

February 2022 — An Ode to the Black Drop

This month, I need to reflect on saying goodbye to one of my dearest Bellingham cafes, The Black Drop Coffeehouse, is closing, and I need to say a few words about it.

It's incredible how a space can hold so many memories and deep connections to the stories of our lives. The Black Drop, located on Champion St. in downtown Bellingham, has held my memories, hopes, tears, and love for almost 20 years. As a student at Western Washington University, one of the most important rites of passage is to venture downtown on foot and discover the places where you can belong and begin to call home. I found it there.

Known for their specialty coffee drinks, creative lattes, and welcoming community, The Black Drop was my go-to place to meet with college students in my time serving at the INN University Ministries. On Friday mornings, free doppios (double shot espressos) were accompanied by deep conversations about faith, music, and growing up. This was a safe place — a place to process who we are, a place to explore literature and sexuality and dark roasted coffee. I remember teaching one college student about how you need to drink espresso shots within the first minutes off the machine, or else they “died” and became overly bitter. This is one of the places where I realized how sacramental sharing a cup with another person could be. It is a sacred space.

One of the things I've always appreciated about this cafe (and how it speaks of many places in Bellingham) is the welcoming, affirming environment. Diverse members of Bellingham society always filled the Black Drop. City of Bellingham and Logos Bible Software employees intermingling with freelance web designers; trans and queer folk alongside pastors and poets — this place was central to the life of our strange little town. Everyone was welcome — AND everyone was expected to be welcoming/loving/accepting, no exceptions!!

As I reflect on my experiences in this cafe, I see how it helped form my heart for what it means to be a pastor who makes space for other people. I sincerely believe that the church must find itself in these public spaces, being the loving hands of God in our community, showing up where life is already happening. The cafes, breweries, lunch spots, gyms, and art galleries of our city are the place where God is already moving, already at work. To follow Jesus, in my understanding, is to go and be with people in this life, coming alongside to support, care, and grow together.

A dear friend called me when he saw that The Black Drop was closing. We talked for about 15 minutes, recalling some of our significant moments together in this cafe. Another friend messaged me on Facebook from Zambia, remembering our shared cups together many years ago. If I'm honest, this cafe is where the love of coffee became a part of my bloodstream, a central part of my understanding of pastoring and sharing life with people. I will dearly miss it.

We have witnessed many changes and challenges as a part of this COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses have struggled to survive. We lament, remember, and anticipate what is next. In closing, I offer two words of direction. First, support the places you love and have brought you into a deeper relationship with this community. And second, follow, and get behind new places that are attempting to make room for the beautiful mosaic of people who make up our city. May we “champion” the new communities that rise in the power of resurrection that comes after we mourn the death of what we love.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth



FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

One of my favorite hymns is “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.” I love how the lyrics speak to the ecclesiastic nature of the church - that as one person and as one congregation, we share a connection with Christians throughout the world. *“Blest be the tie that binds/Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship our spirit finds/Is like to that above.”*

This is intrinsic to what it means to be a Presbyterian. **St. James Presbyterian Church is not an island** - we are connected to the broader work of God throughout the Northwest Coast Presbytery, the Alaska-Northwest Synod, and the greater PC(USA). **One way we signify this is through a financial practice called Per Capita.** “Per Capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the [PC(USA)]. Said another way, it is a Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund — part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together.” This fund benefits St. James in important ways. Throughout the pandemic, the Presbytery and PC(USA) rallied around churches to offset some of the financial uncertainty and provide additional support, thanks in part to Per Capita. **To learn more, visit: [PC\(USA\) OGA \(pcusa.org\)](https://www.pcusa.org).**

Each year, St. James pays \$6067.00 from our General Operating Budget to the Presbytery for Per Capita. This number is based on our official membership roster and works out to be approximately \$50/member. If you feel called to pay towards your own Per Capita, please put “Per Capita” in your check memo or make a note in your online donation.

If you have any questions about contributions in general, please contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

Good News! We ended 2021 with a BALANCED General Operating Budget:

<i>Income/Expenses 12/31/2021</i>	YTD Actual	YTD BUDGET
Income	\$223,279	\$230,050
Expenses	\$241,782	\$266,262
Transfers	\$18,503	-

Aside from utilizing contact-free offering on Sunday morning, you can give in TWO primary ways:

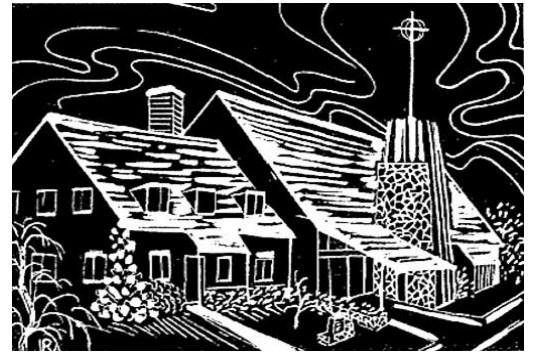
- Online Giving:** You can give a one-time gift or create a recurring monthly pledge. Please visit this webpage to set up or update your online giving: <https://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving>
If you are new to online giving we've got a handy video to show you how, here:
<https://www.loom.com/share/5aea350026204a9cb3c955029dafbdd3>
- 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

Session Highlights, January 9, 2022

The St. James Session met on January 9, 2022 for their regular stated meeting. Here are a few highlights of the meeting:



- All members of the session, the Church Treasurer Marina McLeod, Deacon Representative Pam Gibson, and Pastor Seth Thomas were present for the meeting.
- Treasurer Marina McLeod presented the following December Budget Summary from the General Fund:

Beginning balance on December 1, 2021: \$-21,550.20

Income: \$ 26,845.00

Expenses: \$ 23,797.92

Ending balance on December 31, 2022: \$ -18,503.12

- Deacon Pam Gibson reported that the deacons reached out to all members during the Advent season with cards, notes and phone calls. Deacons Pam Gibson, Julie Keyes and Carla Shafer were each re-elected to an additional three-year term.
- The Session approved the purchase of a new office chair for the secretary, using funds from the Facilities Endowment Fund.
- The Session approved the Terms of Call for Pastor Seth Thomas, which will be voted on at the meeting of the Corporation on January 30, 2022.
- The Session voted to approve for the 2022 budget.
- The Session approved serving communion on the first Sundays of each month during 2022.
- Bereavement leave was granted to Pastor Seth for the occasion of his grandmother's memorial service.
- Expressions of appreciation were extended to outgoing elders Carol Dellecker and Jenny Sue LeSchander for their service to St. James.
- Seth reported that the church has purchased new disposable masks to meet the new COVID recommendations from the Pandemic Response Committee.
- The next regularly stated meeting of the session will be on February 13, 2022.

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

I don't know about the rest of you, but I blinked and January was gone. In Godly Play, we began our parables series in January and will continue that through the end of February. We are still looking for some volunteers, so please let Tracy know if you are interested in helping or learning more about our Godly Play program.

Because this latest Covid surge hit Bellingham so hard, the youth group postponed our January meeting. Our next meeting will be February 27th and we will be enjoying a movie using the new equipment in the fellowship hall. Look for details to follow. We are also offering a Confirmation class to anyone in grades 9-12. The class will meet for five Sundays beginning February 27th right after church. Let Tracy or Seth know by February 6th if you are interested in participating.

Carla Shafer has been leading our adult education book discussion on Mihee Kim-Kort's book *Outside the Lines*. We meet Sunday mornings at 9am through February 13th. Discussions are on zoom, and you can enter using the Sunday morning worship zoom link.

Looking forward, we are planning on finally holding our All Church Retreat at Warm Beach Camp this August 26th-28th. If there is anyone interested in helping with the planning, please let Tracy know.

As always if you have any questions or need anything, please don't hesitate to contact me!

Godly Play Schedule for February

February 6th

The Parable of the Great Pearl. 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 two 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.

February 13th

The Parable of the Sower

February 20th

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

February 27th

The Parable of the Deep Well

ST. JAMES MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION FAMILY PROMISE THANK YOU

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, several St. James members prepared meals for homeless families living in supported Interfaith Coalition Housing. Because of the pandemic, staying in local churches is not practical, as is interaction with these families working hard to end their homelessness. During this time, delivering the meal kits is our opportunity to have a short visit of caring and support for the families. They are always most appreciative of the nutritious and lovingly prepared meal kits and the children are always so very excited to see us. St. James provides these meals quarterly, rotating with other local churches. Our next meal kits will be delivered in April. If you would like to be involved, please contact Gretchen Pfueller at gmpfueller@gmail.com. Many thanks to those who provided the meal kits.

LENT KITS 2022

Bellingham Presbyterian churches are offering simple Lent Kits to deepen your contemplative practice during the Lenten season. If you would like a kit for your household, register at <http://tinyurl.com/lentkits2022>, or call the church office to request one. Kits will be available for pickup beginning on Sunday, February 27th.

Ash Wednesday

*March 2nd, 7:30pm
St. James Presbyterian*

Maundy Thursday

*April 14th, 7:30pm
Cordata Presbyterian*

Tenebrae

*April 15th, 7:30pm
First Presbyterian*

Lenten Pilgrimage 2022



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

Susan Diemont-Conwell

Faye Hill (Clerk of Session)

Maureen Kosa

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 *The Rent Collector* by Camron Wright. We will meet the third Monday in February, February 21st at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link. Books will be available in the church office on Sunday January 30th.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

2/2	Louise Hardin	🎂
2/2	Pam Pries	🎂
2/5	Janet Oakley	🎂
2/12	Tim Crandall	🎂
2/20	Randy Bowers	🎂
2/22	Gail Haines	🎂
2/23	Jim Gresham	🎂
2/26	Ralph Rinne	🎂
2/27	Kay Carr	🎂
2/28	Nancy Peck	🎂

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



Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

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





A winter sunset in Bellingham



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