

# the Pulse

FEBRUARY 2019



## LEAN IN

Greetings! At the close of January 2019, St. James Presbyterian held our Annual Congregational Meeting. We heard reports of the good work God is doing in our midst and listened to presentations of how our church leadership plans to invest and develop this work in the coming year. This year, the Session presented a deficit budget, making space for growth and God's abundant provision by investing in the future with the excess giving we have accumulated in years past.

A phrase kept finding its way into the conversation: "Lean in." What does it mean to "lean in"? Is this just a catchy phrase? A few years back, Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, wrote a book entitled *Lean In*. In her book, Sandberg used the phrase to speak about being present and engaged as a high-achieving leader. We've picked these words up and made common use of them in our daily interactions. So, what does it mean? And what does it mean in the context of the church?

I want to connect *lean in* with a word and concept peppered throughout the Scriptures: ἐγγίζω (transliterated engizo); it means to "draw close" or "come near" or "approach". Jesus uses this word when he talks about how the Kingdom of God is "at hand" — it's ἐγγίξω. It is approaching, imminent, near. It comes from the sense of a time arriving or coming into proximity of a place or person. ἐγγίξω is to, in our vernacular, "lean in."

Leaning in is about turning attention, taking steps forward, and coming into closer proximity with the object of our focus. For us, in the context of mission, vision, and planning, "leaning in" looks like

coming closer to one another in support of the important initiatives we are engaging as a church. In particular, we sense a call to "lean in" and expand our support of children and families in our church. We sense the call to "lean in" to financially support staff and programs that give dedicated time and energy to doing just that. We want to lean towards providing support to the particular needs of the little ones among us (of which there are a growing number — Hooray!).

When Jesus speaks of the Kingdom's closeness and coming, he invites his followers to draw near in hope and anticipation: the Kingdom of God is at hand. It's like he's saying, "Hey, come in close, pay attention, things are about to get really good!"

This is our calling and this is what we are encouraged to do: lean in this year at St. James. Certainly, that has to do with our financial giving — as we propose a budget with a deficit, we hope you will engage in the ways you can to meet that faithfully-set goal. But it also means drawing near in the ways you participate — are you called to lead, are you called to give time, are you called to join in this good work? Yes, yes, yes. So the invitation is to lean in to that calling, to embrace it, and to discover that crackle of anticipation as we partner in what God is doing together. Lean in.

Grace and peace,



Rev. Seth J. Thomas

## RESPONSE

We love hearing how themes from *Grace & Peace* have connected with what God is doing in your own story. If you have a response to Pastor Seth's article from a recent Pulse issue, send it to us at [office@saintjamespres.org](mailto:office@saintjamespres.org).

from January 2019 *Making Space for Epiphany* >>

*There is a time for everything...*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, NIV

### Pruning

My orchid sat on top of the fridge, buried in dust behind a roommate's Tupperware. A rough fall had knocked it out of its pot and it hadn't bloomed since. Aw, what the heck - I took the orchid down from the fridge and put it in the window. Some would say it was a lateral move. I was in grad school and didn't have much more to give. Maybe an ice cube or two.

A friend once told me that if you love something you have to let it go. "If it's meant to be, it will come back to you..." she shrugged and started talking about something else. The conversation might have moved on, but her words took root in my heart. I knew what I had to do.

Some early pruning experiences had taught me that the hardest part of any bad trim is the grow-out phase. It wasn't pretty, but I was starting to trust the process. I grabbed a pair of scissors from the kitchen drawer and held the stem in my hands. I'll take it down to the base and give it a new lease on life. I carefully took the stem in my hands, ready to make start fresh. As I did, the stem came into focus, and so did three little buds.

What? I had been so engrossed with death that I couldn't see life that was right before my eyes. My plant had already begun its miracle comeback, now I just had to wait.

### Purging

We've all had those years. I can't put it into words, but you know what I mean. At the end of one of those years, my next door neighbor knocked on my door. "We're doing some remodeling and ordered a dumpster. There's no way we're going to fill it, so feel free to throw in whatever you want."

Nothing could have wrapped up a year of Virginia Slims and Coors Light better than a dump run, and in this case, the dump came to me. I went downstairs and sat on my bed. It was like winning the lotto, I didn't know where to start.

Soon, I was making my last walk-through. That same orchid, once revived, had since died and sat lifeless on the kitchen table. It felt a little too real. Why was I carrying around this dead orchid thinking it would ever bloom again? "I'm not moving this orchid into the next chapter of my life, I've had enough," I resolved.

I tucked the orchid under my arm and headed towards the door when the word mercy stopped me in my tracks. I don't know why or how. Was it the voice of God?

I looked down at the orchid. Her leaves were withered and leathery, her exposed roots were black and lifeless. There is no way this orchid could live again.

I put the orchid back on the kitchen table. It was not a grand gesture of hope, but a quiet act of surrender; I didn't choose the orchid, but I chose to relent.

Kate Hoskin

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*A new pot, a few loving homes, and two new leaves later...it's not the kind of comeback story that gets interviews or a book deal, but I'm happy to report that the orchid is still kicking!*



## MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION

### FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

Whatcom County Mobile Food Pack  
Family Life Center at Birchwood Presbyterian Church  
400 Meadowbrook Court, Bellingham, WA

What is *Feed My Starving Children* (FMSC) all about? It is a Christian non-profit organization that is committed to feeding God's starving children throughout the world. The event, "Whatcom County Mobile Pack", will be hosted at the Family Life Center at Birchwood Presbyterian Church. Children and adults will hand pack nutritious meals designed specially for starving children. Each volunteer will work a 2-hour shift and can donate financially as well. FMSC will be on-site to help organize and carry out the two-day event. They will bring all the food, supplies and truck for transporting.

700 volunteers are required to pack 130,000 meals. The total cost for this event is \$30,000 (\$0.22 a meal). We will work with other churches, service organizations, businesses, schools and Christian organizations in Whatcom County. Can you imagine the impact this will have as an outreach in our community and fulfill one of God's greatest wishes to help feed starving children throughout the world?

FMSC was founded in 1987 and has served 70 countries by working with 88 world-wide Christian organizations to distribute the food packs. Over the past 12 years they have received a 4-star rating with Charity Navigator. Visit the FMSC website at [www.fmsc.org/about-us](http://www.fmsc.org/about-us) and you will be inspired to participate when you see for yourself how the program is carried out.

**Sign up!** Go to [bpchurch.org/fmsc](http://bpchurch.org/fmsc) and you will be able to pick the shift you would like to work. If you have questions, please contact Gretchen Pfueller at [gmpfueller@gmail.com](mailto:gmpfueller@gmail.com). \*Children must be 5+/childcare on-site. This opportunity involves 2 hours of standing.

- ★ Friday, March 1, 2019  
6:00pm-8:00pm
- ★ Saturday, March 2, 2019  
9:00am-11:00am, 11:30am-1:30pm, 2:00pm-4:00pm

## FINANCE UPDATE

DICK CARR, FINANCE CHAIR

	December 2018	Current Budget	End-of-Year	End-of-Year Budget
Income	\$22,053	\$17,889	\$221,318	\$222,277
Expenses	\$16,047	\$17,131	\$226,294	\$222,277

We ended the year with an excess of \$1,271 instead of a deficit of almost \$10,000. Our treasurer (Marina) is having difficulty with identifying the source of donations that come to the church electronically. If you make your contributions to St. James electronically, you should contact who you go through to make sure they send the individual source with the amount and not just the financial source. If you are contributing using online procedure, be sure that you are paying the fee and not having it passed on to St. James.

## CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

What a great start to 2019! We have had a fun and busy January. Our kids wrapped up their change drive, raising over \$40 for *Feed My Starving Children*. Their change will pay for over 160 nutritious meals for children worldwide. St. James kids will have more opportunities to help with *Feed My Starving Children*:

- On February 3rd we need kid volunteers to help man the soup pot for **Souper Bowl Sunday** at St. James.
- Children 5 and older can help pack meals on March 1st and/or 2nd at Birchwood Presbyterian. Check out the article on page 6 for more details!

Please let Tracy Caruso know if you have kids who are willing and able to help at one or both of those events.

On January 9th we began our weekly **Toddler Time** group. So far we have had a growing number of attendees each week. We are thrilled to be able to offer our space to families in our community to come and play and participate in a time of fellowship with other families.

Tracy Caruso  
Director of Children & Family Ministries  
[tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org)

### ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Our Sunday morning adult education class is studying the lectionary texts each week. The class starts at 9:30am in the lounge, childcare is available in the nursery.



### GODLY PLAY

February is all about Parables! Jerome Berryman says that “it is important for children to encounter parables during childhood so they can develop the ability to hear with their own ears what Jesus was communicating when he spoke in parables.” Our parable boxes use 2-dimensional materials to help reiterate that these are Jesus’s words and stories to us. The wondering questions used for parable lessons are designed to encourage children to see that there are deeper meanings in the parables than what they might initially encounter.



- February 3rd: The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- February 10th: The Parable of the the Great Pearl
- February 17th: The Parable of the Sower
- February 24th: The Parable of the Mustard Seed

- ★ We are always looking for volunteer nursery workers or anyone interested in teaching Godly Play, please let Tracy know if you are interested in either.
- ★ Our wish list is up-to-date with current “wishes” for our Godly Play program.  
<http://www.wishlist.com/saintjamescfm/>





## INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

### INTERFAITH UPDATE

Dear St. James friends,

What a blessing it is to have your support and partnership in helping people in Whatcom County to find hope. And this work you do DOES make a difference. Last week we received a message from a former housing parent who just wanted to let us know that since leaving Interfaith housing she has graduated – with honors(!) – from community college and is now enrolled for a degree from WWU. She and her children are happy, stable, and so very grateful. Know that you help change lives, and you do indeed bear witness to the faith and love you believe in. Thank you, from all of us!

Janie Pemble  
Outreach Director  
Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County

### INTERFAITH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Join us for an eclectic and uplifting program of spiritual music from diverse congregations and faith traditions throughout Whatcom County, ending with an exuberant grand finale involving all of the performers together with the audience! The concert will be held on **Sunday, February 24 at 3:00 pm at First Congregational Church**, 2401 Cornwall Avenue in Bellingham. There will be a freewill offering to benefit the programs of Interfaith Coalition.

### HOPE AUCTION

Saturday, March 23, 2019; 5:30pm  
Four Points by Sheraton in Bellingham.

- ★ Attend the Auction!  
Rally a group of family and friends or make it an endearing evening for two. Tickets are \$65 each, including dinner. Gold Level Tickets (\$100) provide an additional, meaningful donation in supporting Interfaith's mission.
- ★ Donate an Auction Item!  
Do you have an item to gift? A service you offer, your own artwork, gift certificate, tickets to popular sporting events, vacation home getaway ... let your imagination soar, reach out and let's brainstorm! We're happy to receive your gifts, however big or small; generosity and gratitude is not measured in size.



*For over 35 years, the member congregations of Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County have been working together to eliminate homelessness and poverty in Whatcom County.*

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

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **FAMILY PROMISE TACO TUESDAY**

St. James is hosting another Taco Tuesday dinner on February 5 at Sacred Heart. Please sign up in the Horizon Room to donate items for the meal.

### **SOUPER BOWL OF CARING SUNDAY**

We will be celebrating Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday on February 3 at St. James. We won't be watching the game together or enjoying party food but we will be collecting donations in our soup pots to support our March 1-2, Mobile Pack Day for FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN. Cans of soup would also be appreciated for our ongoing support of street youth served through NW Youth Services.

### **FAMILY PROMISE**

Family Promise returns to our neighborhood February 3-10, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. It is getting close to one year of numerous heartwarming stories, homeless families who were losing hope, now in homes, new jobs, improved health, lives changed because so many caring people have shared their strengths, time, talents, treasures and love.

### **FLOWER COMMITTEE**

The flower sign-up sheet is posted for 2019! Please sign up in the Horizon Room.

### **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

The monthly Bible study and luncheon (soup & bread) is scheduled for February 26. Everyone is invited to attend the study at 10:30am and the luncheon at noon. Lesson Six, *God With Us Through Our Trials*, focuses on Isaiah 41:8-13; 43:1-7; and Psalm 46:1-11. No need to bring anything extra to eat this month; the hostesses will provide everything.

### **ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB**

Join us Monday, February 18 at 7:00pm. Our selection this month is *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai. The library book kit is in the office. Grab a book and join us!

### **ALPHA COURSES**

Birchwood Presbyterian Church is starting a 10 week, no cost series to discuss life and the Christian Faith in an informal, fun, and friendly environment. Dinner is included. Alpha starts Tuesday, February 5, from 6:00-8:00pm and meets weekly through April 9th. Please contact Curry Miles at [cmarchitec@msn.com](mailto:cmarchitec@msn.com) if interested.

### **OPEN HOUSE**

The Ground Floor at First Congregational Church of Bellingham (United Church of Christ) is opening! FCCB has partnered with Northwest Youth Services to provide a new day center for local youth experiencing homelessness. You are invited to come celebrate at an Open House on Sunday, February 10, 1:00-3:00pm.

### **GIVE TO SAINT JAMES ONLINE**

Using our online system you can give from your bank account, make a one-time donation, set up recurring gift, designate your gifts as part of your annual pledge, and designate your per capita contribution.

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

### **CHURCH PIANIST/ACCOMPANIST**

We are seeking to hire someone for ongoing support of the music program at St. James. If you know someone who may be interested, please have them contact Carolyn Mullen at [zolhavn@gmail.com](mailto:zolhavn@gmail.com) with a cover letter and resume.

## FEBRUARY 2019

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/2	Louise Hardin
2/5	Janet Oakley
2/12	Tim Crandall
2/18	John Dobbie
2/20	Randy Bowers
2/22	Gail Haines
2/23	Jim Gresham
2/26	Ralph Rinne
2/27	Kay Carr
2/28	Nancy Peck

### → ST. JAMES CALENDAR

#### **Membership Class**

Sunday, February 3, 12:00pm

#### **Building & Grounds Committee**

Tuesday, February 5, 5:30pm

#### **Finance Committee**

Tuesday, February 5, 6:00pm

#### **Mission & Social Action Committee**

Wednesday, February 6, 3:30pm

#### **Christian Faith Formation Committee**

Wednesday, February 6, 7:00pm

#### **Session**

Sunday, February 10, 12:00pm

#### **Worship & Music Committee**

February 13, 10:00am

#### **Deacons**

February 17, 11:45am

#### **Usher & Lector Training**

Sunday, February 24, 12:00pm

- ★ See **Upcoming Events** (pg. 6) for featured activities and current happenings in our church and community.

### → ST. JAMES WEEKLY CALENDAR

#### **Grief Support**

10:00am, 2nd/4th Tuesdays

#### **Toddler Time**

8:30am, Wednesdays

#### **St. James Bell Choir**

6:30pm, Thursdays

#### **St. James Chancel Choir**

7:30pm, Thursdays

### → PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

#### **AA Men's Book Study Group**

6:30pm, Mondays

#### **Al Anon**

5:30pm, Tuesdays

#### **AA SOS Men's Group**

6:00pm, Wednesdays

#### **AA Fairhaven Group**

7:15pm, Thursdays and Sundays

#### **OA**

10:00am, Saturdays

#### **You Are Not Alone (YANA)**

6:00pm, 2nd Monday

#### **WA Gender Alliance**

7:30pm, Tuesdays

#### **St. James Fitness**

4:00pm, Mondays and Fridays

#### **Tai Chi**

5:15pm, Mondays

#### **Yoga**

10:15am, Tuesdays and Thursdays

#### **Bellingham Community Chorus**

7:00pm, Tuesdays

#### **Bellingham Ukulele Group**

1:00pm, 2nd Saturday

#### **Weavers Guild**

9:30am, 3rd Saturday

#### **Boy Scouts Troop 7**

7:00pm, Mondays

#### **Bayside Co-op Preschool**

#### **Hawthorne Learning Solutions**

#### **Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County**



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360-733-1325

Office Hours: Tue-Fri, 9am-2pm

**Sunday Worship Schedule**

9:30 a.m. Adult Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

10:45 a.m. Children's Time and Godly Play

**St. James Staff**

Pastor: The Rev. Seth J. Thomas

Children & Family Ministry: Tracy Caruso

Ministry Assistant: Kate Hoskin

Treasurer: Marina McLeod

Music Director: Carolyn Mullen

Teachers: Erika Singh-Cundy, Sophie Rose Kendrick, Lucy Sieczka