

From Generation to Generation - December 2022

The Season of Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year and a return to Jesus' annunciation and birth story. It is a season to look ahead, in the hope we hold for Christmas, anticipating the arrival of the Christ-child, God with us. It is also a season to look back and remember our forebears, who, from generation to generation, passed on the stories and way of faith to us. We respond with gratitude, reverence, and awe during such times.

This year, we are studying through the narrative of Jesus' birth story, using a beautifully crafted curriculum of texts, art, and devotional tools provided by A Sanctified Art. This arts collective gathers liturgies, visuals, and biblical commentary to support churches with creative resources throughout the liturgical year. This year's Advent story weaves together the sense of memory and anticipation from generation to generation, sharing the good news like the first visitors to Christ's manger went and did.



During Advent, we will look at the stories of Jesus' lineage, parents, and family and hear of those who came to visit him upon his birth. Well-worn stories will breathe new life in us as we consider the simplicity and mundane nature of Christ's birth — a poor child, born to migrant parents, under the watchful eye of imperial and local power, come to set us all free through his loving life. And as we recall Jesus' story, we are also invited to reflect upon our own stories, our narratives of how God has been with us through the generations.

As you decorate your home this year, I'm sure you will remember stories of where particular ornaments and candle stands, dishes and recipes come from in your family's story. Each year, we set out my Grandmother's Christmas mugs, beautifully simple with their holly and berry adornment, ready to be filled with holiday warmth and sipped from beside the tree. These mugs tell part of my story, helping me remember where I have come from and to whom I belong. I imagine you have an item or piece of decoration that evokes these kinds of memories for you. What story does it tell? How do you share this memory with others to keep these stories alive today?

Advent is also a season for us to gather close to one another and remember together. To hold hope together. To sing of the newborn Christ as a community, a people who share this hope that God would be with us here today. We stand in contrast to a world that often divides and insulates us from one another. We sing and gather in conscious defiance of all that would keep us separate, all that says, "There's no room for you here." And in this gathering, we find that there is absolutely room for us in God's story. We belong at the side of Christ's cradle, welcoming this beloved child. We belong together as we support those who are hurting and longing for the hope of Christ's light to show up and shine in our darkness. We gather to BE that light for one another!

I hope you will join us through this season. We have Advent devotionals available each Sunday in the church narthex, free to take and reflect upon during this season. We will celebrate Christmas Eve together at 7 pm on December 24 AND gather for a simple worship service to celebrate Christmas Day at 10:30 am on December 25. Come as you are, bring your family and friends, and share this generational story of God with us through the ages.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Seth

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - DECEMBER 2022

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE & LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

Submitted by Lindsay Anderson, Finance chair

Greetings and Happy Advent! On behalf of the St. James Session and Finance Committee, thank you to those who have submitted a pledge towards our 2023 Stewardship Campaign. As of November 30, 36 pledgers have committed to giving upwards of \$160,000 towards our general operating budget in the coming year. If you are able to join in these efforts, it is not too late!

In order to meet our goal of increasing staff salaries while also maximizing our giving towards mission and social action, we hope to raise \$40,000 more in pledges. Thank you for your ongoing prayers, service, and support. I continue to be in awe of the unique ways God works through the St. James community to bring hope and connection to our hurting, fragmented world.

On a final note, as we wrap up 2022, we continue to work with Avlon Financial to help us finalize year to date reports related to our general operating budget, endowments, and designated funds. These reports, along with the final pledge numbers will help Session finalize next year's budget.

How to Make a 2023 Pledge:

- Hard Copy: Mail your pledge card to the church or return to the offering box on Sunday.
- Digital Pledge Card: www.tinyurl.com/StJames2023

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

JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



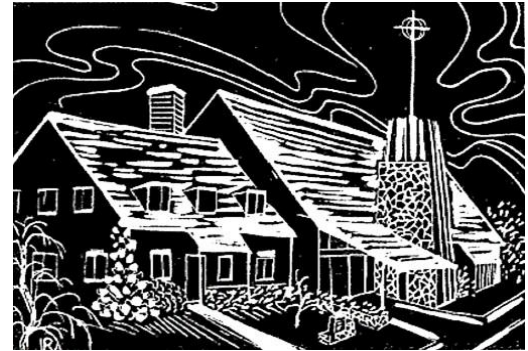
St. James will have a candlelight service on Saturday, December 24th, at 7:00pm. This lovely tradition symbolizes the light of Christ coming into the darkness in the world. Happy Christmas!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session

Highlights of the Session Meeting on November 13, 2022

- Prior to the opening of this meeting, the Session met with prospective new members Behzad Hagshenas, Holly Hagshenas, and Shannon Parks-Beck, who shared their faith stories and answered questions from the Session. They were all received into membership on November 20, 2022.
- Elder Lindsay Anderson shared a devotional message on thankfulness and led the Session in prayer.
- Deacon Rick Seater brought greetings from the deacons. The deacons continue to stay in touch with all members of the church. The Session thanked Rick for the excellent job they are doing to connect with our members.
- The Finance Committee announced that several pledges for 2023 have already been returned to the church, and the committee feels hopeful about the outcome of the Stewardship Drive.
- The Building and Grounds Committee reported that the back-stage clean-up work party was a great success. Many folks stayed after worship to help. Thank you to everyone who gave a hand!
- The Loving Welcome Committee is working hard to have an Advent Festival, the first one in two years. They have set the date for December 4th.
- The Church Officer Nominating Committee will be meeting soon to begin their important search for church officers.
- Pastor Seth invited discussion about how to re-energize our program for training and supporting our volunteers.
- Pastor Seth announced that he plans to work on a new staffing structure soon.
- The December Nominating Congregational Meeting is scheduled for December 18th.
- The Annual Meeting will be held on January 22, 2023.
- Candlelight Christmas Eve service is planned for December 24th and Christmas Day worship will be on December 25th.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Come join us for an hour of joyful noise making - in the form of Caroling - from 6:30-7:30pm on Sunday, December 18th! We'll meet in the Horizon room to get hot cocoa shortly before 6:30pm, and go around the South Hill neighborhood to share the joy of the holiday season with others. No need to bring anything other than yourselves, and dress warmly for the outdoor singing. Sheet music will be provided. Looking forward to seeing you there, and merrily sing some familiar tunes together!

All the Very Best,
Ta Wei

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

What an exciting and busy time we have coming up this month!

Advent season is upon us! As our Godly Play story says: We are all making the journey. We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas, so let's go with the prophets, the Holy family, the shepherds, the angels, and the Magi and all the rest to make the journey that was not just back then. It is also now. For our Godly Play lessons, we will be

focusing on the 4 lessons in the advent series. Our Godly Play students will also be bringing home tins to collect change for our annual change drive for Family Promise. The tins will be due back on Sunday, January 8th. In January we will be adding in more volunteers to our Godly Play teachers, if you are interested in becoming one of our Godly Play storytellers or door people please let Tracy know!

Our Youth Group has been working on the Holiday Joy program. We are collecting gifts for Interfaith Coalition to distribute to families with children who wouldn't otherwise be receiving gifts this year. Tags for gifts are on the Angel Tree in the Horizon room. Gifts need to be returned to church Sunday, December 4.

For the adults at St. James during this season during worship, we will be using material from *From Generation to Generation, A Sanctified Art LLC Advent devotional*. It... "reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding-in and through us." Devotionals can be found in the narthex. We invite you to take a copy to use during this season of Advent.



Gifts under the tree for the Christmas Joy program. Thank you for your love and generosity St. James!

We are holding our annual Advent Festival after the worship service on December 4th. We hope everyone will join us for a soup and bread lunch followed by cookie decorating, wreath making, and Christmas card making. We will need donations of plain sugar cookies, greens, soup, and bread. Please find the sign up sheet in the Horizon room or email tess@sulerin.com to let us know what you can bring.

On Sunday, December 18th at 6:30 PM we hope you will join us for a night of caroling and cocoa! We'll be walking around South Hill to spread music and Christmas cheer to our neighbors. Email Tai Wei with any questions music@saintjamespres.org

There is so much happening around St. James this time of year and we hope you will join with us on our journey to Bethlehem! If there is anything you need or if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me! tracy@saintjamespres.org

Godly Play for December:

December 4th: Advent I & II Prophets and the Holy Family

These lessons help children continue to prepare for the Mystery of Christmas. We move toward Bethlehem, guided by the pointing prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi. We arrive at the birth of Jesus and the lighting of the Christ Candle.

December 11th: Advent III Shepherds

December 18th: Advent IV Wise Men

December 25th: Work Day



INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

Many of us take cooking for granted. Families in our housing are given agency over the steps they take to get out of homelessness. One way we do that is by having our volunteers provide meal kits that the families have chosen, rather than being given precooked meals chosen by someone else.

A parent in our housing recently said that they love the meal kits: "Being able to cook for my family is so important, but while homeless, I didn't have a way to cook meals for my kids."

St. James will be providing meal kits the week of January 16th. Please contact Gretchen Pfueller with any questions at gmpfueller@gmail.com

MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION - GARDENVIEW STOCKING PROJECT

Please join the Mission and Social Action team with our Gardenview Stocking Project. Presently, there are 42 residents housed in the Gardenview tiny homes. There are several ways to make a monetary donation so that our members can shop for the items to fill the stockings. You can go to the church website, www.saintjamespres.org, and click on the giving box. You will see a drop-down menu where you can click on the Gardenview Stocking Project. You can also give a check made out to St. James Presbyterian with *Gardenview Stocking Project* in the memo line, and you can also give cash to a member of the mission team. If you would like more information regarding this project, please reach out to a mission team member or email Maureen Kosa at mkosa@hotmail.com.



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

BOOK CLUB

St. James book club will be taking the month of December off. We will resume the third Monday of January, January 16th at 7:00pm. We will announce the January book at the end of December.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Meet at St. James on Sunday December 18 at 6:30pm for hot cocoa and caroling through the South Hill neighborhood.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

All are welcome to attend our Christmas Eve candlelight service on Saturday, December 24 at 7:00pm.

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
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



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

12/3	Pastor Seth Thomas	🎂
12/4	Cameron Aita	🎂
12/5	Wayne and Linda Landis	💕
12/9	Spencer Bravener	🎂
12/13	Dick Carr	🎂
12/15	Alia Lynnae Bowers	🎂
12/16	Jill Steel Dobson	🎂
12/19	Jennie McLaurin	🎂
12/21	Maureen Kosa	🎂
12/31	Katy Read	🎂

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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