

O Ye Frost and Cold

Volume 102 Number 1

January/ February 2006

*“Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;
for lo, the winter is past,”
-Song of Solomon 2:10, 11*

spring love song.

I've never been there, not really *there*, but I've heard the stories; and I've seen the way my friends' eyes shined when they talked about it. I remember the February night in windblown Kivalina on the Arctic Coast, with magic snowdrifts higher than houses, and Lucy Adams smiled as she said (her husband Enoch in his chair sharpening, sharpening, slowly sharpening the harpoon; shadows casting on the walls), *“Soon, soon it will be SPRING! And Time to go . . . out on the ice”*. And her eyes shined as she remembered; Enoch quietly smiling. And others, all that trip, through Kotzebue and Kivalina and Point Hope, looking out the winter window, looking into the days to come, and saying, with longing smiles *“Soon, soon it will be Time to go out on the Ice.”*

For Spring means Easter and “Going out on the Ice” means the Ancient and Continuing Hunt for the Great Whales. *“What is it about Out There?”* I asked someone. *“Ohhh, “they said (Elijah or Doris or Seymour or Claudia or Somebody) “it is cleaner Out There; it is purer Out There. It is What Makes Us Who We are. “*

Away. Away from all of This Stuff and Out There. Where it's Cleaner. Where it's Purer. To Remember what Others Before Us have Taught Us. To Remember Who We Are.

No Great Whales to hunt, here in the Interior; but I have heard the stories. I have heard now-Elders sitting and remembering. No Ocean Ice to camp on, on the Yukon; but there are Lakes. And maybe there are no Great Whales, but there are Muskrats. And once upon a time, more so then Now, SpringTime meant moving out to the Rat Camps along the lakes. White wall tents on High Knolls and the smell of campfires. Spruce boughs in the tent. Away from All of This; and Out There. In the Woods. Listening to the birds in the morning or the sharp whistles of the muskrats. Remembering Who We Are and What We've Learned and Teaching Those Coming After Us. Simpler. Cleaner. Purer. One Spring, while I wandered far away along the Arctic Coast, my family moved out to the ancestral land and camped in a wall tent like that and the children, then young, have never forgotten it.

There was a Time, as far as I can tell from the stories, when nearly everyone moved out to those camps in the woods, along the lakes. And I've heard people tell stories of camping and skinning hundreds and hundreds of muskrats. The work and the companionship. There was a Time when nearly everyone was Out There in the Spring.

One of the stories I remember was about a couple then young and newly married and in love. Back before there were all of the children and the grandchildren and the great grandchildren. Young then, and just beginning. Like everyone was once. Like maybe you are now.

I never knew her in those years. That was Before me and chances are Before You. I only knew her as a Grandmother, but there was a Time when she was a Young Girl. And she and her husband were out camping and hunting muskrats.

They were in the lakes there across the River, that lay scattered across the Flats. Paddling through the lakes and shooting. And they had gotten separated. She paddling on one lake; he hunting and paddling on another. They had lost track of where the other one was.

And she paddled and looked and paddled and looked and paddled and looked; but could find no Sign of him. Her Beloved. And the Day was wearing on.

Finally, when she stopped paddling so hard and looking so hard; finally when she just stopped; she could hear a distant sound – through the trees and across the woods and across the water. In the distance she could hear him singing to her, through the trees. He was singing that old Traditional love song of the River, with its rhythms of longing and love. The Eagle Island Blues. And she began singing it back to him.

And as they kept singing, they drew closer and closer to each other. And finally found each other. Amidst the great forests and scattered lakes on a fine Spring Day.

There is much talk about Lent and what does it mean and what to do, what to do for Lent. Once she stopped trying so hard, once she *just stopped*; she could hear the Singing of Her Beloved. And once she began acting from her heart, singing to her Beloved, they could find each other.

This Lent, stop.
Just Stop.

*“O You who dwell in the gardens,
my companions are listening for Your voice;
let me hear it.”
- Song of Solomon 8:13*

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THE LIGHT of WINTER VOICES

Wrapped in blankets and heavy clothes, we're sitting outside listening to the

People of God walk by. It's getting colder and darker, but here they come, carrying Christmas presents and following a star; it's dropping to fifty below, but here they come, not giving up; the Light is growing now, and still they pass by, remembering and telling stories and walking into the Spring. We listen, as they pass by, and overhear.....

Never ever never ever doubt the Power of Prayer.

I need to find \$1000 for back rent. I was doing okay till the Governor took away that Longevity Bonus. My landlord has let me slide, but now it's gotten too high, and . . .

I need to track down \$1300 to fix my furnace. Haven't had any heat since June. Can you help?

Do you have \$1000 I could borrow from the Church to fix my furnace?

. . . paid \$99 for 20 gallons of kerosene this morning for my heater. I'd burn wood, but I'm in a tent. I need the heat.

UP in the AIR, JUNIOR BIRDMEN; UP in the AIRRRRRRRRRRR. . .

How old are you now? Aren't you 73?

Hello, are you a recording?

I tell you, there's a LOT OF stress out there. People are under A LOT of STRESS. I don't think I've ever seen it as bad as this.

Oh I can't wait. We start gaining daylight in a month. Spring is coming!

Do you have any food down there? We were doing okay, until . . .

Correspondence Received

THANK YOU

By The Rev. Titus Peter

[NOTE: Father Titus's daughter, Agnes Marie James, died unexpectedly here in Fairbanks January 17th. Her funeral was held here January 21st, led by Bishop MacDonald and others, including her father. Her final services and burial followed in Fort Yukon January 23rd.]

February 10th

Thank you, people of God. You again did for us what the Lord asked you to do.

I have seen this happen many times in churches. It means a lot to people who are feeling sad, to see their loved one leaving them. St. Matthew's is usually full for memorial and funeral services.

A young lady who was going to Mount Edgecumbe, around '63, '64, while I was working with Fr. Straatman at St. Peter's-by-the-Sea; and I used to have a three or four hours of loud gathering of Episcopal students. I received a note and some money from her.

Another young lady from Beaver, who had developed a lot of respect for me, also sent me a beautiful note and money.

Also received gifts from minister friends and relatives and a lot of prayers. I praised the Lord for you. I praised the Lord for Bishop, Scott, Anna, and Steve and Bella Jean and others who had helped. I thank Hilary, her mother, and others for their condolences.

I love you all. The Lord loves you.



HELP AVAILABLE for DISABLED VETERANS, ETC.

By Cathy J. Plumlee

I am the commander for the local DAV, Disabled American Veterans. We have help in the form of money, to help disabled veterans, their spouses and dependents, widows and orphans. With emergencies like heating fuel, electricity, and medical needs, it is an "as needed" situation. Each situation is looked at individually. Help can be obtained by calling me:

Cathy J Plumlee
Commander
Ch. 2, Fairbanks
Disabled American Veterans
cjpbsa@acsalaska.net
452-1130
388-5070

A WORD from FR. STEVE

GOD'S CALLING

By The Rev. Stephen Matthew

February 1, 2006

Good News! One day I went into the hospital and the people we had been praying for had all improved. One person had come out of a coma and was out of I.C.U. She was actually sitting up. Another patient shook my hand when his wife told him who I was. We had been praying all that while for him.

The next day, as I was going into the hospital, one of our elders was checking out, on her way home. Her life had hung by a thread more than once this winter but here she was, going home. One tough lady.

So often we wait around, praying and hoping that people will get well, and all the time God's work is going along right in front of us. As people come into the hospital, so very ill, some close to death, the word goes out and the community begins to pray. And Great things do happen.

Some we have to let go from us. Two elders in Minto, Wilson Titus and Minnie Titus have gone on with many thanks and prayers.

I started this winter with thoughts of retirement. But after many hours of soul searching and prayers, I came to remember those contacts in the rooms and hallways of the hospital. It helps me to realize that praying and trying to comfort brave people, also comforts and strengthens me.

I don't think I can hang up my stole just yet, because God's calling is too strong to be ignored.

I remain in Christ,
Rev. Steve

Winter Voices

Congratulations! You're a GRANDFATHER!

... and they were out of food. So he took his rifle and handed it to his brother and said, "Let's go". And they went out and shot moose.

Anything that has to do with Love, has to do with God. There's no other definition that I know of.

He said, "I'm creating you in My Image", but people get confused on that. They think he's talking about physical characteristics. He's not. He's talking about the Heart, which has no beginning and no ending.

Go Home and cut wood? I don't have to do that! We got monitor now. NOBODY cut wood anymore.

Maybe this crazy warm weather is a gift from God, so we don't go broke with heating oil bills.

I've never done anything like this before, buried somebody, actually digging the grave.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH

RECTOR	The Rev. Scott Fisher 456-5235	SEXTON	Fiona Stewart-Campbell. .
PRIESTS	The Rev. Steve Matthew. . 488-9076	ORGANISTS	Mary Ellen Koeller.452-6039
	The Rev. John Holz 456-3583		Laura Vines 452-4565
DEACONS	The Rev. Bella Jean Savino 456-1503	CHOIR DIRECTOR	Elaine Jacobson479-2472
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	Teresa Moore374-8382	SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	Mary Margaret Davis . . . 457-2865
	Marjorie Grunin 451-1981	UNITED THANK OFFERING	Helen Howard.488-2314
	Darrel Zuke. 488-6073	DAUGHTERS OF THE KING	The Rev. Bella Jean Savino 456-1503
PARISH TREASURER	Carolyn Nethken 457-3304	TREE-CLIMBING	Luke Castellini
PARISH ADMINISTRATOR	Hilary Freeman457-4820	MINISTERS	YOUUS!!!

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Phone# 456-5235 FAX#: 456-2934

e-mail: sfisher@mosquitonet.com Website : stmatthewschurch.org

Diocesan Website: episcopalak.org

Winter Voices

That's very unusual. VERY UNUSUAL. Seeing that many ravens flying together like that. And so low.

That's it, Huh? That's it. Gosh, we live our life like, like we're on Thin Ice all of the time. We just never know.

Yeah, it's been bad. The ice was too thin on the River and when the caribou were trying to cross, they fell through. Then they couldn't get back up. Lot of 'em died. Just came floatin' down the River.

Do you know why I call him 'Tukatuk'? Because he "tuck" on his thumb, he "tuck" his hand, he "tuck" on his finger; he just "tuck" all the time.

You never forget. The pain is ALWAYS there, remembering. You just learn to [sigh] live with it.

Yeah, I feel, sounds funny, *cheated*. I liked spending time with him and was looking for more time. I'm sorry he died.

Aren't you the Episcopal priest? Could you say a prayer for me, here, in the grocery store? My wife died 6 months ago, and I'm just having a hard time. I just miss her.

We called you because we didn't want to be alone.

We're gonna have to close the shop after the New Year. People think that people who own businesses have lots of money, but they don't know the bills that come in. It's the price of heating oil doing us in; and all those shops over on that other side of town taking the traffic flow. Kind of a shame. We put all of our retirement into this place and now, now I don't know what we're gonna do.

.....seeing people coming out of the graveyard, and...

I love coming to St. Matthew's, but every time I do, I start crying.

Introducing (again) the new Senior Warden.....



BRUCE GADWAH

I was born in the northernmost county of New Hampshire, which of course borders the province of Quebec in Canada. I am sometimes asked about my surname and I am told it was at one time probably spelled "Gadoud" or something similar; and quite probably that side came over on a slow boat from France. Now, my mother's side came over on a slightly faster craft from England; and I am often reminded that we are direct descendants of John Quincy Adams and, because of that, we do in fact have in our possession furniture and the like that belonged to Abigail Adams, proudly passed on from oldest daughter to oldest daughter; however, that chain has been sadly broken by my cousin, who said she just could not be bothered.

I attended elementary school in both Vermont and New Hampshire, but I call Pittsburg, New Hampshire home. At one time it was called the "Republic of Indian Stream" and belonged to neither Canada nor the U.S. Therefore, many of the first settlers were outlaws from both sides; moving there where they were quite untouchable by the Law. The locals are very independent and I might have acquired just a bit of that growing up there. I graduated from Wentworth Institute in Boston with an Associate's in mechanical design engineering. I served in the Reserves as an officer in artillery and have been employed by Xerox for the past thirty years.

We moved here as a family in 1993, for what I had planned to be about five years. Since coming to St. Matthews though I have learned that I should not do that anymore; plan, that is, especially without communicating with a much higher authority. Very early on in attending this church I was advised to only do one day at a time without expectation, and that has worked very well for that one day, but I find myself making that same promise every day, day after day.

You have guessed by now that I am somewhat of a slow learner; even though my mother and my aunts were all teachers and the like. I want you all to know that I blame none of you for this behavior, in fact you have been most supportive, but of course that brings about other anxieties.

The long and short of it is is, through no fault of yours, that until I have figured this out, I might have to be here quite a bit longer. In fact, in case I don't get it before I leave this world, I did want to inquire as to the availability of one of those columbarium slots just in case it does not happen in this world.

Well, after all you have all been so understanding and everything; I may just have to overstay my welcome.

[Mr. Gadwah has served on the Vestry for two previous terms. He served a term from 1997 to January 2000, and was Junior Warden from 1997-1998; and Senior Warden from 1998-2000. Following a canonically required year's absence, he was again re-elected, and served as Senior Warden from 2001-2004. He was re-elected during the January 2006 Annual Meeting; and asked by the rector to again serve as Senior Warden. Additionally, he has served on the St. Matthew's Endowment Board since 2003, was Coordinator for the Diocesan Convention that was at St. Matthew's in 2004; serves currently on the Bishop's Committee on Apostolic Vision; and has volunteered at the Manley Summer Camp for three years. On top of all of that, as he points out, he has been "Booyah assistant to the assistant head pot burner since the first flameout"; and "Chena River Regatta co-SubAdmiral in 2000, 2001, and 2004".]

A Word from the Senior Warden

St. Matthews Parish Meetin' Day

By Bruce Gadwah

Let me begin by thanking you for allowing me another term on the vestry of this wonderful church. Last year was full of family and friends from so far away, all here to share in the wedding festivities of my son Jason and his wife Crystal right here on the church lawn, with all of the love that this church family could possibly offer. As busy as that year was, I always seem to feel a void if I am not completely involved with the goings-on of our parish; so once again my life seems complete. The only way I can endure the insanity of the business world out there is to be wrapped up with the church world here and I am sure most of you have similar reasons for clinging to what might be the only constant in the equation; that is, of course, the Love of God, without which none of this would be possible.

For those of you who were able to attend the Annual Meeting I would like to say that I have never felt more at home. For a moment there I thought I was back in New Hampshire on Town Meetin' Day. I could almost feel that competitive spirit that only New Englanders really thrive on. It had the flavor that usually drives family against family, brother against brother. We seem to derive much pleasure from such an event. The difference is that the New Englander is born and brought up that way and therefore what seems to be an insult to the average onlooker is really just taken in stride by the local personality, and life resumes the next day without much of a grudge. We are used to dealing with one another in that combative and sometimes caustic style. In trying to protect the congregation from such possible outbursts we have in the past tried to follow a less aggressive skit; and for repetitive tasks that is ample and has worked just fine, I think. Coincidentally, it allows us to be on time and on schedule more easily. There are other times, such as we could see very soon, that absolutely require a good and fair sampling of the congregation, in order to know we are following the wishes of the majority.

The vestry absolutely encourages more involvement by the members at large, particularly on fiscal decisions of major commitment. After all, we are trying to fulfill the will of the majority at all times and it makes our jobs easier if everyone is more outspoken. By the way, if you feel you need some coaching in that regard please see me or others here that are from my neck of the woods.

I was so encouraged by the polite exchange of viewpoints at the annual meeting that I would like to task all of us with more involvement in issues of interest, and where you may have particular input essential to the vestry in making good choices for all of us here. This church is a mission church and as such we need all the skills afforded to us by all members in order that the finances reflect a positive trend. We have passed a budget that is going to require commitment by all of us, in order that we are in the black on a monthly basis. Considering we did not meet the budget plan of last year and this budget is even more demanding, it is a given that change is absolutely critical. The vestry is always looking to reduce operating expenses, but the one most assured way to manage the budget is for all parishioners to strive to tithe on a regular basis. It should be the goal of us all to set the example. In order for us to entertain parish hall expansion we would need more commitment in that regard. We have in the past relied on some fundraisers of one kind or another to shore up the treasury and we have fun doing them, but respectfully I submit to you that while we always step up to that task, it is only a temporary fix. I am asking each one of us to start to tithe and to strive to increase annually. I was just told what we passed this year is a "faith budget." Frankly, had I known that a little earlier I would not have bored you with all this. . . because my friends if I lost everything else and all I had left was faith in me, faith in you, and faith in God, that would alleviate any of the stress that I was feeling with regard to the 2006 budget. I look forward to the New Year with all of you.

God Bless You.

Winter Voices

He's actually right about a lot of things; I just don't let him know often enough.

I prefer "soft" adventures - like a pool in Mexico.

... that Fishwheel Gold Strike, they called it. There were tents all along up there, but I think the only people who made any money were Big Ray's.

. . . told me that if you had that car in Iraq, they'd take one look at it and blow it up.

It seems to me that when we were children, things were much more certain. It's a matter of Faith, I guess.

. . . and my Father told me, taught me, "*Never act without a Plan.*"

. . . and I didn't know whether to have another coffee, or a Valium.

THAT will change. You'll find out, now that you're married.

My Christmas is Midnight Christmas Eve here at St. Matthew's. That's plenty. More than enough.

All I got for Christmas was a card from the people I work with. That's it. Nothing else. But the card was nice.

What do I remember about Christmas growing up? I used to eat the Christmas ornaments near the bottom of the tree.

What do I remember about Christmas growing up? My father was Norwegian. And he would cook all the Norwegian food for us. He would start months before on the pickled herring. My sister and I used to steal some.

What time is, are you having, are you having a Midnight service at 5 o'clock; I mean, I mean, oh shoot, just what time are your services?

Are you having services for Christmas this year?

Winter Voices

Is your Midnight service still at Midnight?

Some are hearing the footsteps of 8 tiny reindeer, but me, I'm afraid the only steps I hear are the 4 horsemen of the apocalypse.

Gee, I didn't get anything for Christmas. Nothing from my family, nothing.

You knew Bishop Gordon? I've always heard a lot about him. What was he really like, in person?

I finally prayed last night and, then I could sleep. I HAD to give it to Him.

I've got my own Rule driving around town: if it wasn't paved when I first drove on it, then I set my own speed limit.

Women have dreams, their own dreams, but they get buried. I want to help them get them back.

Like my mother said when she was dying: Dying's not that hard; it'd be worse never to have lived.

Is it still yellow poupon dijon mustard looking poop?

It's too warm this winter. It should be thirty, forty below - that's when I like it. It's drier then, not like this stuff. And it's affecting the Aurora. It's not out as much as it used to be. When I first moved here 4 years ago, the aurora was out almost every night, flaring. Now it's not like that.

Aren't Episcopalians supposed to be incarnational? Then how come we're standing around here burning trees and singing "Joy to the World"?

Does this seem a little strange? The tree, that's supposed to burn, WON'T; and the fabric, that's supposed to be safe, is blazing.

Weren't any of you guys Boy Scouts? What's with this fire?

through All The Seasons of Life

SEASONS of LIFE in the MIDST of WINTER

From the lighting of the first Advent candle and the beginning of the Church Year, on **Sunday, November 27th**; through the waiting of Advent, the glory of Christmas, the cold of January, and into the coming Spring of February, through **Wednesday, February 15th**; for the first **81 days** of the Church Year, the nearly 12 weeks since the accounting in the last Newsletter; we gathered and prayed together at least 270 times. An accounting and some of the details:

- 30 Sunday Morning Eucharists
- 66 Private/Home Communion visits by Lay Eucharistic Ministers
- 25 Private/Home Communion visits by clergy
- 9 Sunday 2PM Fairbanks Correctional Center Eucharists; or visits
- 48 Midnight Compline services
- 5 Tuesday Morning Denali Center Eucharists
- 12 Wednesday Morning Eucharists
- 12 Wednesday Evening Eucharists
- 4 Thursday Morning Pioneer Home Eucharists
- 18 Weekday Advent Evening Prayer Services
- 1 "Dark" Christmas Eucharist, for those hurting or grieving
- 1 Midnight Solstice "Bang-Pots-And-Yell-To-Chase-Away-The-Great-Dragon-of-Darkness" Compline
- 1 Sunday School Advent/Christmas Pageant
- 4 Christmas Eve, Christmas Day Eucharists
- 2 New Year's Eve, New Year's Day Eucharists
- 1 New Year's Day Potlatch
- 1 12thNight Traditional Burning (*sortof*) of the Christmas Greens so that Spring will come
- 1 Candlemass Eucharist
- 3 Celebrations of Holy Baptism, 5 baptized
- 5 Commendations of the Dying/Departed
- 9 Funerals (*within Fairbanks*)
- 1 Funeral (*outside of Fairbanks*)
- 1 Memorial Service/Prayers
- 1 Columbarium Internment
- 4 "Teas" hosted in the days before the Funerals
- 1 HouseBlessing
- 1 World Aids Day Service
- 1 Annual Meeting of the Parish
- 2 Special Eucharists with Bp. MacDonald and visitors

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- 2 # of friends thankfully welcomed home from a Combat Zone
 - 9" snow depth in Fairbanks on New Year's Day
 - 51 Coldest Temperature recorded during period (January 27th)
 - +43 Warmest Temperature recorded during Period (February 11th)
 - 35 Recorded Temperature during Annual Meeting (January 29th)
 - 2 # of breaks during Annual Meeting to start cars
 - 10:06AM Sunrise, November 27th
 - 8:50AM Sunrise, February 15th
 - 3:09PM Sunset, November 27th
 - 5:21PM Sunset, February 15th
-

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Seasons of Life . . .

Baptisms

On Friday evening, January 6th, we celebrated the first baptism of the New Year. In an Epiphany celebration, 7 weeks old **William Cole Niebur** (*the rector's newest grandchild!*) was baptized. His Godparents are **Charleen Fisher** and **Darryl Salmon** of Beaver; **Morgan Niebur** and **Fredrick Niebur** of Cannon Falls, Minnesota; and **Sandra Deaton**



Martinson of Nome and Beaver. Two days later, on Sunday, January 8th, nearly 10 years old **Harley Catherine Anne Kraus** (*who had been Mary several weeks earlier in the Sunday School Pageant*) and 8 months old **Isaac Jonas Little** were baptized. Harley's Godparents are **Leona Allridge McDaniels** and **Andy Willis**. Isaac's Godparents are **LaDonna Wolf**, **Dwayne John**, and **Gerald Frank**. And finally, despite nearly forty below temperatures, on Thursday, February 2nd, as we celebrated Candlemass, 5 months old **Jade Cherokee Rose** and 6 weeks old **Elisa Wiehl** were baptized. Jade's Godparents are **Hope Cermelj** and **Pearl Wilson**; Elisa's Godparents are **Cameron Mitchell**, **Matthew Petruska**, **Elizabeth Coot**, and **Wilma Pitka**. The fact that the rector probably baptized Elisa's GRANDMOTHERS once upon a time in Beaver startled him a little.

Funerals, Memorials, and tears

On the last day of the Church Year, Saturday, November 26th, in distant New Rochelle, New York, 45 years old **Dr. Mary Grantham-Campbell** ended her brave struggle against cancer, and a story that began here in the North began returning home. Combining Inupiaq Eskimo and African-American heritage, her Inupiaq name was "**Quutuq**". Born in Fairbanks to **Mary Stalker Grantham** and **L.T. Grantham**; she was adopted by the **Thompsons** of New Jersey and raised outside from age 12 on. She graduated from Brown University in Rhode Island, and earned her doctorate in anthropology from Stanford. Active in education and research, she had won national awards. She taught at UAF from '92 to '94; and last year had celebrated her 25th wedding anniversary. Her husband **Marvin** survives her, their four boys, and numerous relatives and family members – including cousins **Sharon McConnell-Gillis** and **Shirley Lee**. On Friday afternoon, December 9th they gathered here at St. Matthew's for her final funeral, led by the rector and **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, and her body was laid to rest in the traditional manner high atop Birch Hill Cemetery, as the short December sun set. A potluck followed that evening in the Tribal Hall. *[See related poem elsewhere in this issue.]*

The next morning, Saturday, December 10th, 45 years old **Henry Strickland Jr.** died unexpectedly in his sleep here in Fairbanks, in his apartment. Originally from the Kotzebue area, he had lived in Fairbanks the last several years; and his brother and family had just flown in from Kotzebue for a surprise, unplanned visit. His longtime companion **Sarah Roberts**, and their two children; and other children and family members survive him. Nearly a week later, on Friday afternoon, December 16th, they and others gathered at the Chapel of Chimes Funeral Home for a service, led by the rector; before finally returning home to Kotzebue and his final services and burial there.

In the early morning hours of Saturday, December 17th, 88 years old Minto Elder **Wilson J. Titus**, after playing that night with his grandchildren, suddenly died here in Fairbanks. Surrounded by family in the Hospital Emergency Room,

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Winter Voices

The best Voice I ever overheard was in this Parish Hall after a funeral. When I heard someone saying: "*You have to come visit us now; we've got our own outhouse now.*"

What am I doin'? I learned a new word - "*chillin'.*" I'm *chillin'*. It means "*hanging out.*"

My family history is like almost every Jewish person's history. What family wasn't killed off by the Russians was killed by the Germans. We were originally from the Ukraine and . . .

. . .told him 'we need to get out of this bar. We're the two biggest people at this table and the police will come in here any minute and . . .

I was raised that you *have to have* HAM for New Year's, because pigs eat forwards and chickens eat backwards.

I was at my place and decided to come in. I hooked up my dogs and started out. I came to a lake and it was steaming, you know. And at first I thought moose; then I saw my dogs were steaming too. When I got to Chalkyitsik I saw it was 55 below.

I danced 'til 3 in the morning and it was GREAT!

It's so cold out there I saw a raven crash, driving in. Its wings froze flying along and it crashed.

As long as I'm still alive, I thought I might as well act like it.

Is everybody sortof depressed this time of year, or is it just me?

Mother, Mother, ohhhhhh Mom.

Bling? I've got Bling now? Cool.

. . . So say what you need to say; this is NOT an End of something but a Beginning.

Winter Voices

....asked me if I wanted to go to church, so we stopped at St. Matthew's. And that was SOME service. I've never felt anything like that. You know that long part, where you pray for all the people on that long list. The Holy Spirit came over me then. I FELT IT. From my head down, and just through me. I didn't know what it was. It was a little scary, because I never felt anything like that. But I'll never forget it.

. . . and when you leave the Country the first time, it's like you're Love Sick.

. . . so tell all your friends. TELL YOUR CHILDREN! The Rapture is coming BEFORE MARCH and PEOPLE NEED TO GET READY! THEY DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT!

. . . said no embalming. "*I've had enough needles stuck in me*", she said.

We used to call her our Alaskan Elizabeth Taylor. She and her gang introduced me to....

I want to see *that* in the next Newsletter - how you prayed for someone in the Hospital and then they threw up.

Too bad we lost our bro, but he did a good thing.

She worked hard, and she kept her stuff clean.

What's wrong with you? You act JUST SILLY since you got married. But that's okay. That's the way it's supposed to be.

....told us to make sure their hands are open, not clenched. When they're clenched, that's when they take lots of people with them.

I prayed for you, but it was the night before. But God doesn't pay attention to time.

You're waiting for something like *Campbell's Head Soup?*

ST. SIMEON & ST. ANNA NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

In 1991, Bishop Steve Charleston announced at the Diocesan Convention, meeting here at St. Matthew's, the formation of a Diocesan Honorary Society - the Society of St. Simeon and St. Anna. The Society, named after the Elder Saints recorded in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, is composed of persons active in the Diocese for at least 15 years and who are at least 60 years old. The Society honors their outstanding service to the Church, and their ministry as role models to all of us. They also serve as a source of Wisdom and Advice to the Bishop. Among those members of St. Matthew's currently in the Society are **Maggie Beach, Lee and Mary Margaret Davis, Betty Engles, Mary Ann Gallagher, Shirley Gordon, Evolyn Melville, Karen Parr, Hannah Solomon, and the Rev. Titus Peter** (a complete list of Society members, here at St. Matthew's and throughout the Interior, is posted in the Parish Hall, next to the framed poster with **Lincoln Tritt's** poem and the late **Moses Sam's** photograph).

Elders are nominated to the Society by their local Church, which brings the names forward to the local Deanery meeting. The Deanery will then forward the names onto the Bishop, for installation during the Fall's Diocesan Convention.

With the Interior Deanery meeting coming in late May or early June, nomination forms are now available. If there is someone you would like to nominate to this Society (at least 60 years old, active with the Church at least 15 years, a role model for the rest of us), contact the Church Office for a nomination form, or pick one up from a Bulletin Board. [The form asks for the name, address, birthdate, church membership, and a description of some of the church activities of the person being nominated; and the nominees signed consent to the nomination]. Return completed nomination forms to the Church Office by **May 1st**, so they can be submitted, through the Vestry and the elected delegates (**Deacon Bella Jean Savino and Fr. John Holz**) at the 2006 Deanery meeting.

THE Moment. March 13th, 1913.

From the Lumpkin collection given to us several years ago.

This is Archdeacon Stuck departing from in front of St. Matthew's for the First Successful Ascent of Denali. There's a caption typed onto it. It reads: "Archdeacon Stuck, leaving Fairbanks for Mount "Denali" alias McKinley; Rev. C.E. Betticher, C. H. Clegg, Harry Karstens, Walter Harper".



That It May Be Well With You
St. Matthew's Health Ministry



WALKING THE YUKON QUEST

By Sherry Wolf and Mary Margaret Davis

The Health Ministry encouraged parishioners to "Walk the Yukon Quest" starting October 9, 2005 and ending on May 5, 2006. The participant was to daily record on forms that were given to them the number of miles they had walked that day, as recorded on their pedometer. There are now 16 "Yukon Quest Walkers" who turn in their weekly mile log in the green boxes in the church parish hall. The Health Ministry team is encouraged by the participation and would like to encourage anyone who would like to start now to do so. Walking is great exercise and good for your heart and overall health. You can pick up the forms from us any Sunday.

Pedometers are inexpensive and can be purchased at Fred Meyers or any sports' store. The simpler the device the better. All you actually need is to be able to record the miles per day and erase them each night. We have heard from some of the walkers that a good place to wear the device is on your ankle by securing it with a piece of Velcro tape. This way you will be less likely to lose it, it will record more accurately, and you will have it on all day long once you get dressed.

You can view the miles that the "Yukon Quest Walkers" have now walked by looking at the Yukon Quest Map in the Parish Hall on the top of the Health Ministry cabinet.

Please also remember that the Health Ministry team will continue to do Blood Pressure readings on the first Sunday of the month, after each service, in the library. We are also in the process of developing a card "portfolio" that you can carry in your wallet or purse that will list your blood pressure readings, your medications, your significant illnesses, and whatever emergency information is needed for health care professionals to care for you in an emergency.

If you have any thoughts on this, please contact Mary Margaret Davis at 457-2865 or Sherry Wolf at 452-1952.



Winter Voices

Praise God for this church! And praise God for the strength that is here!

Don't ask 'em who's playing in the Super Bowl! They'll think we're terrorists or something! EVERYBODY in the WHOLE COUNTRY except us knows who's playing.

Old people used to tell us, "*Cup of tea and soup is good enough*", and they were right.

They tell us, "*You can tell about a person from the way the food is prepared*" and you can. Look at how nice this is all prepared for my Uncle.

When he was in Attu, he looked over and saw a martin hat, and was really happy. Somebody down there with him from home. It was Horace Smoke. So they stayed together through it all - Attu, Midway, all of it.

We were married 58 years, and in all that time we only had two arguments. But I never got black eye. Two arguments. But those arguments made us stronger. Because they let it out, from building up inside us.

. . . and when we were dancing, after I sang, he said to me, "*I didn't know you knew all the words to that song 'You are my Sunshine'*."

....busted a cap on . . .

There's a moose in the road?
That's MEAT!

. . . so my Boss, as an award, gave me a gift certificate to Wal-Mart, but I just gave it back to him. I don't want anything to do with that place.

. . . makin' sure we got all our ducks covered. . .

. . . and that moose just ran right through our camp and Grampa hollered, "*I told you not to call moose. They're too close!*"

Winter Voices

He'd head out in January, and we wouldn't see him again till April. Took three days for him to haul in all the beaver meat he'd caught.

I remember him sitting down on the bank every morning shaving. With tweezers. Plucking 'em out, plucking 'em out. I tried that when I was 18 and Man, my chin bled for a week. He was tough, my Grampa.

The best bulldozer operator I ever saw.

I wish I'd listened to him when I was young, when he was tryin' to teach us. But we were just mischief kids, and now. . .

His passing is like the End of an Era, you know. Well, ALL these elders passin' is like the End of an Era.

We need to meet a wedding or something. Going to these funerals is getting a bit much.

That's the difference between faith and belief. Belief is a period and faith is a comma. Belief says that's *it*; and when they run into more, it's hard and they don't know what to do. Faith says, "*Oh! There's more?*"

Thank you God that I'm here.

. . . and that medicine they gave me for my arthritis turned all my hair BRIGHT RED.

This isn't Global Warming; this is Just WEIRD.

Gosh, if it's this warm in early February for the Yukon Quest, what will it be like in March for the North American? They'll have to move it to Livengood or someplace.

Sounds like another St Matthew's moment to me.

I saw your website, and I was wondering.....

SUMMARY of the JANUARY 2006 ANNUAL MEETING

On Sunday, January 29th, 2006, the rector called the Annual Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. **Charlene Marth** was elected to be Secretary. A quorum was established, with 55 present. The agenda was approved. The 2005 minutes were approved

Parish organization reports presented in the meeting packet included: St. Matthews Website, Junior Warden Report, Deacon Report, Altar Guild Report, Daughters of the King, Sunday School Report, Education for Ministry, Endowment Board and Tanana Valley Christian Conference. All reports were received.

Proposed By-law Amendments

- By-law amendment to Article IV, section 2, paragraph A to read: "A retiring Vestry member who has served more than one-half of a full-time may not be re-elected to the Vestry until one year has elapsed." After some discussion, the **motion passed, with one (1) opposed.**
- The second amendment proposes that Article XI of the By-laws be amended, by adding the following sentence: "Amendments to the By-laws shall take effect immediately on passage." An amendment was offered to add the wording, "**unless otherwise specified**". **The amendment was passed. By-law with amendment passed.**

Vestry, Scott appointed election judges: Marty Thomas, Carol Holz, Laura Bender

- **Nominated.** Bruce Gadwah, Mary Johnston, Teresa Moore, Darrel Zuke.
- **Elected:** Bruce Gadwah, Teresa Moore, Darrel Zuke

Treasurer's Report, Carolyn Nethken, Treasurer

- Deficit of \$7451. Assets have increased approx. \$2000. Liabilities matched. St. Matthew's is increasing in value. Congregation asked a few questions. **Report passed unanimously.**

Submitted Resolution by Becky Snow regarding the Millennium Development Goals.

- There was much discussion regarding the resolution. There was an amendment to the resolution offered by Marjorie Grunin. The resolution would now read (language change in bold): Be it Resolved, that St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Fairbanks, Alaska, hereby commits itself to work toward contributions of **0.7% of prior year's income less cost of sales** to Episcopal Relief and Development...". The numbered items remain the same. The second change would read: "and be it further Resolved that in 2006 we shall designate **0.2% of prior year's income less cost of sales** for contribution to ERD..." The amendment **passed, 40 yes/6 no.**
- The original motion, with the above amendment **passed, 26 yes/22 no.**

Annual Meeting . . .

Interior Deanery (2)

- **Nominated:** John Holz, Bella Jean Savino, Lee Davis. Gregg Eschright.
- **Elected:** John Holz & Bella Jean Savino.
Alternates: Lee Davis and Gregg Eschright

2006 Budget

- The budget is increased to \$266,381 with the passing of the ERD Resolution. A further amendment was offered to match the ERD amount to the Community Service Grants (Outreach) amount - Moved and 2nd that we add the ERD amount of \$501 to our local Community Service Grants (Outreach) for this year. There was discussion how the money would be raised. There were a few other questions regarding the budget. **The budget passed, with amendment, unanimously.**

Diocesan Convention (3)

- **Nominated:** Tom Marsh, Lee Davis, Karen Parr, Roxy Wright Freedle, Becky Snow, Bella Jean Savino, Gregg Eschright, Bruce Gadwah
- **Elected:** Bruce Gadwah, Tom Marsh, Karen Parr. **Alternates:** Roxy Wright Freedle, Lee Davis, Bella Jean Savino, Becky Snow and Gregg Eschright.

Planning Committee Report

Tom Marsh, spoke on behalf of the committee. [See Reports elsewhere on the Website: stmatthewschurch.org]

Endowment Board

- **Nominated:** Bruce Gadwah and Ray Cockerille.
- A motion was made to move a **unanimous ballot.**

Adjournment

Moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:12 p.m

Annual Reports from: 1. The Altar Guild 2. Daughters of the King 3. Deacon Bella Jean Savino 4. Education for Ministry 5. The Endowment Board 6. Health Ministry 7. The Junior Warden 8. The Planning Committee 9. Prison Ministry 10. Sunday School 11. Tanana Valley Christian Conference 12. the St. Matthew's Website are available online at www.stmatthewschurch.org.

In the halls of the Mendenhall Monarch

by Sushana Fiona Stewart-Campbell

The glacier, like an ancient weary King
occupies his throne
hoary head and glistening crown
obscure the heavens.
The folds of his robe tumble from on high;
faded aqua his mantle, tourmaline his jewels.
The dense, opaque lake curls
round his feet, a glistening train.
Hushed majesty.
One cheeky herald evening Thrush
marbles a spill of liquid harmony in tribute;
otherwise the court is still.
But for the brash knight, bold waterfall
daring to break silence in a corner of the hall.
Woods rich and aching ripe with willow buds.
One would think they would ask permission of the
monarch
before breaking into the white-flurried applause of
spring.

[NOTE: Fiona is our new sexton and, before she was here being our sexton, she was in Juneau writing poetry.]



*News from the Diocese:***THE "BISHOP'S CAMPAIGN for the DIOCESE of ALASKA" BEGINS;
SEEKING FOURTEEN MILLION DOLLARS**

Unveiled during Bishop MacDonald's Address at the October 2005 Diocesan Convention at Meier Lake, the "Bishop's Campaign for the Diocese of Alaska" began with an Opening Eucharist at St. Mary's Church in Anchorage on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th. The Bishop's Campaign, a three year major gift campaign that will "allow the Diocese of Alaska to have the financial base with which to fully realize its potential", focuses on a four part program. As outlined in the Campaign announcement in mid-December, those goals are to: 1) provide transportation funds; 2) Establish Outreach Missioners; 3) Provide specialized education and training for clergy and laity; and 4) Establish functionally operative Diocesan Centers in each Deanery.

With the Bishop committed to asking for help both within and outside of Alaska, the Campaign seeks to raise fourteen million dollars. A number of Bishops from outside of Alaska are joining in the Campaign's efforts.

Jack Coghill (of Nenana) is the Campaign Chair; with **Tay** and **Lowell Thomas** (St. Mary's, Anchorage) the Honorary Chairpersons and **Jack Simmonds** (St. Mary's, Anchorage) the Campaign Treasurer. The Bishop announced at the Diocesan Convention the Executive Committee, composed of clergy and lay representatives from each Deanery, for the Campaign. The Committee consists of **The Rev. Dave Elsensohn** (Sitka) and **Gary Paxton** (Sitka) for the SouthEast; **The Rev. Chuck Eddy** (Anchorage) and **Trigg Davis** (St. Mary's, Anchorage) for SouthCentral; **the Rev. John Holz** (Fairbanks) and **Georgianna Lincoln** (Rampart) for the Interior; and **the Rev. Enoch Adams Jr** (Kivalina) and **Rex Rock** (Point Hope) for the Arctic Coast.

For further information, contact the Campaign Office in Anchorage (907-274-6544), the Deanery representatives on the Campaign's Executive Committee, or the Diocesan Office.

**ADULT EDUCATION & DISCUSSION OPPORTUNITIES
DURING LENT*****Sunday nights at 7. . . Adult Inquirers/Confirmation Discussion***

The Rector and others (*though they don't know it yet*) are leading an Adult Inquirers/Confirmation Class meeting every other Sunday night at 7PM. Anyone is welcome to come by and join the discussion; and the rector promises all classes will end between 8 and 8:30. Classes began meeting February 12th, and will meet March 12th, March 26th, and April 9th.

***Monday nights at 6. . . St. Paul***

Deacon Montie and Lynn Slusher are leading "MONDAY NIGHT SOUP AND STUDY SESSIONS" focusing on St. Paul, throughout Lent. The Gospel (good news) that Paul preached and wrote about began long before any of the gospel writers took time to write down their memories of Jesus. Who was this early missionary and what was the missionary message of Paul? Why have some scholars asked, "Did Paul continue to preach and teach the religion *of* Jesus? Or, "did Paul preach and teach a religion *about* Jesus?". We will look at his life as we have come to know it through: a. **Biography** (Book of Acts) b. **Autobiography** (Epistles) c. **Pseudographic Writings** (Letters written by others, but attributed to Paul) and d. **Hagiography** (Legends and Traditions). Each session will include video presentation of materials, handouts of materials and discussion of materials. These sessions will be held on Monday evenings during Lent. The first session is scheduled for **Monday evening, February 27th at 6:00 PM**. We will meet for soup and study in the Parish Hall for Monday evenings ending on April 3rd. If you have questions, want to register, or provide soup for an evening, please call Lynn or Montie Slusher at 474-4570 or contact us by e-mail at slusher@alaska.net.

Thursday nights at 5:30.....The Windsor Report

Beginning Thursday, March 16th, Lay Eucharistic Minister and member of the National Church's Executive Council Becky Snow will be leading a discussion and study of The Windsor Report, and related documents. The study group will begin with Evening Prayer at 5:30PM, followed by a simple shared supper and discussion. This is one of the crucial documents in the current Anglican Church and its discussions.

THE FOURTH GRADERS COMMENT on CHURCH

[Note: One Sunday morning in February, the 4th Grade Sunday School Class was asked what their experiences were with St. Matthew's. Here's what they said:]



The Kingdom of God is like.....

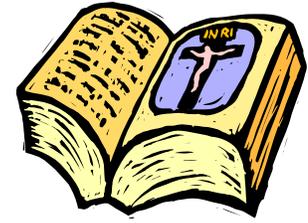


fifty-six small suggestions for the season of Lent.

1. Oh, it's Lent and you know you're supposed to do it, so do it. Give up Chocolate. No chocolate until Easter. Think how that chocolate bunny will taste that day. 2. Like the Kingdom, turn the values upside down . . . and take up chocolate for Lent. One piece a day. But only one. When you want more, give thanks, for now you have been found worthy of the struggle. 3. That person you have meant to call – call them. 4. That person you have meant to write – write them. 5. That person you have meant to apologize to – apologize. 6. Turn off the lights in the house when the sun sets, and watch the soft Darkness come. 7. Get up one half hour earlier and read Morning Prayer each day. 8. Stop every time you are about to go through a door and make the Sign of the Cross, for Our Lord said “*I am the Door*” 9. Come to a Sunday service you don't usually come to, and introduce yourself as a Visitor. See what happens. 10. Sit in a different place in Church. 11. Come on a weekday afternoon and watch the light in the stained glass windows. 12. Talk to somebody you don't know on Sunday morning. 13. Get in the slowest or longest line in the store and give thanks for the chance to wait. 14. Find a tree and say a prayer for it each day, waiting for Spring. 15. That thing, that activity you know you should stop, stop. 16. Every Thursday evening, stop, light a candle, and slowly tear a piece of bread in two. 17. Spend one night in the Rescue Mission. 18. Eat at the Stone Soup Café. 19 Sit in the Emergency Room lobby and say a prayer for everyone that walks by. 20. Go for a walk. 21. Turn off your cell phone. 22. Go to Denali Center or the Pioneer Home and find somebody sitting by themselves. Sit with them. 23. Ride the City Bus and see where you go. 24. Go to Church one Sunday in a different church 25. Find a Lay Eucharistic Minister (*ask the rector*) and go with them when they visit. 26. Send a Thank You note to the Vestry. 27. Don't use the “*Close Door*” button on the elevator; it will close anyway. 28. Open the Bible at random and begin reading it out loud. Stop when it begins reading you. 29. Turn the television off. Especially when THAT show is on. 30. Write on your calendar one good thing that happens each day. 31. Ask if you can be the crucifer at a service 32. Come back on Sunday afternoon and clean the Church. 33. Find an open AA meeting and stop in. 34. Fast – meaning “*stop eating before you are full*”. Discover it is possible to control desire. 35. Watch one dog race and notice how focused and excited the teams are. 36. Go visit Grandmothers and ask them to tell you a story. 37. Find one person you are taking for granted and say “*Thank You*” to them. 38. Buy/find one nail and carry it in your purse or pocket. Bring it to Church Good Friday. 39. One meal a week, join the rest of the world and have only several spoonfuls of rice. 40. Invite someone over to visit you and have a cup of tea. 41. Go visit that person you haven't seen in a long time. 42. Find a rope or string and tie in it one hundred knots. Now pray “*Thank You*” one hundred times each day. 43. Kneel beside your bed and say prayers each night. 44. Call the Church Office and ask “*What can I do to help?*” 45. Don't do one thing you think you *should* do. 46. Learn how to whistle. 47. Learn how to juggle. 48. See how many times you can say “*Ha*” without starting to laugh. 49. Tell your Best Friend that they are. 50. Sing “*la-la-la*” outside your door each morning, to greet the New Day. 51. Go look at the new babies on the second floor of the Hospital and think about YOU being that size; think about GOD being that vulnerable. 52 Bessie Barnabas used to walk to St. Matthew's from Salcha; walk to Church one morning. 53. Turn off the computer; turn off the television; turn off the radio; turn off the music; turn off the cell phone and sit there. Listen to your breathing. 54. Make a small campfire and make campfire tea and sit outside and drink it. 55. Go to a playground and go down the slide. 56. Come by the Church one night when it is dark, and kneel on the choir steps when there are no lights on in the Church. Notice how the halo around the icon glows in the Dark. Notice how the Altar Cross shines in the Dark. Notice the flames of fire in the Cross. Notice how they are blood red. Wonder at what cost the “*I love you*” of God to You. Wonder why you think you could ever lose that “*I love you*”. Realize you have had do nothing to earn it. It is, as all True Love, sheer Gift.

... from an Anonymous Internet Survey

THE ANONYMOUS ST. MATTHEW'S on LENT and SPRING



The questions went out randomly across the computer's address book:

"Spring is coming and Lent is coming, any thoughts? How did you survive January? What's been a Lent that you remember? What's been a spiritual practice that has helped you? Lent sometimes equals deserts equals a hard time. What's helped you through a hard time? What's something that helps YOU draw closer to God? March is SPRING! Thoughts for Spring? Prayers for Spring? DogRaces you remember? Any thoughts or reactions or things to share?" Here's an edited version of some of what came back.

How Did You Do with January and Cold Weather?

"I think I did not survive the cold month of January, but I think that God picked me up. My daughter's spirit kept me going, and my friends' prayer and my prayer is how I'm still here."

"I spent two weekends out in the scary part of the desert [in California] in "Slab City" (near the Salton Sea) territory, visiting a gentleman who has lived in an old truck in the desert for the last 24 years, building a mountain, a literal, physical mountain, to God. His whole message is pretty much "God is love" written and decorated with intricate designs of flowers and blazing color. It's huge, you can climb it, it's quite a climb, and there are fascinating things to look at every inch of the way. He has recently been designated an American Visionary Artist, but he could really care less. He just builds and paints his mountain every day. He likes it when people bring him shiny paint, and so I brought him some gloss medium and acrylic pigment. He's a cool guy to hang out with; he's 75 years old, Leonard Knight. That's my surviving January story!"

"THANK YOU LORD FOR COLD WEATHER!!!!!"

Memories of Lent?

"When I was little, we used to "give things up" for Lent. Chocolate was a popular item. Sometimes, as a kid, it was an unspoken game to see what you could give up that looked pious but wasn't really a very big sacrifice! We also got to "have" the forbidden item on Sundays, if we remembered. Of course this process was not very meaningful, except to remind us of the season. Even then remembering the season was not so much about Jesus and His meaning in our lives as it was about the pattern and ritual of the church and our family."

... YES, I love Lent, it really brings you very close to the good LORD; YES IT really does. I LOVE THE UPLIFT OF THE WALK THROUGH TO EASTER"

"Coming out of a very cold January and feeling the warmth of longer sunny days and the events like skiing, mashing, snow machine rides, walks outdoors, finding things in the yard again, Lent and Easter near ! The Lent boxes, smell and feel of Easter palm branches and making crosses of a green material we could only wonder from where it came and what it meant in God's world. On the wall it was pinned for safe keeping and a remembrance of hope and new birth!"

Spiritual Practices that Help

"As an adult, I am finding daily reading of the Bible very enlightening. I wish we could have a Bible Study class at St. Matt. . . . I really need help figuring some of the relationships between the Old Testament and the Gospels! While I am very familiar with most of the NT, it has been surprising how a few of the stories have become more meaningful when a Gospel is read from beginning to end, instead of being divided up Sunday by Sunday. And I am also surprised at how much more there is in some of the Epistles than I had previously recognized. "

"LET GO! LET GOD. . . DOING THE walk through the stations of the cross [Note: The Stations of the Cross are walked every Friday in Lent at St. Matthew's at 5:30PM], . . . SO SPECIAL THE THINGS GOD SHOWS YOU> LOVE, PEACE, JOY, WARMTH OF GOD'S LOVE. The people, places and things he shows you, so HE can show you something, or teach you something. how awesome it is when you see what it is HE is showing you, when you CONNECT, and it's all so made so very simple, never hard! Praise God, for HE is AN awesome GOD. GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!! BIG WARM HUGS!! "

(Continued on page 16)

Lent and Spring . . .

(Continued from page 15)

“When I get tangled up in the drama of my own failings and those of others, I find the one thing that pulls me out of it every time is the deep knowledge that all of that “stuff” doesn’t really amount to a hill of beans! All those things that occupy often the lion’s share of our attention and energy are really small. Because all the crimes of human beings are like specks of dust floating in the enormous ocean of Life, of Mercy, of Grace.

The most potent thing that humans have at our disposal is our attention. I find that a simple shift of attention makes dramatic changes. If I focus on those specks of dust, my mind tends to chase its tail endlessly with the steady supply of drama that people churn out daily. If I focus on the Ocean, then all of that falls away, and suddenly I have all this attention at my disposal. Simple, everyday life is fascinating. The lines and colors in a person’s face, the thousand tiny changes that happen with expressions. The look of a dead leaf lying on the snow. The touch of a friend’s hand. The Presence of a birch tree. The “small stuff” becomes the Big Stuff, and it’s far bigger, more amazing, and more wonderful than our minds can comprehend as of yet. I don’t bother comprehending. “Comprehending” gets in the way sometimes!

I think Lent invites us to turn our perceptions upside down like that. I think it’s an invitation to let the “big stuff” become the small stuff, and the “small stuff” that we hardly notice when we’re on our daily drug trip become the Big Stuff. It’s an invitation to live inside God, and have God live inside us. Try it, it’s actually fun. It’s not hard. Just play!”

 “Closer to God means being at peace to every thing that happens or passes you by.”

Deserts and Hard Times

“Lent sometimes equals deserts equals a hard time. What's helped you through a hard time?”

fudge brownie, napoleons, éclairs, black forest cake, ben and jerry's. oh oh wait. deserts. sand. wilderness”

“What got me through a hard time?” - A very long time ago, our parents and grandparents used to tell us...you shouldn't cry, you don't go to the grave and bother..... well, my mom is gone so is my grandmother, so there was no one to tell me these things anymore.....and I cried and I went to my [child's] grave - religiously every Sunday, now I don't go....but what helped me with losing [my child] was to cry and go to her grave. I probably drove people in [my community] crazy these past months but, I’m still here, and I’m still standing.”

THANK YOU LORD FOR HELPING ME THROUGH ALL MY HARD TIMES, AND ALL THE WAYS YOU CHOSE TO DO IT; I REALLY LIKED THE ONE YOU HELPED ME THROUGH DOING THE walk through the stations of the cross. .

Thoughts about Spring?

“Spring for our family is a re-awakening of our love for Alaska. We get outdoors and enjoy the skiing, snowmobiling, ice carvings, animals and sunshine... life is good and another spring is coming, but I am sure glad Jesus is here to walk us through these changes!”

 “Thoughts of spring, something new in body, mind, and spirit, special blessings, awesome whispers, so sweet. OH YEAH! and the awesome blessings at COMPLINE<YES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

“God MUST have a feminine side. Everything on earth is so color-coordinated. Someone up there has decorating skills. Also, all the heavenly bodies orbit in spiraling, circular motion, not straight lines. This is the feminine thought process! What a wonderful world!”

 “Dog races, Spring tournaments, Spring carnivals, Spring break, Spring breakup / cleanup, annual tribal shareholder meetings of TCC, FNA, Doyon. Daaga` ”Get Up”!! . . .Spring has always been the most wonderful time of year -- a time of hope and happiness and laughter and social activity that brought people together from off the trap lines and talk of Spring hunts and the first talk of ice moving and ducks and the first geese; school years ending and future plans !! Close calls this Winter, loved ones lost (seems many leave us during the coldest times of the years -- or they are more pronounced!) Spring babies, Spring pussy willows, Spring flowers popping up thru the snow!! As in the Bible; a rebirth, new hope, a new beginning, a time to reflect and rejoice for our good fortune and family and community.”



We should do a lot of praying during Lent.

ASH WEDNESDAY

By the Rev. Titus Peter



What does it mean to you? It seems to mean a lot to my parents. They pray every night and I'm sure every morning. I'm not with them then, as I have to be at school. Sunday, my father, mother, brother and I all go to Church. Only adults go up to the altar rail for Communion. I think Communion is only once a month, and special days. We go home and pray after Communion.

I read the readings picked for the Ash Wednesday service. According to Isaiah, the Lord was not pleased with the people's fasting. He says that they do it for their own interest; just to impress people. The kind of fasting He wants is to help people, share food with the hungry, and open their homes to the homeless poor.

This was easy for my father and his contemporaries, as they were taught by their uncles and parents who, at that time did not have Bibles or know the Lord.

According to Joel, the Lord wants people to warn one another of the Day of the Lord, which is coming soon. There has never been anything like it; and there never will be again. "But even now" says the Lord, "Repent sincerely and return to me, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Let your broken heart show your sorrow." This is what the Lord wants of people, then and now, so they, and we, can be saved; and return to Him.

St. Paul tells his friends, and some enemies, to let God change them from enemies into His friends. Paul doesn't want what God gave them to be wasted. The Grace of God which is given to us is to help people with; and not just to use for ourselves.

Jesus in St. Matthew tells His fellow workers **THEN**, and is telling you and me **NOW**, not to show off when we help needy people; and when we fast. When we help a needy person, we should not let even our closest friend know about it. We should do it privately; and your Father who sees what you do in private will reward you.

Matthew also said for us not to show off in praying. Pray privately to God. This is a good idea. We should do a lot of praying during Lent.

Some people quit whatever they like to do most. I knew an Elder who quit smoking during Lent. Shrove Tuesday, I think he smoked a whole pack of cigarettes. Then Easter Day, he smoked again. He probably saved a lot of cigarette money. Someone told us in such case, they should give the money they gain to the Church.

I gave up reading newspapers last year, and I am planning to do it again. I don't remember what, but I know I gave the money to the Church or to World Hunger. I'll do it again this year. I also shut off my TV, and listen and watch only the news. And I'll do it again. Big deal, huh? I use the time that had been consumed by "Law and Order" to study.

I have thought that we as Christians should enhance our religion. Study hard and find out what God wants us to do; and obey. He wants us to love Him and our neighbors. Try it; it's safe. God the Father Himself will help you to Love Him.



REMEMBERING

By Shirley Lee

[NOTE: Born in Fairbanks, and of Inupiaq and African-American heritage, with family roots to Noatak and the Arctic Coast, "Quutuug" (Dr. Mary Grantham –Campbell) died in New Rochelle, New York on November 26th. Her funeral was held at St. Matthew's on Friday, December 9th. As the sun set on that short December day, her body was laid to rest in the Birch Hill cemetery, in the traditional manner, with her husband, sons and others filling in the grave. The sounds of cold dirt as the Night came; the soft conversation of friends remembering, in the Darkness. Below, her cousin Shirley remembers her; and a poem that was printed in the funeral program.]

It has been said every person has their story and is their own novel. I wished my cousin Mary Jane had had time during her short life to write her story. Resilient, she lived at home as an Inupiaq child in Fairbanks with skin the color of rich brown, publicly deemed African American. We met when we were children at elementary school – little Hunter Hornet cheerleaders. We did not know we were related but grew close as friends. In sixth grade she mysteriously was gone. I did not know it at the time but she was adopted out to a white family in New Jersey, who then moved to St. Louis. I often wondered what happened to Mary Jane. On a flight from Seattle years later I heard a woman's voice, vaguely familiar, in the row behind me, discussing the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act with another woman who obviously was related to her. When we stood to deplane I had to look and saw her. I was delighted! I asked her if she was Mary Jane and she gasped and tears welled up in her eyes. No one had called her that since elementary school, since she was still a child of Alaska. She and her sister Joyce were coming back to Fairbanks to visit their mother and father. What a reunion we had!

We grew close again. She came back numerous times to Fairbanks, to visit and to conduct research for her graduate studies. She eventually earned her doctorate in cultural anthropology and taught at Stanford. Her life's path from Alaska went far and wide before she returned home.

I always thought her name should have been Grace – she was indeed full of love and grace even as a young child. Her death was a reminder for me that we can live by God's grace even when circumstances are the most challenging. If you haven't done so already consider your own unique story! What path in life has God led you? Safe journey.

Forget Me Nots

An Alaskan poem story. Maybe you cannot tell one without the other.

By Quutuug (Dr. Mary Grantham –Campbell)

During the highest evening tide
A while ago, a day or so,
I met a woman who had died
Amongst the crystal of the snow.

Her skin yellow, her hair jet black,
Did cause my frozen position;
Told me she was taking me back
To the warmth of our tradition.

We sewed and skinned and fished and played
Between river and endless sky;
I lived a lifetime, almost stayed,
Until she warned that I might die.

You must go and travel through
an odyssey unlike my own,
to find a love that only you
can etch anew upon our stone.

In one short and quiet breath,
She showed me millions of years;
The home birthplace and site of death
- the Inupiat joys and tears.

Since that evening I travel back
and learn of mysteries untold;
in Kotzebue, in Noatak –
our history my heart does hold.

Poem and academic story
keep getting
in each other's way.

History worms through ballad,
hungry for Humanity.
Verse romps in dissertation,
sprinkling beauty
between lines, under pages.

Falling over one another
tundra of words
looks towards
Arctic horizons
Inupiat zenith.

Now I remember
how
Forget-me-not and Sky
are connected.

Seasons of Life . . .

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prayers were said by his niece **the Rev. Bessie Titus**, the rector, and others. Born in Nenana, Wilson loved the outdoors – hunting, trapping, fishing, dog mushing – and “*never threw anything away (except Christmas paper), making use of everything.*” He was preceded in death by his wife, the late **Selina Jimmie**, four sons, two daughters, and others. Two daughters, a son, their families, nine grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and numerous other family and friends survive him. His services, led by **the Rev. Luke Titus**, **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, and **the Rev. Bessie Titus**, were held at home in Minto Thursday, December 22nd.

On Christmas Eve, December 24th, 42 years old **Richard K. Crow** died tragically in the community of Circle. The son of **Ruth Crow** and **Larry Nathaniel** of Circle, Ricky lived a traditional lifestyle in Circle and is survived by his parents, and numerous other family and friends. **The Rev. John Holz** of St. Matthew’s drove up to Circle on New Year’s Eve, December 31st, to assist in the funeral with Ricky’s Aunt, **the Rev. Mary Nathaniel** of Chalkyitsik.

On Monday, January 2nd, 44 years old Fairbanks resident **Dennis L. Price** died in the Hospital in Anchorage, having been medicated there earlier, under tragic circumstances. Born in California, he moved to Fairbanks at a young age, and attended both Lathrop and West Valley Schools. Working throughout the state as a laborer, fisherman, and firefighter, he also enjoyed ringing bells for the Salvation Army at Christmas. His companion and partner for 16 years, **Frances “Wanzie” Charlie**, survives him; as does a daughter and three grandsons in Barrow, two sisters, two brothers, three Godchildren, and many others, including the people of Minto, “*who were like family to him*”. “*Tea*” for him began being served in the St. Matthew’s Parish Hall Monday, January 2nd, and continued until his funeral the following Monday, January 9th. Then people gathered for his service, led by **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, concluding with the burial at Birch Hill, and a Potlatch following at the Tribal Hall.

Just before the dawn on Saturday morning, January 7th, 91 years old **Martha Mary Stein Wheeler** peacefully passed away in Denali Center. Proud of her long and rich heritage, Martha was born to **Christian Stein**, a Boston Whaler of German and Norwegian descent, and **Kataksinja**, an Inupiaq woman of Point Hope, in the springtime in Point Hope. Orphaned early, she was raised in the White Mountain B.I.A. Boarding School, where **Howard Rock** became part of her extended family. She married in Nome, and lived in Nome and Tanana. She moved back to Tanana in 1980; moved to Fairbanks in 1986; and lived independently until 4 years ago. She faithfully received Communion from Lay Eucharistic Minister **Becky Snow** throughout her time in Denali. 71 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, her son **Emory** of Nome; and her daughters **Mary (John) Schaeffer** of Kotzebue, **Eileen (Tod) Kozevnikoff** of Fairbanks, **Helena (William) Carlo** of Tanana, **Joyce Demoski** of Fairbanks, **Linda (Alfred) Woods** of Fairbanks, **Shirley**

(**Bergman**) **Moses** of Fairbanks, and their families; and numerous other family members survive her. St. Matthew’s filled for her funeral on Tuesday, January 10th, led by **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, **Canon Ginny Doctor**, and **Fr. Stephen Matthew**.

On Tuesday morning, January 17th, 53 years old **Agnes Marie James** unexpectedly and peacefully died here in Fairbanks. Born in Fort Yukon on Candlemass to the late **Sarah James Williams John** and **Titus Peter**, she was raised by her grandparents in Birch Creek; went to school in Oklahoma, Fort Yukon, and Tanana; and graduated from Green River College in Washington in 1980. A woman with great faith, a ready smile, and enthusiastic courage, she became a lector here on Sunday mornings several years ago. Her father, **the Rev. Titus Peter** [See related note from him elsewhere in this Newsletter], survives her; as do her seven children and stepchildren – **Marquita Dawn**, **Michelle Leigh**, **Shannon Marie**, **Jewell Lynn**, **Florence Grace**, **Agnes Sara James**, and **Sharon Schrock**; three sisters, two brothers, and numerous other relatives. St. Matthew’s filled to overflowing for her funeral service, led by **Bishop MacDonald**, Saturday, January 21st. Her final services and burial were at home in Fort Yukon the following Monday.

As the sun was setting on Tuesday afternoon, January 31st, 39 years old **Liza DeWilde** unexpectedly, but peacefully, died in the Fairbanks Hospital. Born near the end of Summer in a tent on the Huslia River and raised there, Liza never forgot the peacefulness of those years in the woods. A hard worker, she never quit trying, and would often stop by the Church to visit, riding by on her Harley-Davidson bicycle. She loved her family and her children – sons **Wayne** and **Kyle** (*Kyle became our newest crucifer here at St. Matthew’s in December*) and daughter **Amelia**. They survive her, as does the rest of her family – including **Norvin**, **Victor** and wife **Leslie**, **Lee** and wife **Lilly**, **Tyson**, **Ray**, **Ricko**, **Sterling**, **Selina** and her husband **Silas Alexander**, **Thelma**, **Riba**, and **La-ona**. Under blue skies and with thirty below temperatures, St. Matthew’s filled for her funeral, led by the rector and **Archdeacon Anna Frank**, on Thursday, February 2nd. Her final services were at home, back along the Koyukuk River, in the days following. It will be hard not to expect her this Spring riding by the Church, and stopping in to say “*hello*”.

Completely unexpectedly, on the day following Liza’s funeral, Friday morning February 3rd, 84 years old Minto Elder **Lige Charlie Sr.** died here in Fairbanks, with his wife **Susie** for 58 years beside him. Born in Old Minto, and a World War Two combat veteran, Lige also worked on the steamers Nenana and Yukon and always had a friendly greeting and handshake, his eyes twinkling. His wife Susie survives him; as do his brothers **Neal**, **Cerosky**, and **Robert**; his sisters **Dorothy Titus** and **Rita Alexander**; his sons **Lindberg**, **William**, and **Rodney**; his daughters **Angie** and **Jennifer**; and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. “*Tea*” almost immediately began being served in the St. Matthew’s Parish Hall; and continued until Monday, February 6th, when the rector and **Fr. Steve Matthew** led a brief service at the Fairbanks Funeral Home, before the drive

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home across the hills to Minto. Final services and burial were held at Minto on Wednesday, February 8th.

Just as services were ending on Sunday, February 5th, quietly over in Denali Center, 94 years old **Lavine Williams** suddenly slipped away (*as he had been actually trying to do for the last several years, including once scaling a sixteen foot barbed wire fence several years ago in Anchorage*). Resident in Denali for the last several years, Lavine was originally from Hughes and the Koyukuk River, and the widower of the late **Gran'ma Susie Williams** of Hughes. Greatly respected throughout the Interior and beyond for his hard work and woods lore, his passing was, as someone commented at the funeral, the end of an era. **Albert "Kip" Weeks**, who was a Church volunteer in Hughes in the early 1970's and now is a retired judge in New Hampshire, commented that Lavine was maybe the smartest man he ever met and "*tough as nails*". (*"Oh, he was another one of Dad's students", commented Lavine's daughter Margaret, upon hearing this.*). Among those surviving are **Alice Ambrose, Rita Koyukuk**, former St. Matthew's Vestrymember **Margaret Williams, Bill Williams** of Hughes and Fairbanks, **Ralph Williams, George Linus, James Williams**, and many others. Wednesday afternoon, February 8th, many gathered at St. Matthew's to pay their respects, in a brief funeral service led by the rector and **Fr. Steve Matthew**; before the final flight home back now to Hughes and the Koyukuk.

Shockingly and unexpectedly, 37 years old **Vincent Williams James** died in Fairbanks the morning of Tuesday, February 7th. The son of **Bruce and Nancy James**, Vincent was born and raised here in Fairbanks and leaves behind his parents, his daughters **Asiya and Kimberly**, his brother **Mike** and wife **Christine**, his sister **Ardis** and husband **Mack Wiehl**, and numerous other family members and friends. St. Matthew's filled past overflowing – into hallways, the Parish Hall, and the front sidewalk - on Saturday afternoon, February 11th, for his funeral, led by the **Fr. Steve Matthew** and the rector. Under clear early Spring skies, his body was laid to rest atop Birch Hill Cemetery.

The evening before Vincent's funeral, on Friday, February 10th, there was a small quiet ceremony at St. Matthew's. A service that began nearly three months earlier, on Friday, November 4th, concluded and the mortal remains of **Donna Johnston** were received into the St. Matthew's Columbarium. Donna had died on the eve of All Saints, October 31st, and February 10th was her 88th birthday. The wind blew through the trees outside on the church lawn as we prayed; and now she rests near the choir pews she sang in for so many years.

Finally, on Valentine's Day afternoon, Tuesday, February 14th, the rector was walking quietly around the lobby of Denali Bank, and out into the parking lot and along the River, praying. Fifty-six years ago, on Tuesday afternoon, February 14th, 1950, 39 years old **Wellesley "Dick"**

Dickinson, following a brief illness, died in the St. Joseph's Hospital, then on the site of Denali Bank. Originally from Iowa, he joined the Marines in World War Two, was transferred to the Army Corps of Engineers, and ended up working on the Alcan Highway. Following its completion, he became "*the supervising patrolman*" on the Highway, the first State Trooper until his death. Following his death, a brief Masonic service was held at the Presbyterian Church, and his body was returned to Iowa for his final services and burial. His daughter, **Jillea Dickinson-Fry**, called St. Matthew's in December to ask if prayers could be said on the anniversary of his death. And so, we did, commending to the Love that knows no boundaries of Time and Space.

Other deaths during this period, though not conducted here at St. Matthew's or by St. Matthew's clergy, necessarily affected us and should be noted. These include a major influence on *this* Newsletter. 62 years old **Lynne Davenport Wilson** was diagnosed shortly before Christmas with cancer and died on Epiphany Eve, January 5th, in Laramie, Wyoming. Lynne lived and worked for the Church in Alaska for ten years, helping establish "*NETWORK*", the Diocesan lay training program; and beginning "*Epiphany*", a monthly Diocesan publication celebrating the baptismal ministry of everyone – Total Ministry. ("*Epiphany*" later merged with "*The Alaskan Churchman*" to become "*The Alaskan Epiphany*".) (And she was the one that suggested to a then young priest that he draw a monthly cartoon for Epiphany. He did, entitling it "*A. C. S. Hosannah*", and it ran for several years. Some of the worth of this St. Matthew's Newsletter goes back to what was learned working with Lynne.) Lynne married **the Rev. Charles "Chuck" Wilson** in 1982 and they began a private practice consulting with churches and dioceses in developing Total Ministry. In 1998 she became the Ministry Coordinator for the Diocese of Wyoming. Her obituary is available on the Alaskan Diocese website (<http://episcopalak.org>), along with the latest incarnation of "*The Alaskan Epiphany*", and a farewell letter she wrote two weeks before her death. She ends, echoing the last sermon of Bishop Gordon at St. Matthew's, with the reminder: "*All of us are surrounded by a love so great, so tenacious that it will not let us go. It is that love that passes understanding' that bears up in the wilderness and finally, leads us home.*"

Also during this period 83 years old **Jeanne Oldre** died in Anchorage Monday, January 9th (*Jeanne arrived in Alaska in 1947 and lived in Fairbanks until 1977, frequently stopping by to visit her friend Diocesan Treasurer Gladys Sams in the Diocesan Office and attending St. Matthew's*); 72 years old traditional Chief of Circle **Albert Bentley Carroll Sr.** died at home in Circle Wednesday, January 18th (*and his funeral and burial were conducted 12 miles out of Circle in colder than fifty below temperatures*); 95 years old **Minnie Titus** of Minto died Thursday, January 19th, as her daughter **Barbara Jimmie** was singing "*What A Day That Will Be*" (*and her funeral also was conducted in colder than 50 below temperatures. There were four death within a month connected with the community of Minto*); 72 years old **Etta Mae Maligialuk Lord**, the beloved wife for

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Seasons of Life . . .

50 years of **Walter Lord Sr.** of Nenana, died Monday, February 6th here in Fairbanks; and, on Wednesday, February 8th, 22 years old **Thomas Horace** of Venetie, the son of **Betty Flitt** and stepfather **Wally Flitt** of Fort Yukon, died. His Godfather, **the Rev. Titus Peter**, conducted his final funeral and burial service in Fort Yukon on February 14th.

Prayers, visitors, banging pots, non-burning trees, etc.

This period recorded began with the lighting of the first Advent candle and, throughout December, in the midst of the preChristmas Gallop, St. Matthew's tried to remain a place of prayer. Advent Evening Prayer was read each weekday night, either by the rector, **Lee** and **Mary Margaret Davis**, **Becky Snow**, or **David** and **Helen Burrell**. On Thursday, December 1st we lit candles and hosted the World AIDS Day Service, led by the **Interior AIDS Association**; and, on Wednesday, December 21st, the Feast of St. Thomas and the Winter Solstice, as in previous years, the rector and **Mary Margaret Davis** led a "Dark Christmas Service" for those hurting or grieving. During this same period **Fiona Stewart Campbell** began as the church sexton on Wednesday, December 7th; **Becky Snow** and **Susan Stitham** began leading an Adult Discussion Group on Thursday, December 8th and, beginning Friday, December 9th, we hosted the Diocesan Standing Committee and Commission on Ministry and Mission. Part of their meetings included a group of visitors from the Vancouver School of Theology. The Principal and Dean of VST, **the Rev. Dr. Wendy Fletcher**, preached during the last service on Sunday, December 11th. That same day we thankfully welcomed back into our midst **Allen Todd** and **Steve Moore**, having safely completed tours in Iraq (*and we could all breathe again*).

Deacon Bella Jean Savino held a Christmas Party Friday, December 16th, and the Time grew closer. On Sunday, December 18th we were once again stunned at the holiness of the Sunday School Advent/Christmas Pageant and, on the 21st, a faithful group banged pots at Midnight and yelled and screamed to Chase Away the Great Dragon of Darkness (*which seems to have worked, for we have been gaining daylight ever since*). Christmas Eve arrived with the light of the first star signaling the lighting of the Christmas Tree lights on the great spruce tree and St. Matthew's filled, for the 101st year in a row, for this great and ancient and ever new celebration of Our Lord's Birth and presence in our midst. One week later, at Midnight on Saturday, December 31st, with a visiting moose and granddaughters and fireworks, we celebrated the gift of a New Year. Again, the next day we celebrated the traditional New Year's Day Potlatch. Eating seemed to work better than burning for several days later, as we gathered on 12thNight, Thursday, January 5th, for the burning of the Christmas greens in twenty below weather (*"and if you don't burn the greens, Spring won't come" goes the*

Ancient Legend), trees treated with fire retardant just sat there, while kindling and everything else burned around them.

"Uh-oh", wondered **Bruce Gadwah** and others, while **Fred Brown** led us in Christmas carols and the fire just sputtered. "What does this mean about the weather to come?"

Shortly thereafter the rector left for two weeks (*and thank you to everyone that led and assisted with services in his absence*) to join his wife **Elisabeth** in a 4300 mile drive around the country; and the temperatures plummeted to the coldest January since 1971. It was still cold when he returned; still cold when we held the Annual Meeting January 29th [*See Summary elsewhere in this Newsletter*]; and warming slightly when **Lee Davis**, preparing for ordination, delivered his first sermon at St. Matthew's during the services on Sunday, February 5th. By the following week, on Monday, February 13th, when **Bishop MacDonald** brought **Bishop Andrew** and **Mary Atagotaaluk**, Diocesan Bishop of the Canadian Diocese of the Arctic by for a special and rousing and accordion filled Eucharist, we were at forty above.

Temperatures up and temperatures down, trees that don't burn and the too many funerals of too many friends. All makes for a feeling of instability and wondering what lasts. As this period closed, and the last service of St. Matthew's was prayed on Wednesday, February 15th; two old friends sat together praying Compline in the Church at Midnight. Despite everything that had been and despite everything that might be, despite chemotherapy and more, it is friendship that lasts, the love of God that wraps around the great wooden altar and all of us and binds us together, seen and unseen, across Time and Space.

Spring *does* come. The Easter Dawn of a New Beginning, singing Alleluia and la-la-la. Right over there, coming in beauty.





KEEPING OUR WORD: THE FINANCES of 2005

Though Lent calls us to look forward, and not back; we are also called to have some sense of where we've been, so we can understand where we are going. Underneath the surface, there have been a few questions about how St. Matthew's ended 2005 financially: Did giving drop? Did expenses increase? Did we spend money we didn't have? Questions like that. This is an attempt at a *simple* explanation.

In January 2005, we passed an Operating Budget of \$257,742. (*This was an increase of +\$9959 over the 2004 Budget*). After prayer and many meetings, this was our best attempt at discerning how much money we thought it would take for St. Matthew's to operate during 2005. Because of our longstanding commitment to the rest of the Church in Alaska, to the Bishop and the Diocese, we pledged to the Diocese that we would continue giving 25% of our Operating Income to the Diocese - \$64,400 if our \$257,742 Budget was met.

But. A lot happened in 2005. Neighboring buildings were purchased and removed, rectors got married, Hurricane Katrina visited the Gulf Coast, a new copier was needed in the office, etc. Gas and heating oil prices rose; Christmas fell on Sunday etc. Some or all or none of that may or may not have affected our Operating budget, but our total Operating Income for 2005 came in at \$250,556. This is a GIANT amount of money and faithfulness, but it is still less than was budgeted. (*Not all money offered at St. Matthew's goes into the Operating budget. Some goes into special accounts – the Building Fund, for example; and some just passes through us to others – the Hurricane Katrina Relief funds, for example*). Consequently, our pledge to the Diocese reduced to \$62,239 and, to keep our word and commitment to 25%, this was paid. (*And incidentally, estimated Sunday attendance increased significantly during this same period, from 2004 to 2005*).

As Operating Income decreased in 2005, so did Operating Expenses. They finally totaled \$258,007 in 2005; over \$6,000 less than the expenses for 2004. But, regrettably, this was still more than the Operating Income. \$7,451 more than the Income. This amount could have been reduced by reducing our pledge to the Diocese, and paying less than 25%; but the vestry and rector prayerfully chose to honor our commitment to the Bishop and the Diocese; and the congregation's directive over 20+ years to maintain our tithe at 25%. To make up for the +\$7000 deficit, money was shifted from an undesignated Reserve account.

As 2006 comes, now with an even higher Budget than 2005 (\$266,878), we continue to do what we are called to do and have learned to trust the most – we pray. You can too.

WEBSITE NEWS

By Darrel Zuke

This is a quick note from your Website 'Webgardener' **Darrel Zuke**, letting you know where we are at with your St. Matthews Website.

If you haven't clicked on the Website lately, I invite you to take a look at:
<http://www.stmatthewschurch.org>.

Since our very successful benefit dinner in late October of last year, we were able to change servers, and add many new features, such as (*well nearly*) every Sunday Sermon now online, Sunday bulletin in both readable and downloadable form, and lots of new links. In work and coming soon: individual WebPages for all our ministries at St. Matthews. A few are online now, such as the Health Ministry page. Many routine business items, such as all the reports from the Annual Meeting, that have lots of pages and would cost lots of money to print in the newsletter, will be posted to the website (*copies will also be available at the church*).

Our webpage has a new look, and is continuing to expand. We need to hear from YOU, as to what you would like to see on your webpage.

And on another note, I also teach a computer class at the Literacy Council. The class is for people who are 'computer challenged, meaning we start at the beginning, and proceed at a slow pace. I cover computer basics, Windows, Window's Program basics (such as Microsoft Word), Email, the Internet, and conclude with 'how to keep your computer updated and healthy.' Email me at webgardener@stmattheschurch.org for more information.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, be sure to email me.



SUMMARY of the JANUARY 2006 VESTRY MEETINGS



January 23rd

The final meeting of the 2005-2006 Vestry of St. Matthew's Church was held on Monday, January 23rd, 2006. Present for the meeting were **Senior Warden Jane Sandstrom**, **Junior Warden Gregg Eschright**, **Vestry Clerk Cathy Davis**, **Darrel Zuke**, **Julia Cockerille**, **Tom Marsh**, **Linda Diementieff**, **Marjorie Grunin**, **Gary Hopkins** and **Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken**. The following activities were discussed or taken at the meeting:

1. Congregational members **Andrea** and **Oliver Backlund** reported on recent activity of the Tanana Valley Christian Conference.
2. Vestry members reflected on the past year's work and accomplishments. This was followed by the Lord's Prayer.
3. It was moved to accept the December 2005 minutes, as presented.
4. **Carolyn Nethkin** presented the Financial Reports. It was moved and passed to use funds from the Mackey Reserve account to cover the cost of the new copier purchased in 2005 for the office; and to move the remaining funds from the account into the checking account. It was then moved and passed to pay the Diocese of Alaska \$9,674, the remainder of our pledge for 2005. This amount brings the total 2005 tithe to the Diocese to \$62,639 - representing 25% of the 2005 Actual Operating Income, less cost of sales.
5. The January Annual Meeting and the presentation of the 2006 Operating Budget were discussed.
6. **Jane Sandstrom** updated the Vestry on the Sexton; and **Darrel Zuke** reported on the St. Matthew's WebSite (www.stmatthewschurch.org).
7. The Vestry listed the following items to be carried forward for the 2006 Vestry's

agenda: Focus more attention on Sunday School/Youth through advertising, etc; Define Operational Income for determining the Diocesan tithe; Deposit Reserve for Operations in an interest bearing checking account; Replace smoke

detectors that were removed for painting in preparation for Diocesan Convention in '04; Establish a User Fee Deposit for Parish Hall use.

The meeting concluded with prayer.

January 29th

In accordance with the By-Laws of St. Matthew's Church, the Annual Meeting of the Vestry was held Sunday, January 29th, immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Church and the election of a new Vestry. Present for the meeting were Vestrymembers **Julia Cockerille**, **Cathy Davis**, **Linda Demientieff**, **Gregg Eschright**, **Bruce Gadwah**, **Marjorie Grunin**, **Tom Marsh**, **Darrel Zuke**, and the rector. Following the procedures described in the By-Laws, the following actions were taken:

1. **Cathy Davis** agreed to continue as Vestry Clerk.
2. The rector announced his selection of **Bruce Gadwah** as Senior warden.
3. The Vestry selected **Tom Marsh** as Junior Warden.
4. **Darrel Zuke** was selected as Vestry Liaison to the Endowment Board.
5. It was agreed to ask **Carolyn Nethkin** to continue as Parish Treasurer.
6. It was agreed the next meeting would be held Monday, February 20th at 6PM.



Meet new friends & spend a week in exotic Manley this Summer!

MANLEY SUMMER CAMP DATES & REGISTRATION

Manley summer camps are fast approaching and here are the tentative dates, for those who might be interested. The tentative dates are: (1) **June 27th thru July 2nd**; (2) **July 9th thru July 14th**; and (3) **July 24th thru July 29th, 2006**. The first group will include youth from the Diocese of Washington (D.C.); the second, youth from St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.; and the third, youth from St. James Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia. Youth from SouthEast Alaska will be joining one of the groups, as will youth from Nenana. If interested, or for further information, contact the Bishop's office or Lee Davis.

St. Matthew's Episcopal
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***Please Note:** Returned copies of **O Ye Frost and Cold** cost the church \$2.07 each, forwarded copies cost \$0.70 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.