

## Sacramental Hopes Amidst Pandemic

Greetings in Christ Jesus,

To say that this past month has been difficult, surprising, overwhelming and utter unexpected would be stating the obvious. As our nation and world have wrestled with responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic we have been forced to face many deep fears and worries in our communities. We feel uncertainty as to what will become of this all and we feel isolated from our kin as we practice social-distancing to ward off the further spread of illness. The Church has wrestled, adapted, pivoted in our ways of gathering together. Nonetheless, we continue to proclaim God's goodness and glory! We will not be silenced!



I've been reflecting on ways this pandemic is inviting us to deepen our witness as people of faith. What does it mean for people to faithfully follow Jesus when it seems like change is the only constant we can count on these days? We have to find ways to weather this storm, ways of living that ground us in our identities as ones who bear the image of Christ.

Moments like this provide us with opportunities to go from cognitive faith to a walking faith, a faith of action and compassion. Belief gets us going, but practices are what solidify that intellectual assent into heart-changing, transformative life in the world.

It is the practices of our faith that help us make this shift. This looks like *actually* taking time to spend in practicing our faith: moments each day with **prayer** and **Scripture**. Taking a walk out into the world as an act of **spiritual pilgrimage**. Keeping time by the **liturgical calendar** (we're in Lent...*oh are we ever in Lent!*) as we go day after day in greater isolation. It looks like finding ways to **remember our baptism** each time we wash our hands. And it looks like wholly delighting in **Sabbath rest** as we are forced to slow down.

Life is bursting forth with these "sacramental hopes" — hopes that as author Barbara Brown Taylor describes it, we might find "an altar in the world", a place to connect with God in the mundane, the normal, the daily rhythms of our lives. We are being invited to be a community that seeks this out right now — as we face a pandemic which demands that we slow down and change the way we live. What better opportunity to change the way we live our faith?

How is this moment calling you to deepen the practices of your faith? In what ways has God been opening you up to God's presence in the here and now through this season? I hope you'll share a note or email or comment on Facebook and tell us how this is happening in you, through the power of God's Spirit.

*Next month, I wholeheartedly plan to resume examining the Marks of Vital Congregations with my Pulse articles. But not today. Today, I am called to slow down and notice what is stirring at this moment.*

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Seth Thomas

## FINANCE UPDATE: A LENS OF GRATITUDE

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Committee



Each month the Finance Committee comes together to go over our church's operating budget and discuss ways to help the Saint James community be thoughtful stewards of God's abundance. At the beginning of March, we began conversations to help start longer-term capital planning. It is exciting to be able to think long-range in order to prepare as well as we can for the future needs of our building and our growing community.

That being said, as we all are deeply aware amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, sometimes we are thrown into the unexpected. While this time brings up uncertainty for each of us on many levels, the good news is God is steady.

Our day-to-day church operating budget, income, and expenses have continued to remain steady, while things around us have been in flux. This is good news. Our whole church staff is able to keep working, as usual, serving us in new and creative ways because of this! Below is a look at our most recent month-end numbers for our General Fund, as of February 29, 2020. Currently, giving is outpacing our projections, and day-to-day expenses for the start of the year were less than we had expected. If you prefer online (one-time or monthly) giving, please visit [www.saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving](http://www.saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving).

As of 2-29-2020	February 2020	CURRENT BUDGET	YR TO DATE	YR TO DATE BUDGET
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$21,150</b>	<b>\$20,216</b>	<b>\$56,315</b>	<b>\$50,173</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$18,733</b>	<b>\$19,144</b>	<b>\$39,325</b>	<b>\$41,015</b>

## CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

By Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director

Greetings from the couch of the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

What a crazy month March has been. I hope all of you are coping with the far-reaching effect of the COVID 19 virus and are able to have everything you need. If there is anything you need please don't hesitate to reach out to Seth, myself, or your deacon.

We ended February with an amazing ukulele concert put on by Community Ukulele Players (CUP) of Bellingham, followed by an amazing ham dinner prepared by Susan Burkland. I want to thank everyone who helped to pull off such a great event and everyone who attended! It was an amazing night and we raised almost \$800 for the All Church Retreat scheduled for August!

While we are worshiping from home, instead of a children's message during our streaming services I am continuing our Godly Play lessons. We are currently in our "Faces of Easter" series and I am hoping to enlist the help of our students from home. If your student can find something in their home that they think will help add to our story, please email me and let me know what your student chose.

I sent out an email with some resources for kids and families during this crazy time. I am including the links to some of those here. Here is an illustrated way of explaining COVID 19 to kids:

[COVID 19 - Explained for Children PDF](#)

*(Christian Faith Formation continues)*

Illustrated Ministry has a free weekly coloring page and a few other goodies for here:

<https://www.illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve>.

Since we have not been meeting for Toddler Time I have been considering doing some live streaming, maybe Zoom meeting times where we can get the littles learning some toddler dances and songs. If anyone with toddlers would be interested in that please let me know.

For our older students, I would recommend [www.downloadyouthministry.com](http://www.downloadyouthministry.com). They have some really great free resources for youths including daily devotionals and other activities.

There are several ways to stay connected during our time of staying home and staying safe.

- Seth streams a morning prayer Monday-Thursday at 9:00 on Facebook, several meetings are being held via Zoom, we are streaming our Sunday morning services on Facebook, Zoom, and the St. James website [www.saintjamespres.org](http://www.saintjamespres.org).
- Weekly announcements, including lectionary texts, can be found in the weekly bulletin posted with the weekly streaming service and in the weekly mail chimp blast we send out.

Please let me know if you have any questions about any of these resources, are looking for more, or if you have any that you would like to share with me.

I miss you all and am looking forward to celebrating when we are able to back together. Until then, please know that I am thinking about all of you and praying for you.

## Godly Play for April



### March 29th: Faces of Easter VI

Lent is the season when we prepare for Easter. This lesson continues to help children prepare for the Mystery of Easter. We move toward the Mystery by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. This week's presentation focuses on the face of Christ and he enters Jerusalem and offers the Twelve-and us-the bread and wine.

### April 5th: Faces of Easter VII

Lent is the season when we prepare for Easter. This lesson continues to help children prepare for the Mystery of Easter. We move toward the Mystery by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. This last presentation focuses on the faces of Christ on the cross and Easter.

### April 12th: Easter Eggs

The folk celebration of Easter Eggs brings delight this time of year. Our culture's Easter Eggs have little to do with Easter that is celebrated in churches, but the eggs of Eastern Europe do. In this lesson, children are introduced to those eggs in a way to reclaim a wonderful sign of new life in Easter.

### April 19th: Work Day

### April 26th: Jesus and the Twelve

This lesson tells the stories of the disciples of Jesus, who we now call apostles.

## SHOUT OUTS!

*The Pulse segment celebrates events, accomplishments, triumphs of our congregation. Contact the office to share a "Shout Out" for next month.*



**SHOUT OUT to Selina Baker!** At their last Cheer Competition Selina Baker and her team, Glitter, won the right to attend the D2 Summit competition in Florida. They are the first youth team to be sent from the Silver Stars gym. Way to go Selina!

**SHOUT OUT to Susan Diemont-Conwell** who successfully passed her lactation counselor exam and is now a CLC: Certified Lactation Counselor! Congrats to Susan as she is able to now support this very important need in our community.

**SHOUT OUT to Lindsay Anderson** who ran the Chuckanut 50k on her own after the race was canceled due to concerns over large group gatherings. Way to go Lindsay! (The Chuckanut 50k is 31.1 miles of trail running in the Chuckanut Mountains.) Don't worry, she didn't break any bones!

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## SAVE THE DATE FOR ST. JAMES ALL CHURCH RETREAT AUGUST 28TH-30TH AT WARM BEACH CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER



St. James has booked the Cascadian Lodge at Warm Beach for the weekend of Friday, August 28th through Sunday the 30th 2020. We would love to have everyone join us at this beautiful facility. The Warm Beach event center is a beautiful facility in Stanwood with tons of activities, beautiful views, and numerous hiking trails. Rooms in the lodge have a queen bed and a bunk bed to sleep up to 4. Our reservations include lodging for Friday and Saturday nights, breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. Plan on arriving Friday evening after dinner to check-in and enjoy a time of fellowship, games, and snacks with our St. James family.

Saturday will include breakfast, a morning of Christian Education, lunch, and an afternoon of relaxing and fun activities. Activities at Warm Beach include a ropes course, sports fields, disc golf, swimming, canoeing, mini-golf, hiking, horseshoe pits, fire pits, and time for fellowship and relaxing. Saturday will conclude with dinner and organized fellowship time. Sunday we will enjoy breakfast followed by a worship service and then packing up and heading home. Plan for a weekend of fun, fellowship, food, relaxation, and Christian education. Look for registration information to come. If you are interested in helping organize or implement this fun event please let Tracy know.



## GREEN ACTION TEAM AT WORK WHILE AT HOME

*By Glory Johnson*

Even though we are not able to gather physically at this time, the Green Action Team continues to help all of us move towards being a “green” church. We had some next steps planned that we hoped to have completed before Earth Day, which is April 22, 2020, but is now postponed until after the mandate is over.

The team has collected all the information from the surveys that were disbursed and collected in January. Thank you to all who filled out those surveys. We gathered a lot of great information.

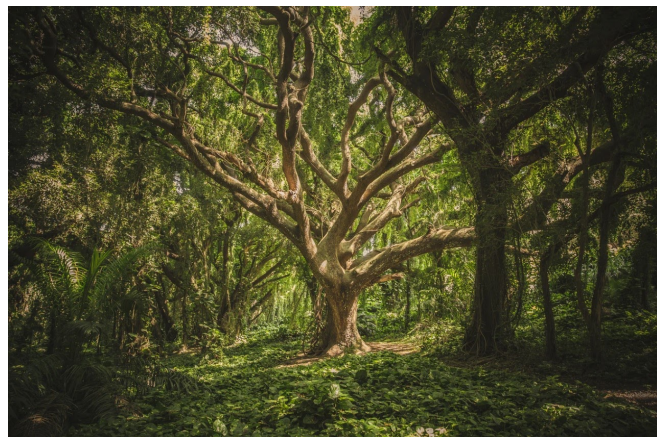
As we are at home, here are some things we can keep doing – or maybe start – to help the planet:

- keep recycling and reusing
- eat your leftovers
- plant a garden
- plant some flowers for bees
- compost
- try one day a week where you eat no meat
- make your own hand sanitizer with essential oils.

I want to leave you with a few questions to think about and look forward to discussing:

- Do we want things to go back to normal?
- Can the planet really sustain our attitudes of “going on as business as usual?”
- Can we do with less stuff?

We are taking many steps to connect with each other during this time. GAT wants to encourage you as you go for walks, runs, hikes or bike rides to try to become aware of your connection with Mother Earth. We need her as much as we need each other.




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## WELCOME TO ST. JAMES!

*These are bios for some of our new members joining the church. Next month, we will feature more. Take a chance to get to know these wonderful new folks.*



### **Jennie and Andrew McLaurin**

Jennie and Andrew McLaurin came to the Pacific Northwest 18 years ago on a 3-year-plan and never looked back. The duo lives in Ferndale where Jennie is a pediatrician and public health professional who works with marginalized adolescents and special needs infants and toddlers. Additionally, Jennie travels nationwide as a clinical consultant, reviewing federal health centers,

*(New members continue)*

and has a book on healing as it relates to the body and communities, which will be coming out in 2021. Andrew is a recently retired healthcare administrator. He continues to work part-time for a local cardiologist, owns a home repair business called I Can Do That and serves on the Ferndale school board.

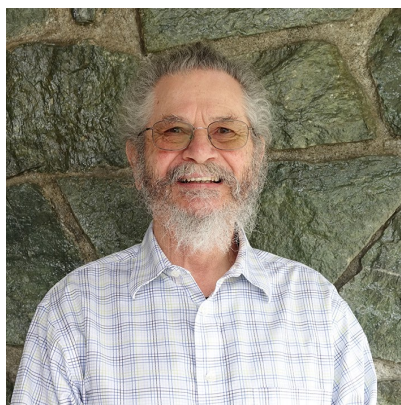
The couple has five children, all in their 20s, who live in Washington and enjoy hiking and travel. Jennie and Andrew are drawn to St. James because of its openness to all people, the liturgy, preaching and social action work and as Jennie says, “the congruence between what the church says it believes and the way it acts.”



### **Jim and Maureen Kosa**

Jim and Maureen Kosa originally hail from the East Coast, where the two lived and worked in Bucks County, Pennsylvania for more than 30 years before moving to Bellingham in 2019. The two made the cross-country move to be closer to their two sons, Lee and Jay, their wives and their four grandchildren, who live in Portland and near Vancouver, BC. The couple loves hiking and the outdoors and found Bellingham to be a perfect fit for their active lifestyle. Jim is a cyclist, fisherman, and hunter. Describing the area, Jim says, “I’m like a kid in a candy store and the candy store gets bigger every day.” Maureen is a retired teacher, who taught English in middle school for more than 30 years, spending the last five years of her career teaching creative writing for high schoolers.

Among her close friends from Pennsylvania, Maureen counts many of her former students as dear friends as well. Jim and Maureen appreciate St. James’ welcoming atmosphere, Pastor Seth’s vision, and energy, and are drawn to the church’s work in social justice.



### **Jim Dunlap**

A native of Oklahoma, Jim Dunlap, along with Kathy, his wife of nearly 50 years, and his daughter and her family, moved to Bellingham in 2017. Before retiring, Jim served as a land-use planner for 40 years. “I retired May 15 and I was living out here by June,” he says. Jim appreciates being surrounded by the wonder and beauty of the Pacific Northwest. An avid hiker, Jim can be found on the trails nearly every day, hiking between 5 and 7 miles. He came to St. James in September of 2019 and as he says, he never left. Jim appreciates the welcoming atmosphere of the church. He enjoys everything about Sundays at St. James—from Bible Study to worship to coffee hour.



### **McKenzie Clark**

A student at Western Washington University, McKenzie Clark was born and raised in Spokane. They are majoring in linguistics and Spanish and minoring in Arabic & Islamic studies and education & social justice, with graduation slated for spring 2021. McKenzie is involved with Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights (SUPER), as well as a number of other campus clubs, and enjoys taking taekwondo. They care deeply about their friends and community at WWU, in Jordan and around the U.S. and beyond and are grateful for supportive parents, grandparents and family, as well as their mentors. McKenzie first came to St. James with fellow student Kate Haworth, who was active in the church before moving after graduation. They appreciate the welcoming, supporting and queer-affirming community at St. James and feel it is the right place for them.



## SPECIAL FEATURE: SOME THINGS I AM LEARNING WHILE STAYING HOME

*By Carla Shafer*

### MUSIC

How is it by isolation, I feel more connected to a greater cause? However, as I experience emotional highs and lows alone, I am challenged to not need to share it, and to let these feelings provide experience for my own discoveries about myself and my outside personal and spiritual relationships.

On May 19, 2012, in Catalonia (Spain) a flash mob formed of local musicians showed up to play the “Ode to Joy” movement from Beethoven’s 9th Symphony. You can view it at this link:



<https://youtu.be/GBaHPND2QJg>

I cried as I watched it. I’m never sure what this kind of tears is about, maybe it comes from early childhood fears of being left alone, or maybe I hold some recent suppressed sense of loneliness. And it doesn’t matter. What matters to me is that I feel the feelings as authentic and as a release, and I am not embarrassed or ashamed (another carry-over from childhood). Lately, I’ve heard the Seattle Symphony’s streaming a free concert, and the Bellingham Symphony shared their dress rehearsal live on-line.

### MEDITATION & EXERCISE

I have a meditation app that I use in the morning and bedtime, but in-between I pay attention to my breath and take time to do some deep, relaxing breaths throughout the day. I take a long walk in my neighborhood every day (otherwise I’m going to have to quit eating). I read in the NYT today that walks are permitted, just stay six feet away from other people. That’s pretty easy except some parks and walks are a little crowded now and then.

### READING & WRITING

I am reading a variety of books: poetry, fiction, theological bits. I am writing because that’s what I do. Some of it is editing earlier work in the hope of getting a collection together for printing.

### A WORD ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

By staying home and driving and flying less, we are in fact, reducing our carbon footprint. There’s a report from Wuhan, China, a city of 11 million people (where the coronavirus was first reported and containment practiced) that the people can see the non-polluted sky and hear birds singing again. It is quieter in Bellingham. There may be fewer trains. It also helps that it is spring here and we can turn down our thermostats, even though we’re home 24/7.

### FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Thank heavens for the telephone (more than the computer) which I use to stay in touch with my children and friends. Akira (my 5-1/2 grandson) and I have an almost daily story time where we make up stories with forest animals, space ships or zombies. It’s so fun to see him sitting on the couch, leaning into the pillows and making faces at himself in the phone, while we work out characters and plot. And being a deacon gives me a good reason to call a few people and see how they are, and that’s a pleasure.

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING, APRIL 5TH

*For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world.*

Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to **One Great Hour of Sharing** supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by **One Great Hour of Sharing** - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work to serve individuals and communities in need. From an initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. For more, you can watch an informational video from the Presbyterian Mission Agency at <https://vimeo.com/320337801>.

Please consider contributing to this special collection by using our On-Line Giving site, <https://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving>, and look for "One Great Hour of Sharing" in the drop-down menu.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING  
SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT



Illustrated Ministry LLC



## ST. JAMES 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

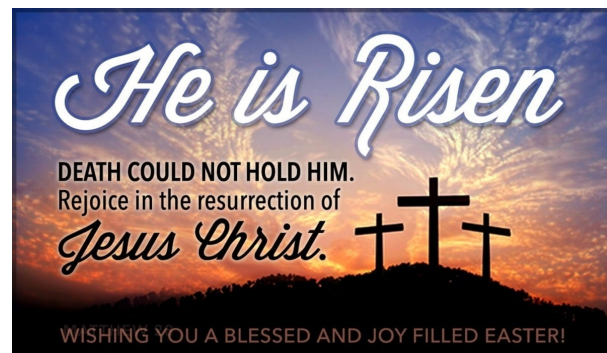
Nursery: Claire Alarid, Tova Breen, Fiona Dent,

Frankie Morrissey, Lucy Sieczka

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: Aaron Caruso

Christian Faith Formation: Sarah Condreay

Finance & Stewardship: Lindsay Anderson

Membership & Congregation Life: Susan Diemont-Conwell

Mission & Social Action: Carol Dellecker

Nominating: Jenny Sue LeSchander & Sarah Condreay

Personnel: Faye Hill

Trustees: Sarah Condreay, Mark Beaty, Aaron Caruso

Worship & Music: Nebiyu Tesfa

## DEACONS

Moderator: Alice Beaty

Marlene Amman, Alice Beaty, Adam Beaty, Pam Gibson

Julie Keyes, Valerie McBeth, Rick Seater, Jean Seater, 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- Godly Play

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB IN APRIL

St. James Book Club is currently reading *Hot Dogs & Hamburgers: Unlocking Life's Potential by Inspiring Literacy at Any Age* by Rob Schindler.

### LENTEN SOUP AND STUDY MINUS THE SOUP!

We have been holding a Wednesday evening Lenten Study looking at the *7 Marks of Vital Congregations*. As we are suspending in-person gatherings, if anyone is interested in joining (without the soup) and meeting on-line over Zoom, please let Seth or Tracy know and we will send you the Zoom link.

### ALL CHURCH RETREAT IN AUGUST

2020 All Church Retreat is August 28-30th at Warm Beach Camp. See Tracy Caruso for details.

<https://www.warmbeach.com/>

### ALL CHURCH ACTIVITY POSTPONED

Please note in your calendars that all regular monthly committee meetings are postponed until further notice due to the **Stay Home, Stay Healthy** mandate by the Governor. Please contact your group leader for details and information regarding possible online conferences. Thank you.



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

4/4	Gil Thurston	
4/12	Sally Crandall	
4/16	Erin Keyes	
4/17	Bruce Kraig	
4/18	Zach Mullen	
4/20	Sally Albers	
4/23	Mark Beaty	
4/25	Valerie McBeth	
4/29	Cheryl McGregor	
4/30	Annah Baker	

### WHERE IS IT?



Come on over! St. James's Facebook page is ACTIVE during this time of sheltering in place and social distancing. Watch Morning Prayer videos by Pastor Seth, and be a part of the Sunday Service. Hint: you don't need a Facebook account to watch the videos. When the pop-up request you to sign up click "not now".

<https://www.facebook.com/saintjamespres/>



Need more? Get more St. James calendar information, sign up for our weekly emails, the monthly e-magazine *the Pulse*, and other updates. Visit our website:

<https://saintjamespres.org/>



### Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

Monthly "The Pulse": the 20th, 2:00pm

## — ST. JAMES CALENDAR

All in-person church gatherings have been postponed until further notice. Committees and groups will be gathering online. Please contact your Committee Chairperson or Group Coordinator to find out more about current offerings and times. Below is a list of our planned events, but the church is closed until further notice.

### **Mission & Social Action- Lounge**

Wednesday, Apr 1, 4:00pm

### **Christian Faith Formation**

Wednesday, Apr 1, 7:00pm

### **Grief Support- Lounge**

Postponed until further notice

### **Building & Grounds Committee- Lounge**

Tuesday, Apr 7, 5:30pm

### **Personnel Committee**

Tuesday, Apr 7, 9:00am

### **Worship & Music Committee- Lounge**

Wednesday, Apr 8, 10:00am

### **Finance Committee- Upper Level**

Wednesday, Apr 8, 6:00pm

### **St. James Work Party**

Saturday, Apr 11, 9:00-11:00am

### **Easter Sunday**

Sunday, Apr 12

### **Session- Lounge**

Tuesday, Apr 14, 6:00pm

### **St. James Book Club- Lounge**

Monday, Apr 16, 7:00pm

### **Deacons- Lounge**

Sunday, Apr 19, 11:45am

### **Pres. Women Bible Study & Luncheon**

(The Lounge & Horizon Room)

Tuesday, Apr 24, 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, Thursdays

### **Weavers Guild- Fellowship Hall**

9:30am, 3rd Saturday

### **Yoga- Horizon Room**

10:15am, Tuesdays and Thursdays

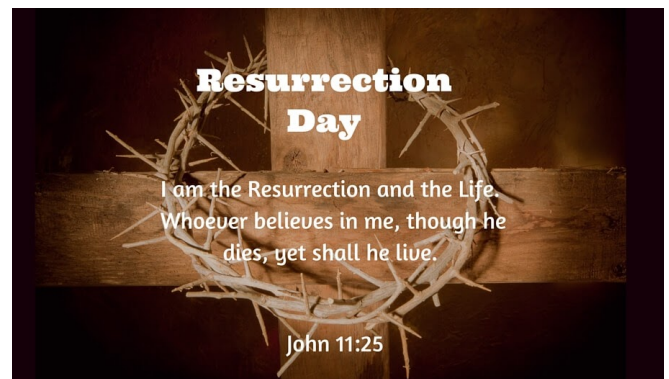
### **You Are Not Alone (YANA)- Lounge**

6:00pm, 2nd Monday

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

### **Hawthorne Learning Solutions**

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







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