
*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in ALL circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This November, as we begin our Annual Stewardship Campaign and prepare for the 2023 fiscal year, I would like to invite us to remember gratitude. This verse from 1 Thessalonians has been an anchor for my life, a constant reminder of where to focus our energies as we live out our faith each day. I would love to explore it in the context of our planning for pledging for 2023.

First, let us rejoice! God has faithfully guided our congregation through yet another significant year. Emerging from the disruptions of 2020 and 2021, we have regained a sense of stability in our gathered life together. Sunday worship is full, both with in-person and at-home attendees. We have our choral program back! We have welcomed new and returning members to resume much of our regular activities. And the face of our congregation has changed: we continue to welcome new families, individuals, seekers, and long-time churchgoers alike, to fellowship in our church. For this, we are so grateful.

Along with this joy, we also see the resumption of life around the church building throughout the week. Our building bustles again with the sound of young children from the Bayside Preschool and Little Saplings music programs. Christian education offerings about mental health, Presbyterianism, environment, and racial justice continue to gain momentum as we focus on growing in our faith and service. As well we celebrate that we can turn our learning into action as we step up to partner once again with Habitat for Humanity, Lowell Elementary School, Interfaith Coalition, and the numerous Twelve Step Recovery programs that utilize our space. Rejoice!

And amidst our joy, we also hear the call to pray without ceasing. We pray to praise God for all that God has continued to provide for our congregation, lifting our voices in gratitude. And we pray for what we know is likely to be continued challenging days ahead. I write this note as our city is shrouded with yet another day of wildfire smoke, a sign of the continuing ecological struggles we face. War and chaos continue to reign in our world. At home, many in our congregation face chronic and acute illnesses that make life more challenging. All of these factors amount to a heavy burden many of us feel. And we turn to God in prayer that God would intervene and sustain us, even as the road ahead may be difficult.

For all of this, we finally give thanks. The Apostle Paul writes that we give thanks in ALL circumstances. Not just some, not just when the way is clear, and the sun is shining (or rain is falling, for that matter). How are we to give thanks? We show our gratitude by returning to God the gifts we have received. We give thanks even in the darkest night, saying we will still praise the Lord.

I have found the practice of gratitude to be one of the most important ways my faith sustains. I can think of many reasons we might want to give up hope, to turn inwards and protect what we have. But by embracing gratitude, we can remember that nothing we have truly belongs to us — it is all a gift from God. And so, with grateful hearts, we turn to God and offer the best of what we have, knowing that God is faithful to use our gifts to bless others and invigorate our hope when we struggle.

This year, the invitation is to examine our hearts seriously about our joy, prayers, and gratitude and then return to God the gifts God blesses us with. We all have different financial situations and can each give our gifts to God in alignment with that place in life. How much or how often you can contribute is of less consequence than the heart of joy, prayer, and gratitude from where these gifts come.

Please look out for your 2023 Stewardship Packet on Sunday, November 6. We rely on your responses to help us craft our operating budget and take strides to grow in our worship and service in the year to come. We request that you return your pledge response by November 27, the first Sunday of Advent, so we can finish the year confidently and look ahead to what God has for us next.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - OCTOBER 2022

Looking Ahead

Submitted by Lindsay Anderson, Finance chair

- This month, St. James will begin our Annual Stewardship Campaign. We invite you to prayerfully consider adding a new pledge, continue an ongoing pledge, or adjust your giving in a way that you feel makes sense for you right now. As the St. James Session, our main priority is to ensure our ongoing ministry of Loving Welcome, Joyful Practice, and Compassionate Service continues.
- Of course, there are utilities, maintenance, and supplies to be purchased next year. We have a strong commitment to children, youth, education, mission, and social action. In order to live out our values, we rely on a small, but mighty staff that gives above and beyond because they feel deeply called to serve here in our community. Your pledges go a long way to support our mission and our staff. Our Session highly values the people behind our programs.
- Many things have been normal in the past three years, and many things have not. The sun keeps rising and setting. The calendar keeps ticking along. We worship, pray, work, gather, play, and rest. We also suffer and struggle. Our Session and Committee continue to hold our treasurer Marina McLeod and her family (as well as all of us going through tough times) close in our hearts and prayers.
- Thank you for considering a 2023 pledge. On behalf of the Finance Committee and the St. James Session, I express gratitude and praise for God's continued faithfulness. Our life and ministry together is a balm through times of joy and also in seasons of hardship.

Stewardship Updates and Finance Behind the Scenes:

- Stewardship packets will be available at church on Sunday, November 6.
- You can return pledge forms by mail, in person via the offering box, or electronically. Will we do an electronic pledge form via Planning Center.
- The finance committee, session, and staff are working with an outside financial agency, Avlon Financial to help us get caught up for 2022, and ready for 2023.

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

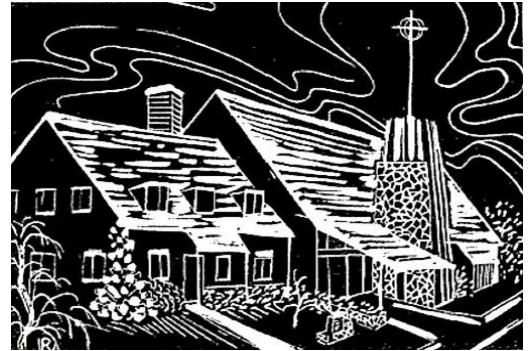
In-Person: Drop your gifts in the contact-free giving box in the sanctuary

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session

Highlights of the Session Meeting on October 11, 2022

- The Session met with prospective new members Judy Buchan, Ralph Buchan, Ryan Knight and Kristi Warnekros. They shared their faith stories and answered questions from the Session. They will be received into membership on November 20, 2022.
- Susan Conwell presented the devotions on radical kindness as it relates to our faith.
- Deacon Merry Thomas brought greetings from the Board of Deacons. She reminded the Session of the Parish Lunch on October 23, 2022 immediately following worship.
- Pastor Seth presented a Treasurer's Report which included the months of January through April, 2022, which was accepted by the Session. The church will soon begin the transition from the Power Church program to QuickBooks for the church financials.
- The Session voted to continue the Emergency Assistance Fund which was begun to help those who needed financial help during the COVID pandemic. Now the fund will broaden to include other needs for short term emergency financial assistance. The Pastor will serve as administrator of the fund and will work in consultation with the Board of Deacons.
- The Stewardship Drive will begin on November 6, 2022.
- The next meeting of the Session will be on November 13, 2022.



Photos from the Deacon's lunch on Sunday, Oct. 23



CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

October was a great month as we begin to wind down the year and look forward to a lot of great opportunities and events.

In Godly Play we told several new Godly Play stories as extensions to our Core stories. For November we will have all new Godly Play stories. We have also started sharing our Godly Play classroom with The Table Church on Sunday evenings. We are so excited that our space can be used to share this amazing program with even more children! We are always looking for volunteers to help with our children's ministry program! We are currently looking for emergency backup volunteers for the nursery as well as Godly Play storytellers and door people. Please let Tracy know if you have questions about any of these roles or if you can help.

Our Youth group began a 3-part series using Mr. Rogers Neighborhood about what it means to be a neighbor. We are shifting the time we will be meeting. We will meet for the second session at 9am on Sunday, November 6th and then again at 9am on Sunday December 4th. Doughnuts will be provided. We hope you can join us!

We are looking forward to a wrap up of our church year and the beginning of a new one with Advent. Look for more information to come regarding our Advent festival, Holiday Joy Program, and Caroling.

Godly Play Schedule November:

November 6th The Story of Ruth

November 13th The Story of King David

November 20th The Story of Daniel

November 27th Advent I



Congratulations to the Keyes family as they are expecting their first grandchild. The pink blanket, knitted by Pam Gibson, was presented as a gift from the St. James congregation.



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 COURSE

Please join us on Tuesday evenings for an 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 through November 22 in the Fellowship Hall.**

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

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 Cold Millions*, an intimate story of brotherhood, love, sacrifice, and betrayal set against the panoramic backdrop of an early twentieth-century America that eerily echoes our own time. We will meet on Monday November 21st at 7:00pm. Email tracy@saintjamespres.org for the Zoom link. Books are available in the church office.

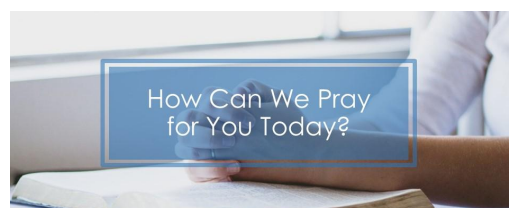
PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

AA Fairhaven Group
 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

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

11/2	Trevor Murphy	🎂
11/5	Pete Conwell	🎂
11/7	Jean Seater	🎂
11/11	David Seater	🎂
11/12	Julie Keyes	🎂
11/13	Patricia Harris	🎂
11/15	Trent Van Dyken	🎂
11/19	Nancy Wagar	🎂
11/22	Miranda Keefe	🎂
11/22	Marilyn Madden	🎂
11/27	Wendy Crandall	🎂
11/29	Craig Keyes	🎂
11/30	Claudia Allan	🎂
11/30	Cedric Engels	🎂
11/30	Cathy Fairbanks	🎂

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





The St. James choir is back! Join us on Sundays to enjoy the beautiful music, or come and sing in the choir.



910 14th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
www.saintjamespres.org
office@saintjamespres.org
(360) 733-1325