
Lent at St. James

The Season of Lent begins on February 14. This season is marked by an invitation to consider ways we need resurrection and healing. This is the season of reflection, calling us to self-awareness and the (often difficult) work of pruning back what is finished and moving towards what brings life. Sometimes, we speak of this with the metaphor of “fast from / feast on.” The Lenten journey invites us to work as a community to move towards deeper wholeness and focus on the Christ-life we share.

I want to highlight a few things that we will be doing this year to help in this process of introspection and commitment to new patterns of living.

First, we invite you to join our Lenten Adult Education class, “*Loving Well: The Gift of Presence in Everyday Conversations*.” With his rich background in pastoral counseling, Randy Pries will facilitate this class, focusing on basic conversation skills that make a loving impact on the people around us: family, friends, neighbors, and beyond. The class will meet on Sunday mornings, from February 18 through March 17, at 9 am downstairs in the church Fellowship Hall. Come to explore what wholeness and new life in your interpersonal connections could look like.

This year, we also return to our multi-church Lenten Pilgrimage. Our tradition is to host First Presbyterian and Cordata Presbyterian congregations for Ash Wednesday at St. James. This year’s service is on February 14 at 7 pm. We will continue the pilgrimage with Maundy Thursday at Cordata (3/28) and Good Friday/Tenebrae at First Pres. Look for posters and flyers around the church for times and reminders. This is always a rich time of sharing connections and deepening our walk with Christ.

I have reflected quite a bit these last few months about how we approach the Resurrection and the story of Easter. Looking forward to this celebratory Sunday, during the Season of Lent, I will be exploring Scripture texts and stories from our lives that give us a taste of what resurrection can look like in our daily lives. How does Resurrection work? So many of us hear the story of Jesus’ life, affirm his death and resurrection, and yet wonder at how this impacts us in material, practical ways. If we do not witness the raising of the dead ourselves, how are we to approach this ancient text with the critical longing and hope that it is, miraculously, true? I look forward to preaching on some of these topics during Lent and invite conversations and questions as we journey together.

As always, it is a joy to serve as your Pastor. Thanks to all who participated in the Annual Congregational Meeting at the end of January. Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to support those in our community who are in need. Thank you for checking in with the church staff and making sure we have the support we need to serve our community well. God is good, and I close this note in gratitude for our life together at St. James.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seth



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

submitted by Faye Hill, Clerk of Session

Highlights of the Session Meeting on January 14, 2024:

- All members of the Session gathered in the Lounge at noon on January 14th for the meeting. Three guests were welcomed: Elder-Elect Ralph Buchan, Treasurer Katie Dunne and Deacon Kirsten Oliver.
- Deacon Kirsten Oliver reported that the deacons delivered poinsettias to homebound members in December. The deacons continue to reach out regularly to all members of the congregation.
- The Treasurer distributed copies of the Stewardship Campaign Report, the Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2023, the Church Budget vs. Actual for December, 2023 and the Budget Summary for 2024. The Session reviewed and discussed these reports. The Treasurer presented the budget figures for the month of December, 2023:



Beginning Balance	\$134,907.87
Income	30,462.94
Expenses	43,737.07
Ending Balance	\$121,633.74

The Session voted to accept these reports and thanked Katie for her work in preparing them.

- This was the last meeting of Clerk Faye Hill's three-year term. Pastor Seth Thomas asked for nominations for a new clerk, but none were forthcoming. Faye was thanked for her service.
- The Building and Grounds Committee reported that the window replacement in the Horizon Room will be done February 12-15.
- The Mission Committee reported that the Christmas Tree Gift project was a great success and she expressed appreciation for the generosity of the St. James Congregation.
- The Session voted to set the open office hours for the church building in 2024 as follows: Monday through Thursday, 10:00am to 2:00pm.
- Plans and preparation for Pastor Seth Thomas' sabbatical leave continue to develop. He will be gone for the months of July, August and September, 2024. The Sabbatical Committee is working with him on the details.
- The Session was reminded of the Annual Meeting on January 28th.
- Pastor Thomas proposed the date of Saturday morning, February 2, 2024 for the Deacon-Elder training. Reverend Jan Smith and Pastor Seth will provide leadership.

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director,



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

It's hard to believe that January is over, and we are moving into February! January was spent catching up from Advent and getting ready for what is shaping up to be an amazing 2024.

Our Godly Play classroom is into our parable series and will continue those until Lent. We are planning on holding a Godly Play training this spring so let Tracy know if you are interested in joining that training or would like to volunteer with our children's programs.

We hope you will join us Friday evening February 9th in the St James fellowship hall for a showing of *Barbie*, with discussion to follow. Come at 5:30pm for pizza and fellowship and the movie will start at 6:00, with a short discussion to follow. Bring your favorite movie snacks to share! Let Tracy know if you are coming so we know how much pizza to order.

We are excited to begin a new adult education class being led by Randy Pries titled: *Loving Well – The Gift of Presence In Everyday Conversations*. We know the importance and call to love others, but what does that practically look like in our everyday interactions with others? You might be surprised by how some basic conversation skills that are known but rarely used, can make such a loving impact on those around us: family, friends, and neighbors in our community. Join us for a 5-week class, at 9am on Sunday mornings starting February 18, meeting downstairs. Drawing on research and scripture, we together will learn some foundational elements of loving relationships and practical skills that we can all put into practice, to extend greater compassion and in deeper ways to reflect Jesus to those around us. If you can't make all 5 weeks, drop in when you can.

We have started planning for our all-church retreat coming in September at Warm Beach conference center. If you are interested in helping to plan the retreat, please let Tracy know. We will have our next meeting on Wednesday February 7th at 7:00 via zoom.

St. James will once again be partnering with First Presbyterian Church and Cordata Presbyterian Church for our Lenten Pilgrimage. As has been the case in the past we will be hosting the Ash Wednesday service here at St. James on Wednesday February 14th. We will have Godly Play available downstairs.

2024 is looking to be an amazing year at St. James. I am looking forward to continuing so many of the amazing things we have already had going as well as bringing in new opportunities for growth in our church. As always if you have any questions about any of our happenings or want to volunteer to help with our children and family ministries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

February Godly Play Schedule

February 4th The Parable of the Sower

February 11th The Parable of the Deep Well

February 18th Work Day

February 25th Faces of Easter I & II

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: Katie Dunne, stjamestreasurer.bham@gmail.com
 Administrative Ministry Assistant: Sharon King, office@saintjamespres.org

SESSION OF ST. JAMES

Tess Bowers
 Aaron Caruso
 Sarah Condreay
 Faye Hill (Clerk of Session)
 Maureen Kosa
 Andrew McLaurin
 Jimmy Parks
 Nebiyu Tesfa

DEACONS

Deacons Parish 1 – Merry Thomas*, Alice Bailey
 Deacons Parish 2 – Pam Gibson, Judy Buchan
 Deacons Parish 3 – Julie Keyes, Carla Shafer
 Deacons Parish 4 – Valerie McBeth, Claudia Allan
 Deacons Parish 5 – Pam Gibson, Adam Beaty
 Deacons Parish 6 – Kirsten Oliver, Amy Morriss*

* Deacon Co-Moderators

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



JANUARY 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	🎂
2/28	Nancy Peck	🎂
2/29	Olivia Pries	🎂

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
 Liberation Yoga
 Linda's Tai Chi
 Little Sapling Music
 Overeaters Anonymous
 St. James Fitness
 The Table Church
 Whatcom Weavers Guild
 Wild Hearts

PRAYER REQUESTS?

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