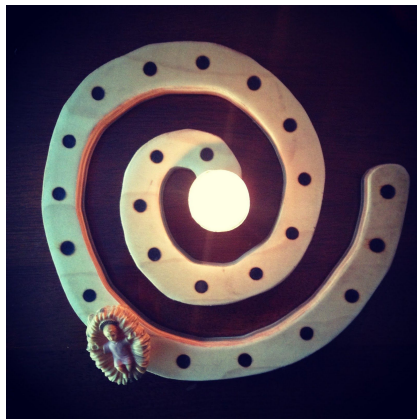


The Season of Enough



Advent is here and Christmas is coming! As you begin the preparations, wrap presents, light candles, hang stockings, and embrace the darkness that gives way to the coming Light, may you feel the deep, abiding, loving presence of Christ this year.

We all know the temptation to make “this year better than the last.” We feel the pull to reclaim something of the past or do a little more this Christmas to show people we care. It’s hard not to be drawn into this cultural practice. However, I want to propose an alternative option, something that may call us deeper into the season through the acceptance of the goodness of “enough.”

Through the stories of God’s people, there has always been this temptation for more, for something greater. In the Old Testament, it was the drive to have a king, to have the grandeur of wealth and authority which come from a powerful monarch’s rule. To be like neighboring societies — to be strong. This desire evolved as the New Testament

story unfolds. There were expectations and hope for a king that would raise up and overpower the Roman Empire, a king that would raise up Jerusalem to its rightful place, to make the people of God as powerful as they were destined to be.

The quest for a powerful ruler betrays a belief that how we have ordered society or what things we have as a people are “not enough.”

Here, instead, is the alternative way: A young, unwed mother gives birth to a vulnerable child in a humble stable. The birth is celebrated by rugged sheep farmers and mystic sages from lands afar. The powers of the empire are not undone — rather, this new child must flee to a foreign land as a refugee to escape ethnic cleansing. And yet from this inception point of the Christmas story, we witness the rise of a whole new way of being human, a way which lifts up the low and undermines the powerful and turns all the longing for power and privilege on its head by promising all creation that they have enough as they are received by God’s loving and grace.

This is our story — that there is enough in the world in Christ alone. That God provides enough for our needs. That together, as God’s gathered people, all around the world, there is not a need for some greater ruler, but rather that as a collective of people who embrace the way of love for God, neighbor and even enemy, that all people can be welcomed into the “enough-ness” freely, gracefully, now. That in Christ the humble, servant King, we have found the fullness of belonging and wholeness that we have been longing for.

What if, this year, we let go of the expectations for “better” or “more” and rested in the “enough-ness” of Christ? It might look like something as simple as pausing to say, “thanks,” for all that we have, the food on the table, as grand or as simple as it is. Or the presence of people in our lives (the messy and wonderful people we choose and the family we don’t and the beauty of them all as they are). Or the humble child who we call Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting God, Prince of Peace — not because he rose up as a great earthly ruler, but because out of the enough-ness of his humanity and fullness of lovingkindness and grace in his divinity, Christ set us all free from the need for more, the need for a king, the need for all things to be perfect or more than they are.

What if this Advent were to become the Season of Enough? And what if, by receiving what we have been blessed with and letting go of the desire for more, we find the deeper, truer, more grace-filled beauty of Christmas in the end.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Seth Thomas

FINANCE UPDATE: OCTOBER FINANCIALS AND STEWARDSHIP

By Dick Carr, Finance Committee

As of the end of October, it appears that our expenses have been lower than anticipated and our total income has improved such that we may end 2019 looking like a balanced budget. While these results are good, there are many reasons why this has occurred. It should be looked at as a very lucky year financially for St. James.

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's box by December 31st.



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. Officially, the fall campaign is over but we will still accept all responses submitted this month. As a reminder, our treasurer, Marina, is the only person to see your pledge form. UPDATE: As of November 15th, we have received 60 pledges entered into the system. There were 120 packets distributed to the 2019 contributors which include members and non-members. Each response is important to the church for planning purposes. We are pleased to have more contributors responding. The total amount pledged for 2020 is \$185,880 out of our much-needed goal of \$200,000. The church is grateful to see an increase in contributors pledging as there has been stagnant for the past three years at the \$163,000 level. As a reminder, pledges are our primary source of income. This increase in pledging is a good indicator of the overall health of St. James to maintain our current commitments, especially with the growth of children participating in the church. We are still \$20,000 short of where we should be for 2020. The Finance committee has prepared a draft budget and has sent it to Session for review and comments. The draft budget indicates a deficit of \$20,000 for 2020 which is an improvement from the 2019 budget.

THANK YOU!

Finance and Stewardship Committee
Dick Carr, Chair as of November 17, 2019

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

*totals as of November 9, 2019

	August	CURRENT BUDGET	YR TO DATE	YR TO DATE BUDGET
Income	\$17,567	\$16,675	\$200,834	\$177,333
Expenses	\$19,655	\$20,842	\$192,025	\$207,087

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

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

By Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director

Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries! November was a great month of preparing for December, Advent and all that comes with it!

Toddler Time continues to grow and is a much-appreciated program on Wednesday mornings. We will be taking a break for the Holidays and Wednesday, December 18th will be the last Toddler Time for the year. We will resume on January 8th.



Our gratitude study on Diana Butler Bass' book *Grateful: The Subversive Practice of Giving Thanks* met for 3 small but excellent discussions! We look forward to more group discussions to come! If you have any interest in participating in or leading future group studies, please let Tracy know.

We held a dessert auction on November 24th to raise money for our All Church Retreat in August, we raised over \$200 to help offset the cost of the retreat for all. Thank you so much to everyone who donated a dessert or purchased a dessert. Look for another FUNdraiser coming in February.

Last week our Godly Play students took home containers to collect change for their change drive to benefit Family Promise. Collected change needs to be turned in by December 29th but can be turned in any Sunday in December to Tracy.

Our Annual Advent Festival is happening on Sunday, December 1st immediately following worship. We will be enjoying a spaghetti lunch and decorating Christmas cookies. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!



The youth group is organizing the annual Holiday Joy/Angel Tree program through InterFaith Coalition this year. The Angel Tree is currently up in the Horizon Room. This year we have pledged to help 10 children with 2-3 gifts each and an additional 15 general gifts. Please grab a gift tag and return unwrapped gifts to Tracy by Sunday, December 15th. If you prefer to make a donation rather than shop yourself, please put a check in the offering plate with "Angel Tree" written in the memo.

We will be needing kid participation at our Christmas Eve service. Our Christmas Eve service will be held on Wednesday the 24th at 7:00, if you can help please plan on arriving by 6:40. Let Tracy know if you are planning on attending!

Godly Play for December

Godly Play schedule for December:

- ★ December 1st: Advent I
This lesson, together with the next three lessons, helps the children to anticipate the mystery of Christmas. In the Advent lessons, we will move toward Bethlehem and arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle. This week's lesson focuses on the Prophets.
 - ★ December 8th: Advent II
This lesson helps children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle. This week's lesson focuses on the Holy Family.
 - ★ December 15th: Advent III
This lesson helps children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle. This week's lesson focuses on the shepherds.
 - ★ December 22nd: Advent IV
This lesson helps children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle. This week's lesson focuses on the wise men and the celebration of Christmas.
 - ★ December 29: Work Day
-

SHOUT OUTS

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

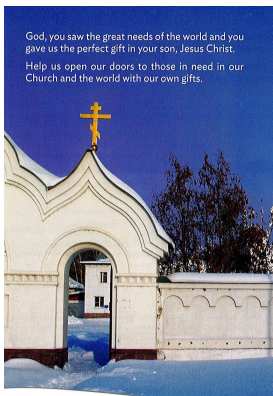
- ❖ Pastor Seth and Lindsay Anderson running in the Leavenworth half and full marathon and Lindsay broke her personal best record
- ❖ Eden Grace baptized
- ❖ Sarah Condreay participating in *Crazy for You* at the Bellingham Theater Guild
- ❖ Spencer Bravener and Ferndale band winning





ADVENT OFFERING SHARES CHRISTMAS JOY

St. James Mission & Social Action Committee is active in our local community. Each year 50% of the Advent offering, collected on the second and third Sundays of Advent, goes back into the Presbyterian community. This year's theme is "Leadership: Past, Present, and Future."



God, you saw the great needs of the world and you gave us the perfect gift in your son, Jesus Christ. Help us open our doors to those in need in our Church and the world with our own gifts.

CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Our special Advent offering, Christmas Joy, will be taken on Sunday, December 15. Christmas Joy is dedicated to church leadership—past, present, and future—through the financial support of the Assistance Program of the PCUSA's Board of Pensions. At the same time, this offering looks to the future, supporting new leaders for our Church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. These educational institutions provide students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come.

You'll find a descriptive Christmas Joy brochure in your Sunday bulletin on December 8. Please read it and consider making a contribution to this important offering on the 15th.

Thank you!
St. James MSA committee

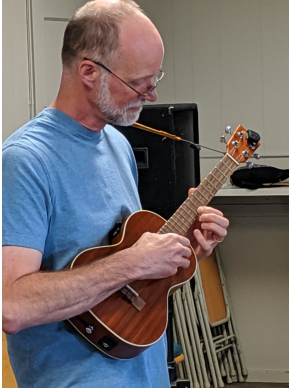
A WARM THANK YOU FROM INTERFAITH COALITION

So many generous people responded to ensure warmth for everyone this winter by donating to Interfaith Coalition's Winter Warmth Drive. THANK YOU for the wonderful items you helped provide to neighbors throughout Whatcom County! Over 2,500 coats, and 1,200 items like hats, scarves, and gloves, were distributed in Blaine, Ferndale, Bellingham, and Deming in October because of your generosity and through the work of many volunteers. There were a lot of smiles and "thank you's" from our guests, and many pitched in to help haul bags, set up, and clean up distribution events. The camaraderie and fellowship reminded us of all of our human connections. Blessings and thanks from all.



PULSE ON GROUPS

This month "Pulse on Groups" met up with Bellingham Ukulele Group (BUG) leader Wes Lewis to learn more about this inspiring & zany group. BUG meets in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday afternoons plucking their little chordophones to their heart's content.



I love the ukulele!

Why? Because it's one of the easiest instruments to play: 4 fingers/4 strings, learn 3 easy chords and play thousands of songs! It's unpretentious and fun yet in the hands of a serious player, like Jake Shimabukuro, it can weave a tapestry of beautiful and moving music. It brings people together in clubs nation-wide to strum, sing and build community. The small size travels well too. To relieve boredom, I take mine with me in the car, on the ferry, the train---I even toss it in the plane's overhead luggage compartment when I visit far-away family. There couldn't be a better time to learn to play the ukulele with free on-line lessons, YouTube videos, and songs with chords available in any key for only the price of a sheet of printer paper.

Bellingham Ukulele Group meets right here at St. James Presbyterian Church every second Saturday from 1:30 to 4pm. Come join the fun. We gather together to celebrate the uke and sing out of a great songbook: THE DAILY UKULELE (available at Village Books---Volumes I and II).

Please stop by, with or without a ukulele, and check us out. As we say, "catch the BUG"! No membership fee, donations accepted.

Wes Lewis
BUG Leader
bellinghamukulelegroup.com



(photo credit: (l) Wes playing a tune on his ukulele, (r) a typical jam session, both photos courtesy of Wes Lewis)

FLOWER COMMITTEE HOLIDAY POINSETTIA SALES



Thank you for your poinsettia orders. The plants will be on display in the Sanctuary December 15th through the 24th. Plants are purchased in memory or appreciation of someone special, or in celebration or as an expression of a glorious event from your year. **Don't forget to pick up your plant after the Christmas Eve service!**

See Cheryl McGregor for questions cmcgregor54@gmail.com

(photo credit: St. James Chancel, December 2013)

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE PRESBYTERIAN NEIGHBORHOOD

The Pulse takes a look at Tom Hanks' portrayal of Fred Rogers is Hollywood's most recent look at Presbyterian clergy.

by Dr. Edward McNulty | Special to Presbyterian News Service

FRANKLIN, Ohio — Though the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a relatively small denomination compared to Baptists or Methodists, Hollywood has paid plenty of attention to Presbyterian clergy.

The most recent example is director Marielle Heller's long-anticipated film featuring the children's television host Fred Rogers. "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" is but the latest in a line of films in which a Presbyterian member of the clergy is a major character.



Bringing in Joanne Rogers (Maryann Plunkett) helps Lloyd (and us) see Fred not as a "living saint," but as a man with his own problems that he too struggles with. Hanks, as everyone seems to agree, beautifully captures the essence of Fred Rogers, especially Rogers' slow-paced, soft-voiced speech, and intense concentration as he listens to people. Due credit also must be given to Rhys, who convincingly displays the anger and anguish of Tom Junod (the Lloyd Vogel character in the film). The man may be a famous writer for a top magazine, but Rogers discerns that at heart he is still the angry boy deeply hurt by, and thus resentful of, his father. When Rogers' agape form of love, so beautifully described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, envelops him, he begins to change as he rediscovers the hurting child buried deeply in himself. A broken man learns that he does not have to stay broken.

Enjoy the full article at

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/its-a-beautiful-day-in-the-presbyterian-neighborhood/>

Photo credit: Fred Rogers, played by Tom Hanks, left, welcomes Lloyd Vogel (Matthew Rhys) to the WQED studio in Pittsburgh in a scene from "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood." (Photo courtesy of TriStar Pictures)

JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



St. James will have a candlelight service on Tuesday, December 24th, at 7:00pm. This lovely tradition symbolizes the light of Christ coming into the darkness in the world. Happy Christmas!



Gerard vanHonthorst, Adoration of the Shepherds, 1622

Holiday Schedule

Advent Festival & Spaghetti Dinner
December 1, Sunday, 11:45am

Bellingham Community Chorus Concert
December 13, Friday, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Bellingham Community Chorus Concert
December 14, Saturday, 2:00pm-4:00pm

Angel Tree Wrap Party
December 15, Sunday, 12:00pm-2:00pm

Worship Service
December 22, Sunday, 10:30am-11:45am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24, Tuesday, 7:00pm

Merry Christmas! Office Closed
December 25, Wednesday

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, Leeya Fogle,
Lucy Sieczka, Erika Singh-Cundy

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

(Photo credit: St. James Chancel December 2013)



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

Co-Moderators: Alice Beaty

Parish 1: Alice Beaty and Adam Beaty
Parish 2: Pastor Seth & Deacons
Parish 3: Julie Keyes and Carla Shafer

Parish 4: Marlene Amman and Kate Haworth
Parish 5: Karen & Dwayne Rogers and Pam Gibson

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:30 a.m. Adult Bible Study
10:30 a.m. Worship
10:45 a.m. Children's Time

UPCOMING EVENTS

ADVENT FESTIVAL DECEMBER 1ST!

Please join us right after worship Sunday the 1st for our annual Advent Festival. We will be enjoying a spaghetti lunch and decorating Christmas cookies. Come down and join the fun!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S LUNCHEON & BIBLE STUDY ON HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Join us on December 3rd for the last group meet-up for 2019. No gathering in November. The normal monthly meet-up on the 4th Tuesday will return in January 2020.

BELLINGHAM COMMUNITY CHORUS CONCERTS FOR DECEMBER

Two holiday concerts are planned for December. An evening event, December 13, Friday, 7:30pm-9:30pm and a daytime gathering on December 14, Saturday, 2:00pm-4:00pm

ANGEL TREE WRAP PARTY

Our youth group has put up the annual Angel Tree in the Horizon Room. This year we have pledged to support 10 children with 2-3 gifts each and an additional 15 general gifts. Please grab a tag off the tree and return unwrapped gifts to Tracy no later than Sunday, December 15th.

CHRISTMAS EVE- CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Come one! Come all! Invite a friend, bring a neighbor to the Candlelight Service, 7:00pm.

CHRISTMAS DAY- CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th, in honor of the Christmas Holiday, and Wednesday, New Year's Day, January 1st. Merry Christmas and Happy 2020!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

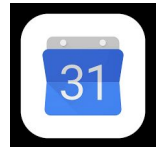
12/3	Pastor Seth Thomas	🎂
12/4	Cameron Aita	🎂
12/5	Wayne and Linda Landis	💍
12/7	Gale Pfueller	🎂
12/9	Spencer Bravener	🎂
12/12	Kirsten Oliver	🎂
12/13	Dick Carr	🎂
12/15	Alia Lynnae Bowers	🎂
12/16	Jill Steel Dobson	🎂
12/27	Shannon Laws	🎂
12/28	John and Marion Dobbie	💍
12/31	Katy Reed	🎂

WHERE IS IT?



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/>



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. office@saintjamespres.org

→ ST. JAMES CALENDAR

Personnel Committee- Lounge

Tuesday, Dec 3, 9:00am

Building & Grounds Committee- Lounge

Tuesday, Dec 3, 5:30pm

Finance Committee- Upper Level

Tuesday, Dec 3, 6:15pm

Grief Support- Lounge

Wednesday, Dec 4 & 18, 10:00am

Mission & Social Action- Lounge

Wednesday, Dec 4, 3:30pm

Christian Faith Formation- Godly Play

Wednesday, Dec 4, 7:00pm

Session- Lounge

Sunday, Dec 8, 12:00pm

Worship & Music Committee- Lounge

Wednesday, Dec 11, 10:00am

Deacons- Lounge OFF for December!

Sunday, Dec 15, 11:45

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tuesday, Dec 24, 7:00pm

→ ST. JAMES WEEKLY CALENDAR

Toddler Time

8:30am, Wednesdays

St. James Bell Choir

6:30pm, Thursdays

St. James Chancel Choir

7:30pm, Thursdays

St. James Fitness- Fellowship Hall

4:00pm, Mondays and Fridays

Tai Chi- Fellowship Hall

5:15pm, Mondays

→ 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

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



910 14th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
www.saintjamespres.org
office@saintjamespres.org
(360) 733-1325