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## January 2022 – The Future We Choose

In these first weeks of the new year, we are often challenged to consider ways we intend to alter our practices, rhythms, routines to be healthier, more connected with God and others, and grow more able to sustain the ups and downs of daily life. We encounter the opportunity to choose a new future — to take tangible strides to grow.

This Christmas break, I read *The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis* by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, two significant architects of the Paris Climate Agreement. This book lays out many dramatic shifts that are already beginning to occur due to our climate crisis and offers a powerful encouragement to choose a new future. We have time and resources, and we now must take tangible steps forward. I found the book haunting yet hopeful — rich with opportunities to shift and grow and cautionary regarding how significant the shifts must be to curb our world's CO2 emissions in the decades to come.

God has blessed humanity with ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness for such times as this. And as people of the way of Jesus, we recognize that while many of the reports of the crisis we face may be deeply concerning, the way forward emerges as we trust the work of resurrection — hope and action guide us.

The authors of this text make it very clear — the time for action is now. It is time for our communities, businesses, churches, and individual lives to make significant shifts to embrace a new, renewable future. Such transitions require sacrifices, but isn't this what we are about in the way of Jesus? Losing our lives so that we might find life? Saying, "not my will, but Yours be done"?

I see this moment, this juncture of a new year, and the immensity of the global work we must undertake as an immense opportunity. It is an opportunity for us to come together, work to find solutions, and not simply settle for how things are and how they could continue to be but to boldly embrace the possibility of a brighter future ahead of us.

What might it look like for the church to lead in such a time as this? What would it be like for us, as St. James Presbyterian Church in Bellingham, to be a part of charting out and embarking on a journey towards that brighter future? We have a choice. That is the privilege and burden of being God's people — God gives us choices to act, listen, engage, and draw closer to one another.

If we have learned anything these last two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that communities of people can make choices to serve, care for, and support one another, even in the face of the most difficult challenges. The hope, the assurance, the guiding light of all that we face together is that we do not go forward alone. Instead, we are united by Christ, the body of Christ that we are, to make common cause towards facing such challenges with heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Honestly, I'm incredibly hopeful for the future we can choose together. I'm hopeful for the future of our church. I'm hopeful for the future of our city, county, and world. It is not a naïve hope — we have much work to do to finally overcome this pandemic and meet the larger challenges we face, like climate change which compounds other issues like systemic racism and economic disparities between the rich and poor. And yet. And yet, God has called us to choose a resurrection future, embrace it, celebrate it, and grow into it. This gives me great hope!

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth

## THE FUTURE WE CHOOSE



## Surviving the Climate Crisis

Christiana Figueres and  
Tom Rivett-Carnac  
Architects of the 2015 Paris Agreement

## FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - December 2021

*By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair*

As I write this, it is December 22 - the day after the Winter Solstice, also known as "the darkest day." These days, the sun rises late and sets early, leaving us to pause, rest, and reflect as we hold hope for the coming light. In a few days, we will celebrate Christ's birth - a reminder both that God brings life and that God is intimately connected to our humanity. So, what does this have to do with church finances?

Everything... because together (pandemic or not), as the St. James community, we gather to participate in God's life-giving action. We do this through our worship, through our mission and social action, through our loving welcome, and through our life together. In November, we received a higher than expected general offering and a few other unexpected gifts - all of this helps us cut down on our operating budget deficit (and replenish our reserves). Our staff and session have responsibly managed our resources through another pandemic year. In terms of 2022 pledges, we have received \$171,120 in pledges and we see a little more. Thank you, to our faithful community and to our God who provides.

Next month at the annual congregational meeting, we will share our 2022 budget. Thank you for partnering with St. James to bring God's generosity, provision, and abundance to this world.

If you have any questions about year-end IRA giving, memorial giving, pledges, or contributions in general, please contact Marina McLeod, [stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com](mailto: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:

<b><i>Income/Expenses as of 11/30/21</i></b>	<b>November Actual</b>	<b>November BUDGET</b>	<b>YTD Actual</b>	<b>YTD BUDGET</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$23,330.00</b>	<b>\$18,719.00</b>	<b>\$196,583.57</b>	<b>\$211,311.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$17,863.99</b>	<b>\$19,439.40</b>	<b>\$217,983.77</b>	<b>\$241,826.52</b>

**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 or Pledges:** You can mail your pledges and gifts to the church.

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

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

*submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session*

### Highlights of the Session Meeting on December 12, 2021

- All members of the Session, Deacon representative Julie Keyes and Church Treasurer, Marina McLeod were present at the meeting.
- Deacon Representative Julie Keyes reported that the deacons continue to explore options for connecting with the people in their parishes. They are getting to know the new members who were received into the church on October 31st. Julie expressed appreciation for the reciprocal relationship of the Board of Deacons with the Session.
- The Session voted to approve the 2022 budget as drafted by the Budget Committee, based on the budgeted income of \$171,000.
- The Building and Grounds Committee announced that the siding project has been completed.
- The Session voted to approve the purchase of a projector and a roll-up screen for use in the Fellowship Hall at a cost of \$2,676.85.
- The Mission Committee reported that the Christmas Joy Offering will be received this month.
- The Worship Committee reported that a Christmas Caroling event is planned for December 19th and the Christmas Eve Worship Service will be held according to tradition.
- The next meeting of the Session will be on January 9, 2022.



## CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director, [tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org)



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

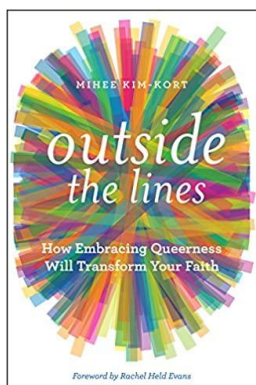
Another busy and crazy year is behind us. Even though we are still dealing with so much uncertainty and there doesn't seem to be an end to Covid in sight, 2021 brought some pretty amazing things!

It has been such a joy to safely welcome so many people back into our building this year, and especially wonderful for me to be able to open our Godly Play classroom again.

Seeing the faces of our Godly Play students and listening to their wonderings has filled my heart over and over.

Getting to meet in person with our Youth Group has also been a blessing for me. Being together as they built the best themed bed and raised over \$700 for Family Promise for the Bed Race, writing postcards for our St. James Family, and having the help with the Holiday Joy project felt like a little bit of "normal".

Ending 2021 with the beginning of the church year with the season of Advent also filled me with joy as we joined together for a night of Caroling and also a virtual Christmas party.



As we look forward to 2022, I pray we continue to bring more of us together in person and resume more in person activities that have been put on hold for so long. In this new year, look for more information on several new opportunities. In our next group zoom discussion, Carla Shafer will be leading us in an Allies book discussion of *Outside the Lines: How Embracing Queerness Will Transform Your Faith* by Mihee Kim-Kort. Discussions will begin on January 16th at 9:00am on the worship service zoom link. Let Tracy or Seth know if you would like a copy of the book.



We will be holding a confirmation class for anyone in grades 9-12 beginning in February. Let Seth or Tracy know if you are interested or have any questions.

I want to thank you all for all the support that the St. James Family continues to give to our Children and Family Ministries. It is such a joy to work where our children are so loved and valued! Blessings to you all in 2022.

**Godly Play Schedule January:****January 2nd: Epiphany**

In this lesson we remember the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem. We will recall together all the weeks in Advent as we had before Christmas but give special attention to the final purple candle, the one that represents the three kings. We will stop here and pay attention to what the three gifts were and what they symbolize as gifts for a baby who is the Messiah.

**January 9th: Holy Baptism**

In this lesson we learn that Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into the Church. For Christians, this rite is the gateway into the family of families we call the Church. We ask the children to remember or look forward to the day of their baptism by lighting candles from the light of the Christ Candle, since this is also the day they receive their "light."

**January 16th: Parable of the Good Shepherd**

In this lesson we hear the parable of the Good Shepherd, in which the shepherd searches for his one lost sheep, leaving the other ninety-nine to do so. This parable is often considered more of an identity statement than a parable.

**January 23rd: Parable of the Good Samaritan**

The Parable of the Good Samaritan. 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.

**January 30<sup>th</sup> Work Day****ST. JAMES MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION**

**FAMILY PROMISE SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES JANUARY 17-23.** 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](mailto: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.

## ST. JAMES STAFF IS AT YOUR SERVICE

Pastor: The Rev. Seth J. Thomas, [pastor@saintjamespres.org](mailto:pastor@saintjamespres.org)

Children & Family Ministry Director: Tracy Caruso, [tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org)

Music Director: Luke Arnold, [music@saintjamespres.org](mailto:music@saintjamespres.org)

Treasurer: Marina McLeod, [stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com](mailto:stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com)

Administrative Ministry Assistant: Sharon King, [office@saintjamespres.org](mailto: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/>

Church Office Hours:

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





## UPCOMING EVENTS

**ST. JAMES BOOK CLUB** is currently reading *Laughing All the Way to the Mosque: The Misadventures of a Muslim Woman* by Zarqa Nawaz. We will meet the 3rd Monday of January, January 17th at 7:00pm. Email [tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org) for the Zoom link. Books are available in the church office.

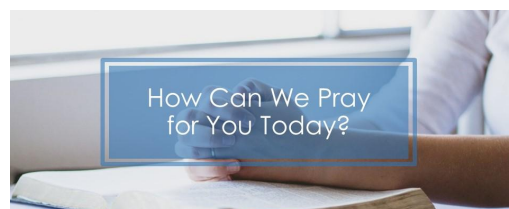
## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

1/1	Teresa Bowers	🎂
1/1	Susan Burkland	🎂
1/2	Ed Simmers and Jane Madden	💕
1/5	Kat DeVaney	🎂
1/8	Marty Haines	🎂
1/11	Zach Engels	🎂
1/15	Karen Summers	🎂
1/15	Kyle Anderson	🎂
1/17	Dwayne Rogers	🎂
1/17	Sam King	🎂
1/18	Genevie Pfueller Roguski	🎂
1/23	Hailey Caruso	🎂
1/28	Tricia Bravener	🎂
1/31	Marlene Amman	🎂

## PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

**AA Fairhaven Group** (in building, Sundays/ Thursdays)  
**AA Grateful Hearts Women's Group** (in building)  
**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)

**Add your request to the St. James Prayer Chain**  
**Contact your Deacon or St. James at:**  
**360-733-1325 | [office@saintjamespres.org](mailto: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 - photo by Sam King*



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