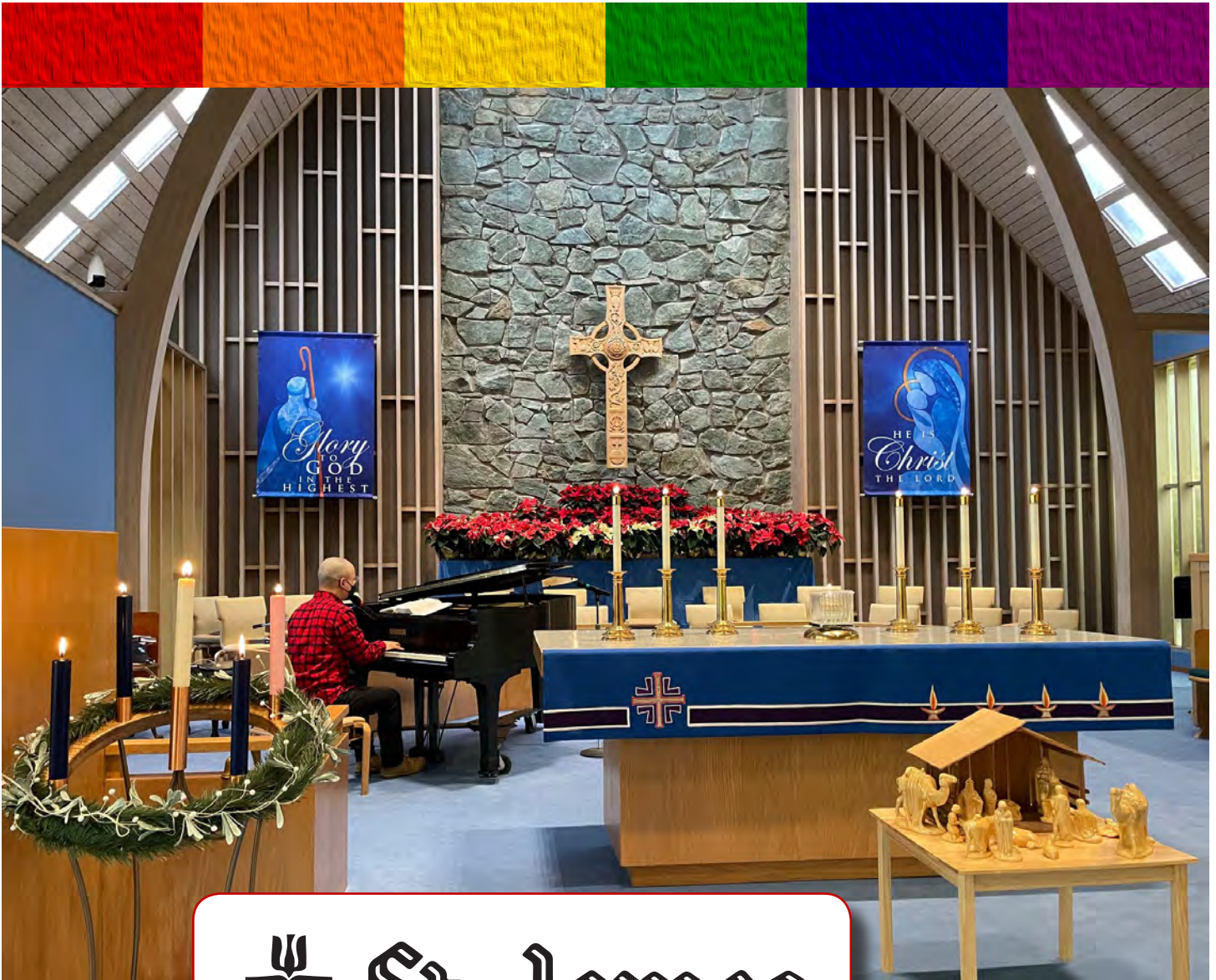


2022 St. James Presbyterian Annual Report



St. James
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CONTENTS

Staff and Officers.....	1
Annual Meeting Agenda	3
Pastor’s Note, the Rev. Seth J. Thomas	5
Tribute to Treasurer Marina McLeod.....	7
Board of Deacons, Alice Beaty.....	9
Clerk of Session, Faye Hill	10
Building & Grounds, Aaron Caruso	11
Christian Faith Formation, Sarah Condrey.....	13
Finance & Stewardship, Lindsay Anderson	15
Loving Welcome, Teresa Bowers	16
Mission & Social Action, Maureen Kosa	18
Nominating, Sarah Condrey.....	19
Pandemic Response, Susan Diemont-Conwell	19
Personnel, Faye Hill.....	20
Worship & Music, the Rev. Seth J. Thomas	21
Pastor’s Terms of Call, Congregation	23
Annual Financial Report, Finance Committee	24

STAFF MINISTERS

The Congregation

PASTOR

The Rev. Seth J. Thomas
pastor@saintjamespres.org

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Tracy Caruso
tracy@saintjamespres.org

MINISTRY ASSISTANT

Sharon King
office@saintjamespres.org

WORSHIP DIRECTOR

Ta Wei Tsai
music@saintjamespres.org

CUSTODIAN

Jerry Arreola
jerryarreola468@gmail.com

DEACONS

Moderator, Alice Beaty

CLASS OF 2022

Alice Beaty
Valerie McBeth
Jean Seater
Rick Seater

CLASS OF 2023

Alice Bailey
Adam Beaty
Kirsten Oliver
Merry Thomas

CLASS OF 2024

Pam Gibson
Julie Keyes
Carla Shafer
Amy Morriss

SESSION

Moderator, The Rev. Seth J. Thomas

CLASS OF 2022

Lindsay Anderson, Finance
Aaron Caruso, Building & Grounds*
Susan Diemont-Conwell, Pandemic
Nebiyu Tesfa, Worship

CLASS OF 2023

Teresa Bowers, Loving Welcome*
Faye Hill, Personnel & Clerk of Session*

CLASS OF 2024

Sarah Condrey, Christian Faith Formation
Maureen Kosa, Mission & Social Action
Andrew McLaurin, Personnel

*Church Trustee







AGENDA

Annual Congregational Meeting: January 22, 2023

Call to Order / Opening Prayer / Quorum

Welcome

**Minutes of Previous Meeting
(already approved by Session)**

Review of the Annual Report

Report by Personnel Committee

Terms of Call Summary and Vote

2022 Budget Presentation

2023 Session Adopted Budget Presentation

Report by the Trustees

Outgoing Elder Report

Adjourn with Prayer & Doxology





PASTOR'S NOTE

Submitted by the Rev. Seth J. Thomas

God promises never to leave us nor forsake us. In times of great joy, it is often relatively easy to see God's presence. Of course, we know God is present in favorable circumstances and blesses us in our work and lives. In the more trying times, however, we begin to wonder where God is—why do we face such struggle? Where is God when we are hurting or lonely?

Each year, as I try to summarize and frame all that I've seen God accomplish in our life together at St. James, I find myself attempting to paint a positive picture and hide from the messes we've found ourselves in and the struggles we've faced. There are yet again so many things we can be thankful for that God has done amidst us: We keep gathering, growing in faith and connecting our lives to the liberating story of God.

And yet, this year, it's harder to see the light. The weight of loss overshadows. And I've come to accept this is ok. It is ok for us not always to know what will come next. It's ok to step out in faith when we don't always have control over outcomes. And it is ok to look back to God and say, "Please, help. Be near."

As with each year, the passing of time and aging impacts our community. We celebrated the lives of Gale Pfueller, Irene Rome, Margaret de Maine and Milt Schayes, longtime St. James members who had a lasting impact on many of us. Each faced health difficulties in the last years of their vibrant lives, and we held space for them to live out their days with us gracefully. With the support of their families, we send them on into glory with Christ, entrusting them into God's kingdom community which we all await.

Sadly, this year was marked by a tragic death as well, for we were faced with supporting our church treasurer, Marina McLeod, as she battled a rare form of brain cancer that ultimately spread through her 34-year-old body. No family should have to say goodbye to their wife, daughter and friend at such a young age; no community should have to wrestle with a farewell to such a gracious friend this soon.

This year taught me how important it is to stay attentive to this present moment and all God has for us here and now. Life passes by. I recently talked with my son, Asher, about the meaning of the statement, "The days are long, and the years are short." Time passes, and our calling is to attend to the now, this moment, and what God is up to. We struggle with this because we want to be able to plan and control the outcomes down the road. We also want to amend the past and change our perspec-

See Pastor's Note, page 6

Cont'd. from Pastor's Note, page 5

tives to see things more favorably or find a silver lining. But what this year tells me is that all we have is now. Today, we abide in the presence of God's spirit and ask, "What shall we do today?" We do not hold any guarantee of a future, only a hope of the promise of our next breath. What will we do with the time we have?

As I look at the work we have before us at St. James, I am inspired to ask this question of us: "What shall we do today?" This congregation has persisted, grown and served our community for over 130 years by doing just this: listening for God's voice in this present hour and finding active ways to engage with its leading.

When I encountered St. James Presbyterian Church during the call process to become pastor, a mission statement on the website caught my attention. It said: "We are a welcoming Christian community, seeking God's purpose, listening for God's message and sharing God's love."

Each word is active—seeking, listening and sharing. They exist in the present as ways we engage in discerning the voice of God and going into the world to participate in God's direction.

It is ok for us not always to know what will come next. It's ok to step out in faith when we don't always have control over outcomes. And it is ok to look back to God and say, "Please, help. Be near."

While our mission statement has adapted over the years to include additional pieces about loving welcome, joyful practice and compassionate service, this active sense still applies. Our work is to seek, listen and share the good news of God's love in the world around us, right here and now.

As you read this report, hear the stories of God's faithfulness as we've witnessed it all around St. James. From a new garden outside to expanding our Godly Play offerings, strengthening our financial structures and welcoming new tenants to share our beautiful space, we have seen God be faithful and sustain our call to ministry together. God is good.

In the coming year, I want to encourage you to take a more active stance on how you engage in the voice of God. This year is for us to keep listening, serving and loving one another. Now is the time we have; now is the moment for us to draw together and pursue that great purpose of God together. May we seek. May we listen. May we share.

And may we do this all in the name of Jesus Christ, who abides with us here and now, welcoming us into lives of meaning, purpose, grief and hope.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Seth



TRIBUTE TO MARINA

By the Rev. Seth J. Thomas

The year 2022 will forever be marked by our congregation's loss of a dear staff member and friend, Marina McLeod. Marina served as the St.

James treasurer since 2014 when she graciously took over the role from her mother, Suzanne Gresham. Marina's expertise, creativity and analytical thinking, along with her kind disposition, blessed our community for those many years.

We will remember Marina's smile and spark, the life and joy she brought to so many people. She was an active member of the St. James Bell Choir, a true "ringer" if there ever was one. Marina loved mathematics, games, music and her family. Alongside her husband, Mike, and family, we mourn the loss of this woman far too soon.



A service will be held in honor of Marina's life and memory on February 11, 2023, at 3 pm, at St. James Presbyterian Church.





BOARD OF DEACONS

Submitted by Alice Beaty, Board of Deacons Moderator

Parish 1 - Alice Bailey and Merry Thomas

Parish 2 - Jean and Rick Seater

Parish 3 - Julie Keyes and Carla Shafer

Parish 4 - Alice Beaty and Valerie McBeth

Parish 5 - Pam Gibson and Adam Beaty

Parish 6 - Kirsten Oliver and Amy Morriss

In 2022 the St. James deacons continued to provide care, compassion and friendship to members of their parishes.

Deacons acknowledged birthdays and anniversaries, sent emails and cards, and called their parishioners. Special attention was given to those who are homebound and those who have chosen not to attend church but watch the services online. Deacons visited and delivered treats and flowers, most recently poinsettias for Christmas. Deacons also helped with transportation, meals and deliveries for parish members.

Several memorial receptions for long-time members were hosted by the deacons. Providing a supportive and welcoming atmosphere for family members and friends to remember loved ones is a cornerstone of the deacons' calling.

The deacons hosted the annual picnic at Lake Pad-den Park in July. It was well attended and provided much-needed fellowship. The annual parish lunch was held in October for the first time since 2019.

Many thanks to those deacons "retiring" this year— Jean and Rick Seater and Alice Beaty. Thank you also to Valerie McBeth who agreed to another term as a deacon.

As a group and individually, the deacons are looking forward to serving the congregation of St. James in 2023.

Deacons acknowledged birthdays and anniversaries, sent emails and cards, and called their parishioners. Special attention was given to those who are homebound and those who have chosen not to attend church but watch the services online.



CLERK OF SESSION

Submitted by Faye Hill, Stated Clerk

St. James continues to grow as we begin to emerge from serious COVID challenges. More committees are meeting in person, attendance at worship in the sanctuary has increased and our membership has increased during 2022.

We mourn the loss of dear members Margaret deMaine, Gale Pfueller, Irene Rome and Milt Schayes in 2022. All of them were strong leaders, serving as church officers, attending church regularly and serving faithfully on several committees. We miss their leadership, but most of all we miss their friendship, smiles, enthusiasm and encouragement. May God guide us as we follow in their faithful footsteps.

We also mourn the loss of Marina McLeod, our beloved treasurer. She served St. James, the Session and the Board of Trustees in countless ways as our treasurer, and always with a smile.

We celebrate with joy the addition of seven new members this year. The Session met with and welcomed into membership Judy Buchan, Ralph Buchan, Behzad Hagshenas, Holly Hagshenas, Ryan Knight, Shannon Parks-Beck and Kristi Warnekros. Please introduce yourselves to each of them and offer them the warmth of fellowship which is very special at St. James.

The elders who served on the Session this year include Lindsay Anderson, Teresa Bowers, Aaron Caruso, Sarah Condreay, Susan Diemont-Conwell, Faye Hill, Maureen Kosa, Andrew McLaurin and Nebiyu Tesfa. There were 10 meetings of the Session this year—some on Zoom and most in person at the church.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you this year as Clerk of Session. I wish to thank our pastor and moderator, Seth Thomas, for his strong leadership, patient assistance and warm friendship.

Church Membership 2020-2022			
	2020	2021	2022
Year-start active members	122	122	127
New members	6	6	7
Members transferred	0	0	(1)
Members deceased	(5)	0	(4)
Members removed	(1)	(1)	(1)
Year-end active members	122	127	128



BUILDING & GROUNDS

Submitted by Aaron Caruso, Committee Chair

The focus of the Building & Grounds team this past year has been about making our building more welcoming and friendly to our tenants and other visitors to St. James. After saying goodbye to two tenured tenants, we welcomed five new groups that bring immense energy and excitement into our community. We now host new children's yoga and music or-



ganizations, as well as another faith community. The biggest building priority was to create a more permanent solution for the heating (or lack thereof) issues that we encountered last winter. Blythe Heating diagnosed and repaired our boiler, which should guarantee heat for the foreseeable future. Other work around the church included painting the kitchen, cleaning out the storage area behind the stage, and building and installing a new community garden.

After saying goodbye to two tenured tenants, we welcomed five new groups that bring immense energy and excitement into our community. We now host new children's yoga and music organizations, as well as another faith community.

As always, if you see something around the church that needs attention or you have an idea to improve our space, we would love to hear your thoughts.





CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Sarah Condrey, Committee Chair

The Christian Faith Formation committee welcomed the freshness of 2022. It was the first year in two years that was not defined by the pandemic, and we were happy to return to some of the events that we had put aside for the last couple of years like our traditional Easter egg hunt, Godly Play ice cream social kickoff and annual Advent festival. We are grateful for the dedication of Tracy Caruso, our director of Children & Family Ministries. Her leadership has continued to develop a growing ministry.



After two years of postponing due to pandemic concerns, St. James was finally able to have our long-awaited church retreat at Warm Beach in August. The weekend was a great success; several people stayed the whole weekend while others came out for the day on Saturday. We look forward to this becoming a tradition over the next several years.



We also saw the return of Creation Camp in June! This was an incredible week in which we served nearly 40 kids (not including the middle and high schoolers who made up half our volunteers!). Campers raised over \$750 for World Relief and were given a \$500 match by an impressed grandmother. Campers learned new songs, heard Godly Play stories and participated in craft projects, science lessons and several new games.

See *Christian Faith Formation*, page 14

Cont'd. from *Christian Faith Formation*, page 13

In addition to the retreat and the return of Creation Camp, Godly Play continued weekly with new stories and new storytellers, and in conjunction with First Presbyterian Church, Tracy helped train new Godly Play teachers. We are so grateful for the talents of Claude Hill, Sam King and Jeff King for their help in creating many of the pieces that go with each of the stories. Sunday mornings before the service, Kat Devaney has led a short memory verse time with the kids, which has been well attended and will be extended to adults each Sunday in the coming year.

The youth group began meeting again and assisted with the Holiday Joy program and setting up the Angel Tree with gift tags. Tracy is searching for additional youth service opportunities in the upcoming year. We have also resumed participation in Bellingham Community Partners and will again be partnering with Lowell Elementary School to provide students with snacks, mentors and help with ongoing needs.

We are so grateful for the year we have had and the activities we have been able to engage in after such a long and hard couple of years. This work would not have been possible without the leadership of Tracy and the support of committee members Ryan Knight and Kat Devaney. We look forward to a new year and the continued work of this committee!





FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP

Submitted by Lindsay Anderson, Committee Chair

On behalf of the St. James Finance committee, I would like to express deep gratitude toward God our provider and you our faithful community for supporting our church's day-in and day-out operations. This year has been marked by deep concern and now grief as we watched our dear St. James treasurer, Marina McLeod, as she endured an aggressive cancer diagnosis and then passed away on December 26. It is hard to write about finances at a time like this.

As I write this, I am reminded that beyond the daily operations, beyond the income and beyond the expenses, life and all of its beauty and hardships move ahead. Marina was an incredible gift to our community and we are saddened by her death. I personally had the pleasure of ringing the St. James bells with Marina, and her laughter was a welcome joy each week. She was deeply dedicated to all that she did, and during this year, we were held in large part by the foundation she laid for us. As a committee, our thoughts, prayers and love are with all of Marina's family and friends.

Highlights of 2022:

- Ray Dellecker and Pam Gibson have both been faithful committee members through thick and thin. I am grateful for their wisdom and for their presence.
- Sharon King has taken on a great deal of treasurer duties and is incredibly humble, willing to learn and an amazing problem-solver.
- Marina was an invaluable resource, both in the systems she created and in her willingness to consult as she was able.
- We have officially switched over to QuickBooks Pro with the help of a local business, Avlon Financial. This will make it easier for us to manage the day-in and day-out operating expenses and income of St. James.
- New tenants, including a local worshipping community, The Table, have helped to offset the loss from Hawthorne Learning Solutions and the Interfaith Coalition.
- We have been able to give toward all intended Mission & Social Action commitments, passing along 10% of pledged offerings in 2022.
- Overall, pledges and giving have outpaced expenses in 2022!

This has been a unique and "unprecedented" season in which to serve as your Finance elder, to say the least. I will continue serving on the committee but will be taking a break from Session while I support my teenagers into young adulthood. Thanks to the 2022 Finance & Stewardship committee (Pam Gibson and Ray Dellecker), along with Reverend Seth Thomas and Ministry Assistant Sharon King for their continued support. We are holding onto God's love, grace and wisdom in the year to come.



LOVING WELCOME

Submitted by Teresa “Tess” Bowers, Committee Chair

Helpers: Ryan Knight, Carla Shafer, Alice Beaty, Amy Morris and Tracy Caruso

The Loving Welcome committee is responsible for outreach and fellowship events. This year marked the first year of this committee officially operating under the new guiding values created in 2020 (Loving Welcome, Joyful Practice and Compassionate Service).

In 2022, we primarily employed social media and our online presence to advertise St. James activities. This was a year of reopening with church life getting back to normal. While last year we held a virtual gingerbread house-making party and outdoor caroling, this year we were able to hold many more in-person indoor events. (Sadly, caroling was cancelled this year due to weather, but hopefully this will become a new tradition.)



Pastor Seth led the way with community outreach, bringing the St. James presence to numerous community events such as the Whatcom Pride Festival and Sacred Earth Fair. St. James’ continued online presence has also made it possible for more people to attend from home even as the pandemic has somewhat subsided. We are so blessed to have such a warm, charismatic representative.

The [summer retreat] was full of swimming, hiking, sunshine and great conversations, and the music by the campfire is a memory I will treasure.

Our first summer church retreat was held at Warm Beach Retreat Center in August. Years ago and for many years, I recruited for and organized a winter snow retreat up in the mountains near Leavenworth at Tall Timber Ranch. The summer retreat at Warm Beach, however, was more accessible for many at St. James, giving participants the option of staying for the entire weekend or for a just a day. Though much of the retreat-planning had already been accomplished when it was originally planned in 2020, Ryan

See Loving Welcome, page 17

Cont'd. from Loving Welcome, page 16

and I helped Tracy with some last-minute details and activities as the long-awaited weekend approached. Pastor Seth led a very inspiring workshop on Saturday and on Sunday, delivered an outdoor sermon amidst a gorgeous backdrop. The weekend was full of swimming, hiking, sunshine and great conversations, and the music by the campfire is a memory I will treasure.

In September, Pastor Seth held a three-week course on Presbyterian Basics, which was well attended by a mixture of prospective and current members. Afterwards, we welcomed nine new members to join our church.



Our committee's biggest event at the church this year was the Advent Festival, a multigenerational gathering that was enjoyed by all. We held a soup luncheon and brought back wreathmaking and cookie-decorating, adding in some craft and cardmaking activities. We had so much help—Carla Shafer, Alice Beaty and Ryan Knight helped with planning, and Amy Morris jumped right in to help in the kitchen. So many delicious soups were brought in to share, as well as plenty of fresh evergreen trimmings. I especially enjoyed making extra wreaths to give away.

Looking forward into 2023, we expect to hold more fellowship events, including a family game night already planned in January, will attempt to increase our social media presence and continue to invite in those from Bellingham and our surrounding community, showing them the “loving welcome” they can find at St. James.





MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION

Submitted by Maureen Kosa, Committee Chair

Committee members: Claudia Allen, Carol Dellecker, Ray Dellecker, Gena Gustafson, Patricia Harris, Maureen Kosa (elder), Amy Morriss, Gretchen Pfueller and Carla Shafer

The Mission & Social Action (MSA) committee meets monthly to share news, discern where to best help our community and choose volunteer activities in the community. Our yearly budget, approximately \$17,000 in 2022, represents 10% of St. James' anticipated income. One of the committee's main functions is to select recipients of our mission funds. About two-thirds of our funds are given in support of local mission work, with the remaining third going to our Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination for national and international work.

A few of our local opportunities in 2022 included a booth at the Sacred Earth Fair, sponsored by the Multifaith Network for Climate Justice (MNCJ), and a volunteer workday at the Telegraph Road build-site for Habitat for Humanity. St. James also hosted several events, including a prayer vigil for peace in the Middle East, an evening prayer lamentation service to grieve continued gun violence and a movie, The Magnitude of All Things, which was sponsored by MNCJ and included a community discussion following the movie. MSA continued to support Family Promise by collecting and delivering meal kits. We also participated in the Interfaith Coat Drive as well as the Gardenview Christmas Stocking Project. MSA gave support to the Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries course this past fall and continued to explore ways to deepen our commitment as a Creation Care Congregation.

Our hope is to continue to propose actions for local and world organizations that further restoration of right relationships with each other, with our neighbors and with our Earth. We seek to continue work that impacts the wellbeing of ALL communities, and we warmly welcome anyone who would like to join our committee.

Mission & Social Action 2022 Disbursement

RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
Local Partners	
Bellingham Food Bank	\$3000
Lighthouse Mission	\$1000
Habitat for Humanity, Whatcom County	\$1000
Interfaith/Family Promise	\$1000
Opportunity Council	\$1000
Northwest Youth Services	\$1000
Lummi Boys and Girls Club	\$1000
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Service	\$900
Skookum Kids	\$770
Bellingham Public Schools	\$770
Community 2 Community	\$585
Whatcom Peace & Justice	\$585
Familias Unidas Por La Justicia	\$585
Unity Village (Homes Now)	\$500
Gardenview (Road2Home)	\$500
WAIPL	\$200
Regional & International	
PC(USA) GA Mission	\$900
NW Coast Presbytery Missions	\$900
PC(USA) Disaster Relief	\$900
	\$17,095



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Submitted by Sarah Condrey, Committee Chair

This year's Nominating committee members were Ray Dellecker, Kirsten Oliver, Kat DeVaney, Lindsay Anderson, Seth Thomas and Sarah Condrey. The committee was thoughtful, prayerful and diligent in seeking new members. We are grateful for those who have served and excited for those who are stepping in. We still have a couple of open positions that we are looking to fill!

DEACONS: We are grateful for the service of Alice Beaty, Rick Seater and Jean Seater. Valerie McBeth, Jean Seater and Rick Seater have served faithfully and brought comfort and support to our church community over the last several years. They will be stepping off the board of deacons this year. Valerie McBeth will be renewing for a second term and Claudia Allen will be stepping in as our newest deacon. We are still looking for two more deacons to serve.

Class of 2023: Adam Beaty, Kirsten Oliver, Merry Thomas, Alice Bailey

Class of 2024: Amy Moriss

Class of 2025: Claudia Allan, Valerie McBeth (*2 positions still open, seeking nominations)

ELDERS: Lindsay Anderson and Susan Diemont-Conwell have completed their terms and are stepping off the board of elders. They have headed Finance and Pandemic Response for three years and have served with grace and calm through the pandemic. We are very grateful for their leadership. We are also grateful for Nebiyu Tesfa and Aaron Caruso who have renewed for a second term. We welcome Ryan Knight and Jimmy Parks to Session.

Class of 2023: Tess Bowers, Faye Hill

Class of 2024: Sarah Condrey, Andrew McLaurin, Maureen Kosa

Class of 2025: Nebiyu Tefsa, Aaron Caruso, Jimmy Parks, Ryan Knight

Pandemic Response

Submitted by Susan Diemont-Conwell, Pandemic Response Lead

This year stands out for me as a time when mask-wearing has become accepted and engrained in our culture. When I sit in church or am out and about, I fully expect to see some people wearing a KN95, N95 or surgical mask, while others are comfortable leaving the mask at home. I see people asking those wearing a mask, "Would you feel more comfortable if I also put on a mask?" It's a beautiful nicety and reflects a level of understanding, compassion and knowledge, because whether it's COVID-19, RSV or the flu, respiratory viruses are here to stay. What we've done at St. James is a reflection of that knowledge. We've adjusted church guidelines, knowing that we now have a deeper understanding of how these respiratory viruses travel and what we as individuals can do to protect ourselves.



PERSONNEL

Submitted by Faye Hill, Committee Chair

Committee Members: Maureen Kosa, Andrew McLaurin, Katy Read and Faye Hill

The Personnel committee lost two very special members this year—Gale Pfueller and Milt Schayes. Gale and Milt served as members of this committee for several years and were devoted to the staff by actively working to ensure they had what they needed to do their jobs effectively. They will be missed by our committee and the staff they served. Maureen Kosa and Andrew McLaurin stepped up to become members of our committee, for which we are truly grateful.

In July, our friend and music director, Luke Arnold, resigned to move to Texas to continue his music education. Luke served us well during the difficult COVID years, and he is already missed. We soon began our search for a new music director and were fortunate to find and hire Ta Wei Tsai to that position. Ta Wei brings expertise and joyful enthusiasm to the job. Under his skillful leadership, the choir is back and sounding great.

The Personnel committee held performance reviews with each member of the staff. In doing so, we were reminded of what a talented staff we have. We honored them in worship on Staff Appreciation Sunday with gifts and words of appreciation. It is our hope that church members will find opportunities to thank them for their strong dedication to their jobs.

Here are some staff highlights for the year:

- Pastor Seth Thomas continues to serve St. James with amazing energy, insight and expertise, even while working on his Doctor of Ministry degree. He will graduate on May 4, 2023.
- Children & Family Ministries Director Tracy Caruso continues to grow our programs as more families and children become involved. The Personnel committee has recommended an increase in the number of hours for her position.
- Ministry Assistant Sharon King has had a busy year. In addition to her regular ministry assistant duties, she acted as interim treasurer during Marina's illness. We are appreciative of her willingness and ability to add these duties to her other tasks.
- We anticipate with delight the growth of our music program under Ta Wei's leadership.

We are all deeply saddened by the loss of our treasurer, Marina. She was very dedicated to her work as our church treasurer and generously shared her wisdom and astute advice with us in all things financial. Most of all, though, we will miss her smile, her beautiful spirit and friendship.

The Personnel committee continues to meet regularly; we work hard to support our staff in many ways. The St. James congregation is blessed to have such a dedicated and talented staff.



WORSHIP & MUSIC

Submitted by the Rev. Seth J. Thomas

As a worshipping community, our weekly gathering continues to be the heartbeat of our life together, drawing us into reflection, spiritual practice and commitment to Christ as we go about our weeks. We continue to gather for worship and fellowship every Sunday at 10:30 am. This year, Worship elder Nebiyu Tesfa has kindly greeted visitors as they enter our building for worship. He has also prepared and cared for our communion service



each first Sunday of the month. We are fortunate to have opportunities to serve in our community, allowing everyone to use their gifts and contribute to our life together.

This year, Worship elder Nebiyu Tesfa has kindly greeted visitors as they enter our building for worship. He has also prepared and cared for our communion service each first Sunday of the month.

As we moved through 2022, we had an opportunity to bless and send on our longtime music director, Luke Arnold. Luke began his Master of Music in Piano Performance at Rice University in Houston, Texas. We bid Luke a fond farewell in July 2022 and know he will do great things in the music world.

We are grateful for our new Worship & Music director, Ta Wei Tsai. Joining us in September 2022, Ta Wei has brought renewed energy to our Sunday worship and choral programs. We are fortunate to have our choir back, growing with new and returning members. Under Ta Wei's leadership, they brought us a beautiful Christmas Eve service, and we look forward to more musical offerings in 2023!

See Worship & Music, page 22

Cont'd. from *Worship & Music*, page 21

In the coming year, we hope to relaunch our formal Worship committee to engage new and returning volunteers with opportunities to serve and plan our gatherings together. The past years of pandemic and emergence have left us with a paired-down version of this leadership. We hope new folks will want to get involved with sanctuary decorations, ushering, communion preparation and service, and offering music gifts in our times of worship. There is a part for us all to play as we gather in Jesus' name!





TERMS OF CALL

Pastor Seth J. Thomas

Reviewed by Session January 8, 2023. Effective February 1, 2023, pending congregational approval.

EFFECTIVE SALARY FOR 2023

Cash Salary	\$17,190
Housing Allowance	\$60,000
SECA Supplement	\$6,394
Total Effective Salary	\$83,584*

*Includes a 8.2% Cost of Living Adjustment.

UPDATES TO BOARD OF PENSION DUES

Now 39% of Total Effective Salary – Translates to a \$3,708 increase.

REIMBURSABLE BUSINESS EXPENSES

Professional expense funds of \$4,000/year. (Increase from \$3,500).

OTHER BENEFITS

Board of Pensions Benefits

Full medical with dental, pension, disability and death benefits for pastor and family.

Continuing Education/Study Leave

14 days annually, accruing at 1.2 days per month of service until a maximum of 42 days.

Includes a maximum of 2 Sundays.

Vacation

35 days annually, accruing at 3 days per month of service until a maximum of 35 days; unused vacation compensated at the annual salary rate upon termination.

Study leave and vacation are subject to Session approval; use in advance of accruals or accumulations exceeding the limits are at the Session's discretion.

Sabbatical Leave

3 months every 7th year.

Family Medical / Sick Leave

10 working days, including a maximum of 2 Sundays, no accrual or carryover, forfeited at the time of termination.



2022 Financial Highlights

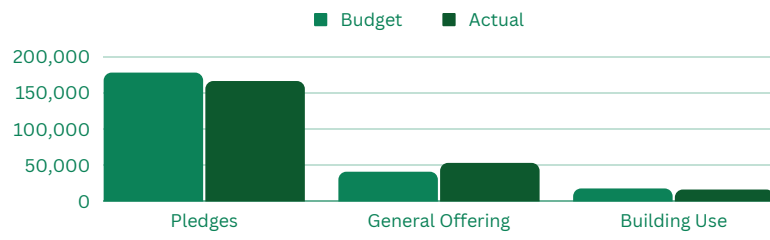
Income, Expenses, and Partnering with God's Mission

Overview

2022 was a positive financial year for St. James. We saw renewed interest in outside use of our facility, steady pledging and general giving, and lower expenses in many categories.*

Gifts and Pledges

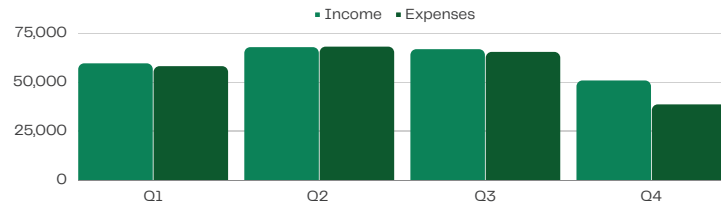
We end 2022 with a **small excess (≈\$9000 or +4%)**, due to consistent pledged giving and generous general offerings.



Income vs. Expenses

Quarterly Income/Expenses

We continued to see income sufficient to cover our expenses throughout 2022. Consistent pledging and general offering allow us to sustain our ministry.



Endowments

In accordance with market trends this past year, we saw some larger losses in our endowment funds managed by the Presbyterian Foundation. We are still in a solid position and look to recoup losses in 2023 and begin new capital projects this year.

2022 Endowment Interest Balances:

	Jan. 2022	Dec. 2022
NCF Balanced Growth:	\$152,188	\$128,512
Facilities:	\$512,334	\$351,052
Music:	\$13,441	\$10,105
Christian Ed.:	\$33,178	\$24,706
Pastoral Transition:	\$20,618	\$17,140

Building Use

Stable Building Use Income - \$15,610.00

Weekly support groups and special events, along with regular tenants Bayside Preschool, Little Saplings Music, and The Table Church, continued to utilize our space and bless our neighborhood.

*WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Because of our finance transition and the loss of Marina McLeod's expertise, this is a tighter financial snapshot than normal. Please reach out to Pastor Seth for more info. As well, the Finance Committee welcomes new members.



2023 Budget and Goals

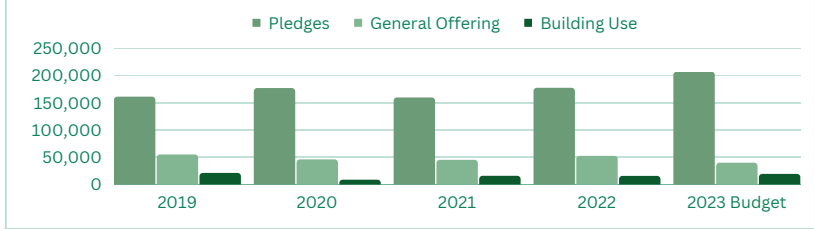
Looking Ahead, Supporting Our Staff, Following the Spirit

Overview

In 2023, we plan to meet our goals of supporting our incredible St. James staff and focusing our ministry efforts on continuing to make our church a place of loving welcome, joyful practice, and compassionate service. Thank you for supporting this vital work!

Increased Pledging

We had a successful 2023 Stewardship Campaign, including adding new pledged givers this year and an overall increase from the congregation to bolster our thriving ministries. For the first time in years, our pledged giving is above \$200,000 (As of 1/8/23, we reached commitments for \$206,550)!



Supporting Our Staff

We are all aware of the increased financial pressures due to rising costs and increased minimum wage standards. In 2023, the Session of St. James commits to supporting our staff, offering necessary increases to salaries and benefits.

2023 Budget Highlights

- Increase Tracy Caruso's position to 30 hrs/per week (from 20)
- Make Sharon King's pay rate more competitive with comparable Church Administrator positions.
- Adjust Nursery/Godly Play staff salaries in response to minimum wage increases.
- Contracting with Avlon Finance to streamline accounting processes.
- There are no significant changes to Program and Operating expenses from the 2022 budget.

Changes to Pastoral Benefits

The Presbyterian Board of Pensions increased medical and pension dues from 37% to 39% of the Pastor's Total Effective Salary (see Pastor's Terms of Call, pg. 23)

Mission Commitment

A Tithe to Mission

Our Mission & Social Action committee has made concerted efforts to keep our missions giving (outwards to our community and beyond) at pace with **10% of our Annual Pledged Giving**. In 2023, we excitedly commit \$20,000 to missions spending, supporting local projects like Gardenview Homes and Lighthouse Mission, as well as PC(USA) projects. See the MSA report on pg. 18 for the 2022 spending summary.

THANK YOU!

We experienced a significant transition with our church finances during 2022, moving into 2023. Thank you for your steadfast support which enables us to move ahead with confidence and continue to serve God together.



910 14th Street
Bellingham, WA 98225