

## Summer and Sabbatical

Greetings friends,

I am so grateful for you all and how we have worked together in ministry these last seven years. We have undergone immense transitions as a congregation, and at this juncture, I reflect on all that God has done in our lives. This chapter has been about new life, innovation through trials, and hope.

God sets these rhythms in motion, and we witness the movement. According to God's design, there are times when it is appropriate to step back, reflect, and rest. I will be doing just that this summer—stepping back, resting, moving, and restoring. My family plans to take a sabbatical from July 1 to October 1, 2024, during which we will disconnect to reconnect with each other and listen to God's soothing voice to rejuvenate.

I've admitted to many of you: I'm tired. We've run hard for seven years together. And it's that good kind of tiredness that comes from doing something you love with people you love.

While away this summer, I am very excited about the fantastic team of people supporting our church. I'd love to share a little bit about them.

First, Janice Smith will serve our congregation as Head of Staff in my absence. We've come to know Jan through her joyous preaching at St. James these last few years. Jan will work with our staff to ensure they have the support they need and connect with our congregation and its volunteers to ensure you all have what you need to thrive and rest.

Our beloved Randy Pries, who has a background of many years in ordained ministry and pastoral counseling, will be available for care and support. Working with our fabulous Deacons, Randy will support our congregation in times of joy and struggle, making himself available for visitations and support for weddings and memorial services. I encourage you to reach out to Randy if you need to talk or need pastoral care.

Kyle Anderson will serve as moderator of our church Session. Kyle, Lindsay, and their family have been active at St. James these seven years, and he brings a wealth of leadership experience from his work at Logos Bible Software here in town and his training as a Presbyterian minister. He knows how to run an efficient meeting!!

Each Sunday, you will have a chance to hear from a team of great preachers. Jennie McLaurin, Fred Hartsook, Jessica Parks, Kyle Anderson, Jeff King, and the pastors from First Presbyterian and Cordata Presbyterian will teach through the lectionary Gospels through the summer, supporting our formation and growth in the faith.

And...we have YOU: You are the ministers of our congregation, called to strengthen and support God's work in this church. Over the Summer, I have some requests for you.



*continued...*

First, welcome people. Make new friends, connect with strangers, and be the hands and feet of Jesus. Second, rest. You need it. We all need it. God has guided us through quite a time of upheaval and transition, with the COVID pandemic, shifts in our congregation's membership and leadership, and into a new chapter of life. This is all wonderful, but it is tiring. So embrace the beauty of rest.

I look forward to celebrating the end of this chapter with you all at our commissioning and "going away party" on June 30. During worship that day, we will also commission you and these leaders to your work and service, so make sure you join us for both.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seth

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## THE LILLY ENDOWMENT FOR CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM

Clergy Renewal Programs are open to Christian congregations whose pastors are serious about congregational ministry and who can envision the program as a means of renewing the pastor's commitment to the congregation and ordained ministry. The annual programs are designed for those congregations and pastors who have a strong relationship with one another, a high degree of mutual trust and support, and are eager to see their relationship strengthened, renewed and continued.

Read more here: <https://lillyendowment.org/for-grantseekers/renewal-programs/pastors/>

### ***From Pastor Seth's grant proposal (March 2023):***

*My heart sings when I am attuned to God's presence and can respond to God's grace. A hymn that has bound me to this awareness of God's goodness throughout my spiritual journey is "**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing**." In high school, as I began to teach myself the guitar, this simple three-chord song helped me access worshipping God through song and opened an entire world of music and service to me. I have led numerous congregations in this hymn. Many nights, I sang it to my then-infant son, Asher, as I swaddled, held, and soothed him off to sleep. When I think of rest and rejuvenation, I desire to "tune my heart to sing Thy grace."*

*My sabbatical plan embodies this line in 3 clear ways:*

- *I will "tune" into God through daily prayer rhythms and physical movement.*
  - *I will engage my "heart" by visiting thin places and embracing wonder.*
  - *I will "sing [God's] grace" by making music, delighting in my family, and resting.*
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## ONE PARISH, ONE PRISONER - WELCOME HOME TREE FOR CLIFF

Our friend Cliff will be released from prison on Monday, May 13th. In an effort to make his homecoming comfortable and welcoming, we're doing a Welcome Home Tree - like the Angel Tree, there are numbered tags that each have a desired item listed. If you're so inclined, please take a tag or two, purchase the item(s), and return to the church no later than Sunday morning, 5/12. If you have any questions, please find a member of the OPOP team: *Wendy Crandall, Alice Beaty, Diana Philbeck, Jenny Sue, Mark Beaty, Ryan Knight, Pastor Seth.*

Thank you for your support and generosity!



## CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Tracy Caruso,  
Children & Family Ministry Director

Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

What a crazy busy month May was, and June is shaping up to be just as fun!

A big thanks to Carla Shafer and Marjolein van der Veen who led us in a 4-week study to become more knowledgeable about the Palestinian situation. It was an amazing class and we still have a couple of the books used if anyone wants to borrow them!

Our youth group started out the month with a super fun bowling outing where I demonstrated an impressive lack of skill. Despite that, we all had a lot of fun. Our next youth group meeting will be June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5:30-7:30.

I want to give a huge shout out and thank you to everyone who helped plan, donated art, or performed in, and attended our first, hopefully of many, St. James afternoon of art fundraiser. We had a wonderful time, enjoyed some truly amazing performances, and helped raise over \$1,200 towards our all-church retreat in September.

Our Godly Play classroom is finishing a spring trip of stories from the New Testament. We will be taking a break for most of June and then start a series of stories from the Godly Play Saints collection for the majority of the summer.

We will be celebrating all of our children and youth on our Milestone Sunday on June 16<sup>th</sup>. We have such an incredible group of kids at St. James, and I hope you will all be there to help celebrate not just those reaching special milestones, but each amazing kid!

We hope all the women at St. James will join us for a luncheon on Tuesday June 18<sup>th</sup>. We will have our last Sacred Encounters bible study at 10:30 followed by lunch in the fellowship hall at 11:30. Even if you haven't made it to any of the previous meetings, we hope you will join us for one or both events on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

VBS is back at St. James! We will once again be partnering with First Presbyterian Church to offer a four-day Vacation Bible School from June 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> for children entering Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. We hope you will join us as we *Find God in the Peaks and Valleys at Alpine Ascent*. Register here: [tinyurl.com/AlpineVBS2024](https://tinyurl.com/AlpineVBS2024). We will also have snack donation cards for anyone who can help donate snacks for the campers and feeding the chaperones that week.

Mark your calendars for the All Church Retreat September 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. We will again be gathering for a weekend at Warm Beach Retreat and Conference center in Stanwood. Keep your eyes out for more details for the weekend schedule and the Saturday program. Registration will open on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will have options for the full weekend or just Saturday. If you would like to help in the planning of this event, please let Tracy know.

The sun is beginning to occasionally peak through and I can tell summer is on its way! I hope you will join us as we enter this new season. If there are any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at [tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org).



## FINANCE UPDATE

*submitted by Andrew McLaurin, Chair of Finance*

Greetings! We continue to be blessed with strong finances. As of the end of May, we have funded our mission projects. Your continuing support is critical to our financial position.

I am pleased to share that Judy Buchan is joining this month. Judy is a CPA and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to our committee. Please thank Judy for her willingness to serve.

Thank you again for your faithfulness!

Andrew

	April Actual	April budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<b>Income</b>	\$22,089.00	\$24,375.00	\$115,588.00	\$97,500.00
<b>Expenses</b>	\$22,277.00	\$27,647.00	\$95,579.00	\$110,588.00

If you have any questions regarding the finances of Saint James Presbyterian Church please feel free to contact me or Katie Dunne at [stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com](mailto:stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com).

### **Aside from utilizing contact-free offering on Sunday morning, you can give in TWO primary ways:**

1. **Online Giving:** You can give a one-time gift or create a recurring monthly pledge. Please visit this webpage to set up or update your online giving: <https://saintjamespres.churchcenter.com/giving>  
*If you are new to online giving we've got a handy video to show you how, here:*  
<https://www.loom.com/share/5aea350026204a9cb3c955029dafbdd3>
2. **Mail-In Donations or Pledges:** You can mail your pledges and gifts to the church.  
 Saint James Presbyterian Church  
 910 14th Street  
 Bellingham, WA 98225

## **SIGN UP HERE FOR USHERS, COMMUNION, LECTORS & OFFERING COUNTERS**

We need ushers, lectors, offering counters, and communion servers! The following links will take you to an online signup where you can sign up for Sundays that work with your schedule and receive an automatic reminder a few days before your service. If you have questions, please contact Sharon at [office@saintjamespres.org](mailto:office@saintjamespres.org).

- **Usher:** <https://tinyurl.com/UshersStJames>
- **Lector:** <https://tinyurl.com/LectorStJames>
- **Offering Counters:** <https://tinyurl.com/OfferingCountersStJames>
- **Communion Servers:** <https://tinyurl.com/CommunionServerStJames>

## ST. JAMES STAFF IS AT YOUR SERVICE

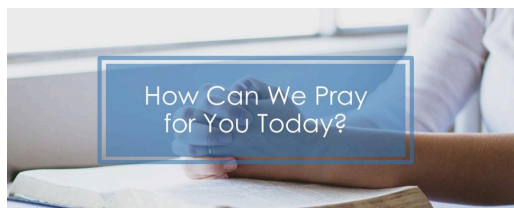
Pastor: The Rev Dr. Seth J. Thomas, [pastor@saintjamespres.org](mailto:pastor@saintjamespres.org)  
 Children & Family Ministry Director: Tracy Caruso, [tracy@saintjamespres.org](mailto:tracy@saintjamespres.org)  
 Music Director: Ta Wei Tsai, [music@saintjamespres.org](mailto:music@saintjamespres.org)  
 Treasurer: Katie Dunne, [stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com](mailto:stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com)  
 Administrative Ministry Assistant: Sharon King, [office@saintjamespres.org](mailto:office@saintjamespres.org)

### SESSION OF ST. JAMES

Tess Bowers\*  
 Ralph Buchan\*  
 Aaron Caruso\*  
 Sarah Condrey  
 Maureen Kosa  
 Andrew McLaurin  
 Casey Morriss\*\*  
 Jimmy Parks  
 Nebiyu Tesfa  
 Pastor Seth Thomas, Moderator

\*Church Trustees      \*\*Clerk of Session

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



### DEACONS

Deacons Parish 1 – Merry Thomas\*, Alice Bailey  
 Deacons Parish 2 – Judy Buchan, Gena Gustafson  
 Deacons Parish 3 – Buzz & Holly Hagshenas, Carla Shafer  
 Deacons Parish 4 – Valerie McBeth, Claudia Allan  
 Deacons Parish 5 – Pam Gibson, Julie Keyes  
 Deacons Parish 6 – Kirsten Oliver, Amy Morriss\*

\* Deacon Co-Moderators

### JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

6/1	Alice Beaty	🎂
6/3	Tracy Caruso	🎂
6/4	Craig and Julie Keyes	💕
6/6	Lily Williams	🎂
6/7	Eden Engels	🎂
6/9	Jane Botsford	🎂
6/9	Fred Daugert	🎂
6/10	Terri Inge	🎂
6/13	Mike and Sue Smith	💕
6/15	Sue Smith	🎂
6/17	Mark and Alice Beaty	💕
6/20	Amber Wainscott	🎂
6/23	Alice Bailey	🎂
6/27	Corinna Bowers	🎂
6/28	Sharon King	🎂
6/28	Ben and Shannon Pries	💕
6/30	Claude and Faye Hill	💕
6/30	Caleb Knight	🎂