

**Olympia  
First  
Baptist  
Church**

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

Kathleen and I want to thank everyone involved in honoring us with the reception celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary here at Oly First! Special thanks to the Pastoral Relations Team of Jan Downen, Sara Ann Nash, Mike Cooper as well as Ricky and Carrie Bowman for making it all come together. Thanks also to John Paget who put together a very heart-felt slideshow of some of the highlights of the last 30 years. The whole experience was honoring and special. Thank you. For those who gave cards, sent emails and/or texts, thank you as well. I am humbled by your kind words and the expressions of love and remembrances you shared.

It's hard to really believe it's been 30 years. But when Mike Bradburn smiles at you and says, "I was nine when you came," well, I guess math don't lie. Or you see a picture of yourself holding a baby who is now finishing up her freshmen year at Oly High, well, again, it pretty much confirms that you've been in place for a long time. It has been a crazy journey we have taken together, but God has found a way to use us to be a people of hope and good news to those who come to us, here on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> & Washington.

God is good...all the time...God is good!

Life and ministry here on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Washington is never really dull or predictable. A few weeks ago, there was a late-night shooting in the parking lot; a few days later an act of vandalism that included a broken Fellowship Hall window. The day before that broken window, there was an arrest outside of my office. To be clear, that was not a normal week, but it is a reminder that the world around us is unpredictable, chaotic and at times, dangerous.

I know that our normal reaction to incidences like that are to withdraw, retreat, fortify our boundaries and put limits on the unknown, which usually means putting limits on people who are not like us. Unfortunately, we follow the

Risen One who says things like:

***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.***

(Luke 4:18—19)

That's what we try to live out, here on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Washington. Good news to the poor – Table Grace. Release to the captives – One Parish, One Prisoner. Recovery of sight to the blind – Spiritual nurture. To set free those who are oppressed – Resettling immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees thru World Relief. Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor – reminding ourselves and letting others know that they, & we, are:

**Made in God's image, Enough in God's eyes, and Deeply, deeply loved.**

Jubilee! Restoration! New Life!

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That work, that ministry, that calling...is messy, complicated, full of surprises, both good & bad. It is not easy, and it's not the type of "church experience" most people are looking for or want. But, it is what Jesus established as the core of what God's kingdom is about. It is good news. It is about hearing, responding, and finding intersections between God's story and our own, individually as well as a faith community. All of it is the work(s) of the Spirit, even when, or especially when you have one of those weeks...

I love this congregation's heart. I sense, I feel, I see, how God is at work within us, individually and collectively as a faith community. There is an ever-expanding openness to not only being surprised by God's Spirit, but an openness to what God may be doing ahead of us. Open to new opportunities for community and relational connections. An openness to imagining, perhaps, different ways of being "church" in a world that is increasingly suspicious, wary, critical, and dismissive, regarding their perceptions and lived experiences with the "church." I love that there is an openness to try, explore, consider, ponder and move forward in ways that may feel awkward, a bit uncomfortable but necessary as we try to be bearers of hope, good news, and connection. In other words, a community of belonging; a spiritual oasis for those who need nurturing, healing, rest, and sustenance. A community of inclusion for all who seek and/or have questions about God, the state of their world, the uncertainty they feel.

We may feel unequipped. We may think that we are too imperfect, not spiritual enough, or just not enough, period, to be such a community; to be that spiritual oasis and place of belonging.

**But...it doesn't matter, really.**

As long as we are open and open-hearted, God seems to find a way. As long as we don't intentionally create barriers for others, God is finding avenues, paths, for connection to happen. Opportunities, to discover where God's story and the people we engage with can perhaps find intersection and common ground. And when that happens, hope is discovered and new life is in play. That's the power, the mystery, the good news of Jesus Christ. This is what grounds us, inspires us, and gives us direction. God creates. Christ redeems.

The Spirit swirls, sustains, and surprises!

Stay open. Be open-hearted. Get ready to be surprised!

Come and See!

Pastor Mark (Rev)

## Table Grace – Ministry Volunteer Opportunities

Below is a Volunteer sheet that outlines the different needs and opportunities there are for volunteers throughout the week around the ministry we provide with Table Grace.

From making sandwiches and putting lunches together after worship on Sundays, or distributing those lunches Sunday afternoon and interacting with our guests to sorting through our weekly donations of food, household items, toiletries and assorted other items for the Nancy Room to going to Lotus Court to share some of the abundance of food we receive, this is a life-giving ministry that meets people where they are. We build bridges into people's lives by providing simple, basic needs and doing so with love, respect and a bit of joy!

You can find a Volunteer sign-up sheet, like the one below, as you enter the church building downstairs, on one of the tables in the entryway. If you have questions, please contact: Patty Mauerman – (360) 890-6472 or at [paddycakes2009@hotmail.com](mailto:paddycakes2009@hotmail.com)

We especially need extra help on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of each month, both making the lunches as well as distributing them in the afternoon.

Again, this is a ministry of love and need! We are called to be bridge builders. To show the love of Christ not just with our words, but through our actions.

Come and See!

### Volunteer Sign-up Sheet

When would you like to volunteer? Please mark with an 'X' and circle desired week

\*\*\*We will contact you when extra help is needed or you can just show up\*\*\*

Name	Contact Info	Lotus Court Food Pantry Saturday 11:00 – 12:30	Table Grace Make Lunches Sunday Morning 11:45-2:45	Table Grace Serve Lunches Sunday Afternoon 3:00-5:30	Table Grace Fill Inventory Thursday 10:00-11:30	Please Circle
<b>Example: Patty</b>	<b>360-890-6472</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday ANY
						2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday ANY
						2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday ANY
						2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday ANY
						2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday ANY

SAMPLE

## Worship Changes & Tweaks this Summer – Creating Space for Storytelling

Just wanted to give everyone a heads up about something we are going to experiment with during the summer months of June, July and August. Don't panic, the change will only be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of those months: **June 21<sup>st</sup>, July 19<sup>th</sup>, and August 16<sup>th</sup>!**

On these Sundays, we are going to stray from our regular order of Worship and do worship a bit differently. There will still be singing, but perhaps with more contemporary songs as well as using Jonathan's gifts on piano & organ. There will still be prayers, community life/connection/fellowship. And, there will still be readings from God's Story, found in the Bible.

However, the change comes in you and I having the courage to share parts of our story within the worship experience. Usually you listen and take in whatever the preacher that Sunday has to say. Hopefully, during that preaching moment, there is something, at least 1 thing or nugget, that you can latch onto that gives you some hope, encouragement, good news, etc., that you can take with you for the week to come.

But this summer, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, you and I will be sharing God's Story with each other by sharing parts of our own story with God.

In small groups and/or individuals, who will respond to a question prompt in advance, we will be the ones who share how God's story intersects with our own. Please know that you are not required to share, to respond, if you are not comfortable. We want to respect your privacy, your comfort level with others, your trust. Even if you choose not to share, listening to others and their lived experiences with faith might give you some new insight, or hope, good news, or even help you realize, you are not alone. That parts of their faith story might also intersect with yours. When that happens, there is connection, something that's shared and understood.

Worship changes cont...

So, get ready! Don't take this as an opportunity Not to Come, but as another way of building stronger relational and spiritual connections with others.

June 21<sup>st</sup> – Gospel Story – Matthew 10:24–39

Story Prompt & Questions: What does your faith in Christ cost you?

How much does fear play within your faith?

Do you have stories or a story of overcoming that fear, to share?

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July 19<sup>th</sup> – Gospel Story – Matthew 13: 24–30, (36–43)

Story Prompt – Parable of the Weeds and Tares

Question – What do we/you struggle with in the midst of growth & health?

Alternative Story – Genesis 28:10–19a – Jacob's Ladder (Dream)

Question – What are/is your dream(s) for this faith community? Yourself?

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### **City of Olympia Community Priorities Forum in January, 2026**

Responding to a survey on community priorities.

This is what they identified:

**Food Access & Basic Needs and Emergency Preparedness & Community Resilience** emerged as the most consistently high priorities, with over 60% of respondents ranking each in the Top 3.

**Affordability & Access and Safety & Livability** followed closely behind, often tied to very concrete, place-based concerns like housing costs, sidewalks, crossings, and transportation.

Here is a link to survey results:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iGdsAghXZ5\\_YtDkhjyew2sjMYgnXKSEb?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iGdsAghXZ5_YtDkhjyew2sjMYgnXKSEb?usp=drive_link)

As we continue to pray and look for what are the needs of others in our widening neighborhood and how we might partner, or help create, and/or serve to make those dreams and needs a reality, this is a resource that the City Council has created. If you're interested, curious, or just want to be better informed. Take a look. If you have any questions you can talk with Pastor Mark and/or Melissa McKee.



### **Veterans Honored**

Quilts of Valor, a nationwide organization that provides handmade quilts to US Veterans to express gratitude for their service. Three of our church family members recently have been honored in this manner.

Don Ice enlisted in the Air Force in 1950. In 1952 he applied for the Army's Officer Candidate School, was accepted, and became an officer. Duty stations included Korea and later, Taiwan where he was a military assistant. Don went to flight school in 1956. In Viet Nam, Don was a Commanding Officer with A Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Battalion where he flew helicopters. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross - medal twice. With the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Don retired in 1970 after 20 years of service for his country.

Chuck Downen enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1954 and went to San Diego, CA for boot camp. After Navy Electronics Tech School and Marine Corps Radio Tech School, Chuck went to Camp Lejeune, NC in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Battalion. In 1956 he was deployed to the Mediterranean in a tank platoon attached to a Battalion Landing Team. When the Suez Canal War broke out in 1956 Chuck went into Egypt as part of a 5-man backup communications team between ships at sea and Marines evacuating U.S. citizens. That 3-month deployment turned into 7 months. Back in the U.S. in 1957 Chuck was attached to Charlie Company. They headed to the Caribbean for a 2-month training in Puerto Rico, Panama, and Cuba. Sergeant Downen was released from active duty in 1957.

In 1959 Frank Wilson was inducted into the Army and sent to basic training at Fort Ord, California. Upon completion he then reported to Fort Sam Houston Texas Brooke Army Medical Training Center where he received a certificate successfully completing The Medical Specialist Course. From Texas he went to Fort Dix, NJ and boarded a troop ship from New York to Fort Davis Panama CZ. Frank completed his active service in Panama with the rank of SP4 (T) E-4). In August 1961, he received his separation and transferred to the US Army Reserve. In August 1965, Frank was Honorably Discharged from military service.



IN LOVING

*memory*

A Memorial Service  
will be held  
to remember Terry Whitehouse  
on Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.,  
held at Olympia First Baptist Church  
with a reception will follow.

ABW Women's Ministry June 2026

Women's Ministry is currently reviewing and realigning the focus of our programs. We have only just begun; however, we can report that the CHRISTMAS BRUNCH will take place this December.

Members have also decided that they want more emphasis given to the support of local programs. Cards and notes are being written to church members who are home bound or who are ill in an effort to let them know that they are not forgotten.

Memorial receptions will continue to be a continuing commitment. Please stay tuned for further decisions as they are determined.

THE DEACON'S CORNER

Pat Luhr

## WANTED BOOKS (ADULT & CHILDRENS)

### Spring cleaning? We can use books for children and adults.

Around the corner from our church front steps, right beside the "Take a Prayer" rack. Is our little red FREE Book library. As an outreach, we share free books for our surrounding community.

Pat Luhr and one of her friends from Altrusa have been trying to keep books in the little library. Please bring book donations to the church, there is a plastic tub with "Book Donations" on the floor, inside our front door. God bless you. Thank you!



Olympia Commons Day Camp – Operation Restoration  
July 20<sup>th</sup> thru July 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 5<sup>th</sup>. 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](mailto:olympiacommons@olympiachurch.org)



# 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: 9<sup>th</sup> - Grad

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

Director: Delynnia Woitt

## JR. HIGH CAMP

JULY 19-25

Grades: 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>

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

Director: TBA

## ELEMENTARY CAMP

JULY 26-30

Grades: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>

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](http://www.campbethel.net) / [contact@campbethel.net](mailto:contact@campbethel.net) / (360)289-3444