



## The Alaska United Methodist Conference

ERBELE ETCHINGS

June 2014

Dear Friends,

As we write this, the “cruise season” is once again underway. The downtown has been cleaned up and the tourist shops are open. The current phase of the dock repairs is complete and the buses are scurrying back and forth.

Each year, Memorial Day through Labor Day, the church changes the Sunday school rooms into a hostel for the summer. Thus far we have had guests from Australia, Canada, Germany, Taiwan and from across the US. We are delighted that Paul and Patti Caseman from Arizona have returned for the first half of the summer to be the managers of the hostel. Then Marvin Jones from Idaho, who was here two years ago, will come for three weeks followed by Linda Shoup from Washington. All of them have a record of being marvelous hosts. If you are interested in being the hostel manager in the future let us know and we can talk details. Contact us at: [www.ketchikanhostel@gmail.com](mailto:www.ketchikanhostel@gmail.com)

In May, Teri returned from another trip to Haiti. This time he was there for 3 weeks. The audit department of the General Board of Global Ministries asked him to return to set up the accounting books for the Relief and Development Department and the Education Department of the Haitian Methodist Church. He enjoyed reuniting with friends he had made last fall during his initial sojourn. There are no pictures to show you or tales to tell because this was an intense 3 weeks of desk work. He has enjoyed serving the greater church with his auditing skills and hopes to be invited to do more of it.

Ev traveled quite a bit during the winter and spring as one of the leaders for the UMW Mission U. Because of the size of Alaska, the United Methodist Women hold 4 events during the year. Her teaching topic was “Living Sacramentally”. It was a rewarding and fulfilling experience for Ev, and she hopes she will be able to do it again sometime in the near future.

### DAY SHELTER

First City Homeless Services held their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Empty Bowl supper. Fourteen restaurants provided the soup, and three businesses provided funds for the bowls, which were actually large mugs. The people who bought tickets for the event could have all the soup they wanted plus keep the bowls. Over 200 people came and \$5,000 was raised.



The Free Radicals entertained the crowd with toe tapping Blue Grass music.

The Ketchikan Homeless Day Shelter, which is housed in the fellowship hall of our church, is meeting a recognized need in the community and finding assistance from the city, the borough, the state, businesses and individuals.

We recently had an onsite review by the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. This is what Chris L. Carson, CIMG, Project Manager had to say at the conclusion to his report:

*This is a very well thought-out program that definitely meets the needs of the community. The services they provide with the amount of funding available to them are a testament of their dedication. Of my many years working with Non Profit organizations, I've never seen a group of individuals so passionate about a program as this one. Excellent Job!!!!*



Youth from a local church provided 80 brown bag meals for the Saturday lunch program.

Your gifts through the Advance #3020487 – Downtown Ministries helps purchase the Saturday lunches – thank you.

## CHOOSE RESPECT

**How likely are you to be raped?** It may be a question of geography. A sobering CNN series of reports examined rape statistics across the country and uncovered a wide variety of crime rates – **with Alaska clocking in at triple the national average. Even more shockingly, its child sexual assault rate is six times the national average.** Governor Sean Parnell calls it “an epidemic.” And statistics paint an incomplete picture, because they only reveal reported rapes. The true rate, in Alaska and nationwide, is likely considerably higher.



Domestic violence is a sad reality for Alaskans. Each year the governor proclaims a day to have a “Choose Respect” rally. Our march begins across the street from our church and goes down Main Street. Though a rally is not enough, at least it is a first step. Bringing awareness and encouraging people to speak up must be done to initiate concrete action toward eradicating this blight.

## FAMILY NEWS

Our son, Andrew and granddaughter, Emma, were here for a couple of weeks. The doctor declared it unwise for Jolita, who is due in July, to fly to the United States. So she and 18 month old Ella had to stay home in Lithuania.

On April 27, Jolita was ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church in Lithuania. We are very proud of her.



Later in the summer we will have Anna and her Emily and Julian. Anna and Joe announced this week that they will be giving us our sixth grandbaby in January. We are beaming with joy for our expanding family.

## ITINERATION

Part of the expectation for GBGM missionaries is that we visit churches that are supporting through their prayers, gifts and financially and also with churches that are seeking ways to enter into ministry with GBGM missionaries and Advance Special programs. This fall we plan to visit New England and the Dakotas.

We will be available October 7- November 9, 2014. Thus far we can confirm these dates:

1. Oct 7-9 NYC at GBGM
2. Oct 9-11 Rhode Island
3. Oct 12 – Wilmington, Massachusetts
4. Oct 12 – Wells, Maine
5. Oct 19 – Redwood Falls, Minnesota
6. Oct 20 - 30 – North Dakota
7. Nov 1- 9 – South Dakota

We will begin contacting those who are Covenant Churches to see what date works best for us to visit.

**While we are in your region  
we will speak to any UM group  
any time - any place.**

**Contact us so we can put you on our calendar.**

We thank you for your prayers and support.

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**Advance Numbers for your financial gifts:**  
**Alaska UM Churches # 931027**  
**Evelyn's Salary Support # 10832Z**  
**Downtown Ministry – Day Shelter #3020487**



**Teri – Evelyn  
&  
Chief Johnson**