

Looking Ahead: Pandemic, Lent, Spring, and Life Together

Greetings siblings in Christ,

As I'm sure you are aware, the seasons are about to shift, and with that, we are walking into yet another phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mask mandates are lifting in some places, revised and relaxed rules making a return to some more of our activities, and we are catching a glimpse of the resurrection life that Spring brings about. As we step into Lent (Ash Wednesday is March 2), we enter a season of preparation, discipline, and hope amidst a shifting world.

I'm excited to think about the prospect of shifting out of pandemic mode, perhaps officially to the "new normal," soon, but Lent gives me pause. Lent is a season that reminds me that we must go slow, take deliberate steps in our formation as people of Jesus, and not rush too quickly to resurrection without tasting the grief and learning we have experienced in this previous long winter.

This Lent, we will continue our new tradition of "pilgrimaging" with our fellow Bellingham Presbyterian churches. St. James will host an in-person and Livestream Ash Wednesday service on March 2 at 7:30 pm. Cordata Presbyterian (400 Meadowbrook Ct, Bellingham) will welcome us for Maundy on Thursday, April 14 at 7:30 pm. We will finish the pilgrimage at First Presbyterian Church (1031 N. Garden St., Bellingham) on Friday, April 15 at 7:30 pm with a Good Friday Tenebrae service, leading into Easter weekend. Each church will provide childcare and Livestream options at all of these events.

As we think about moving into a season where mask mandates begin to lift, it is essential to understand that our church will take measured, deliberate steps in our reopening as we have committed to doing all along. We will also continue to follow local, state, and CDC guidance, ensuring that we keep the people in our building safe.

I'm sure many of you are wondering about the return of such activities as choral singing, children's programs, and even coffee service after church. While we have had plenty of time to think about the next steps for these elements of our life together, we will still need to roll things out slowly. So, once again, we ask everyone to be patient and considerate of the broad-ranging needs and abilities we have to accommodate for the return of these activities.

In the meantime, though, we can continue to gear up and prepare for resurrection. I hope that Lent will be a season where you can take stock of your spiritual disciplines and grow closer in your journey with Jesus. We will also be reaching out to folks who submitted their Time & Talent forms to get you connected up with committees and activities around the church.

It is too early to say we are fully emerging from this long season of COVID-19. Our world is still so topsy-turvy. War is breaking out in Ukraine. Black lives are still bearing the weight of racism in our nation. We are still experiencing the loss and change in relationships with family and friends. And so, we stay the faithful course together. We trust that God is about making all things new — and it is our work to participate in this renewal and resurrection. So, let's stick together, let's support each other, and let's emerge from this challenging time as a renewed people, ready to help and lead God's people forward in Christ.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth



FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

New Year, New Possibilities

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

This month, the Finance Committee and Session got their first peek at the 2022 St. James financials. While things shake down over the course of the year, there is always a sense of renewal and hope at the start of a brand new fiscal year. Between your response to the 2022 Stewardship Campaign, steady building use, and a healthy reserves, our General Operating Budget projects that we will have all we need for the day in and day out ministry of St. James. God is faithful!

Of course, as the past few years have taught us, curveballs are never out of the question! At the end of January, we saw lower than anticipated pledges and general offering. We anticipate that this is, in part, due to the Omicron surge. We recognize that coming to church in person can impact giving. Additionally, more folks are using online giving and/or bank transfers. This is a great way to give, whether we are in person or not! Personally, our family loves the convenience of online giving, but I will be the first to admit that it is easy to forget to update your pledge at the start of a new year.

The Finance Committee will continue to monitor all of our church funds - the general fund, the designated funds, our reserves, and our endowments - monthly. These numbers are reviewed in triplicate by our Treasurer, the Finance Committee, and Session to ensure both accountability and swift action in case we need to make budget adjustments.

If you have any questions about contributions or our financials, please contact Marina McLeod, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com.

Here is a snapshot of our 2022 General Operating Budget as of January 31:

<i>Income/Expenses</i> 1/31/2022	January 2022 Actual	January 2022 BUDGET
Income	\$15,659.75	\$23,466.00
Expenses	\$22,633.01	\$23,946.21

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 February 13, 2022

- The Session continues to meet by Zoom. All members of the Session were present at the meeting. Pastor Seth was the moderator for the meeting.
- Deacon Adam Beaty was the representative from the Board of Deacons. He announced that the annual congregational picnic is planned for July at Lake Padden. The deacons are beginning to meet in hybrid form as the pandemic numbers improve.
- Church Treasurer, Marina McLeod, presented the following report for the month of January, 2022:



Beginning balance	\$ -0-
Income	\$15,659.75
Expenses	\$22,633.01
Ending balance	\$-6,973.26

- Pastor Seth Thomas announced that new elder Maureen Kosa will chair the Mission and Social Action Committee. Teresa Bowers will chair the Loving Welcome Committee.
- The Christian Faith Formation Committee is planning Vacation Bible School for summer which will be on a smaller scale than last year.
- The Loving Welcome Committee is scheduling a meeting for the Congregational Life Committee and the Membership Committee to develop strategies going forward.
- The Personnel Committee is making plans to do the annual staff reviews for non-pastor staff.
- Pastor Seth announced that 40 people have turned in Time and Talent sheets.
- The Session voted approval for a community garden on the southernmost section of our property, near the playground.
- The next meeting of the Session will be at noon on March 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!

February was a month of preparing for Lent. We are excited to once again be holding an in person Ash Wednesday service with First Presbyterian, Cordata, and Spring Church. We will have both the nursery and our Godly Play classroom open during the 7:30pm service on March 2nd.

In Godly Play we finished up our Parable series and will be jumping into our familiar Faces of Easter series with a couple new stories during Lent and for Easter. We are still looking for volunteers for our Godly Play program so please let Tracy know if you are interested in helping!

Our youth group enjoyed a movie night and are planning March's event. Anyone in middle or high school is welcome to attend our youth events! We have also begun a confirmation class for high school students. If you are or have a high school student and are interested in joining, please let Tracy or Pastor Seth know.

For Lent we will be holding a discussion led by Pastor Seth on the Apostle's Creed. Join us Sunday mornings at 9am on the Sunday morning worship zoom link. Books are available from Pastor Seth or Tracy. In addition to the Sunday morning discussion, The Christian Faith Formation Committee would like to invite you to participate in a personal Lenten weekly response. Each week we will post a different medium to accompany the Sunday morning discussion and sermon series. This will be an invitation to reflect on the piece of art/music/writing throughout the week and examine how it helps you to prepare for the coming of Easter and draw you closer to God.

Looking forward, we will be hosting an Easter egg hunt on Easter morning, April 17th following worship. We will need donations of individually wrapped nut free candy.

We will also be holding a week-long Vacation Bible School June 27th thru the 30th from 9 - 11:30am each morning. We will need lots of volunteers for this event before, during, and after! Please let Tracy know if you are able to help. More details and information on registration will follow.

We will also be looking for help in planning our twice postponed all church retreat coming this August 26th - 29th 2022 at Warm Beach camp. If you would like to help with the planning committee please let Tracy know.

We have so much coming up around St. James and I am filled with joy to see so much growth and excitement! As always if you have any questions or need anything please don't hesitate to contact me!

Godly Play Schedule for March**March 6th**

The Mystery of Easter. Lent is the season when we prepare for Easter. This lesson gives an introduction to the relationship of Lent to the Mystery of Easter as well as how Easter overflows into the season of Easter.

March 13th

Faces of Easter I & II. Lent is the season we prepare for Easter. These lessons help children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Easter. We move toward the Mystery by hearing the stories of Christ's journey toward the cross and resurrection. This week's lesson focuses on the face of Christ as a newborn child and Christ as the one who was lost and found.

March 20th: Faces of Easter III & IV

This week's lesson focuses on the One who was baptized and blessed and Christ's temptation in the desert.

March 27th: Work Day**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



<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 Jøssing Affair* by St. James member Janet Oakley. We will meet the third Monday in March, March 21st at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link. Books are available in the church office.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

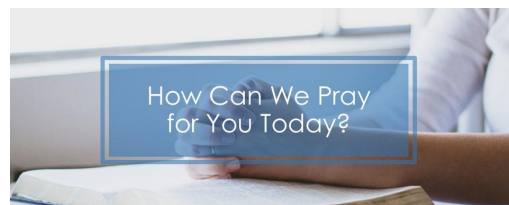
MARCH 6 THROUGH APRIL 10

During the Season of Lent, we will be studying the Apostles' Creed. Join Pastor Seth for a 9 am Bible Study Sunday mornings before worship, where we will use Alister McGrath's "Apostles' Creed" study guide to connect the Creed with the Scriptures. In-person and on Zoom. Guidebooks are available upon request.

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



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

2/29	Marina McLeod	🎂
3/3	Jody DeWilde	🎂
3/8	Martha Speer	🎂
3/11	Stacy Thomas	🎂
3/13	Adam Beaty	🎂
3/18	Madeleine Smith	🎂
3/21	Marion Dobbie	🎂
3/21	Pam Gibson	🎂
3/24	Zach Melrose	🎂
3/25	Peter and Mary van der Veen	💕
3/27	Cindy Bauleke	🎂
3/27	Donna Lane	🎂
3/28	Mike Smith	🎂
3/28	Margaret Humble	🎂
3/30	Jim Kosa	🎂

Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

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





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(360) 733-1325