

The Enduring Flame

"Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-4)

I grew fascinated with the anatomy of fire when my father studied and completed his degree in Fire Science. How fire ignites and endures is such a raw, experienced reality, yet we often don't consider what it takes for such a force to be established and grow. We look at the fire as something we should put out. What if a fire is something we can cultivate and utilize in the right circumstances for the health of our world and our lives? We know that the burning of wildfires, as destructive as they are, are a part of the renewal process of the land — a necessary part of our world being made new and healthy.

James talks about how the faith that is produced through endurance is mature and complete, lacking nothing. Part of that endurance process is for faith to be dismantled, burned up, and built anew. The same thing could be said for the more familiar metaphor of endurance running, which breaks down our muscles to strengthen them. A fire provokes change. It makes space for renewal. It clears the land so that the land can endure another season of growth and life.

It seems like everything these days ties back to our current predicament of the COVID-19 pandemic. What if COVID is a fire? We know that it is enduring, burning through our world, producing a lot of destruction in its path. We certainly want to extinguish it before it harms more people and dismantles too much more of our shared life together. But what if we treated the extinguishment of the pandemic as not a great relief and sought a return to normal, but as an opportunity to let new life emerge? What if the endurance of faith is built up by the trials of this pandemic. These are trials we would never have chosen. Still, they have nonetheless presented us with opportunities to grow and become more fully aware of our belovedness, our collective struggle, and our mutual belonging in the family of God?

A wildfire burned through the Icicle Creek Canyon, approaching Leavenworth, WA, years ago. We drove that road frequently to visit my grandparents. I remember how stark the land appeared, how empty. But I also remember my father encouraging us to look out the window and see the bits of new life springing up through the charred ground. As the years have gone on and I've made that drive repeatedly, I've seen that life, produced through the endurance of God's good creation, returns to flourishing. I've watched as new trees sprout up, bushes and undergrowth retake root. Faith can work the same way. Faith produced through endurance grows and matures, finds its roots, and flourishes.

May it be so with us. May we recognize the deep grief of the wildfire that has been this last 18 months for the destruction that it is. But may we also see the eternal, enduring flame of faith produced through our steadfast clinging to Christ. What is growing up in you, in us? May we cultivate it, make space for it to expand, and become its most whole self. And may we do so as one body, made more vital in our collective endurance, drawing close to the Eternal Flame that is the Spirit burning in our midst.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth



Finance Committee Update - August 2021

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

Fall is in the air and St. James is finding safe and innovative ways to share in ministry, discipleship, and life together. It was wonderful to come together as a church body for our annual picnic and it was also a joy to participate in Compassion Camp. Thank you to your continued giving, as well as to positive returns in our endowment funds, we are fortunate to be able to carry on and steward the resources God has given us. In the general operating fund, we are still running a deficit as projected. This deficit is about 38% less than budgeted and our reserves remain healthy.

This fall, the Finance Committee will be coordinating our yearly audit of our general operating budget, contributions, designated giving, and endowment fund transactions. We appreciate the volunteers who help make this happen! We are also gearing up to plan the 2021-2022 general operating budget and stewardship drive. It is hard to believe we are nearing the final quarter of the year.

If for any reason you need to adapt your pledge for the remainder of 2021, or if you have other questions about contributions you please contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

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

<i>Income/Expenses as of 7/31/2021</i>	<i>July Actual</i>	<i>July BUDGET</i>	<i>YTD Actual</i>	<i>YTD BUDGET</i>
Income	\$18,516.10	\$18,519.00	\$124,787.00	\$136,635.00
Expenses	\$20,309.85	\$21,913.51	\$139,465.41	\$157,658.32

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

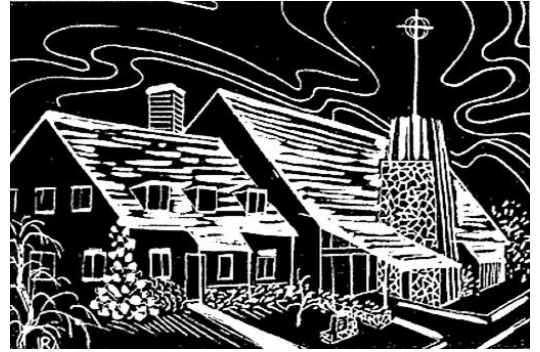
Need assistance or would you like to schedule a contact-free donation pick-up?
Contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com

Session Highlights

submitted by Rev. Seth Thomas, Session moderator

The St. James Session did not meet in August 2021, but remained active in supporting the ongoing work of our church over the last month.

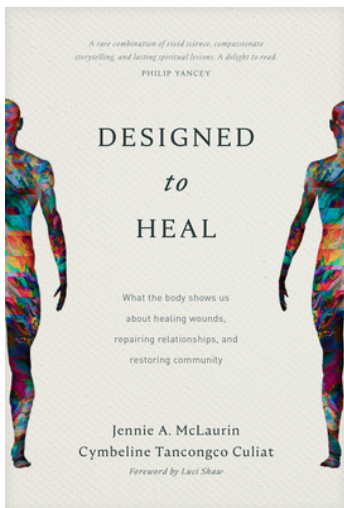
St. James' Building and Grounds committee, in coordination with the Church Trustees and Session, are moving ahead with a project to update the siding on the westward facing exterior wall of the church. The plan is for this project to take place in September.



Elders will be reviewing edits to the church bylaws -- updates to language and process that bring us up-to-date -- and will review at an upcoming meeting.

The next gathering of the Session is slated for September 12, 2021, following Sunday worship.

In closing, I wish to express my immense gratitude to all of the currently serving church officers of St. James. Our church elders and deacons have been a steady support through one of our most difficult seasons of life together. They have engaged in their work of stewarding our church resources and caring for our members with energy, vitality, imagination, and love. I am grateful to serve alongside these gifted folks and look forward to all the work Christ leads us to in the months and years to come. Thank you!!



***Designed to Heal* -- Jennie McLaurin's new book is available! Book Event on September 19 at Cordata Presbyterian**

Bellingham public health pediatrician and St. James member, Jennie McLaurin, will be speaking about her new book, *Designed to Heal*, during a book signing open to the public Sunday evening, September 19th at Cordata Presbyterian Church. McLaurin's writing connects science and faith, demonstrating how people and their organizations can heal in ways similar to the human body. Her presentation will be at 7 p.m. with book signings to follow.

McLaurin, who has degrees in medicine, public health, and theology is extending a special invitation to St. James members and several other congregations. McLaurin has a clinical practice for marginalized youth, and speaks to audiences on bioethics. She has co-authored her book with Cymbeline Culiati, an executive of a biotech company.

"Just like the human body," McLaurin states in the introduction of her book, "the corporate body I inhabit--my church, my family and my workplace--are sometimes injured. Often those wounds appear too complicated to heal. So how should I respond in times of stress, crisis, and deep hurt?"

McLaurin's book has been acclaimed by Philip Yancey as "A rare combination of vivid science, compassionate storytelling, and lasting spiritual lessons." Village Books store representatives are expected to help with book sales at the event. Don't miss this rare opportunity and bring your masks for safety.

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

It is hard to believe we are finishing a second summer of Covid and looking forward with uncertainty to the fall. Despite it all, we had a great summer around St. James and we are looking forward to a busy fall.

We held our first in-person Compassion Camp in August and it was great to see so many of our St. James family of all ages! We had a great time each week singing along with Kat, Luke, and Seth on their ukuleles, following yoga led by Rory, listening to and talking about

bible stories, working on crafts, and playing games. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped with Compassion Camp.

We are looking forward to a busy fall around St. James. We will be opening up our Godly Play classroom to in-person learning again for students ages 4 - 11! The Godly Play classroom will be open beginning at 10:15 and the story will begin at 10:35. Students will join the worship service in the sanctuary for the final hymn.

We are also planning on opening the nursery and we will have the nursery open to children ages birth - 4. The nursery will open at 9:45 and children will need to be picked up by a parent from the nursery after service. A reminder that all children 5 and older will need to wear a mask.

Our youth group will be participating and raising funds once again in the Family Promise Bed Race on September 26th. Last time we raced, we won the Best Themed Bed. We are hoping to hold our title and will need lots of help! If you can help with constructing a bed with wheels and/or decorating, please let Tracy know. We will also need a lot of support at the race with many voices cheering on our kids!

We are excited to introduce a new book discussion coming in September! We are blessed to have Jennie McLaurin lead us in a weekly discussion on her book *Designed to Heal: What the Body Shows us About Healing Wounds, Repairing Relationships, and Restoring Community*. There will be a kickoff on September 19th at Cordata Presbyterian, watch for more information on that event, and we will continue meeting Sunday mornings at 9:00 via our worship service zoom link. We plan to finish each week in time for those who would like to join in-person worship.

With so much happening around St. James, we are in need of volunteers to help! If you can give any of your time to our youth and/or children, please let Tracy know!

Godly Play for September

September 12th - The Circle of the Church Year: This lesson sets the context for the whole year. Each year, the Christian people move through a circle of memory and expectation to open themselves to the elusive presence of God.

September 19th - The Holy Bible: This lesson focuses on where the Church's story comes from. It is part of a comprehensive approach to Christian formation that forms a spiral curriculum that enables children to move into adolescence with an inner working knowledge of the classical Christian language system to sustain them all their lives.

September 26th - Godly Play: Creation: With this lesson we begin to track the elusive presence of the mystery of God in the story of God's People. We begin to play Hide-and-Seek with the Holy One and ask, "What can we know of the Giver by the gift?"



St. James Mission and Social Action

Allies Panel - New date - September 19

The Allies Panel will discuss issues related to welcoming the differences among us as it relates to LGBTQIA (queerness) on Sunday, September 19, 2021 via Zoom from 9-10 AM. Panelists include:

Alice Beaty, Pam Pries, Luke Arnold, Tricia Bravener, Spencer Bravener, Julie Keyes and Carla Shafer. They will answer questions of how they became allies, fears about acting as an ally beyond family, the best parts of opening up to everyone, and how their faith informs their actions. Everyone is welcome to listen in and join the conversation. For more information, please contact Carla Shafer at chuckanutsandstone@gmail.com

Prayer of Illumination - submitted by Kat DeVaney August 15, 2021

Father, we come to You today asking for justice. You have promised us in multiple places in scripture that if we ask for anything, you will give it. Mark 11:24-25 says "All that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours. And when you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance so that your heavenly God may in turn forgive you." Father, help us to have faith that you will bring justice and forgiveness, and help us to listen and look for our role in bringing it to pass.

We ask for justice for those who have been discriminated against.

We ask for justice for those who have been denied due process.

We ask for justice for those whose voices have been silenced.

We ask for grace to offer forgiveness when we have been denied justice to others.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And we ask, knowing that you will fulfill your promise.

In Jesus name, Amen.

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 - Online and In-Person, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Masks are required inside the church building, regardless of vaccination status.

Thank you!

Live streaming at:

<https://saintjamespres.org/live>

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

Fall Office Hours:

9:00am - 2:00pm, Monday - Thursday



UPCOMING EVENTS

ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB is currently reading *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher: The Epic and Immortal Photographs of EDWARD CURTIS* by Timothy Egan. We will be meeting Monday, September 20 at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link.

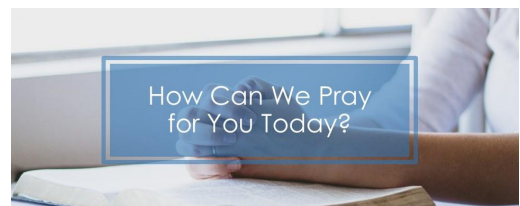
PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

AA Fairhaven Group (in building, Sundays/ Thursdays)
AA Men's Book Study Group (in building, Mondays)
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 (in building, Mondays/ Thursdays)
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)

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

9/6	Margaret McVie	🎂
9/6	John Sibold	🎂
9/7	Peter and Susan Burkland	💕
9/8	John Harris	🎂
9/11	Bill and Katy Read	💕
9/12	Gracelyn Dobson (Gracie)	🎂
9/13	Aaron and Tracy Caruso	💕
9/14	Robb and Cheryl McGregor	💕
9/17	Dave Nelson	🎂
9/17	Brian Johnson	🎂
9/18	Ann Lary	🎂
9/19	David Anderson	🎂
9/21	Asher Thomas	🎂
9/23	Faye Hill	🎂
9/26	Marcus Baker	🎂
9/30	Phyllis Jones	🎂

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



Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

Monthly "the Pulse": the 25th, 2:00pm





Photo submitted by Deanna Wildermuth



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