

FALLING FORWARD

Peace be with you,

Fall is undoubtedly one of the most striking seasons in Bellingham! I hope you are falling into it with a sense of gratitude and hope. Those feelings may seem difficult to connect with these days, so I want to encourage you to "fall forward" in some particular ways this month in hopes of cultivating gratitude and hope. Here are a few ways to practice "falling forward."

First, a practice of participation: October is Stewardship season at St. James, and this year, we fall forward together in hope for all that God is leading us into in the coming year. We firmly believe that there will be ministry and work for the church to do beyond COVID-19, beyond a contentious election cycle, beyond our divisions. God is calling our church to look forward to the horizon and pledge our financial support to our church's mission. Falling forward here means prayerfully considering how you can support St. James' ministry in the year to come and returning your Pledge Packet (available in digital or print format) by November 1, 2020. Email Marina McLeod (stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com), our church treasurer, if you have questions about how to receive your packet and respond.

Second, a practice of planning and possibility: We all know that Fall marks a new school year. It is also an election season, which holds the possibility of looking forward as a nation to the future. It is a season when we can set our intentions about what we hope for in the year ahead. I would like to invite you to practice "possibility" — take a moment to journal or meditate on this question: What do I long for in this season and the year ahead? When we pause to practice possibility, we have an opportunity to name what we hope for and begin to make plans for how to get from where we are to where we see God calling us to. Pause and consider the possibility of this year.

Finally, a practice of prostration: In my mind, this practice aligns most directly with "falling forward." In this season, there is much to lament, to redeem, to restore. A faithful way of the Christian tradition is to fall before God in prayer. That might look like physically getting down on to the floor and laying down and telling God all that is on your heart. It might mean pausing in your favorite chair and letting the walls of activity and rumination fall away to make space for the Spirit to speak. I invite you to "fall forward" into God's loving arms in this season. We need God's presence and love now as much as ever.

Let's fall forward together, not in fear, but in possibility, planning, prostration, and hope! I pray that this cultivates a posture of gratitude and hope in you today and sustains you through the season.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Seth Thomas



August Finance Committee Update - Continued Thanks

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair



Every month, when the St. James Finance Committee meets, we are blown away by this community's generosity, prudence, and trust. As of August 31, the St. James' general operating budget has an excess of over \$11,000! Incredible! In September, some special COVID-related benefits are set to expire, such as the North Coast Presbytery's three-month waiver of our Board of Pensions dues for our pastor. Our excess income gives us peace of mind as we enter the fall. St. James is in a healthy financial position.

We are grateful for the many ways you all share your resources - whether they be money, time, or talents. Your contributions allow us to further our commitments to loving welcome, joyful practice, and compassionate service. Thanks be to God!

Following is an update on St. James' Year to Date General Operating Budget:

Income/Expenses As of 8-31-2020	AUGUST ACTUAL	AUGUST BUDGET	YR TO DATE ACTUAL	YR TO DATE BUDGET
Income	\$21,577	\$19,545	\$162,804	\$170,176
Expenses	\$13,101	\$17,332	\$150,915	\$172,235

While we are worshipping at home during this time you can to give in TWO primary ways:

1. **Online Giving:** You can give a one-time gift or create a recurring monthly pledge. Please visit this webpage to set up or update your online giving here: <https://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving>

If you are new to online giving we've got a handy video to show you how, here:
<https://www.loom.com/share/5aea350026204a9cb3c955029dafbdd3>

2. **Mail-In Donations:** You can mail your pledges and gifts to the church. Please note that though the church office will be closed mail will be checked regularly.

St. James Presbyterian Church
 910 14th Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Need assistance or would you like to schedule a contact-free donation pick-up?

Contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

By Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director

Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries! I hope everyone had a good entrance into Fall and the adjustment of yet another season dealing with COVID. For most of us, this back to school time was yet another in a long line of new normal and adjustments. If your family is anything like mine the fatigue is setting in. I hope that everyone can take time to rest and to give grace to everyone who is feeling the fatigue.

Around September St. James marked the beginning of our 4th year of **Godly Play**. Although we are not able to be together in our class I have been recording the stories from the classroom so we can get a better sense of our Godly Play program. I will be sending home parent pages for each story at the beginning of each month along with some coloring pages or activities that can be done at home. I hope families will send me pictures of any work that has been done along with and answers to our wondering questions. We will share those on our "Work Days". Anyone interested in participating please email me at tracy@saintjamespres.org.



Our Youth Group will be meeting via zoom on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 4:15. The second Thursday will focus on our Simple Sundays curriculum and the 4th Thursday will be games and social time. If you are interested in attending, please contact Tracy for the zoom link.

Our Adult Education has been doing a Zoom book study on the topic of Race. We are reading **Austin Channing Brown's I'm Still Here**. Pick up a copy and join us Sundays at 9:00AM on Zoom, using the Worship Service link to join early.

October 4: Chapters 5, 6, 7 (and interlude "Why I love being a black girl")

October 11: Chapters 8, 9 (and interlude "How to survive racism in an organization that claims to be antiracist")

October 18: Chapters 10, 11, 12 (and interlude "A letter to my son")

October 25: Chapters 13, 14

Godly Play for October:

- October 4th: The Flood and the Ark
In this lesson, we move with the people of God from the creation to the re-creation and God's promise to Noah, to God's family, and us.
- October 11th: The Great Family
We continue to seek the elusive presence of God. God was present at creation, blessing all that was made. Noah walked with God and was led by God's presence to build the ark that preserved life. Now Abraham and Sarah discover that God is present everywhere, putting their lives on the line to test the promises of God.
- October 18th: Exodus
In this story, we see that God was with the People as they "went out" (the literal meaning of the word exodus) from slavery into freedom through the water. The People of God look back to this time to sustain them when God is hidden and they feel lost. For the Jews, especially, the Feast of Passover keeps alive this core event. For Christians, Baptism reawakens this event.
- October 25th: Work Day. Please submit any work or wondering questions to Tracy by October 22nd to be shared.

OPERATION: SANCTUARY REFRESH

By Jenny Sue LeSchander

We're done with the sanctuary refresh project! Because of a very generous donation from a long-time St James member, the idea of replacing the sanctuary carpet grew to a much larger, far more complex project. Starting back in July of 2019, Seth held a series of "listening sessions" to help discern our wants for the future aesthetics of the sanctuary. The overall conclusion was that we just wanted to "freshen it up" and make it look a little newer. So in February of this year a "Sanctuary Refresh Committee" - comprised of Aaron Caruso, Brian Johnson, Claude Hill, and me, Jenny Sue LeSchander - began the hard work of deciding what needed to be done and how we'd do it.

There were a few big projects around which everything had to be planned - the red tile under the pews was asbestos so we needed to bring in an abatement team; the pews needed to be moved and stored somewhere while the flooring was being replaced, and we needed all the dirty work done before the new carpet arrived. All while working around the restrictions and challenges of a global pandemic.

If we had made a time-lapse movie of the sanctuary, you would see: the sanctuary getting emptied of anything moveable; Claude refinishing the pulpit, lectern, and communion table; the sanctuary pews being moved out; the balcony pews being moved into the Horizon Room; the carpet being removed; the rock wall being steam-cleaned and sealed; the walls being painted; the pillars getting re-white washed; the sanctuary being tented for the asbestos tile removal; the tile floor being cut out and replaced with new plywood; new vinyl planking being installed (replacing the tile); the sanctuary pews coming back in (but not being installed); a lift being brought in; the light bulbs being replaced; drop microphones getting installed in the sacristy; the ventilation system being cleaned like you wouldn't believe; the carpet being installed (sanctuary and balcony); new oak baseboards being installed; the balcony pews being moved back upstairs; a camera being installed so services can be broadcast online; the sanctuary pews getting installed; and everything being moved back into the sacristy. Phew!! It was a massive undertaking and there was a LOT of moving parts. Two major things you wouldn't have seen were the pews and the narthex floor being refinished. Since we had to move the pews out of the sanctuary, we took a look at the condition and decided they would benefit from being refinished. But finding a finish-house who would accept the job of refinishing 30 pews AND had the space to do so was no small feat. Luckily Bellingham Professional Finishes accepted the work but had to rent an adjacent warehouse for the pews. The warehouse was only available for a very specific time frame, so everything really had to fall in place to work out. And it did! As for the narthex floor, there was an unfortunate incident with the rental lift that resulted in a battery acid spill. Luckily it was through no fault of ours, so Hardware Sales took full ownership and had the floor refinished. It looks great and it didn't cost us a cent!



There are many people who deserve special recognition for all their extraordinary help - Julia Powell from Flooring Connections was an invaluable help, for more than just the flooring. She came in at the start and got us pointed in the right direction. She also coordinated the timing of the painting and the asbestos work around the flooring work, and held our hands the entire time. Our own Claude Hill was a workaholic! If something was made of wood, Claude was going to make sure it was perfect. We decided to shorten 2 pews to allow space for 2 more wheelchairs, and Claude did all that work himself. He also did all touch-ups and adjustments that were needed to install the pews on new flooring. Aaron Caruso was, among other tasks, our lightbulb changer. Perhaps going up in a lift isn't too scary, but he was fearless when climbing a 36' ladder to replace bulbs where we weren't able to fit the lift. And Brian, Aaron, and Claude were tireless in their support of me (Jenny Sue) while trying to coordinate all this work. Whenever I needed help with anything I could put out the call and they'd be there without question. For as much work as it was, it went surprisingly smoothly, thanks to the people who were willing to help no matter how many times I requested it. And you'll be glad to know we managed to come in \$10,000 under budget!!

I can't wait for you to get to see it in person. It really does look great!



COAT DRIVE ON NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 12TH

Join St. James and the Interfaith Coalition for the 2020 Coat Drive

The Interfaith Coalition's annual winter warmth drive will be happening again this year. This provides warm outerwear for everyone from babies to seniors. Please bring gently-used or new Winter coats (Please, no clothing, light jackets, or other non-winter items.) to our church through Monday, October 12th. Knitted hats and scarves are also cherished.

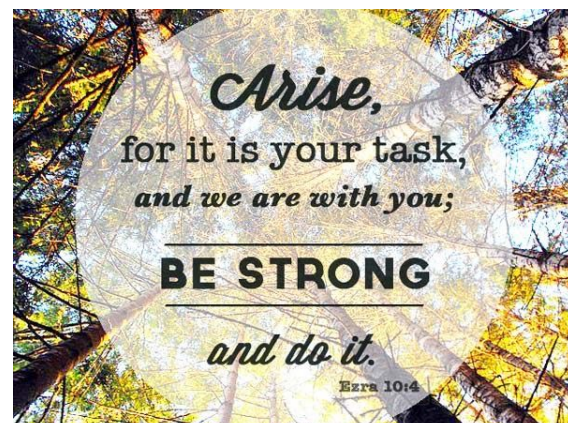
New Safety Procedures: All items should be laundered if possible, then placed into a plastic bag that is labeled on the outside of the bag with the number of coats, sizes (kid sizes and adults 2X and 3X are especially needed), and gender if applicable, and twist-tied shut. Because of COVID -19 concerns, unbagged coats can not be accepted. For many of our neighbors, this program means they will not need to spend limited income on a winter coat or do without.

****Our church will be setting up a collection bin outside the church, next to a door on the lower parking lot side. Thank you for sharing the warmth! Please contact Gena Gustafson if you have questions, 253-677-6006.**



ST. JAMES STAFF IS AT YOUR SERVICE

Pastor: The Rev. Seth J. Thomas, pastor@saintjamespres.org
Children & Family Director: Tracy Caruso, tracy@saintjamespres.org
Accompanist: Luke Arnold
Treasurer: Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com
Administrative Assistant: Shannon Laws, office@saintjamespres.org
Teachers: Claire Alarid



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
Deacons Parish 1 Open- Alice Beaty
Deacons Parish 2 Jean & Rick Seater
Deacons Parish 3 Julies Keys, Carla Shafer
Deacons Parish 4 Marlene Amman, Valerie McBeth
Deacons Parish 5 Pam Gibson, Adam Beaty

Worship Schedule- Join us for streaming service

10:30 a.m. Worship is a LIVE Service Stream from our websites:

<https://saintjamespres.org/>

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

Office Hours for September:

Tuesday 9:00am - 12:00pm

Thursday 9:00am - 2:00pm

Friday 9:00am - 2:00pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB IN OCTOBER

St. James Book Club is currently reading Melinda Gates's *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*. "When you lift up women, you lift up everybody - families, communities, entire countries... In her book, Melinda tells the stories of the inspiring people she's met through her work all over the world, digs into the data, and powerfully illustrates issues that need our attention..."

We will be meeting Monday evening October 19th @ 7:00. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link.

FAMILY PROMISE SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

are available October 12-17th, as St. James partners with our neighbors, Sacred Heart, and Our Saviour's to assist homeless families. Since the families are remaining in only one church, during this time of Covid-19, knowing specific needs in advance is difficult. However, if you are willing to provide dinner (either homemade or a commercial meal sent by delivery service) for the three moms, three children, and grandpa, please contact Gretchen Pfueller at gmpfueller@gmail.com for more information. She will have a list of needs soon

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

10/1	Jim Mullen	🎂
10/1	Laurie Anderson	🎂
10/2	Alyson Storrs	🎂
10/4	Lance Melrose	🎂
10/7	Aubrey Caruso	🎂
10/11	Carla Shafer	🎂
10/12	Christian Beaty	🎂
10/13	Don Hoyt	🎂
10/24	Sean Keyes	🎂
10/24	Claude Hill	🎂
10/26	Peter Burkland	🎂
10/27	Robin Crandall	🎂
10/31	Selina Baker	🎂



Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

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

ST. JAMES CALENDAR

Please contact your Committee Chairperson or Group Coordinator to find out more about current offerings and times. Gathering room and time may shift when Whatcom County enters Phase 3.

→ PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

AA Fairhaven Group
AA Men's Book Study Group
AA SOS Men's Group
Bellingham Com. Chorus
Bellingham Ukulele Group
Boy Scouts Troop 7
Happy Hour Al-Anon
Overeaters Anonymous
St. James Fitness
Linda's Tai Chi
WA Gender Alliance
Weavers Guild
Yoga
You Are Not Alone (YANA)

Bayside Co-op Preschool
Hawthorne Learning Solutions
Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County



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