



# Soundings

September 2010

## VIEW OF THE SOUND

*In the beginning of God's creating the skies and the earth — when the earth had been shapeless and formless, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and God's spirit was hovering on the face of the water — God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.*  
(Genesis 1:1-4a)

Sitka Lutheran Church is certainly not “shapeless and void”, but it is September and that brings the start to many things here at the church. What a perfect opportunity to use the good light that God created as we look to these new beginnings. Sunday School started August 29<sup>th</sup>. A working group for outreach met late last month. (As this is being written a group considering the budget, and another group beginning the conversation on stewardship are scheduled to meet before August is out.) Before, during, and after all these conversations we should be in prayer seeking the kingdom of God, the mission of God, the good light of God.

This year's Sunday school marks the beginning of a new Sunday school curriculum. It is called Akaloo. Jesus said to his disciples, “follow me.” The name Akaloo is inspired by the Greek word *ακολουθειν* : *akolouthein* (“to follow”). It is a faith formation program designed for the whole congregation, pre-k through adult. This year we will be using it for grades pre-k through 3rd, 7th through high school. The program is based on asking and answering age appropriate questions in the following five areas, Discovering the Bible; Experiencing God; Becoming a Disciple; Celebrating the Church; and Embracing the World. For a sneak-peek at some of the questions and take a video tour through the program go to [www.akaloo.com](http://www.akaloo.com). It is my expectation that all 48 children and youth listed in our current directory plus MORE will have shown up for the new beginning of Sunday School. It is my hope that our teachers — Eve Fish, Laura Buehler, Catherine Hawk, and Ben Downey — have their hands full. Be prepared to help out.

As mentioned above, the working group for outreach had a successful meeting. Notice it is not called a committee? For some mysterious reason lost to time that word, “committee” makes people run for the hills. So, this *group* came up with a few ideas. One of them

was to repeat a success from last year — a pizza making/eating party with the kids from Mt. Edgecumbe. This took place on August 29<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped that we develop a closer relationship with the students there. I know this is something that has been important for the church. Another outreach idea that has been completed is a follow-up letter to those Vacation Bible School participants who did not designate a church-home on their registration form. The Sunday worship and school schedules for all five organizing churches were listed. A few ideas came up that would require someone who is interested doing some further work on them. Who would like to find out about the welcome packet that is given to new Coast Guard families? Can we include information about our church life in it? Who would like to think about what we might be able to offer Mt. Edgecumbe kids on Sunday afternoon when they come streaming into town? Who would like to explore the possibility of holding a Fair Trade Fair this fall? Meanwhile, here are some things we all can do — share your life in Christ with a stranger, they won't be a stranger very long. Share the good news with the most unlikely person you can think of, they won't be as “unlikely” as you think. But even if you never say anything out loud remember this: your LIFE = Evangelism, your LIFE = Outreach.

Money. Our prayer team especially, and everyone else I hope, has continued to pray for the work of the Holy Spirit to be in the midst of our conversations about stewardship and budget. But as Bishop Keys has pointed out, “money follows ministry, follows mission.” When was the last time you took a look at the mission statement of Sitka Lutheran Church? It is printed in every newsletter. I urge you to take a look at it today. I urge you to pray through it today. Does it reflect this church's ministry in God's mission as it is today, as it was in the past, as it should be in the future? Will our budget and stewardship support this mission statement?

Seek the good light. Let us join with the Holy Spirit in the work of God for the good of all.

*Pastor Sandra +*





... from the Bookshelf

and

... from the Sacristy

were not submitted in time for this issue of the *Soundings*.

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### MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 11, 2010 SLC CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING

Attending: Pastor Sandra Rudd, Harvey Brandt, Helen Cunningham, Wayne Dye, Jon Fish, Kim Hunter, Greg Johnstone, Chris Pryor, Elaine Strelow.

Absent: Craig Buehler, Ben Downing (out of town). Myron Oen (medical).

Vice President Greg Johnstone called the meeting to order after 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 11, 2010.

Opening prayer was led by Pastor Sandra.

SLC summer volunteers Bill and Carleen Kehrberg were introduced and thanked for their gracious ministry to our congregation and visitors.

Bible work focused on Ephesians 4:17 – 5:7 concerning renewal of the new self in Christ and how we are to behave.

Minutes of the July 14 meeting were approved.

Council members agreed to deposit in the General Fund a \$500 gift from the Missouri congregation of July volunteers Dave and Janice Reynolds.

Harvey Brandt reported receiving an English translation of portions of a Finnish prayer book in the 1840s church artifacts.

A printed Treasurer's Report was not available because of Helen Cunningham's vacation out of town and timing of bank statement for reconciliation. She said finances appear to be stable.

Pastor's Report was reviewed as printed. Helen Cunningham moved, seconded by Harvey Brandt and carried, that vacation time be granted to Pastor Sandra for approximately September 12-18 ahead of the First Call Theological Education training she is required to attend September 20-23 at Holden Village, Washington.

Attendance will be publicized for the Southeast Lutheran churches Cluster Meeting to be held in Wrangell on October 8-10.

### Committee Activity

Parish Life – Rally Day with youth focus is planned for Sunday, August 29, with potluck breakfast at 9:00 a.m., followed by Sunday School and Adult Forum. Possibilities for other adult learning were mentioned.

Parish Resources – Printed report highlighted by Harvey Brandt. A meeting was set for Wednesday, August 25, at 7:00 p.m. for budget committee to formulate a financial spending plan for 2011. The stewardship advocacy committee will meet on Wednesday, September 1, at 7:00 p.m. The Council reviewed the need for prior approval of purchases.

Parish Outreach – A pizza making party for teens was scheduled for Sunday afternoon, August 29, with special invitation to Mt. Edgecumbe High School students. A meeting was set for Wednesday, August 18, at 7:00 p.m. for outreach committee reactivation.

### New Ministry Opportunities

An SLC long-range calendar planning meeting was scheduled for the September Council meeting.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Elaine Strelow, Secretary

The next SLC Congregation Council meeting will be Wednesday, September 8 at 7 p.m. This is an open meeting. Members of the congregation are invited to audit the meeting. †

### SUMMER VOLUNTEERS FAREWELL AND HELLO

**Bill and Carleen Kehrberg** of Bradenton, Florida and Sheldon, Iowa were our very capable volunteers for August. In a note they submitted to the Sunday bulletin, "It has been a true blessing and an amazing opportunity for us not only to spend a month in beautiful Sitka, but to develop friendships that will be everlasting and to be part of the congregational life of Sitka Lutheran. Your church history is so unique and valuable — you are to be commended for keeping it alive and sharing it with others."

Thank you, Carleen and Bill, for your dedicated service. Safe travels and come again soon.

Les and June Huth will serve as September Volunteers at SLC. Both are retired educators with many years of distinguished service in the Iowa public schools and at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa (and other points throughout the world). Les taught at Sheldon Jackson College the summer of 2006.

They have volunteered extensively in Honduras, Mexico, Tanzania, China and New Orleans (after Hurricane Katrina). Les has led Lutheran mission trips to Tanzania several times. As they state most emphatically, "The work of the Lutheran Church is a very critical part of our lives. We have remained very active in the church, traveling and promoting equity and justice according to God's will."

They have been blessed with 5 children, 14 grandchildren and have parented 34 Foster children.

Sitka Lutheran Church welcomes Dr. Les and June Huth in service as September volunteers. †

## INDONESIA MISSION REPORT

*This piece written by Kristi Johnson, Mission Team Leader from St. Mark Lutheran in Anchorage, clearly illustrates the point of sending people on these Mission Trips instead of just sending money. This clearly points out why SLC members and others should consider going on a trip of this kind.. .H Brandt*

Clyde indicated this had to do with conversion of USD into rupiah. Since we got a better rate in Scianter, next time we probably should not convert the bulk of our funds here. To some extent, the in-country fees this time (the \$500) were a shot in the dark because we had no real sense of what we paid for things on the first two trips. We will be better able to estimate this cost next time. I gave the orphanage about \$600 when I left for transportation, food, etc., which was on top of the \$3500 we had paid in plus whatever individuals paid for along the way.

If this comment had to do with whether it was worth spending the money on the trip, one of the questions Mr. Bakkara and Emmy and I talked about after y'all left was whether they would have preferred we give them the money we spent on the trip rather than us coming. They (and the rest of the staff confirmed this in other conversations) are convinced that our presence is more important. When talking with the staff informally, they repeatedly talked about what an inspiration it was for them for us to be there and the positive impact they believe we have on the children. On that final note, I would add that I believe what we bring has very little to do with teaching English. No child probably spoke better English at the end of our visit (except maybe for Berkat, who not only spoke better English, but also spoke better bahasa Indonesia, but not because of our teaching, but because of the time, attention, and love that was

given). In my mind, teaching English is simply the vehicle we use to build relationships with the children and to show them God's love. †

*The following article was taken from the Alaska Synod August newsletter "OutFast". You can see the complete newsletter at the Synod website, [www.elcaalaska.net](http://www.elcaalaska.net)*

## THIS IS THE TIME!

**Sabbatical Gave Me Time.** Time to slow down, read, study, play, catch fish, write, pray, and do projects (electrical, plumbing, down trees, garden, lighting, get rid of stuff, etc.). Time is a commodity that seems scarce at "times." Time is something you cannot make, you have to **Take the Time** or it does not happen. Taking these 57 days (with about five for work related activity) is the most time I have had off since I was fourteen years old. This was a time of learning about myself, this call to ministry, and what we face next.

### What were the personal learnings from this time?

> Exhaustion. Most of those around me--work, family and myself--realized how exhausted I was. The rush of September to early December and the non-stop January to the end of May adds up to 147 days of travel, 70,000 miles of flying, and about 70 hours per week. Learning: Take better care of myself by losing weight, getting regular exercise while traveling (I am working out 5-6 days a week when home), taking days off during the "crazy" times, and not overbooking the schedule.

> Prayer. My prayer discipline was not all that I hoped, yet God's presence throughout this time was constant and productive. This is not to say that prayer always has to be productive, but it was in that I came to some clarifications on what I need to pay attention to related to this call to ministry. This call needs to be more about relationships and not administration; it needs to grasp the future and not just hold on to the past; it needs to be about *metanoia*--a radical change of heart, mind and behaviors--for pastors and congregations. Prayer is the gateway to these conversations.

> Study and Teaching. Knowing my passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the joy of sharing it with others, I need to take more time for study and create opportunities to teach and disciple others. Having time to read, study and write made the sabbatical transformative (see my sabbatical reading list). It is

too easy not do the serious work of theology and scriptural study; to slide into the same old resources and ideas without looking at contemporary biblical and theological work. Three more books remain on my list to read in August: *After You Believe* NT Wright, *Contemporary Christologies* Schweitzer and Wind, *Sun, Soil, Spirit* Robb.

> Family. I love my wife and my kids (and I found out that I am to be a grandpa).

### **Sabbatical Learnings for the Church, the Alaska Synod and your congregation:**

> Urgency. God has an urgent message for the world to hear. Why is it urgent? Because it will make people's lives better almost immediately! The gospels share this repeating theme of "immediately" that conveys this urgency to Jesus' message and the mandate to spread the Good News. This urgency is often lost in the church and our congregations. Yet, we are in an urgent time as the church. The research I have done has only made this urgency more real and pressing. And I am realistic: many pastors do not share this conviction, others still feel that the "good old days" are right around the corner, many feel we should not rock the boat and let things be, and congregations worry about moving too fast. Yet, in these times, we had better act while we still have the capacity to do so. More on this over the next few months.

> Vision. Urgency without vision is anarchy (and we do not want that, now do we). We, the Body of Christ, have to embrace God's mission in the world--life-giving, reconciling, healing and Kingdom building--so to move ourselves into what that mission looks like in our places, people and communities; that is Vision. A congregation's vision is only real when we hold ourselves accountable for getting there. If it is only some nice thought that never gets acted upon, then it is only a fantasy. Vision has laid out strategic plans, actions and evaluations connected to them. This is the time for every congregation to define what their Vision of God's Mission looks like in their place at this time.

> Passion. Passion without Vision is fanaticism, Vision without Passion is a dream. Our passions for life and ministry as the church are always met in the life, ministry and passion of Jesus Christ. Jesus is passionate about the Father, about compassion and mercy, about life and love. Our passion in ministry is fed and focused by the Spirit through prayer, sacra-

ments, and community. If we are not passionate about it, then why do it? I pray that each of us finds that passion for God and ministry. This is what makes new ministries happen. It intensifies the commitment and celebrations of what is accomplished. Imagine: What if each of us were passionate about our relationship with/in God and each other for the sake of the Kingdom.

> Visibility. Most adults ages 18-45 believe that Christianity has nothing for them. Their view of "Christian" values is overwhelmingly negative e.g. anti-homosexual, judgmental, hypocritical, old fashion, and insensitive to others (and that includes those who go to church). Research tells us that if a young person has not made a faith connection by the time they are eighteen then there is only 6% chance they will do so afterwards. The reality is one segment of the Christian spectrum has laid claim to the "public" image of Christianity in this country. Our faith communities do not have the visibility as centers for Christ's love that is necessary to capture the attention of the public square. Will we be a voice in the Christian identity conversation or do we just fade away? If the research from Barna, ELCA Research and Evaluation, PEW and others is correct, then this is the time for congregations to have that *metanoia*--radical change of heart, mind, and actions--experience in their community life. Now is the time to start this work anew. No excuses, no more resting, the sabbatical is over. Let's get to work!

Pastor Michael Keys  
Bishop, Alaska Synod ELCA

Prayer is not merely an occasional impulse to which we respond when we are in trouble: prayer is a life attitude.

~Walter A. Mueller

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God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer.

~Mother Teresa

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As long as there are tests, there will be prayer in schools. ~Author Unknown



## Celebrating Our Heritage

### An Historical Instrument Sounds New Notes

Sitka Lutheran Church's 1844 Kessler Organ #45,  
first pipe organ on the West coast of North America

**Harvey D. Huiner, organist**

An excellent gift idea! Each CD is \$20 (inc. s/h). Make check payable to Sitka Lutheran Church and send it to Cynthia Johnstone, Sitka Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 598, Sitka, AK 99835. Be sure to include your mailing address. For CD details, e-mail the church office at [slc.admin@acsalaska.net](mailto:slc.admin@acsalaska.net)



*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of what then shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27)*

#### Prayers of strength, courage and faith in cancer treatment:

Chris Pryor's sister, Linnea, Carl Anderson's friend, Casey Sorem, Sue Fleming's great-niece Anna and her family; Tom Smotherman; Kelly Perkins; Anna Lawton's cousins, John Ricaporte and John Bartels Jr.; Eve Fish's brother, Jaeson Hora; Phyllis Kluting

#### Prayers for heart or stroke patients: Emma Kohler's son, "Butch"; Shirley Anderson

#### Prayers for other chronic health issues: Trevor Kluting

#### Prayers for other needs: Anna Lawton's friend, Sharon Stetson

Alaska Synod Prayer Partner, M/V Christian, Southeast Alaska villages

Pioneers' Home residents and staff

Families of all who are serving or have died serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world.

Bishops Mark Hanson (ELCA) & Michael Keys (Alaska Synod)

**Please call the church office, 747-3338, with any changes to the prayer list.**

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**Sitka Lutheran Church has a website.**

[www.sitkalutheranchurch.org](http://www.sitkalutheranchurch.org)

There you'll find:

- a list of weekly events
- links to the history of SLC
- the current issue of our monthly newsletter, *Soundings* and calendar
- a lot of information and links to much more



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH & SERVICE

**HISTORY COMMITTEE** coordinates the Summer Volunteer Program and promotes our rich history. Call Harvey Brandt at 747-6447 for more information.

**WEDNESDAY SOUP & WORSHIP:** At 6 p.m. we share a meal of soup and bread. We take turns cooking. A casual vespers service and/or scripture study begins at 6:30. Occasionally we share Holy Communion. Everyone is invited to participate in this relaxed and meaningful experience.

**ALTAR GUILD:** Dedicated to preparing the worship space. New members are welcome. If you are interested, contact Marilyn Hanson, 747-6989.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL (age 3 through high school) & ADULT FORUM:** Every Sunday September through May, 9:15 a.m.

**WOMEN OF THE ELCA:** All women of Sitka Lutheran Church are members of Women of the ELCA and are encouraged to participate. Meetings are held at 12:05 p.m. first and third Thursdays of each month. Call Elaine Strelow, 747-3469 for more information.

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL** meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. following soup and vespers/scripture study at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend this meeting.

**QUILTS TO COMFORT:** From October through March, come and help stitch quilts together from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come and go as you are able every Tuesday in the Fellowship Hall. No special talent is required.

**PIONEERS' HOME HOLY COMMUNION,** Sundays at 1 p.m., shared a ministry with St. Peter's Episcopal Church. †



Prayer Ventures is a guide to daily prayer for the global outreach ministry of the church. It is produced by the Division for Global Mission and the Division for Outreach. Find your copy for this month in the narthex. †

**The Church office needs a new computer printer. It will cost about \$100. Can you help? Please send a donation to Sitka Lutheran Church (Printer), P.O. Box 598, Sitka, AK 99835**