

The Pulse

The St. James Presbyterian Church Newsletter

December 2015

Several years ago, our two sons began asking for something for Christmas that I frankly wasn't ready to give them. It's probably not what you think. They asked us not to buy them anything, and use the money instead to support a child in another country. What was my problem with that? Certainly I wasn't against giving to others. My issue was with not buying for my kids. Parents want to give to their children; it comes with the territory.

This year we're finally doing it—no presents (except inexpensive items we just happen to come across; I'm still letting go of old ways). But our main gift will be the time we spend together choosing a cause to support. Understand, I'm not saying everyone should do this, or that it's the "best" or "most Christian" way to "do" Christmas. Nor am I holding up my kids as an example (honestly, part of their motivation was avoiding shopping and writing thank you notes!). Nor do I mean to imply that I'm more altruistic than others. Just consider how long it's taken me to get on board with this.

In fact, that's my point. This change hasn't come easily. It didn't fit my expectations for my Christmas. It required me to change. That's what Advent is about. The voice of one in the wilderness cries, "Prepare the way of the Lord." And Mary's song reminds us that the One for whom we prepare for is the One who brings down the powerful and lifts the lowly, and turns all our notions upside down (Luke 1). God shakes things up. God has a plan and expects us to get on board. If I can't change my notions about Christmas gifts, how will I possibly be ready for the Kingdom?

Most of us spend a lot of time "getting ready for Christmas." How much do we give, really, to preparing for Christ?

Pastor Janet Sonnanburg

St. James Advent Festival



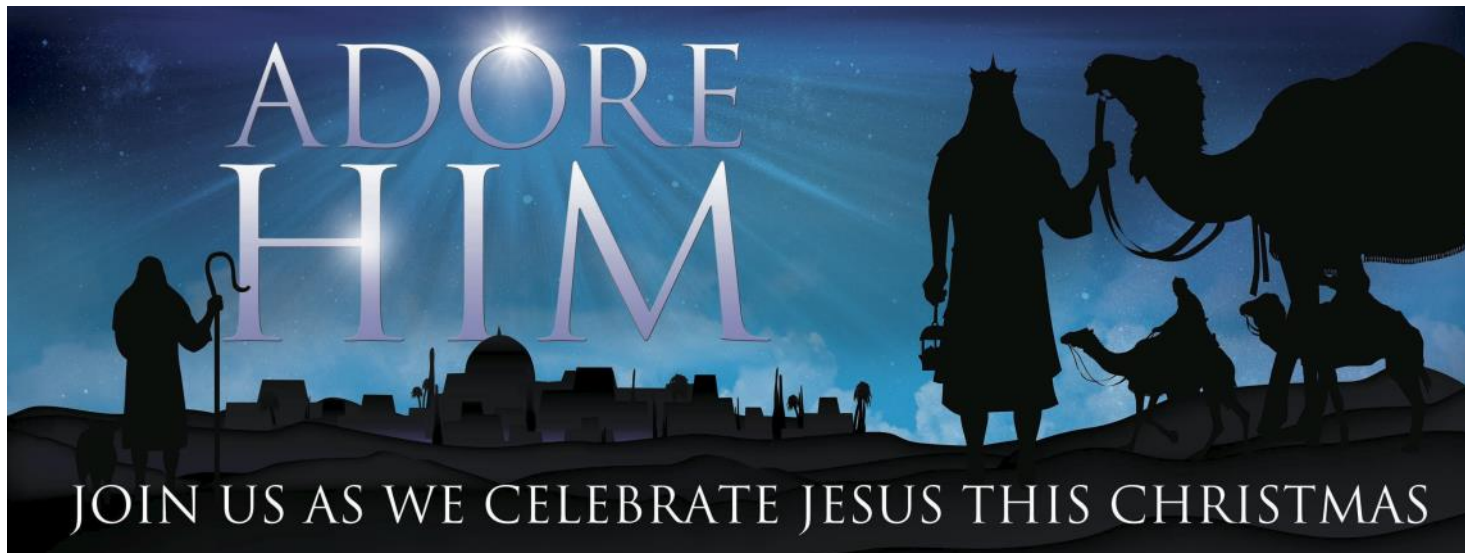
Sunday, December 6, 12:00pm, In Fellowship Hall

Fun for Everyone!

Enjoy ham, scalloped potatoes, & baked beans for lunch. Make a fresh evergreen wreath or gingerbread house.

Suggested donation to cover cost

Lunch: \$5/adult, \$12/family; Wreath form: \$3; Gingerbread house: \$2



Christmas Eve Services

5:30 p.m. Family Worship Experience

This half hour service is designed with young children in mind. The Christmas story, told in rhyme, will be interspersed with familiar and beloved Christmas carols. We welcome the young and the young at heart.



Partners in faith. Changing lives.

The Interfaith Coalition wants to express its immense gratitude to St. James Presbyterian. Your generosity and caring has helped open doors for many homeless families, provided needed shelter and support for the vulnerable, and now a new home for its staff and office.

Many members of your congregation volunteer countless hours to help with our auction, as well as with other programs and ongoing office and administrative needs. One of the bedrooms and kitchen at Our House was beautifully furnished by a group of caring St. James women and, in another act of generosity, your congregation helped provide solar panels for the triplex.

Your caring and support does more than just provide necessities for the vulnerable – you provide hope and inspiration too. A thank you letter from a young girl who lived in Our House last year said: *"...It is nice to know that there are people who do care about people and big or small families that are homeless..."* This girl, and the other families and individuals who are helped through Interfaith programs, all experience that there **are** people who care about them. The adults are inspired to continue their work towards stability, and children learn that there is hope and that good things can happen when people care.

Interfaith Coalition staff members Laura Harker, Janie Pemble, Carolyn Roy, Mike Hess, Andrea Hausner, and Peggy Lohse extend a warm invitation to all members of St. James to stop by and introduce yourself. We are on the second floor where the former preschool was located. Come say hello and share what you hope or dream of what else we can accomplish together.

Check out our new website:

www.interfaith-coalition.org

Like us on Facebook:

Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County



Interfaith Coalition Coat Drive a Warm Success

As the cool weather finds us reaching for a jacket, we're reminded that some of our neighbors are in need of this basic item we take for granted. This fall, we provided winter coats as well as hats and scarves to our neighbors. Thank you for donating winter wear and bringing some much needed warmth to others this fall. We appreciate your commitment to this program and are humbled to experience the gratitude in words or expressions of those who benefit from your efforts.

It is so heart-warming to witness coats no longer needed by members of your congregation benefiting people in need, allowing them to spend their limited income on other basic necessities.

In God's love, Laura Harker



Shout and cheer, Daughter Zion! Raise the roof, Daughter Jerusalem! Your king is coming! A good king who makes all things right, a humble king riding a donkey, a mere colt of a donkey. I've had it with war—no more chariots in Ephraim, no more war horses in

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, Dec. 15, when we will meet for a Bible study at 10:30 and potluck salad luncheon at noon. We welcome back storyteller Barbie Craigie who lifts our hearts each December by presenting a heartwarming story.

Women's Evening Bible Study

The Women's Evening Bible Study will meet on Wednesday, December 16 at 7 pm in the Lounge. We will be discussing Lesson 3: Absence of Water: Thirst and Longing in our *Come to the Waters* study guide. These are stand alone lessons on the theme of water in the Bible. The study guides are provided and available in the church office. Come and bring a friend! Calendar updates:

- Women's Evening Bible Study – 7pm on the 3rd Wed of month

A Big Thank You



This year the Presbyterian Women's Association Arts and Crafts Faire was the best ever. We raised \$2285 to be distributed to charities benefitting women and children; \$607 of the total was the quilt raffle. It was a success because of the wonderful support from the congregation. A big thank you to all those who contributed: baking, decorating, purchasing raffle tickets, working to set up or on the day of the faire, and supporting the vendors by purchasing their items.



Angel Tree

The "Angel Tree" is up and ready for the decorative wings. The wishes will be presented on pretty angel's wings

For the seasons of Advent and Christmas, beginning on November 22nd:

We will be studying and discussing the book, **The Gift of New Hope**, by Christopher L. Webber. This book invites us to explore our yearning for God's presence through Bible readings during the weeks before, during and following Christmas. Hope is the focus of the Advent season. The book and our class discussions will help us to understand, appreciate and engage in meaningful and joyous celebrations of Advent and Christmas, and to live each day in God's hope through Jesus Christ. Everyone is invited. Books are provided. Meets Sundays at 9am in the Lounge.

For the Season of Epiphany, beginning on January 3rd: You won't want to miss the discussion of the book, **Jesus, Pope Francis and a Protestant Walk into a Bar**, by Paul Rock, Senior Pastor of Second Presbyterian Church, Kansas City, Missouri and Bill Tammeus, columnist for the Kansas City Star. Pope Francis has taken the world by storm, captivating Catholics, Protestants and non-Christians alike. The revitalization Francis is bringing to the Catholic Church is not without precedent, however. Jesus had a similar effect in his day, drawing crowds with his humility, kindness and wisdom – even as he drew the disapproval of established religious leaders. We will learn what is universal among Christians, what is unique to Catholics and Protestants, and how all Christians can practice understanding and cooperation across differences. We anticipate rich and lively discussions as we go through the book. Everyone is invited. Books are provided. Meets Sundays at 9am in the Lounge.

Christian Faith Formation Committee

1. We welcomed aboard a familiar face from last year. Ben Gamman, now a graduate student in education at Western Washington University, is once again our Youth Leader. Please take time to stop Ben and ask him about his plans for our children and youth.
2. The nursery area is being outfitted with new cupboards to keep supplies more orderly and safe from curious little hands. This committee action resulted from a recommendation from the Task Force, and construction will be done by our Building and Grounds Committee. Thanks to all of you!
3. The committee invites families to worship together on Christmas Eve. This means no childcare will be available that evening, recognizing that everyone -- even childcare workers -- appreciate spending Christmas Eve with their families.



December Birthdays

6	Sharon Schayes
7	Gale Pfueller
13	Dick Carr
14	Barb Kilpatrick
15	Alia Lynnae Bowers
18	Scott Wenger

December Anniversaries

5	Wayne and Linda Landis
28	John and Marion Dobbie

The Stewardship Committee wants to thank everyone who has responded with a financial commitment to St. James for 2016. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. We have received 61 pledges for a total of \$170,800.00. Our goal of \$200,000.00 has not been met which will require cuts to our budget to compensate for this difference. We don't anticipate any changes to our current staff but changes in support of other areas will be required. If you have not pledged as yet, but have decided to pledge, we will gladly accept it. If you have not responded because you cannot afford to pledge for 2016, please let us know. If you prefer to support St. James with loose offerings, we appreciate this as well but cannot use it for budget planning purposes. Thank you.

Committee members: Peter Burkland, Marina McLeod, Monica Reynoso, Martha Speer, Dick Carr, chair

Thank you Rev. Cindy Baukle for your willingness to continue to participate with the Grief Support Group as it is an important gift in the life of St. James. The Grief Support group meets bi-weekly at 10am on Monday mornings in the Lounge. The next meeting will be Monday, December 7th.

OCTOBER FINANCIAL STATUS

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Year to Date Budget</u>
Income	\$16,316.00	\$186,554.70	\$188,932.00
Expenses	\$6,420.97	\$160,332.28	\$196,465.80

Thank you for your Mission and Social Action giving in 2015.

Fund and voluteer work were distributed among these groups based on needs and programs.

BUDGETED – Provided as part of member's annual giving: General Benevolence \$7,750 with additions noted below (\$0,000)						
Children, Youth and Families	Hunger & Homelessness	Justice -Human Rights	Environment - Sustainability	Peace	Educational Opportunity	National/International Missions
Northwest Youth Services	Food Bank	Community to Community	Earth Care Events	Whatcom Center for Peace and Justice	Progressive Christian Voices – WWU**	PCUSA missions (\$4,000) (\$250 MidEast
	Habitat for Humanity	Human Rights Film Festival	NWIC Environmental Research Center Scholarship			Presbytery missions
	Interfaith Coalition – Our House (\$2,500)	Tierra Nueva				(\$1,750) Synod (\$500)
	Lighthouse Mission					
	Maple Alley Inn					
UNBUDGETED – Provided from Special Offerings or Projects where full offering or voluteer time are given to designated purposes						
Angel Tree – IFC	Church World Service – Tool & Blankets	Bellingham Pride Fest		Prayer Vigil for Middle East Peace	Homeport Learning Center	
Montana de Luz (Guatamala)	CWS – Crop Walk			Atfaluna School for Deaf Children (Gaza)**		
	Maple Alley Inn – Souper Bowl; Auctions – Habitat for Humanity, InterFaith Coalition (IFC)					
	Undie Sunday – IFC					

- Special Offerings –
1. SJPC Thanksgiving offering to the food bank
 2. PCUSA Christmas Joy Offering – during advent, for college and seminary students of color, and Presbyterian Pension plan emergency supplement
 3. PCUSA One Great Hour of Sharing – PDA disaster, Hunger, Self Development of People, offering financials (Palm Sunday)
 4. PCUSA Peace and Global Witness – World Communion Sunday – local congregation distributes 25% for peacemaking (Season of Peace ends on World Communion Sunday – 1st Sunday Oct)
 5. PCUSA Pentecost Offering – Young Adult Volunteers, Ministries for Youth, Children at-risk, offering financials, - local congregation distributes 40% for youth (50 days after Easter Sunday (May 15, 2016))

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>For Co-op Preschool information call 360-510-9558</div>		1 8am Prayer Group 10am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	2 9:15am Christian Faith Formation 5:30pm Mission & Social Action 6pm SOS Men's AA	3 10:15am Yoga 5:30pm Building and Grounds 5:30pm Congrega- tional Life 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:15pm AA 7:30pm Choir	4 4pm Cross-fit	5 10am OA 1pm Bellingham Ukulele Group
6 9am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship w/communion - 12pm Advent Festival 6:15pm AA	7 10am Grief Support Group 5:30pm SIA 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study 6:30pm Boy Scouts	8 8am Prayer Group 10am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 6:30pm Comm. Chorus Rehearsal 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	9 6pm SOS Men's AA 6:30pm Weavers Guild	10 10:15am Yoga 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:15pm AA 7:30pm Choir	11 12pm Prime Timers 4pm Cross-fit 4:15pm Membership	12 9am Pet Partners 9am Church Work Party 10am OA
13 9am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship 12pm Session + Lunch 6:15pm AA	14 5:30pm SIA 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study 7pm Boy Scouts	15 8am Prayer Group 10am Yoga 10:30am Women's Bible Study 12pm Women's Luncheon 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 6:30pm Community Chorus Rehearsal 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	16 Pulse due date! 6pm SOS Men's AA 7pm Women's Bible Study	17 10:15am Yoga 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:15pm AA 7:30pm Choir	18 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm Prayer Vigil for Peace in the Middle East at Sacred Hearts	19 10am OA 1:30pm Bellingham Academy of Music
20 9am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship 11:30am Deacons 1pm Bellingham Community Chorus 6:15pm AA	21 10am Grief Support Group 5:30pm SIA 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study	22 8am Prayer Group 10am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	23 6pm SOS Men's AA	24 Christmas Eve 5:30pm Service 7:15pm AA 7:30pm Service	25 Christmas Day Office Closed	26 10am OA
27 9am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship 6:15pm AA	28 5:30pm SIA 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study 7pm St. James Literary Society	29 8am Prayer Group 10am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA	30 6pm SOS Men's AA	31 New Years Eve 10:15am Yoga 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:15pm AA 7:30pm Choir	January 1, 2016 New Years Day <i>Office Closed</i>	<div>Hawthorne Learning Solutions</div>

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St. James Presbyterian Church

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Children's Ministry: Merry Thomas, Coordinator
Ben Gamman, Youth Leader
Zadra Nolan, Teacher
Katy Jackson, Teacher
Clerk of Session: Carla Shafer
Custodians: Cascade Vocational Services:
Don Bayne, Aaron Cook, Vernon Point
Music Director: Carolyn Mullen
Office Manager: Natasha Orme
Organist/Pianist: Melany Armstrong
Treasurer: Marina McLeod

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study

10:00 a.m. Worship



Changes Are Coming! This will be our last *Pulse* Issue you will see in the mailbox.

Continuing to mail printed newsletters is proving to be wasteful of our money and resources. Therefore, **we will start sending the *Pulse* via email** for all who have internet access. For those who do not have internet or prefer a printed *Pulse*, **there will be ample copies available for pick up at church.** The only newsletters that we intend to mail are to homebound members and friends or those who live out of town. Our goal is to have the bugs worked out by January so we do not have to renew our bulk mail permit. Thank you for your understanding as we transition to a new process.

Congregational Meeting