

June Update - How's the Thomas Family Doing?

This month, as the academic year ends, I feel like it's an excellent opportunity to share a few little updates on how the Thomas family is doing these days. Many of you often ask for updates on our little family, so here you go! Enjoy!

On Friday, May 28, Asher graduates from kindergarten! It's amazing that our son, who came with Stacy and me to our first gatherings at St. James when he was just 2 years old, is now getting ready to start first grade at Roosevelt Elementary School. He had a great experience with kindergarten this year, continuing on at Birchwood Christian School, housed at Cordata Presbyterian Church. We are so grateful for the group of peers he remained connected with during this pandemic season. His reading is taking off, his writing and drawing becoming both more precise and more epic by the day, and his absolute love of mathematics continues to grow. Most recent Asher amazingness: "Dad, give me a challenge problem, you know, a TIMES one, like 2×6 ." We are so proud!

This month, Stacy wraps up another challenging year as Executive Director of Teaching and Learning for Blaine School District. This past academic year has been anything but ordinary, calling upon the best of our teachers and educators on the front lines of caring for our most vulnerable young ones. Stacy has been instrumental in leading the schools of Blaine through this time and, while she is very tired from it, it is clear she is gifted in this work and makes the challenging task easier for all who receive her support. Schools are certainly not out of the woods yet when it comes to COVID-19 work, so as we look ahead to the 2021-22 school year, please hold Stacy and all educators in your prayers — this is such important work, and it's often overlooked. We are so grateful for the congregation of St. James and the ways you have stood beside us and in the care of Stacy.

As for myself, I know there are many parts of my life that I don't often take time to share or update you all on, so I'll do my best! In April, I finished my first year of a Doctor in Ministry with Portland Seminary by turning in a 7,000-word paper (about 30 pages) on liberation theology and the problem of silence in the church around issues of racial justice. I have been inspired by this work and look forward to sharing more of it with our congregation. It was a heavy lift to complete this work amidst all that we have gone through as a community. Still, I feel invigorated by the work. It is already helping me as a preacher, writer, and leader. In the fall, I will begin the second year of the degree and have a strong focus on content related to leadership and spiritual formation, the keystones of the program.

I also find myself incredibly grateful for colleagues in ministry during this season. Whether it is my connection with the other Presbyterian pastors in Bellingham or my clergy group with ministers from St. Paul's Episcopal, Congregation Beth Israel, and First Congregational — these connections have remained invaluable in the support they provide and the space to commiserate over all that we are working through these days. Joining colleagues at the Lummi Totem Pole Blessing or chatting with Deanna, the new Executive Director of Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County (also a Lutheran pastor) — I recognize how blessed I am to serve in the role I'm called to with people who I can lean on for care and friendship.

In closing, I simply want to say thanks. Thank you for the faithfulness you've all shown in this past year. Thank you for the grace and patience that you've exhibited as we've done new things. And I look forward to the day, hopefully very soon, when we will begin to find our way back to something that feels a bit more normal. We don't look back, but we look forward to all that God has revealed and taught us. What have you learned during this season? I'd love to hear about it.

Until we meet again, grace and peace,



Rev. Seth Thomas



FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - MAY 2021

Ebbs and Flows

Submitted by Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair lindsaynicole12@gmail.com

Summer is coming and we are almost half-way through the year. On behalf of the Finance Committee and Session, I am happy to report that our General Fund continues to be healthy as we carry out the ministry God has set before us. In April, our expenses were slightly more than our income. Marina McLeod, our amazing church treasurer has been tracking the ebbs and flows in our Operating Budget over the past few years and it is normal to see ebbs and flows month to month. Thankfully we have a robust reserve from multiple years of wise stewardship and faithful giving.

We are grateful for your commitment to pledge and give towards our daily operating expenses. *Did you know that if you have a special anniversary, birthday, or event coming up and you would like to forgo a traditional gift, you can invite loved ones to give financially to St. James in your honor?* I know many of us hit a point where we need less “stuff” in our lives. This can be a great way for people to celebrate you by helping to sustain a faith community where you have found belonging and purpose.

For questions about contributions you may contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

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

<i>Income/Expense as of 4/30/21</i>	April Actual	April BUDGET	YTD Actual	YTD BUDGET
Income	\$12,640.88	\$18,819.00	\$78,411.90	\$80,778.00
Expenses	\$19,622.50	\$22,336.26	\$80,228.34	\$90,748.10

Aside from utilizing contact-free offering on Sunday morning, 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: <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.

**Saint James Presbyterian Church
910 14th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225**

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

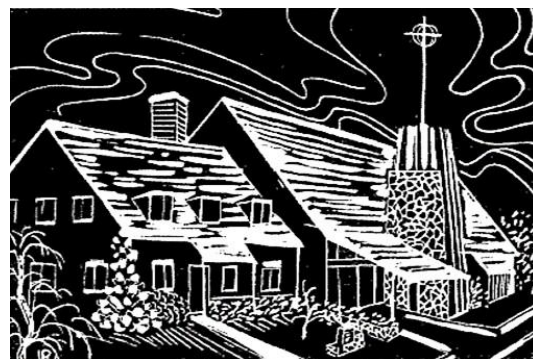
Contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com

Session Highlights

submitted by Faye Hill, Session moderator, fayeannhill@gmail.com

Here are some highlights from the Session Meeting by Zoom on May 2, 2021:

- Rick Seater brought greetings from the Board of Deacons. The deacons continue to meet monthly and support our members with calls, notes, emails and prayers.
- Treasurer Marina McLeod presented the Treasurer's Report for the month of April (see summary in above Finance section)
- The Session approved vacation dates for Pastor Seth, per his request.
- Building and Grounds chairperson, Aaron Caruso gave an update on building use and announced the need for a new office computer.
- Christian Faith Formation Committee chairperson, Sarah Condreay, reported that Tracy and the committee are in the planning stage for Vacation Bible School, hopefully outdoors, with a meal if church pandemic rules permit. Family retreat at Warm Beach is still on hold, and will likely be pushed into 2022. The committee is looking forward to the time when children can safely re-enter the building and resume Godly Play.
- The Pandemic Response Committee, chaired by Susan Diemont-Conwell, continues to meet monthly and welcomes questions or comments from anyone in the congregation.
- Personnel Committee chairperson, Faye Hill, reported that April 22nd was Shannon Law's last day of employment as Administrative Assistant. Interviews will begin this week for a new person to fill that position. Very favorable annual Staff Performance reviews were conducted in April with Luke Arnold (Music Director) and Tracy Caruso (Director of Children and Family Ministries).
- Seth announced that Reverend Jan Smith will fill the pulpit on May 16th.
- The next meeting of the Session will be on June 13, 2021.



Carolyn and Jim Mullen are now Oregon residents! They've sold their house in Sedro-Woolley and have headed down to Gleneden Beach, OR, for good. We all knew it was just a matter of time before Oregon claimed them for good! Just to make sure the move was extra difficult, Carolyn broke her ankle the night before moving day. In true Carolyn-fashion, it didn't slow them down much; just a 1-day delay. She's had surgery and is on the mend! Get your agate hunting now before she's able to hit the beach! As soon as she & Jim become professional beach bums they're sure to get *ALL* the agates.

We'll certainly miss them both but you can always send them notes at: The Mullens, PO Box 415, Gleneden Beach, OR 97388 or email at zolhavn@gmail.com.

Luke Arnold is graduating! Our own amazing Luke Arnold will be graduating from Western Washington University on June 12. You might assume he's just graduating with a degree in Piano Performance, but he's *also* getting a degree in psychology! Way to go, Luke!! (Don't worry...we're not losing Luke. He plans to continue his work here Music Director and continue adding piano lesson clients, as well as enjoy post-undergraduate life in this beautiful city. One of Luke's shining piano students is Asher Lee Thomas -- you should hear them play "Old McDonald!")

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director, tracy@saintjamespres.org

Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!



June 2021 Pulse

Greetings from the director of Children and Family Ministries! As spring begins to wind down and we move toward the end of the school year we are looking forward to an exciting summer!

We have finished up our normal Godly Play cycle and I am very excited to be introducing a new series of stories that follow the *People Who Inspire* from the Communion of Saints section of Godly Play. I am also looking for anyone who is interested in learning more about

Godly Play and possibly volunteering as a storyteller. Please let me know if you are interested!

Looking forward to this summer we will be holding a 5-week Vacation Bible School beginning at the end of July and through August! Look for more information to follow. We will again be using the Illustrated Ministry Compassion Camp. This year's theme is "Loving Kindness". Each Sunday we will be able to meet in person outside after Worship for a time of bible stories, crafts, and music. Look for more information to come!

We are finishing up a study of Justin McRoberts and Scott Erickson's book *Prayer: Forty Days of Practice*. We had a great time discussing the amazing pieces of art and accompanying prayers. For the summer we are looking into doing a weekly outside prayer time. We will be sending out a brief online survey at the beginning of June looking for what preferences people have for study themes, times, and locations.

I look forward to a great summer around St. James and the excitement of being able to do more things in person! As always if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at tracy@saintjamespres.org.

June Godly Play Schedule:

People Who Inspire is a collection of stories written to supplement the collection of stories about the saints. This Story, and the others in this collection, serves as an example of a Christian person who inspires us all to strive for justice and respect and the dignity of every human being.

June 6th

Harriet Tubman

June 13th

Florence Nightingale

June 20th

Mother Teresa

June 27th

Martin Luther King Jr. & Rosa Parks

St. James Mission Partner: Opportunity Council

by Gena Gustafson, gusgustafson@comcast.net

The Opportunity Council is one of the agencies selected by the Mission and Social Action Team to receive donations from Saint James. Opportunity Council is a community action agency serving the homeless, low income families and individuals in our community. Their mission is to help people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for justice and equitable communities. The work they do makes a difference for families, children, veterans, aging seniors, and our vulnerable neighbors.



Opportunity Council has been active in Bellingham for over fifty years. They offer a broad scope of services from assisting with immediate needs such as food and shelter to longer term programs that promote self sufficiency in our community. A large component of their work and success is in connecting those in need with the most appropriate agency or services. A good example is the work they do to help a family with a special needs child find appropriate medical and educational services. Another role they fill is connecting volunteers to a vast group of social service agencies in our community as well as the local school districts.

Please visit their website: www.oppc.org to learn more about their history and the great work they do.

ST. JAMES STAFF IS AT YOUR SERVICE

Pastor: The Rev. Seth J. Thomas, pastor@saintjamespres.org

Children & Family Ministry Director: Tracy Caruso, tracy@saintjamespres.org

Music Director: Luke Arnold, music@saintjamespres.org

Treasurer: Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com

Administrative Ministry Assistant: Sharon King, office@saintjamespres.org

SESSION OF ST. JAMES

Lindsay Anderson

Tess Bowers

Aaron Caruso

Sarah Condreay

Carol Dellecker

Susan Diemont-Conwell

Faye Hill (Clerk of Session)

Jenny Sue LeSchander

Nebiyu Tesfa

DEACONS

Deacons Parish 1 Merry Thomas, Alice Bailey

Deacons Parish 2 Jean & Rick Seater

Deacons Parish 3 Julie Keyes, Carla Shafer

Deacons Parish 4 Valerie McBeth, Alice Beaty

Deacons Parish 5 Pam Gibson, Adam Beaty

Deacons Parish 6 Kirsten Oliver, Milt Schayes



<https://mlp.org/>

Worship Schedule- Join us for a streaming service

10:30 a.m. Worship is a LIVE service stream and in-building with a reservation from our websites:

<https://saintjamespres.org/>

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

NEW! Office Hours:

Mon., Tues., Thurs., & Fri: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Church office is closed on Wednesdays



Enter via the office door on 14th Street.

A mask is required to enter the building, sign in at the temperature station.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEW BOOK FOR ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB

We're currently reading *The Honey Bus: a Memoir of Loss, Courage, and a Girl Saved by Bees* by Meredith May. An extraordinary story of a girl, her grandfather and one of nature's most mysterious and beguiling creatures: the honeybee.

We meet Monday evening June 21st @ 7:00.
Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

6/1	Alice Beaty	🎂
6/3	Tracy Caruso	🎂
6/4	Craig & Julie Keyes	💕
6/7	Eden Engels	🎂
6/9	Jane Botsford	🎂
6/9	Fred Daugert	🎂
6/10	Terri Inge	🎂
6/12	Bob & Madeleine Smith	💕
6/15	Sue Smith	🎂
6/17	Mark & Alice Beaty	💕
6/20	Amber Wainscott	🎂
6/23	Bob Smith	🎂
6/25	Bob & Nancy Pace	💕
6/27	Corinna Bowers	🎂
6/28	Sharon King	🎂
6/30	Claude & Faye Hill	💕

Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm
Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm
Monthly "the Pulse": the 25th, 2:00pm



WHATCOM COUNTY - Phase 3

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 (in building, Wednesdays)
Bellingham Com. Chorus
Bellingham Ukulele Group
Boy Scouts Troop 7 (in building, Mondays)
Happy Hour Al-Anon (in building, Tuesdays)
Overeaters Anonymous
St. James Fitness
St. James Yoga
Linda's Tai Chi (in building, Mondays)
WA Gender Alliance
Weavers Guild
You Are Not Alone (YANA)

Bayside Co-op Preschool (in building)
Hawthorne Learning Solutions (in building)
Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County (in office part-time)

Add your request to the St. James Prayer Chain
Contact your Deacon or St. James at:
360-733-1325 | office@saintjamespres.org





Photo by Sharon King



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