

# Alaskan Golden Nugget News

## Community of Christ

January 2009

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### Thoughts to Consider...

by Willa Frey

“Be a Sanctuary For Peace” is the suggestion for all of us for 2009. It is the title of the new Worship Manual for this year and is chock full of ideas of how we can promote peace and be a sanctuary. A sanctuary is a place of safety for many people. It is also a place for learning and practicing our life skills. It is an opportunity to reach out to others and help them develop awareness of what a sanctuary can mean in their lives. It provides us with an opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ with others who are searching and longing for it. How long has it been since you reached out to invite someone to go with you to church – to worship with you and others? The call is out to each of us share our knowledge and

understanding of peace with others. If we don't, how will they learn? I don't mean to cram it down their throats but to share kindly and with joy. If we are to believe what we have been told, there are many out there looking for just such an opportunity. D & C 161:1c-2a tells us “Be a joyful people, laugh and play and sing, embodying the hope and freedom of the gospel. Become a people of the temple, those who see violence but proclaim peace, who feel conflict yet extend the hand of reconciliation, who encounter broken spirits and find pathways for healing.” Let's truly be a sanctuary for peace this year.

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### Homer News...

by Edna Fisk

Now for us, we are doing quite well. The doctor said he didn't need to see me for another year (unless I needed to see him.) We are taking it easy on night driving when the roads are bad or it is raining.

Toras is getting a lot of winter king salmon fishing in and enjoying it. We have made two trips to Anchorage in June to an eye specialist as I have a torn retina so they want to keep track of how it is doing. The last trip we went on to Wasilla to see our niece Doreen and husband Greg. It is almost 360 miles from our place. She does come to see us more often. She is the only family we have here.

We celebrated our 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June. We also went to Michigan for a family reunion. It was a lot different this year. It was held for four days instead of just one afternoon at a park. Headquarters were at the Hubert and Betty Lou's place across the road from the old farm home now owned by their

oldest son. Different families cooked the main meal each day. We cooked a halibut meal and it was a day different friends of the families were invited to dinner. We recalled old times we shared together when we all lived back there. While there, they lost their oldest sister Helen who had just reached ninety years. Then later, a sister Inez lost her husband. There are five left in their eighties and three in their seventies. Toras' brother Louis had open heart surgery and now is recovering nicely.

Our grandson, Gary, from Roscommon spent two weeks with us in July. He got to fish the big red salmon run in Kenai and then got to help can them, also got to halibut fish.

Don and Janis spent ten days with me while Toras went moose hunting. He got a moose, first one he got in several years for ourselves. Always helping others to get one. We always got a share to put in the freezer.

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### Lower Kalskag News...

by Karen and Dave Ward

Dave and I just returned from nine days in Korea to see our son. He lives and works in Seoul which we found crowded with the 12 million other people that live there. We wanted to be there in time for our church's Christmas service but we were too late. We did visit on Christmas Eve with a friend of our son, Steve, who is a church member that came to the U.S.A. several years ago to visit.

The country is beautiful with the mountains, trees and seashores. We visited palaces, tombs, Buddhist Temples, a spa, cities and small villages. We rode the subway, taxis, buses, cable car and the bullet train. It was quite an experience of which we will always remember!

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## Anchorage News...

I am able to type again so here is what news I have collected. Judy and Sarah (and canine Esther) spent Christmas with Chris and Kate Steinel in Fairbanks. They had a wonderful time. Ron Anderson is house-sitting in Anchorage for the winter. He will be with us until spring. Ron must enjoy winter in Alaska!

Herb and Melanie Hancock are living in Leisure World in Mesa, Arizona in their condo for a couple of weeks. They decided that winter was a good time to leave Alaska!

Marjorie LaRose wants to thank everyone for all the prayers, love and concern she has received since Floyd's death. She says it isn't easy to readjust her life but knowing so many care, really helps.

Jim Williams is continuing to heal since his hip operations. He is working full time again but will be in Physical Therapy for another 4 or 5 months. He visited his father in south Texas in December and reports they are doing fine. Jim and Bonnie Williams traveled to California for Bonnie's operation. Jim reports she is doing quite well and has lost some weight. Amanda (their daughter) is still employed as a Special Ed teacher with the Anchorage School District.

Florence Pearson returned to Anchorage on December 24<sup>th</sup> after an interesting trip to visit relatives in College Station, Texas. She left Anchorage on December 12<sup>th</sup> after a long wait in the Anchorage airport, barely making a connection in Seattle to Dallas. Her luggage didn't make it. She flew to College Station and borrowed a few essentials for a few days until her luggage caught up with her. During her visit, she played for the Studebaker Christmas Party, her cousin's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and on

## by Lou Gilmore

December 21<sup>st</sup> she performed a wedding for one of her distant relatives. She was thankful her suitcase arrived before the performance! Her travel clothes were quite soiled by then.

Andrea Martin and her mother Bonnie Joy open their home on the first Sunday of the month for the Communion Service. Andrea (Andy) is serving in the Air Force as a nurse. She is very relieved now that her second deployment to Iraq has been temporarily cancelled. She says she will most likely have to go later but at least not for the present.

Merilou Hartwig has been in Anchorage with her Mother, Lou Gilmore, for the past 6 weeks but returned to Iowa on New Year's Day. Lou has had problems this fall. She spent 6 weeks at the Mayo Clinic – from September to November. Russ and Colleen Hancock live in Rochester (Russ is Lou's grandson) and were a wonderful host and hostess. Lou was put in Clinical Trial for 1 month only to find out it didn't work on her tumor and it was still growing. She returned to Anchorage but had to return to Mayo for more treatment. They put her on a new drug that hasn't been approved by the FDA but has worked on her kind of cancer. Merilou came to be her "nurse". Lou will have a C-Scan on Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> and see the Oncologist on Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>. Let's hope and pray this one is successful. One of the side effects of the drug is Gout. She is now being treated for that and is hopeful she won't be plagued with Gout again. It wasn't fun!

## Valley News....

The Wasilla group gathered food for four Thanksgiving baskets. The baskets were delivered to four needy families referred by a social service agency. As a Christmas project, Wasilla has been making fleece hats as a group. The hats will be donated to the Valley Family Center.

Neil and Ellen Long were back in town for about a month and returned to Craig, AK at the end of November, just before Thanksgiving. Dorothy & Free (Neil's parents) will travel to Craig to spend Christmas with Neil, Ellen, and Jared. Brian, another son, is living in New York. After New Year's, Dorothy and Free will go to Missouri for the rest of the winter and

## by Carol Coppock

plan to return to Alaska in April. Charlie Marsh is back in his own home and has a care giver in daily to help him. She brings him to church on Sundays. We are all glad that he is better and has her help.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month is a recreational outreach program. In November, the activity was bowling and eighteen people attended; members, family and friends.

Dwight Coppock represented the Valley Group at the Pacific Northwest Mission Conference held in Nov. He later gave a presentation to the congregation concerning that conference.

## Fairbanks News....

This fall the congregation started working on a project to provide tied fleece blankets for a local organization as noted in an earlier edition of the GNN. What started out as a modest attempt to provide 10 blankets for the local Rescue Mission soon took on a life of its own. Several members worked on blankets during the week as well as some work done on the regular crafting night, a couple of Saturday sessions and what evolved into congregation-wide involvement as we developed a "service project" Sunday. As the piles of blankets grew, we thought we'd stop at 50, then at 60, but we just kept making blankets. There were many jokes about this huge quantity of blankets that continued to grow by leaps and bounds. By the end of December, we were able to provide 85 blankets to several organizations: the Rescue Mission, Women's shelter, Senior Center (for use in their vans), Denali Center (a long term care facility), Joel's Place (serves homeless and displaced youth), Stevie's Place (serves abused children), a family we adopted for Christmas through Love Inc. (Love in the name of Christ) and also for a family adopted by another group. As we sorted blankets trying to give appropriate sizes and patterns for the different



*45 of the 85 blankets we donated.*

groups and the individual piles began to grow, there was a tangible presence of the Christ's spirit. Members of the congregation volunteered to deliver the blankets to different organizations with one of the mothers taking all the younger members of the congregation (10 and under) to deliver some of the blankets. Without exception, everyone returned with stories of the appreciation with which the gifts were received. It is in giving that we are blessed.

Our youth have been quite busy this fall with involvement in sports (skiing,) and in music. Many enjoyed the Christmas Programs presented for the

**by Willa Frey**

community. One youth, 4<sup>th</sup> grader Reyna Vargason, was selected for Outstanding Artist of the month. She really does beautiful work and is quite creative.

Jennifer, Sara, and Caitlyn Ford spent Christmas with dad, Brodie, then flew to Fairbanks to spend the following week with grandma, Sandy Besser. They were thoroughly enjoyed by all, however, were happy to return home when the temperature dipped below -40°. It was only -20° in Eagle River and that started to sound really warm!

Breanne Meath was selected for the Northwest Honor Choir which includes Alaska, Wash., Oregon, and Idaho. It was quite an honor and we are all proud of her! She was also selected for the Alaska Honor Choir. Double honors!

Carol & Dwight Coppock spent a week with us and they got things taken care of in the business. It was wonderful having them share with us!

As most of you know, Elsie O'Brien has been recovering from a broken hip. She is currently staying with her daughter, Lesa Meath, and family as she continues the healing process. She is doing much better and is thankful for the many prayers on her behalf. We've all been so happy to see her back at church again~! They were all happy to have a quick visit from daughter Kim from Washington.

Jerry Reou had a heart attack just before Thanksgiving and was airlifted to Anchorage where he underwent bypass surgery. He was thankful for the many prayers on his behalf as was his wife, Beverly. They were also very grateful for the fine ministry offered them by the Anchorage saints who visited them daily. I know they developed some new friendships during this time. Chris Steinel took a day and flew down to offer support during the difficulties. It was quite a challenge for Jerry and we were all relieved and pleased when they were able to return to Fairbanks. They remain with his daughter, Lesli Ruiz and family.

We've had a siege of extreme cold (-40° to -50°) along with heavy ice fog which makes driving difficult as visibility is non-existent. Due to the cold weather, poor driving conditions, and the distance some members drive for services, church has been cancelled for the last three weeks. The temperature is expected to break this week, so we are looking forward to being able to worship together again next weekend.

Alana Malloy has been recovering from a back injury. She's hoping to return to work soon. Her husband, Craig, has accepted a position in Korea and will be leaving next weekend. We will all miss him.

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## Delta Jct. News ....

Hi! I hope you are all staying warm and that your Christmas was great! Ours was very mellow and we are staying home and Gary is stoking wood in the stove as fast as he can! Our low was -48° last night. But then it got cloudy and warmed up to a -34° – seems like a heat wave! We are supposed to come to Fairbanks next week for some PT and massage appointments for me, but if it stays cold or gets colder like they are predicting, those appointments will be cancelled!

We are trying to keep the house warm as we endure the cold weather that has enveloped the

## by Cheryl & Gary Cooper

interior of Alaska! We have learned during our 30 years in Alaska, not to travel during this time of year and are glad to be home and put wood in our stove! Our Christmas was spent with some Delta friends and we enjoyed their company and good food.

We were able to attend a science conference in November in Portland and saw family and friends, too. We are busy with activities at UAF and with the Alaska Science Consortium. We will be doing some traveling in January and February and sure hope it warms up before we have to drive and we hope everyone has a great 2009!

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