

# the Pulse

August 2017

THE SAINT JAMES PRESBYTERIAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



about Abraham — God covenants with Abraham to make him into a great nation. And no matter what Abraham does, no matter how far off his perceptions of what God would require of him, God continues to faithfully pursue and care for Abraham's needs. Because God makes (and keeps) covenants.

Marriage is a covenant. And so is our bond of life together as a church. Whether you realize it or not, every time we gather

## Covenants

At the end of July, Stacy and I celebrate our 12th wedding anniversary. It is hard for me to believe how quickly the time has gone and, at the same time, it feels like we have been married for our whole lives. With each year, our commitment to each other deepens, our friendship strengthens, our hope for a long life together grows.

Each year, this anniversary gives me pause as I consider the difference between the type of commitment we make to one another as partners as it stands alongside all of the other promises and agreements we make throughout our days. We live in a world of contracts and policies, where we must put into writing binding legal statements that keep parties invested in a decision. We tend to operate with the assumption that others cannot be trusted to have our mutual interest in mind.

The stories of the Scriptures, and particularly the Old Testament Origin Stories that we have been looking at this summer, show us a world where contracts and commitments reign as well. But they also open our eyes to a God who makes commitments for the well-being and wholeness of humanity that are deeper, stronger, holier than a simple contract. What makes the stories of the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so remarkable is that they operate out of a completely different paradigm — **Covenant**.

Covenantal bonds are deeper than a contractual commitment or agreements based on reciprocity ("We hereby mutually agree to scratch each other's respective back in perpetuity.") Instead, God makes covenants with people out of love and commitment to their well-being, regardless of their faults or ability do what's right. Think

together for worship and fellowship at Saint James, there is an invitation to partake in a covenantal relationship with God and with each other. Our life together is built upon people making deep covenantal commitments to share all God has provided with one another. We make covenants to stand up on behalf of the poor and needy. We make covenants to pursue God's peacemaking love in the world — regardless of the cost to ourselves. Covenants are made for the good of the other, for the benefit of all creation.

As we enter the month of August and look forward into Fall 2017, it is an important time for us to consider the concept of covenant. We have learned that our origins are found in a loving God who wants to bring about wholeness to all creation and uses messy people like me and you to do so. As we look forward, we are going to have conversations about how we covenant together in membership at Saint James. We'll look at covenantal promises as we hopefully have the opportunity to celebrate baptisms and marriages in our community. And we'll strive to covenant together in the sharing of our resources, as we look at how covenantal people steward what God has provided in abundance to the glory of God's name.

Friends, as your pastor, I have also made a covenant commitment to love and serve God with you at Saint James. I count it an honor to be bound into this covenant, this promise of faithful service to this church, to you all, and to Jesus Christ. It is a joy to be people of the covenant and to journey with you all.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seth



# PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



Friday, August 18, 2017  
5:30pm-6pm

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Faith Lutheran Church  
2750 McLeod Rd, Bellingham  
(360) 733-3970

God of mercy and compassion, of grace and reconciliation, pour your power upon all your children in the Middle East: Jews, Muslims and Christians, Palestinians and Israelis. Let hatred be turned into love, fear to trust, despair to hope, oppression to freedom, occupation to liberation, that violent encounters may be replaced by loving embraces, and peace and justice could be experienced by all. Amen.

-The Reverend Said Ailabouni  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chicago,

**AUGUST 2017**

## JUNE FINANCIAL STATUS

	May	Current Budget	Yr. to Date	Yr. to Date Budget
Income	\$16,703	\$15,902	\$116,988	\$108,016
Expenses	\$17,239	\$16,584	\$99,679	\$107,838

Statements have been mailed for January thru June showing your contributions to St. James Presbyterian Church. If you have not received your copy, please contact the church office and Natasha will let Marina know.

Each statement indicates whether you have paid the annual per Capita for the year. Just in case this has been overlooked, now is a good time to consider paying the \$50 for each member in your family.

The Finance Committee hopes that you are having a great Summer.

Dick Carr  
Finance Chair

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## Highlights from the 09 July 2017 Session Meeting

### Session members and their associated committees:

Laurie Anderson	Membership
Dick Carr	Finance
Tracy Caruso	Nominating
Tim Crandall	Personnel
Jill Hoyt	Worship and Music
Gretchen Pfueller	Mission Social Action
Merry Thomas	Christian Faith Formation
Jeanne Uhles	Building and Grounds

### Motion(s) passed since the 11 June 2017 Session Meeting:

Ms. Susanna Schreiber's membership has been transferred from the South Aiken Presbyterian Church, Aiken, South Carolina, to St. James.

### Items of interest:

Session Retreat is scheduled for Friday, 4 August 2017;  
 Start date for the choir is 10 September;  
 Kickoff for the Stewardship Drive is 1 October and will be limited to the month of October;  
 The bathroom renovation project is on hold until November due to contractor availability.

Mark Beaty  
Clerk of Session

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# Kids Need Books

## GIVE YOUNG READERS IN NEED TOOLS TO SUCCEED: DONATE BOOKS!

Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County's Kids Need Books (KNB) program provides new and gently-used books to low-income families. KNB helps local kids bridge the "summer slide," the academic decline low-income students face during summer months away from school and books. Our program has been so successful that it has evolved into a year-round effort throughout the county!

KNB distributes books at pop-up Food Banks at Bellingham schools, literacy festivals, county migrant camps and rural food banks. The program hands out about 10,000 books a year and, in the words of a local school volunteer, "It has fundamentally changed the reading culture of our neighborhood."

**WANT TO HELP?** KNB needs books in English and Spanish ranging from high demand board books to contemporary, young adult novels. Books and financial donations may be dropped off at the Interfaith office:



910 14TH STREET, BELLINGHAM | 360-734-3983 | [OFFICE@INTERFAITH-COALITION.ORG](mailto:OFFICE@INTERFAITH-COALITION.ORG)  
[WWW.INTERFAITH-COALITION.ORG](http://WWW.INTERFAITH-COALITION.ORG)



**INTERFAITH COALITION**  
Partners in faith. Changing lives.



## KIDS NEED BOOKS

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## Book Distribution Reflections

By Joe Nolting, volunteer coordinator

It's the weekly book distribution at a local elementary school. The frail, nine-year-old girl has thinning hair as fine as silk. She walks along the tables touching titles, stopping to page through a book on insects, then a mystery. Her eyes meet mine and she asks if it's okay to take both books. I nod and tell her to enjoy. She smiles shyly and walks away clutching the books to her chest like treasure. A moment later her mother stops by and thanks me, explaining that her daughter had a brain tumor removed last year. The surgery and chemotherapy have set her back and she has fallen behind in school. The mother would like to help her child—read to her and check her homework—but she is a single parent with two other children. She works two full-time jobs and must carve out a few hours each day for sleep.

A young Hispanic mother "shops" for a board book for her two-month-old niece. I suggest a brand new book about animals, each page filled with vibrant pictures and soft, fuzzy textures. The mother bites her trembling lip, wipes away a tear, and laughs, "I will wrap this up as soon as I get home. Now I have a baby gift. I am so excited!"

Our policy is to hand out one book per family member. Some families leave with half a dozen books. Last week I helped a young mother bring her food boxes to her car. Her two young children were so excited about their books. The little girl asked, "Mama, may we read in the car or do we have to wait until we get home? Please may we read in the car?"

The first-grade boy eyes the middle grade novels. I suggest a title more age appropriate farther down the table. He puts his hands on his hips and gives me a look of exasperation. "I can read chapter books, you know." He points to the books I recommended. "I could read those little kid books when I was in preschool. What I really want is a never-ending story, like this." His chubby fingers pick up a stack of Magic Treehouse mysteries. He opens the first book and reads aloud—and fluently—the beginning paragraph. A moment later he walks away with the treasured

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## PULSE

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books nestled under his arm. When he glances back at me over his shoulder he is grinning broadly.

The twelve-year-old girl has intense dark eyes. I had met her a month earlier. She is the oldest of four children raised by a single parent father. The family's story is complicated and convoluted—living in a truck and moving from place to place—always home-schooled. Now they are staying with friends until Dad can find work and they can get a place of their own. I tell the girl to take as many books as she wants as I don't know when she'll be back. She picks up *Harry Potter*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Bridge to Terabithia*, and *Walk Two Moons*. "These won't take long to read," she says with a smile.

### Want to Help?

KNB needs books in English and Spanish, ranging from high demand board books to contemporary young adult novels. Books and financial donations may be dropped off at the Interfaith office.

## Free Books / Libros Gratis



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## THANK YOU

**THANK YOU** to all those who brought items for **PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT!** Can you imagine how uncomfortable it would be to totally be without many of those items on a regular basis? This day of service is looked forward to by the many who participate. The kindness you have shown is truly appreciated.

## NW YOUTH SERVICES

**NW YOUTH SERVICES** provides services to hundreds of street youth during the summer months. Please keep the single serve food donations coming. They are always warmly welcomed when Bill Read delivers them. And, those little hotel toiletries, as well as other small sized toiletries, are always needed. THANKS!

## TOUR THE LIGHTHOUSE MISSION

**TOUR THE LIGHTHOUSE MISSION VILLAGE**, in the heart of Bellingham's Old Town, this Thursday, Aug. 3, 3-7pm. Learn how our support helps to shelter 230 men, women and children each night who would otherwise be homeless. Visit each of the buildings and meet staff members. Refreshments provided.

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### August Birthdays

5	Gary Culbertson
7	Jeanne Uhles
9	Monica Reynoso
12	Wilma French
13	Jill Hoyt
13	Lois Anderson
16	Megan Pfueller Melrose
19	Bill Read
23	Keena Mullen
24	Rick Seater
25	Mary van der Veen
28	Marilyn Monahan

### August Anniversaries

6	Tim and Wendy Crandall
13	Rick and Jean Seater
21	Dwayne and Karen Rogers
21	Jim and Carolyn Mullen
23	Gil and Inge Thurston
24	Gragg and Betty Miller

### Presbyterian Women

The St. James Women's Association will meet for its monthly salad potluck luncheon on Tuesday, August 22nd at the home of Gretchen Pfueller. Please meet in front of the church at 11:45am to carpool to her home. If you have any questions, please contact Merry Thomas or Gretchen Pfueller.



### St. James is looking for a Pianist/Accompanist

Would you or someone you know like to get more involved with the St. James music program? We're looking for a Pianist/Accompanist to play on Sunday morning and rehearse with the choir on Thursday evening. This is a paid, part-time position. For more information contact Carolyn Mullen at 360-595-0934.

### St. James Children's Ministries

Aug. 6: "Struggle" focuses on Genesis 32:22-31. Children hear about Jacob's struggles -- with his brother Esau and with God. Adults can help children learn that God is with them in happy times as well as sad or difficult times.

Aug. 13: "Jealousy" focuses on Genesis 37:104, 12-28. Pray that each child, like Joseph in this story, feels especially loved by someone. Children learn to trust in God's love.

Aug. 20: "Restoration" focuses on Genesis 45:1-15. The story focuses on Jacob's forgiving his brothers and on the family's being reunited. Pray that children will be supported and blessed within their families.

Aug. 27: "Defiance" focuses on Exodus 1:8-2:10. Children are captivated by the story of baby Moses and his big sister Miriam. Despite its frightening elements, children learn that God wants each child to be cared for and loved.

## AUGUST CALENDAR 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>For events not listed on this calendar, check out the St. James website! <a href="http://www.saintjamespres.org">www.saintjamespres.org</a></div>		1 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	2 11:15am Tai Chi 12:15am Chair Tai Chi 4pm Mission & Social Action 6pm SOS Men's AA	3 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm Building and Grounds 5:30pm Congregational Life 7:15pm AA	4	5 10am OA 1pm Bellingham Ukulele Group
6 9:30am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship w/Communion 7:15pm AA	7 10am Grief Support Group 5:15pm Tai Chi 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study	8 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 5:30pm Finance 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	9 11:15am Tai Chi 12:15am Chair Tai Chi 2pm Worship Committee 6pm SOS Men's AA	10 10:15am Yoga 3pm Christian Faith Formation 4pm Cross-fit 7:15pm AA	11 12pm Prime Timers 6:30pm Church Work Party	12 10am OA
13 9:30am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship 12pm Session BYOL 7:15pm AA	14 5:15pm Tai Chi 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study	15 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	16 Pulse Items Due 11:15am Tai Chi 12:15am Chair Tai Chi 6pm SOS Men's AA	17 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 7:15pm AA	18 5:30pm Prayer Vigil for Peace in the middle East at Faith Lutheran Church	19 9:30am Weavers Guild 10am OA
20 9:30am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship 11:45am Deacons 7:15pm AA	21 10am Grief Support Group 5:15pm Tai Chi 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study	22 10:15am Yoga 12pm Women's Luncheon 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	23 11:15am Tai Chi 12:15am Chair Tai Chi 6pm SOS Men's AA	24 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 7:15pm AA	25 3pm Membership Committee	26 10am OA
					<div>Pulse articles are due on the <u>16th of each month.</u> Please mark your calendars.</div>	
27 9:30am Adult Church School 10:30am Worship 7:15pm AA	28 5:15pm Tai Chi 6:30pm AA Men's Book Study	29 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 5:30pm AI Anon 7:30pm WA Gender Alliance	30 11:15am Tai Chi 12:15am Chair Tai Chi 6pm SOS Men's AA	31 10:15am Yoga 4pm Cross-fit 7:15pm AA	<div>Bayside Co-Op Preschool For information please call 360-733-3972</div> <div>Hawthorne Learning Solutions Contact Matt and Emily Hawthorne for times and dates. <a href="mailto:hlearningsolutions@gmail.com">hlearningsolutions@gmail.com</a></div>	