

Advent — Words for the Beginning

Advent, the four weeks leading up to Christmas, is a season of anticipation and wonder. In the darkest time of the year, we sing songs about the dawning of Christ's light as we remember his miraculous birth. We tell stories of stars and shepherds, angels, and empires. It is a time for us to gather close and share the joy of God with us, Emmanuel!

Read below about the design of this year's Sanctified Art Advent curriculum. We have devotional resources available for anyone who would like a daily reminder of the story. These, along with quilting and artistic resources, can be found in the Narthex.

Do you like to quilt or paint or draw? Grab one of the premade quilt designs and help us make a decorated tapestry of our own quilt squares.



Advent is certainly a time for reflection, as well. While all around us, the world swirls with consumerism and bright lights, the people of Jesus turn inward, reflecting on the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that sustains us. We use this time to reset — before the year turns, the church year invites us to turn and look ahead. The Light is dawning — we ready ourselves to follow where the Light leads. We will do this through weekly worship, individual study, and acts of loving service to one another and our world. Beloved of God, let us journey together!

From A Sanctified Art — <https://sanctifiedart.org/words-for-the-beginning-advent-bundle>

Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving; and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. In many ways, pregnant Mary was surrounded by endings—large and small, personal and political. But Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. Christ's birth offered a beautiful new beginning for shepherds and Magi alike—all the while, King Herod tried to bring Christ's story to an end. When we ourselves navigate seasons filled with endings and beginnings, we need reminders. We need words that can feel like steady ground, like a path for our feet to find as we step forward into the unknown.

We have crafted an Advent series filled with blessings, with the scriptures and reminders we need to hear again and again as we begin a new season. These reminders root us in the fundamental truths of our faith. Many of them are life lessons we teach to children—lessons that adults continue to learn and relearn. They may resemble the blessings we impart to loved ones during special ceremonies like weddings, graduations, or baptisms. And so, we invite you to move through this Advent season as if you are entering a sacred new chapter, holding fast to the reminders that will bolster you for the journey ahead.

As you journey through this season, may you find words for belovedness and hope. May you find words for beginning again. For no matter what you are facing, no matter what this new day brings, love is your beginning.



CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director

Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries

October was a fun month beginning with welcoming Seth back from his sabbatical and introducing the new pub theology offering facilitated by Jimmy and Jessica Parks. We also had a great turnout for our pizza and game night. November began with an amazing two-week class led by Randy Pries that bookended election day and hopefully offered participants some relief in a very difficult time for many.

Our Godly Play classroom focused on the Old Testament in October and November, which is usual for this time of year, but we also added some side-by-side stories so that the students were able to wonder what different stories have to say to each other. We will be moving into our Advent series for December. I am excited to offer two adult only sessions of Godly Play on December 15th and 22nd at 9:00am in the Godly Play room. This will be a chance for adults to come experience Godly Play sessions, explore the room, and gain a deeper understanding of Godly Play. Childcare will be available in the nursery during this time. I hope you will come and join us as we wonder about the Mystery that is Christmas together.

The youth group met twice in November. They organized and set up our annual Holiday Joy Angel Tree. The tree, along with a sign up sheet, is in the Horizon room. If you are able to help make a less fortunate family's Christmas a little brighter this year, please grab a tag that appeals to you, write your name and gift on the sign up form in the Horizon room, bring your unwrapped gift back to the church with the tag by DECEMBER 10TH.

Our annual Soup and Bread Lunch and Advent Festival will be held on December 8th right after service. Come join us for some amazing food, cookie decorating, crafts, music, and fellowship. We need people to bring soup, bread, and cookies, along with volunteers to help with set up and cleanup. If you can contribute or volunteer, you can sign up on the sheet in the Horizon Room or at the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B054BAAAA2BA5F49-53218169-advent>

I have Advent packets for families to take home with some activities that families can do together over December. Packets will be in the Narthex with the Sanctified Art Devotionals, and I encourage all our families to grab one and try some of the options. I would love to hear back on how you and your family are using the packets. You can email me at cfm@saintjamespres.org.

We will be continuing our Pub Theology group Monday December 9th and 23rd from 630-730 at Archer Ale House. Childcare and carpooling are available at St. James from 6:15-7:45. This has been a great time to get together and explore themes of Christian ethics-ideas about good, evil, and the in-between, and how we live them out in everyday life.

We are looking forward to wrapping up Advent with our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight service on Tuesday December 24th at 7:00pm. Children will be welcome to participate in our service and we will have activities provided during the service as no childcare will be provided downstairs.

I wish you all a very peaceful, joyful, and happy Advent season!

December Godly Play Schedule

December 1st Work Day

December 8th Advent I & II

December 15th Advent III

December 22nd Advent IV

December 29th Work Day

FINANCE UPDATE

submitted by Andrew McLaurin, Chair of Finance

As announced on Sunday, we have started our annual pledge campaign. The pledge campaign is critical for the budgetary process. Pledges are the main source of income for the church. Our budget is based on the amount pledged as well as several other factors, such as general offerings and income from the building. At least 10% of our budget is dedicated to outreach and mission work other church. For those of you who have pledged in the past, we greatly appreciate your dedication and commitment to the support of St. James Presbyterian Church. If you are considering making a pledge for the first time, we appreciate any support you feel led to provide.

Pledge packets will be available in the narthex following worship for the first two Sundays in November. We will mail any packets not picked up. There are pledge packets available for anyone wishing to make a pledge for the first time.

I am pleased to announce that we have hired a new treasurer. Stefany Ness joined our staff mid October. She has strong experience with Quickbooks and general bookkeeping. We are excited to work with her. Katie Dunne is assisting with the transition. Thank you, Katie, for your continued support during this time.

Thank you again for your faithfulness!

Andrew

Saint James Presbyterian Church				
Budget Report, Budget vs. Annual				
For the Periods: October 2024, and Year-to-Date				
	October, Actual	October, Budget	Year-to-Date, Actual	Year-to-Date, Budget
Income	\$ 14,826.23	\$ 24,375.00	\$ 271,810.59	\$ 243,750.00
Expenses	\$ 34,665.75	\$ 27,647.10	\$ 352,020.43	\$ 276,471.00

(This is the same article that appeared in the September 2024 Pulse. The budget snapshot is new)

If you have any questions regarding the finances of Saint James Presbyterian Church please feel free to contact me or Stefany Ness at treasurer@saintjamespres.org

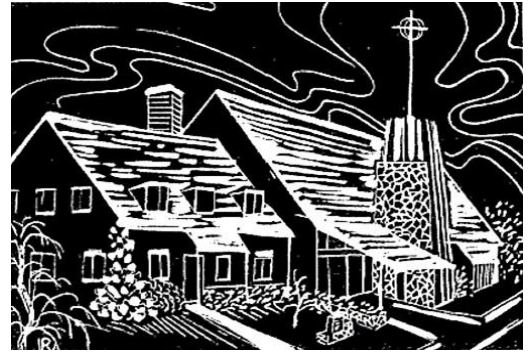
Aside from utilizing contact-free offering on Sunday morning, you can give in TWO primary ways:

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

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS - OCTOBER 13, 2024

Submitted by, Carla Shafer, Clerk of Session Pro-Tem

(minutes are available upon request from the church office)



- Notes from Session on October 13, 2023
- The Luncheon to welcome home Seth, Tracy and Asher from their Sabbatical Study trip, and supported by a Lily Foundation grant, was wonderful. Session members and Deacons thanked Sarah Condrey for her excellent coordination.
- Building and Grounds chair Aaron Caruso reported that the Horizon Room repairs are completed and everything looks very good. The funds to fully pay for the repairs have been transferred from the earnings of the Building Endowment invested with the PC(USA) Investment fund..
- The Christian Faith Formation Committee chaired by Jimmy Parks announced two new projects: a monthly “Pub Theology” discussion at Archer’s Ale House, 10/28/24 at 6:30 PM. It will be facilitated by Jimmy and Jessica Parks and Pastor Seth. And activities for youth will be offered at the church. For Info talk to Jimmy or Tracy Caruso.
- “A supportive St. James Writers Circle will begin meeting for writers who want to work on their craft and share their prose, memoirs, songs or poetry. Facilitators are Maureen Kosa and Carla Shafer. The morning meeting live at the church will be first Thursday, 11/7/2024 and the Zoom meeting will be on the third Wednesday, 11/20/24 at 7 PM. For more info and sign up with Carla at chuckanutsandstone@gmail.com or talk to Maureen. In December: Live on
- Finance Committee Session members reviewed account balances and were reminded to turn in each committee’s budget request for 2025. Annual Report information needs to be submitted to the Clerk of Session by November 30.
- Loving Welcome Committee confirmed the family dinner and game night will be held “Potluck and Pizza” on October 18, 2024. The Advent Festival will be held the Second Sunday of Advent on Dec. 8, 2024.
- Mission and Social Action Committee completed the coat drive successfully and is planning to provide Christmas Stockings in coordination with First Presbyterian and Cordata Presbyterian. Maureen is preparing the MSA Chair Notebook for the new Committee Chair in January.
- Nominating Committee members are Nebiyu Tesfa, chair; Kirsten Oliver, Faye Hill, Skip Gibson, Diana Philbeck, and Carla Shafer. There are 5 openings for Deacons and 4 openings for Elders.
- Personnel Committee The treasurer position has been posted and interviews completed. More details will be available soon. Staff reviews will be conducted in November. Appreciations for staff and others who managed church operations and care successfully are forthcoming.
- Worship Committee is assisting with support for our music program and plans for church decorating and the Christmas season.
- Pastor’s Report Pastor Seth gave a report of his Sabbatical experience and expressed appreciation for all the work that was done in his absence. The next Regular meeting of the Session is scheduled for Nov. 6, 2024 at 5 PM.

ST. JAMES WRITERS CIRCLE

St. James Writers Circle is a gathering of members and friends who are writing (or would like to be) prose, poems, novels, short stories. We are open to all genres and topics, and encouraging of spiritual and other content that is an authentic reflection of your personal views and explorations of ideas. We will meet to support each other's writing and provide resources. Meetings at the church will be at 10 AM on the first Thursday of each month, (Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 2 and so on) and on Zoom on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 PM (Nov 20, Dec. 18, Jan. 15 and so on). Writing Circle facilitators are Maureen Kosa and Carla Shafer.

MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION

Submitted by Maureen Kosa, Chair

Interfaith Coalition Winter Coat Drive:

A huge thank you to all who donated and supported the Interfaith Coalition Winter Coat Drive. Thank you to Gretchen Pfueller for organizing the coat drive and to Ray and Carole Dellecker for delivering the coats, etc. to the drop-off location. Your generosity is always appreciated.

New Lighthouse Mission Facility:

In a recent Nextdoor Neighbor post a local resident, Katrina Lyon, wrote about her tour of the new Lighthouse Mission facility. The full-length article may be found in our narthex. The new Bellingham facility is located at 1312 F Street and replaces the Base Camp that was temporarily housed on Cornwall Avenue. Lighthouse Mission Ministries President and CEO, Hans Erchinger-Davis, reports, "The new facility will help many people change their lives with mental health services, addiction support and safe housing." One of the many new features includes micro—shelters for families and other visitors who need other support. Overnight capacity will increase to 300 beds. During severe weather conditions, the new facility will also add an additional 100 beds.

On the social media platform, Nextdoor Neighbor, a local resident, Katrina Lyon, posted a wonderful summary of her tour of the new facility. Lyon states that although Lighthouse Mission is a Christian Ministry, you are not required to participate in Christian services. The ground floor has offices for partners and services. Service organizations include legal services, medical counseling, and mental health counseling. There are various wings for men, women, and for families. The building has AC/heat and solar panels.

Lyon describes three levels of support. The first tier is Outreach which includes making connections and getting people off the streets. Tier 2 is enrolling in one of the year-long recovery programs which are housed across the street. Tier 3 is transitioning back into the community with a job, etc. The street level entrance off Holly Street will be open to the public and will include a coffee shop staffed by residents.

As Lyon mentions, Lighthouse Mission will not solve the unhoused problem, but it is a huge piece of the puzzle. Ways to volunteer include working the reception desk at the Agape House (for women), stuffing envelopes for mailings, and by making birthday cakes for children staying in the units. You can also check out their website at www.thelighthousemission.org for more volunteer options or to donate. The new building cost 29 million, and most of that has been raised. 1.5 million is the balance owed.



Gardenview Stocking Project:

Once again, St. James will be filling stockings for the 40 residents housed by Road2Home at the Gardenview Tiny homes village here in Bellingham. Stay tuned for ways to help in this wonderful project to brighten the lives of the residents during the holiday season. If you are interested in helping in this project, please contact a member of the mission team or reach out to me at mhkosa@gmail.com

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.

- 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
 Children & Family Ministry Director: Tracy Caruso, tracy@saintjamespres.org
 Music Director: Ta Wei Tsai, music@saintjamespres.org
 Treasurer: Stefany Ness, treasurer@saintjamespres.org
 Administrative Ministry Assistant: Sharon King, office@saintjamespres.org

SESSION OF ST. JAMES

Tess Bowers*
 Ralph Buchan*
 Aaron Caruso*
 Sarah Condreay
 Maureen Kosa
 Andrew McLaurin
 Carla Shafer (interim clerk**)
 Jimmy Parks
 Nebiyu Tesfa
 Pastor Seth Thomas, Moderator

*Church Trustees **Clerk of Session

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

Church Office Hours:
9:00am - 2:00pm, Monday - Thursday

Worship Schedule - Online and In-Person, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Live streaming at:

<https://saintjamespres.org/live>
<https://www.facebook.com/saintjamespres/>

NOV/DEC BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

11/2	Trevor Murphy	🎂
11/6	Aaron Knight	🎂
11/6	Benjamin Knight	🎂
11/7	Jean Seater	🎂
11/11	David Seater	🎂
11/12	Julie Keyes	🎂
11/13	Patricia Harris	🎂
11/13	Heather Williams	🎂
11/15	Skip Gibson	🎂
11/19	Nancy Wagar	🎂
11/22	Miranda Keefe	🎂
11/23	Catherine Fairbanks	🎂
11/27	Wendy Crandall	🎂
11/29	Craig Keyes	🎂
11/30	Claudia Allan	🎂
11/30	Katie-Gray Landham	🎂
12/3	Pastor Seth Thomas	🎂
12/3	Jim Rothwell	🎂
12/8	Mark Johnson	🎂
12/9	Spencer Bravener	🎂
12/12	Kirsten Oliver	🎂
12/15	Alia Lynnae Bowers	🎂
12/16	Jill Steel Dobson	🎂
12/19	Jennie McLaurin	🎂
12/26	Lea TerBeek	🎂
12/21	Maureen Kosa	🎂
12/21	Mrinalini Majumdar	🎂
12/29	Ben Pries	🎂
12/31	Katy Read	🎂

PROGRAMS SHARING OUR FACILITY

- AA Fairhaven Group
- AA Grateful Hearts Women’s Group
- AA Men’s Book Study Group
- AA SOS Men’s Group
- AA Meditation Group
- Bayside Co-op Preschool
- Bellingham Community Chorus
- Bellingham Ukulele Group
- Boy Scouts Troop 7
- Happy Hour Al-Anon
- Liberation Yoga
- Linda’s Tai Chi
- Little Sapling Music
- Overeaters Anonymous
- St. James Fitness
- The Table Church
- Whatcom Weavers Guild

Deadlines for church publications

Weekly bulletin: Wednesday, 2:00pm

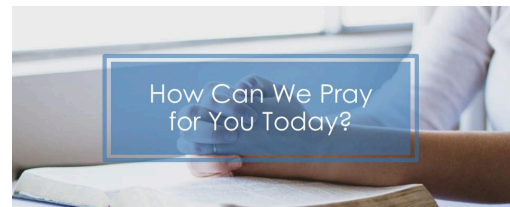
Weekly email: Thursday, 2:00pm

Monthly “the Pulse”: the 25th, 2:00pm

Add your request to the St. James Prayer Chain

Contact your Deacon or St. James at:

360-733-1325 | office@saintjamespres.org





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