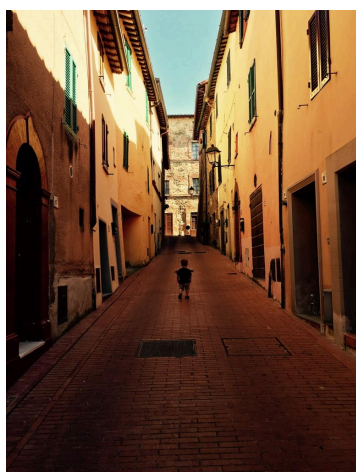

August Updates

Greetings friends,

We are in the long, dog days of summer. It's warm. Parks are full of Bellinghamsters and visitors from out of town. I've heard an elementary schooler hint at a desire to go back to school soon. It's August. Things slow down a bit, and it's an opportunity to catch our breath.

Catching my breath this Summer has been a little more difficult than usual. As you have probably heard, Stacy has a recurrence of cancer and is undergoing treatment. This has thrown our lives into a bit of a spin, derailing some of our plans for an active, playful summer. Instead, we're counting the blessings of each day with enough energy, good sleep at night, and the comfort of friends and family. We've celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary, took a little time for vacation out at Birch Bay, and are keeping a slower pace.

A year ago, my family was fortunate to be settling into our accommodations in Italy during my sabbatical as August rolled in. We spent the first days of August in the small countryside town of Pacciano, a place we had visited with Asher when he was very young. We love that little village, its olive oil farms, its quiet streets, and its friendly inhabitants. Here's a picture of Asher when he was just about 2 years old, and then again when he was almost 10.



Remembering where we were a year ago, within the context of facing a difficult cancer diagnosis in the here and now, reminds me of the power of memory. And of hope. At this time of year, I'm drawn to memories like these, as I replay the good times and adventures we've had in the past. God has been good and faithful.

Memory and hope are intertwined because it is our memory of God's faithfulness and goodness *from the past* that we lean on when we hope for the future. Hope is remembering God's goodness and trusting in it for what lies ahead.

I don't know what life will look like for my family in the months and years to come. Similarly, we don't know what God has in store for us as a church community at this time. The world is changing. Our community is changing. And with it, the needs of God's people and our role in the world, adapt and evolve, following the ever-unfolding work of God's Spirit ahead of us.

My August reflection is this: I'm looking for hope. And I'm looking for it by remembering that God has watched over us for so long. To hope today is to look forward, together, knowing that the Good Creator accompanies us along the way.

Grace and peace,
Seth

CHRISTIAN FAITH FORMATION

Submitted by Tracy Caruso, Children & Family Ministry Director



Greetings from the Director of Children and Family Ministries!

After a very busy June, it has been nice to have a slightly more relaxed July with just a few events. We had a fun craft night making friendship bracelets that we then handed out at the booth we shared with St. Paul's Episcopal church. It was a great day full of love and color and the bracelets were a big hit!

Our Godly Play class has been following the sermon series, and it has been fun to hear some stories that we don't usually hear this time of year and a new story that I wrote to add to our shelves. We will continue to loosely follow the sermons as we go into August and our annual pulpit swap. I will be attending the North American Godly Play conference in Vancouver this month and am excited to bring back some fresh ideas for our Godly Play program.

I have been sending out weekly emails to our St. James families with updates on events and other goings on like the weekly park meet up. If there is something you have planned or are planning like a hike or a trip to the Bellingham Bells and want to open it up to others, please let me know and I will include it in our weekly email. If you haven't been receiving the weekly emails with the times and locations of those and you want to get on the email list please let Tracy know cfm@saintjamespres.org.

A big thank you to the Deacons for putting on our annual summer potluck. It was so much fun to have so many folks hanging out, eating good food, and having a good time.

Unfortunately, due to everyone's extremely busy schedules we are having to cancel our youth group work trip to camp Lutherwood. We will still be meeting for our regular meeting on August 24th from 5:30-7:30pm.

This month I celebrate 7 years of working at St. James and I just want to say thank you to all of you who have shown me so much support and encouragement over the years. It has been a blessing to see my children grow up in this church and in this program. I love this church family and I have loved watching it grow and expand to so many children, youth and families. I look forward to continuing this work for many years to come.

Godly Play for August

August 3	Paul's Travels
August 10	Paul's Travels
August 17	Paul's Travels
August 24	Work Day
August 31	Work Day

FINANCE UPDATE

Submitted by Andrew McLaurin, Chair of Finance

We are now through the first 6 months of 2025. Our expenses are tracking as expected and are essentially as projected in our budget. Although we are on budget with our tithing there continues to be concerns that in the fall we will find ourselves in a tighter financial situation. I mentioned previously that we received several annual pledges in full in January. This has enabled us to maintain our outreach programs and pay our bills. We, as a congregation, are paying our pledges as expected. There is a lag in general offering collections. Seth mentioned this on July 20 along with asking for us to consider increasing our pledged tithing for the remainder of the year. Increases will help mitigate the shortfall.

Seth also mentioned our reserves. There are several endowments that we have. These include Building and Grounds, and Music to name two. These funds are restrictive in their use. The Elders are very careful in considering how these funds can be used. To date we have not funded operations with any of the endowment funds.

The finance committee, Session and Seth are developing a concise presentation for the congregation. We believe this documentation will clearly depict the challenges we are facing. In the interim, please contact me if you have specific questions regarding our finances.

	Actual Cash Flow, June, 2025	Budgeted Cash Flow, June, 2025	Actual Cash Flow, Year-to-Date, As of: June 30, 2025	Budgeted Cash Flow, Year-to-Date, As of: June 30, 2025
Rental Revenue	\$1,255.00	\$1,930.31	\$11,925.93	\$11,581.86
Annual Pledges	\$10,898.39	\$13,018.84	\$116,706.55	\$115,386.99
General Offering	\$3,553.08	\$3,815.41	\$21,671.20	\$23,607.57
Uncategorized Offerings Income*	\$2,377.55			
TOTAL INCOME:	\$21,419.02	\$18,764.56	\$150,303.68	\$150,576.42

GIVING TO ST. JAMES

If you have any questions regarding the finances of Saint James Presbyterian Church, please feel free to contact 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>

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING UPSTAIRS?

Did you know we have a third floor at St. James? Above our main office space, three large workrooms have been home to Interfaith Coalition of Whatcom County and other previous St. James ministries.

We aim to explore new ways to utilize this part of our building. So, with a bit of help from volunteers, we've begun to gather some workspace furniture (tables, desks) to make the space more usable for drop-in use. Do you know someone who works in a coffee shop all day and needs a change of scenery? Or do you need a place to work for a few hours with a beautiful view of Bellingham Bay? Maybe you can help us brainstorm ways to develop "The Attic" into a hub of activity at St. James. We have a small team exploring this concept and would welcome others. Contact Jessica Parks or Pastor Seth for more info.

MEAL FREEZER

The Deacons will be starting a freezer meal service to provide a few meals to those in our congregation who are in need of a meal or two to help in the event of an illness, or emergency, or any other type of need where a precooked meal would come in handy. We are looking for help preparing a few meals a month. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Horizon room. Meals should be delivered in containers that do not need to be returned and labeled with the name of the meal, preparers name, and what kind of diet it fits i.e, vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, etc. If you are in need of a meal please coordinate with the Deacons.

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, cfm@saintjamespres.org

Music Director: Leah Bruno, music@saintjamespres.org

Treasurer: Stefany Ness, treasurer@saintjamespres.org

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

SESSION OF ST. JAMES

Tess Bowers* – Loving Welcome
 Ralph Buchan* – Personnel
 Aaron Caruso* – Building & Grounds
 Carol Dellecker – Mission & Social Action
 Faye Hill – Worship
 Andrew McLaurin – Finance
 Jimmy Parks – Christian Faith Formation
 Rick Seater – Clerk of Session
 Nebiyu Tesfa – Nominating
 Pastor Seth Thomas, Moderator

*Church Trustees

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

Live streaming at:

<https://saintjamespres.org/live>

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

MAY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

8/1	Casey and Amy Morriss	💖
8/4	Corenia Murphy	🎂
8/5	Gary Culbertson	🎂
8/6	Tim and Wendy Crandall	💖
8/7	Jeanne Uhles	🎂
8/10	Jeff King	🎂
8/12	Wilma French	🎂
8/13	Rick and Jean Seater	💖
8/16	Megan Pfueller Melrose	🎂
8/17	Jimmy Parks	🎂
8/17	Randy Pries	🎂
8/18	Gena Gustafson	🎂
8/19	Bill Read	🎂
8/21	Dwayne and Karen Rogers	💖
8/24	Rick Seater	🎂
8/25	Mary van der Veen	🎂
8/26	Luke Arnold	🎂

DEACONS

Deacons Parish 1 – Merry Thomas*, Alice Bailey
 Deacons Parish 2 – Judy Buchan, Gena Gustafson
 Deacons Parish 3 – Buzz & Holly* Hagshenas, Jean Seater
 Deacons Parish 4 – Valerie McBeth, Alice Beaty
 Deacons Parish 5 – Diana Philbeck, Jenny Sue LeSchander
 Deacons Parish 6 – Kirsten Oliver, Gretchen Pfueller

* Deacon Co-Moderators

Church Summer Office Hours:

10:00am - 1:00pm, Monday - Thursday

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
 Linda's Tai Chi
 Little Sapling Music
 Overeaters Anonymous
 St. James Fitness
 The Table Church

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



Psalm Twenty Three

*The Lord is my protector;
I shall not have any need besides his presence.*

*He encourages me to rest,
To obtain the peace and renewal of his spirit within me.*

He guides me because I love him.

*Even with the wars, sadness and sorrow around us,
I will not be afraid;
For the Lord is there by my side.
His love and strength comfort me.*

*He gives me strength in times of uncertainty;
He loves me and meets my needs.*

*Because I love him,
I see goodness and mercy in everything.*

*Because of his promises,
I never lose hope.*

*I will live in the intimacy of his love,
Forever.*

Paraphrased and compiled by the Adult Church School Class, Sunday morning, April 25, 1999.