

A DIFFERENT AND FAMILIAR LENT



The season of Lent begins on February 17th this year, with Ash Wednesday. With the marking of ashes, we embark on a 40-day journey toward the cross, which culminates in Good Friday's remembrance, the silence of Holy Saturday, and the joyous celebration of Easter Sunday on April 4. The Lenten journey is a central part of practicing the Christian year, as it roots us in the story of Jesus and his outpouring of love for humanity.

This year, as with everything, we will practice the Lenten journey differently. Different has become familiar. And with this difference, we sense an invitation to adapt and alter how we practice the familiar things to deepen their meaning while maintaining their familiarity and approachability.

For St. James Presbyterian, the Lenten season will take on a mixture of familiar and different. We plan to continue our new tradition of fellowshipping with our partner Bellingham Presbyterian churches as we practice Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday together. We plan to host Ash Wednesday again this year but in an online format. Please join us for an online service on February 17 at 7 pm, using the Zoom, Facebook Live, and church website formats you are familiar with for our Sunday morning gatherings.

During the Lenten season, our congregation will be focusing on the practice of The Examen as a way to root us each week. The Examen, a holy review of the day/week/month/year, is a practice that invites us to respond to God's presence in our lives and pray for discernment on how God is inviting us into deeper relationships. Developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, this ancient practice involves reviewing a recent time and exploring how God has manifested as Presence and Absence in each moment. It is an opportunity to explore places in our daily routine where we sense God drawing us to pray, serve, and respond in action. This past year has afforded many of us with more time to ask the question: "where is God?" We hope that by building in a rhythm of practicing the Examen each week together, we can begin to learn how this practice enhances our daily connections with God's Spirit and helps us pay a bit more attention to God's voice.

Each week, we will host an online gathering where we will walk through The Examen. These gatherings will be hosted by me (Pastor Seth), Tracy Caruso, and Glory Johnson. Each week, we will build in spaces to pause and review how we have encountered God's Presence and pray for illumination to see God more clearly in the days ahead. Practiced over the six weeks of Lent, the hope is that we build this in as a more frequent routine of listening to God's voice.

We will be creating "Lent Kits" for the congregation to enhance your "at home" practice this year. These kits will be available for pickup at the church on Ash Wednesday, February 17, and Sunday, February 20. If you would like a kit delivered to your home, instead, please contact the church office (office@saintjamespres.org or 360-733-1325).

While this year will be different, we pray that journeying through the familiar story of Jesus' road to and beyond the cross will spark moments of hope and resurrection power that conquers all.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Seth Thomas

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - January 2021

Planning for Our Future

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair



In 2020, we celebrated the Sanctuary Refresh Project (we cannot wait for you all to see it in person!). *Did you know that we were able to pay for this project entirely without a loan or collecting additional donations from our congregation?* What a blessing! This project was funded through a **designated gift** and a portion of the interest earned from our **facilities endowment**.

This year, our Finance Committee, Building & Grounds Committee, Session, and our church treasurer have been working on a plan to utilize the ongoing interest earned from the facilities endowment to fund ongoing building maintenance and enhancements. This **Ten-Year Capital Vision** will include *enhancements* to security, technology, energy efficiency, environmental sustainability, ADA accessibility, etc., as well as ongoing *maintenance*, such as updates to our exterior siding, parking, and roofing.

Thanks to a history of faithful giving, St. James was able to create a series of endowment funds years ago. These funds are managed by the Presbyterian Foundation. I am grateful to be able to collaborate with our committee members and session to steward this and all of our financial resources with prayer, intention, and wisdom.

For any questions related to giving - including pledges, general offering, endowment giving, memorials, or designated gifts you may contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

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

Income/Expenses As of 12-31-2020	DECEMBER ACTUAL	DECEMBER BUDGET	ANNUAL ACTUAL	ANNUAL BUDGET
Income	\$20,095	\$23,108	\$234,666	\$253,990
Expenses	\$23,648	\$23,110	\$231,637	\$259,779

While we are worshipping at home during this time you can 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! With 2020 firmly behind us we are looking forward to possibly being able to get back into some sense of normalcy for 2021.

A big thank you to all the children and families who participated in the change drive we held during Advent. The kids raised over \$40 to help support Family Promise!

Our Youth group continues to meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:15. We are continuing with our Simple Sunday's curriculum on the 2nd Tuesday and games and social hour on the 4th Tuesday. Anyone in Middle or High School is welcome to attend. Email Tracy for the zoom link.

This month, beginning February 7th at 9:00, we hope you will join us as Glory Johnson leads us through a study of Resmaa Menaken's *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending of Hearts and Bodies*. Join the main worship service zoom link. Let Seth or Tracy know if you are interested in joining us and need a copy.

Godly Play in February will include a couple of parables and then we will be moving into Lent and then our Faces of Easter series. I will continue sending out the parent pages to each story. If you need a hard copy mailed to you, please let me know. It is hard to believe that I will be recording these again as this is where we began our recordings last year. Godly Play is meant to be a 3-year cycle and so it is normal for children to hear the same stories repeated each year. For children, it is a chance to hear the story after a year of growth and maturing and see what else they can get out of it. I encourage the adults who are hearing the stories over zoom or Facebook to consider them in that same way and see what new feelings, expressions, and understandings you find after a year of Covid.

As always if you have any questions or need anything, please don't hesitate to contact me! I continue to miss seeing our St. James kids and can't wait until we can be together again.

Godly Play schedule for February

February 7th - The Parable of the Mustard Seed. Jerome Berryman says that "it is important for children to encounter parables during childhood so they can develop the ability to hear with their own ears what Jesus was communicating when he spoke in parables." Our parable boxes use 2-dimensional materials to help reiterate that these are Jesus's words and stories to us. The wondering questions used for parable lessons are designed to encourage children to see that there are deeper meanings in the parables than what they might initially encounter.

February 14th - The Parable of the Great Pearl. Jerome Berryman says that "it is important for children to encounter parables during childhood so they can develop the ability to hear with their own ears what Jesus was communicating when he spoke in parables." Our parable boxes use 2-dimensional materials to help reiterate that these are Jesus's words and stories to us. The wondering questions used for parable lessons are designed to encourage children to see that there are deeper meanings in the parables than what they might initially encounter.

February 21st - The Mystery of Easter. Lent is the season when we prepare for Easter. This lesson gives an introduction to the relationship of Lent to the Mystery of Easter as well as how Easter overflows into the season of Easter.

February 28th - Faces of Easter I. Lent is the season we prepare for Easter. These lessons help children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Easter. We move toward the Mystery by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. This week's lesson focuses on the face of Christ as a newborn child.

Mark Your Calendar! Pickup for Lent Materials.

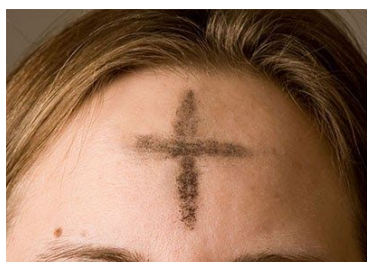
A message from Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director

We have put together some materials and treats for everyone in our St. James family to use during the Lenten Season. We will be having a pick up day on **Wednesday, February 17th (Ash Wednesday)**, and on **Sunday, February 20th** for folks to drive-thru and grab a bag of materials. We have also put together separate bags for the children and those will be available then as well. Times for pick ups will be announced closer to the date. If you will not be able to pick up materials for yourself, please let us know and we will make sure they are delivered.



ASH WEDNESDAY AND DAILY READINGS

From the PCUSA Missions Agency



Ash Wednesday, February 17th, begins the season of Lent with a public act of confession and contrition. Acknowledging that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, we stand in solidarity as fellow creatures before our Creator, acutely aware of our mortality. In the face of our transience, we pledge ourselves anew to live unto God's Word in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that remains forever.

Historically, Ash Wednesday was a time when penitents were presented for church discipline during Lent, culminating in reconciliation on Maundy Thursday. Ash

Wednesday is also the occasion when would-be disciples of Christ known as catechumens were enrolled in the catechumenate, a special time of learning the basics of the faith in preparation for baptism on Easter Sunday or during the Easter Vigil. In some traditions, Ash Wednesday is a fast day, beginning the Lenten time of fasting and preparation for the Great Three Days that culminate in Easter. [PCUSA Season of Lent Reading Guide](#)

Big Thank You to St. James Volunteers

By Gretchen Pfueller, gmpfueller@gmail.com

THANK YOU to the St. James volunteers who prepared meals on MLK Day of Service and throughout the week of our FAMILY PROMISE support commitment. Mom and the kids were very excited to see the meals arrive and most appreciative.

Currently, FP families are living in Interfaith Coalition housing during this time of Covid-19. However, a very generous donation to Interfaith Coalition has inspired a new vision. Interfaith Coalition is currently seeking a large home or suitable building that could house five families, offices, a daycare, and a learning center. If you know of any such spaces please let our Pastor Seth or our St. James Office Administrator, Shannon, know and they can pass along the good news.



INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

February Update on Habitat for Humanity

By Ray Dellecker, rdellecker@gmail.com

One of St. James' community partners is Habitat for Humanity which builds affordable owner-occupied housing throughout Whatcom County. Our church supports Habitat with a significant financial contribution, onsite volunteering (when Covid restrictions are lifted), and through donations to and purchases from the Habitat Store. Each Habitat family performs 500 hours of sweat equity on their future home (or someone else's) before moving in and assuming responsibility for their zero-interest Mortgage.

The Telegraph Townhomes project is an attractive and affordable community being developed in partnership with the Kulshan Community Land Trust. The first eight of an eventual 52 townhomes are now complete, and the homeowners will move in as soon as Occupancy Certificates are obtained. To help Telegraph families with their budgets, the townhomes are highly energy-efficient, including community solar energy.



Habitat has a busy year ahead, too, intending to build four more townhouses this year at Telegraph as well as a single-family home in Sudden Valley. We are hoping that as the Covid crisis eases, there will be opportunities for volunteers at construction sites, and we will keep you posted.

Habitat's store on Cornwall Avenue remains open during Covid times for donations and shopping. Your donation of gently used furniture, appliances, and building materials helps provide an important source of operating revenue to the organization. Please check Habitat's website for donation guidelines and contact information.

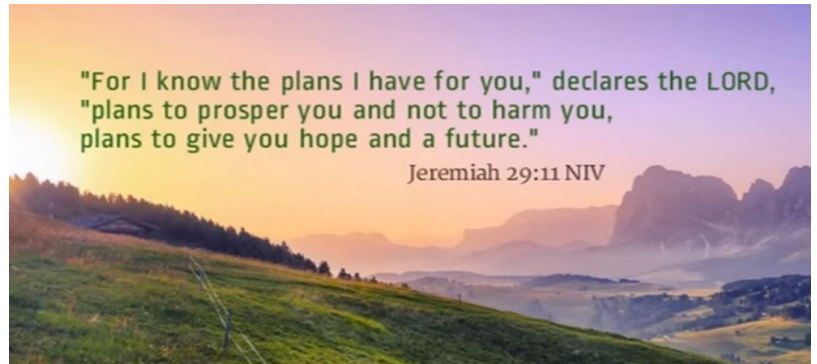
ST. JAMES STAFF IS AT YOUR SERVICE

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 OF ST. JAMES

Lindsay Anderson
Tess Bowers
Aaron Caruso
Sarah Condreay
Carol Dellecker
Susan Diemont-Conwell
Faye Hill
Jenny Sue LeSchander
Nebiyu Tesfa



1st Lent Sunday, February 21st

Special thanks to Mark Beaty who is ending his term of service on Session.



DEACONS

Deacons Parish 1	Merry Thomas, Alice Bailey
Deacons Parish 2	Jean & Rick Seater
Deacons Parish 3	Julie Keys, Carla Shafer
Deacons Parish 4	Valerie McBeth, Adam Beaty
Deacons Parish 5	Pam Gibson, Adam Beaty
Deacons Parish 6	Kirsten Oliver, Milt Schayes

Thank you to Marlene Amman who has finished her term on our Board of Deacons

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:

Tuesday 9:00am - 12:00pm

Thursday 9:00am - 2:00pm

Friday 9:00am - 2:00pm

Enter via the office door on 14th Street, sign in at the temperature station

UPCOMING EVENTS

ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB IN FEBRUARY

St. James Book Club is currently reading Nichole Chung's *All You Can Ever Know*.

"Chung's memoir is more than a thoughtful consideration of race and heritage in America. It is the story of sisters finding each other, overcoming bureaucracy, abuse, separation, and time."

—The New Yorker.

We will be meeting Monday evening February 15th @ 7:00. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link.

SUNDAY BOOK STUDY FOR FEBRUARY

Join us beginning February 7th at 9:30 for a study of Resmaa Menaken's *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending of Hearts and Bodies*. Join the main worship service zoom link. Let Seth or Tracy know if you are interested in joining us and need a copy.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

2/2	Louise Hardin	🎂
2/5	Janet Oakley	🎂
2/12	Tim Crandall	🎂
2/18	John Dobbie	🎂
2/20	Randy Bowers	🎂
2/22	Gail Haines	🎂
2/23	Jim Gresham	🎂
2/26	Ralph Rinne	🎂
2/27	Kay Carr	🎂
2/28	Nancy Peck	🎂
2/29	Marina McLeod	🎂



Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

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

ST. JAMES CALENDAR

Until there is a vaccine that is widely available and widely used, the Reopening Task Force will remain in place throughout all phases of reopening. The church guidelines and procedures will be updated as the state, local and presbytery recommendations and guidance evolve.

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)



Presidents Day, February 15th

Photo: kiplinger.com



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