our Top Ten List:

One--Advent is an announcement—Joy to the World!

Two--Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation that God is on the move and creating something new, different and unexpectant.

Three—Advent is a reminder, “Do Not Be Afraid!”

Four—Advent is mysterious and surprising because God doesn’t do things the way we expect, anticipate or would do ourselves!

Five—FIVE GOLDEN RINGS! (Just making sure you’re still paying attention!)

Six—Advent is Good News!

Seven—Advent is Hope!

Eight—Advent is Peace!

Nine—Advent is Joy!

Ten—Advent is Love!

As we enter this season of new life and joy may all of us be intentional in our preparation of heart, mind and spirit to receive the Christ Child! Find ways to deepen your excitement of what God might be up to that is different and unexpectant this season of Advent, personally and as a community of faith! Remember, our joy is not complete until it is fully expressed! Find ways to express the mysterious good news, hope, peace, joy and love that Advent offers the world!

Blessings and Joy,

Pastor Mark

Mission Board

Gary Baits

Each December we honor retired ministers & missionaries with an offering called RMMO:

The roots of the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) originated in the mid-1930s, when American Baptist congregations received a Communion Fellowship Offering on the first Sunday of each month to support retired ministers, missionaries, their widowed spouses and elderly clergy within their churches. The long-standing tradition of the RMMO established in 1977 supports ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCU-SA.

This year’s theme, Honoring the Service of God’s Servants uplifts the generosity, grace and tireless work of retired ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses and families who have dedicated their lives to serving the body of Christ. We hope you will join us in honoring God’s committed servants.

AN UPDATE ON OUR MISSIONARIES

Gary Baits

Our missionaries have been actively doing ministry in challenging situations. Mylinda Baits recently returned from Nepal. She writes,

“I was invited by my International Ministries colleague, Carole Sydnor to train almost 60 Nepali leaders in arts-based coping strategies and collective care for teachers, counselors, pastors, youth workers, and emergency first responders.” One participant said, “Doing the different activities like drawing made me feel good. The things I learned in the past 3 days are very valuable and I will utilize them in my day to day life.”

To read more about this ministry trip, and to see photos of the training, go to Mylinda's online journal: <https://www.internationalministries.org/coming-home-to-the-body/>

As most of you know, Sarah Jean Nash has come to Olympia indefinitely because of the political unrest in Bolivia. Here is the background for the decision, from the International Ministries website. International Ministries global servants to Bolivia, J.D. and Rhonda Reed and Sarah Nash, have temporarily returned to the United States as civil strikes impeded their ministries and threatened security and safety.

On October 20, national elections were held in which incumbent President Evo Morales sought to be elected to a 4th term in office. Morales claimed a narrow victory, but in the wake of accusations of fraud and opposition-led strikes which paralyzed the country, he has tendered his resignation. This has, in turn, generated further protests from Morales supporters, some of which have escalated into violent confrontations.

As the situation developed, the Reeds and Nash were in regular communication with IM leadership as well as the leadership of their ministry partner in Bolivia, the Fundacion Esperanza (House of Hope). A mutual decision was reached that they would temporarily return and work remotely from the United States. Sarah is at her family home in Seattle, Washington, and the Reeds are staying at the West Virginia Baptist Convention’s Mission House in Parchment Valley, WV.

IM continues to be in contact with Carmen Flores and Ricardo Achu, Directors of Fundacion Esperanza (House of Hope), and Area Director Adalia Gutiérrez Lee reports that though roadblocks and protests have significantly inhibited ministry programs, they and their family are well. She sent a personal note assuring them, “on behalf of all the American Baptist Churches USA that you are NOT alone, the people of God are praying for Bolivia and love you dearly.”

The Reeds and Sarah expect to return to their homes and ministries in Bolivia as soon as the situation comes to a full resolution. They ask that their IM supporters join in praying for Bolivia and its people. “This has been called a battle for the soul of Bolivia,” J.D. notes. “Some others have said that this is one of the most pivotal moments in Bolivia’s political history. Pray for the Bolivian Evangelical Community to be a light in this troubled time and that the Holy Spirit will empower them to lead the way to a new Bolivia. Pray for this wonderful country and its amazing people. Pray that there is reconciliation and unity and that the country of Bolivia will be stronger because of how the Holy Spirit guided them to a new chapter in the history of their country.”

For more information, visit IM global servant’s pages:

Sarah Nash – <https://www.internationalministries.org/author/s-nash/>



*In Loving Memory of Dennis Baker,
A Memorial Service will be held at
the Olympia First Baptist Church
on December 7th, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.
Reception to follow*

The Choir Cantata:

Joy Has Dawned

A Christmas Musical Written and Arranged
by Lloyd Larson

Born to reign in us forever, born to set his people free;
dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.
you Jesus, joy of the highest heaven,
born as a little baby under a wondrous star.

Joy has dawned upon the world,
promised from creation;
God's salvation now unfurled,
hope for every nation.
Joy to the world, the LORD is come;
let earth receive her King!

The message of Christmas is truly a message of joy!
It is an eternal message and is a message to be
embraced in the good days and the bad days.
Joy is upon the world.
And that is something to celebrate!

Sunday, December 15 is the
Choirs Christmas cantata.
Bring your family and friends!



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Pastor Dave's Ponderings

The interim pastor's Thoughts Along the WAY ...

I've been thinking some about "change" recently. Perhaps you have too. The winds of change are moving around and through Olympia First Baptist. I'm assuming you've done some thinking about the ramifications of the Pastoral Search Committee's report of not bringing forth a candidate for the senior pastor position and their disbanding. That was followed by the discussion and vote on our ABC region affiliation.

Those decisions bring change into our congregation. How major the changes are may depend on your perspective on one or the other or both issues. As the old saying goes, "The only constant in the world is change."

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." Albert Einstein

"Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change." Wayne W. Dyer

The internet is a wonderful resource, isn't it?

Walk with me, if you will, in what we know about the changing winds surrounding us.

First, the pastoral search process. What we know is that Pastor Mark is looking for another position. In time, he will no longer serve this congregation. But, hear this please, that will not happen immediately. Mark will continue to serve us in the creative and purposeful way he has for these 23 years. Mark works with integrity, for which we can all be grateful.

We need to begin thinking about what it will mean for Mark not to be among us. You do recognize that he teaches a class on Sunday mornings, he leads the Thursday Bible Study, he prepares worship for Emmaus House, he helps with the men's breakfast, he's been preaching about half the time for FBC, he is the pastoral staff person for the Christian Education and Mission Boards, he is chief coordinator for Table Grace, and he is our liaison with the police department and community services, among other things.

Second, the region affiliation process. See articles about this elsewhere in this edition of *Windows*. I will be bold to say that most people at FBC will not notice any affect of our move to a new region. That's because we are a local autonomous congregation and we make our own decisions.

Making our own decisions includes what region we belong to and who to call as pastor. Those who will serve on the next pastoral search committee will

be aware of a change in that they will be working with Rev. Doug Avilesbernal, executive minister of Evergreen, in the search process, rather than the staff of MissionNW. Our search committee will set the guidelines that inform Rev. Doug as to the qualities, characteristics and skill sets we would like in our next pastor.

The new search committee will probably get down to work after the first of the year, though they may have some orientation before then. We will have a congregational meeting to officially call them to this work.

I don't anticipate our worship style to change, other than as we may choose. What you've been hearing in the teaching experiences we offer will not be changing. The ministries we emphasize will not be changing. The pastoral care offered will not change. Our involvement at Camp Bethel will not change.

We will have different opportunities for engagement with the larger church, should we (you) choose to do so.

Through all of this I'm reminded that the breath of God has not left us. Indeed, the Bible speaks of breath as

wind and Spirit. I believe the Spirit of God is moving in our midst and our calling to be open to the Spirit's leading in these times. Sometimes it is hard to

open ourselves, our minds and hearts, to the Spirit. This is where we bump up against hard change.

Hear the words of hope in the words to this hymn:

I feel the winds of God today;
today my sail I lift,
Though heavy oft with drenching spray
And torn with many a rift;
If hope but light the water's crest,
And Christ my bark will use,
I'll seek the seas at his behest,

And brave another cruise. — Jessie Adams

May we be venturesome folk who "trust in God's unchanging ways" (another hymn) even as we go through these changing times.

See you in the meeting place where "we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand."
(Another hymn)

I feel the winds of God today;
Today my sail I lift ...

Moderator's Report by Jean Heidal

As we come to the Advent season there is some concern about what the future holds for First Baptist Church as we are still in a state of "transition". The only clear path we have at this time is the leading of the Lord into a next phase of affiliation with the Evergreen Baptist Association. The vote at the Annual Meeting was a clear sign that it was time to change.

Here is just a brief recap of the Annual Meeting Region Affiliation vote:

A motion was made to suspend Robert's Rule and replace it with an 80% majority to pass. Approximately half of our active membership took part in the discussion and vote. The discussion lasted about one hour.

This is the ballot and number of responses to each option:

1. I agree that Evergreen Association is a better fit for us. (56)
2. I'll back the move to Evergreen, even though I have questions. (10)
3. For unity's sake, I'll support the move to Evergreen even though I prefer MissionNW. (1)
4. I cannot agree to move to Evergreen Association. (8)

I have been in phone contact with both Rev. Doug Avilesbernal (Evergreen) and Rev. Patty Duckworth (Mission NW) to advise them of the church decision. Letters have also been sent to each of them requesting the changes in affiliation. Our affiliation with MissionNW was withdrawn at their board meeting in late November. Rev. Alivesbernal, in a phone conversation with me, said that our decision to join Evergreen will be presented to their Executive Committee at their next meeting. The "right hand of fellowship" will be given at Evergreen's next Annual Meeting in October, 2020. However, we will be in full membership as soon as the board votes on our request.

With Pastor Dave's permission, I have invited Pastor Doug to come to our December 4th Executive Council meeting. He is going to focus on 3 areas of interest to us:

- 1) brief review of Evergreen's structure and what they can do for us
- 2) help with the Pastoral Search now that we will be beginning again
- 3) leadership training for church officers and providing a "mentor" church to be with us as we assimilate into Evergreen.

If you (congregation) would like to attend this meeting you are invited to do so. We will probably assemble in the Fireside Room at 6:30 pm. There may even be a coffee pot on and a cookie or two!

I know this is a big step for us as a church family so please come and listen to what is available to us through Evergreen Association. The changes and unknown are never easy, but we can find strength together as we chart new territory.

Thank you to the Executive Council for their hard work this year! I look forward to 2020 and all it has to offer, with the Lord's leading.

Women's Ministries by Jean Heidal

The Women's Christmas Brunch is fast approaching. Tickets sales may be closed by the time you receive this copy of "Windows", but if you do not have your ticket(s) as yet, please ask me. The Brunch is set for Saturday, December 14th, at 10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. The doors open at 9:30 am so you can visit with your friends, have a cup of coffee and do some "shopping" in the Cookie Room. All the details have been included in the Sunday bulletins and it promises to be a great time. Carolyn von Gohren will play some Christmas melodies as we gather, Sandi Swarthout will present a program of Christmas music, Carol Sutton (from Seattle) is bringing the devotional thought and several of our young ladies will read a Christmas story. There will also be a presentation to "Three Wise Women." It's a great way to focus on Christmas which we celebrate!

And speaking of Cookies... It's time to pull out those Christmas cookie recipes and start baking. We need lots of cookies for our "Cookie Room" sale. These are a big hit each year. Even a small batch would be appreciated. Please be sure to mark the kind of cookie you are bringing and if they have nuts. If you would like to help bake cookies we will be in the church kitchen in Thursday, December 12th, at 10 am. Come join us! Bring your ingredients and make the dough at church or bring the dough and we will "bake together." This has been a fun event in past years so come join us. If you have questions regarding the Cookie Room please contact Dixie Mize.

Diapers... At our November meeting Jane Van Deventer shared her experience as a foster mother for the past 39 years! Jane, and her husband, Neal, have also adopted several children, some who were originally in their foster care. It was a riveting story of love and caring that Jane & Neal have provided for babies/children in their home. In addition, we were able to send home with Jane **1966 diapers** from our collection. About 300 more diapers came in on November 17th so we may make a total of 2500 by the end of the month. Thank you to all who have contributed.

In January, we will have our "Ladies' Night Out" event. Plans are being worked out at this time -- watch for details in the upcoming bulletins and January newsletter.

Thank you all for your support of Women's Ministries! It's such a privilege to work with such a caring congregation.