

O YE FROST AND COLD

Volume 104

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“Shhhh” sings the running ice, as it disappears; “it’s time to let go of the Winter”

Finally the ice is running now; these Northern rivers emptying themselves. The parade of Winter and its memories sweep by, fragmented with the ice. There goes early November on that piece; and the dark one there carries dark Advent. Across, that clean snowy white one must be part of Christmas; and that little one barely there carries that one day in February. Past us; past us; past us go the Winter and its memories. Good bye and thank you and don’t hurry back, please.

There are rivers, and there are rivers.

In front of us a large block grinds into the willows and stops, pushing and pushing. That’s some of this Spring, that pushing and grinding. The willows bend back to escape. Finally, the current catches the ice, eases it back into the main flow and, turning, away it goes. It disappears singing the familiar icesong. “shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh” sings the ice, sings the River, sings the Season.

There are rivers, and there are rivers. And there are memories, and there are memories. And some are not let go of very easily.

When I entered the Hospital room this Spring, I could see my friend. They have gotten him up and out of the bed. He sits slumped over in the green Hospital chair, his eyes closed. Slow breathing. The gown has slipped down, exposing his thin shoulders and chest. It doesn’t seem respectful to see him like this, but I can’t see, given the tubes, how I could straighten anything. His arms are outstretched on the chair, to allow the hooked up tubes to flow. With Holy Week approaching in the next week, my friend is naked, humiliated, and stretched out like a medieval painting.

“Ahhh, Titus,” I think, “now, now it’s your Crucifixion”.

Having followed the One he called “Our Sweet Lord” all these years; now he follows into the Passion and the Cross. His arms just hang there, head drooping. I am sure he is praying.

For most of these last years, he couldn’t hear any of us. But he could always hear God.

He was at St. Matthew’s for almost every service. I remember the Wednesday night Eucharists. He would come early. Very early. And sit against the far windows to catch whatever Light there was. And he would pray. A solitary thin figure in the pew. Talking to his Lord. And his Lord would speak to him. They would finally eat together; and the rest of us were allowed to join them.

Many didn’t know who he was. At the end of the service, he smiles and shakes hands politely with everyone and leaves, a thin old man in a coat too big for him, hat tilted back. No one knows who he is, as he leaves.

No one knows that he once studied Transactional Analysis in New York. No one remembers the group counseling sessions he ran on the St. Matthew’s lawn in the Summer. No one knows of those nights spent nursing drunks through their DTs. No one knows of those nights walking 2nd Avenue to watch for those who might need help. No one knows that for years, every week, he prepared a sermon, using the Bible and William Barclay’s commentaries and anything else he could find. *(It had been years since he preached, but he wrote them out every week, ballpoint penned on lined writing tablet. He needed and enjoyed the study and the discipline. He thought he should be prepared, if asked. I remember the last time he preached at St. Matthew’s, some 20 years ago. He began by apologizing that his voice wasn’t very clear. He began by introducing himself as “I am a man who has buried . . .”, and he recited off the long litany of family members whose funerals he had done. And folks then sat very quietly listening. There was more to this slight man than they thought.)* No one knows that as a young man from the Yukon Flats, he ended up in the Aleutians and India during World War Two. *(In my mind I carry a photograph that MUST have existed someplace. Titus, young and cocky as he was, smiling in the population seas of India. He is dreaming of running a snare line in January, as he smiles in the photograph.)*

No one, except me, remembers a silent December night in Fort Yukon. “Come on, kid,” he said, and we sailed around Fort Yukon and beyond on his dogteam. The only sound the silence of the runners on the snow; the only light the full moon.

No one knows that by now he has given away everything he ever had –houses, boats, dogs, cabins, tools, cars, money – to those who needed it more. No one know that all he has left in this life is the Spirit.

There are rivers; and there are rivers.

Once on a high Summer Day, flying low from someplace to someplace, a friend and I crossed over Birch Creek and there was the Rev. Titus Peter below, making his way in an old green scarred boat down towards the Yukon. He recognized the plane and, as we circled, he waved and waved, hat tilted back on head. Wings tilted in reply and we continued on. It was good to see him down there. I kept looking back,

(Continued on page 2)

ST MATTHEW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
FAIRBANKS ALASKA
THE REVEREND SCOTT FISHER

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THE
SPRINGING of
END-of-
WINTER
VOICES

It is Lent, which means Spring, and we are sitting outside, freezing, because it is still Winter. We are sitting outside and we are freezing and the weather is changing every ten minutes; and Here come the People of God. They are telling stories, and remembering, and carrying, carrying, carrying the caskets of those they love. They pass by, with courage and faith, and we overhear. . .

Don't get misdirected. The point ISN'T that they DIED. The point is that they LIVED.

Yesssssss, it's been an unusual Lent for me too. Not QUITE what I planned, this Spring.

You parents, if you want to honor my son, spend time with *YOUR* Children. Lots of times my son would ask me "Dad?". . . and I didn't have time for him. Now he's dead.

Did you know this Church is listed in the *Lonely Planet* Guide? We HAD to come look.

. . . and there at the Ice Festival was this big block of ice. And carved on it, it said, "*Betsy, will you marry me?*"

Their life and hearts are in *agony*; but most folks are in agony underneath these days, don't you think? My life certainly is.

Gramma never read the Bible. She couldn't. But she DREAMED it -in Gwich'in.

Yeah, duct tape. R--- used to call it Indian Chrome.

Climbed the bank; went back in the brush; had my uncle; tied the cord off and cut it; then came back down to her husband waiting in the boat.

They say your face when you're born is the face you leave with, the face you die with. I've been watching his face while I sit here. Look at it. No lines, nothing.

Let go of the winter . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Wake spreading out behind, slowly disappearing. Not a sign that he had passed that way, not a disturbance. Just passing along; and then gone. I have thought of that a long time.

Rivermen make their ways without disturbance, able to read the flow of the current and the ripples of air and water and light. (*Not for nothing did Our Lord call first those who spent their time in boats, and knew the ways of wind and water and light. Not for nothing did one of them once leap the side and go walking across the water when called. River travel takes faith.*)

With rivers opening now, I think of Rivermen I have known, sitting there confidently in the back of the boat watching ahead.

The path of the River is the path of humility. You don't fight the River, you learn to listen to it, and go where it's going.

When Titus began his ministry, he walked over to Walter Hannum, the then priest in Fort Yukon. "*I thought I'd help him out. Read lessons or something in the Church. He told me, 'You want to work for the Church? Then here's what you do. First you go to the Church early every Sunday and you go down in the basement and start the fire for us. You do that for a couple of months; then we'll talk.' If Walter Hannum hadn't done that, I wouldn't have become a priest. It taught me discipline and humility, going down every Sunday, Saturday nights when cold, and making that fire.*"

I think of my friend once upon a time in that River below me. He devoted his life to traveling really a different River, the unseen River of the Spirit. That was the real River he lived on, learning its moods and shadows, listening for its flow.

Faithful to its song, faithful to its wisdom, learned first from Elders when he was young, he followed its currents

Which have now flowed to the crucifixion in the Hospital.

In the days and nights to come, he would breathe softer and softer while we sat there. Finally one morning, in the days before Palm Sunday, all had left except a niece. Awake all night beside him, she fell asleep as the sun began to rise. His breathing was soft and steady.

An unseen hand, like an uncle's, gently touched her shoulder, waking her. Free now, his spirit touched her. He was gone.

No sign he was ever here, no disturbance, except the wakes left in the River of Spirit, in our hearts.

"shhhhhhhh," sings the ice, as it flows around the curve of the River, "*Time to let go*"

A smiling figure, hat tilted back, waves, young again.

"*K'eegwaadhat nakhwah ooli*", he says, "*May God be with you all*"

"*neenahaal'yaa*", I promise, "*I will see you again*".

Easter is finally a Destination, not a Particular Date.

The Rev. Titus Peter was buried in the Hudson Stuck Cemetery in Fort Yukon on Saturday, March 15th. It was the day before Palm Sunday. The grave is near the original location of the Church in Fort Yukon. You can see still the foundations of the basement. And the chimney from the stove.



DIOCESAN YOUTH CAMP in JUNE



The Diocesan Youth Camp will be at Camp Challenge, near the corner of Bogard and Trunk Road between Wasilla and Palmer, June 1-7. The Camp is for kids entering the 4th through the 8th grade, and counselors and staff aides are needed [young adults entering high school through early college]. The latter will need to meet a day earlier, 5/31, for staff orientation and training. Interested persons can see pictures of camp activities here:

<http://flickr.com/photos/johnhanscom/sets/72157600414135860/>

This Camp has been operating in its present form since 1991. For more information: the Rev. Jim Basinger [All Saint's Anchorage or jbasinger@chugach.net], the Rev. Paul Klitzke [St. David's Wasilla or paul.klitzke@gmail.com] or the Rev. John Hanscom [Christ Church Anchorage or ihs369@msn.com].

End of Winter Voices

Every meeting of the Vestry should have a "Tree Appreciation Moment", I think.

He was EVERYONE'S Uncle and Grampa.

. . . A window into the very heart of God—a window called Titus, who now is open to us only by prayer, whom we used to look through too casually; who now sees face to face what we see only dimly, as in a glass, and a little more darkly.

...hollered at him, "Titus, there's porcupines out there". He dropped his bag and backpack and grabbed a stick and took off down the road after those two porcupines. Got 'em too. That's the first time I met him. Chasing those porcupines.

...called me and said "The Aleutians have been attacked and we're leaving". I told him "I'll be down there with you boys"; and I went down there; and we prayed together; and I stayed with them until they had to leave. "Goodbye

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH

RECTOR	The Rev. Scott Fisher 456-5235	PARISH ADMINISTRATOR	Hilary Freeman 457-4820
PRIESTS	The Rev. Steve Matthew. . . 488-9076 The Rev. John Holz 456-3583 The Rev. Layne Smith 374-5957 The Rev. Lee Davis 457-2865	SEXTON	Michael "Tree" Nelson . . . 456-5217
DEACONS	The Rev. Bella Jean Savino 456-1503 The Rev. Montie Slusher . . 474-4570	ORGANIST	Laura Vines 452-4565
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CLERK	Teresa Moore 374-8382	SUNDAY SCHOOL	Charlotte Perotti 457-1332
VESTRY	Charlene Marth Helen Howard 488-2314 Hubert Griffin 452-4692 Darrel Zuke. 488-6073 Roxy Wright-Freedle. . . . 455-9300 Marty Thomas 455-6612	HEALTH MINISTRY	Martha Thomas, Chair . . . 455-6612
PARISH TREASURER	Carolyn Nethken 457-3304	ENDOWMENT BOARD	Darrel Zuke 488-6073
		WEB GARDENER	Maggie Castellini 479-5444
		NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Mary Margaret Davis . . . 457-2865
		SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	Helen Howard. 488-2314
		UNITED THANK OFFERING	The Rev. Bella Jean Savino 456-1503
		DAUGHTERS OF THE KING	
		MINISTERS	YOU US!!!

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 Diocesan Website: episcopalak.org

End of Winter Voices

Fairbanks; goodbye Fairbanks" they all hollered as that train pulled out. We all felt so bad. We were worried. We didn't know if we'd see them again. And here, he was with us all those years since. Thank God.

I can see the level of the snow against the western side of the house has melted and gone down a little; so it *IS* getting to be Spring.

I slipped a pack of cards into his casket so him and Gramma can play cards.

Well *sortof* we've got a place to sleep. We sleep in an abandoned car at night. We've got our blankets and stuff there. We just hide down in there and our breath fogs up the windows. So mostly it's safe. Sort of. I guess.

. . . and there was that time we were buryin' -----; and that box was so *cheap*, his arm fell out when were half way up the hill. We got that back in; and then almost all the rest of him fell out. Then Uncle ---- came along with 16 penny nails and just POUNDED that sucker shut.

Well, we didn't know where else to go with her, after the funeral; and we knew they weren't finished at the cemetery yet; so we just gave her one last ride around town. She liked Burger King, so we went through the Burger King Drive Thru. Did they look at us funny? Noooooo.

I didn't know him, but I always heard so much about him, that I stopped in there, the Church, to pray for him, at the Visitation. And I got such an overwhelming sense of joy when I prayed for him. Does that make sense?

You're still here? I heard you retired and moved to Connecticut.

I got to Fairbanks about 7 weeks ago. Everyone's told me I have to meet you and come to this church. They said *THIS* is THE Church to go to. I found you on the Web.

Endowment Board of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church is Calling For Grant Requests

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Endowment Board is seeking applications for the 2008 grants. Each year the Endowment Board awards varying funds generated by interest and cash dividends earned by the Board over the previous 12 months ending December 31. Grant requests must comply with the mission of the Endowment Board. The Endowment Fund is operated to *enhance the worship, ministry and mission outreach of St. Matthew's*. Grants cannot be used for the general operating budget of St. Matthew's. The amount for distribution this year is \$3,647.73.

All grant requests must be typewritten, signed, and received no later than **June 30, 2008**, to be considered. Applications may be picked up in the Parish Office or found online at www.stmatthewschurch.org.

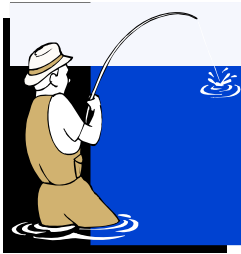


This could be for YOU: **LEARNING to THINK THEOLOGICALLY**

All of us at baptism are called to ministry, to be workers in God's vineyard, whether that be as a Sunday School teacher, a choir member, a friend, a parent or any of an infinite variety of other ways of serving. *If figuring out your ministry has ever seemed confusing or daunting to you*, Education for Ministry is a tool that might help you. **Education for Ministry (EFM)** is an adult education program designed to help us live into the life God is calling us to. The materials come from Sewanee Seminary and lead the students into a study of Old Testament, New Testament, Church History and Theology, in successive years. The core of the program, however, is learning to think theologically – to apply what we learn to the every day lives we lead in this challenging and complex world God has created for us. Students make a commitment to the program for one year at a time. EFM meets one night a week from September through May. Look for a display with more information that will be put up during the month of May. Due to the necessity of ordering materials, we need those **of you who** would like to participate next year to make that commitment (payment and registration) by the end of June. You can ask **Becky Snow, Julia Cockerille, Roxy Wright**, (*currently certified EFM mentors*) or any of the current students about what it is like, to help you decide whether this program might be a good fit for you.

We would like to congratulate **Karen Kiss** and **Bernice Aragon** who are both completing Year Four!

DATES to REMEMBER THIS SUMMER



Sooner or later, *sigh*, FINALLY it will be Summer. Green grass and flowerbeds dancing with color and robins singing and boats going by and staring at dirt to try to turn it into a garden. Princess tour buses and visiting Saskatchewaners and four thousand three hundred ninety six things that we HAVE to get done before Falltime.

In the midst of all that activity, it might be a good thing to keep track of some of the things already being planned for this Summer. For example, there may be a wedding, or seven or twelve, during the Summer. For example, the St. Matthew's Ministry OutReach Committee [See related article elsewhere in this Newsletter] is already beginning to plan possible trips to Nenana, Tanacross, Minto, Circle, and Eagle. (*And who knows where else!*). For example, now retired clergy, like the Rev. Charles Morris, are already planning to visit. (*In the Summer of 1956, he was a summer seminarian in Alaska and, in Beaver, met his wife Janet, then teaching Vacation Bible School for Bishop Gordon. He's coming back in late June to say hello to the Rev. Luke Titus, and visit Fairbanks, Anchorage, Beaver, and Minto.*)

And there's more. When planning your adventures this Summer, don't forget the following.

In June, there is the **Annual Midnight Sun Eagle Summit Solstice Eucharist on June 21st**. That's a Saturday this year. Why not come join the Eucharist, and then drive onto Central and Circle for picnics and Sunday church there? Or stay up all night & enjoy watching us try to handle the Sunday 8AM Eucharist.

In July, when the 49th Annual Golden Days arrive, this year is the **TENTH ANNIVERSARY of BOOYAH!** Who knows, on **Saturday, July 19th**, how that might be commemorated?

And August will be a busy month. **Friday, August 8th** would have been the late Shirley Demientieff's 58th birthday. Providing Governor Palin signs the bill that passed the legislature this year, figure a party and a bridge dedicated to Shirley that day in Nenana. **The Tukudh (Gwich'in) Language and Liturgy Institute** returns to the University of Alaska **August 4th through the 15th**; and plans are being made for an historic Tukudh Eucharist again at St. Matthew's near the end of the Institute (*perhaps around August 17th*).

And **August 23rd and 24th**, the Yasuda family, assisted by Ryo Satomi in Japan and various folks in Beaver, is holding a **50th Anniversary Memorial Potlatch honoring Alaskan Pioneer Frank Yasuda**. (*The students and staff of Cruikshank School in Beaver visited Japan in April. Some of their visit included attending St. Alban's Anglican Church in Tokyo, and singing a hymn from the Chilig for them*). There could be as many as 50 visitors from his hometown of Ishinomaki and elsewhere in Japan present for this event. They include a traditional Japanese Drum/Dance Group. They'll need help with housing here in Fairbanks, and perhaps even a concert can be arranged.

Who knows what else might happen? Watch for further details on the St. Matthew's website (www.stmatthewschurch.org)!

End of Winter Voices

. . . was born up there on an ironing board.

I feel like I've *LOST CONTROL*; like I don't have any control over things. Have you ever had that feeling?

They're all pretty much gone now, aren't they? David, Isaac, Titus, Jam-es, Paul, Phillip. Just Trimble left now.

....always told me, "*when something happens to me, be sure to tell my kids and my family how much I loved them*". And so you kids, your mother really loved you. And...

Why can't I just die???? Why doesn't God just take me???? I prayed for this, for two years... what bad thing did I do in my life for God to punish me soooo bad. . .

. . . Dad used to talk about that and compared it to "*hunger*" When you are hungry, physically, you need to eat; when you are hungry in your soul, you need to attend church or listen to sermons or songs...or read the Bible..... And the longing won't be fulfilled until you eat, or attend church, and take your Communion.

. . . heard this noise and we went by his office and there was this priest prostrate on the floor; and the Bishop over him, just bawling him out, really giving it to him. And the guy just spread prostrate on the floor. After, we all went to dinner, and they were there; and every time the priest went to take a bite, he'd look at the Bishop first; and he would shake or nod his head, on whether the priest could take that bite. Some Church, that one.

. . . told me that he grew up in {X} and he said there were Three Rules if you were a man there. You don't cry; you drink, and you fight. Those were the Rules. That's why he left.

One thing, I think it's *ALL* by the grace of God, you know, and that's that this is happening so fast that there's no time to worry about it.

End of Winter Voices

If I had a brain, I'd TAKE IT OUT and STOMP on it!

. . . and she was breathing softly; and a tear rolled down her cheek. One tear. And that was it. Very quietly.

Holy Moses! Is an entire generation taking off for Glory this month?

They were wing-walkers back in The Day, you know, during the Depression. You know, walkin' on the wings of those biplanes.

...so that's why I'm here - to make a new start.

Well, at least a polar bear in town gives us something new to think about, other than all the other stuff going on this week.

Well, what would YOU do if you had a polar bear charging at you?

I think we saw bears like that this summer up here. But we never say anything. They're pretty dangerous. People have to be sure to take a gun with them if they go out. And a dog.

Nooooooooooooo, I don't think I want to sit down too close to you. People around you seem to be dying a lot these days.

Just wait till it's Spring, and you have to start burying all those folks whose funerals I keep reading about that you've been doing.

I must tell you. I had an "a HA!" moment this year, this Easter at St Matthew's. After all these years, I finally got it.

Yeah, you need to go back to the REAL River and hear God.

I asked him, "If I had died by that falling snow, what would you have told my mother?" And he said, "I would have told her your last words were." And he went like this [arms and feet waving]. So Jim, for you, for the last time . . .

through All The Seasons of Life

SEASONS of LIFE in the SEASON of SPRING

For the 2 months since the accounting in the last Newsletter, through the Seasons of Lent and into Easter, through dog races and ice festivals, and up and down weather and Spring celebrations; through the 63 days from Sunday February 24th through Saturday, April 26th, we gathered together and prayed at least 177 times. An accounting and some of the details. (Visit the St. Matthew's website at www.stmatthewschurch.org to see photographs and videos of much of this):

- 29 Sunday Morning Eucharists
- 2 Rite VIII Children Eucharists
- 23 Private/Home Communion visits by clergy
- 9 Private Home Communion visits by LEMs
- 37 Midnight Compline Services
- 3 Sunday afternoon Fairbanks Correctional Center Eucharists
- 2 Tuesday Morning Denali Center Eucharists
- 10 Wednesday Morning Eucharists
- 10 Wednesday Evening Eucharists
- 5 Thursday Morning Pioneer Home Eucharists
- 1 Baptism Service, 1 baptized (out of Fairbanks)
- 1 Baptism Service, 15 baptized
- 1 Service of Confirmation and reaffirmation, 3 confirmed, 5 reaffirmed
- 1 Celebration of Holy Matrimony
- 7 Commendations of the Dying/Departed
- 2 Receptions of the Body
- 10 Funerals (within Fairbanks)
- 5 Funerals (out of Fairbanks)
- 3 Fridays in Lent Stations of the Cross services
- 7 Holy Week services (Monday thru Holy Saturday morning) services
- 4 Easter Services (Easter Vigil and Sunday morning)
- 1 Easter Egg Hunt Easter Sunday afternoon
- 1 105th Anniversary service
- 3 Interior Deanery services
- 1 "Spring Fling Fundraiser"

-
- 9 hours, 31 minutes, 6 seconds - Length of Daylight on February 24th
 - 16 hours, 32 minutes, 30 seconds - Length of Daylight on April 26th
 - 21F Coldest Temperature since February 24th (February 28th)
 - 59F Warmest Temperature since February 24th (April 23rd)
 - 0 # of people who can figure out the weather this Spring

Holy Baptisms, Confirmations, and Reaffirmations

An Easter beginning. On Wednesday, March 19th, the Wednesday of Holy Week, the Rev. Deacon **Bella Jean Savino** traveled to Trinity Church, Circle, and celebrated Easter services there. While there, she baptized **Ezias Nelson**, the child of **Melissa Carroll** and **Lucn Nelson**.

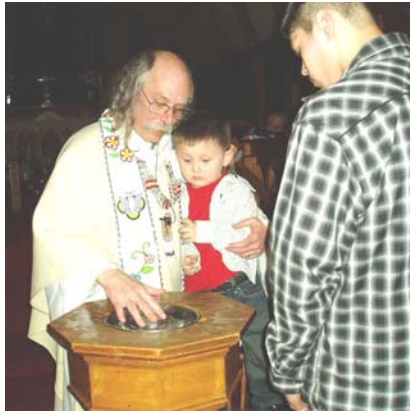


Saturday evening, March 22nd, in celebration of the Easter Vigil and the first Eucharist of Easter, a joyous and excited full church gathered for Easter and 15 baptisms. Baptized this Easter were 12 years old **Ashley Kaye Aragon** (Godmother: **The Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**); 7 years old **Gabirelle**

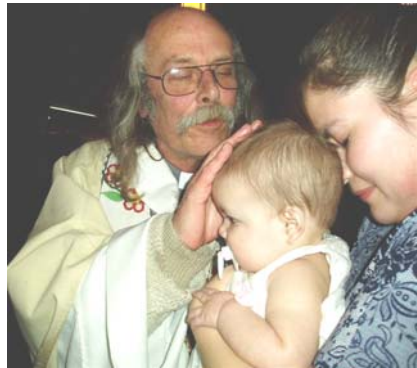
(Continued on page 7)

Seasons of Life . . .

Alexandria Lanhaim Beene (Godmother: *The Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino*); 2 years old **Cheyenne Grace Garrison** (Godmother: *The Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino*); 1 year old **Leon Joseph Beetus** (Godparents: *Charles Ned and Charlene Ned of Allakaket*); 14 months old **Samson Theodore Beetus** (Godparents: *Charles Ned and Charlene Ned of Allakaket*) [NOTE: *and Samson and Leon's parents brought a celebrational cake that we all shared Easter Sunday morning*]; 3 months old **Eve**



Camrin Gloshey Engles (Godparents: *John Ritter of Whitehorse, Mark Frank of Fairbanks, Lauren Gloshey of Albuquerque*); 4 months old **Florence Ramona James** (Godparents: *Mary James, Bertina Titus, and Virgil Titus*); 11 months old **Mauricio Emilio Ketzler-Lopez** (Godparents: *Dale Erickson and Cynthia Erickson*); 1 year old **Darius Daddy Morgan** (Godparents: *Susan Gooshaw, Roberta Titus, and Shanika Morgan*); 3 weeks old **Julius Isaiah Morgan** (Godparents: *Isaiah Weeks, Heather Whitwell, and Aiesha Morgan*); 9 months old **Simon Austin Ned** (Godparents: *Cisco Beetus, Dennis Ned, and Tiffany Bergman*); 6 months old **Alissa Sandra**



Tukkuyeetlno Robb (Godparents: *Tammy Hartsgrrove, Lewis Hartsgrrove, and Stacey Pare*); 8 months old **Adam Kia Weeks** (Godparents: *Annie Silas and Jeremiah Silas*); 1 year old **Amari Courtney Weeks**; and 2 years old **Jordan John Woods** (Godparents: *Elias Saylor, Bruce Oslund, Barbara Thornton, Brian Erickson, Judy Evans, and Tawnie Burns*).

Easter celebrations continued when, on Sunday morning, April 20th, as part of the concluding Interior Deanery meeting, **Bishop Carol Gallagher** confirmed **Ashley Kaye Aragon** (who had been baptized at Easter), **Charlie Philip Jagow**, and **Jesse Lee Evans Peter**. During that same service, **the Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor, Dawn Jagow, Mae Peter, the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino, and Bessie (Peters) Williams** re-affirmed their own Baptismal vows. As part of the service, Senior Warden **Bruce Gadwah** and other Vestry members presented each of the newly confirmed with new prayer books.

Holy Matrimony

On Saturday afternoon, March 29th, with the Church full and snow threatening outside, **the Rev. James Hunter** celebrated the wedding of **Alicia Brahan** and **Shaun Perkins** of North Pole, breaking the Trail for all of the coming Spring and Summer weddings.

Commendations, Funerals, Memorials, etc.

As recorded in the last Newsletter, 48 years old **Julie Ann Tritt** died here in Fairbanks early in the morning of Saturday, February 23rd. The second

(Continued on page 18)

End of Winter Voices

If gas keeps rising, it's 5.50 a gallon here *NOW*; I don't know how we'll run our boats this Summer. We won't be able to afford to. And then snow machines too. Maybe it'll all go back in a circle to the Way it was - canoes and dog teams. Long time ago, we could live without money. I did it. But the KIDS don't know how to live like that anymore.

I grew up with Elders. They were happy people. And *STRONG*.

....there was a knock at the door and he answered it - holding a plate with a pile of cocaine, a card, and a straw on it. And the knock was the Police. That's why that place is closed.

... was a big Irishman and nobody could hold him down, to pull his tooth out, for his toothache. So he started walking up to Fort Yukon, where they had Novocain, you know. He froze to death, up there above White Eye. Old ---- ---- found him and hauled him up to Fort Yukon. Had a heck of a time with his sled, getting his body back up, because when he froze to death his arm was out here, and so, along the trail, his arm kept . . .

I'd boiled some moose nose at home; so we drove out to Creamer's and sat there eating, crackers and eating. That was our last car ride together.

I'm afraid. I'm afraid of Dying. How do I live with this Fear? That's what I need to know.

Well sure, but back in those days I was ridin' freights all over Out There. I did that Out There for about twenty years, just hobo-ed.

We used to eat pigeons as a boy, I remember, back in Minnesota. Our neighbor would call and say, "Come get my pigeons"; and we'd get fifty to a hundred of them, roosting in his barn. Then wring their necks and cook them. Tasted like any other bird.

End of Winter Voices

Bishop Bentley confirmed me when he came through. I was a little girl, and we weren't even at the Church. We didn't have a Church then. We were in So and So's log house. After the service, Bishop Bentley said to me, "Little girl, if I don't see you again, I'll see you on the other side of the River." Then he left. And ---- -- asked, "What the heck business does the Bishop have on the other side of the River over there?"

Get a My Space page for the Church? Ohhhh, please. Do you know how much work it is writing in a blog every day? Forget it.

We just wanted to thank you and everyone for letting us have "Tea" for my brother here. It's really meant a lot to us. We wanted to be *HERE*, at *THE Church*. This was my Grandmother's Church, you know. She always came here; and told us that if we ever needed any help for anything, we could always count on St. Matthew's.

There was so much snow it didn't hurt, but I was covered in snow and didn't look very graceful lying there laughing my head off and yelling at the dog to quit!

I've got one for those "Voices" in the Newsletter. My daughter came home and said she had to get her car painted. "Why?" I asked her. She said she had just shoveled the snow off of it. "But why do you have to get it painted?" I asked. "Well, she said, "I used a shovel"

He DEMANDS that we love one another. That's pretty hard. I fall short.

They always say "Don't let the Sun go down on your anger." I guess that means in the Summer up here you can hold onto your anger a long time.

To BE is to DO.

We have a Woman Governor now; and this Bishop visiting us is a Woman. And that's the way it should be; because that's where the Power is. I never thought I would say that.

The Last Article of the Rev. Titus Peter

[NOTE: The Rev. Titus Peter loved to write. He wrote letters around the Country. It was the way he stayed in touch. In recent years, when being understood became difficult, he kept writing. Some of his essays, the advice and memories of an Uncle, have appeared in the St. Mathew's Newsletter. Since his move home to Fort Yukon, he often contributed article to the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Government Newsletter. This article, courtesy of Titus's family, and CATG Executive Secretary Carol Shewfelt, was the last one he wrote, shortly before he died. Though some of it addresses internal CATG business, its themes of humility and wisdom can speak to us all. This is Titus speaking.]

IF YOU HAVE A HARD TIME . . . , JUST TELL THE LORD

By the Rev. Titus Peter

My fellow Athabaskans.

My conscience is quite clear about the way in which I perform my life as an Elder. Remembering the Elders in my young days, I could never be like them. I have to admit they had it easy, as all young boys and girls were taught respect; and so they listened to Elders and learned.

People say time is changing and people change with it. This is right and good with some people. Even when I was a young man, young people, including myself, start saying "O that's denadi," ("long time ago"). Today they say, "That was then; today is now." Seems like those who says these wise statements has to go back to "then" life by listening and accept help, in order to fulfill the purpose for what he or she is here for.

My mother told me if I listen to Elders I will live a long life; I didn't really believe her, thinking what does listening to Elders has to do with our life; when our time is up we die. I went about my way and in a few years I was dead. I walk around, but I was dead. I had to get back to the "then" life and teaching. Paul Solomon Sr. knew I could do better and was a lot of help to me. So as an Elder I like to say to you young people "Don't use drugs or alcohol. You may say I'll just use a little bit. There's no such thing. You may be able to do it tonight and tomorrow night, but the third you may take a little more than little bit and if so you are on your way into "now" life."

I have been writing articles of what little I know of our beautiful ancestors and our beautiful loving Lord. I want to thank C.A.T.G. for always willing to print my articles in their newsletter. Some times they can't read my writing. Once I wrote Jesus said "I am a good Shepard" and it was written "I am a good shape".

Concerning children I noticed, reading last year's meeting report, that activities, programs, teaching, etc is not on the report. Ron Solomon did feel that they should enroll shareholders children. Someone spoke on how it will affect our distributions. How it will affect was not written. If it means dividend I'm sure it will. I'm sure dividend had been a help to many people in different way. I noticed some gratefully use it for their people who are in need, which is our Traditional Value. Some use it for a care for their addictions, alcohol, bingo, pull tabs etc. Paul Solomon Sr. told me these things are not bad. Too much of it makes it bad. I had helped people with their alcohol addiction knowing that they are going through.

Actually I shouldn't talk this way because I don't need dividend, as I'm not addicted to anything and I don't have a family. To tell you the truth, I much rather have a family, and in need once in awhile, than where I'm at. I told my brother once, as I was visiting him, his grandchildren keep running in and out getting pop and other goodies out of the refrigerator after asking him or Minnie. I had bills, which I showed him, saying, "look I have more money than you, but you have more wealth than me." Arlene has a good advice, come to meeting and you will learn. When I attend meetings I get more frustrated than anything else. I can't hear; people don't understand me when I talk. I'm just

Just tell the Lord . . .

(Continued from page 8)

like a block of wood and in the way.
I am interested in what you are

doing, very impressed and proud of you, this is the first time I read the report of your meetings. My eyes are so weak. I need new head. Keep praying before discussions. If you have hard time with it, just tell the Lord to send you Holy Spirit to with your discussion.

God Bless You.

[NOTE: Part of EFM - "Education for Ministry"- is Theological Reflection. Sometime organist and EFM student this year Mary Ellen Koeller shares one of her Theological Reflections from the class, commenting on Henri Nouwen's reflections on Rembrandt's 'The Return of the Prodigal Son', and combining her thoughts with his. If YOU are interested in EFM, see related article in this Newsletter]

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

(LUKE 15:11)

By Mary Ellen Koeller

Henri Nouwen, a professor at Harvard and the author of the book, "The Return of the Prodigal Son", saw this Rembrandt painting at the museum in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1983. *(It was one of Rembrandt's last paintings before he became blind and died in 1669).* The painting is 6 by 8 feet, with strong contrasts of light and shadow to increase the dramatic impact of his picture; and it had been acquired by Catherine the Great in 1766. The author states that the seemingly insignificant encounter with the painting early on set in motion a long spiritual adventure that brought a new understanding of his own existence and gave him the strength to search in earnest for life's meaning. Here are some of his thoughts and recollections.

God the Father loves each of us so much that He awaits us with open arms and wants to hold us in an eternal embrace. Rembrandt captured God, His humanity, compassion and misery in one circle of love, life and death ...hope and relief, the embrace of father and son's reconciliation, his forgiveness, inner healing, an intimate part of the spiritual journey from life to death and back to life again..

There are four figures looking and watching the reunion. The role of a bystander is there. What is he thinking? Is it jealousy, anxiousness... and the seated man staring into space. The tall man is erect and looking critically at the son and his father. Hands gripping each other and the posture of not wanting to get involved. And what about the red cloaks on the older son and his father? Even the father's hands have a story.

The prodigal son has traveled from a distant country. Look at his feet and filthy clothes. Yet, the author sees the gospel of love in the picture: a gate that allows one to move to the other side of existence and observe the human experience. There is displayed loneliness, love, sorrow and joy, war and peace, hunger and thirst for God. As if God is saying, "Keep my word and I will live in You". He dwells in our innermost being and he gives us an invitation, a spiritual challenge, an inner peace, and it takes lots of prayer to get us to where God wants us to be.

The older son demonstrates his responsibility and steadfastness in the painting: yet he scorns the scene he is witnessing. He has been so loyal to his father; and yet is so jealous of his brother that he asks about his inheritance while his father is still living: an unheard of situation. At the end of the book I felt that the parable and the old painting speaks unmistakably of the boundlessness of God's compassionate love. It is Divine love and mercy in its power to transform death into life. God is always and eternally holding us in a loving embrace as the father is holding his own prodigal son.

Nouwen ends his story this way: Don't be afraid, God welcomes all of us with His immense Embrace and He doesn't let go!

End of Winter Voices

I haven't learned how to fold a sailboat out of paper. But I expect to.

Do you think it's EVER going to quit snowing?

Two Eagles flew above his house then he passed on; and the moon, the full moon was just pure red. I mean red.

. . . but how could I say "goodbye" to my friend?

Did you enjoy Spring? Those ten minutes last week one afternoon.

I am SOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO sick of this snow and ice stuff.

Without Laughter we can do NOTHING. If you can't laugh about it, it's not worth doing.

I saw a goose!
It's SPPPPPPRRRRRRRIIIIIIIIIING!!!

I feel like I'm in that movie "Groundhog Day". We've been flying and changing planes for 36 hours; yet it's only 2 hours since we left.

. . . sang "In the Sweet By and By" in Gwich'in. Couldn't see the prayer book through the tears.

. . . in the end we decided to stay married out of a commitment rather than any loving reason. [Now] we're actually enjoying each other again. . . . So sometimes maybe it is better to just hang in there; even if there does not seem to be a light at the end of the tunnel.

. . . and he danced on "American Bandstand" when he was young, but most people don't know that.

I like to think they are out there on the clouds, with the pure RED moon shining on them dancing together.....eternally.

We always called them "the cowboys". When we heard that they'd come down the River and back to town, we'd say "ohhhhhhhh, the cowboys have come in from the Black River".

End of Winter Voices

"Jesus!" he called out; "Jesus! Come!" So we prayed with him; and his breathing got quieter.

...because to really know someone you have to camp and hunt with someone.

... and that swan flew over us, and just danced.

I think you need to start doing a special dance or something. This weather is getting a bit much.

Are you certain you and Bruce and Tom burned those Christmas greens back in January?

AN ANONYMOUS EARLY APRIL LESSON about COMMUNITY & MOTHERS from A FARM in the MIDWEST

Last night, after one very long and hazardous drive home, I pulled into the driveway. In the dark, I saw all three ducks and three of the four geese standing out in the snow next to the hen house, but certainly not willing to go in. I looked in and the chickens were fine, but the fourth goose was not in there, and nor was she in the garage. So I stomped around in the wet drifts and heaps of snow . . . and found her covered by a few inches of snow, with her head bowed towards the wind. She was sitting on her nest and four eggs (which I am sure are not fertile) and refusing to abandon them. I picked up the four eggs; and she followed me into the hen house where I made a nest in a pile of straw. The other waterfowl had immediately followed us in.



I hate to admit it but I almost cried. It was so sweet they did not want to leave her out there on her own.

LOW CARBON DIET

By Oliver and Andrea Backlund

One of our favorite prayers in *the Book of Common Prayer* is "For the Right Use of God's Gifts", "*Almighty God, whose loving hand hath given us all that we possess: Grant us that we may honor thee with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of thy bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*" We believe that we are called to be careful of the riches that God has showered upon us, in children and grandchildren and good land and resources to sustain us. We accept that these are gifts from a loving Father, not possessions to squander and waste. We also believe that one day each of us will be called to give an account of the use to which we have put these gifts and to answer for our attitude toward them and the source of all good things.

During our childhood, although we were not precisely poor, each of us was taught to be careful with what we had -- in Andrea's home, the Yankee saying was "*Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.*" For Oliver, the sentiment was the same, if the words were different. The point was that nothing should be wasted; everything should be husbanded and used with respect. In the case of food, it meant a clean plate and with clothing, it meant staying clean and patching what was torn. "*Make it do*" meant that we should be stewards of what we had, not yearning after what others might enjoy. Now that we are entering the last of life, for which the first was made, we feel once again called to return to the sentiments of thrift and prudence that shaped our youth. We observe that the earth is changing, not always in desirable ways, and we hear that our modern way of life may be part of that change. We believe it is our task to help others to understand this.

Part of that responsibility is to speak with others about this belief and to show others ways in which they, too, may best use the gifts that their heavenly Father has given them. For that reason, we offered to set up and facilitate the "*Low Carbon Diet*" group at Saint Matthew's. This group of 22 households has purchased the workbook we are using and will be meeting to discuss ways to better conserve and use energy, so that we can both save money and help to protect the environment. We recently held our first meeting and we all had ideas and questions about ways to implement the suggestions in the workbooks. We discussed how to calculate the amount of CO₂ that each household produces now and some of the ways in which we can cut back on CO₂ emissions. The best part of the meeting was the enthusiasm each participant brought to the group. We plan to meet two more times over the next month and a half.

“ . . . overall, there has been much prayer and contemplation as we move through our activities”

A REPORT from the TRANSITION COMMITTEE for the DIOCESAN BISHOP'S SEARCH COMMITTEE

By Co-Chairs Cathy Davis and Marty Thomas



In an effort to spread the duties involved in replacing a bishop in a diocese to include more of the congregations in the State, the Standing Committee for the Alaska Diocese chose to activate a Transition Committee along with the Bishop's Search Committee. The duties include helping the current Bishop and his family move from Alaska to his new post, arranging for the consecration of the new Bishop including travel and housing for family and other important members of the Bishop's party, supporting the Diocesan staff and assisting the new Bishop in his/her move to Alaska. The committee is comprised of **Cathy Davis**, Co-Chair, Interior Deanery, **Kathryn McCormack**, South Central Deanery, **The Rev. Willard Neakok**, Arctic Coast Deanery, **Lana Palmer**, Southeast Deanery, **Don Stevens**, Interior Deanery and **Marty Thomas**, Co-Chair, Interior Deanery.

Our first meeting took place June 2007 as we met with the Search Committee and the Standing Committee in a Retreat at Camp Challenge in Wasilla. This was an extraordinarily spiritual time getting to know one another and learning what the following year and a half would bring. We prayed, sang and planned, and left a couple of days later feeling ready to go.

The Transition Committee's tasks began with the transition of Bishop Mark and his family. Much was needed as they spruced up their house, packed and traveled the State saying goodbye. Each Deanery member was charged with the duty to help their congregations plan a farewell for the Bishop and family. There was a lot of work to do on the house and the local Transition members pitched in with several other Fairbanks folks to scrape wallpaper, paint, remodel, and landscape. A three-day yard sale took place and again Transition members were there to help. The house is still not sold and some of us still drive up to keep track of it.

Consideration of the consecration location was next on our agenda. After meeting, we presented the pros and cons for both Fairbanks and Anchorage to the Convention in October and the choice was Anchorage. Since that time **Kathryn McCormack** has spent many hours researching available locations in Anchorage, keeping in mind our budget and the potential number of people who would want to attend. The consecration will be held at the Sheraton Hotel, followed by a reception and a banquet within the building. Rooms are being held for those from out of town planning to attend. More information will follow once all the 't's' are crossed.

We have kept in touch with the Diocesan staff and have offered to help where we can. We served lunch in October and again this month, and Cupid delivered valentine cookies and candies on February 14.

And overall, there has been much prayer and contemplation as we move through our activities, remembering the challenge for the MacDonald's as they settled into an entirely new environment, the Standing Committee as they oversee the day to day workings of the Diocese, the Search Committee as they prepared our profile and consider candidates, and as we plan for future activities.

Preliminary Announcement



Tukudh (Gwich'in) Language and Liturgy Institute

University of Alaska Fairbanks

August 4-15, 2008

The international Tukudh Language and Liturgy Institute will return to the University of Alaska Fairbanks in August, 2008. It was last held there in 2003.

Two courses will be offered for UAF credit:

Tukudh: Traditional Gwich'in Writing System (2 credits: ANL F295P - F01), and

Tukudh Hymns: Gwich'in Liturgical Music (2 credits: ANL F295P - F02)

The teaching team includes Mr. William Firth (Aboriginal Languages Coordinator, GNWT, Yellowknife), Mr. John Ritter (Yukon Native Language Centre, Whitehorse), and Gwich'in Elders, clergy, and tradition-bearers from many Gwich'in communities who will share their knowledge of the remarkable Tukudh tradition.

Discussions are underway with the Diocese of Alaska and St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (Fairbanks) to plan a service of Holy Communion in Tukudh.

Course Fee: In-state tuition rates will apply for official credit.

Class materials will be provided by YNLC.

Registration will take place on the first day of class, August 4, 2008.

Housing will be available at the UAF residence halls and the Cutler apartments.

Travel: Participants are responsible for their own travel and should seek support from their parish, diocese, First Nation, or other local organizations.

Additional information may be obtained from the regional contacts:

Alaska:

Rev. Bella J. Savino
St. Matthew's Church
Fairbanks, Alaska
907-456-1503



NWT:

Mr. William Firth
GNWT
Yellowknife, NWT
867-920-6251



Yukon:

Mr. John Ritter
YNLC
Whitehorse, YT
877-414-9652 toll free



"... a productive meeting, full of prayer, laughter and important sharing"

REPORT on the INTERIOR DEANERY MEETING, APRIL 17-19 2008

By Becky Snow

The Interior Deanery convened and organized itself at St. Matthew's beginning April 17, after a delicious dinner served by **Pauline Wilson** and friends. You were represented by **Bella Jean Savino** and **Becky Snow**, with **Scott** periodically putting in an appearance. Each day began with GBD and the meeting ended with Eucharist on Saturday. Although not very many villages managed to attend, we were blessed to have **the Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher** present throughout. She led a clergy conference before the main meeting started and preached and confirmed at St. Matthew's on Sunday. In between she shared her experiences in the wider church and gave a short talk about "*Leadership Guided by Love*," accompanied by a photo story of her life and ministry.

Most of the work took place on Friday. We heard reports from the 9 congregations present. All have been struggling with the cost of fuel oil; most need more people trained for ministry; most have plenty of small children, but few teens, and are looking for ways to bring the teenagers back.

The Interior Clergy reported back from their conference, challenging us all to develop resources to provide follow-up nurturing of those we invite to come worship with us so that they can learn to be good disciples, especially through organization of "Sunday schools" for both children and adults. They also encouraged working on the development and support of individuals and congregations through singing and drumming and other musical activities.

The high points for me were the energetic conversations we had about qualification for ordination and about the proposed Suffragan bishop. The Commission on Ministry was gathering the insights and concerns of the deanery in response to the question, "*What do we want a newly ordained priest to know and be able to do?*" The answers given will be included in COM deliberations after it has collected similar

information from all the deaneries, to help guide the COM in its work with people in the ordination process. **Peter Newton** brought his independent sense of urgency regarding the general need for training - more of it, given more often, and financially accessible for all in the diocese. With regard to the proposed Suffragan bishop, the discussion covered reasons why the diocesan convention supported the idea, the work of the task force recently appointed to develop a plan for electing one, what other ways there might be for obtaining additional episcopal assistance in the diocese, and what the expectations might be for a Suffragan once we have one.



On Saturday new deans were elected for the Yukon Flats (**Sarah Knutson**) and Yukon-Koyukuk (**Mary Starr**, incumbent); names were accepted for the St. Simeon and St. Anna Society, to be forwarded to the next convention; and **John Holz** was nominated for reelection to the Standing Committee at the next convention.

It was a productive meeting, full of prayer, laughter and important sharing. St. Matthew's was as hospitable as ever and many thanks were directed toward the fabulous kitchen crew. Thank you for allowing me to represent you.



[NOTE: One of the more exciting ministries happening these days is "Dancing with the Spirit", the Rev. Belle Mickelson of Cordova's ministry of teaching fiddle and guitar to children throughout the Bush. Here she reports on her Christmas and Easter travels.]

"DANCING with the SPIRIT" NEWS

By the Rev. Belle Mickelson



Our hearts are aching as we lost **Dan Ison**, one of our staff members this last week. Keep his five young kids, friends and family in your prayers. We'll be setting up a fund to help his kids with music and other after-school activities... Look for updates on our new web page www.dancingwiththespirit.org

Thanks for all your prayers and financial support. We're happy to report that in this past year, we have spent 8 weeks in school programs and 2 weeks of summer camps, plus have arranged for almost 50 instruments for kids. We're busy fundraising for our summer camps. Our immediate need is for the Tanana Bluegrass Gospel camp. Various tribal and community organizations in Tanana have donated \$2,000—but we still need at least \$5,000.

My son **Mike** and I just returned from teaching kids guitar and fiddle at the Beaver Spring Carnival. There were some great Native and Athabascan fiddle dances with visitors from Stevens Village. Mike entered the wood splitting and sawing contests and we tried the tea-making event. The villagers really laughed to see us trying to get a fire going under our coffee can of tea water!

I was in Allakaket on the Koyukuk River for Easter. Eighty-two villagers were packed in their log cabin church. Kids were everywhere sitting on the steps by the altar and all through the front of the church. There were 11 baptisms including a set of twins! Afterwards, the kids and I played music in the tribal council offices and **Grandpa Moses** jammed with us on his fiddle.

The week before, my son Mike and I taught guitar, fiddle, mandolin and banjo in Arctic Village. We sang **Hank Williams** and **Johnny Cash** songs—and Sweet Bye and Bye in English and Gwich'in... I knew I had arrived when I found myself singing the chorus in Gwich'in in my dreams.

My son Mike and I were able to spend the month of December in six villages, teaching guitar and fiddle and helping with church services. The tour began in Beaver, a small town along the Yukon River. We flew in a small plane with lots of excess luggage—guitars, fiddles, mandolins, and a banjo. We were all bundled up in case of an emergency landing. It was 45 below when we landed in the winter twilight and loaded everything on snow machines for the short ride to the school. We were teaching within an hour of our arrival as they held "Saturday School" in our honor. Here, as in all the villages, kids were so excited to see us come! It was so great to see their smiles as they picked up guitars or a banjo... I loved what 7 year-old **Allyson Fisher-Salmon** told me as I played the fiddle for her. "It talks," she said, "it talks!"

In Stevens Village, the kids giggled and laughed as they tried square dancing by themselves. We held church there in the gym right before the school concert and community square dance. **Robert Joseph** brought "church in a box" on his snow machine—two wooden Blazo boxes filled with prayer books, a bible, and beaded altar decorations. All the kids played along on the Christmas carols. In Tanana, **Pete Peters** traveled with us and brought Native drumming and language. "Indian Rock and Roll" was the kid's favorite. **Dorothy Jordan**, the superintendent, taught the "two-step" and Pete taught "the jig." We helped with the big Christmas Concert and dinner at Arctic Village. Kids played fiddles, guitars, mandolins, and banjos and sang Jingle Bells, Silent Night, The First Noel, I Saw the Light, and You are My Sunshine. Outside, it was 40 below and the moon shone on the snow-covered ground. Elders **Gideon James**, the Rev. **Trimble Gilbert** plus **Wilbert Kendi** helped my son Mike and I teach music all week. They are from the Athabascan Indian fiddling tradition of rhythmic foot stomping and dancing. The kids loved it and many stayed after school to play just one more tune!

I'm still amazed at how fast all the kids learn. We use color-coding and simple notation. We made four week-long visits to both Arctic Village and Tanana this year—and junior high and high school fiddle students can easily play over twenty-five songs including Amazing Grace, I'll Fly Away, Liza Jane, Will the Circle be Unbroken, and Faded Love. The best part is the joy they feel—and the sense of accomplishment. On the guitar, it only takes a few days to learn the chords and start flatpicking. The mandolin is great for little fingers because there are two finger chords. We don't have a lot of banjos and acoustic basses—but hopefully that will happen soon!

(Continued on page 15)

Dancing with the spirit . . .*(Continued from page 14)*

There were fresh wolf tracks along the road as we drove in from the Allakaket airport... We held Christmas Sunday services at the Tribal Council offices. There was one bible and one prayer book—and we used a plastic coffee mug for a chalice... Later, we held a bluegrass workshop for the kids and that evening hosted a square dance with **Grandpa Moses** on fiddle. The next day we flew into Hughes. We hauled the instruments over the snow by moonlight on plastic sleds to the community Christmas dinner to teach the kids. Santa came and passed out presents amid much laughter. Then we had Christmas Eve services in the warmth of a wood stove at the log church. I'll never forget the beauty of all our faces reflected in candlelight as we played and sang Silent Night.

Right after the first of the year, I headed to New York State for a visit to the Kingston St. John's Episcopal Church arranged by **the Bishop of New York**. We did a mini-music camp with four days of 2 hour sessions for the St. John's youth group—and lots of other young people who just heard about the camp. Parish musicians and the Hudson Valley Bluegrass Association helped with the teaching. The Alaskan band Bearfoot www.bearfootband.com and **Bishop Mark MacDonald**, the new Indigenous Bishop of Canada arrived to lead the last day of camp—and visit the Presiding Bishop's staff in New York City. **The Rev. Ginny Doctor**, Alaska's Canon to the Ordinary, came in for this meeting to let the national staff know about Dancing with the Spirit. Check out our story at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_94950_ENG_HTM.htm The next day, Bearfoot played to a packed St. John's church. Apache musician **Roland Moussa** opened the concert after a Native Alaskan crafts silent auction. Many thanks to our host, **the Rev. Duncan Burns** of the Muskogee Creek Nation, his family and parish—and all the great people who made these events in New York State so awesome!

In other exciting news, the Presiding Bishop's staff has invited us to lead a guitar workshop at the Episcopal Youth Event in Texas in July and we're hoping to help St. John's Kingston with teaching guitar on their mission trip to Navaho Land. St. John's on Maui is planning an Hawaiian Bluegrass Camp June 13-22. The Tanana Camp is May 27-June 1, Arctic Village is June 3-8, and Beaver June 10-15. Check out our new web site www.dancingwiththespirit.org We're raising money for the summer camps in the villages—and to buy more instruments for kids. Give the gift of music! Keep us in your prayers! Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to Dancing with the Spirit, Episcopal Diocese of Alaska, 1205 Denali Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

Baa'sa, Masik cho, THANKS SO MUCH!!

DRUGS & DRINKS: PAINFUL QUESTIONS

[Once upon a time (about 20 years ago) friend and Wednesday Evening St. Matthewite Ed Soren co-authored a book. A trained and licensed substance abuser counselor, Ed and Frank Shiromoto, a licensed therapist working with chemically dependent families, combined common questions they were asked in treatment into the book: Drugs and Drinks: Painful Questions. Through simple questions and answers, it gives folks a sense of what therapy and treatment might be like. He suggested running excerpts in the Newsletter might be worthwhile. We are. The questions come up everyday. Here's an excerpt:]

I feel I can't face the world without drinking or using drugs. Does that mean that I'm addicted?

Yes. One of the major signs of addiction is an inability to live or function without the presence of a chemical in one's system, and the continued use of it in the face of negative consequences to one's health and ability to function effectively. You may feel you function effectively right now with drugs and alcohol, but we guarantee that this is a false sense of security, and you will find yourself needing more drugs more frequently as time passes. You're questioning whether you're addicted or not, and your statement that you can not live without chemicals leads us to think there is a serious problem which you have to address immediately - you are probably addicted. If you can't live without chemicals, then the likelihood is that you can't live with them, at least not for very long without incurring dire results. You seem to use alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism for daily living. Is this what you want to do with the rest of your life? If not, seek medical advice and get help.

AN EDITED SAMPLING of CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.....

The endurance of St. Mark's Mission in Nenana

April 14th

... I shall tell you a story about when the St. Mark's Mission went into the river. The Mission was the place where people brought their children from up and down the river. Many fine and wonderful people were raised and schooled there.

The church let people go and salvage whatever they could, before the building slipped into the river. Years later we were having a tea at our house, for no reason other than to get together and share a meal. My Grandma Mary told the story about how her and her sister in law Dina were picking berries and found this stash of chairs they recognized from the Mission. They moved the whole pile, and waited for things to cool off before going to recapture their endeavors. When they got back there was nothing there. For years as they visited homes around the village they spotted the chairs.

My uncle Solomon Luke was sitting at the tea, and had a big grin on his face, and told Grandma Mary "I've been wondering for over 30 years who got my chairs"; as he was the one who recovered the chairs before the Mission went in to the river.

The purpose of the church was fulfilled, as the chairs were sturdy - they served people for years to come.

Don't know if this is newsletter material but it's the Gospel according to

Mitch

[NOTE: "Mitch" is Traditional Chief of Nenana and old friend Mitch Demientieff]

In Memory of Vernon Joseph

April 14th

. In an effort to come to terms with all the emotions I have gone through in the past year since the passing of my husband...I created a memorial website in honor of his memory, some of its features are quite nice: people can log onto the site and post their own stories about Vernon or light a candle in his remembrance. I would like to share this site with the many readers of the St. Matthews Newsletter. And invite all to visit the site..

<http://vernon-joseph.last-memories.com/>

Blessings,

Rhonda Joseph, Vernon Joseph's widow

What springtime in Alaska means to me:

April 15th

Snow, sun, slush, ice, wind, and more sun,
Chickadees and ravens showing off,
Dog races in the snow, and
Mush for Kids with little or no snow.
Flu bugs and coughs coming and going
Too many boiled eggs for one person to eat
And, from where I come from -
Fresh herring eggs on kelp or branches.
Yum!

[NOTE: This is from friend **Drena McIntyre**; and if you haven't tried fresh herring eggs on branches, you should.]

MORE CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

*Greetings from Walter Tommy in South Carolina**April 18th**Hello to all my friends and family,*

*Well, here it is. **SPRINGTIME** in sunny, hot, South Carolina. Another winter of my being away from the **COLD** winter of my Great State of Alaska. And I really didn't miss the cold all that much. Just the people.*

*But now that it's spring time, I **DO** miss Alaska*

*It sure is good to meet new people here and I've met some really good decent people. A lot of times, when out and about, I'm asked "**what is my tribe?**" When my wife and I were up in Charlotte, North Carolina, having coffee at a nice restaurant, some guy came out and asked me my tribe, and when I told him, Athabascan...he said, "**ALASKA!!!**" But for the majority of the people here, they've never heard of Athabascan until I tell them that the Apaches and Navajos are Athabascan people.*

*My wife thought that I would miss my home, but let me tell you something...**L-O-V-E** conquers all.*

1 Corinthians 13:4 is all the virtues of love, in what it will do.

I remember when I was just a young boy back in the 1950's; of all of my grandparents there in Nenana believing in the Christian faith, the Episcopal Church. Considering their age at that time, 80-90, that would put their birth at 1860-1870. The way that they lived their life, was in humbleness in their everyday life. It was so loving and caring and respectful for everyone and everything, that I just couldn't help but love them for this. A love so deep in my whole being, that I just glowed with joy at seeing them anytime and all the time.

Every single elder was my grandpa and grandma, uncle and auntie.

*There was a smile with, "**Hi, grandma, or grandpa**". And I would sometimes hear their reply of, "**Ys!**"*

*There was no need to say too much more than this, because we could feel the love in our hearts, and see it in the eyes and smile, and hear the gentleness of, "**hello choy-gh!**"*

With the world as it is now; that is so hard to find.

My elders had always chosen their words carefully and prudently. That's what made them wise. To know what to say and how to say it without any judgment. And how much to say, without scaring me into not wanting to hear them anymore.

A wise person is thoughtful in everything they do and say; patience in what life will bring; acceptance of everything that they have no control over. This Wisdom they had was learned through the balance in their everyday living of having a belief in a power greater than themselves.

*I struggle with how to be wise and thoughtful in what I want to say and do with my life, because I know that what I **DO** say, sometimes does not conform to my actions.*

*But by the Grace of God, I **AM** sober and straight today. And that, in itself is what will determine how my message will get across.*

*While I was in treatment, my primary counselor said something to me that challenged my integrity of what I wanted to be like, "**don't tell me what you're going to do with your sobriety; Show me what you're going to do with your sobriety.**"*

Ana-la-se, Cho'.

Walter

[This is the link to Walter & Andrea's art studio; Try It Ag'n Studios: <http://www.myspace.com/tryitagnstudios>]

[NOTE: "Walter" is our friend Walter Tommy, of Nenana and Fairbanks; who is now married and in love in South Carolina]

Seasons of Life . . .

(Continued from page 7)

youngest child of **the late Rev. Paul and Julia Tritt** of Venetie, and the first high school graduate of John Fredson High School in Venetie, Julie was a familiar friend and face here at St. Matthew's during the week. St. Matthew's filled past overflowing for her funeral Thursday afternoon, February 28th. The service was conducted by the rector, **the Rev. Steve Matthew, the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino, and Pastor Dan Treakle** of the LAMP Program. With Dan's assistance, **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, the rector, and **Deacon Bella Jean Savino** flew to Venetie the next morning, Friday, February 29th, for Julie's final funeral service and burial. They joined with **the Rev. Trimble Gilbert** of Arctic Village and **the Rev. Margo Simple** of Venetie in Julie's final service; and then burial. A cold wind blew that afternoon, from the North, across the Land and the hill and the frozen Chandalar River winding down below.

Tragically, 13 years old **Aaron John Smoke**, the son of **Marty Smoke** (of *Stevens Village*) and **Irma M. Brown** (of *Noorvik*), died here in Fairbanks Monday, February 25th. He was a boy just beginning, who dreamed of following in his late Grandfather **Horace Smoke's** footsteps. He's survived by his parents, his Grandmother **Alice Smoke**, his brothers **Michael Brown, Patrick Tickett, and Arlo Smoke**; his sisters **Gwenneth Smoke and Elvina Brown**; and many many other relatives and friends. The David Salmon Tribal Hall filled Monday, March 3rd for his funeral, led by **Archdeacon Anna Frank, the Rev. Steve Matthew, the Rev. Bessie Titus, the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**, and the rector. Final services and burial followed in Noorvik several days later.

At the request of family and Hospice facilitating, prayers and "Last Rites" were said with 78 years old **Marvin Wulkinga** of Gambell late Monday night, March 3rd. Marvin was being lovingly cared for in the home of his niece, here in Fairbanks. Subsequently, Marvin peacefully died Thursday, March 6th; and his services were held at home in Gambell.

Early in the morning of Saturday, March 8th, with the day just beginning, 49 years old **Alice Blanche Cruikshank Jordan** passed away in the Fairbanks Hospital, surrounded by prayer and tears. The youngest daughter of the late **Moses and Ruth Cruikshank** of Beaver, Alice was born in Fort Yukon, and raised in Beaver and Fairbanks. For those of us who knew her, there was always a wide-eyed sense of wonder to Alice, discovering the world. The rector remembers her as a teenager, riding endlessly the trails of Beaver on a small motorbike. She was *never* separate from her family. Her daughters **Donna Sharp and Vickie Sikorski**, and their families, survive her; as does her brother **Robert**; her sisters **Charlotte and Janet**; her boyfriend of 22 years **Dennis Umphenour**; her nephew **Eric John McGahn**; her Godmother **Elsie Pitka**; and all of us who loved her. St. Matthew's filled past overflowing for her funeral Thursday, March 13th, led by the rector, **the Rev. Steve Matthew, the Rev. Mary Nathaniel, and the Rev. Deacon Bella**

Jean Savino, with **Jackie Sunnyboy** assisting with the Eucharist. Alice was buried atop Birch Hill Cemetery, next to her parents.

As the sun was rising into the sky on Tuesday morning, March 11th, in the week before Holy Week, **the Rev. Titus Peter**, Episcopal priest for over forty years, finished the Race. He had kept the Faith. He was 87, and had been hospitalized in Fairbanks for a week with pneumonia. Born in Fort Yukon and raised there and Birch Creek, he learned Traditional values, and kept and taught them all of his life [See *articles elsewhere in this Newsletter*]. During World War Two, he served in the Aleutians and India. Following study with **Episcopal Archdeacon Walter Hannum**, he became in 1964, after **David Salmon and Isaac Tritt**, the third Interior Athabascan ordained to the priesthood. His studies and ministry took him to Brooklyn, Minnesota, Arizona, here at St. Matthew's, and throughout the State. His passion was forgiveness; his passion was forgiveness; his passion was forgiveness and counseling alcoholics. He was instrumental in forming the Gwitchyaa Gwitch'in Ginkee Organization during the struggle against the Rampart Dam in the early 1960's and, with his close friend the late **Jonathon Solomon**, worked to involve the Church in the struggle to halt oil development of ANWR. He liked pancakes. He taught the rector how to cook them. There is much much more. *Beyond words more.* Thursday night, March 13th, his body was received into the Church. On Friday afternoon, March 14th, St. Matthew's filled for his funeral service. The service was led by the gathered clergy: **Archdeacon Norman Elliott** of Anchorage; **Archdeacon Anna Frank** of the Interior; **the Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor** of the Diocesan Office; **the Rev. Marian Nickelson** of Kenai; **the Rev. Deacon Marilyn Duggar** of Nenana; **the Rev. Helen Peters** of Tanana; **the Rev. Trimble Gilbert** of Arctic Village; **the Rev. James Hunter; the Rev. Steve Matthew; the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**; and the rector. More clergy were present in the congregation. Final services and burial followed at Home in Fort Yukon the following day. And then Holy Week began the next day.

On Wednesday in Holy Week morning, March 19th, 51 years old **James Michael Flaherty** reached over to put on his boots at home; and died completely unexpectedly. Born in Washington, D.C., Jim arrived in Fairbanks in 1980 and never left. He worked for the Department of Transportation thirty years, traveling the State and making new friends wherever he went. His passion was big water and big fish, and he and his wife **Janet** made a yearly trip to Zihuatanejo to pursue that. Jim's nephew **Jason Bainter** had just died a month earlier in Fairbanks. He's survived by his wife **Janet**; his sister "**Kitty**"; his step-brothers **Pat and Mike**; his step-daughters **Kiana and Erika**; their families; and numerous other family and friends. They all crowded into St. Matthew's Easter Monday, March 24th for his funeral service, led by the rector and assisted by **Shirley Lee**. A wake followed out in the Goldstream Valley.

On Good Friday morning, March 21st, 79 years old **Clara James**, sick and in the Nursing Wing of the Pioneer Home for some time, prayed "*It's TIME, Lord Jesus, and I'm ready. Take*

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Seasons of Life . . .

me". He did, that afternoon, in quiet peace. A faithful member of the Church all of her life, Clara had previously lived in Venetie, Fort Yukon, and Birch Creek, before moving to Fairbanks a number of years ago. She is survived by her daughters **Mary** and **Lori**, her son **William**, their families, 12 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren, and many more friends and relatives. Easter Tuesday, March 25th, St. Matthew's filled for her funeral, led by **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, and assisted by the rector and **the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**. Final services and burial followed at home in Birch Creek in the following days.

Easter Sunday afternoon, March 23rd, 101 years old **Gran'ma Rosalie Joseph** of Fort Yukon quietly and faithfully passed away here in Fairbanks, while a Chilig hymn was being sung to her. Prayers were said. A woman of great faith, when else would she die except on the Sunday of the Resurrection? Born to **Ellen** and **Old Moses**, she was adopted into a family that included **Louise Peter**, **Katherine Peter**, **Lily Pitka**, **Henry Moses**, **Archie Moses**, **Milton Moses**, **Benjamin Stevens**, and **Sam Pitka**. Married to **Stanley Joseph** in Circle when she was 18, they later moved and lived in Fort Yukon. She is survived by her children and their spouses **William** and **Freda Joseph**, **Lena Kleinsmith**, **Alice Carroll**, **Edith Engler**, and **Mary** and **Albert Thomas**; 30 grandchildren, 84 great grandchildren, 21 great great grandchildren; and many numerous other family members, including nephews **Steve Ginnis** and **Lawrence Moses**, and niece **Eleanor Lewis**. Her funeral was held at home in Fort Yukon Easter Friday March 28th. *NOT* insignificantly, a polar bear was shot in Fort Yukon that weekend.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, 70 years old **Hannah "Candy" O'Steen** died in the Fairbanks Hospital late Easter Monday afternoon, March 24th. Born in Tanana, Candy enjoyed her family, gardening, cooking, and listening to the fiddlers in the Tanana Community Hall. She's survived by her children and their families – **Judy Ybarra-Justice**, **Ben Ybarra**, **Orlanda Ybarra-Oberrecht**, **Ernesto Ybarra**, **Mike O'Steen**; her brothers and sisters **Ben Joseph**, **Clifford Joseph**, **Charles Newby**, **Mary Ann Felix**, **Lillian Coleman**, **Beverly Joseph**, **Linda Evans**, and **Sharon Kay Newby**; her stepfather **Chuck Newby**, and many more family and friends. Her body was received at home in the Church Thursday evening, March 27th, and St. Matthew's filled for her funeral Easter Friday, March 28th. The service was led by the rector, **the Rev. Steve Matthew**, and **the Rev. Bessie Titus**; and assisted by **Shirley Lee** and **Beverly Joseph**. The following day, Easter Saturday afternoon, March 29th, **The Rev. Steve Matthew** and **the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino** assisted **the Rev. Helen Peters** with Candy's final service and burial back at home in Tanana.

Easter Thursday morning, March 27th, as the sunrise was just ready to begin, 93 years old **Mary Sam** of Beaver

quietly passed away in the Fairbanks Hospital, with grandchildren beside her. Born and raised in Old Salmon Village above Chalkyitsik, Mary attended the Mission School in Fort Yukon, and then married **John Schuman Williams**; and they raised their family in Chalkyitsik. Following her husband's death, she married **John Sam**, and they continued raising the family in White Eye Village above Beaver, and then finally Beaver. A smiling and faithful friend to everyone, she was often asked to pray for others in Beaver. Her cabin door in Beaver, facing the River, was always open to anyone passing by. Her great grandchildren called her "*Grandma Love*"; and she was. She's survived by her children **Lilly Tritt**, **Paul Williams Sr.**, **Virginia Rieck**, **Larry Williams**, **Joanne Wiehl**, and all of their families; and all of us who ever sat at that little table in that cabin with her, sharing a cup of tea and laughter. Monday, March 31st, St. Matthew's filled for her funeral. The service was led by the rector, **the Rev. Steve Matthew**, **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, **the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**, **LAMP Pastor Dan Treacle** (*who spoke movingly of how Mary had "adopted" him following the death of his own mother*); and assisted by **Shirley Lee**. The next day, Tuesday, April 1st, we gathered in Beaver for Mary's final service and then burial; with the service again led by the rector and **Pastor Dan Treacle**.

Saturday, April 5th, 62 years old **Rose Marie (Sam) Lee-Walker** passed away in the Fairbanks Hospital, after a brief hospitalization, leaving the family shocked. Born in Arctic Village to the late **Moses** and **Jenny Sam** of Arctic Village, Rose was raised in Venetie, and lived in Fort Yukon, Venetie, and Arctic Village, before moving to Fairbanks in recent years. "Mama Rose" did everything from run a bed and breakfast to work as a Health Aide, but mostly she loved sewing and mostly she was a Mother. She had true faith and a kind and generous heart. She's survived by her children and their families – **Janice Smith**, **Michael Lee**, and **Daniel Lee**; and numerous other family and friends (including 13 Godchildren). St. Matthew's filled for her funeral Wednesday, April 9th; the service being led by **the Rev. Trimble Gilbert**, **the Rev. Steve Matthew**, **the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**, and the rector, assisted by **Shirley Lee**. Her final services and burial were at home the next day in Arctic Village.

Friday, April 11th (*at the end of a tragic week – see below - that had seen a number of other deaths in the Interior*), 34 years old **Patrick Lee Henry** died unexpectedly at home in Huslia. A young man with a wide smile and a giving heart, he taught his son Martese how to hunt and snowshoe. He's survived by his sons **Martese Chappell** and **Terrance Solomon**, his father **Silas Henry**, his mother **Audrey Bonacci**, 4 brothers, 4 sisters, and numerous other family and friends. **The Rev. Steve Matthew** flew down to Tanana Thursday, April 17th for Patrick's funeral and burial. **Flora Demoski**, **Faith Peter**, and **Mary Ann Peter** assisted with the service.

Monday morning, April 21st, to the sound of the birds of Spring singing, 79 years old **(George) Harry Thomas** of

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Seasons of Life . . .

Fort Yukon passed away at home in Fort Yukon, in his wife Grace's arms. That afternoon, a swan danced over the gathered family and friends in the front yard. Harry had been diagnosed with cancer on St. Patrick's Day, treated in Anchorage, and finally allowed to return home several weeks earlier. He walked back into his house from the medivac. Born in Fort Yukon, but raised with his nine brothers 300 miles up the Black River, Fort Yukon people still remember them all coming back to town each May with the winter's catch of fur. Harry moved into Fort Yukon in 1956, and in May 1958 married **Grace Petersen**. They were never separate. Harry's survived by Grace; their sons and their families **David, Bruce, and Randy**; 10 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; 6 of his brothers and their families; and all of his who were his friends. Thursday, April 24th, the rector and **Sam Pitka** flew to Fort Yukon, to join **the Rev. Mardow Solomon, the Rev. Teresa Thomas** (*Harry's sister-in-law*), and **the Rev. Mary Nathaniel** in Harry's final service and burial.

And Saturday noon, April 26th, folks gathered here to remember. 15 years ago that day a young girl from Pitka's Point — **Sophie Sergie** — was found murdered at the University. Friend and passionate Fairbanks community member the late **Shirley Demientieff** organized a Memorial Anniversary service every year on that date, to remember Sophie and other victims of unsolved homicides here in Fairbanks. She "*passed the mantle*" on, as her own death neared, to **Shirley Lee**. This year, family and friends gathered to remember Sophie, and the other 32 victims since 1972 of unsolved murders, in a service led by **Shirley Lee**, and assisted by the rector, and members of **the Demientieff family**.

Other deaths over the last several months need to be noted also. 80 years old "**Jack**" **Jones**, the beloved husband of **Doreen**, died in Palm Springs, California, with his family around him, Tuesday, February 26th. A service was held at The Church of St. Paul in the Desert several days later; and a Memorial Service will be held at St. Matthew's this month. On Tuesday, March 11th, 85 years old **Elisabeth Aprill** died in Homer. Elisabeth was the widow of **the late Rev. Joe Aprill**; together they had served churches in Seward, Homer, and Kenai. Once upon a time, Elisabeth sang in the choir here at St. Matthew's. On Saturday, March 15th, 84 years old **Nellie Crawford** died in Denali Center. Nellie was the daughter of the late **Kivvaq** and **Mary Riley** of Barrow. Her service was at 1st Presbyterian Thursday, March 20th. On Good Friday, March 21st, 86 years old **Richard "Shorty" Thibedeau**, of Fairbanks, Hawaii, and most recently Denali Center, died in Denali Center. His service was held Easter Friday, March 28th at the Tribal Hall. Easter Sunday evening, March 23rd, 97 years old pioneer and legislator **Alaska Linck** died at home, the mother of Midnight Compline friend **Jim Moody**. The "Choir" stained glass window in St. Matthew's is partially a gift from her and

Jim. Her service was held at 1st Presbyterian April 9th. Monday, April 7th, 31 years old **David Vent** died tragically in Huslia; his funeral being held there April 11th. Friday, April 11th 44 years old **Clarence Charlie Jr.** of Minto died tragically in Minto. His family hosted "tea" here in the Parish Hall, until his services and burial at home in Minto Saturday, April 19th. 33 years old **Daniel Ison** of North Pole, who had helped with **the Rev. Belle Mickelson's** "*Dancing in the Spirit*" program, died tragically in North Pole Monday, April 14th. His funeral was held Friday, April 18th in North Pole. Sunday, April 20th 81 years old **Logan Luke** of Tanacross, who had served as an acolyte in his youth died; and his funeral services were held in Tanacross in the days following. And Tuesday, April 22nd, 81 years old **Janet Baird**, active in many things throughout the community, died in the Fairbanks Hospital. Her funeral arrangements are pending. There were more that could be noted.

And that's kind of how this Spring has been.

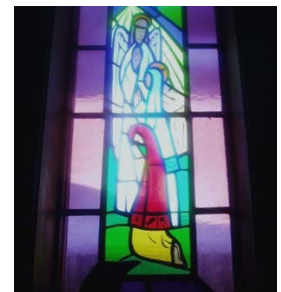
Geese and other visitors

Several times we noted birthdays in the last weeks, including a surprise 80th Birthday Party for **the Rev. Glen Wilcox** on Sunday, February 24th. On Wednesday, March 5th the first of the Spring tourists arrived — a visiting and excited group from New Zealand. That next Sunday, March 9th, we passed out our Spam "Door Prize" to the visitors who had come the greatest distance — returning visitors from Kentucky. **Bev** and **Lloyd Schommer**, optimists to the core about Spring weather, returned from their Winter Exile Easter Sunday, March 23rd. At Noon on Saturday, March 29th, we stood in the wind downtown and remembered the 105th Anniversary of the 1st service in Fairbanks. The next day, Sunday, March 30th, **Bill Stevens** brought sandwiches and soup to share, following the 9AM Eucharist, in gratitude. **The Rainbow Girls** visited us on Sunday, April 6th, as part of "Rainbow Sunday", and **Fr. Jim Kolb** showed up at Midnight Compline April 9th. Geese finally returned to the Fairbanks area Saturday, April 12th. And the Interior Deanery held their Annual Meeting here Thursday, April 17th through Saturday, April 20th. **Al** and **Ruth Storvick** were here on Sunday morning, April 20th, warm from Arizona. We hoped that might mean Spring. But . . .

It still kept snowing, however.

Despite that, on Saturday night, April 26th, St. Matthew's gathered at the Tribal Hall for a "*three times cancelled but we keep trying*" Spring Fling Fundraiser. Over \$1400 was raised for the Operating Budget, through the efforts coordinated by **Pete Peters, Shirley Holmberg, Allen and Irene Todd, and Senior Warden Bruce Gadwah**, and the donations of many.

The Light, the Light keeps growing and growing and growing. The ice may not go out until July, but *ahhhhhhhhh*, in the Country of Easter now there is almost no Darkness at all. And we dance a-away into that Light. "



Ministry - a beating heart, God within us, Christ filling us, the Holy Spirit carrying their Life Giving Presence into the world - the people of God, very members incorporate in the One Body of God.

"...Ministry is more than simply doing good. Ministry is an act performed in his name. Therefore, it is not something we do solely on our own, but something Christ does in us, through us, and with us. Ministry has been given to us. Our task is to uncover what is already present so that the ministry of the church might be carried out in all of its fullness. (Fenhagen, p.21)" - "quote from EFM, Common Lesson Five, page 5-2-1"

A VISION OF SHARING CHRIST'S LOVE

By Roxy Wright

As the heart beats - the breath of life goes in - and OUT. As we come into Church we are gathered to God and nourished - and as we go out, we go *in His name*, to share what He has given us. In sharing and giving, we are nurtured and given blessed gifts by God through those whose lives we touch - usually far beyond what we feel we have to give others.

At a recent vestry meeting for St. Matthew's, Father Scott Fisher suggested that as a part of outreach, members of the church might organize once a month to collectively visit other churches in our Diocese. Scott said that a group of people from Tanacross had recently made a special trip to Fairbanks to attend services here. The Rev. Deacon Montie

Slusher routinely travels to Nenana once a month to conduct services at St. Marks. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have some of our congregation go with him? Last Easter Linda Demientieff traveled to Stevens Village, and Fr. John Holz and Bruce Gadwah to Circle to share services with the people. Their visits were warmly welcomed. Back in Fairbanks, many of our congregation were enthusiastic about continuing this outreach...but it has not been followed up on.

This project kind of ended up in my lap. Father Scott shared with the newly elected vestry, that one of their main functions was to oversee the business (physical, financial and spiritual) of the church; and that they should not be the ones carrying the entire load of work, so.... the other main function of the vestry is to encourage and invite all of the members of St. Matthews to participate and share in the ministry of our church.

I am looking for volunteers - one per month to organize a collective outreach by our congregation. We could start by reaching out to those closest - St. Jude's North Pole and St. Mark's Nenana. Going to Tanacross, Circle, Minto or other destinations would require more planning: contacting local people, inviting clergy, and figuring out timing. (Having noon services would facilitate driving in the morning and returning the same day.)

Contact info: Roxy Wright, P.O.Box 55290, North Pole, AK 99705 PH:455-9300 email: roxyw@mosquitonet.com

{A Later Update: members of St. Matthew's will be visiting St. Jude's North Pole Sunday, May 4th; and Linda Demientieff is coordinating the next trip - to St. Mark's Nenana. Here we come!}

SPRING 2008 GRADUATIONS

Holy and Almighty God, we give you thanks for all of those graduating this Spring, for all their work and days and nights of effort, and all of those who have supported and helped them along the Way. May your Blessing go before them now, into new places, new adventures, and new learnings. In the Name of Our Lord Jesus, the Wisdom from on High. Amen.

HERBERT J. AHKIVIANA (High School; North Pole High School; North Pole, Alaska). . . **CLIFFORD ALEXANDER IV** (High School; Minto School, Minto) . . . **BERNICE ARAGON** (Education for Ministry; St. Matthew's) . . . **MEGAN BARKER** (High School; Lathrop High School) . . . **KATJA BINKLEY** (High School; West Valley High School; Fairbanks) . . . **LUKE CASTELLINI** (Tanana Middle School, Fairbanks) . . . **BRANDON CLEVELAND** (High School; Ambler, Alaska). . . **LINDSEY COX** (High School; East High School; Anchorage). . . **KIMBERLY DULLEN** (Bachelor of Science; University of Alaska - Fairbanks). . . **CHARLES ESMAILKA, JR** (Hutchinson High School; Fairbanks). . . **SHANI FISHER-SALMON** (Pre-Kindergarten; Cruikshank School; Beaver). . . **STUART GRANT** (Bachelor of Science; University of Alaska - Anchorage). . . **SARAH DIANE GRAY** (High School; Vivian Webb School for Girls,



Claremont, California). . . **SHIRLEY MAY HOLMBERG** (Master of Arts in Rural Development; University of Alaska - Fairbanks). . . **CAROLINE GRACE KANGAS** (Shirley Gordon's granddaughter) (High School; Mercer Island High School; Mercer Island, Washington). . . **KAREN KISS** (Education for Ministry; St. Matthew's) . . . **GLORIA LANNEN** (University of Alaska - Anchorage) . . . **ALEXANDRIA LeCAPITAINE** (Bachelor of Science; University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee). . . **NATHANIEL LeCAPITAINE** (Bachelor of Science; University of Wisconsin - Superior). . . **ROBERT NETHKEN** (Bachelor of Science; University of Alaska - Fairbanks). . . **AMY ROSE OATES** (High School; West Valley High School; Fairbanks) . . . **GINESSA JADE PETER** (Bachelor in Psychology, Minor in Business; University of Alaska - Fairbanks). . . **LESSA PETER** (High School; Effie Kokrine High School; Fairbanks). . . **KYLE SMOKE** (High School; Cinnamon Hills, Utah) . . . **JOHANNA SODERLAND** (High School; Lathrop High School; Fairbanks). . . **MIRANDA SOLOMON** (High School; Fort Yukon High School; Fort Yukon). . . **ALLICIA TUTTLE** (Bachelor of Arts; University of Alaska - Fairbanks). . . **TAMARA WILSON** (daughter of Pauline and Robin) (Bachelor of Arts; University of Alaska - Fairbanks). . . *And all of the others.*

SUMMARY of the FEBRUARY 2008 VESTRY MEETING

The Vestry of St. Matthew's met for their regular Vestry meeting Monday, February 11th, with the following present: **Senior Warden Bruce Gadwah, Junior Warden Ray Cockerille, Vestry Clerk Teresa Moore, Hubert Griffin, Helen Howard, Darrel Zuke, Marty Thomas, Roxy Wright, and Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken.** Member **Charlene Marth** was present via teleconference. In the rector's absence, due to hospitalization, Senior Warden **Bruce Gadwah** chaired the meeting, which began at 6:05PM. Following a round of healing prayers for the rector, the following actions were discussed or taken:

1. It was moved and passed to approve the January minutes, as corrected.
2. Parish Treasurer **Carolyn Nethken** spent some amount of time explaining the Financial Reports and their complexities. January 2008 Operating Income totaled \$14,562; January Operating Expenses totaled \$25,353; resulting in a **Monthly Deficit of -\$10,791.**
3. There was discussion of the Memorial accounts, and **Marty Thomas's** work with Parish Administrator **Hilary Freeman** updating the accounts; and discussion regarding the PayPal account.
4. Senior Warden **Bruce Gadwah** led a discussion on the need for Committees and congregational involvement. **Marty Thomas** volunteered to be a liaison towards increasing congregational involvement. The FundRaising Committee, and the planned Valentine's Day Fundraiser, were discussed.
5. It was moved and passed, following discussion, to purchase a shredder for the church office. It was moved and passed to allow a vestry discretionary spending limit of \$100, enabling the timely purchase of necessary items without needing approval by all Vestry members
6. With the decision to hold the next meeting Monday, March 10, the meeting adjourned with a Closing Prayer for the rector at 7:35PM.

SUMMARY of the MARCH 2008 VESTRY MEETING

The Vestry of St. Matthew's met for their regular Vestry meeting Monday, March 10th, with the following present: **Senior Warden Bruce Gadwah, Junior Warden Ray Cockerille, Vestry Clerk Teresa Moore, Hubert Griffin, Darrel Zuke, Marty Thomas, Roxy Wright,**

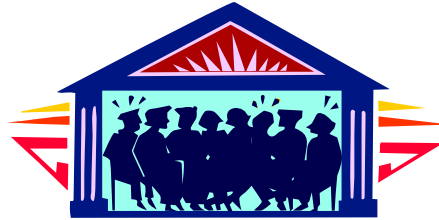


Charlene Marth, Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken, and the rector.

Following the sharing of childhood Easter stories and an opening prayer, the meeting began at 6PM. The following actions were discussed or taken:

1. The rector introduced briefly the history of the vestry, its evolution, its role, and responsibilities.
2. It was moved and passed to approve the February minutes as corrected.
3. **Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken** presented the February Financial Report, noting that February Operating Income totaled \$15,394 (*Year-to-Date \$29,956*) and February Operating Expenses totaled \$21,656 (*Year-to-Date \$47,009*). This resulted in a **Monthly Deficit of -\$6,262**; and increased the **Year-to-Date Deficit to now -\$17,053.** There was discussion about several line items in the Budget; and the increase in utility heating costs in the rectory and Church (*The Church has steam heat and the rectory has fuel heat*).
4. There was continued discussion about Committees. **Charlene Marth**, assisted by material from **Marty Thomas**, will work on Stewardship; **Marty Thomas** will work on a Caring Committee, sending cards for various occasions; **Darrel Zuke** will work on creating an address database; and Fundraising events will be held until after Easter.
5. There was discussion about the Diocesan Faith into Tomorrow grants; and the scheduled Interior Deanery meeting here April 17 -19.
6. Senior Warden **Bruce Gadwah** reported on the purchase of an Office Shredder; and Junior Warden **Ray Cockerille** reported on plans to fix the Sacristy roof.
7. There was a report on recent Endowment Board activity; and their planned October workshop on Wills.
8. The possibility of fees for Parish Hall use was raised for future discussion.
9. There was further discussion about individual Vestry member responsibilities. **Hubert Griffin** volunteered to create and lead the Opening Spiritual Exercise at the April meeting; and **Roxy Wright** will be responsible for the Closing Exercise.
10. With the decision to hold the next meeting April 14th, the meeting adjourned at 8:20PM, with a Closing Prayer by **Charlene Marth**, as the person who had most recently seen a bunny (*the feet of a chocolate one*).

**SUMMARY of the
APRIL 2008 VESTRY
MEETING**



The Vestry of St. Matthew's met for their regular monthly meeting Monday, April 14th, with the following present: **Senior Warden Bruce Gadwah, Junior Warden Ray Cockerille, Vestry Clerk Teresa Moore, Charlene Marth, Hubert Griffin, Marty Thomas, Roxie Wright**, and the rector. Following an opening spiritual reading and exercise by Hubert Griffin, the following actions were discussed or taken:

1. **Marty Thomas** volunteered to serve as Temporary Clerk, given Teresa's impending hand surgery. No items were added to the agenda; and the March minutes were approved as corrected.
2. With Parish Treasurer **Carolyn Nethken's** absence due to illness, the March Financial Statements were presented. March Budgeted Operating Income totaled \$27,731 (Year-to-Date January through March total \$57,687); and March Budgeted Operating Expenses totaled \$27,093 (Year-to-Date January through March total \$74,103). This resulted in a Monthly Surplus of +\$638; and decreased the Year-to-Date Surplus/Deficit to - \$16,415.
3. Further discussion noted that Income was up, when compared to March 2007, but Easter was in March this year and April last year. It was noted that the costs of Clergy Healthcare have increased over last year, as have heating bills. With some questions regarding the financial statement formats, and some of the Budget line items, the Reports were accepted as presented.
4. There was discussion about the re-scheduled St. Matthew's Fundraiser;



payment for the Easter videotaping; and the PayPal accounts.

5. **Charlene Marth** reported on beginning Stewardship activity; and **Ray Cockerille** reported on recent Endowment Board activity. **Marty Thomas** reported on Memorial activity, and the beginning work of the Caring Committee. Senior Warden **Bruce Gadwah** reported on cable installation; and **Marty Thomas** will explore applying for the Diocesan FIT grant towards Homeless Ministry.
6. In property discussions, Junior Warden **Ray Cockerille** reported that the sacristy roof repair will be this Summer; and noted the problems in the Condensate Room in the basement. It was decided to postpone Spring Cleaning discussions until next month; log chinking, the church roof, and the condition of the sidewalks were noted; and the rector asked about Directional Signs.
7. The visit of **Bishop Carol Gallagher** and the coming confirmations were noted; it was moved and passed to support the nominations received for the Diocesan Society of St. Simeon and St. Anna; a further action was tabled to allow for prayer; and the closing of Sunday School on May 18th was noted.
8. The rector discussed St. Matthew's visiting other neighboring churches in the Deanery this Summer; and **Roxy Wright** agreed to initially organize this. With further discussion on other matters, including **Sexton Tree Nelson's** service above and beyond "the call of duty", the date for the next meeting was set as Monday, May 12th.
9. Following a Closing Spiritual Meditation by **Roxy Wright**, the meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.



Cruikshank School students and staff of Beaver with the Rev. Belle Mickelson and her "Dancing in the Spirit Program"

Visiting St. Alban's Church in Tokyo. A 50 year Memorial Potlatch for Frank Yasuda is planned in Beaver this August.



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
1030 Second Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701-4355

O Ye Frost and Cold

Address Service Requested*

May 19, 2008

***Please Note:** Returned copies of **O Ye Frost and Cold** cost the church \$2.82 each, forwarded copies cost \$0.75 each.

Can't come to Church? Church will come to You!!

As the monthly listing of services shows, there are a number of Lay Eucharistic Ministers trained and willing to bring the Eucharist to those who are sick, shut in, or unable to come to the Church. If you would like someone to bring you the Communion, or know of someone who would like that, please contact the Church Office at 456-5235 or slip a note in the offering plate on Sunday mornings.