

O Ye Frost and Cold

Volume 105, Issue No. 4

Published Quarterly

October - December 2009

"But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

Remembering his parents' red bell, which always hung in the house on Christmas, because it had always hung in his father's childhood house on Christmas . . . and now has disappeared. *maybe*.

In those days . . . the trash furnace behind the School was a round contraption of rusted metal and a gimcracky teetering stovepipe. It hid behind the white frame buildings, away from public view. You could watch bright flames burning in the rusted holes of the metal. In the days after Christmas, the B.I.A. teacher was back there, tossing boxes through the opened door. I stumbled into him and watched the flames burning. Schools accumulate paper, and I assumed that's what was in the boxes. Black and gray smoke up into the winter air; delicate ash falling fragily onto our snow.

Then I saw the boxes disappearing into the consuming flames were filled with Christmas ornaments and decorations. Santa Clauses and angels and candycanes offered into the conflagration.

The teacher was a creative soul. He had stunned us early in the Winter, when he walked into the Village Store, fresh from a school lesson on the Civil War, dressed as Abraham Lincoln. ("They must handpick these people for us", said my brother-in-law watching, shaking his head). He had charmed us at Christmas, with the beauty and intricacy of his handmade Christmas decorations. Now they were all disappearing into the flames.

One of the understood Rules of Community Life is hardly ever do we interfere in someone else's business. We will all watch what you are doing and we will all certainly discuss what you are doing, but hardly ever will we intervene. It's your business. Nonetheless, I had to protest. "What are you doing?" I asked, "Those were wonderful". As he tossed the decorations into

the flames he said, "I make Christmas decorations every year; and then throw them away after. If I didn't; I wouldn't make new ones. Christmas is always new, not old."

And away they went, turning all into delicate dark ash falling fragily onto our white snow.

We construct the House of Christmas as a House of Memory. We hang childhood ornaments made by now adult children on the trees and remember. A familiar carol comes jangly over the store's speakers, and we are snared in once upon a time moments. My friend sits at home on her couch remembering, I am sure, nearly a century ago - she and her friend Josephine lying in bed on that long ago Christmas night, whispering and eating Christmas candy. Candlelight whispers in the darkened Church and we are wrapped in other Christmases, other services. We crowd into the Church Christmas Eve, all of us, seen and unseen, with all of our memories - "the hopes and fears of all the years" - and they are sacred and real that Night, reminding us they are sacred and real all nights, all days.

And yet, and yet. Christmas is always more than memories, a once-upon-a-time, a Past. "Once in royal David's City", yes; but it is Christmas Present. Christmas Future. Christmas wine is always a new wine.

Quietly over there, hardly noticed, that young quiet couple, crowded shyly into the corner of the Church. He stands, protective. She sits, holding the Child, wrapped in its soft blue blanket. The Child sleeps, eyelashes soft on cheek. There are memories of the pregnancy, its wonder and terror, but now there is only *This Child, This Holy Night, This First Christmas* for them, for us.

Always New; Always Beginning.

"There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;" - "God's Grandeur", Gerard Manley Hopkins

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The SOUND of AUTUMN VOICES

We are sitting outside and the Fall is beginning and we are listening, as the leaves change and the People of God pass by. They pass by, talking of moosehunts and stories; and we listen. The geese fly over and the daylight shortens and as they pass by, we are listening. The temperature drops and the snows whisper, and they keep walking on - praying and grieving and telling stories and remembering and trusting. We listen and hear. . . .

..... and when they invited me here, I asked if I had to wear a tuxedo for this thing; and she said “an Alaskan tuxedo, maybe”; so I went over to The Prospector and bought

. . . told him that old thing about “well, that’s why they call it Medical Practice and not Medical Science, isn’t it?”. He didn’t think that was funny.

I prayed and prayed and prayed and then, when I got to Court, the Judge said “I don’t have any papers on you!”; and he just let me walk out. I’ve been sober ever since and I figure . . .

. . . fell asleep on the couch holding his musk ox picture.

. . . just got back, but all I saw were cows. Too early. The bulls are still way back.

. . . gets 50 to 80 beavers a year trapping out there.

Father Scott, where is he? Where IS HE, now that he died?

A CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY CALENDAR of EVENTS

Monday, December 21st - *The Feast of St. Thomas & The Winter Solstice*
 7PM A “Dark Christmas” Service, for those grieving or having a Hard Time
 12AM “Bang Pots & Yell & Scream to Chase Away the Great Dragon of Darkness” Midnight Compline

Thursday, December 24th - *Christmas Eve*
 5PM Christmas Eve Eucharist
 8PM Christmas Eve Eucharist
 10:30PM Caroling in the Church
 11PM Christmas Eve Eucharist



Friday, December 25th - *Christmas Day*
 11AM Christmas Day Eucharist

Sunday, December 27th - *the 1st Sunday of Christmas*
 8AM Eucharist
 10AM A Festival of Lessons and Carols, plus Eucharist

Thursday, December 31st - *New Year’s Eve*
 11PM New Year’s Eve Eucharist

Friday, January 1st - *New Year’s Day*
 2PM Traditional New Year’s Day Covered Dish/Potluck/Potlatch

Saturday, January 2nd
 2PM GIANT CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PRACTICE for EVERYONE, young & old. Bring bathrobes & humor & flexibility. *Come be a BIG ANGEL, Grandparents.*

Sunday, January 3rd - *the 2nd Sunday of Christmas*
 8AM Eucharist
 10AM GIANT CHRISTMAS PAGEANT, plus Eucharist

Tuesday, January 5th
 6PM Twelfth Night Covered Dish & Burning of the Christmas Greens so that Spring will Come

Wednesday, January 6th - *Feast of the Epiphany*
 9:30AM & 7PM - Eucharists

Sunday, January 10th - *The 1st Sunday after the Epiphany*
 8AM, 9:15AM, 11:15AM - Eucharists, with celebrations of Holy Baptism [*If interested, contact the Church Office*]

Sunday, January 31st - *The 4th Sunday after the Epiphany*
 9:15AM One Eucharist this morning, with the Annual Meeting of St. Matthew’s Church, followed by a Covered Dish & first meetings of the new Vestry & Endowment Board



Tuesday, February 2nd *Candlemass*
 6PM End of Christmas covered dish, Groundhog carols, Candlemass Eucharist



**IT'S GETTING CLOSER.....
THE SELECTION of the NEXT BISHOP**

With the arrival of 2010, the Diocese moves closer to finally calling the next Episcopal Bishop of Alaska. Though it may have seemed as if nothing was happening, folks have been praying and meeting while you and I weren't looking. The Bishop Discernment Committee (Chair: **Daniel Hall** of Southeast; **Deatrea Marceil** of Southeast; **Stacy Thorpe** of South Central; **The Rev. Ann Whitney** of South Central; **Clarence Bolden** of the Interior; **Linda Demientieff** of the Interior; **The Rev. Wilfred Lane** of the Arctic Coast; and **Martin Oktolik** of the Arctic Coast; with **Betsy Greenman** of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia as Consultant) is meeting the weekend of December 11th. This will be their final meeting, as they prayerfully decide their recommendations to the Standing Committee. They are charged by the Standing Committee to "*discern at least three qualified nominees who will be recommended to the Standing Committee for the presentation to an Electing Convention of the Diocese of Alaska*".

Following their mid December 2009 meeting, here's a rough Timeline of the Events that will follow:

- In **January 2010**, the Bishop Discernment Committee presents their recommended names to the Diocesan Standing Committee

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Autumn Voices

... was spared because I took "polio naps". That's what they called them. They found that children that got overtired were more susceptible to polio, so we had to take 'polio naps' every afternoon.

... and that's the last time I was ever stuck in a village; or rather, regretted being stuck in a village. It was snowing; one of those REALLY heavy snows. And I saw her go out. I thought she was going out to pack wood in or something; so I followed her out. She was standing out there, in that HEAVY snow; her arms raised to Heaven; her face turned up to Heaven, saying "Thank You God. Thank You that You've made a way for my niece to be here with me". After that, I never again worried about ...

Are you getting all this yet; or should I begin this sermon again?

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH

RECTOR	The Rev. Scott Fisher 456-5235	PARISH ADMINISTRATOR	Hilary Freeman 457-4820
PRIESTS	The Rev. Steve Matthew. . . 488-9076 The Rev. John Holz 456-3583 The Rev. Lee Davis 457-2865	SEXTON	Michael "Tree" Nelson . . . 456-5217
DEACONS	The Rev. Bella Jean Savino 456-1503 The Rev. Montie Slusher . . 474-4570	ORGANIST	Laura Vines 452-4565
SENIOR WARDEN	Roxy Wright-Freedle.	CHOIR DIRECTOR	Barbara Hameister 455-7397
JUNIOR WARDEN	Karen Kiss.	ALTAR GUILD	Mary Johnston. 455-7245 Cathy Giacomazzi 479-7736 Patty Meritt
CLERK	Helen Howard.	SUNDAY SCHOOL	
VESTRY	Charlene Marth Ray Cockerille Marty Thomas Arlie Nethken John Parsons. Irene Todd.	HEALTH MINISTRY	Charlotte Perotti 457-1332
PARISH TREASURER	Carolyn Nethken 457-3304	ENDOWMENT BOARD	Martha Thomas, Chair . . . 455-6612
		WEB GARDENER	Michael "Tree" Nelson. . . 456-5217
		NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Maggie Castellini 479-5444
		SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	Mary Margaret Davis . . . 457-2865
		UNITED THANK OFFERING	Helen Howard. 488-2314
		DAUGHTERS OF THE KING	The Rev. Bella Jean Savino 456-1503
		MINISTERS	YOU US!!!

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 Diocesan Website: episcopalak.org

Autumn Voices

I don't think we should use the word "Fall". I think we should say "Autumn". That's a much nicer word. Saying "the Autumn of the Year" sounds much nicer.

I have to tell you - that was more people than I have ever seen at a funeral; and I have NEVER seen so many completely DEVASTATED people at a funeral.

. . . spayed that iguana, probably because it was eegbound.

. . . and neither of the hamster's rear legs could touch the ground . . .

You were walkin' down there? They think they wounded a brown bear down there last night; and they shot a black bear there last week.

. . . told her "Quit dancin' now; and pack that fish".

You know why bears are coming into villages now, don't you? 'Cause there's no more fishcamps along the River like there used to be.

. . . was going up the Yukon River and saw a long black thing coming towards us. Thought it was a long drift. . . but it was BLACK DUCKS! And they . . .

. . . those Welsh cakes and . . .

. . . and they pay \$150 a plate at that restaurant for just the backside of a good muskrat!

WHEN are you going to QUIT sitting and visiting; and PRAY FOR ME?

Every time I see you, you're at some kind of celebration - weddings, Solstice; even I guess funerals are a kind of Celebration. You MUST have an interesting life.

"... a break from Christmas preparations to just visit."

MUSICAL CHAIRS in NENANA

By Mitch Demientieff

[NOTE: Friend Mitch Demientieff of Nenana submitted this November memory of once upon a time Nenana for this Newsletter; and then died unexpectedly at home Tuesday, December 1st - the day after the Month of Telling Stories ended. Now it's up to us who remain to remember the stories.]

I have a memory of the old St. Marks Mission School and boarding home. My wife and I were making tea in our home, for no apparent reason, and fed the elders; after which was a time of visiting. With a full tummy, a cup of tea or coffee, the stories always happened; and such was the case this day.

My Grandma Mary Demientieff, Aunt Dina Jensen and Uncle Solomon Luke were there, as were many locals. It was a happy evening, as we took a break from Christmas preparations to just visit.

My Grandma Mary started telling the story about the Mission. Apparently Aunt Dina and her went to pick berries up in the area we call the Village, and came upon a stack of chairs that they recognized from the Mission; so they dropped their berry buckets and moved the chairs. The church had given permission for anyone to recover anything they could, as the building was going in the river. The ladies covered the chairs up with brush to wait for another day to retrieve the chairs.

Upon returning [to retrieve the chairs], they discovered the whole pile of chairs missing!! Grandma said they wondered where

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New Bishop . . .

- By **February 2010**, the Standing Committee publishes the Names to the Diocese. Each approved Candidate "will be requested to provide a DVD introducing themselves while responding to a series of questions. These DVD's will be sent out to each congregation for viewing." The Petition Process also opens now, for 2 weeks.
[Ash Wednesday, **February 17th**]
- **Late February, early March 2010** - the Candidates "tour" the Diocese. We meet them and they meet us.
[**March 28- April 4th**. Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday]
- **April 9 -10, 2010**. The Electing Convention for the 8th Episcopal Bishop of Alaska. Meier Lake Conference Center, Wasilla.
- **September 4, 2010**. In Anchorage, consecration of the 8th Bishop of Alaska.

Autumn Voices

. . . told us Jesus gave His skin for us, and that's what we eat at Church. *Soooooo*, we'll be working at teaching on the Eucharist.

We have to go on; to make ourselves happy. So we tell stories.

. . . told her " *I came home backwards last night*". And she said, " *You always come home backwards*".

. . . was in the liquor store buying a whole bunch of those little bottles of liquor. " *What are you going to do with THAT?*" I asked him. He said his arthritis was really bothering him, so he was going to rub it all over . . .

He thinks that they're all YOUR musk ox and. . .

When we say " *Don't cry on them*", it means - it's hard to explain - it means it makes it hard for them to get where they want to go.

. . . said " *Let's play 'Duck, duck, goose'*". But I told her this is Sunday School, and we want to talk about Jesus. Then she said, " *Okay. Let's play 'Jesus, Jesus, St. Francis'*". So we did.

. . . when the priest gave us that chalice, I forgot all that I'd been thinking. Just *THAT* wine, *THAT* blood.

People ask what I'm going to do now that I'm retired. " *Small acts of kindness*," I say. " *Just small acts of kindness*".

Look around you. THIS is YOUR family.

. . . said " *I'll thank you to mind your own business. I'm dealing with some things you don't know about. There's A BEAR IN THIS HOLE.*"

through All The Seasons of Life

SEASONS of LIFE FALLING into WINTER

For the 3 months since the last Newsletter, through the **91 days** from **Tuesday, September 8th through Monday, December 7th**, from the last days of Bright Summer into the Darkness of Advent, we gathered and prayed together for **280 services** or other celebrations. An accounting, from the Official St. Matthew's Service Record Book, and *some* of the details:

- 35 Sunday Morning Eucharists
- 56 Private/Home Communion visits by clergy
- 21 Private/Home Communion Visits by Lay Eucharistic Ministers
- 4 Sunday Afternoon Fairbanks Correctional Center Eucharists
- 69 Midnight Compline services
- 5 Tuesday Morning Denali Center Eucharists
- 13 Wednesday Morning Eucharists
- 11 Wednesday Evening Eucharists
- 6 Thursday Morning Pioneer Home Eucharists
- 6 Celebrations of Holy Baptism (9 baptized)
- 5 Weddings or Renewals of Vows
- 7 Commendations of the Dying/Departed
- 1 Prayers the night before a Funeral
- 9 Funerals
- 1 Funeral, out of Fairbanks (*Nenana*)
- 1 Ordination, out of Fairbanks (*Nenana*)
- 2 Holy Eucharists, out of Fairbanks (*Beaver, Stevens Village*)
- 6 Advent Evening Prayer Services
- 2 House Blessings
- 4 Animal Blessing services
- 1 Reception of a Novice Oblate
- 1 September 11th Memorial Eucharist
- 2 Thanksgiving Eve, Day Eucharists
- 4 Blessings (*Healing staff, wedding rings, necklace, cross*)
- 1 Parish Nurses Graduation Service
- 1 Family Prayer before Departure to War
- 1 All Hallows Eve Midnight Bell tolling for the Departed
- 1 Removal of Names from Banners at End of Church Year
- 1 Sunday afternoon Music & Magic Concert
- 1 Honoring Party for an Archdeacon
- 1 Thanksgiving Day Covered Dish
- 1 St. Nicholas Day Churchwide 9AM Covered Dish Brunch

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- + 73 Highest Temperature recorded in Fairbanks since September 8 (*September 9th*)
 - 34 Lowest Temperature recorded in Fairbanks since September 8th (*November 21st*)
 - 7 # of days Temperature remained below 0
 - 13hours 48minutes 23seconds – Length of Daylight *September 8th*
 - 4hours 11minutes 29seconds – Length of Daylight *December 7th*
 - 7" Official snowdepth in Fairbanks on December 7th

Holy Baptism

On Sunday, September 20th, during our Feast of St. Matthew celebrations, 6 months old **Evan Wilfred John Little** was baptized. His

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Seasons of Life . . .

Godparents are **Gerald Frank, Wilfred John, and LaDonna Wolf**. Wednesday evening, September 30th, a very serious almost 1 year old **Tre Logan Newman** was baptized. His Godparents are **Jacinto and Susan Reynago**. Two weeks later, on Wednesday evening, October 14th, 10 months old **Angel Leeloo Simpson** was baptized. Her Godparents are **Joel Lucas, Sarah Carter, and Margie Jones**. Another two weeks later, on Wednesday evening, October 28th, 2 months old **Aaron Benjamin Victor Joseph Lee Beetus** was baptized. We all smiled. His Godparents are **Christopher Sears, Douglas Pitka Jr, Shara David, and Leona Bifelt**. On Sunday, November 1st, during our Feast of All Saints celebrations, 2 years old **Maribel Gabrilla Estrada** and 1 year old **Deja Elizabeth Flores** were baptized. Maribel's Godparents are **Julio A. Toro and Vanessa Toro**. Deja's Godparents are **the Rev. Mary Nathaniel, Candice Nathaniel, and Brian Grassman**. Finally, in a family celebration

Wednesday evening, November 11th, 2 months old **Margaret Kitty Sagers**, 27 years old **Desiree Brandy Joseph**, and 26 years old **Victoria Ryan Wigley** were all baptized. Margaret's Godparents are **Beverly Joseph and Dennis Joseph**. Desiree and Victoria were sponsored also by **Beverly Joseph**.



Weddings and Renewals

On a beautiful early Fall afternoon, on Saturday afternoon, September 12th, family and friends gathered to celebrate the wedding of **Jimmy Biddle**, whom the rector first met in Chalkyitsik several decades ago, and **Patricia Nyholm**. It was a relaxed and joyous occasion. The celebration continued out the Steese Highway, with **Bill Stevens'** fiddle music filling the air. Several weeks later, in appreciation, the couple presented St. Matthew's with a beautiful wooden lectern that Jimmy had made out of Tennessee hardwood.

Two weeks later, **the Rev. Mary Nathaniel** arrived in town from Chalkyitsik to celebrate, on Saturday afternoon September 26 at the Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall, the wedding of her niece **Jessica Gooshaw and Steven Flores, Jr**. Smiles filled the Hall.

Nearly a month later, on Saturday afternoon, October 24th, in forty above temperatures, St. Matthew's filled with St. Matthew's for the celebration of the wedding of **Thomas Marsh and Bonnie Jean Hameister**. Not a soul was nervous, except perhaps official witnesses



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Autumn Voices

. . . asked "Have you ever sat still long enough to watch a leaf change?"

ENJOY every SANDWICH!

Ohhhhhhh no. We can't let any more congregations into the Wingnut Section.

Well, I'm certainly *not* a Portfolio Queen.

It was a 10-holer. And the bigger boys would hide in the grass down there, and wait for the little boys; and then . . .

She was about 7 or 8; and wearing mukluks. She kicked at that pike; and it opened its jaws and sank its teeth in; and it took. . .

I was raised by my Grampa; and he always told me "Don't brag; don't show off". I think I do though; I brag sometimes; but I always remember him telling me that.

I'm ready. I'm ready to meet my Lord. I'm not afraid. The only thing I worry about is . . . I don't know if my children know how much I loved them. I don't think I told them that enough.

Well, maybe it's Global Warming.

You know what we're seeing here at this burial now, don't you? It's a whole Generational Shift. This is the first time for all these young men, doing this. Now it passes on.

Jesus is back in my room, you know. I see Him there. He watches me.

This is REALLY nice. It's good for us all to come together for a *good* thing.

I told him "I love you" and he looked at me and said "I love you"; and then he just died.

Autumn Voices

That sand is really bad. Gets in everything. You're up there in that turret, you know, with goggles and everything, but even then, when you're finally done; you're spitting sand out of *everywhere*.

. . . and all those little meadows and ponds, now that it flooded, are filled up now with little fish. We were out there moose hunting, and you'd hear "plip...plip....plip" – fish jumping out there.

I suppose the mice will come back. They're a pretty resilient Tribe.

My kids are worried about me being alone out there, at my cabin; but I've been alone out in the woods most of my life.

. . . that bathtub floated down in the Flood, but we don't know where it came from. Wonder if anybody in Eagle is missing a bathtub.

. . . and I wore three coveralls out this Fall hunting; and I *only eat with my ears*.

. . . leaving to go to Hawaii.....

. . . leaving to go to the East Coast and . . .

. . . leaving to go over to Hawaii and . . .

. . . leaving to fly down to Peru, and we're going to hike to Machu Picchu and . . .

OH. I've got tears in my eyes. That quiet military guy that always sits in the back is leaving this week. He told me "thank you" and how much this Church has meant to him. "I'll be back," he said.

Well, technically I guess I'm AWOL, but . . .

ANNUAL MEETING of ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH SUNDAY, JANUARY 31st



As required by the Church By-Laws, the Family of Saint Matthew's will gather for its Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 31st, at 9:15(ish). The Meeting, held in the context of the single Eucharist celebrated that morning, is a chance to pray and listen and make decisions. We'll hear reports from the various ministries of the Church [*Please submit to Church Office by January 15th*], hear from Parish Treasurer **Carolyn Nethken** on how 2009 went financially, receive from the Vestry the proposed 2010 Budget for the Church and decide about it; and hold various elections calling people to the different ministries within the Church. The proposed 2009 Budget will be available in the Parish Hall for discussion in the weeks prior to the meeting; and proposed nominees will be listed also.

Here is a Summary of the Elections to be held at the Meeting. If you are interested in being considered for Nomination to any of these positions, please contact either the Church Office or any Vestry member.

VESTRY We will be electing three people to serve on our Vestry - three for three-year terms. **Helen Howard, Karen Kiss, and Charlene Marth** are going off the Vestry. **Helen Howard** and **Charlene Marth** are **NOT eligible** for re-nomination or election this year. **Karen Kiss**, who was elected at the 2009 Parish Meeting to fill resigned member Hubert Griffin's term, **IS ELIGIBLE** to be re-nominated and elected. *To serve on the Vestry of St. Matthew's, as stated in the By-Laws, a person must be a baptized Lay person, at least 19 years old, have taken communion at least three times in the last year, been a regular worshipper at this Church for at least the last 3 months, and be a regular contributor of their Time, Talent, or Treasure.* Continuing members of the Vestry in 2010 will be **Ray Cockerille, Roxy Wright Freedle, Marty Thomas, Arlie Nethken, John Parsons, and Irene Todd.**

ST. MATTHEW'S ENDOWMENT BOARD We will be electing two people to serve on the Endowment Board - two for three year terms. **Bruce Gadwah** and **Maggie Castellini** are going off the Endowment Board; and both **ARE eligible** for re-nomination and election. **Laura Bender, Helen Burrell, Ray Cockerille, Marty Thomas, and Allen Todd** will be continuing members of the Board in 2010.

INTERIOR DEANERY DELEGATES We will be electing two persons to represent us at any meetings of the Interior Deanery in 2010. (*This meeting, subject to change, is tentatively scheduled for early June in Tanana*). In 2009, we elected the **Rev. Deacon Bella**

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Annual Meeting . . .

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Jean Savino and Irene Todd as our delegates;

with Tom Marsh, Roxy Wright, and Bruce Gadwah as Alternates. They are ALL eligible for re-nomination and election.

2010 DIOCESAN CONVENTION DELEGATES The 2010 Diocesan Convention is currently scheduled for April 9 and 10 at Meier Lake Conference Center outside of Wasilla. THIS WILL BE THE ELECTING CONVENTION - electing the next Bishop of Alaska. By Diocesan Canon, the rector must attend. Any other clergy associated with St. Matthew's - Fr. Steve Matthew, Fr. John Holz, Fr. Lee Davis, the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino, or the Rev. Deacon Montie Slusher - must be nominated and elected as a St. Matthew's delegate to vote at the Convention.

We are eligible to send at least 10 delegates (1 delegate for every 100 members), but traditionally have sent three plus the rector (Mainly for financial reasons. Each delegate costs around \$500 for registration). We will be electing at least three delegates (exact number to be proposed by the Vestry when they finalize the 2010 Budget).

For the 2009 Diocesan Convention, we elected Shirley Gordon, Ron Moore, and Linda Demientieff as Delegates; with Laura Bender, Mary Margaret Davis, Julia Cockerille, and Linda Mullen as Alternates. Subsequently, Laura Bender, Julia Cockerille, and Mary Margaret Davis attended as our delegates.

Should you be interested in nominating someone, or being nominated, for any of these positions, contact any Vestry member, or the Church Office. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting, but only with the consent of the nominee.

Autumn Voices

That was a funny thing this Fall. We were headin' up the River and this plane, military plane, comes wooping out of nowhere and . . .

Yeah, the wolves are back. I see their tracks out there on the River. They stay just outside of the Light, watching.

Nooo, I know, If I set one trap out, then I'm gone. I'll be out of here until the Season closes.

He was Our Rock.

THAT rifleshot, THAT sound of THAT rifle is very important. It tells the Spiritual World that . . .

It's a Catholic Tradition to sing now a Hymn to Mary. As Jesus was suckled . . .

. . . and my father had gotten a good moose. He went down to the Store and got , and got two cans of sweet potatoes, and made soup with that. I always wanted to try to make soup that way, for people, but now . . .

Are you having services this Christmas? What time is your Midnight Christmas Eve service?

What can we do? It's in God's Hands.

GWAMPA! I heard SLEIGH BELLS last night! Santa's coming!



Pictures from Stevens Village

School and Post Office
Beaded Altar Hanging (Katherine Peter)
Sunday School

See stmatthewschurch.org for more

"Vestry not only gives you a snapshot of the breadth and width of what St. Matthew's has to offer, but also allows you to contribute your time and talent."

VESTRY REFLECTIONS

[NOTE: When we meet for our Parish Annual Meeting Sunday, January 31st, after prayer we will be calling new members to serve on the Vestry. Below, Helen Howard and Charlene Marth, who will both be retiring from the Vestry - and are ineligible to be re-nominated, reflect on their Time on the Vestry. . . and urge YOU to pray and think about YOUR possible involvement.]

BE THINKING OF THE ANNUAL MEETING! - Helen Howard

As we turn toward Christmas and the New Year, my thoughts turn even further - towards the next Annual Meeting. I've been on the Vestry for nearly three years now, and with **Charlene Marth** and **Karen Kiss**, my time is up and we need to find others who are ready to step into our shoes.

I'm sitting at home on a cold, snowy night but thinking of that restful building of glowing logs and warmth that sits beside the Chena River, where Father Scott is always ready to hold services, even in the middle of the night - I doubt there are many other churches where there are so many services conducted by so few priests as he does. I think he must spend more time in church than at his house. And he is always there, pretending he is sleepy or disorganized, but giving well thought-out sermons, gently steering vestry meetings, or visiting people at the hospital, as well as holding weddings and funerals - again far more than you might find elsewhere. I think of him climbing down the riverbank to join the Red-Green Regatta entry, or cheerfully watching over **Lloyd** and **Bruce** stirring Booyah and ladling it out with **David Burrell's** help.

As usual, the vestry's main concern this year has been with the budget. And we are praying that there will be another miracle in December to pull up our income to match our expenses.

Some good things have happened this year. **Bruce Gadwah** has again earned our grateful appreciation for the sweat and time and funds to blacktop the parking lot. Thank you, **Bruce**. And the Fire Marshall has found that we are in pretty good shape. The fact that we have a sprinkler system might even reduce our building insurance costs retroactively.

Meetings of the Vestry tend to be enjoyable, though our main purpose is to handle the business of St. Matthew's. We usually sit around a table with plenty of food, and there are the breaks when Father Scott departs to look at the scenery. This year we seem to have been getting out much earlier since **Ray Cockerille** brought that question up upon his election to the vestry - we used to meet later and get out late!

So, please be thinking about running for election at the forthcoming Annual Meeting which will be on January 31st. This year's vestry has begun a long-range planning calendar by setting down the dates we know about, and I think the next vestry will be quite occupied with plans for the long range. How about joining in...?

VESTRY SERVICE - Charlene Marth

It had been awhile since I served on the Vestry. I remembered it quite fondly from before. I will remember it again as a time that I enjoyed. I found this 3 years was definitely much more challenging. When I was elected to the Vestry, I was living in Fairbanks. Soon after, I moved to Anchorage for my job. It became quite an ordeal. I tried to come home on weekends as much as possible. It was difficult to divide my time between my family (and me get enough of them!) and church activities. And then when I was not in Fairbanks for the Vestry meetings, it was a, um, pleasure (*sarcasm*) to call into the meeting and be represented by a little phone box on the table for a few hours of meetings. There were a number of times

(Continued on page 13)

2010 Proposed St. Matthew's Budget

At a meeting of the Vestry on Tuesday, December 15th, after much prayer and discussion, the Vestry approved the following Operating Expenses Budget for 2010. It's reproduced below now for your consideration. It will also be posted in the Parish Hall in early January for your examination and consideration. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact any **Vestry Member or Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken**. The Vestry will be meeting January 19th to consider any suggested revisions. The FINAL Budget will come before the congregation at our Annual Meeting Sunday, January 31st at 9:15 AM.

Please be aware that this Budget reflects only OPERATING EXPENSES; and there are other monies in Reserved Accounts for certain designated programs and expenses (see Vestrymember or Parish Treasurer for details).

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this responsibility.

St. Matthew's Church

2010 PROPOSED EXPENSE BUDGET Vestry Approved 12/15/2009

	2008 Final Actual	2009 Final Budget	2009 Actual through November	2010 Proposed Budget	
Clergy assistants salary	12,897	12,852	11,781	13,000	Rounded
Deacon Assistant	5,700	5,842	5,355	5,988	2.5% increase
Rector salary	47,795	49,040	44,953	50,266	2.5% increase
Supply Priest	-	350	200	350	
Total	66,392	68,084	62,289	69,604	
Supply secretary	499	2,500	924	2,000	vacation & additional office help
Admin secretary salary	28,070	28,771	26,373	29,490	2.5% increase
Child care providers	2,550	2,600	2,300	2,600	50/Sun if 1 sitter 40/Sun if 2 sitters
Organist	4,995	4,600	4,830	5,000	for Sundays and other services
Sexton	646	650	2,434	3,000	Unemployment, SS, MC on housing+200 per month stipend
Total	36,760	39,121	36,861	42,090	
Clergy Assistant/Deacon Pension	1,026	1,109	1,731	1,138	19% of salary
Clergy pension plan	13,306	11,800	12,672	13,737	percentage of salary and housing
Secretary pension plan	2,191	2,590	2,191	2,654	9% of salary
Clergy med-dental-life Insurance	26,916	26,640	24,420	28,000	for rector only
Healthcare staff	-	1,000	-	1,000	secondary/reimbursable (reduced by non-use)
FICA & ESC employer tax	3,645	4,000	3,648	3,500	Secretaries, organist, childcare & sexton
Total	47,084	47,139	44,662	50,029	
Office operations	6,543	6,000	7,145	7,800	copier, supplies, bank chge, postage & telephone
Newsletter printing/postage	4,128	6,600	5,437	6,000	bulk mail permit, postage
Website service	359	400	359	360	monthly on-line fee
Total	11,030	13,000	12,941	14,160	
Janitor services	580	500	-	500	extra cleaning
Janitor supplies	764	1,000	568	1,000	includes, tissue, bags, lights
Grounds maintenance	-	500	-	500	plants, lawn, snow removal
Utilities -Rectory	10,036	10,000	6,357	8,000	heating oil, water, sewer, electricity
Utilities -Church	19,252	17,500	12,600	15,000	steam heat, water, sewer, electricity
Auto maintenance	330	1,200	-	750	
Total	30,962	30,700	19,525	25,750	
Choir Music	181	100	94	150	
Christian education	210	2,500	680	2,000	adult, youth, Sunday School, EFM
Ministry support	-	500	-	500	pre and post ordination
Diocesan Convention/Deanery	300	2,500	2,300	3,200	5 members and rector
Diocesan tithes (25% net disposable income)	73,270	73,270	62,645	73,500	Tithe on operating income (less cost of sales)
Nursery program	-	50	-	-	general supplies
Health ministries	-	200	75	200	requested by Health ministry providers
Prayer Shawl Ministry	-	-	-	300	postage, supplies etc.
Fellowship & receptions	59	150	59	150	open to all parish hall activities
Community Service Grants (Community Outreach)	1,160	1,487	-	1,821	Matches Worldwide
Worldwide Outreach	1,160	1,487	-	1,821	.6% times prior yr operating income (2009)
Prison Ministries	-	700	-	-	
Rector discretionary	315	100	1,685	100	donations anticipated
Lee Davis Discretionary	-	-	1,378	100	donations anticipated
Asst clergy/deacon discretionary	170	100	250	100	donations anticipated
Total	76,825	83,144	69,166	83,943	
Auto Insurance	705	750	697	700	comprehensive
Building/officer liability Insurance	13,182	15,120	14,139	14,200	includes liability, bonding, fire, etc.
Worker's compensation insurance	1,528	1,300	1,637	1,640	Calc'd on paid staff
Total	15,415	17,170	16,473	16,540	
Worship Publications/bibles/hymnals	1,313	1,200	1,405	1,400	Day-by-Day, lectionaries, etc.
Altar Guild/Altar expenses	5,146	4,000	3,917	4,000	communion bread, supplies, candles, flowers
Communion Wine	-	-	-	-	was donated in '05, '06, '07, '08, '09
Total	6,459	5,200	5,322	5,400	
Total	290,927	303,558	267,239	307,516	
Cost of Fundraising/Sales	4,223		952		
Operating Budget	295,150	303,558	268,191	307,516	

BAPTIZED in the YEAR of OUR LORD 2008 / 2009

We are NEVER alone. We are constantly and always surrounded by the friendship and company of the saints, united through the Eternal Spirit with those we love. Similarly, the clergy associated with Saint Matthew's never function alone, but only as part of this part of the Body of Christ – St. Matthew's Episcopal Church on First Avenue in Fairbanks. Throughout the Church year, from the 1st Sunday of Advent (usually near the end of November) until the 1st Advent Sunday of the next year, we track on the banner that hangs on the Eastern Wall of the Church the names of those whose baptisms were celebrated here, or by clergy associated with Saint Matthew's. It is an on-going record of the breathing Life of Christ, of which we are given Grace to be part. On the last night of the Church Year, as the sun sets into the Darkness (& Promise) of Advent, and a Distant Star begins to move in the East, the names are removed – for either family members to keep, or to be immolated in the Epiphany bonfire – and we begin again. This year, these were the names.

December 2008

CASSIDY LYNN Martinson
JAYMAN CARVER James

January 2009

WESLEY RYAN Sharp
ZACHARY THOMAS Sharp
ALEXANDER ROBERT Bergman Jr
TIA VIOLET Bergman
BRIAN RUDY Grassman
MADDISON AMELIA MAE Wright

February

LEXINE COLETTE ANN Demientieff
WALTER EDWARD Smagge

March

CLAYTON BENJAMIN Stevens
DONAVAN ARTHUR PAUL McTaggart

April

KADIN MATTHEW Dinwoodie
JESSE ALLEN Hamner
MEGAN LEIGH Lundemo
RYDER ALLAN Pitka
CHRISTOPHER RAYE Skogstad
DAPHNE NICHOLE Sweet
HOLLY TRACIA Tritt
ECHO YUNA-MARIE Aipporah-Horan
LAURA ANGELA Thompson-Pitka
BENJAMIN TIMOTHY Moore
ASHTON PHILIP Peter
NATALIE JANET HANNAH John

May

MATTEO TAAVI Kuizenga
ANNIKA TAAVI Merkel
LEIA EILEEN Shewfelt
RIHANNA SHERAE Williams
RYAN JAMES Sparks
DYLAN JAY Jillson

June

JULIUS DAKOTA Simon
AUBREY ADDISON COE Dublin
CALEB XAVIER ABRAHAM Smoke
MALAYA SUSAN Zottola
ELVIS ANTONIO Angulo

July

ELIJAH MARL Wigley
MAKAYLA RYAN Wigley
MAMIE ROSE Biddle

September

CASEY ROSE Erhart
KINLEE JOSEPHINE Roberts
CAYDEN ROY Roberts
EVAN WILFRED JOHN Little
TRE LOGAN Newman

October

ANGEL LEELOO Simpson
AARON BENJAMIN VICTOR JOSEPH LEE
 Beetus

November

DEJA ELIZABETH Flores
MARIBELL GABRILLA Estrada
DESIREE BRANDY Joseph
VICTORIA ROSE Wigley
MARGARET KITTY Sagers



THE FEAST of ALL SAINTS/ ALL SOULS 2009

We are NEVER alone. We are constantly and always surrounded by the friendship and company of the saints, united through the Eternal Spirit with those we love. Similarly, the clergy associated with Saint Matthew's never function alone, but only as part of this part of the Body of Christ - St. Matthew's Episcopal Church on First Avenue in Fairbanks. From the Feast of All Saints on November 1st, to the Feast of All Saints the following year, we track on the banner that hangs on the Western Wall of the Church the names of those whose deaths or funerals were attended by the clergy of St. Matthew's, or those whose funerals were here. It is an on-going record of the Eternity of Love, and our companionship with those in our midst who walk the Dark Valley of Grief. On the last night of the Church Year, as the sun sets into the Darkness (& Promise) of Advent, the names are removed - for either family members to keep, or to be immolated in the Epiphany bonfire - and we begin again. This year, these were the names.

November 2008

WILLIAM L. Pair
JOYCE Milton

December 2008

VERLA Evans Stallings
FRANCIS John
EFFIE Ned Williams
VAUGHN Kozevnikoff



January 2009

FELIX Oryan Wholecheese
ARTHUR William Clark
EDWARD Smogge II
EVELYN Alexander
ALLEN John/Joel Nickoli
JEFFRY Adams

February 2009

CAROLYN Fee
JOHN George

March 2009

THELMA Kahl
PAMELA Huraux Petersen
DAVID John
HAROLD "Bogey" Bogenrife

April 2009

RANDOLPH Honea
SHERON Shepard
HORACE Cadzow
JAMES "JD" Drum
CAROLINE Big Joe
HAROLD "Buddy" Brown
VIOLET Kennedy
FLORENCE Ambrose

May 2009

LYNDEN Lewis
MERILYN Aunaqpaq Lisbourne
MARGARET Evans Carlson
DWIGHT Kurt Deely
ELIZABETH Mary Grassman

May 2009

JOSEPH Beetus
DEREK Gray
W.C. "TOD" Kozevnikoff
GREGORY Evans

June 2009

PETER Wholecheese Jr.

July 2009

DELL Barber
LINDA Charlie
JUDY Nollner
JEREMIAH Silas

August 2009

LU Fredson Young
NOREEN Hayr
A. RUTH Ivasak Evern
HERBERT George

September 2009

ZACHRY S.E. Jones
CLIFF Sewell
STEWART A. Boyles Sr.
JIMMY Zirger
BERTHA Inagoluk Moses

October 2009

ISABEL Charlie
BRENDA Lee Latvala
HUGH Thomas Phillips Jr.
LANE Scott Profit

Holy and Everlasting God, we remember before You our brothers and sisters, our family and friends, who have journeyed to be with you, especially in this Last Year. We still hear their voices and remember them in our hearts, but now their Life is eternally with Thee. Console all who mourn and grant us to trust in the Eternity of Friendship and Love - ours for Them and You for Us. Eternal Rest grant to them, O Lord, and let Light Perpetual shine upon them. In the Name of Thy Son we do pray, AMEN.



Our "Journey to Bethlehem" began All Saints' Sunday (November 1st). This is our second year participating in this health- and spiritual-designed program from Fairbanks to our Christ's manger. We contribute miles by exercising, eating healthy, and including selected spiritual readings. So far, 30 people have turned in miles. Last year, we had a total of 50 participants. Thank you to Pat Sackinger

for keeping track of the miles and marking the map in the Parish Hall.

Thank you to Cindy Stragier, a registered pharmacist, for being available on November 8th & 15th after Sunday services to help "Demystify Medicare Drug Plans."

December is our month of "Coping with the Holidays and Domestic Violence & Recovery." There are booklets prepared with "Getting through the Holiday," "Thoughts for the Holidays," "Healing Holiday rituals," "Handling the Holidays," "How to Nurture Yourself – 47 suggestions," plus stories from other survivors, available at our display in the Parish Hall.

Letters were sent in October to families who have lost a loved one this last year inviting them to All Saints' Sunday, when the names of the departed are remembered during the services; and to the Dark Christmas Service to be held Monday, December 21st at 7 PM for those having difficulty with the holidays.

January is our "Healthy Nutrition & Exercise Month." There will be healthy snacks and food provided after the Sunday services. Anyone who would like to donate, may call the Church office (456-5235).

The Prayer Shawl group continues meeting on the last Sunday of each month to pray and share and welcome new people knitting and crocheting shawls. Also, on the last Sunday of the month, you may have your blood pressure checked.

This fall, we have printed different prayers out of the Book of Common Prayer for health and wellness in the bulletin and on cards available in church. The cards were printed by Mary Margaret Davis and Marlin Collins.

If you have ideas or activities concerning health that you would like presented at St. Matthew's, please contact us.

Vestry Reflections . . .

(Continued from page 10)

where I seriously didn't feel I was fulfilling my obligation and talked to Scott about resigning... he just smiled. Soooooo, now it's been three years and it's time to pass the baton.

Serving on Vestry is a ministry. It is fulfilling and challenging. You learn as well as contribute. Did you know that there are people here practically every night of the week in one meeting or another? Do you know how much St. Matthew's is utilized outside of Sunday services? St. Matthew's is an amazing place. Vestry not only gives you a snapshot of the breadth and width of what St. Matthew's has to offer, but also allows you to contribute your time and talent. It is a tithe of time, very worthwhile time. I encourage you, **YES YOU**, to talk to a Vestry member, past or present, to see what Vestry is all about. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to approach me or other Vestry members about serving.

Is God calling you?

Sunday School News November 2009

Thank you for helping! Cindy, Tree and Will helped with cleaning. Laura and Christine have helped with music. Will, Lisa, Gina and other parents and teens have helped with teaching.



Many people have donated snacks! Thank you! We have a good supply of healthy bars, cookies, crackers, raisins & peanuts. There is a sign up sheet on the door to the kitchen if you want to bring juice, cheese, fresh fruit or other perishables. Plan to serve about 5-6.

We have been talking about "servants". First we answered the question: Who is a servant? Then we were detectives one day looking for servants, or evidence of servants, around St. Matthews.



We found Millie serving in the nursery, health ministry displays, foundation servants, Vestry members, cleaning equipment and lots of servants who set up and bring food. We even sneaked into

the church to be reminded of those who serve by leading prayers, singing in the choir and playing music.

We have also been learning the **servant song**, thanks to Laura and Christine.



The next week we were servants ourselves by packing the **shoebox presents for 14 children** in poor countries.



Thank you so much for your generous donations! Every box had soap, combs, hair supplies for girls, a toothbrush, a toy or two, lots of school supplies and a couple of stuffed animals. Enough money was donated for shipping to take care of 11 of the boxes, too. We also frosted and decorated cupcakes for the congregation. Next week we will enter Advent continuing as servants by making a fleece tied blanket for a family in need, identified by LOVE INC. that my Rotary Club has adopted for the holidays.



We still need more children! There are three children consistently attending, with about 5 more who have come more than once and about 8 who have come only one time. Some people have identified that there are children who would like to come, but **need transportation**. If you know of some children in this situation, we have some people who are willing to transport. Bella Jean and Bruce have expressed interest in working on this problem. Maybe the best way right now is to just match a driver with the same 2-3 children for every Sunday. If one person would consistently bring 3 kids, we would double our attendance! It would also make the teaching easier if we knew which children would be attending regularly.



It is unclear how many children will come for the **Christmas pageant**. **We still need a coordinator**. One simple idea, suggested by Carol Brice is to meet on a Saturday afternoon to make animal costumes. One older child narrates the story, by reading from the Bible, the children dress in black clothes and wear their animal masks, plus the main characters in the crèche. You could also do something more elaborate or even an alternative if you choose. If you have signed up on the bulletin board to help, could you please add your phone number or email address so I can get in touch with you? Watch the spot on the stairwell for your monthly newspaper.

“... when sugar was rationed, but love and community overflowed.”

REMEMBERING CHRISTMAS PAST

Like everything else, Christmas has gone through a lot of changes. I remember how much Christmas meant to our people, back when I was a child in the 1950's, both in Arctic Village and in Fort Yukon. These were the happiest times of my life. Then in 1960, we were sent off to boarding school. Needless to say, Christmas has never been the same since, except in the sacredness of the blessed event. Back in the 50's, the people were together like the family that we are. Everybody pitched in and tried to help in the celebration so that all will be happy. My vision is, after we, the children went off to boarding school, the village went dark. As hard as it was for us, I can't imagine what it was like for our parents, considering how close families were back then. Then in the 70's, the turmoil of the Native Claims Settlement Act and pipeline started, in which we had to fight to keep our faith in God. The corporate world was trying to make us believe in money. Also the in-fighting started in our villages and region. Some did start believing in money. Now, our people are finally starting to come back together again but it is slow and fragile. With God help, we can all be like a family again and have the kind of Christmas, I remember as a child.

K'eegwaadhat nokhwa ooli'

(Continued on page 16)

[During the 11:15 Eucharist on Sunday, November 29th, the rector, acting for Abbot Paul of the Desert, of the Companions of St. Luke of the Order of Saint Benedict, received Kathy as a "Novice Oblate" of the Order. And nearly everyone present, when this was announced, wondered: "What's an Oblate?"]

WHAT is an OBLATE?

By Kathy Mackey n/OSB

Oblates of the Companions of St. Luke, OSB are individuals who have chosen to become part of a Benedictine Community in order to enrich their Christian way of life. **The purpose for becoming an Oblate is to join in Community with others who seek to know, love and serve the Lord through our charism of prayer that propels one into healing action.** One's personal expression of the Oblate vocation results from a blend of Baptismal vows, Benedictine promises and personal gifts and interests.

Oblates incorporate the principles of St. Benedict, whose spiritual wisdom is derived from the Gospels, into their lives. Oblates seek God by searching for the perfection that he has set before us in Christ Jesus. By integrating their prayer and work, Oblates open themselves to and reveal Christ's presence among us.

St. Paul tells us that each member of the body of Christ, the Church, has a special function and place in Christ's kingdom. Not all men and women are called to live in a monastery or to take Solemn

Vows. Oblates are single and married, men and women, who live in their own homes, and in those homes seek the richness of their calling in the world. The Oblate seeks to bring the world to God by being witnesses of Christ by word and example.

There is no greater work than that of prayer for a Benedictine. Oblates of the Companions of St. Luke promise to live a life of prayer. The Companions of St. Luke encourage their Oblates to use the Divine Office as a starting point for this prayer life. The use of the Divine Office unites the Oblate with their Community and links the Oblate with the thousands of Oblates around the world. Prayer is an act of oblation. It is an offering of praise, petition, and thanksgiving. Prayer opens the doors of heaven and places us in the throne room of God. Prayer offers the soul the opportunity to once again meet and touch its Lover and Creator in a mystical way. Prayer is a selfless act, as we seek in it the will of God through Christ Jesus. In it we can find contentment, peace, tears, joy, and union with God. Through prayer we seek wholeness, healing and a desire only to love God. When time and opportunity are available, Oblates are to seek the companionship of their vowed Brothers and Sisters in prayer.



Christmases Past . . .

(Continued from page 15)

Back in the "old days" when it wasn't unconstitutional to have School Christmas Programs, we began learning carols and practicing plays and skits for the Huntley Elementary School Christmas Program. The programs included serious Christmas music as well as novelty songs such as Oly Olson's "*I yust go nuts at Christmas*". The rooms were decorated with student made ornaments, the black boards (remember them) were covered with colored chalk drawings from young artists. It was a real community event which was perhaps enriched by a feeling of togetherness and mutual cooperation in a time of war.



Each program ended with Santa coming and giving each child a brown paper bag filled with hard candy, peanuts in the shell, or a tangerine, sometimes a candy cane. Due to wartime rationing of sugar, at least once, there were homemade cookies, an apple saved from local trees and a colored popcorn ball. None of the treats were wrapped and were just dropped in the bag and often due to sweaty young hands became one glob of goodies.

This was a bitter sweet time; the joy of young children mixed with sadness as families received telegrams that spoke of death of a young man known to all of us.

Perhaps it is just nostalgia for the past, but I wish we still celebrated Christmas as we did years ago when sugar was rationed, but love and community overflowed.

... your question about earliest memories of Christmas took me back to the first time I remember going to church. It was an Easter Sunday. I was three. We'd come up from San Francisco to the home ranch and my grandparents home for my brother and I were going to be baptized. My "grandpa" took me by the hand and we went up the stairs to the door and into the full building (only on Easter was it full the whole time I was growing up). Grandpa paused and looked around at everyone then looked down at me saying "Kisspatch (his name for me) you are related to *everyone* here."

ALL those people were my relatives, my aunts and cousins ~ cousin's to the third and 4th degree ~

descendents of that original wagon train. But what an introduction to being part of the body of Christ! That feeling has stayed with me whenever I enter a church. "*Kisspatch, everyone here is your relation.*"

The first Christmas I remember is when I was four years old, the year before I entered kindergarten. My mom was always an integral part of the PTA when my sister and I were in school. That year my older sister had moved on to another school, but Mom still remained active in the elementary school PTA. This was the era of "room mothers." There was a second grade class that didn't have anyone to do this job, so Mom volunteered.

I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley of California about twenty miles from Weed Patch. Some people who have read *The Grapes of Wrath* don't know that this is a real place. Many of the students attending our school were children of the Dustbowl, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and others literally living in tar paper shacks in the Lake Bottom area of the district. None of the families in the school were affluent, but the second grade was extremely impoverished.

Toward Christmas Mom realized that many of the children would not be getting toys at Christmas. A skilled seamstress, she began making rag dolls for each girl. My dad was skilled in woodworking, and he made trucks for all the boys. These were not "cookie cutter" toys; each one was different. I can remember all the dolls and trucks arrayed under our Christmas tree at home and then going to the class party where the toys were given to the children. Even at four I can remember the smiles, the words of thanks and the sheer joy on all the faces. Somewhere in the family photo albums there are pictures, including one of me receiving the extra doll and truck my parents had made for me and kept secret.

In the old old days, before we enjoyed the convenience of electricity... when we gathered at the Community Hall, instead of flashlights people carried their Coleman gaslamps, to not only light up their path but to light up the Hall. It was so cool to watch the evening end, as people poured out the door with lamps in hand and went their separate ways. That's a December memory!!!!

On Mark 12:38-44: "The widow puts two coins into the Temple Treasury"

"AN ACT of GIVING"

[A sermon delivered, on the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday, November 8th, 2009, by the Rev. Deacon Teresa Thomas of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, in Fort Yukon.]

It seems like Jesus was just "hanging out" in the Temple. The Temple was the only place of worship for the Jews and was located in Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel. In other towns the Jews used to go to the synagogue every Saturday to listen to the scriptures and hear the elders explain them. When He was a child, Jesus used to go to the Temple once every year at the time of the Passover with his father Joseph, and his mother Mary. We know this because we are told the story about when Jesus was 12 He was so enthralled with it all that He stayed on while His parents left to walk back home. It took three days for Joseph and Mary to find Him. Three days passed, and He was still discussing religion with the teachers at the Temple. He was pretty surprised that Joseph and Mary thought it strange that He'd stayed on. "*Don't you know that I was bound to be in my Father's house?*" That was how Jesus thought of the Temple.

So, as Jesus became a man, he hung out "*in His Father's house*", having some "*down time*", it seems. The Temple was huge and a very beautiful building and it needed a lot of upkeep. People had to pay taxes, the country was occupied by the Romans, but the Temple was the only place that only the Jews could go, and the women couldn't go into the most sacred parts. A lot of tradition had grown up, since the Temple was built to house the commandments given by God. A lot of things went on there besides worshipping God; there was quite a thriving business area where sacrificial animals were sold. It was pretty expensive to keep going, so people gave money to pay for the Pharisees, the high priests, and the scribes (who were the only ones who could write). The Jewish Law was represented here, because the whole nation revolved around the Jewish religion, all the laws, all the learning; so it was like the courts, the universities, the government, and the church all in one. It was the heart of the nation.

So the bowl for the offerings was huge. Everybody contributed. I expect this widow had always given money; and it was only when she became widowed that it was getting harder and harder to make ends meet. There was no Social Security; there was no Medicaid; there was no Welfare. Women relied on their husbands completely; so completely that if their husbands died before them, they were married to their husband's brother. And do you remember when Jesus witnessed a sad little funeral procession outside the town of Nain? If you recall, there was a widow, whose son, her only financial support, had died. She would have been utterly destitute. Jesus knew this, and walked up, and brought the dead young man back to life, in effect saving at least two lives.

Being a widow here is pretty difficult; you know how difficult it is to get someone to cut wood, to do house maintenance, etc. We really depend on hunting and fishing for our main sources of food. But it was ever so much worse in Israel two thousand years ago. So it went against common sense to give away the very last few coins with which she could buy food.

I would be surprised if she didn't bring to mind the widow who had only a handful of grain and a cup of oil when the prophet Elijah dropped by, expecting a meal. You would have thought Elijah would have asked for food and lodging from someone better equipped to provide for him when he traveled through, but it was starvation times. As the story goes, her store of grain and oil multiplied many times over, after she had used her last food to cook for the prophet. In Jesus' time, women weren't educated, and she might not know the story. I have a feeling that she had a wonderful mother who had taught her to trust God when she was a little girl. She had the right attitude, even though the world worked a little differently; in fact so differently that people strutted around the Temple, coming not only to see but to be seen, putting in their extra cash (which was significant) into the Treasury Bowl. Two copper coins would not be a real help. Not enough to make a difference; at least, not in the economics of those days.

But this is how the world sees it. And people had forgotten that the world is the Kingdom of God. But this woman hadn't. She knew beyond all reason that God was God. That He was all good; and that He knew her, and that He cared for her, and could do anything. She gave the little that she had away, because it was the way that she worshipped the God who made her. She really trusted in God to take care of her. And Jesus happened to see this; and He knew that this was all that she had. He knew that this woman could die because she gave everything she had to God. She could not work; she had no husband to earn money for food.

We hear in the Gospel of Luke that the child Jesus grew big and strong, and full of wisdom. We know that Jesus is perfectly Man, and perfectly God, but so we know that He learned to see God in His neighborhood. This is one of the few places in the Bible when we see Jesus learning. Jesus was pretty amazed, so much so that He remarked on it to the Disciples who were with Him in the Temple; so that it eventually got written down, because someone remembered this happening.

Jesus is all about bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth, and this is also when we see a little bit of heaven on earth. It is hard for us to get our mind around it. We are used to giving out of our abundance; we have fundraisers for all sorts of people and situations; this is how we see God acting through us. But it is hard to find anyone who would give all that they had, especially when there is no family to help them after, no welfare

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**WRITINGS from
ARCTIC VILLAGE**

By Lincoln Tritt

"... people seem to be looking at the world as if looking at it on a television screen."

THE REALITY [October 18, 2009]

I read an article the other day about scientist predicting the North Pole would melt in about ten years or so. What they do not say is that the heat that causes this will be fatal for the plants and animals, which includes the people. We humans are the weakest creatures on this planet. It is not hard to figure that we may be long gone by the time all these warming happens.

This is what I mean, when I say that people seem to be looking at the world, as if looking at it on a television screen. It is difficult to see the reality of the situation if you do not relate to the real world, as a human being. On top of all this, the people who interpret these instances are people who have already lost touch with reality. Machines (robots) and money are the guiding forces of the modern day activities. This is not good for the living things of this planet. If the balance between the living things and the mechanical things of this planet is altered to where the non-living things take over this planet then the living things cannot survive. Already people are getting directions from computers, which mean that the computer is dictating our lives. Instead of having a human brain that relates to life, most of us are programmed and directed by machines. This is why leaders should always be in touch with reality through there connection to life. This is why the concept of life is so important to the indigenous people. Without life, this planet would be just another planet like mars with nothing but sands and rocks.

One of the biggest obstacles that people have to face when dealing with the problems of society is there are people who will try to stop you, even if it

was for a noble cause, because there are people who live good off of these problems. I have noticed a lot of approaches to dealing with today's global problems have been stopped or in many cases sabotaged. Even when we try to bring back the concept of humanity, they started calling anybody with flesh, human. Being human is not just the physical appearance of an individual but also their values and their traditional indigenous connection to life and the creator. A person must be human; physically, mentally and spiritually.

When people try to do something about the damages to the planet and the resulting disasters, the media turns it into an energy debate. These tactics are just to keep people from dealing with the results of the damages to the Earth. They cannot be reasoned with because they have lost touch with reality. In our community, we try to get people to listen to only those who know what they are talking about. These are usually the people who have experienced what they are talking about. We do not listen to people who only talk. How long have those experts on televisions and magazines been around? Yet, the problems that they are experts in are bigger than ever. What problem have they solved?

Look at the world from where you stand and see it with your own eyes, listen with your own ears and interpret what you see and hear with your own mind. Then get together with others who see and hear all these, the way you see and hear them, then discuss them and take actions. There are people who still remember what their traditional indigenous ancestors taught them. These are the wisdom keepers. They are many false teachers, so make sure you pick those that are truthful and spiritually strong.

"Being taught at a very young age with the concept of God being in every living thing taught me to respect all things"

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An Act of Giving . . .

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system, no PFD, no savings, no Social Security, no Indian Health, certainly no health insurance, no general assistance, no tribal projects.

Everything that this woman was, was in God. He was all she had. In her there was no darkness at all; her giving was God in her mind, and in heart, and in her soul. We have been talking in desperate physical need; she had the Kingdom of God within her. When we look at her, we see the Kingdom of God. No doubt there were, and are, others just like her; but on this occasion, Jesus caught sight of her doing this, and remarked on this act of total generosity. And if Jesus can marvel at it, then we should too. If there is anything we can say about Jesus, we know that He was generous in giving – think of the feeding of the five thousand, and there were twelve baskets of left-overs.

Every miracle is an act of giving, and this act of the widow giving all that she had is a kind of miracle. We say *"It takes one to know one"*; and Jesus, who gave all that He had, and all that He was, knew what this Gift meant.

REPORTS from the OCTOBER DIOCESAN CONVENTION

[From Thursday, October 8th into Sunday, October 11th, the Diocese of Alaska met in Anchorage, at organized and friendly St. Mary's Church, for its Annual Diocesan Convention. Planned by the Diocesan Standing Committee and chaired by Assisting Bishop Rustin Kimsey, the Convention's theme, based on Matthew 13:52, was "Finding and Sharing our Old and New Treasures". Treasures were found and shared. St. Matthew's was officially represented by those we elected at our January 2009 Annual Parish Meeting: Laura Bender, Julia Cockerille, Mary Margaret Davis, and the rector. A number of other St. Matthewites, including Marty Thomas, were also present, either officially or unofficially. Below, Laura, Julia, and Marty report and reflect back to you on the meeting.]

Informal Report of the 34th Convention of the Diocese of Alaska – Laura Bender

I agreed (reluctantly) to be nominated as a delegate from St. Matthew's to the 34th Convention. I was thoroughly relieved when I was elected as an alternate, not realizing that more often than not the "alternates" become the "official delegates". So...with much trepidation I agreed to be one of the three delegates representing St. Matthews (along with Mary Margaret

Davis and Julia Cockerille). The theme for the convention was "Finding and Sharing Our Old and New Treasures". Bishop Kimsey opened convention with a sermon where he spoke about "God's call"; God's call to us as individuals and God's call to us as a diocese. Friday morning we heard an energetic talk by Dr. Michael Oleksa on "Working together to find our treasures" and then we spent much of the time in small group Gospel based reflections.

I naively assumed that conventions were nothing more than business meetings and found myself frustrated that we were spending all this time "sharing" and "getting to know one another" and not doing any actual business. In the three days of convention we did cover some official business – we approved the budget, dealt with three resolutions, had elections to committees, and heard reports. But it wasn't until the end of convention that I realized that the most important business taking place was what I had been hearing (but not listening too) for the last few days – that our church, our mission, our faith, is all about us, the people of Alaska. It is our unique stories, traditions, cultures that make the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska so special – that although we are all different, we are also part of the same family. We are all called by God to do

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Writings from Arctic Village . . .

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CARIBOU/GWICH'IN [November 4th, 2009]

It has taken our people a long time to settle down, from being a nomadic tribe. Even I, as a child, did not live in any settlements for any length of time until I was about 5 years old. I was born in 1946. My family did not have a house in any settlement until 1958, when my father built a house in Arctic Village. We had a cabin that I know of, but it was out in the woods.

If you look at the caribou migration data, you can probably imagine the area they cover in a year's time. You have to be aware that the migration pattern of today will not be the same as the pattern of the past.

Both my father and grandfather wrote of their trips to the Arctic Coast, which is on the other side of Brooks Range from us. That is where our people have gone, in the past, for sheep and for fishing, until the arrival of the whaling ships, then they also went there to trade.

So, when we fight to save the caribou, we are fighting for a big area of land. Different areas provide different nutritional needs for different seasons of the year. You need to alter your diet for the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter. The caribou is our connection to the Earth

and as a result, our connection to the reality of life. We cannot survive without it. If it was otherwise, we would have died with the last attempt at civilization. Be aware that the concept of civilization is a threat to your humanity. Many civilizations have come and gone, but the indigenous people's way of life has survived, like a long straight path from the beginning of humanity.

Only through the one true God can we live a healthy life on a healthy planet. Being taught at a very young age with the concept of God being in every living thing taught me to respect all things. As children, growing up in the woods, we grow into sacred universal rules that we live by. Every living thing that exists on this planet, from the smallest to the biggest, plays a part in keeping this planet alive.

For the Gwich'in people of Alaska and Canada, the paths of the caribou's migration and the birthplace of the caribou are all sacred lands.

This is the reason the lands of the Gwich'in nation were healthy when the Europeans arrived. Today, we still try to keep it clean and healthy, but it is like trying to keep a bunch of hungry puppies from a dish of food.

The Earth needs to live and it cannot live if it is not healthy. Like any other living thing, the planet will die, if we do not keep it alive. Earth dies, we die.

Diocesan Convention . . .

His work and to work together in His name and before we can do that we need to know who we are as individuals and family members. And, getting to know who we are takes time, conversation, and sharing of stories and this type of “business” is just as important as the “official” business of the 34th Convention.

Delegate Report on the 2009 Diocesan Convention - Julia Cockerille

The 34th Diocesan Convention was held this October in Anchorage, where we were warmly welcomed and cared for by our family at St. Mary’s. St. Matthew’s delegates were Fr. Scott, Mary Margaret Davis, Laura Bender and me. Our Assisting Bishop Rustin Kimsey chaired the convention, and thanks largely to his graciousness (and his firm grasp of parliamentary procedure) this was the smoothest convention any of us have attended.

The convention opened with the Eucharist, with Bishop Kimsey celebrating and preaching. In his sermon Bishop Kimsey spoke about the prophet Jeremiah’s call from God, “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you*” (Jeremiah 1:4-10). The Bishop emphasized that this wasn’t just about the calling of our future bishop, but that each and every one of us have received God’s call through our birth and baptism.

He said “*I also believe the health of the call within us will depend greatly on how well we honor the call of God within others.*” He said that differing beliefs need to be openly dealt with, but warned us that rigid attitudes of what’s right and wrong, “my way or the highway”, deny the Presence of God in others. We need to talk and listen to each other.

Bishop Kimsey also asked us to be open to the Presence of God in our future bishop. Instead of trying to make him or her conform to our own ideas of what a bishop should be and do, allow the Grace of God to work in our new bishop and also in us, and, he said, you will find new ways to do the job of being the Church in Alaska .

Bishop Kimsey said that (*if he could*) he would give these “marching orders” to our new bishop: spend a week in February in Pt. Hope or any village, spend two days being present at St. Matthew’s and following Scott Fisher around soaking it in, and then go visit the hospitals in Anchorage with **Norman Elliot**. Talk, listen and be present to people’s suffering as Jesus was.

He ended his sermon by telling us that his “*most vivid memory of my time in the villages is that of children’s faces. The smiles, the openness, the warmth - those are the blessed images I will carry with me for the rest of my days.*”

I think Bishop Kimsey’s sermon was important for Alaskan Episcopalians to hear. You can read the entire transcript on the diocese’s website, www.episcopalak.org.

The next morning we listened to the keynote address, “*Working Together to find our Treasures*”, by

Fr. Michael Oleksa of the Russian Orthodox Church. Fr. Oleksa began by saying “*Any ministry in Alaska is cross-cultural*”. He defined “culture” as “*the story into which you were born.*” He told us about the awful blunders he made coming from a Russian/German family and trying to minister to folks in the villages. Thankfully for him (*and us*) Fr. Oleksa has a terrific sense of humor! He spoke about the rituals of social etiquette, the concept of “time”, what a certain tone of voice can mean and dozens of other ways people relate to each other that are deeply different from culture to culture. He ended his address with a crucial piece of advice: when you have inter-cultural communication it is necessary to say “*Forgive me.*”

Fr. Oleksa’s address was followed by the acceptance and blessing of the beautiful cross-cultural icon of “Our Lady of Alaska” by Sherry Lynch, which is traveling around the diocese and is currently before the altar at St. Matthew’s.

Here is a summary of the business conducted by the convention:

- The Bishop Discernment Committee reported that there are five candidates currently being considered. They have been interviewed extensively and background checks have been done. The next step in the discernment process is to visit them and their families where they live and minister. [Note: One candidate has prayerfully withdrawn since, leaving four.]
- The election of the new bishop will be held **April 7 – 10, 2010 at Meier Lake**, to be immediately followed by the diocesan convention.
- It was resolved that “*The Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation*” adopted by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church in July 2009 be studied and implemented over the next three years by the parishes and deaneries of the diocese. It was also resolved that this Charter be made available on the diocesan website as a teaching and planning resource for all people and churches in the diocese.
- It was resolved that cross-cultural/anti-racism training be added to the list of trainings required by licensed priests and appointed or elected members of diocesan bodies (e.g. the Standing Committee, etc.).
- St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church in Homer was granted parish status.
- A diocesan budget was accepted.
- **Ann Whitney** of St. David’s Church in Wasilla was ordained to the priesthood in a moving, Spirit-filled service.
- New members of the Society of St. Simeon and St. Anna were also announced and welcomed in that service, including our **Gladys Terry** and **Becky Snow**. [Note: Other new members of the Society from the Interior include **Margaret Bessette** of Circle, **Simon Francis Sr** of Ft. Yukon, **Robert Joseph** of Stevens Village, **William & Minnie Salmon** of Chalkyitsik,

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Bruce Gadwah and **Pauline Wilson**. A reception followed in the Parish Hall. It continued into the next morning; as Tom and Bonnie shared wedding cake with all of us after the Sunday Eucharists.

Several weeks later, on Saturday afternoon, November 14th, we overflowed again with family and friends, as the rector celebrated the wedding of **Shannon Opgenorth** and **Renee Edwin**. Community, family, and joy surrounded the couple, in this celebration at the end of the week of the Annual Old Time Fiddling Festival.

Finally, Monday evening, November 30th, in a private gathering at their home, **the Rev. Mary Nathaniel**, in town again, celebrated the Renewal of Vows of **Mary (Christian)** and **William Schneider**.

Commendations, Funerals, Burials

As noted in the last Newsletter, on Monday, August 24th, 95 years old **Noreen Lillian Hayr** died in Anchorage, where she had lived the last several years. Born, raised and educated in British Columbia, Noreen met her future husband **Art** at a dinner dance in Vancouver. He arrived in Fairbanks to open an office for Dominion Life of Canada and, sending for Noreen, she arrived in Fairbanks after 10 days of boat and train travel. They were married here at St. Matthew's the day she arrived – September 20th, 1939. **John** and **Grace Butrovich** “stood up for them” at the wedding and became lifelong friends. Here they lived and raised their family of three children, duck hunting in the Minto Flats, moose hunting up the Goodpaster River, summering at the Harding Lake cabin, and raising huge gardens. Noreen was the first President of the Top O’ The World Garden Club, a lifelong member of the Pioneers of Alaska Women’s Igloo # 8, and a member of PEO Chapter F since 1975. She is survived by her two surviving children **Richard** and **Barbara**, their families; three grandchildren, and **William** her great grandson. Saturday afternoon, September 26th, St. Matthew's filled for her Memorial service, back home now, led by the rector and **the Rev. Lee Davis**. The Closing Hymn, with candles dimming, was “*Silent Night*” – the St. Matthew's Christmas Moment that Noreen always appreciated; and the last song her daughter Barbara had played for her before she died. “*Sleep in heavenly peace*”.

As also noted in the last Newsletter, on Friday,

September 4th, 10 years old **Zachry Stanley Edward Jones** died suddenly and tragically, as he was being medivaced to Anchorage. The lively son of **Douglas Felix II** and **Ricki Jones**, Zachry was a Hunter Elementary School student here in Fairbanks. He was fine on Wednesday. **The Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino** saw and spoke with him in the Fairbanks Hospital before his medivac. Zachry was one of the first confirmed deaths in Alaska from the H1N1 flu. He's survived by his parents, his sisters **Ashley** and **Shaylynn**, his brothers **Kyle** and **Douglas**, and many many more. St. Matthew's filled for his funeral Friday afternoon, September 11th, with 400+ devastated people, family and friends, spilling onto the sidewalks. The service was led by the rector, **the Rev. Steve Matthew**, and **the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**. Burial followed at Birch Hill; with a potlatch at the Tribal Hall following.

Early Friday morning, September 11th, 46 years old **Stuart Anthony Boyles Sr**, known as “*Big Stu*”, died in the Fairbanks Emergency Room. And prayers were said. Born in Juneau, he lived most of his life in Anchorage and Fairbanks. He's survived by his wife **Karen (Adams) Boyle**, daughter **Marie** and sons **William** and **Stuart**, 5 grandchildren, brothers and sisters, his mother **Flora** and his mother-in-law **Hannah (Solomon) Hope**. Final services and burial were held in Anchorage several days later.

Wednesday, September 23rd, 53 years old **Jimmy Dennis Zirger** passed away in the Fairbanks Hospital. Born in Texas and raised in Oklahoma, Jimmy arrived in Fairbanks in 1978 to work with his father **Roy** in his trucking company. He later has his own trucking company – JDZ Trucking. He's survived by his mother **Dona**, his sister **Mona McGuire** of Oklahoma, 3 daughters, 4 grandchildren, more family and friends, and dogs that he loved. Friends gathered locally Saturday, October 3rd; and finally, Sunday evening, November 29th, friends gathered at St. Matthew's for a final Memorial Service and prayers, led by the rector.

Thursday afternoon, September 24th, as the sun was setting, 79 years old **Bertha (Nictune) “Inugoluk” Moses** passed away in the Fairbanks Hospital, with family and prayers surrounding her. Her husband **Johnson** of course was there. They had never been apart for 61 years. Born in Alatna, she learned her Inupiaq language and traditions from her family. As a teenager, Bertha's father **Oscar** gave her a medical dictionary to read, and she was fascinated. She served Allakaket 24 years as a health aide; and was the first resident manager of the Tanana Chiefs Conference

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Patient Hostel in Fairbanks. Upon her retirement, it was named after her. Fluent in three languages (*Inupiaq, Koyukon, and English*), Bertha spoke softly and gently, with incredible strength of spirit. She was deeply compassionate, deeply intelligent, and deeply wise. And deeply faithful. Bertha and Johnson were always together, living role models of how Life should be and What Was Important. She's survived by Johnson, their 9 children and their families, 33 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and many others. Saturday, September 26th, the David Salmon filled to overflowing for her funeral, led by **Archdeacon Anna Frank, the Rev. Steve Matthew, and Ordination Candidate Shirley Lee**. Her final services and burial were at home in Allakaket several days later.

Friday morning, October 2nd, surrounded by family, 81 years old **Isabel Charlie**, who was always smiling, peacefully died in Denali Center. Born in CrossChacket, Isabel married **Timothy Charlie** in 1942 and together they raised their two children – **Marie Roberts** and **Fabian Charlie**. She was an active member of the community of Minto – from Sunday School teaching to cooking at the School to teaching as a Bi-Lingual Instructor and, here in Fairbanks, she worked at the Fairbanks Al-Anon Club. She is survived by her son **Fabian**, 4 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren, her sister **Agnes Moore**, her many other relations – including her cousin **the Rev. Steve Matthew**, and many more. St. Matthew's filled for her funeral Monday, October 5th, led by **Archdeacon Anna Frank, the Rev. Helen Peters, the Rev. Bessie Titus, the Rev. Steve Matthew, the Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino**, and the rector. Final services and burial were held at Minto Wednesday, October 5th.

Friday, October 9th, 44 years old **Brenda Lee Latvala**, died quietly in her sleep. Originally from Minnesota, and of proudly Winnebago heritage, Brenda had lived in Fairbanks for 25 years. She's survived by **Jon Gustafson**, her love and companion these last 15 years; and 2 children, 3 grandchildren, 7 brothers and sisters, and many more family members in Minnesota and friends here in the Interior. A Memorial Gathering was held at **Moe Samuelson's** house on Noyes Street Sunday afternoon, October 18th, with poems written by her Great Grandmother and prayers led by the rector. Final services were held later in Minnesota.

Saturday, October 10th, 81 years old **Hugh Thomas Phillips Jr** passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at his home. Born in Ruby, and raised for

a time in the Tanana and Anvik Missions when his mother died, he was later raised along the Yukon River by his father, in a traditional subsistence lifestyle. After marrying **Mary Jane Titus**, they lived in Ruby and Kokrines, before moving to Fairbanks. Hugh was employed at the University as a plumber, until his retirement in the early 1990's. Hugh was a familiar voice here in the Interior, because he and Mary Jane were co-founders of KJNP Radio's "*Village Voice*" radio show. Their singing over the radio filled many cabins on cold wintry Saturday nights. He's survived by his daughter **Cheryl**, his son **Todd**, 6 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, his sister **Pearl O'Grady** and her family, and many more. Thursday, October 15th, the Chapel of Chimes Funeral Home filled for his service, led by the rector; with burial following on top of Birch Hill.

Quietly on Friday afternoon, October 16th, 46 years old **Lane Scott Profitt** told his wife Lesa "*I love you*", while he lay in the Fairbanks Hospital . . . and then he quietly died. Born in Montana, and then raised in a number of places with his father in the military, they arrived in Alaska; and Lane worked as a cook for 20 years in the Fairbanks area. He's survived by his wife and companion **Lesa Heffle**, 2 stepchildren, 2 grandchildren, his parents, and many other family members and friends here and Outside. St. Matthew's filled for his funeral, led by the rector, assisted by Aunt **Beverly Joseph**, Thursday afternoon, October 22nd; with burial following at Birch Hill Cemetery. A potlatch followed at the Tribal Hall.

And so, Saturday Midnight, October 31st, as the Feast of All Saints arrived, 6 of us gathered in the Church Narthex to toll the great bell 52 times – one for each of those who had died since last All Saints. The deep sound of the bell, into the dark now November night, as their names were called. And 52 candles burned on the Altar during the Eucharists that morning.

And the roll continued, beginning again.

Sunday morning, November 15th, as Church services were beginning, 61 years old **Thomas "Dale" Carroll Jr.** of Fort Yukon died peacefully in Denali Center, where he'd been the last several months. **The Rev. Deacon Bella Jean Savino** said prayers. Born to the late **Thomas** and **Nellie Carroll** of Fort Yukon, Dale was the oldest of 12 children, a firefighter, dogmusher, and story teller. He had honorably served in the Army National Guard. In the last week of his stay in Denali, he and the rector had had long quiet talks and prayers. He's survived by his lifelong companion **Linda McClain**, her daughters, his 10 brothers and sisters,

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and numerous other family members and friends. His services were held at home in Fort Yukon Wednesday, November 18th.

Tuesday evening, November 17th, quietly and peacefully, 92 years old **Henry “Yede taat da’dt” Williams Sr.** slipped away in Denali Center, where he had been a resident the last 10 years. Born at Hog River, Henry lived a traditional Koyukon lifestyle and was a skilled trapper and hunter. He knew the country wide around Allakaket intimately. Smiling and friendly and full of stories, Henry was also deeply faithful, always attending services at Denali. He’s survived by his brother **William Koyukuk**; his sisters **Lydia Bergman, Sophie Beetus, Lillian Simon** and **Annie Koyukuk**; 8 children and their families; 20 grandchildren; and family and friends throughout the Interior. Friday morning, November 20th, the rector, Ordination Candidate **Shirley Lee**, and the **Rev. Bessie Titus** led a funeral service for Henry at the Fairbanks Funeral Home, before all left to fly home to Allakaket; and his final service and burial there in the days following.

Wednesday, November 24th, with family and friends beside him, 86 years old **Fritz Fredrick Noble** died at home in Wasilla. Born in Tanana, Fritz worked on the Alice and Nenana steamboats, and worked for the Alaska Railroad, retiring in 1977. He’s survived by his sister **Hilda Waldron**, 3 daughters, 4 sons, 15 grandchildren, and many more. His funeral service was held Tuesday, December 1st, at George Hall in Nenana, officiated (*in the Rev. Marilyn Duggar’s absence*) by the **Rev. Deacon Montie Slusher** and the **Rev. Steve Matthew** of St. Matthew’s. Burial followed across the River and atop the Hill.

But. As the funeral procession for Fritz Noble left George Hall and began making their way along the road beside the River, that Tuesday, December 1st afternoon, they passed an ambulance at a neighboring house. The ambulance was too late. 57 years old **Mitchell Demientieff Sr.**, after cutting wood that morning, had died instantly and unexpectedly of a heart attack. [*When the phone call came to the St. Matthew’s Church Office that afternoon, we were watching an unusual gathering of ravens outside. We could not function. The rector and Mitch had done the previous Wednesday morning’s Eucharist together, quietly praying together as the sun came up. He called almost daily from Nenana, just checking on us and giving us the Nenana Weather Report. He frequently stopped by for quiet talks and*

to visit. Ohhhhhhhhh my.] Born and raised in Nenana, Mitch was elected chief of Nenana by the time he was 18 and was President of the Tanana Chiefs Conference, in 1973, when he was only 19. He later would serve a second term. No paragraph can simply describe Mitch and his accomplishments. He was a Leader, when leaders were needed; he taught Tradition and stories and songs, so that others can remember and sing them now; he stood tall, when somebody had to; he was a friend, when a friend was needed. *And more; and more.* Mitch is survived by his wife for 25 years **Kathleen**; 6 children and their families, 14 grandchildren, his 3 sisters **Joyce, Kathy**, and **Janet**, and their families; his brother **Cliff**; numerous other family members, everyone throughout the State and nationally that knew him.....and a growing spruce tree in the St. Matthew’s Churchyard that he gave in memory of his late older sister Shirley. Saturday, December 5th, most of the Interior was in Nenana for his services. A private Catholic Family Mass was held that morning; and then a public ecumenical service at George Hall that afternoon. **Fr. Sean Thomson** of the Catholic Diocese and the **Rev. Marilyn Duggar** officiated, with 8 other Episcopal clergy (*the Rev. Berkman Silas, the Rev. Richard Simmonds, the Rev. Luke Titus, the Rev. Bessie Titus, Archdeacon Anna Frank, the Rev. Canon Ginny Doctor, the Rev. Steve Matthew, and the rector*) assisting, along with all of the religious figures of the community present. Former and current TCC Presidents **Will Mayo** and **Jerry Isaac** gave eloquent eulogies; and his sister **Kathy Morgan** bravely spoke, breaking our hearts. **Shirley Holmberg** smudged the casket, and we were away. As the sun set, he was buried across the River and atop the Hill. And the wind *BLEW and BLEW*. The Potlatch went on until 4 in the morning.

There were other deaths over the last three months that necessarily affected the St. Matthew’s community and need to be noted. 30 years old **Timothy Dohan**, the son of **Polly Hyslop** of Northway, died in early September in New York City, where he was living and working as a senior graphic artist with a Madison Avenue ad agency. His funeral and burial were held Saturday, September 26th in Tanana. 20 years old **Gerald Bruce James Jr.**, the son of **Evelyn** and **Gerald James** of Fort Yukon, died September 13th in Ft. Yukon; and his funeral was held there September 17th. Tuesday, September 29th, 62 years old **James “Mervin” Morgan**, the son of **Herbert Morris** and the late **Alice Pearl Morgan**, died at home in Fairbanks. There was a gathering in his memory here in

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Fairbanks Sunday, October 4th. 78 years old **John Peter Ch'igiioonta** died in Las Vegas Saturday, October 31st. John Peter grew up on the shores of Old John Lake; and later lived in Old Crow, and the St. Mark's Mission in Nenana. His remains will be scattered along the shores of Old John Lake, near his late Uncle **Stephen Peter**, later. Wednesday, November 4th, 60 years old **Lucy Ann Carlo**, daughter of **Poldine** and the late **William Carlo**, died at home. Her burial will be this Spring, on the North side of the Yukon River Bridge. 72 years old **Norma George**, born in a canoe between Wood River and Nenana, died Saturday, November 7th; and her funeral was held Friday, November 13th in Nenana. Also Saturday, November 7th, 68 years old former Borough Mayor **Juanita Helms** died here in Fairbanks. 78 years old **Daniel Dinwoodie** died in Anchorage Monday, November 23rd; and there will be a celebration of his life early this next year. Finally, 56 years old **Marjorie Kowalski Cole** died here in Fairbanks Friday, December 4th. Her funeral was held here in Fairbanks Tuesday, December 8th.

. . . and Visitors and Travels and Nurses and Novices and more

Other things DID happen, of course. **Daisy** and **Skeeter** and **Maria** and **BottleRocket** and **Duck** and **Puppy** and **Lolly** and **Sam** and **Elliott** and **Beethoven** and **Mia** and **Crash** and **Ballerina** and **Bunny** and at least 3 teddy bears and **Yellow the Wolf** and **MORE** came to visit during the services Sunday morning, October 4th, for the Feast of St. Francis Blessing of Animals. Other folks stopped into visit us too, during these months. The Pioneers of Alaska were in town for their Annual Statewide Convention the weekend of September 20th, and that meant **the Rev. Marian Nickelson** of Kenai and **Archdeacon Norman Elliott**, among others, came by to visit.

We went to visit, too. The Wednesday evening service September 16th was cancelled, so



that many of us could drive down the Highway to participate in **the Rev. Marilyn Duggar's** Ordination to the Priesthood in Nenana. **Laura Bender**, **Julia Cockerille**, **Mary Margaret Davis**, and the rector traveled to Anchorage October 8th, officially representing us at the Diocesan Convention [Note: See reflections elsewhere in this Newsletter]. Parents from Ohio were here Sunday, November 15th, to prayerfully give thanks as they welcomed their son safely home from Iraq that week (*and, conversely, special prayers were said October 30th for young Justin Thumma, a Marine returning to a tour in Afghanistan*); and **Rob** and **Kathy Steiner** were here Sunday, November 22nd, surprising us all.

The Choir returned singing on Sunday, September 27th; and Sunday School started up that same Sunday. Sunday, October 18th, we hosted a Health Ministry Parish Nurse graduation ceremony; with **Ann Fleenor**, **Pat Sackinger**, and **Cindy Straiger** all receiving graduation certificates. In a first for everyone present, during the 11:15AM Eucharist on Sunday, November 29th, the rector, acting for **Brother Paul of the Desert**, Abbot of the Abbey of St. Benedict of the Companions of St. Luke, OSB, in Donnelson, Iowa, received **Kathy Mackey** as a "Novice Oblate" into the Order.

And there was music. Through the coordinating efforts of former Senior Warden **Jane Sandstrom** (and ably assisted by her husband **Greg** emceeding), the 6th Annual "St. Matthew's Music and Magic Concert" was held Sunday afternoon, November 22nd. And it was lovely.

And there was food. And *IT* was lovely. There were Covered Dishes celebrating St. Matthew's on September 27th; and All Saints November 1st; and Thanksgiving on Thanksgiving Day. We enjoyed the Community wide dinner and celebration honoring **Archdeacon Anna Frank** Saturday, November 7th. And, in a daring new twist to the usual activity, on Sunday, December 6th, the 9:15 Eucharist was cancelled and we all ate together in a Churchwide Brunch in the Parish Hall.

Singing, eating, and lighting blue Advent candles . . . off we marched into the Darkest part of the Winter.

 [Note: Photographs of many of these events are posted on the St. Matthew's Website: www.stmatthewschurch.org]

SUMMARY of the SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2009 VESTRY MEETINGS

September

The Vestry of St. Matthew's met on Monday, September 14th, with the following present: **Senior Warden Roxy Wright, Junior Warden Karen Kiss, Vestry Clerk Helen Howard, Ray Cockerille, Arlie Nethken, Martha Thomas, Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken**, and the rector. Following an Opening Spiritual Exercise led by **Marty Thomas**, and approval of the August minutes, the following actions were discussed or taken:

- **Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken** presented the September Financial Report, noting that August Operating Income totaled \$24,710 (Year to Date January -August Operating Income = \$186,085) and August Operating Expenses totaled \$27,904 (Year to Date January -August Operating Expenses = \$196,763). This resulted in a monthly deficit for August of -\$3,194; and a Year to Date Deficit of - \$10,678.
- **Candidate for Ordination Shirley Lee** was interviewed by the Vestry and, following discussion and prayer, it was voted unanimously to support Shirley's request to the Diocese for ordination to the diaconate.
- **Marty Thomas** reported on the Diocesan Faith into Tomorrow (FIT) grant that St. Matthew's has received for winter clothing and supplies for the Homeless Ministry. **Charlene Marth** is continuing to work on a contract for **Sexton Tree Nelson**.
- **Patty Merrit** has agreed to coordinate the Sunday School Program. There was discussion and support for the proposed innovations, including shifting the time for the Sunday School to coincide with the 11:15 Eucharist.
- The Vestry will continue doing announcements during the Sunday services; and a Vestry Planning meeting will be held Tuesday, September 29th.
- There was discussion of the Fire Marshall's Inspection (*he was accompanied by Senior Warden Roxy Wright and former Senior Warden Bruce Gadwah on his inspection*) and Final Report. A door will be added to access the electrical panel in the Parish Hall; and there is still discussion about the ceiling in the Mechanical Room. In further property discussions, work is being done on the rectory exterior; **Al Brice** has removed stumps from the church and rectory lawns; and **Ray Cockerille** will work on removing the graffiti on the front door.
- The upcoming Diocesan Convention in Anchorage was noted; and the St. Matthew delegates will be (*as of this date*) **Laura Bender, Mary Margaret Davis, Linda Demientieff** and the rector. **Marilyn Duggar's** upcoming ordination in Nenana was also noted.
- In a discussion about fundraising, **Bruce Gadwah** will bring up his PFD Gas pump again into the Parish Hall; and a possible November Fundraiser will be discussed at the September 29th Planning Meeting;
- Finally, it was noted that **Laura Vines** hopes to re-



start "Cabin Fever University" this Winter; and additionally is interested in beginning a "bartering system" at the Church.

• With a Closing Prayer by **Senior Warden Roxy Wright**, the meeting concluded with the decision to hold the next meeting Tuesday, October 13th.

October

The Vestry of St. Matthew's met on Tuesday, October 13th, with the following present: **Senior Warden Roxy Wright, Vestry Clerk Helen Howard, Arlie Nethken, Martha Thomas, Irene Todd, Charlene Marth, Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken**, and the rector. Following an Opening Spiritual Exercise, and approval of the September minutes, the following actions were discussed or taken:

- **Parish Treasurer Carolyn Nethken** presented the October Financial Report, noting that September Operating Income totaled \$18,115. (Year to Date January -September Operating Income = \$204,200) and September Operating Expenses totaled \$20,900 (Year to Date January -September Operating Expenses = \$217,663). This resulted in a monthly deficit for September of -\$2,785; and a Year to Date Deficit of - \$13,463. There was a wide-ranging financial discussion, noting the rise in electrical costs; and that Permanent Fund checks have not (as opposed to 2008) been distributed yet. There was discussion about the rise of the Morgan Stanley account charges; the need for a spreadsheet tracking the history of the various St. Matthew accounts and line items; and the coming December MDG outreach distribution of +\$2000. It was moved and passed to seek congregational suggestions for the outreach.
- There was follow-up discussion about the September Planning Meeting, which **John Parsons, Ray Cockerille, Arlie Nethken, Marty Thomas, Irene Todd, Roxy Wright, Karen Kiss**, and the rector attended. The meeting developed a 2009-2010 Calendar. The next Planning Meeting will be October 20th.
- The rector and **Marty Thomas** reported on the Diocesan Convention. It was noted that at our January 2010 Parish meeting we will be electing delegates to vote for the election of the next Bishop (at the April 2010 Convention at Meier Lake, outside of Wasilla).
- **Marty Thomas** reported on the FIT grant for Homeless Ministry; **Charlene Marth** continues to work on Sexton Tree Nelson's contract; **Ray Cockerille** has been in contact with the Church Insurance Company about a possible insurance reimbursement; and Vestry members will continue to do the Sunday announcements.
- There was discussion about the Sunday School and the need for possibly providing rides to Sunday School and Church.

(Continued on page 26)

Summary of Vestry Minutes . . .

- **Senior Warden Roxy Wright** discussed a book she was reading - "*The Passionate Steward*" - and the Church as Community, not a secular fundraiser. Family dinners will continue the First Sunday of each month. The rector noted that there are new faces every Sunday at each service, particularly folks returning from Iraq; and the need to welcome them.
- With a Closing Prayer, the meeting concluded with the decision to hold the next meeting Tuesday, November 10th.

November

The Vestry of St. Matthew's met on Tuesday, November 10th, with the following present: **Senior Warden Roxy Wright, Junior Warden Karen Kiss, Vestry Clerk Helen Howard, Ray Cockerille, Charlene Marth, Martha Thomas, Irene Todd**, and the rector. Following an Opening Spiritual Exercise by **Helen Howard**, and approval of the October minutes, the following actions were discussed or taken:

- In the absence of the Treasurer, the October Financial Reports were considered, noting that noting that October Operating Income totaled \$25,634. (Year to Date January - October Operating Income = \$229,573) and October Operating Expenses totaled \$25,775 (Year to Date January -October Operating Expenses = \$243,290). This resulted in a monthly deficit for October of -\$141 and **a Year to Date Deficit of - \$13,717**. Concerns were raised, since most of the pledged Permanent Fund Dividend tithes now have been received.

- **Helen Howard** reported on her research of various CD rates available from a variety of banks and credit unions, and the discussion will continue.
- There was discussion about beginning work on the 2010 Budget. Three vestry members will meet with the rector and Treasurer between November 29th and December 9th to begin work on the Budget, for presentation at the December Vestry meeting. Again, the +\$2000 to be distributed in OutReach money at the December meeting was noted. One suggestion has been received.
- There was discussion about the Planning Meeting; and the follow-up to the Church Insurance reimbursement possibility.
- There was discussion about the December 6th 9:15 Brunch, replacing the 9:15 Eucharist. **Ray Cockerille** will tactfully ask those who go to that service if they are agreeable to the idea; and **Charlene Marth** will research menu ideas.
- The rector reported on his November trip to Stevens Village; and the hope of involving others in future trips.
- Various property repair issues were discussed - the back pew, the rectory, the heater in the narthex.
- Time off for the sexton, the December Newsletter Deadline, and Thanksgiving services were discussed. The need for a Sunday School Christmas Pageant Director was noted. The possibility of a Christmas Bazaar was discussed; and the "*Music and Magic*" Concert scheduled for November 22nd was noted.
- With the decision to hold the next meeting on Tuesday, December 15th, the meeting closed with a spiritual exercise led by **Irene Todd**.

Diocesan Convention . . .

(Continued from page 20)

Eunice Williams

& **Exenia Sam** of Venetie, and others.]

If you would like to follow up any of the topics in my report in greater detail, there are links in the diocese's website www.episcopalak.org.

It was a great, if rather exhausting, convention and I thank you for asking me to attend on your behalf.

Please, talk and listen to God in one another.

My Thoughts on the Convention – Marty Thomas

I'd never attended Convention. I had no idea how things worked. There would be a myriad of people, strangers, in attendance. Convention traditionally falls on the anniversary of the burial of our daughter, Lyndsay. I am uncomfortable in crowds. Could I have been any more unready for this weekend?

I was not a delegate. I was invited to attend Convention as the Chair of the Transition Committee, a part of the Bishop's Search Committee, with the request to give an update on our Committee's accomplishments. I packed my suitcase wondering "*really, God, what is your plan?*" We'd been unable to meet as a committee thus far with so many issues still in the works. Maybe Convention weekend was our opportunity for a face-to-face meeting? Still, everyone

attending seemed to have a real mission. I felt like a drifter with no particular place to hang my hat.

Things aren't always as they appear. It was such a growing experience. First of all, those in attendance were not strangers at all. They were people of God just like me, searching, looking for ways to understand and communicate, the threads of their lives meandering from all points of our State through joys and pain to come to this one place on this one weekend. We have many differences, yet we are one in the same spirit. Pondering on our differences and our journeys became a focus for me, as I prayed to put myself aside to accept those around me as God's own.

We were blessed with thought-provoking speakers, opportunities to reflect and discuss what we had heard, deeply moving services and joyful music sung with such fervor. Business was taken care of, the days flowed event into event with opportunities to rest, eat and pray. I heard many times that this was the most peaceful and productive convention ever.

In the end I was not called upon to give a report. And hopes for holding an impromptu meeting fell through due to illnesses. So clearly God's plan for me had nothing to do with the Transition Committee, but maybe just 'transition'.

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

O Ye Frost and Cold

Change Service Requested*

December 24, 2009

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.

CHRISTMASTIDE

Thursday, December 24th -Christmas Eve

5PM Christmas Eve Eucharist
8PM Christmas Eve Eucharist
10:30PM Caroling in the Church
11PM Christmas Eve Eucharist

Friday, December 25th - Christmas Day
11AM Christmas Day Eucharist



Sunday, December 27th - the 1st Sunday of Christmas

8AM Eucharist
10AM A Festival of Lessons and Carols, plus Eucharist

Sunday, January 3rd - the 2nd Sunday of Christmas

8AM Eucharist
10AM **GIANT CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**, plus Eucharist