

Determined

*The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.* *Isaiah 50:7-8a*



The Prophet Isaiah writes about the Servant of God who sets his “face like flint” as he stands before his adversaries to confront evil and injustice.

Flint is a highly durable substance, a mineral that has been used throughout human history to make other tools, build walls, and start fires. When archeologists find the weathered tools and weapons of earlier civilizations, flint arrowheads and knives are common discoveries — they’re strong and they last!

Setting our faces like flint means to be focused, strong, and durable. The Servant of the Lord looks at all the forces that oppose God’s Reign and sets his face with determination, eyes focused on what he must do, body and mind ready.

I have felt such a range of emotions in response to serving in ministry during this pandemic. It has been sorrowful, strange, and bewildering, as well as rich with possibility, hope, and resilience. As we step into Autumn, the feeling that keeps coming to mind seems to set right down in the middle of all of these feelings: determined. I am determined to faithfully serve and lead in this season and beyond. I am determined that God has good work for us to do in the many years ahead. I am determined in my own calling as a pastor and leader and sense the struggles we face are, for me, an opportunity to grow, strengthen, and set my face like flint, stepping forward to honor my call. It would be easy to release it all and give up. But that is not what we do. We persevere and remain determined.

This determination is a perfect practice for us as we head into October with our Annual Stewardship Campaign. As we prayerfully consider our financial support for St. James Presbyterian in 2022, I want to invite us to be determined. I invite you to set your face like flint — may we be strong, durable, and united in the good work God has for us. This means stepping up to support our work together through bold and faithful giving. This means standing on the promises that God is faithful and will continue to be faithful. This means responding to God’s faithfulness even in the face of all that has been difficult for us this year. Our congregation’s work has persisted through this pandemic and we are determined to keep moving forward together.

Do we muster up our determination and go it alone? No!! Look back at the opening of the passage from Isaiah above: “*The Lord God helps me.*” God provides what we need, the strength, grit, and determination to keep on. And God gives us each other — we do not carry a community on our own. We are determined to keep together, keep serving, keep worshipping, and keep loving our neighbors. Our faces are set — “*let us stand up together.*”

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth

PS: The 2022 Stewardship Campaign pledge packets will be available starting Sunday, October 3. If you have questions on how to make your financial commitment for the upcoming year, please reach out to our Church Treasurer, Marina McLeod (stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com).

Finance Committee Update - September 2021

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

As the leaves change and the temperature drops, the Finance Committee is working closely with Treasurer Marina, Pastor Seth, and the Board of Elders to prepare for our 2022 General Operating Budget. That means **October is Stewardship Month at St. James!** Packets will be made available after October 3 and we hope you will prayerfully consider committing to a new or sustaining pledge.

Why pledge? When community members let us know what they intend to give during a calendar year it helps us to plan accurately for our commitments to this community. Of course things do not always go as expected, but we appreciate your willingness to trust, risk, and give as we rely on the Spirit of wisdom while we carry out God's unique work through St. James.

Year to date, we continue to see lower than expected income *and* lower than expected expenses. If for any reason you need to adapt your pledge for the remainder of 2021, or if you have other questions about contributions, please contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

Following is an update on St. James' Year-End Date General Operating Budget - *both income and expenses continue to be less than expected:*

<i>Income/Expenses as of 8/30/2021</i>	August Actual	August BUDGET	YTD Actual	YTD BUDGET
Income	\$16,640.00	\$18,519.00	\$142,536.12	\$136,635.00
Expenses	\$16,876.34	\$19,046.20	\$157,015.87	\$176,704.52

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, Clerk of Session

Here are some highlights of the Session Meeting by Zoom from September 14:

- All members of the Session, Pastor Seth Thomas, Church Treasurer Marina McLeod and Deacon Alice Beaty were present for the meeting.
- Treasurer Marina McLeod presented the August budget summary from the general fund:

The beginning balance on 8/1/21 was \$14,243.41. There was \$16,640 in income and \$16,876.34 in expenses for the month of August. The ending balance on August 31, 2021 was \$14,479.75.



- Deacon Alice Beaty reported that the annual picnic on August 1, 2021 was a success and the deacons plan to do this again next year with the addition of more outdoor tables. She also informed the session that the parish lunch scheduled for October has been cancelled due to COVID concerns. The deacons are discussing what could be done in lieu of this event.
- The Building and Grounds Committee reported that replacement of the siding on the west side of the building is 2 – 4 weeks out.
- The session voted to approve the participation of our youth in the annual Interfaith Bed Race scheduled for September 26, 2021.
- The Mission and Social Action Committee reported that the Peace and Global Witness offering is scheduled for September 26, 2021.
- The Pandemic Response Committee reported on the status of the increasing spread of COVID in our community. St. James continues to follow the state guidelines as announced by our governor.
- The Personnel Committee reported that they have completed the annual review of Pastor Seth and expressed appreciation for the great job he is doing.
- The Finance Committee reminded the session that the stewardship drive is planned for October 3 – 31.
- The Worship Committee continues to work to provide a warm welcome to worship while diligently maintaining the safety precautions as established by the session.
- The session voted to approve time off for Pastor Seth October 18 – 31.

Family Promise Support Opportunities: October 11 and 14. St. James will be providing meal kits (ingredients for specific meals) as we partner with our neighbors, Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Our Savior's Lutheran Church to assist homeless families. The families are currently living in Interfaith Coalition individual housing units during this time of COVID-19. If you are willing to provide a dinner kit for one of the families, please contact Gretchen Pfueller at gmpfueller@gmail.com for more information. She will have a list of needs soon.

Volunteers are also needed as tutors at the after school Interfaith Learning Center at First Christian Church. Training will be provided and previous experience in an educational program is desired.

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries! As the days are getting shorter and colder my heart is getting fuller and warmer! We have re-opened our nursery and Godly Play classroom and it has been such a joy to see our kids back!

We have updated our Godly Play program and moved times around a bit. Our Nursery is open beginning at 9:45 and our Godly Play classroom now opens at 10:15 to include some bible verse and song learning. Godly Play starts at 10:35 and students will be brought upstairs to the sanctuary for the last hymn. On communion Sundays the Godly Play story will be told in service and children will go downstairs after the story and then come back to the service for communion. If you are interested in learning more about our Godly Play program or how you can help volunteer to work with our children, please let Tracy know!

Our Youth group participated in the Family Promise Bed Race again this year. They raised over \$500 for Family Promise while bringing home the Best Themed Bed award for the second year in a row! A huge thank you to everyone who helped to build and decorate the Minecraft themed bed and to everyone who came out to cheer on our racers!



We have a couple of great offerings for adult education around St. James. We are thrilled to have Jennie McLaurin leading us in a weekly discussion on her book *Designed to Heal: What the Body Shows us About Healing Wounds, Repairing Relationships, and Restoring Community*. Join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 on the Sunday morning zoom service link. We will be ending in time for those who wish to attend worship in person to get to church. Let Tracy or Seth know if you need a book.

Faye Hill will be leading a new Bible Study for Women for this year, which is titled What My Grandmothers Taught Me. It is a rich, interesting and thoughtful study, based on the stories of the grandmothers of Jesus. See announcement below or contact Faye Hill for more information.

It has been so exciting to welcome new children to St. James and see the return of many of our St. James children. We look forward to welcoming more children to our programs as families feel more comfortable. As always if you have any questions or need anything please don't hesitate to contact me!

October Godly Play Schedule

October 3rd: The Flood and the Ark. In this lesson we move with the people of God from the creation to the re-creation and God's promise to Noah, to God's family and to us.

October 10th: The Great Family. We continue to seek the elusive presence of God. God was present at creation, blessing all that was made. Noah walked with God and was led by God's presence to build the ark that preserved life. Now Abraham and Sarah discover that God is present everywhere, putting their lives on the line to test the promises of God.

October 17th: Exodus. In this story we see that God was with the People as they "went out" (the literal meaning of the word exodus) from slavery into freedom through water. The People of God look back to this time to sustain them when God is hidden and they feel lost. For the Jews, especially, the Feast of Passover keeps alive this core event. For Christians, Baptism reawakens this event.

October 24th: The 10 Best Ways. In this story we continue to witness God's elusive presence with God's People on three 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.

October 31st: Work Day.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy

All women of the church are invited to participate in the latest Presbyterian Women's Bible Study, titled "What my Grandmothers Taught Me". We will begin our first lesson on Tuesday, September 28th, in the Church Lounge at 10:30am. There is no need to sign up, just bring your study book. If you do not have a study book, please call Faye Hill at 360-734-8098, and we will see that you receive one in plenty of time to begin the study.

When we read the genealogy of Jesus in the book of Matthew carefully, we find that the author lists the names of several men and also the names of only a few women –Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary. Why have these women been mentioned? Jesus obviously had many more women in his family tree than these five. We will find the answer to this puzzling question as we read and discuss together the individual stories of these five women. Matthew has named these women for a reason. Their stories will inspire our lives today and lead us into the Gospel, the Good News about Jesus Christ.

Please call Faye if you have questions.

St. James Mission and Social Action



Winter Coat Drive: We are partnering with the Interfaith Coalition to collect winter coats, hats, gloves, and scarves. Please donate new or nearly new outerwear. Durable raincoats and down jackets are excellent choices. Gently used items should be freshly laundered. We will have a designated space by the coat rack for donations. Many hands will make warm hearts this winter. Any questions, please contact Gena Gustafson or Maureen Kosa.

When considering an item for donation, a discerning question might be, "Would I feel comfortable giving this coat to a friend?" If anyone would be interested in helping to distribute the coats, please contact either Gena Gustafson or Maureen Kosa.

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 *Just Mercy* by Brian Stevenson. We will be meeting Monday, October 17th at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link. Books are available in the church office.

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 (in building, Saturdays)
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

10/1	Laurie Anderson	🎂
10/2	Alyson Storrs	🎂
10/4	Lance Melrose	🎂
10/7	Aubrey Caruso	🎂
10/9	Andrew McLaurin	🎂
10/11	Carla Shafer	🎂
10/12	Christian Beaty	🎂
10/13	Don Hoyt	🎂
10/24	Sean Keyes	🎂
10/24	Claude Hill	🎂
10/26	Peter Burkland	🎂
10/31	Selina Baker	🎂

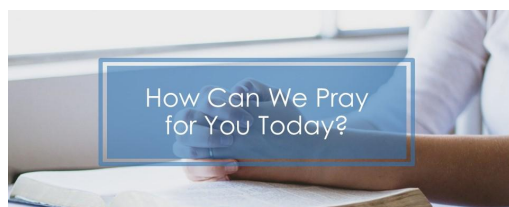
Add your request to the St. James Prayer Chain
Contact your Deacon or St. James at:
360-733-1325 | office@saintjamespres.org

Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

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





Wildflowers at Artist Point



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