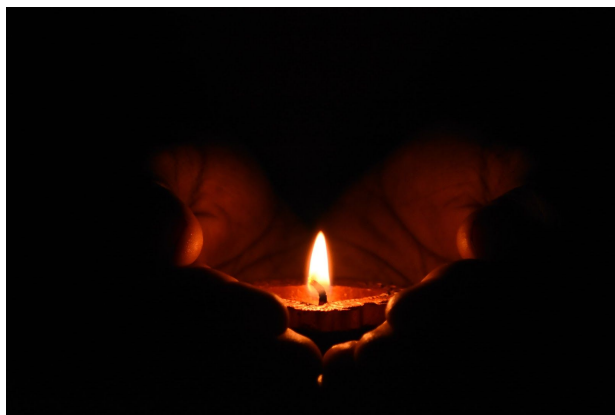


## THE WEARY WORLD REJOICES



What's that, you say? Are you tired? Are you weary? Let's not play games — 2020 has been one of the more challenging years in our lifetimes. No matter how you spin it, we have gone through a lot and are tired. And so we enter into the season of Advent worn down and longing for hope more than we might usually.

What do we do? We put up lights, we decorate the tree. We send and receive Christmas cards. And we turn our eyes and hearts to the Nativity, where the manger lays empty, and we wait. We wait for the coming of the Christ child, the one who we hope so deeply will bring about a new way, a rise of justice, a bit of relief, and the promise of salvation from our weariness.

This Advent season, we will practice the movements of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love in our "at home, at distant" worshipping life. My hope

would be that we start to hear the words of Christ's promised coming as all the more vital to our survival and sustenance this year.

Over the four weeks of Advent, our worshipping life will revolve around this theme: "The Weary World Rejoices!" Drawn from lyrics of the Frenchman Placide Clappeau's "O Holy Night," our Sunday services will look at how a weary world can possibly rejoice! How can such a thing happen? It starts by embracing the promise of "a thrill of hope." It comes into greater fullness as "the soul (feels) it's worth." The joy continues as we are "led by the light of faith" into the anointing of God's presence in our lives. And we experience the love of God that awakens us up so that "all within us praises Christ's holy name!" This progression is one of rising, awakening, light dawning in a way that breaks through the weariness and shows us new life. The power of our Christian witness is that we rejoice despite the darkness, facing the pain and suffering, in protest against injustices we see all around, and in the hope that the weariness and sorrow only last for a moment, but the joy of Christ's love comes in the morning. I invite you to embrace the difference of this season of Advent as an opportunity to experience this hope of Christ again, for the first time.

Much of our church's Advent practices usually revolve around festivities in our building, music in the sanctuary, lighting candles, making wreaths, children running around with stomachs full of too much gingerbread. This year will be different. Perhaps out of the weariness, we can instead find a quieter, softer way to experience the dawning of Christ's light at home. A lit candle, a beloved piece of music on the stereo, a Zoom call with a friend we miss dearly. Maybe the awakening will come by bundling up with our closest people, our quarantine crew, and going for a walk in the December stillness. Or perhaps you'll be ambitious and sing as you walk! (You know, singing outside is totally allowed during the COVID-19 phases). How will you embrace this season of weariness? In closing, I want to offer a straightforward encouragement and call: If you are lonely, if you feel too tired to carry on, please know that you have a community with your church family that loves you and wants to support you. Please let me know ([pastor@saintjamespres.org](mailto:pastor@saintjamespres.org) or 360-303-0898). Please reach out to a friend. And know that while this is a lonely time, the Presence of the one who brings light out of darkness walks with you, holds you, and will sustain you. For this, we are grateful.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Seth Thomas

## FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - Stewardship Campaign Update

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

Thank you to everyone who has pledged towards our 2021 Stewardship Campaign. Currently, we have received \$148,870 in pledges, which is about 70% of our 2021 goal. As you are able, the finance committee encourages you to complete a pledge form on behalf of your household. By making this commitment, you help the Session and Finance Committee plan our giving and programming for the year ahead.

Stewardship Is...



Love in Action

To learn more about pledging and giving, contact please contact Marina McLeod, [stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com](mailto:stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com) or visit [www.saintjamespres.org/respond/stewardship](http://www.saintjamespres.org/respond/stewardship).

We are grateful for all the ways this community gives of their time, talent, and resources. Your gifts and your presence help further God's kingdom work in immeasurable ways.

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

Income/Expenses As of 10-31-2020	OCTOBER ACTUAL	OCTOBER BUDGET	YR TO DATE ACTUAL	YR TO DATE BUDGET
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$17,325</b>	<b>\$19,844</b>	<b>\$197,478</b>	<b>\$210,347</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$17,303</b>	<b>\$21,091</b>	<b>\$189,307</b>	<b>\$216,930</b>

**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](mailto:stjamestreasurer@gmail.com)

## CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

By Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries! What a busy month we had preparing for Advent! It will be a very different season than in the past, but we are hoping that we can still connect, even if not physically.

I want to give a big thank you to our youth group for working hard on a couple of projects! They sent encouraging postcards to members of St. James and also helped with our **Holiday Joy** program. This year we were able to help 10 children have a little bit brighter Holiday. Thanks to everyone who helped and donated to the **Holiday Joy** program.

**Bags of Advent** materials were distributed to our kids last week with some different Advent, Godly Play, and Illustrated Ministry activities as well as some sweet treats. I encourage families to send photos or videos of their children participating in some of the activities. We will also continue our tradition of holding a change drive for **Family Promise**. We will let you know how we will collect the money after Advent. If anyone is interested in participating in the change drive and you didn't receive an Advent bag please let me know.

During Advent, we hope you will join us for a book study of **Kathy Escobar's A Weary World**. During the holidays, so many of us can suffer from all sorts of reasons. The magnitude of our weary world weighs on our hearts and minds. We wrestle with chronic pain, broken relationships, shattered dreams, fragile faith, and unexpected losses. Our grief and sorrow feel particularly acute when compared to the festivity and joy everyone else seems to be feeling. *In A Weary World*, Escobar provides daily and weekly reflections paired with prayers and practices to honor our struggles during the holidays.

We will be meeting on Sunday mornings at 9:00 beginning on November 29th. Use the regular Sunday worship service zoom link. If you are interested in purchasing a book use the following link:

<https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/0664266932/a-weary-world.aspx>

Wishing you all a blessed Advent season. I miss you all, especially during this particular time. Let me know if you need anything or have any questions!

### Godly Play schedule for December:

November 29th: 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 6th: 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 13th: 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 20th: 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 27th: Work Day

## PCUSA SPECIAL OFFERING: CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

*A message from Carol Dellecker and the PCUSA*

“Many hands make light work.”  
 “Teamwork makes the dream work.”  
 “If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.”

There are lots of ways to say it — but working together really does make bigger and better things possible. And, lots of times, working together makes it more fun, too. In fact, there are times made better just by our ability to be together, to be with one another.

That is something that really rings true, doesn't it? Being together. During these past months, many of us weren't able to be together in person. We have always been together in spirit and in faith. But we missed seeing each other. We missed seeing faces we love — up close and personal. But that doesn't mean we haven't been together. And we definitely have not been alone.

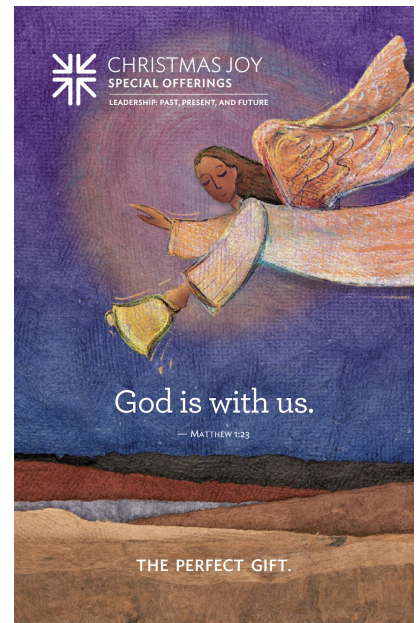
There is a word that comes up a lot during this season we call Advent in the Church, and it points to the same sentiment, but about God: “Emmanuel.” Emmanuel means “God is with us,” and, in Jesus, we Christians claim that God took on human form to be with us. “God is with us” is more than just saying God is along for the ride. It states God values togetherness and relationship with us, leading us to value togetherness and relationship with one another. When we are all together as we are today — and even when we are apart.

The Christmas Joy Offering is one way we join together as Presbyterians from around the country. We do this to meet the needs of vulnerable people we might not be able to meet as individuals or as single congregations. We might not be able to meet face to face with those who need the support that our gifts provide, but we are very much still together.

The gifts we share connect us. They also change lives. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we and others support church workers and their families who experience critical financial needs through help from the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. We connect with the young people attending Stillman College, Presbyterian Pan American School, and the Menaul School, supporting the education and leadership development for students of color, who will soon be leaders in our Church and in the world.

St. James Presbyterian participates in four PCUSA special offerings during the year. The final one for 2020, the Christmas Joy Offering, will be taken on Sunday, Dec. 13. Your Mission and Social Action committee ask that you please consider contributing to this worthy cause. You can contribute to this offering by sending your check to the church on or before Dec. 20 with Christmas Joy Offering in the memo line, or by using the green GIVING link on the St. James website and selecting Christmas Joy Offering in the pull-down menu.

“God is with us.” All the time. During this season of Advent, as we approach Christmas, thank you for sharing those lessons and these truths, through your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering.





## GREEN ACTION TEAM SHARING

By Glory Johnson

In the PNW we can take pictures of such beauty, but we can easily look past the ugliness, like the destruction of the fires this year. The destruction is leaving the earth wounded. How do you pray about the climate crisis? Did you taste the ash from the fires knowing it held the death of tree-beings once alive? The GAT invites you to these encouraging education opportunities related to climate justice and environmental awareness:

**David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet 2020** Netflix documentary

**My Octopus Teacher:** 2020 Netflix documentary directed by Pippa Ehrlich and James Reed

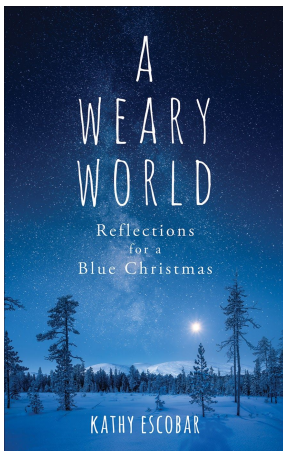
**Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*** book (2013) and the **Robin Wall Kimmerer Talk** YouTube video <https://youtu.be/ZpLBGK9sYEQ> about decolonizing education and holistic understanding of the land.

Poem by **Mary Oliver**, "Lead"

**Connecting Faith, Climate, and Justice – Tuesday, 12/8/2020, 4:00 PM.** Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) Conversation; Multifaith Network for Climate Justice (MNCJ) co-sponsored free event: registration online required: <https://secure.ucsusa.org/onlineactions/XZILm3qCskCkTIUtbnrFwA2>



## NEW BOOK FOR THE SUNDAY MORNING BOOK STUDY



Join us for an Advent book study of Kathy Escobar's *A Weary World*. During the holidays, so many of us can suffer for all kinds of reasons. The magnitude of our weary world weighs on our hearts and minds. We wrestle with chronic pain, broken relationships, shattered dreams, fragile faith, and unexpected losses. Our grief and sorrow feel particularly acute when compared to the festivity and joy everyone else seems to be feeling.

In *A Weary World*, Escobar provides daily and weekly reflections paired with prayers and practices to honor our struggles during the holidays.

We will be meeting on Sunday mornings at 9:00 beginning on November 29th. Use the regular Sunday worship service zoom link. If you are interested in purchasing a book use the following link: <https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/0664266932/a-weary-world.aspx>

<i>December</i>									
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat			
		1	2	3	4	5			1. Giving Tuesday
									4. National Cookie Day
									10. Hanukkah Begins
6	7	8	9	10	11	12			19. Super Saturday
13	14	15	16	17	18	19			21. First Day of Winter
20	21	22	23	24	25	26			25. Christmas Day
27	28	29	30	31					31. New Year's Eve

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB IN DECEMBER

St. James Book Club is currently reading *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Never Let Me Go* breaks through the boundaries of the literary novel. It is a gripping mystery, a beautiful love story, and also a scathing critique of human arrogance and a moral examination of how we treat the vulnerable and different in our society.

We will be meeting Monday evening December 21st @ 7:00. Email [tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org) for the Zoom link.

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

12/3	Pastor Seth Thomas	🎂
12/4	Cameron Aita	🎂
12/5	Wayne and Linda Landis	💖
12/7	Gale Pfueller	🎂
12/9	Spencer Bravener	🎂
12/13	Dick Carr	🎂
12/15	Alia Lynnae Bowers	🎂
12/16	Jill Steel Dobson	🎂
12/27	Shannon Laws	🎂
12/31	Katy Read	🎂



### 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  
 St. James Yoga  
 Linda's Tai Chi  
 WA Gender Alliance  
 Weavers Guild  
 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





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