
Stewarding Our Staff

It is October! And as the leaves fall from their branches and the rain (finally) returns, we also return to the annual task of responding to God's blessings and planning for the year to come.

We will officially launch our St. James 2023 Stewardship Campaign on Sunday, November 6. We will begin distributing information packets, including an outline of what our Finance Committee is hopeful for in the coming year and an opportunity for you to respond by returning your commitment to an annual pledge. Everyone connected with St. James is welcome to participate in this process, as it helps us understand what kinds of financial commitments we can make in the year ahead.

God has given us this church body where we worship, grow, and serve. And as a body, we work to steward and take care of the community. In years past, we've focused on Stewardship Season to focus on building needs, technology upgrades, and the development of our children's ministries. This year, we choose to focus on strengthening our church staff: the great folks employed to support this community.

We're a neighborhood church with a modest but mighty staff. Staff salaries and benefits make up about 2/3 of our annual operating budget, which means that the people we employ are a central focus for where your giving dollars go. Core staff members are Tracy Caruso (Children & Family Director), Sharon King (Administrative Secretary/Interim Treasurer), Ta Wei Tsai (Music Director), Marina McLeod (Treasurer), and myself (Pastor). Alison Witwer, Rory Anderson, and Ava Sandler make up our fantastic Godly Play and Nursery team. These people lead our music, care for our finances, nurture our children and family programs, and support the spiritual needs of our congregation. We do many things at St. James with volunteer support, but the staff is central in how we make things happen.

I am proud to say that this current staff is the strongest iteration of our team that I have led in my 5+ years at St. James. Our team has the humility, hunger, and smarts to do the work well. And we want to support their work!

We have all felt the pinch of our nation's inflation rate over the last couple of years. The cost of living continues to rise, especially in beautiful cities like Bellingham. Amplify this with the continual stress of working in the aftermath of a 2+ year global pandemic which asked so much from us all, especially from our employees tasked with executing our church's ministries amidst incredible challenges.

This year, our Stewardship Campaign will highlight the gifts of these staff people and ask our community to help strengthen their compensation so we can continue cultivating a strong team and doing good work. It is an understanding that working in the non-profit sector is not the most lucrative opportunity out there. And yet, if we want to keep and strengthen the right people, we need to develop them and compensate them well. That is what we are asking you to help with this year.

If I had my way, I would like to see the following happen through the growth of our pledged giving this year:

- We expand Tracy Caruso's role as Children & Family Director to include more time for outreach to youth and young adults. I would like us to free Tracy up to develop our youth program and service opportunities for young people, both those already present and those in need of community. I want to see Tracy begin her Christian Educator certification with the PC(USA) and become a certified Godly Play trainer.
- We raise Sharon King's salary to a level competitive with local church administrators. Our office position is funded at the level of basic secretarial work, and if you know Sharon, you know she already goes far above and beyond the scope of what that entails.
- We initiate an audit of all staff compensation to make sure it aligns with comparable positions in other local non-profits, not just churches. And then, we execute a salary leveling process to keep our staff's pay competitive.

Stay tuned for more information regarding how you can participate in this year's pledge campaign. I know it is demanding to consider increasing your monthly support of the church, especially amidst all the other financial challenges so many of us face. But we also put our faith in God to provide all we need. God is faithful, so we trust that God will direct us to expand again according to our needs.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - OCTOBER 2022

Looking Ahead

Submitted by Lindsay Anderson, Finance chair

Happy October, St. James friends! On behalf of the Finance Committee, thank you for helping us through this year with your continued prayers, service, pledges, and offerings. Right now, the St. James Finance Committee, Session, and Staff are looking ahead to 2023. We deeply appreciate all that this community has been able to do to share in God's loving kindness, both within and outside our church walls over the years. Soon, we will be launching our 2023 Stewardship Campaign. Stay tuned for more details as we get ready for a new calendar year. Giving financially is one way to support the mission of our community.

Updates, Celebrations, and Next Steps:

- Behind the scenes, Treasurer Marina has been able to help us with our 2022 financial reports while still mostly on medical leave. We have updated reports through the first quarter of 2022. We are grateful that Marina is able to do this!
- The Finance Committee and Session is exploring ways to help us continue to get caught up as we head into the 2023 fiscal year.
- Sharon, our St. James Administrative Assistant, continues to handle the day to day deposit and accounts payable operations. Thank you Sharon!
- I am always thankful for our committee members. Ray Dellecker, Pam Gibson, and Jim Kosa have all served on our committee this year.
- We are consistently monitoring activity in our General Fund, Endowments, Mutual Funds, and Designated Funds. Everything continues to be generally as projected, with the exception of market losses in our endowments and mutual funds (which is to be expected in 2022).
- 2023 general operating budget planning is underway and our Stewardship Campaign will launch this fall.

We appreciate your prayers, support, and generosity. If you have any questions about a current or past contribution, please email stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com or call Sharon King in the office, 360-733-1325.

With Grace,

Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

How to Give to St. James:

Online Giving: <https://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving>

Mail-In: St. James Presbyterian Church, 910 14th St. Bellingham, WA 98225

In-Person: Drop your gifts in the contact-free giving box in the sanctuary

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session

Highlights of the Session Meeting on September 11, 2022

- The Session met in the church lounge following worship on September 11, 2022.
- The Session voted to allocate funds to hire an accounting firm to help with finances during Treasurer's absence, if needed.
- The Building and Grounds Committee reported that we added two new tenants – Little Saplings Music and The Table Church.
- The Mission and Social Action Committee reported that Habitat for Humanity organizers will be speaking during worship on 9/18/22 about their current building projects. They are seeking assistance and donations.
- The Personnel Committee reminded the Session that Pastor Seth Thomas' annual review will take place on September 28th.
- Our new Director of Music, Ta Wei Tsai, is off to a good start, and will soon be starting regular choir rehearsals. Everyone is invited!
- The Parish Lunch is scheduled for October 23rd following worship. Deacons will be contacting members about this soon.
- The December Nominating Congregational Meeting has been set for December 18, 2022 following worship. The Annual Meeting has been set for January 22, 2023.



THE SANCTUARY COURSE®

TUESDAYS
Oct. 4 - Nov. 22

7:00 - 8:00 PM
in the Fellowship Hall

LEARN MORE AT
[SANCTUARYMENTALHEALTH.ORG](https://sanctuarymentalhealth.org)

 **SANCTUARY**
Mental Health Ministries

 **St. James**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SANCTUARY MENTAL HEALTH COURSE

This Tuesday, October 4, we begin an 8 week educational opportunity focusing on Mental Health. The Sanctuary Course provides an excellent integration of how our faith and life together connect with our mental health and the struggles we face on a psychological and social level. Come to learn, process, and explore how we can support each other. Tuesdays, 7pm, in the Fellowship Hall

For more information on the program, click the link provided. <https://sanctuarymentalhealth.org/>

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

I hope everyone had a good September with all the craziness of back to school and the end of summer. We had a great month at St. James with our best attended Godly Play kickoff, a fun game night, and a great Presbyterian Basics class. Even with all that in September we have more to look forward to in October!



Our Youth Group will be meeting on October 2nd, November 6th, and December 4th to look at what it means to be a neighbor using scripture and Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood! We will meet after service from 12-1pm. We have invited the youth from Cordata Presbyterian and First Presbyterian churches to join us and look forward to hosting them.

Our Godly Play class continues to expand on some of our core stories with new extension lessons that have been fun to introduce to our students. We are still looking for volunteers who are willing to be a door person or storyteller for Godly Play. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org if you are willing to help with that. We have hired another wonderful nursery/child care worker, Ava Sandler. Introduce yourselves and welcome her.

Looking forward to the end of the year is our Stewardship campaign and the time to think about giving to St. James and the programs and ministries we support. This past year has been an amazing year bringing back many of the events we had been missing during Covid. It was amazing to be back in our Godly Play classroom last fall and to be able to host VBS. We also were able to participate in new events like the Sacred Earth Fair and an All Church Retreat at Warm Beach. We are looking forward to another year full of fellowship events, adult education classes, expanding Godly Play and our youth ministries. To continue our Children and Family Ministries program growing we need the support of our St. James family and we ask you to think of our programs during this time of Stewardship.

Godly Play Schedule for October

October 2nd The Story of Abraham/The Story of Sarah

October 23rd The Ark and the Tent/Temple

October 9th The Story of Moses

October 30th Work Day

October 16th The 10 Best Ways

CHOIR IS BACK AGAIN!

Dear Friends of St. James,

Greetings, and a very warm welcome to all near and far! Yes, the rumor is true: choir is restarting again in just a few more days, with the first rehearsal kicking off on Thursday, October 6th, at 7:30pm in the Sanctuary.

I know I speak for not just myself when I say that through the challenges we've faced as a community in the times of the pandemic over the past two and half years, music has been a constant source of comfort and inspiration.

If you are looking forward to having a time and space where you can sing with other folks in a safe, friendly, and supportive environment, I would love to invite you to join us for choir this Fall (and beyond). We are going to have a group of diverse musicians, with a wide variety of musical skills and levels - from complete beginners, to lifelong music-maker's - but all with the common understanding of being kind, welcoming, and caring towards one another.

All you have to bring is yourself, and anyone else who you know that might enjoy singing with others. No prior experience of singing in a choir group - nor the ability to read music - is required; we will all be on our individual journey within the group, to discover and sharpen our musical skills.

Our goal during the hour-long rehearsal each week on Thursdays (7:30-8:30pm) is not only to rehearse for the service on the following Sunday, but a chance to build community, and learn something from everyone else in the room through the sharing of music.

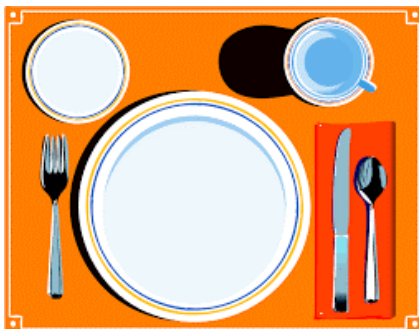
Lastly, no weekly commitment is required. While we'd love to have you as often as you're able to make it, we won't ever stop you from visiting your favorite friends, kids, or mountains.

Hope to see you soon, and please do not hesitate to email me at music@saintjamespres.org

Thank you!

Yours truly,

Ta Wei Tsai



ANNUAL PARISH LUNCH

Sunday, Oct 23

In Fellowship Hall following worship

Deacon's provide everything

A fellowship opportunity with your Deacon and parish members

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: Ta Wei Tsai, 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

Andrew McLaurin

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, Amy Morriss



<https://mlp.org/>

Worship Schedule - Online and In-Person, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

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 Heartbeat of Trees: Embracing Our Ancient Bond with Forests and Nature* by Peter Wohlleben. We are meeting the third Monday in October, October 17th at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link. Books are available in the church office.

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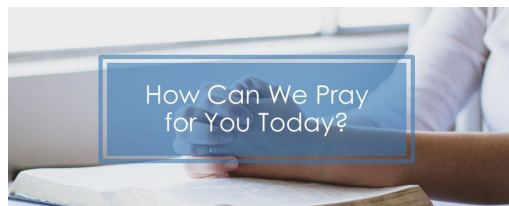
PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

AA Fairhaven Group
 AA Grateful Hearts Women's Group
 AA Men's Book Study Group
 AA SOS Men's Group
 Bayside Co-op Preschool
 Bellingham Community Chorus
 Bellingham Ukulele Group
 Boy Scouts Troop 7
 Happy Hour Al-Anon
 Overeaters Anonymous
 St. James Fitness
 St. James Yoga
 Linda's Tai Chi
 Little Sapling Music
 The Table Church
 Whatcom Weavers Guild

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

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

10/1	Jim Mullen	🎂
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	🎂
10/21	Jessica Parks	🎂
10/24	Claude Hill	🎂
10/24	Sean Keyes	🎂
10/27	Robin Crandall	🎂
10/31	Selina Baker	🎂



Deadlines for church publications
 Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm
 Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm
 Monthly "the Pulse": the 25th, 2:00pm





Pastor Seth Thomas, Kyle and Lindsay Anderson, celebrating the completion of the Leavenworth Oktoberfest Marathon. Seth ran the Half (13.1 miles) and Lindsay and Kyle ran the Marathon (26.2...each!)



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