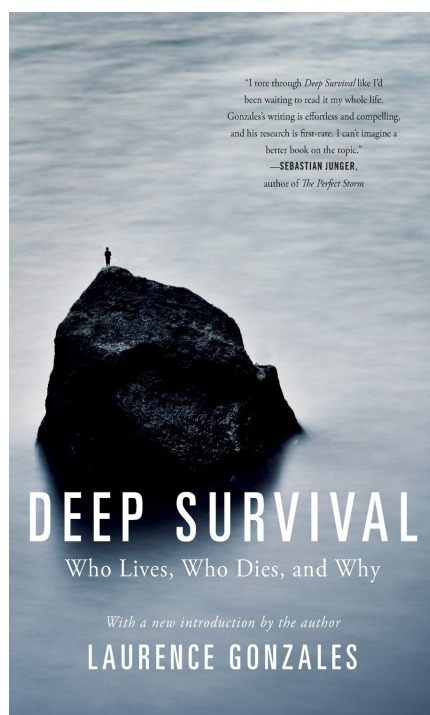


December 2021 — In Between



Advent is a time between times. It is a space in our year to consider what is shifting, adapting, and growing as we await the arrival of the Christ-child. To live in between, we must have practices that encourage our patience, sustain our minds and bodies, and keep pointing us in the right direction to come home to Christ.

One of the final books I'm reading this term for my doctoral program is *Deep Survival* by Laurence Gonzales. The book's premise is: "who lives, who dies, and why." The author examines the training and survival methods of Army Rangers, wilderness guides, experienced rock climbers, and river rafters to discern what it takes to survive in shifting, uncertain, dangerous circumstances. Our bodies must adapt, our mental models change, and we must be in tune with our emotions to pass through the in-between times of survival and struggle. The ones who can live and thrive in the face of such danger are the ones who can follow the leading of their hearts, which call us beyond the status quo or the plan to see what is often unseen.

As we live in this season of Advent, I wonder if we can explore a bit of our adaptability. As we wait for the light of Christ to dawn, how do we tend our hearts, strengthen our devotions in prayer and worship, shift and grow to the new circumstances and needs for care that arise amidst our ever-changing world? The story of the people of God is one where we learn, again and again, to lean not on our own understanding but to seek first God's kingdom before all things. We wait in the hope of Christ's coming, knowing that God will invite us to be changed and renewed through Christ's arrival.

As we move through the weeks of Advent, with the days growing shorter and shorter, it seems an opportunity to evaluate the steps we take along the journey. In this in-between time, we consider: where is our hope, what leads us to joy, what sustains God's peace in us, and how might we more fully love our neighbors in new and impactful ways? To embrace the in-between is to learn how to survive in a shifting world, to hold fast in faith in Christ alone, nothing else.

I wonder what this journey looks like for you this year. In some ways, the steps toward the light of Christmas are familiar. We walk along a road that many have trod before us, a well-worn path of faithful pilgrims through the generations. In other ways, because of our world context and social pressures, we may feel we have set out into uncharted territory. Whatever way you face this Advent journey, trust that God has provided you with what you need. While we are "in-between," God meets us right where we are to sustain and support our steps. Perhaps you find this in how an Advent devotional stirs your heart and mind. Maybe you find this support from God in the practice of lighting Advent candles. Or perhaps you find you survive the in-between by practicing times of deep silence amidst all the hurry and noise of the season. Whatever the steps of the journey look like, know that God is with us. This is the promise of Emmanuel, God...with...us.

May you experience the blessed in between of this season as we wait in hope for Christ, who is Child and Savior, Sustainer and Friend.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - November 2021

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

Stewardship Update

During November and December the Finance Committee, the Session, and our amazing St. James Treasurer are working hard to complete the 2022 General Operating Budget. It is not too late to turn in your 2022 Stewardship Pledge. As of November 20, we have received \$164,928 in pledges and anticipate more to come based on past years' records. We hope to reach \$180,000 in pledged giving. You can turn in your pledges to the church on Sunday, via mail, or email. Please reach out to Marina McLeod with questions!

After the past two years, we know - more than ever - how unpredictable life can be. As we plan for 2022, we are grateful for a positive response to the pledge drive, a healthy amount of money built up in our reserves, and robust endowment funds. It is no small gift to be able to support our pastor and staff in the ministry that they provide, especially during hard times.

If you have any questions about contributions in general, 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 10/31/2021</i>	October Actual	October BUDGET	YTD Actual	YTD BUDGET
Income	\$16,862.00	\$18,719.00	\$173,478.57	\$192,592.00
Expenses	\$22,416.48	\$21,202.09	\$200,119.78	\$222,387.12

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

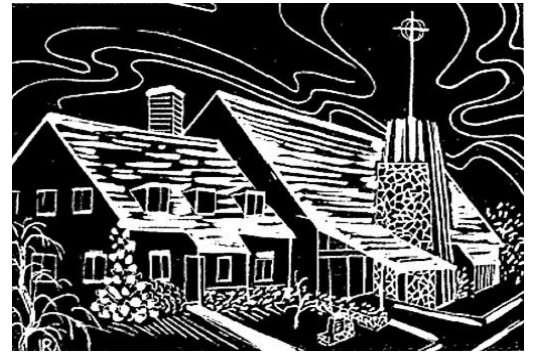
submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session

Highlights of the Session Meeting on November 14, 2021

- All nine members of the Session, Pastor Seth Thomas, Church Treasurer Marina McLeod and Deacon Representative Carla Shafer were present at the meeting.
- Deacon Carla Shafer brought greetings from the Board of Deacons. The deacons asked the session for help as they try to re-imagine ideas for connecting with church members during this continuing time of COVID. Folks may gather with facemasks and social distancing, but no food or drink can be served. The Board of Deacons welcomes suggestions regarding this challenge from the session and the congregation.
- Treasurer Marina McLeod presented the October budget summary from the General Fund:

Beginning balance on 10/1/21	\$-21,086.73
Income	16,862.00
Expenses	22,416.48
Ending balance on 10/31/21	\$ -26,641.21

- Pledges for 2022 are continuing to arrive. The 2022 budget will be presented at the next meeting of the session on December 12th.
 - Clerk Faye Hill announced that the following new members were received during November: Claudia Allan, Elsie Gibson, Amy and Casey Morriss and Jessica and Jimmy Parks.
 - Building and Grounds Chairperson Aaron Caruso announced that the siding project is underway.
 - Finance Committee Chairperson Lindsay Anderson reported that we have received 48 pledges to date totaling \$151,828.
 - Pastor Seth Thomas reported that he attended an excellent retreat in Cannon Beach. He will be away 11/17 – 11/27 for a family wedding in Missouri and Thanksgiving vacation.
 - The next meeting of the Session will be on December 12, 2021.
-



CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

Advent season is upon us! As I told in our Godly Play story: *We are all making the journey. We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas, so let's go with the prophets, the Holy family, the shepherds, the angels, and the Magi and all the rest to make the journey that was not just back then. It is also now.* For our Godly Play lessons, we will be focusing on the 4 lessons in the advent series. Our Godly Play students will also be bringing home tins to collect change for our annual change drive for Family

Promise. The tins will be due back on Sunday January 2nd. In January we will be adding in more volunteers to our Godly Play teachers, if you are interested in becoming one of our Godly Play storytellers or door people please let Tracy know!

Our Youth Group has been busy with some end of the year projects. They sent out Thankful postcards to all our St. James friends. It was fun to receive some responses to their posed question: What are you thankful for? I agree with Jean Seater that I too am thankful for our Youth Group!

The youth are also working on the Holiday Joy program and we are collecting gift cards to Target or Fred Meyer in the amount of \$25-\$50 to go to the 10 children that we have agreed to sponsor this year. The youth group will be assembling these gifts on Sunday the 5th if you are interested in donating a gift card or money please have those to the church by 11:30 on Sunday, December 5th.

For the adults at St. James, we hope you will join us in some devotion and discussion. "Advent calendars come in all shapes and sizes but what they have in common is a daily rhythm of anticipatory reflection. Biola's Center for Christianity, Culture, and the Arts offers a FREE online Advent Project designed to help you pause each day to reflect on the beauty and meaning of the season. Each day of the Advent Project features a Scripture passage, a devotion written by a member of the Biola community, a work of visual art, a poem, and a piece of music. Our prayer is that in the midst of these challenging times, the Advent Project will help ground you in the unsurpassable beauty, mystery, and miracle of the Word made flesh." We will meet each Sunday at 9am, beginning December 5th to discuss the devotions via zoom. Click the link below to sign up to receive your daily devotionals.

<https://ccca.biola.edu/events/2021/nov/28/advent-project-2021/>

There is so much happening around St. James this time of year and we hope you will join with us on our journey to Bethlehem! If there is anything you need, or if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me!

Godly Play for December:

December 5th: 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 12th: 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 19th: 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 26th: Work Day**ST. JAMES MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION****GardenView Tiny Home Community**

Pastor Seth Thomas, Maureen Kosa, and Ray Dellecker visited the new GardenView tiny home community on Lakeway on November 8. Our host was Echohawk, a Pawnee, who has lived in Alaska, is passionate about housing issues, was trained by Low-Income Housing Institute (LIHI) in Seattle, and then asked for an assignment in Bellingham. The Pawnee mantra: "Work for the people, don't talk about it"

GardenView is a partnership of Road2Home and LIHI, under agreement with the City of Bellingham. The village consists of 30 tiny homes, 14 of which are currently occupied, 6 ready for occupancy, and 10 still under construction. Each home is 8' x 12' with electricity for lighting and heat.

There are community facilities for cooking, dining, bathrooms and showers, laundry, crafts room, and computer room. Echohawk herself is on site 8 hours a day, and two other staff members cover the other shifts. Among her many management tasks, Echohawk maintains a list of chores for the residents to perform: kitchen cleanup, bathroom cleanup, grounds maintenance.

Road2Home provides case management services, and each resident is expected to see their case manager at least twice a month.

Echohawk expressed appreciation for recent visits to GardenView by Mayor Fleetwood and Governor Inslee.

Residents are seniors or veterans, many of whom were recently homeless and living in camps or cars. In many cases, these folks were located by the Opportunity Council and recommended for this village. Prospective residents have to agree to abide by a set of rules, including no alcohol or drugs in the public spaces, and to work toward sobriety. Echohawk said her philosophy is to "meet folks where they're at." Their goal is that residents would move on to more permanent housing within 9 months.

They are in need of construction volunteers to help finish the remaining homes. Also, Echohawk provided us with a list of items that the village needs, including plastic storage tubs, Christmas stocking stuffers, and other items. Our Mission committee is spearheading a project to deliver enough stockings for every Gardenview resident prior to Christmas. We thank you for your generous support!

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

SESSION COMMITTEES

Building and Grounds (Aaron Caruso)
Christian Faith Formation (Sarah Condreay)
Finance (Lindsay Anderson)
Mission and Social Action (Carol Dellecker)
Nominating (Jenny Sue LeSchander)
Pandemic Response & Re-opening (Susan Diemont-Conwell)
Personnel (Faye Hill)
Worship (Nebiyu Tesfa and Jenny Sue LeSchander)

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 “A Land More Kind Than Home” by Wiley Cash. *It is a haunting tale of courage in the face of cruelty and the power of love to overcome the darkness that lives in us all.* Please note we will be meeting the **2nd Monday** in December, December 13th at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link. Books are available in the church office.

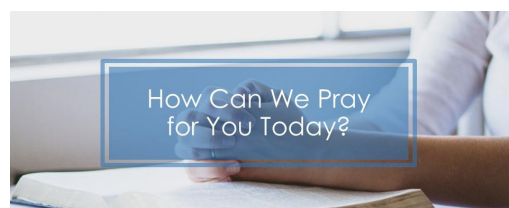
PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

AA Fairhaven Group (in building, Sundays/ Thursdays)
AA Grateful Hearts Women's Group (in building as of 12/6)
AA Men's Book Study Group (in building, Mondays)
AA SOS Men's Group (in building, Wednesdays)
AA WITS Women's Group (in building, Tuesdays)
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

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	🎂

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





St. James Presbyterian Church Bellingham



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