

June 2017 Alaska Circuit Update

Faith Lutheran, Anchorage

Iglesia Luterana de Fe en Cristo, Anchorage

Pastor Chris Ewings

Principal Tom Zarnstorff

Faith Lutheran Church underwent all kinds of changes over the past year. Words like “sprinkler project” and “remodel” were words that were frequently on the minds and in the mouths of the people of Faith. You note these changes when you walk into our place of worship and see a new sprinkler system hugging the ceiling. You see the evidence when you walk downstairs and find the renovated classrooms in our school and the remodeled office area. You can almost feel the warmth of the new coat of living red on our brightly painted walls in the fellowship hall and the safe, clean aura of the fresh and homey colors that adorn the halls downstairs. The Lord blessed our efforts to build up His house and the results continue to glorify our God.

But it wasn't just the church structure that underwent all kinds of changes; even more importantly the Lord worked in our hearts and lives to remodel His Church—the people of God. The Word of the Lord worked powerfully among us. He used the pointed words of His law to show us our sins, the rotting planks and dilapidated walls of our lives, so that we would see our own need for Him to rebuild us. He used the comforting words of His Gospel to show us our Savior, the One Who shows us how much we are worth to Him by giving His life to make us His Own. Our God sent us His Holy Spirit to edify us, building up the Church and bestowing upon us the gifts we need to serve Him. We added many opportunities for the people of Faith to hear God's Word in small group Bible studies and monthly men's and women's Bible studies. The Lord blessed us by building up His house—His people—and the results continue to give God glory.

Over the course of the year, the Lord blessed us with all kinds of new living stones, too: souls that joined our church and the Church of Christ Jesus. Through baptism and instruction in God's Word, the Lord caused His Church to grow. We had 8 adult confirmations and 6 adult baptisms in the past year. We had 19 Hispanic teens join us for confirmation class, 6 of whom asked for a special class in Spanish. We advertised our Bible information class, called “Making Life Better,” on Facebook and had 4 souls join us through that ministry. We had nearly 30 people join our congregation.

The Lord, in His wisdom, also chose to remodel His Church on earth by relocating several members to their eternal home. On April 1, the Lord called His servant and our beloved pastor, brother and friend--Jim Oldfield--to His Heavenly mansion.

The Lord also blessed us with a very large number of visitors and contacts as He undertook efforts to expand His Church, using the power of His Gospel to cement us together as a beautiful, living building. We have had at least 1 first time visitor in 56 of the past 60 weeks. Our Toddler Time program has reached over 350 families since its inception. Efforts to reach out to the community through summer camps and community projects have started to give us a bigger footprint in the city

of Anchorage. We hosted Financial Peace classes at Faith as well as “A Return to Grace” at our local theater and were blessed by the results of both. The Lord is building up His house and the results give God all the glory.

Faith Lutheran School was blessed to have Leah Snyder join us as our Kindergarten teacher this year. Together with Melissa Mittelstadt’s zeal and enthusiasm and Tom and Cindy Zarnstorff’s experience and hard work, our school took strides forward. We saw an increase of enrollment in the lower grades which is helping us build our school from the bottom up. As we teach young minds and prepare young hearts, we see the Lord’s work among us and it is marvelous in our eyes!

As we reflect on the blessings and even the challenges of the past year, we stand in awe of the Church God has constructed among us. We rejoice that He has given each one of us—every single soul—a place in His house and work to do for His glory. Then, as living stones, the people of Faith seek to live the purpose God has intended for us that we may attain the goal that we have set as a congregation: “Alive in Christ to share life in Christ with all.” To God alone be the glory!

Faith Hmong Lutheran, Anchorage

Pastor Pao Moua

Greetings Brothers of the PNW!

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! Faith Hmong continue to share the Gospel message to the Hmong community of Anchorage Alaska. As we reflect on the church we are happy that the Lord has given us one new family, and two baby baptism this past year.

As Faith Hmong continues to share with the Hmong community. We are happy that a few of the event this past year was a success and able to share God’s word with many. One of our better turn out is our Thanksgiving event in November and our Valentine event in February drawing a little over 35+ people from the community for joining us. We continue to prepare for this coming year that the Lord will bring many more to hearing his word and that many will be save.

Faith Hmong, My family and I would like to thank PNW mission board and CEF for the purchase of a parsonage this ministry. This has been a great blessing for my family and this ministry.

We all continue to give thanks for the support in this ministry and will continue to ask for your prayers for this ministry.

In Christ,

Pao Moua

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran, Anchorage

Pastor Fred Voss

Shepherd of the Hills continues to serve the saints in S. Anchorage and remote areas of Alaska. We finished our building/remodeling project last year. We have been enjoying the extra space and especially the expanded narthex for fellowship. The project has had a positive reaction from our neighbors, many of whom have commented on how nice the property looks, both inside and out. Attendance is up and we have had some new faces in worship. We continue to serve folks on Kodiak Island and have seen a small increase in our group there. Pastor Voss continues to serve as a Police and Fire chaplain assisting officers and firefighters, EMTs and EMS workers and members of the community. We are thankful for God's continued blessings.

Peace Lutheran Church

Little Lambs of Peace Preschool, Eagle River, Alaska

Pastor Brian Hackmann

Teacher/Director Jennifer Keller

Jesus' church in Eagle River is experiencing his blessings on a day-to-day basis. This year we started out the year with a larger than normal number of attendees in Bible Information Class. We've had several Adult Confirmations already this year with several more scheduled in the coming weeks.

We are planning a Preschool Day Camp next week and hope to meet some new families in the process. Lord willing this will be an opportunity to introduce our preschool to a new batch of families with preschool age children. Enrollment seems to be higher at this time than it was last year, and we were able to pay for most of our expenses with tuition income last year, so we are praying that enrollment continues to climb and that we might be able to be a self-supporting ministry again this coming school year.

Later this summer we are hosting our first ever Path to Victory Soccer Camp. We are hoping to reach a new portion of our community with the gospel of Jesus. It should be a new and exciting approach to ministry that we are praying both our community and our membership will be excited about.

Light of the World Lutheran, Fairbanks

Pastor Jason Strong

The radiance of God's grace and the light of his love continues to shine brightly on his people at Light of the World. As with every congregation, we have had our fair share of struggles, but this past years, God's blessings up here in Fairbanks have certainly been overshadowing.

Our membership has seen a sharp increase due to about 10 new military families moving to one of the two bases in the area (we've typically had two or three at a time). Besides adding an influx of children, they've brought some fresh and new perspective to our ministries here. Based on the experience of one of these families, our Outreach Team will be looking at starting up a Mom & Tots group this coming fall, and we're exploring different ways to get involved in the community more, like supporting our local soup kitchen and helping out at the community food bank on a monthly basis.

God has also moved the people here to be extremely generous in their giving. We started funding to replace the roof on the parsonage last October and met our funding goal by Easter. We're starting funding for handicap access, and we're hoping to raise funds to put in a playground by next summer as well. Some have even started talking about expanding our current facilities!

Of course, our other ministries at Light of the World are a blessing as well. Our women's group (G.L.O.W.) are looking to send a record amount of women down to the Alaska Women's Retreat in September. Work continues on creating an every-member stewardship program. Our VBS continues to be a great outreach tool to the community and a great service opportunity for members. We're looking at numbers in the 50's again this year. Now, in a couple of months, the daylight will decrease; the darkness will return. We thank God, however, that his Light and his blessings will remain!

Christ Lutheran, Juneau & Grace Lutheran, Sitka

Pastor Steve Wall

By God's grace we continue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus in Southeast Alaska. We continue to experience having long time members moving out of the area, but we have also seen a small increase in the number of people in Bible Information Class. The biggest challenge facing our congregation is financial as we have consistently been falling well short of meeting our budget.

Several years ago we completed a land swap with the City of Juneau so that they would be able to access land behind the church for housing development. We anticipate that construction will begin next Spring and we are looking forward to having a mission field in close proximity to the church. In the meantime, the City of Juneau has also contacted us about using our driveway for a temporary

emergency access to the new development which could potentially provide a financial benefit to the congregation.

We continue to stream our services online for the benefit of the members of Grace Lutheran Church and others throughout Southeast Alaska. May God bless our ministry as we preach and teach the fullness of God's Word in this remote, beautiful, and unique part of the world.

In Christ, Pastor Steven Wall

Grace Lutheran Church and School, Kenai

Pastor Rob Guenther

Principal Ryan Holper

God continues to shower us with his Grace here in Kenai with blessing upon blessing! Our school year has drawn to a close with enrollment projections for the 2017-18 school year already suggesting that we will have our 9th straight year of increased enrollment. At each of our last 3 open houses we've enrolled two more preschoolers. It looks like we will likely set records with 80+ students this fall!

The increased enrollment, as well as several new members (parents joining through the BIC), we've been financially stable and have been able to invest some of those dollars in a number of smaller projects to improve our property and grounds again. This year we upgraded our heating equipment and switched all of our lighting to LED (reducing our utilities bill to almost half of what it had been)!

Right now, we're going through the arduous task of getting our preschool licensed with the state. That's taking a lot of time from our principal, but is helping our preschool to be better and safer. We look forward to completing that process this summer.

We're also getting ready for our 6th annual Path to Victory Soccer Camp (expecting another 100 campers again). We're excited to share Jesus' love at the camp, but also hopeful that it will bring a number of students to Grace Lutheran School as it's done the last 3 years (we've had at least one preschooler enroll per year who had never heard of us prior to the soccer camp).

We rejoice in God's abundant grace to us at Grace and on the Kenai Peninsula! And we're thankful that God's love has continued to sustain us as he strengthens us by Word and Sacrament!

In Him,
Rob

King of Kings Lutheran, Wasilla

Pastor Robb Robbert

This past year at King of Kings Lutheran was another year of God's grace:

- We said goodbye to some good friends who moved outside.
- We welcomed other families into our fellowship.
- We have been busy beautifying our 35 year-old campus.
- Our CEF loan was reduced significantly under the theme "Debt Free by 23".
- A committee from our church is working with me in putting together a book that will be ready by next year's convention to commemorate 50 years of gospel work by the Wisconsin Synod here in Alaska.
- I have been working with three groups of people on becoming members of our congregation. For two groups the challenge is language and for one the challenge is a Calvinistic background of some members. I have talked with my CP and the DP and have a plans of action in place.
- I have accepted the position of chairman for the Ministry of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for the synod. Please tell me how I can help you and your congregation in that matter.
- I am sorry to be missing this year from convention. I had to go back to Wisconsin for my oldest daughter's wedding. I look forward to seeing you next year.
- Next year Jerusalem!!!!

