

The Northern Light

Featuring the people and events of First Congregational Christian Church of Anchorage

June 2017

Inside

Page 1	Minister's Message
Page 2	Moderator's Message Life and Learning Outreach
Page 3	Summer Musical Offerings Save the Date for Walton's Island
Page 4	FCC's Ushering Teams Stewardship
Page 5	Note: Calendars and Newsletter Deadlines Congratulations to our Graduates
Page 6	Just for Kids
Page 7	Puzzle Answers "Interim Ministry Explained"



Minister's Message



"Time flies when you're having fun"- or so the saying goes. As we get closer and closer to the Poindexters' arrival, it inevitably, and obviously, leads me to reflect on the past year of my life and my journey with you. My reflections have focused mostly on how smooth a transition we have experienced. For example, the leadership

transition so far has been...well, kinda boring. The church hasn't experienced a massive haemorrhage in members, we have maintained the status quo and in terms of worship, and on Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday we even saw growth in numbers. Financially, we have retired debt and yet we're preparing for lean times over the next few years (pray that our preparations will not be needed). The church body is optimistic about the future and our membership are proud to say that we are First Congregational Christian Church Anchorage. We, as a congregation in change, are doing remarkably well.

What does that mean?

It means- no excuses!

Intentional Interim Ministry comes with some deeply rooted principles that are accepted by most denominations and church organisations in North America. One such principle is that the Interim Minister cannot apply for the Senior Minister position. There are several reasons why; two such reasons include-

1. To prevent the Interim Minister from becoming political or feeling the need to please people in order to get the job.
2. To guarantee that the Church gets the best possible candidate and not settling for who they know or are familiar with.

When I signed my contract with the church, which we called a Covenant, it included a clause saying I would not apply for the position of Senior Minister. I did that then because I wanted what was best for the church. My education and experience with Interim Ministry over the years has reinforced these principles. Our church deserves the best candidate. Period.

When I signed the covenant/contract, I signed it wanting what was best for the church. I wanted the best for the church because I take pride in my work and because I liked you and had a history with you. I still want what is best for this church although, my reasons for wanting what is best have changed. I want what is best for this church because this is my church, I love my church, and my church has blessed me in ways I could not have imagined.

This love means I want what is best, and this means that my church, our church, is only "my church" for now. I will very soon move on and "my church" will change. That is ok.

The thing that won't change is that First Congregation Christian Church of Anchorage has become my home. I have found my spiritual home in worship and fellowship with all of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. The church that I am a member of may change- but my home will not.



Moderator's Message

"As one goes through life one learns that if you don't paddle your own canoe you don't move." A quote from Katharine Hepburn.

We as a church are paddling but the oars need a little extra muscle. We are a great loving church family, but there is always room for improvement. Maybe you feel you can't take on a big project, but there are many small ones such as greeting, helping with the flower garden, helping in the kitchen clean up, and many others. So get your paddle moving and keep us moving.

I would like to thank everyone that helped with preparations for the visit of Jacob Poindexter and his family. We are looking forward to their arrival in mid-July.

Have a wonderful summer, and I will see you in church on Sundays.

Louise Smith
Moderator

From Your Life and Learning Ministry

Marcie Errico, Chair

The youth had a great Sunday-school year with a lot of service, crafts, and outings. We will be taking a break for the summer, but the nursery will be available, with activities for older children as needed. We will start again August 20 (the day before school starts). Have a great summer!



From Your Outreach Ministry

During the summer, your Outreach Ministry is going to focus on supporting F.I.S.H., as their food pantry is often empty this time of year. For our ongoing project, we're asking "Can You Bring a Can?" This is your reminder to bring a can (or two or three) to church each Sunday to help supply F.I.S.H.'s food pantry so they can continue to deliver food to needy recipients. Kathy Broome has created some beautifully-decorated bins for the Narthex just waiting to be filled to the brim.

Summer Musical Offerings

Lori Parker Wasko
FCC Chancel Choir Director

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

1 Peter 4:10

Thank you for offering your gift of music for worship. We appreciate the time it takes to practice and prepare for such an offering, and we hope that you can appreciate the time it takes to prepare the worship service each week. Please read over the following to ensure that we are all partners in this service to God.

Please know that the themes of our worship services are thought about far in advance. They often follow the lectionary and the liturgical calendar. Changes can and do happen spontaneously, but it is our wish that we will learn from the whole gospel and not center on the favorite texts and passages of the minister and this congregation. Since within each service there is a flow and a purpose, the offerings of music are placed to complement this harmony.

With these guidelines in mind, I hope that before you write your name in the white Volunteer notebook, you will read through this To Do list:

- Have a chat with Lori or Caroline about your selection of music and when you are available to offer it. Please give them enough time to suggest the Sunday that your offering will be most appropriate.
- When you sign up in the white Volunteer notebook, include the title and composer/arranger of your Musical Offering. You may also add a "Musical Note" for the Bulletin if you want the congregation to know something about your selection.
- Finalize your selection with the FCC Office early in the week of your offering, so it can be added to the Bulletin.
- Show up the morning of your offering a half hour before the service to make sure everything is set up and do a microphone check, if necessary.

Thanks again for sharing your talents with us so that together we can make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Lori Parker Wasko
FCC Chancel Choir Director

"Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Martin Luther



Save The Date – A Summer Day on Walton’s Island

Jim Walton is busy tidying up his island getaway and making sure it's ready for **Family Fun in the Solstice Sun!** What better way to celebrate the Summer Solstice than a picnic on Jim Walton's Island north of Anchorage, on Saturday, June 17th. Jim will put an invitation with full-color pictures, a map, and directions on the Narthex table, or Kate can send them as email attachments. If you have questions, you can call or email Jim.

FCC's Ushering Teams

By Paul Wasko

Hey friends, first off "Thank you!" for volunteering to serve on ushering teams this summer! I'm in the process of working with the Worship Committee on a revised set of ushering procedures that I'll share when finalized. For now, I've constructed the following schedule (below). As more folks respond to the survey (I've had six) I'll add in additional team members.

Thanks again.

If you haven't responded to the very brief survey, please go to <https://goo.gl/forms/CCAPMBB60BrRWQ2>

Summer 2017 Usher Schedule			
Lead/float	Paul Wasko (pwasko@gmail.com)		
Schedule: June-July-August			
Which Sunday	Usher 1	Usher 2	Usher 3
First	Kathy Means	Claudia Kniefel	
Second	Kate O'Dell	Cathy White	
Third	Susan Faith	Miguel De Marzo	
Forth	Barb Ross		
Fifth	Paul Wasko		

From Your Stewardship Ministry

Deborah Stauffer, Chairperson

The Stewardship Ministry (Trustees) met May 9 and the following summarizes their actions:

1. acted on facility rental requests from Wings of Love, Clearwater Church, and the G & G Rounders (a dance group)
2. reviewed maintenance and upgrade plan including lighting in Cary Mead Hall, building keys, Meeting House sound system, outside signage
3. approved facility use fee schedule
4. planned a review of Stewardship Ministry policies and procedures
5. confirmed elevator inspection
6. planned to evaluate and get bids for side porch repair, moss removal from the Hospice roof, and general pest control
7. discussed Hospice downstairs flood repairs and insurance response
8. approved choir director contract
9. discussed new financial reporting and possible fundraising activities

The Stewardship Ministry meets the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room. The meeting usually lasts 1.5 to 2 hours. All are encouraged to attend.

Calendars

From Kate: You'll notice that I am not including a monthly calendar as part of this newsletter. In past issues, I always put in the updated version as of publication. However, with our busy and active congregation, I have to make changes almost daily. That means by the time the folks who receive their newsletters through snail mail got them, the calendars were already inaccurate.

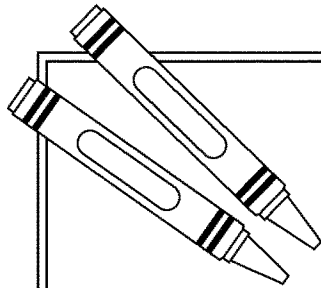
While I post the most up-to-date calendar on the web site (www.fccak.org), I know that not everyone uses that source for information. The result is that people show up for a meeting that was rescheduled, or miss out on an event that was added since the last newsletter was published. Therefore, I'll print out a calendar and post it on the Church Office door. Also, if you let me know, I'll either send an updated calendar as an email attachment, or I'll print out a paper copy for you to pick up when you come to church. Remember that I'm always available to answer the phone (907-272-8363) if you're unsure about a meeting date/time.

Newsletter Deadlines

From Kate O'Dell, Editor: One of the special features of this newsletter, *The Northern Light*, is that it includes articles of particular interest to our church family. With that in mind, I urge you to consider sending me items in addition to the usual reports. If you've read a book, poem, or article; attended an event or want folks to know about something coming up, please get me the information by the **25th of every** month. You can either email the information to the church (fcc@gci.net), bring me a copy (e.g., of the poem), or provide the web site address. You can also write the article yourself for me to proofread and edit.

Congratulations to our Graduates!





Just for KIDS

Unscramble the letters under the blank spaces to find the words that complete the Psalm.



Psalm 148 (verses 1-4, 7-14)

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his _____; praise him, all his host!

(legans)

Praise him, _____ and _____; praise him,

(uns) (nomo)

all you shining _____!

(stras)



Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!...



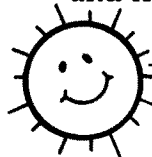
Praise the Lord from the earth, ... _____ and hail, _____

(reif)

(swon)

and frost, stormy _____ fulfilling his command!

(dwin)



_____ and all _____,

(snaitMoun)

(slihl)

fruit _____ and all cedars!

(seter)

Wild animals and all _____, creeping things

(taclet)

and flying _____!

(dribs)



Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young _____ and _____ alike, old and young together!

(nem)

(nowem)

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his _____ is above earth and _____....

(rylog)

(veenah)

Praise the Lord!

Puzzle answers on p. 7 of this newsletter.

FCC People

Interim Minister

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Revjj.fcccak@gmail.com

Caroline Valentine, Organist,
Director, Northern Lights
Ringers

Lori Wasco
Director, Chancel Choir

June Skinner
Nursery Attendant

Contacts

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Scott McClure 272-8363

Wedding Coordinator

Barbara Widtfeldt 377-1673

Serving the NACCC

Sharon Higgins,
Year-Round Delegate

Serving the PNAACC

Claudia Kniefel
2017 Delegate

Puzzle Answer:

Angels, sun, moon, stars,
fire, snow, wind, Mountains,
hills, trees, cattle, birds, men,
women, glory, heaven



Interim Ministers and Transition

by Kate O'Dell & Sharon Higgins

[We're writing this article in response to many questions about the role of an Interim Minister and, specifically, why Rev. Johnathan did not apply for the Senior Minister position.]

When the Pastoral Search Committee began their work in 2016, one of their first tasks was to gather resources to guide them every step of the way until we were able to call a new Senior Minister. We're fortunate to belong to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC), which is a rich resource for documents, services, and consultations with experts as well as other churches who have engaged in a similar process. One of the most useful documents was *Calling a Congregational Minister: A Handbook for Pastoral Search Committees*. The first section is titled STAGE ONE: "Starting Right. Step 2 is Secure interim leadership

Quality leadership during this interim period is critical. One way of assuring your church of continuous pastoral coverage is by securing an interim minister. This is preferable to depending on persons to supply the pulpit from Sunday to Sunday.

An interim minister will be able to:

- Preach and lead worship on Sunday.
- Provide church program leadership during the week.
- Visit the sick, shut-ins and persons with special needs.
- Meet with the appropriate boards and committees of the church.
- Be available for weddings, funerals, and counsel as the need arises.

Churches may selfishly think of this interim time as an opportunity to save money by reducing pastoral services. The needs of the congregation continue, however, and may be even greater during the time of a pastoral search.

The interim minister who comes to serve your congregation should never be eligible for consideration as your permanent pastor. Nor is she or he to be a consultant to the Search Committee. The church and the interim minister should have a clear understanding about these matters at the outset.

FCC has chosen to seek an Interim Minister who has received specific preparation and is hired with a defined position description. On their website, the Interim Ministry Network in Baltimore, Maryland, provides language helps us understand the elements of an Intentional Interim Ministry.

Vision

As a result of work of the Interim Ministry Network, church bodies are stronger because they have effectively managed transition and are better able to share with their members and society God's love that brings hope and joy in times of change.

Core Values

- Providing praxis-oriented education and training for clergy and lay leaders
- Providing learning experiences that reflect professionalism, excellence, and innovation
- Seeking and affirming inclusivity in living out the mission
- Strengthening faith communities
- Building healthy relationships among colleagues and within faith communities

The Network has created a document used by permission in NACCC's *Handbook*, "Why Should the Interim Pastor Not Be a Candidate for the Permanent Call?" These statements, which represent a summation of experience over many decades and involving many congregations, may help establish the context for our contract with Rev. Johnathan.

The following are listed as the rationale for not considering the interim Pastor/transition specialist as a candidate for the permanent position:

1. An interim pastor/transition specialist has an advantage over other possible candidates who may desire to be considered for the position because he or she has more visibility in the congregation. This makes it unfair to others who may be interested in the position, but who will not have the same visibility.
2. An interim pastor/transition specialist will always have a following, but almost always will have those who are not favorably committed to him or her. If he or she were to be called to be pastor, there would be built-in opposition from the very beginning.
3. If the decision is made to consider the interim pastor/transition specialist along with the others being considered and she or he does not get the position, there could be hurt feelings that would jeopardize the remainder of her or his interim work until the pastor is called.
4. A precedent could be set which would result in pastors seeking interim positions with the specific idea of putting themselves in a better position to be considered and called as the pastor, thus greatly damaging the whole call process.
5. The congregation itself may pass up better leadership than it is getting, even with a good interim pastor/transition specialist, if it fails to consider a larger number of potential pastoral candidates.
6. Interim ministry is unique and an interim pastor/transition specialist may often lead in ways that would be acceptable as an interim pastor/transition specialist, but would not be acceptable to some in the congregation were he or she to remain as the pastor.
7. Other pastors will know of the ministerial ethics involved and will know that those have been broken if an interim pastor/transition specialist is called. The result could be a lack of fellowship and broken relationships with other pastors.
8. During the time of interim, the congregation often is uniquely vulnerable and therefore develops a relationship based on need and insecurity. While this can be useful in leading a congregation to prepare for the incoming pastor, it could make for a very inappropriately skewed decision for the permanent call.

If you have questions or would like to have a further conversation about FCC's pastoral search process, feel free to chat with Eric Johnson, who chaired the Committee, or Sharon Higgins, our Year-Round Delegate to the NACCC. Two people who have a background that includes experiences with transitions from interim to permanent pastors are Lynn and Rev. Dave Barber, so you may want to talk with them about their observations