

## Vital Congregations Initiative

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*  
—Isaiah 43:19

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*  
—1 Corinthians 3:16

*See, the home of God is among mortals...See, I am making all things new.*  
—Revelation 21: 3,5

With a nod to what will most surely be this year's most overused metaphors, 2020 will be a year for seeking clearer vision in our life together. Each new year affords us with the chance to take stock of where we are and consider what ways God is calling us deeper into mission together.



One important way we will engage this call to clarity is by participating in a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denominational program called Vital Congregations. We are at a place of growth and new life in our congregation — it is the perfect time to ask questions of ourselves about what is going well, what is vibrant and life-giving, and perhaps where are we being called to engage God's mission in the world in fresh ways.

*The purpose of the Vital Congregations Initiative is to work alongside leaders of existing congregations continually assessing, discerning and living into faithful actions that increase vitality through intentional spiritual practices that take them deeper into following Jesus Christ, so that their own lives are changed, congregations are transformed and the mission of God spreads throughout particular communities and the world.*

(More information is available at: <https://www.northwestcoast.org/nwc-vital-congregations>)

Our work on this project will commence in January, as our Session and leaders begin praying and discerning over some predefined questions and areas to review from the denomination. Then, in Lent, we will go through 7 weeks of study in our Sunday worship on "7 Marks of Vitality" — 7 areas that folks who study church health have identified as markers for how a church is exhibiting health, needs support, and has the opportunity to celebrate.

One of the most helpful parts of this process is that we do not do it alone. St. James will be among about a dozen other Northwest Coast Presbytery churches engaging this process. Because we do this alongside our neighboring churches, we have a chance to share best practices, work together in learning cohorts of pastors, and support one another unto the ultimate end of helping our congregations become more healthy, vibrant, and vital in the upcoming chapters of our life together.

I am excited about this work. It can be so helpful to have the support of an outside "lens" (in the form of our denomination and presbytery) to look through and see what is going on around us. When we share life in a single context day in and day out, it can be easy to lose sight of how we are changing and being inspired by God's Spirit. I am hopeful that this process will open us up all the more and aid in discovering the ways we can celebrate the good, new, vibrant work God is calling us to in the years ahead.

I pray you will find inspiration and joy in engaging this initiative together as a congregation. Thank you for all that you bring to our community and life together.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Seth Thomas

## FINANCE UPDATE: STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2019

*By Dick Carr, Finance Committee*

As of the end of November, our year January through November Income and expenses indicate that we may have a small excess at the end of the year. There are many factors that have contributed to this wonderful financial result. May this be a lesson to St. James that this dramatic result is probably a one of a kind.

Note: If you have purchased something for the church and desire to be reimbursed, you need to fill out a reimbursement form that you will find in the treasurer box, get it approved by a committee chair and placed in the treasurer box by January 5, 2020.



### STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN FOR 2020

The Stewardship Committee wishes to thank everyone who has responded and indicated their desire to financially support St. James for 2020. The campaign is officially over but there seems to be a response or two dribble in. The Finance Committee will still accept all responses. As a reminder, our treasurer, Marina, is the only person to see your pledge form. As of December 8, 2019, we have received and entered into the system 64 pledges. The total amount pledged is \$195,420 out of our much needed goal of \$200,000. As a reminder, pledges are our primary source of income. This increase in pledging is a great result toward recovery to a level that will financially support the church in a manner that is necessary to move forward. There will still be a deficit budget for 2020. It should be much smaller than the 2019 budget deficit.

### ***THE CHURCH APPRECIATES EACH AND EVERY CONTRIBUTION! PLEASE PLEDGE!***

Your Stewardship Committee, Pam Gibson, Christian Beaty, Marina McLeod, Treasurer,  
Seth Thomas, Pastor, and Dick Carr, Finance Chairman

	<b>November</b>	<b>CURRENT BUDGET</b>	<b>YR TO DATE</b>	<b>YR TO DATE BUDGET</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$13,392</b>	<b>\$16,670</b>	<b>\$214,226</b>	<b>\$194,003</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$18,479</b>	<b>\$18,327</b>	<b>\$210,321</b>	<b>\$225,413</b>

*On-Line giving continues to be available for those who wish to use this option. Also Giving through your IRA account is also an option if you have to withdraw funds from your account by December 31, 2019.*

THANK YOU! [saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving](http://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving)

## CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

*By Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director*

Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

What an amazing 2019! I want to give a huge thank you to everyone at St. James for the amazing amount of love and support that has been shown for the youth and children here. Because of that love and support it was an amazing year for growth!

We started the year with no youth program and now have a wonderful group of kids who had a great 2019! They brought home the best themed bed in the Family Promise Bed Race, organized a hugely successful Holiday Joy/Angel Tree project, and consumed an armies share of doughnuts and otter pops!

We celebrated 23 youth and children in June and the numbers are increasing, including the addition of Reid Aita and Eden Engels both born in June 2019. It has been a joy to watch and I am excited to see what 2020 has to bring!

Our Godly Play students started the third year of a 3 year cycle and are getting introduced to some new stories and enrichment activities. They held a Change Drive for Advent and the children have raised over \$20 in change for Family Promise.

With all the growth and energy in 2019 we are eagerly looking forward to 2020 and the enormous amount of possibilities that it has in store for us:

Toddler Time resumes on Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday mornings from 8:30-10:00am for ages 4yrs old and younger. Parents have a chance to socialize with other parents and enjoy free coffee while their children play. This is a free, unstructured playtime; while it will be staffed, parents/guardians must be present at all times. We provide a few toys but feel free to bring your own to share.

Mark your calendars for January 24<sup>th</sup> for another Movie Night! Come enjoy pizza and popcorn and a movie. Watch for more details to come.

We are also looking forward to August 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and the All Church Retreat. Watch for more registration information and fundraising projects to come.

Our Sunday morning adult education class will continue to study the lectionary texts each week. The lectionary texts are posted each week in the weekly email announcements, if you don't currently receive that and would like to, please contact the office with your email. The class starts at 9:30 in the lounge, childcare is available in the nursery. All are welcome!

Looking forward to the new year with anticipation, joy, and gratitude!



## Godly Play Schedule for January:

### ❖ January 5<sup>th</sup>: Epiphany

In this lesson we remember the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem. We will recall together all the weeks in Advent as we had before Christmas but give special attention to the final purple candle, the one that represents the three kings. We will stop here and pay attention to what the three gifts were and what they symbolize as gifts for a baby who is the Messiah.

### ❖ January 12<sup>th</sup>: Holy Baptism

In this lesson we learn that Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into the Church. For Christians, this rite is the gateway into the family of families we call the Church. We ask the children to remember or look forward to the day of their baptism by lighting candles from the light of the Christ Candle, since this is also the day they receive their "light."

### ❖ January 19<sup>th</sup>: Parable of the Good Shepherd

In this lesson we hear the parable of the Good Shepherd, in which the shepherd searches for his one lost sheep, leaving the other ninety-nine to do so. This parable is often considered more of an identity statement than a parable.

### ❖ January 26<sup>th</sup>: Work Day

## PULSE ON GROUPS

*This month the Pulse takes a look at the weekly St. James Fitness group hosted by Christian Beaty.*



For the past 10 years, St. James fitness has consistently met 2 days a week and continues to make it happen. Many of the members had never worked out in this manner but that didn't stop them from coming to each class and putting forth the effort to learn and lead a healthier life. If it is one thing that St. James Fitness proves every class, age is only a number and doesn't define your limitations.

St. James Fitness is a circuit structured program meaning that each workout has several stations with different exercises at each station. Our workouts always include a warm-up, workout, and stretch. The main goal of each workout is to get a full-body workout including strength training, coordination, cardio, and core work. Regardless of your level of fitness, exercises can be modified to fit your needs. Not only will you get a good workout but you will enjoy the camaraderie of group training.

Classes are held Monday and Friday from 4:00-5:00 p.m and are \$25 a month. So come and join us and start the new year off on a path to a happier and healthier you. Please feel free to try out our class for a few sessions at no charge and see if it is a good fit for you. A personal thank you to Bob Monahan. Without your support and passion for fitness, St. James Fitness would still only be an idea.

*(photo credit: St. James Fitness class, Christian Beaty, 2019)*





## ST. JAMES STAFF IS AT YOUR SERVICE

Pastor: The Rev. Seth J. Thomas  
Children & Family Ministry Director: Tracy Caruso  
Worship & Music Leader: Dylan Cisneros  
Accompanist: Luke Arnold  
Treasurer: Marina McLeod  
Administrative Assistant: Shannon Laws  
Nursery: Claire Alarid, Fiona Dent,  
Lucy Sieczka, Erika Singh-Cundy

Office Hours:  
Tuesday, Wednesdays 9:00am-12:00pm  
Thursday, Friday 9:00am-2:00pm



## SESSION

Moderator: The Rev. Seth J. Thomas

Clerk of Session: Mark Beaty  
Building & Grounds: Jeanne Uhles  
Christian Faith Formation: Sarah Condreay  
Finance & Stewardship: Dick Carr  
Membership & Congregation Life: Laurie Anderson  
Mission & Social Action: Carol Dellecker  
Nominating: Jenny Sue LeSchander & Sarah Condreay  
Personnel: Faye Hill  
Trustees: Dick Carr, Jeanne Uhles, Mark Beaty  
Worship & Music: Jill Hoyt



## DEACONS

Moderator: Alice Beaty

Parish 1: Alice Beaty and Adam Beaty    Parish 4: Marlene Amman and Kate Haworth  
Parish 2: Pastor Seth & Deacons    Parish 5: Karen & Dwayne Rogers and Pam Gibson  
Parish 3: Julie Keyes and Carla Shafer

### Sunday Worship Schedule

9:30 a.m. Adult Bible Study  
9:30 a.m. Youth Bible Study (Second Mondays)  
10:30 a.m. Worship  
10:45 a.m. Children's Time

*(photo credit: The Flower Committee would like to thank everyone that participated in the annual fundraiser, also a special "Thank You" from St. James to the folks who decorated the church for advent. Thank you all and Happy New Year!)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S LUNCHEON & BIBLE STUDY

The monthly Women's Bible study and the Women's Association luncheon will be held on Tues, Jan 28th. Bring a dish to share for the potluck luncheon and fellowship time.

*Bible Study 10:30-11:30 (Lounge),  
Luncheon 11:30-1:00 (Horizon Room)*

### SMALL GROUP DINNERS START

Beginning in January we are bringing back Small Group Dinners. Small group dinners are a one-time dinner with 5-10 people assigned/put together for the evening. Each participant brings part of the dinner to share with the volunteer hosts home. It is a wonderful way to meet others in the congregation. Look for sign up forms in the attendance pads in the pews.

### ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING

Please join us following worship on Sunday, January 26, for St. James' Annual Congregational Meeting. At this meeting, you will have a chance to hear about the Mission and Plan for our church in the 2020 year, as well as look back and celebrate all the great things that have happened in 2019. The congregation will also vote on Pastor Seth's Terms of Call for the year and elect trustees and the nominating committee for 2020. All members of the congregation are welcome to vote at the meeting and everyone is welcome to attend.

### SAVE THE DATE FOR THE INTERFAITH HOPE AUCTION!

Interfaith Coalition's Hope Auction happens on Saturday, March 28, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The auction will take place at the Four Points by Sheraton.

To donate an auction item and purchase tickets, please contact Pastor Seth or Interfaith Coalition at 360-734-3983 or through the website:

[www.interfaith-coalition.org](http://www.interfaith-coalition.org)

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

1/1	Teresa Bowers	
1/1	Susan Burkland	
1/2	Ed Simmers and Jane Madden	
1/3	Kim Kendall	
1/8	Marty Haines	
1/8	Don Mellinger	
1/11	Zach Engels	
1/11	Karen Summers	
1/15	Kyle Anderson	
1/17	Dwayne Rogers	
1/18	Genevieve Pfueller Roguski	
1/23	Hailey Caruso	
1/28	Tricia Bravener	
1/31	Marlene Amman	

### WHERE IS IT?

- ❑ Add your name to the 2020 church directory and include your birthday to our monthly birthday list today. Contact the office to be added or update your information.
- ❑ The usher sign-up sheet for January and February is on the bulletin board in the Horizon Room. Sign up to meet, greet & usher folks that gather for worship
- ❑ The sign-up sheet for Flower Ministry is in the Horizon Room on the right side of the bulletin board
- ❑ Get more St. James calendar information and sign up for our weekly emails and the monthly magazine. Visit our website: <https://saintjamespres.org/>

→ **ST. JAMES CALENDAR**

**Church Office Closed**

Wednesday, Jan 1st

**Personnel Committee- Lounge**

Tuesday, Jan 7, 9:00am

**Building & Grounds Committee- Lounge**

Tuesday, Jan 7, 5:30pm

**Finance Committee- Upper Level**

Wednesday, Jan 8, 6:15pm

**Worship & Music Committee- Lounge**

Wednesday, Jan 8, 10:00am

**Mission & Social Action- Lounge**

Wednesday, Jan 8, 4:00pm

**Christian Faith Formation- Godly Play**

Wednesday, Jan 8, 7:00pm

**Session- Lounge**

Sunday, Jan 12, 12:00pm

**Grief Support- Lounge**

Wednesday, Jan 15, 10:00am

**Deacons- Lounge**

Sunday, Jan 19, 11:45

**St. James Book Club- Lounge**

Monday, Jan 20, 7:00pm

**Church Office Closed**

Monday, Jan 20th

**Annual Congregational Meeting**

Saturday, Jan 26, 12:00pm-1:00pm

**Pres. Women Bible Study & Luncheon  
(The Lounge & Horizon Room)**

Tuesday, Jan 28, 10:30am-1:30pm

→ **ST. JAMES WEEKLY CALENDAR**

**Toddler Time**

8:30am, Wednesdays

**St. James Bell Choir**

6:30pm, Thursdays

**St. James Chancel Choir**

7:30pm, Thursdays

→ **PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY**

**AA Fairhaven Group- Fellowship Hall**

7:15pm, Thursdays and Sundays (childcare)

**AA Men's Book Study Group- Horizon Room**

6:30pm, Mondays

**AA SOS Men's Group- Horizon Room**

6:00pm, Wednesdays

**Bellingham Com. Chorus- Fellowship Hall**

6:30pm, Tuesdays

**Bellingham Ukulele Group- Fellowship Hall**

1:00pm, 2nd Saturday

**Boy Scouts Troop 7- Fellowship Hall**

7:00pm, Mondays(except school holidays)

**Happy Hour Al Anon-Horizon Room**

5:30pm, Tuesdays

**Overeaters Anonymous- Lounge**

10:00am, Saturdays

**St. James Fitness- Fellowship Hall**

4:00pm, Mondays and Fridays

**Tai Chi- Fellowship Hall**

5:15pm, Mondays

**WA Gender Alliance- Godly Play Room**

7:30pm, Tuesdays

**Weavers Guild- Fellowship Hall**

9:30am, 3rd Saturday

**Yoga-Horizon Room**

10:15am, Tuesdays and Thursdays

**You Are Not Alone (YANA)- Lounge**

6:00pm, 2nd Monday

**Bayside Co-op Preschool**

**Hawthorne Learning Solutions**

**Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County**





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