



January 2026

# The Messenger

Shelton Presbyterian Church

Rev. Jeffrey W. Bursch, Pastor  
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## OUTREACH/MISSION MINISTRY



### Serving the Community

The Outreach/Mission Team is promoting the Feed the Hungry program this month. Churches in the Shelton community share days during the month to provide meals downtown at the old Community Lifeline building. Our church provides a meal one Monday each month. We are grateful that Donna June has stepped up to plan and prepare these meals. Leslie Burkhalter has stepped up during the summer to give Donna a much-deserved break.

We need volunteers to assist with these meals. A new schedule is available for the 2026 year with the dates and staffing needs. Members can sign-up to be a part of the first team in the afternoon to help with the preparation/cooking (Donna will set the time based on the amount of prep needed). The second team will work from 4:30 to 6:30 to serve the meal and provide clean-up. Gail Straus is providing the lead for this team. The OMT will have a table set-up on Jan 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> with the sign-up sheets and members to answer any questions. Please note that the sign-up clipboard is always available at the visitor desk as well.

A big thank you to all the members who have helped in the past to keep this valuable program up and running. The service provided to folks in need who live in our community is so powerful. Be sure to stop by and consider being a part of helping our neighbors.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

I would like to thank all of you who have been involved with Kids Camp, Sunday School, or Nursery in the past three years. You have made my time on Session as the Children's Ministry coordinator very enjoyable.

Kristi Holzgrove is taking over for me. She will need everyone's continued support to maintain the momentum of our Childrens' ministry programs.

Blessings to you all,  
Lyn Baker



## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Happy New Year Nominating Committee, and thank you for the help with a busy 2025. I look forward to working with you this year.

Blessings, Karen Hilburn



## WORD FROM THE PASTOR

How many sermons do you actually remember? How many stand out in your mind so much so that you remember the points that were made, or the scriptures that were explained? If I'm honest, for me, there are very few. I remember a few jokes and stories that were told. I remember a few sermons that I disagreed with. But sermons that inspired me? Not too many. There are only a couple that stand out in my memory.

One such message was delivered to me when I was in college. I was attending Seattle Pacific University, and I often went to the Wednesday night worship gathering called Group. On the evening in question, the school chaplain, Steve Swain, was speaking. He was preaching on the commandment to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27). I had heard the text many times (I grew up in churches), but this message was different for me. I heard something new.

There were two things from the message that stood out for me. First, he explained that to love God with all your mind meant that it was okay to ask questions, to pursue truth, to have doubts. There are no questions that are off limits. There is no truth that is not God's truth. We don't need to be afraid of the sciences or academic discovery. In fact, we should pursue the truth with vigor and without fear. Growing up in churches where doubt and questions were discouraged, I found this perspective liberating.

Second, the chaplain explained, that for him, to love God with your whole heart meant that all emotions were okay. Being angry or depressed or anxious is not a sin. They are normal human emotions. They are a part of how we are designed as human beings. To love God with our whole heart means to take those emotions to God, to express how we feel, and to find the encouragement, love, and strength that we need to walk by faith.

You can probably see in my teaching and preaching, how those two messages continue to inform my calling as a pastor. Some sermons do have a long and lasting impact. I continue to be guided by the truth that came to me in that message 36 years ago. It has born good fruit in my life. I am grateful.

As we move into the new year, I would encourage you to bring your whole self to God in worship. God sees you, and knows you, and loves you. Bring your whole heart, mind, soul, and strength to the Lord in 2026. You will not be disappointed.

In Christ,  
Pastor Jeff

## Bible Studies

### ***Men's Bible Study***

Men meet Thursday mornings at 9:00 AM at the church. This study is led by Bill Corbett. Please join us.

### ***Thursday Night Bible Study***

This study is held every 1st and 3rd Thursday at 7:00 pm. The study is led by Pastor Jeff and is open to everyone. It is held in the lobby of the church. Please join us.

### ***Women's Bible Study***

Women meet Wednesday mornings at 10:00 AM at the church. The study is led by Lori Matlock.



### **January Birthdays**



1 Eileen Bailey	11 Erin Clifton
2 Rachel Darch	11 Kati Johnson
5 Jubilee Whitman	14 Justin Holzgrove
8 Caleb Johnson	17 Brooklyn McMullin
8 Sharon Johnston	21 Robin Pizanti
10 Larry Walker	

## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

	January 4	January 11	January 18	January 25	
<b>Lay Leader</b>	Mary May	Melissa Casey	Gary Sarver	George Bowen	



Pictured above left to right: Will Chisholm, Jack Casey, Robin Gagnon, Kristi Holzgrove, Amanda Wilgenburg  
Pastor Jeff

### WELCOME OUR 2026 ELDERS & DEACONS

Last Sunday was the Ordination and Installation of our 2026 Elders and Deacons. They are as follows:

**Elders:** Jack Casey, Dan Dickey, Robin Gagnon, Karen Hilburn, Kristi Holzgrove, Dewayne Matlock, Taylor (Terri) Saylor, Mark Schlauderaff, and Lynn Wilson

**Deacons:** Eileen Bailey, George Bowen, Leslie Burkhalter, Will Chisholm, Carla Dickey, Joe Everett, Harris Haertel, Jeanne Haertel, Tina VanderWal, Janna Johnsen, Teresa Sanders, and Amanda Wilgenburg

## SPC Youth News



### YOUTH-SPONSORED PANCAKE BREAKFASTS

Starting the first Sunday in February (1st), our youth will be cooking up a Pancake Breakfast following worship once a month - the first Sundays of the month throughout the winter and spring of 2026. This is a fundraiser for our youth that helps them raise money for the cost of summer camp. Your support is SO APPRECIATED!!

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Tina VanderWal

Chuck and I were eating breakfast at Blondie's when he noticed a high school friend eating breakfast with a group of friends. He went over to say hello and returned a few minutes later. When we left the restaurant, I asked Chuck how his friend was doing. He sadly told me "Not well," and then explained why.

When Chuck asked him, "How do you like retirement?" his friend answered that ever since retiring he's had health issues including heart surgery and he's just looking forward to going to heaven.

Chuck was really saddened by his response. Heaven is a great destination that we all look forward to, and we know that life can be tough. But I also know that our Lord wants us to find the joy in each and every day. He wants us to enjoy our time on earth and all the gifts He has given us, our families, our friends, nature and the list goes on.

When I look out at our congregation, I am inspired by so many. Some may have lost a loved one, or some are dealing with serious health issues, and some are in constant pain, but when you see them, they smile and when they speak you can see and feel the joy they still have in life. And I know that joy and peace that "passes all understanding" comes from walking daily with Jesus.

As we face 2026, none of us knows what life will bring but as long as we focus on Jesus, He will guide us through the hardships of life, and we will find His joy sprinkled throughout each day – even the difficult ones. As the song by Tommy Walker says, "I have a hope. I have a future. I have a destiny that is yet awaiting me. My life's not over; a new beginning's just begun. I have a hope. I have this hope." Wishing you all a wonderful New Year filled with His love and blessings of joy and peace!

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10