

REMAINING RESILIENT



We all recognize that this year has been filled with unexpected and emerging challenges. We realize that our nation is in a time of upheaval and (hopefully) rediscovering the core truths that bind us together as kin. As we enter into November, we must foster spaces for hope and remain resilient.

Over the last couple of years, I have had the privilege to participate and support the work of The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology's Resilient Leaders Project. I participated in the project's pilot cohort and since have been interviewed regarding how I practice resilience in ministry. My deep hope is that by becoming aware of ways to "bounce back" and avoid burnout, I can establish myself in sustainable ministry to our church in the long run.

We need to be resilient at this moment. We need to be able to sustain through such a difficult season. So, how does this happen? In the Resilient Leaders Project, they focus on three core ways to build and bolster a posture of resiliency in our daily life and work.

The first way we do this is to take account of the People who support us. Who are the allies, partners, and wise companions in our lives who we lean on? Who are the people you go to when you need support? Friends, family, significant others, professionals like therapists or doctors? When we take stock of all of these people who provide support, we begin to recognize and find gratitude for the supports we have and identify sections of our life that may need more help. I hope you would count your St. James Presbyterian Church family as a part of that support structure that sustains you.

The second piece in fostering resiliency is establishing Practices that ground us and remind us who we are. For me, resiliency practices include exercise (walking and running), making music, doing things with my hands (baking bread, working in the yard), laughter, and prayer. These resiliency practices are routines we can return to when we need support when the stress levels rise, and we begin to lose our way. I wonder what practices you employ to foster resiliency? In this season of distancing from our in-person church community, I know the practice of fellowship and phone calls to one another has been vital in sustaining many of you. I pray that we will continue to be a faith community that puts our life in Christ into practice through prayer, support, and witness in all we do.

Finally, resiliency grows out of having clarity of Purpose. Without purpose, we become untethered and blow about in the wind. But with purpose, we can set a clear course and pursue it. Purpose becomes our "North Star," the destination to which we orient our hearts. For me, a primary purpose in my life is to be a pastor who guides followers of Jesus into knowing more deeply that they are beloved, that their voice matters, and that they can be formed more fully unto God's way through their life's journey. Life without a clear purpose can be difficult and disheartening. I wonder: have you found the ability to clarify your purpose a bit more in this season? I know many of us have taken stock of what is important to us. If you took a moment, how would you define your purpose today?

We need resiliency. We do not know how long we will be facing this global pandemic. The calls for racial justice will demand our hearts be present and engaged. This year's election cycle, regardless of the way it ends, has required much of our hearts and minds, sapping us of energy and hope regarding some of our most vital national institutions. We must foster resiliency to sustain for the long term.

Thankfully, this is what the people of God do. This is what the church has been about for over 2000 years. We grow, adapt, support, find purpose, and live alongside one another. Today remember: we are in this together. Finally, remember that we serve the Risen and Resurrected Lord: the greatest example of resiliency is Christ's resurrection and the resurrection life Christ offers to us.

In Christ's resurrection love,

Rev. Seth Thomas

PS: The Resilient Leaders Project has focused heavily on gathering data regarding what makes for sustainable ministry. If you're curious to read some of the reporting on how this happens, check it out here:

<https://theseattleschool.edu/programs/certificate-resilient-service/resources-research/>

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - Stewarding Our Resources

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I write to you full of gratitude for the ways you all have continued to share your resources during 2020. Thanks to your sustained giving, St. James has been able to uphold commitments we made last fall to our congregation, our staff, the stewardship of our building, and the missions and social actions we support. When the Finance Committee and Elders worked together a year ago to prepare and adopt this year's budget we had no idea what was to come. While in September our expenses were greater than our income, overall we still have a YTD excess of over \$8,000 in our General Operating Budget. The therapist in me sees this in part as a result of trust - trust in God and trust in one another to do what needs to be done in difficult times. This level of trust, along with the collective wisdom of our congregation, makes me excited for what is to come in 2021.



If you are still considering your 2021 pledge to St. James, it is not too late! Gifts can be made to St. James Presbyterian Church, 910 14th Street, Bellingham, WA 98225. You can also give online, at www.saintjames.org/respond/stewardship. If you have questions, contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

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

Income/Expenses As of 9-30-2020	SEPTEMBER ACTUAL	SEPTEMBER BUDGET	YR TO DATE ACTUAL	YR TO DATE BUDGET
Income	\$17,349	\$20,327	\$180,153	\$190,503
Expenses	\$21,088	\$23,603	\$172,003	\$195,838

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

- 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>

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<https://www.loom.com/share/5aea350026204a9cb3c955029dafbdd3>

- 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

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Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries. It is hard to believe that we are already into November and rapidly approaching Advent and a new year. As our days are getting wetter, darker, and colder I hope you are all finding some joy and comfort in your families and especially in the children in your lives. While these darkening days can be tough on us we have to remember that they are also tough on kids. Whether they are your kids, your grandkids, or just your friends, I encourage you to read the article below: FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING FOR CHILDREN By Jane Born.



We are continuing on with our **Godly Play** curriculum and I am excited by having some parent involvement in the telling of our stories. Families should check their emails for activities that accompany the stories. If you need a paper copy please let me know, I would be happy to mail them. Any pictures of the activities or answers to the Wondering Questions can be sent to me at tracy@saintjamespres.org.

Looking forward, the Youth Group will once again be participating in the **Holiday Joy/Angel Tree** project through Interfaith, look for more information to follow about how you can help make Christmas a little brighter for some of the children in our community.

We will be sending Advent packets home that will contain some **Godly Play** activities, some family Advent activities, stickers, books, and more. Please let me know if you would like to receive a package. Although we won't be able to be together as we have been in past Advent seasons, I hope we can share some of the same activities and feel like we are together.

Godly Play for November:

Godly Play: The 10 Best Ways In this story we continue to witness God's elusive presence with God's People on 3 occasions at Mt. Sinai: First in the burning bush when God revealed to Moses the name of God. Second, when God gave the Ten Commandments to the people through Moses. Third, when, after breaking the tablet in anger, Moses climbed up to Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments a second time.

- **November 8th: The Ark and the Tent**

Moses experienced God's presence on Mt. Sinai, but also in the tent of meeting. In addition, God's presence was in—or more likely seated on—a throne above the ark of YHWH (a box or chest that contained at least the tablets of the commandments, and possibly the rod of Aaron and a vessel of manna). This story describes how the two traditions of the tent and the ark came together in the tabernacle.

- **November 15th: The Ark and the Temple**

In this story, we see a continuation of the travels the tablets of the commandments took. We see a new way of thinking for the people of God in regard to the experience of God's presence.

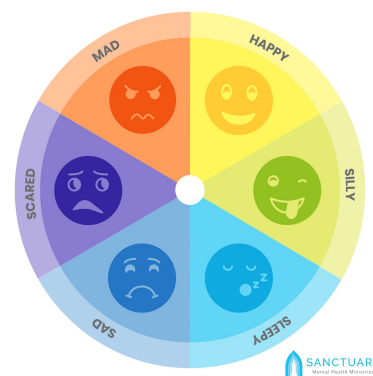
- **November 22th: The Exile and Return**

In this story, the Babylonians capture Jerusalem and take God's People into exile. Even though this journey is forced upon them, they make an astonishing discovery: God is not just in one place, in the temple in Jerusalem, but also in a foreign and strange land. God's presence is not here or there, but everywhere, waiting. To be found. To find us.

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING FOR CHILDREN

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How can we help the children in our lives cultivate mental and emotional resilience in the face of a global health crisis? This is the question facing parents, caregivers, and teachers everywhere. We may not have significant data regarding the impact of COVID-19 on minors yet, but the reports trickling in are cause for concern. Dr. Spinks-Franklin—a developmental-behavioral pediatrician—recently spoke with the New York Times and shared that “parents are reporting an increase in anxiety levels for children who were already kind of anxious in their temperament, and kids who previously had not had anxiety have developed anxious behaviors.” She also reported seeing an increase in children struggling with fear of germs, fear of people, sleep, and depression.



This may sound overwhelming, but there is also good news. We do not need to be doctors, mental health professionals, or “super” Christians in order to promote mental health and wellbeing in our families and communities. In fact, there are simple practices that can make a big difference in children’s lives.

Let’s talk about the five ways to wellbeing. In 2008, a British think-tank was asked to survey a vast amount of literature in the field of positive psychology and identify the key themes that contributed to a person’s ability to “feel good” and “function well” in life. They found that much of the existing research fit into a few simple categories, which they termed the five ways to wellbeing. Since then, many other studies have validated these categories and demonstrated the effectiveness of the five ways—including several studies that specifically look at the positive impact of the five ways on children’s mental health.

Before we take a closer look at each of the five ways to wellbeing and how they can be incorporated into homes or classrooms, let’s address the question that comes up for most Christians when reading the results of secular research: Where is God in all of this?

Augustine was a fourth-century bishop and one of the greatest thinkers, writers, and pastors in the history of Christianity. He once said that all truth is God’s truth. (Well, we’re paraphrasing here; his actual quote is much longer!) Augustine was deeply committed to the idea of God’s sovereignty over creation. He was not surprised when secular scientists and philosophers proclaimed truths about the world—after all, they were simply discovering what God had originally designed—and he was even willing to embrace those truths to the degree that they revealed God’s glory as the Creator.

So what do the five ways to wellbeing reveal about God, and about us as his image-bearers? If we wanted to summarize, we could say the following: God has created us to grow and develop our minds (LEARN), hearts (TAKE NOTICE), bodies (BE ACTIVE), and relationships (CONNECT), and he has called us to bless others by sharing the fruit of this growth generously (GIVE).

Here are the five ways to wellbeing, then—five simple practices that can help the children in our lives feel good and function well. We’ve listed a few ideas for how to engage in these practices with kids, but feel free to take small steps, be creative, and discover what works in your context. This may mean prioritizing your own mental health! After all, one of the primary ways children learn is by observing the adults around them. If we are making room for the five ways to wellbeing in our own lives, then we can organically invite children into these practices.



LEARN

When children encounter new information or learn new skills, their curiosity and confidence increase.

While school is certainly an important avenue for education, there are many ways to incorporate learning into everyday life. Try asking children to participate in cooking different meals from around the world. Go on a virtual museum tour together, or check out the live cams from a zoo or nature reserve. Enroll children in lessons to learn a musical instrument or a foreign language. Memorize a poem together, or help them pick up a new hobby like knitting or fishing. Most importantly, give them lots of time for creative play. This is one of the primary ways that children explore the world, and research suggests it constitutes an additional and unique way to wellbeing.



TAKE NOTICE

Learning to recognize emotions is an important part of children’s social and emotional development.

Additionally, giving children permission to name and express their emotions teaches them not to be afraid of their feelings. Even supposedly “bad” feelings can be shared, and often we feel a little better after someone listens to us with kindness. A feelings wheel is a great tool to help children begin noticing and naming their emotions, and it can open up important conversations.



BE ACTIVE

Experts recommend that children engage in “60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.”

Going on a family bike ride, taking part in team sports, or signing up for lessons like swimming or gymnastics are easy ways to get kids moving. If sports and classes aren’t available in your area due to health guidelines, there are also fun, free online videos that encourage children to be active. P.E. with Joe and GoNoodle are both great channels that introduce children to exercise. And don’t underestimate the value of a game of tag, a living room dance party, or a DIY obstacle course!



CONNECT

As we head into the seventh month of physical distancing, we are more aware than ever of the need for relational connection!

This need is actually one of the most important ways that we reflect the image of God. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist in an eternal relationship, so we are created to be connected with God and with one another. Of course, connecting may look a little different at the moment. If children are missing significant adults, such as grandparents, teachers, aunts, and uncles, or even beloved babysitters, consider arranging an outdoor gathering, like a picnic or barbeque. For younger kids who struggle to connect with adults or friends online, try introducing a few interactive games like Simon Says or a scavenger hunt during video calls. (This website has some great ideas.) Children can also make cards to send to loved ones or bake goodies to share with neighbors and classmates. Finally, don’t forget the importance of connecting with God. Pray with the children in your life, read the Bible with them, and encourage them to ask questions about their faith.



GIVE

Serving and sharing are additional ways that we reflect the image of God (Matthew 7:9-11). It may take some creativity, but it is possible to help even young kids practice giving.

We can encourage the gift of kind words by starting a compliments club and challenging children to compliment one person each day. We can help children sort through outgrown clothes and toys to donate. We can ask children to create artwork and cards for elderly or sick community members. And we can remind children that a well-timed smile, hug, or “thank you” is a gift that warms the heart of any tired parent or caregiver!

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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 Condrey
Finance & Stewardship: Lindsay Anderson
Membership & Congregation Life: Susan Diemont-Conwell
Mission & Social Action: Carol Dellecker
Nominating: Jenny Sue LeSchander & Sarah Condrey
Personnel: Faye Hill
Trustees: Sarah Condrey, 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 a 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

ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB IN NOVEMBER

ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB IN NOVEMBER

St. James Book Club is currently reading Rebecca Skloot's "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks", a fascinating and moving story of medicine and family, of how life is sustained in laboratories and in memory.

We will be meeting Monday evening November 16th @ 7:00. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link.



PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

11/2	Trevor Murphy	👑
11/3	Irene Rome	👑
11/5	Pete Conwell	👑
11/7	Jean Seater	👑
11/11	David Seater	👑
11/12	Julie Keys	👑
11/13	Patricia Harris	👑
11/14	Bob and Irene Rome	❤️
11/19	Nancy Wagar	👑
11/22	Margaret deMaine	👑
11/22	Marilyn Madden	👑
11/25	Marie Mellinger	👑
11/27	Wendy Crandall	👑
11/29	Craig Keys	👑
11/30	Cedric Engels	👑

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 (in session)
- Hawthorne Learning Solutions (in session)
- Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County (in office)



Deadlines for church publications
 Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm
 Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm
 Monthly "The Pulse": the 20th, 2:00pm

Issues from 2015-2020 of c@Ū~|•^ are available to view and download at the St. James website. Please visit

<https://saintjamespres.org/connect/pulse-newsletter/>

