

## Executive Presbytery's Report 2017 Winter Stated Meeting of Presbytery

### 1. New Ways of Doing Presbytery

This presbytery marks the start of operating under a new structure in our presbytery. Our new structure now puts the focus on two regions: The Road System Region and the Native Ministries Region. This new structure puts the emphasis on congregational support, and empowers leadership from churches in regions to partner together for ministry and mutual support. This means that the sparks, which God's inspiration ignites in members from each congregation and community can be nurtured by that congregation, but also by the strength and ideas from other churches facing the same concerns in that region. This also means that we can choose to better care for one another in the face of the loneliness that often goes along with Christian witness in an age of mostly unchurched people.



This will be a new way of doing things, which means we will certainly stumble a bit in learning the new paths we follow. As always, though, this structure seeks to empower local ministry, and local people, by connecting individuals and congregations to others. Perhaps this new structure will cause us to look to God with fresh eyes, and to discover more fully the richness of God's empowerment through connected ministries.

### 2. Introducing Rev. Hugh Anderson, Interim Teaching Elder and Coach

The Olgonik Presbyterian Church, the Atqasuk Chapel and the Kuukpik Presbyterian Church (Nuiqsut) have pooled their resources to hire Rev. Hugh Anderson to serve as Teaching Elder and Coach to leaders on those three congregations. Hugh is providing CRE training to three students in Olgonik, who hope to become a CRE team, perhaps by this time next year. Hugh is providing elder/deacon training and CRE coaching in Atqasuk Chapel. He is working with the session in Nuiqsut to raise up some new officers. In addition, Hugh provided a unit of continuing Education in Worship on Wednesday under the authority of our Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Welcome, Hugh!



### 3. Young Adult Leadership Development

Last year the Anaktuvuk Pass church members asked me when there would be a new director for their Project Y.E.S. program. This program for high schoolers was started by Sally Johnston a number of years back and was one of the most effective peer-evangelism and peer-to-peer training programs going in our presbytery. The Anaktuvuk youth began providing leadership to the younger kids in their community, but then reached out to the youth in Nuiqsut and got them going, too. Then the Nuiqsut

Youth began to reach out to Olgonik. It was an amazing program. But it was very dependent on having a good organizer/director, and when Sally moved it fizzled out.



Over the past few months I have been working with some folks from the Leadership Team to develop an idea to improve our congregations' effectiveness in raising up and encouraging young adult leadership development. The idea would be to follow up on this request from Anaktuvuk Pass, but to also encourage young adult leadership development throughout the presbytery. Many of our churches are aging, and have found effective outreach to younger generations difficult.

With this in mind, we are using the Mathes Intern Fund to seek an intern to begin next fall for the purpose of encouraging young adults ministries in our congregations. The intern will serve as director for Project Y.E.S., but will also gather information about resources and methods that are working across our denomination.

Two documents are available to you for as you prepare to report on this.

- The first is an article on ministry with Millennials (ages 19-35) that every ordained person in our denomination should read. Its information comes from the Barna Group, a research organization aimed at helping Christian spiritual leaders to be more effective. However, the author speaks with frustration at how millennials feel left out, but also with great fervor:

"From the depths of my heart, I want to love church.

I want to be head-over-heals for church like the unshakable Ned Flanders.

I want to send global, sky-writing airplanes telling the life-change that happens beneath a steeple. I want to install a police microphone on top of my car and cruise the streets screaming to the masses about the magical Utopian community of believers waiting for them just down the street.

I want to feel this way, but I don't. Not even a little bit...

So, at the risk of being excommunicated, here is the metaphorical nailing of my own 12 theses to the wooden door of the American, Millennial-less Church..."

Please read it and consider

- The second is the job description for the intern that was scheduled to be approved yesterday. As you look at it, you can begin to consider how this person might encourage the work in your congregation.

#### **4. The PC(USA) Apology to Native American, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians**



Former Stated Clerk, Rev. Gradye Parsons  
Rev. James Nageak Translates into Iñupiaq

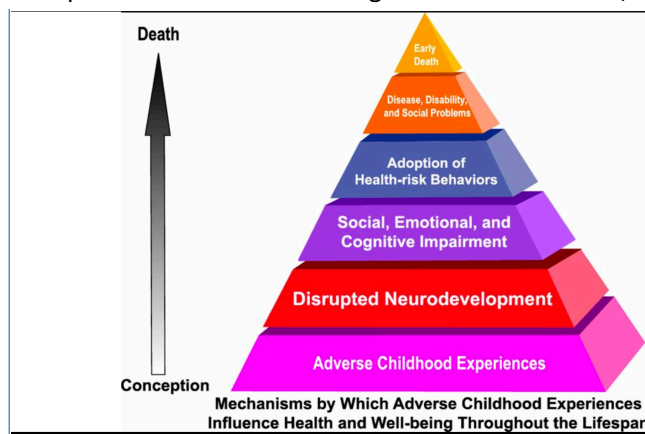
The Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church closely followed the two overtures on this topic. Although, at their prompting, some of us presented the apology at AFN last October, the big event for our presbytery happened two weeks ago during Kivgiq week. The importance of this event should not be missed by anyone. It was important enough that the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and the Ukpeaġvik Inuit Corporation each gave us a grant of \$10,000 to do this well. This grant allowed us to bring one person from each of our congregations to Utqiagvik for the event.

There will be an hour to report on this event later in this meeting. However, there are two outcomes that need to follow. Noting that an apology that is not followed by walking a new path is not true repentance, we need to be asking God what our next steps should be. Two areas clearly require action:

- a. We need to develop healing ministries for the effects of intergenerational, historical trauma left behind by the clash of Western culture into indigenous cultures in Alaska.
- b. We need to find appropriate ways to raise up local leaders in our villages and communities, and to provide quality mentoring and training for them.

## 5. Finances

One of the lessons we are learning is that good work cannot always be done on the cheap. The results that are beginning to come out of our work at the Renewal and Healing Event in the arctic, like the results that are developing in Gambell after the Reconciliation Event there five years ago, all cost money. The ministry of Jesus Christ is essential, if people are to thrive in the abundant life of Christ. How to raise the money it takes to do it well is a burning question now, even though it comes when Alaska is facing its first recession in over 30 years.



## Comparing 0 ACEs to 4

- 390% more likely to be a Smoker
- 390% more likely to have chronic Pulmonary Lung disease
- 240% more likely to have hepatitis
- 250% more likely to have sexually transmitted diseases
- 460% more likely to suffer depression
- 1,220% more likely to commit suicide

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)  
Many Alaskans grew up with multiple ACEs

The other related-but different question is how to raise up the workers needed. The fields are truly white with harvest. People are starving for good news, and in need of leaders, who know how to connect the gospel to the healing that their broken souls crave. In Jesus Christ there is good news. The healing is real, but the laborers are few. How will we raise up leaders, and how can we afford to train, mentor and support them well for the ministries needed in Alaska?

Yet, we proclaim God's providence: God provides! We need to open our eyes and honestly ask ourselves how God is providing, and we need to pursue those opportunities with earnestness and vigor. There are at least three places, where we can start.

- Church giving needs to be more than just per capita if we are to do ministry. I recommend that churches give the "Fair Share" level if possible. If not, I recommend that they set a minimum of a 10% of their income (the biblical tithe). This level of commitment is important if we are to be able to do our work, and it is also important, because it will cause us to pay attention to why our connection together matters.



Under Construction: The New Church and Community Center - Gambell.

- A few of our churches have received bequests in recent years, as has the presbytery. Many of our older church members want their church to thrive now, and after they are gone. We should not be shy in asking them to be good stewards to the church. The wealth any of us have
- belongs to God. How does God wish us to steward those gifts to advance the good news of Jesus Christ?
- We have received grants this year from the Rasmusson Foundation (\$500,000 - half of what was needed to finish the Church and Community Center in Gambell), and from the ASRC and UIC (\$10,000 from each) for the Renewal and Healing Event. We need to consider how to partner with agencies like these, when it builds the Way of Christ.



Presbytery Pastors asked to Join in Blessing Prayer Before the Opening Ceremonies for Kivgiq