

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

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

As I look back at 2022 and forward to what we have coming in 2023, I am filled with excitement and anticipation. 2022 was a year of huge growth and change for many people, including me, who were trying to figure out what a return to “normal” would look like. The question of what parts of the “old normal” we wanted to bring back and continue and what a new normal could look like swirled in many different aspects of each of our lives. As we

emerged from the covid restrictions, and began to bring back some of our past traditions and events around St. James, I came to realize that I needed a new normal. Beginning in April, with a return to a full in person Easter worship service, followed by our traditional Easter egg hunt, to July, following an amazing week of Vacation Bible School, the first “normal” one in two years, I realized what I wanted my new normal to be. Since covid, I felt like I was wearing so many different hats that I wasn’t able to fully engage or commit to any of them. I felt like I was just scratching the surface to keep things running. Bringing back the old normal made me realize I was being called to focus more on my love for the children, youth, families, and programs at St. James. The decision to close my business after 16 years was extremely difficult and hard, but also came with much relief. In part, because of the members of the St. James session, who increased my hours for 2023, I have been given the opportunity to truly put my energy into what I have been called to do: share the message of God’s love to the children, youth, and families of St. James.

With God’s love,
Tracy Caruso



Photos: Bottom Left: Sacred Earth Fair, Top Left: Whatcom Youth Pride, Top Right: Bellingham Pride, Bottom Right: All Church Retreat at Warm Beach

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE - JANUARY 2023

Submitted by Lindsay Anderson, Finance chair

By Lindsay Anderson, Finance Chair

I know from my past life in vocational ministry, that church life is a microcosm of well, life. We experience unexpected grief and joy amidst the predictability of everyday routines, commitments, activities, and meetings. As our committee gathered this week, we shared memories and appreciations of our late treasurer, Marina McLeod. During the uncertainty of the pandemic, Marina was a calm and wise presence. She reminded me the importance of trusting in God, while continuing to be organized and diligent. Marina helped us to remain steady when it was hard to do so!

And, now we as a committee continue to take that sentiment to heart while we look ahead to 2023. We could not do it without you, our incredible community. On behalf of the St. James Finance Committee, thank you to everyone who has pledged so far! We have raised over \$198,000 in pledges as of January 5, 2023. This helps St. James immensely towards increasing staff salaries and will help us increase our Mission and Social Action disbursements.

Year-End Report & 2023 Budget

The session will share a year-end 2022 report and the adopted 2023 Budget at our congregational meeting on January 22, following the worship service.

Attention Online Pledgers

If you have previously set your pledge to repeat automatically, **and you are changing the amount**, you may need to login to our online giving portal to update your pledge. Go to www.saintjamespres.org and click on Giving to access the portal. Click on your profile and then navigate to "My Giving". From there you can manage your recurring donations.

We appreciate your prayers, support, and generosity. If you have any questions about a current or past contribution, please email stjamestreasurer@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>

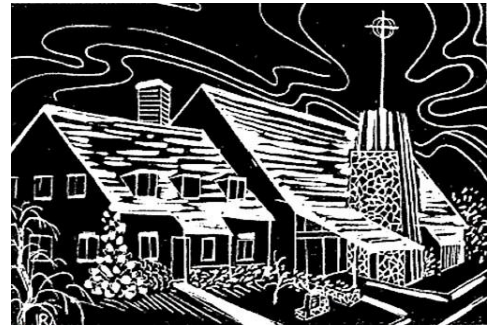
Mail-In: St. James Presbyterian Church, 910 14th St. Bellingham, WA 98225

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

The end of year financial summary is printed in the 2022 Annual Report which is available in the church office.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session



Highlights of the Session Meeting on December 11, 2022

- Deacon Pam Gibson brought greetings from the Board of Deacons. She reported that the deacons continue to stay in close contact with all the members of the church with notes, emails and phone calls. Poinsettias will be delivered soon to those who are confined to home. The deacons will not meet in December.
- Time and Talent questionnaires will be distributed in 2023.
- The session reviewed the updated treasurer's report prepared by Avlon. The session heard a report on the 2023 Stewardship Drive, which is going very well. 46 responses have been received to date.
- The session discussed the security of the building and will be reviewing some possible new security protocols for the building.
- Appreciation was expressed to Teresa Bowers and the Loving Welcome Committee for the delicious Advent Festival lunch and holiday crafting opportunities for all ages that followed.
- Susan Diemont-Conwell agreed to help produce the Annual Report, helping with editing and layout.
- As the year draws to a close, the session was reminded of the following important dates: December Nominating Congregational meeting will be on December 18, 2022, and our Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, January 22, 2023 following worship.

Highlights of the Session Meeting on January 8, 2023

- The Session welcomed the Deacon Representative, Julie Keyes and Elder-Elect Jimmy Parks.
- Maureen Kosa presented a devotional message on Epiphany and led the Session in prayer.
- Deacon Julie Keyes reported on the activities of the deacons. Last month they delivered poinsettias to those who are unable to attend worship.
- Pastor Seth Thomas reviewed the proposed 2023 budget, line by line, with the Session. The Session asked questions and discussed the budget in depth. The Session voted to make two changes in the budget. This was followed by a vote of the Session to accept the 2023 budget as presented. The Congregation will vote to accept the Pastor's Terms of Call at the Meeting of the Congregation on January 22, 2023.
- This meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Session will be February 12, 2023.

Highlights of the Meeting of the Congregation on January 28, 2023

- Pastor Seth Thomas opened this meeting at noon in the Church Sanctuary. The Clerk of Session declared that there was a quorum present.
- The Congregation voted to accept the agenda as distributed.
- The Annual Reports were distributed and reviewed by the congregation who voted to accept the Annual Reports for 2022. Elder Susan Diemont-Conwell was thanked for her work in putting the report together.
- The Congregation heard reports from the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee.
- Pastor Seth Thomas left the room for a few minutes to allow the congregation to discuss his 2023 Terms of Call. After discussion, the Congregation voted to accept the Terms of Call as presented. Pastor Thomas returned and was greeted with applause.
- This meeting was adjourned by Pastor Seth at 12:25pm.

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

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



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

We had a great 2022 at St. James and are looking forward to an even better 2023.

As our Godly Play stories say, we have journeyed together to Bethlehem along with the Prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, the angels, and the magi!



Although the weather impacted much of December and we had to cancel our caroling event, we were still able to have a fun Advent festival and hold beautiful Christmas Eve, and Christmas day services full of music and joy! During our Christmas Eve service we asked people to complete the sentence “My story is...” We compiled the answers into a star you can view in the narthex.



During Advent our students collected change to donate to Family Promise. They donated almost \$30 in change! Thanks to all our Godly Play students who participated.

We have several areas where we are in need of volunteers for our children’s ministries. We need help with emergency backup in the nursery or Godly Play classroom, story tellers, door people, and memory verse teaching. If you have any interest in helping with our children’s ministries please let Tracy know.

As a Bellingham Community Partner, we are once again joining with Lowell Elementary school to provide snacks for children who may need them during the school day. Thank you to everyone who donated snacks in January, we have them set for a couple months and will do another round in March.

Our Godly Play classroom has started the parable stories that will carry us to Lent and then we will begin our *Faces of Easter* series. New in 2023 we are sending home Godly Play parent pages each week to help students “recall, and in a sense relive” the stories told in the classroom. We hope you and your family can wonder together and share your wonderings with us.

We held a fun pizza and game night in January with many games played and much pizza consumed. We will be trying to plan monthly fellowship events through 2023. If you would like to help with events or would like to join the Loving Welcome committee let Tracy or Tess know.

Youth group will be meeting Sunday, February 5th for a trip to the Firehouse Café. We will walk to the Firehouse and spend an hour in fellowship and planning for future youth group events.

Beginning February 12th we hope you will join us in an Intergenerational Bible Time. We will meet at 10:15am in the lounge for a brief time of fun scripture memorization and songs before worship and Godly Play begin. We hope to see everyone ages 0-100!

We are looking forward to an incredible 2023 with so much energy, excitement, and anticipation. We are so glad that you made the journey to Bethlehem with us and hope that we can continue our journey beyond. As always, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

GODLY PLAY FOR FEBRUARY:

- **February 5th Parable of the Mustard Seed**
 - **February 12th Parable of the Leaven**
 - **February 19th Parable of Parables**
 - **February 26th Work Day**
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MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION UPDATE

Claude Hill, Amy Morriss, and Maureen Kosa joined a large group of volunteers on Monday, January 16th at the The Telegraph Road Habitat for Humanity site to honor MLK's legacy. Claude used his amazing woodworking skills to help build tables while Amy and Maureen joined a formidable crew from St. Paul's Episcopal Church to work outside on land mitigation. The St. Paul's group volunteers one Friday or Saturday each month and has invited us to join them. The next opportunity is on Saturday, February 18th at a site in Everson. If anyone is interested, please let me know. We will post any opportunities in March or April as soon as we get dates. Please email me with any questions 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

Administrative Ministry Assistant: Sharon King, office@saintjamespres.org

SESSION OF ST. JAMES 2022

Lindsay Anderson

Tess Bowers

Aaron Caruso

Sarah Condreay

Susan Diemont-Conwell

Faye Hill (Clerk of Session)

Maureen Kosa

Andrew McLaurin

Nebiyu Tesfa

DEACONS OF ST. JAMES 2022

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 is currently reading *Mink River*, "Brian Doyle's stunning fiction debut that brings a town to life through the jumbled lives and braided stories of its people." We will meet the third Monday of February, February 20th at 7:00pm via zoom. Contact Tracy for the zoom link.

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

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

1/1	Tess Bowers	
1/1	Susan Burkland	
1/2	Ed Simmers and Jane Madden	
1/5	Kat DeVaney	
1/8	Marty Haines	
1/11	Zach Engels	
1/15	Karen Summers	
1/15	Kyle Anderson	
1/17	Dwayne Rogers	
1/17	Sam King	
1/18	Genevie Pfueller Roguski	
1/23	Hailey Caruso	
1/28	Tricia Bravener	
1/31	Marlene Amman	

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

2/2	Louise Hardin	
2/2	Pam Pries	
2/5	Janet Oakley	
2/12	Tim Crandall	
2/20	Randy Bowers	
2/22	Gail Haines	
2/23	Jim Gresham	
2/26	Ralph Rinne	
2/27	Kay Carr	
2/28	Nancy Peck	

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



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