

the Pulse

December 2018

THE SAINT JAMES PRESBYTERIAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Anticipating Christmas with Your Whole Self

The season of Advent is always about anticipation. We anticipate, long for, await the coming of the Christ-child on Christmas Day. But this rhythm of anticipation is in contrast to a cultural practice of the Christmas season: an immersive season of celebration, gift-buying, eating, and music that demands we engage right now, right away, all season long.

How might we engage Advent in a fresh way this year? What if we could use the power of our senses--our body's natural gifts of touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound--to deepen our anticipation of the coming of Christ? All around us, we are invited into a full-sensory extravaganza of Christmas celebration--here and now--even at the outset of December. Perhaps there is a way to faithfully engage our senses in a way that subversively treasures the longing and anticipation of the Advent season.

Let's start with our sight. What we see can stir up memories and emotions. Perhaps part of your tradition includes setting out your nativity scene or crèche at home. Depending on how (and when) you choose to place the baby Jesus, it can also deepen your sense of anticipation. In many Christian homes and churches, Christ is not added to the manger until Christmas Day! What would it be like for you to look upon the manger longingly, with Christ noticeably absent, during the season of Advent? Would this practice invite you to long for Christ's coming a bit more this year?

How about smells? Or tastes? Many cultural celebrations of the Christmas season involve baking and savoring meals with loved ones. A way to deepen this experience

during the coming season may be to find a new recipe that ties into the Biblical story — maybe you could learn about making flatbread like Mary and Joseph might have eaten on their journey to Bethlehem. Or maybe you have some incense, similar to the gift the Magi brought the newborn king. How might burning this in your home during the Advent season invite you to reflect on the deep hope that we find in Christ this year?

I love Christmas music. My ears will be filled with the Amy Grant's "Tennessee Christmas" and Sufjan Stevens' epic carol collection all December long--the Bing Crosby record is currently on our turntable. However, a way I have learned to anticipate Christ during the season of Advent is by spending time in pronounced silence. Everywhere we go, we are bombarded with the sounds of jingle bells and carols. What might it be like to also set aside space in your home or car for silence? How might you breathe in the stillness and depth of this season as a part of your preparation practice?

One of the most important ways we experience this season is through the sense of touch: the embrace of a loved one at a family gathering or the hand we hold as we say "grace" at dinner. My invitation to you is to deepen the meaning and intention behind each of these encounters. How does the closeness of friends and family draw you closer to the longing that the expectant mother, Mary, must have felt anticipating the birth of her baby boy? How do your encounters with the people around you invite you into tenderness this season?

This Advent, we are going to be examining the church's Advent cycle through our senses. My hope is that our church community has an opportunity to encounter the story of Jesus' birth with our whole selves--body, soul, and spirit; touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound. Come along on this journey, bringing all that you are, to come celebrate the King.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seth



2018 ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

The committee distributed 95 packets. Our goal for this campaign is \$190,000 in pledges. St. James has received 56 responses that indicate as follows:

Annual pledges received is \$156,776

Per Capita Pledges is \$3,325

These pledges are \$11,000 less than the pledging for the current calendar year. St. James appreciates the participation shown with the 56 responses. THANK YOU! The goal of \$190,000 is a very realistic amount needed for what the church anticipates doing in 2019.

As of the end of October we have a deficit of \$5,775. Our budget for the 2018 year shows a deficit of \$10,422. There are funds available in the General Fund Account to cover this deficit.

2019 BUDGET

The Finance Committee has prepared a preliminary budget and has distributed it to Session on November 11th. This budget shows a deficit of \$40,600. Session now has the responsibility to determine the next action to be taken. Fortunately, there are adequate monies in the General Fund Account this issue. While funds exist with St. James to cover these issues for a limited time period, serious prayers are needed to address this matter for the long term future of St. James.

Dick Carr

Finance Committee Chair

	October	Current Budget	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date Budget
Income	\$14,586	\$16,921	\$181,499	\$182,769
Expenses	\$20,018	\$16, 579	\$187,274	\$180,715

Bellingham Community Chorus

The Gift Of Community

Saturday, December 15th - 2pm & 7pm
 St. James Presbyterian - 910 14th St.
 \$10 brownpapertickets.com Or At The Door
 Find us on Facebook

Give to Saint James Online!

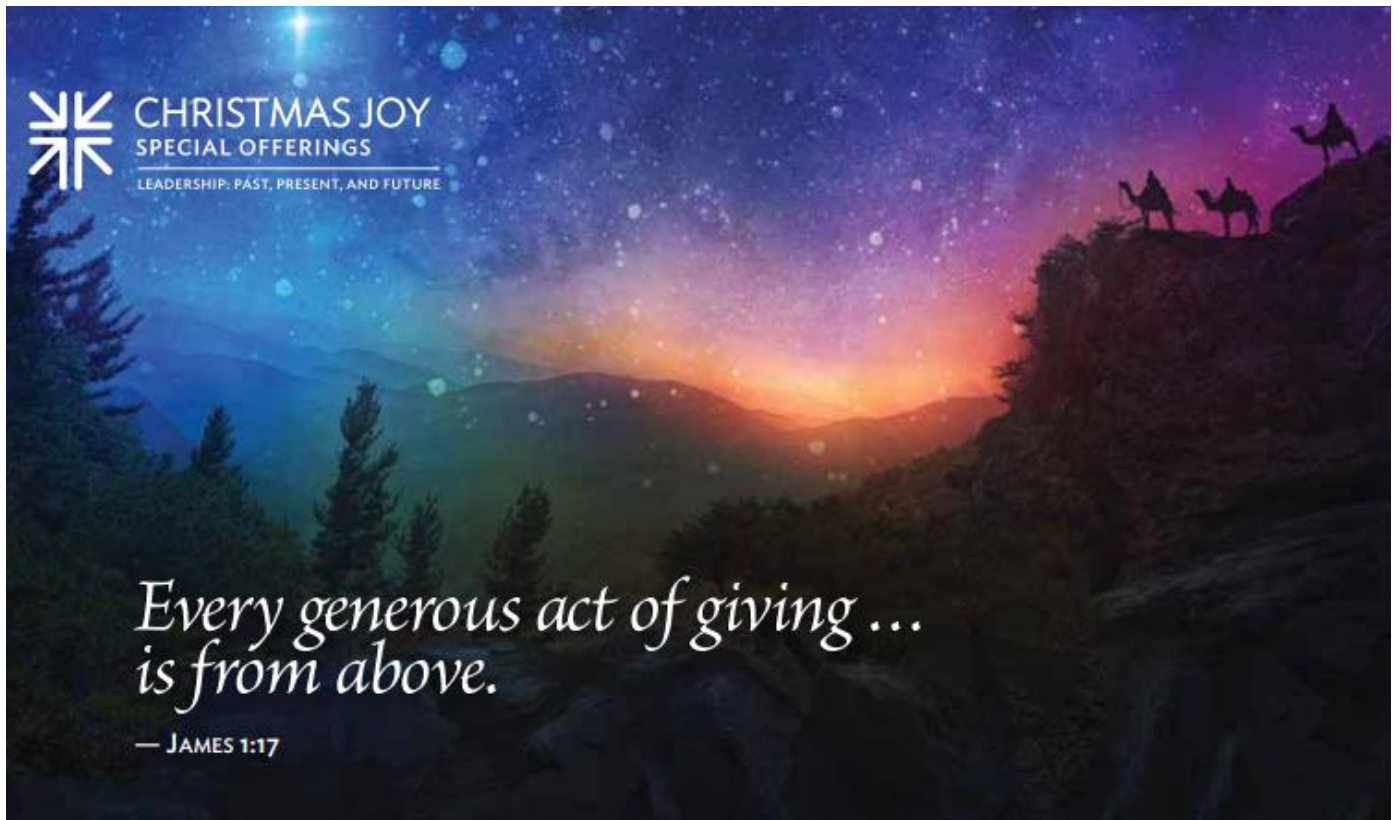
Using our online system you can donate a few ways:

- * Give from your bank account
- * Make a one-time donation or set up a recurring gift
- * Designate your gifts as part of your annual pledge
- * Designate your per capita contribution

Go to: <https://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving>

BELLINGHAM COMMUNITY CHORUS: THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY

A festive collection of holiday pieces, old and new, in various styles. Directed by Rob Viens, accompanied by Lisa Nakahara. Performances will be held on Saturday, December 15 at 2:00pm and 7:00pm at St. James Presbyterian Church. Concert will be followed by a reception with punch, coffee, and finger foods. Tickets are \$10 at the door or at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3905902



THE PERFECT GIFT

In the lead up to Christmas, many of us spend time in search of the *perfect gift* — the gift that communicates to friends and family how much we know and love them. We search our memories for indications of what gift might cause the faces of our loved ones to light up. We scour the stores and shops, hoping to come across the thing that will communicate a depth of love that our words cannot.

Jesus came to live among us, bringing light into darkness, and reconciliation to God and to one another. A perfect gift from a gracious God. As important as gifts to loved ones are, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gives throughout the year through the Christmas Joy Offering, drawing us back to the manger and God's perfect gift to us.

During this Advent Season, we celebrate leadership; past, present and future through support of the Christmas Joy Offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus. We want future leaders for the church and world, like those educated at our Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color to reflect the wideness of God's intended diversity, and we want those church leaders and their families who find themselves grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need. For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. May our gifts, and the leaders who receive them, point us always to the truth of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ — the truly perfect gift.



CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Greetings! We have had a great November and are looking forward to a full, meaningful, and fun Advent Season.

- On November 25th we sent home containers for a change drive to support *Feed My Starving Children*. The students will be collecting money during Advent to celebrate the season of giving. Students will be collecting donations until December 30. We will be partnering with First Presbyterian Church of Bellingham and Birchwood Presbyterian on March 2 to pack over 100,00 nutritious meals that will be sent to starving children around the world.
- On December 2, we will be holding an Advent Festival after worship. Join us for a fun afternoon of fellowship! We will be serving a ham lunch and decorating gingerbread houses. It should be a fun time for all and we encourage you to attend! We are also looking for volunteers to assist with gingerbread house decorating or clean-up. Please let me know if you can help with either!
- We are looking forward to having our children participate in our Christmas Eve Candlelight service on December 24th at 7:00pm. Please let me know if you plan on attending so I can assign parts to kids.
- We are excited to announce that we will be hosting the first of our weekly *Toddler Times* on Wednesday, January 9. *Toddler Time* will be held on Wednesdays downstairs in the Fellowship Hall from 8:30am-10:00am. It will be open to the Bellingham community for children ages birth to 3 years and their parents as a time of fellowship and play.

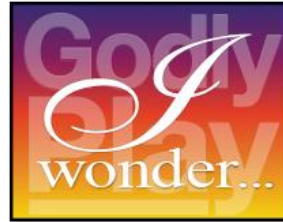
We hope you will join us during this fun and busy Advent season!

Tracy Caruso

Director of Children & Family Ministries

Students meeting God through play during last month's "work day".

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 has been updated and can be found at <http://www.wishlistr.com/saintjamescfm/>



Godly Play for December:

December 2nd: 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 9th: 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 16th: 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 23rd: 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 30th: Work Day





INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.



With Deep Appreciation:

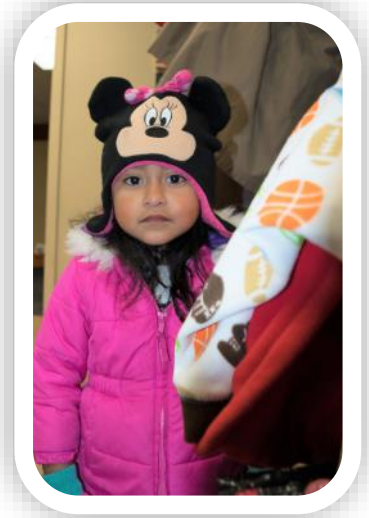
Thanks to your generosity, there were plenty of coats and warm items to warm the bodies and hearts of our guests at the Interfaith Coalition coat distributions around Whatcom County this past month. It would be impossible to fully describe the grateful “thank yous”, and the look on faces of our guests at the distributions, as more than 3,000 items were shared with families who came for help to make it through the upcoming winter. This is an effort that is made possible by so many of you choosing to help. Our deepest gratitude to your congregation reps, the volunteers who collected and dropped off coats, or helped at the events, and all who donated. May you be blessed in knowing that there are many families who will be warmer because of you.

Thank you!

Janie Pemble

Outreach Director

Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County



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



CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREE

The “Angel Tree” is up and decorated with “angel wings” in the Horizon Room. Each wing states a special wish or need of an individual. This year we are sponsoring two families.

You are invited to take a “wing” (or more if you wish), purchase that item, and bring it to the church no later than **Sunday, December 16**, when we will gather to wrap and deliver the gifts.

If you prefer to donate money to the project instead, please clearly mark your donation for “Angel Tree”. Please contact Kay Carr for more information.

PULSE

Advent Festival

Join us **Dec. 2** after worship for a meal and refreshments in the Fellowship Hall as we start the Advent season together. Gingerbread houses and activities for all!

Congregational Meeting

Join us **Dec. 9** for a brief meeting immediately following worship. We will hear a report from the Nominating Committee and elect church officers for the upcoming year.

Presbyterian Women

All women are invited to join in the Bible study **Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 11:00am and the luncheon at 12:30pm**. The Bible study, published by Horizons' *God's Promise--I Am With You*, will focus on Lesson Four, "God With Us When We Seek God". The primary scriptures are (cont.)

1 Chronicles 28:1-21; and 1 Kings 11:1-13, 29-39. The potluck salad luncheon begins at noon in the Horizon Room. December's luncheon is earlier in the month than usual because of Christmas. We will resume the fourth Tuesday of the month in January.

St. James Book Club

The St. James Book Club is up and reading! Our selection for the **December 17th** meeting is *Whistling Past the Graveyard* by Susan Crandall. **Meetings will be the 3rd Monday of the month in the Lounge at 7pm**. The library book kits will be kept in the office. Grab a book and join us

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join us Monday, December 24 for our Christmas Eve service from 7:00-8:30pm.

Church Pianist/Accompanist

We seeking to hire someone for on-going 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 a with cover letter and resume.

Church Directory Update

The Membership committee is updating the church directory. The church office will be sending an email requesting your most current contact information, please complete the form by December 16; we will use the information you provide to update our records. Please email office@saintjamespres.org with any questions or to be placed on our email mailing list.



For December, we will discuss and learn the "back stories" of eight of our beloved Advent and Christmas carols/hymns. If you are interested and need child-care, please let Tracy know.

Below is a schedule for our Advent study.

DECEMBER 2

- ◇ OH COME ALL YE FAITHFUL
- ◇ O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

DECEMBER 9

- ◇ WHAT CHILD IS THIS?
- ◇ IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

DECEMBER 16

- ◇ GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN
- ◇ ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

DECEMBER 23

- ◇ O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
- ◇ O HOLY NIGHT



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

December Birthdays

- 3** Pastor Seth Thomas
- 7** Gale Pfueller
- 13** Dick Carr
- 15** Alia Lynnae Bowers
- 25** Jesus Christ
- 31** Katy Read

December Anniversaries

- 5** Wayne and Linda Landis



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

01

10:00am SOS Men's
AA Celebration
10:00am OA

02

9:00am Adult Bible
Study
10:30am Worship/
Communion
12:00pm Advent
Festival
6:15pm AA
Fairhaven

03

9:00am Personnel
10:00am Grief
Support
5:15pm Tai Chi
6:30pm AA Men's
Book Study
7:00pm Boy Scouts

04

10:15am Yoga
5:30pm Al Anon
5:30pm Building &
Grounds
6:00pm Finance
7:00pm Bhm Comm
Chorus
7:30pm WA Gender
Alliance

05

6:00pm SOS Men's
AA
7:00pm CFF

06

10:15am Yoga
6:00pm Bell Choir
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven
7:30pm Choir

07

4:00pm St. James
Fitness

08

10:00am Marilyn
Methven Memorial
Service
10:00am OA
1:00pm Bellingham
Ukulele Group

09

9:00am Adult Bible
Study
10:30am Worship
11:30am Cong.
Meeting
12:00pm Session
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven

10

4:00pm St. James
Fitness
5:15pm Tai Chi
6:00pm YANA
6:30 AA Men's
Book Study
7:00pm Boy Scouts

11

10:15am Yoga
5:30pm Al Anon
5:30pm Building &
Grounds
6:00pm Finance
7:00pm Bhm Comm
Chorus
7:30pm WA Gender
Alliance

12

10:00am Worship
Committee
6:00pm SOS Men's
AA

13

10:15am Yoga
6:00pm Bell Choir
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven
7:30pm Choir

14

4:00pm St. James
Fitness

15

Bayside Preschool
Co-op Open House
9:30am Weavers
Guild
10:00am OA
2:00pm & 7:00pm
Bhm Comm Chorus:
*The Gift of
Community*

16

Pulse Articles Due!
9:00am Adult Bible
Study
10:30am Worship
12:00pm Deacons
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven

17

10:00am Grief
Support Group
4:00pm St. James
Fitness
5:15pm Tai Chi
6:30pm AA Men's
Book Study
7:00pm Boy Scouts
7:00pm Book Club

18

10:15am Yoga
5:30pm Al Anon
5:30pm Building &
Grounds
6:00pm Finance
7:00pm Bhm Comm
Chorus
7:30pm WA Gender
Alliance

19

6:00pm SOS Men's
AA

20

10:15am Yoga
6:00pm Bell Choir
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven
7:30pm Choir

21

4:00pm St. James
Fitness

22

10:00am OA

23

9:00am Adult Bible
Study
10:30am Worship
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven

24

CHRISTMAS EVE
7:00pm Christmas
Eve Candlelight
Service

25

CHRISTMAS DAY

26

6:00pm SOS Men's
AA

27

10:15am Yoga
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven

28

4:00pm St. James
Fitness

29

10:00am OA

30

9:00am Adult Bible
Study
10:30am Worship
7:15pm AA
Fairhaven

31

4:00pm St. James
Fitness
5:15pm Tai Chi
6:30pm AA Men's
Book Study
6:30pm Boy Scouts



910 - 14th Street, Bellingham, WA 98225
www.saintjamespres.org
office@saintjamespres.org
360-733-1325
Office Hours: Tue-Fri, 9am-2pm

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 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