

*News and
Stories
from the
people of
FCC of
Anchorage*

February 2021

The Northern Light

First Congregational Church of Anchorage

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Message from the Moderator

Many years ago, Dave and I were members of a church where we had a “Joys and Concerns” part of every Sunday morning’s service. So often, things that people mentioned during those services were both joys and concerns. So many things have both good and bad aspects to them. That is especially true of really important things – a child leaves home to go to college, new parents are sleepless because of the newborn in their lives, people change jobs or houses or cities or relationships or

To me it’s analogous to simultaneously walking and chewing gum, to multitasking. We do it all the time. Rarely is there anything that’s important to us that doesn’t have both good and bad characteristics, and we just have to meander or forge ahead somehow.

I think that most of us are regularly making decisions about our future courses of action, choosing between two good things (or two bad things), having difficulty deciding which way to go, not knowing. Sometimes we don’t have a choice, which can be difficult in its own way, but choosing is also hard. Life is so unpredictable. Even when we think we know what’s coming, we are often surprised how things can gradually or rapidly veer off into the scary unknown. When we deliberately jump off into a great unknown, and know that we don’t know what’s coming, we are even more likely to be surprised. Oddly enough, Jacob’s message on the last Sunday of January spoke to me on what I had begun writing about for my words on what the future holds when he said that while “what can be in the future is rooted in the past”, all that we can do is make an “informed guess” as to what will happen in the future. (Forgive me if I misquoted that; at least I was listening.)

As a real-world example of me not knowing about the future, I am continually amazed at how much goodness our Zoom gatherings and Zoom worship, as well as making music with the Acapella app, have brought to us, even though they only became part of our lives because of the awful pandemic.

What am I leading up to in all this philosophizing about the future? I just have to say it. For those of you who were not in the few meetings where I mentioned this, Dave will be retiring this spring, leaving a very good job but going to a life without midnight shifts. Good or bad? Both, of course. Sometime after that we are planning to move from Alaska and the people we love at FCC to go to Wisconsin, where I grew and where we were married and spent about 5 years of our married life. Good or bad? Again, both, of course. I will so much miss so much of what we have found at FCC – the friends, of course, the music-making, Jacob’s sermons and friendship and percussing, being Moderator and sort of being part of all the ministries, and on and on. I plan to revel in all that goodness for our remaining months here! Thank you all for being, for being you, for being here at FCC.

-Lynn Barber, moderator



Worship Ministry

Every February 1, I announce to the world that I have survived another Alaskan winter. The sun is higher in the sky, it is noticeably warmer and brighter, and I am sure that it has always been a clear and sunny day. I am filled with relief and hope for another spring and summer of enjoying this beautiful state. I eagerly await the emergence of people from the confines of their homes, Fur Rondy, and the dog races.

This year may be quite different. The dog races may be canceled. We are still under COVID restrictions for gathering at the

church and hoping an emerging mutant strain doesn't set us back.

Yet there are still things to be grateful for and opportunities to connect and to worship together. I connect with my Outside family more than I ever have at weekly Zoom gatherings. The choirs are getting better and better at recording music on Acapella and getting more creative. Rev. Jacob is starting a new Open and Affirming (ONA) series on Friday nights at 6 pm. We will have Taize services on Zoom at 6 pm on Tuesdays during Lent. We are planning a pre-

recorded April Aires concert for late April, also on Zoom.

We are continually discussing how we can do outreach to the church and community in meaningful ways. We are helping those in need financially and with meals. As always, if you have a need or know someone who does, please call Krystal or Jacob at the church office and they will see to it. And as always, it is wonderful to see all of us come together for Zoom worship and fellowship on Sunday mornings. We are a very blest church.

-Kathy Means, chair

*Starting
February 7th,
Sunday
School will be
at the church
on Sundays at
1pm.*

Life & Learning

With ASD opening up the schools again, it seems safe to re-start Sunday School and Pilgrim Fellowship activities. Starting **February 7**, we will begin meeting at the Church on Sundays at 1pm. We will alternate lesson weeks with activities weeks until Spring Break. There will be no meetings March 7 or March 14. After Spring Break, we will plan to begin weekly lessons through Youth Sunday in May.

-Marcie Errico, chair

Fellowship Ministry



Yesterday I signed copies of my new will, an Advanced Health Care Directive, and a General Power of Attorney at a surprisingly formal ceremony. As my lawyer and I were going over the final versions before the two witnesses came to join us, I realized how different this document is from the original one I filed more than twenty years ago. For example, she now included a detailed section on how my “principal agent” was to deal with all of my digital “estate,” for want of a better term. Definitely not something we even thought to account for in earlier documents.

This whole experience reminded me that updating my will and creating the other two documents is only part of my work to plan for

the day when, as the Irish Celts believed, I travel to Tir-Nan-Og. I also need to answer many questions that will guide my family and friends and relieve them of the burden to search high and low for important papers or decide whether to hold any sort of gathering.

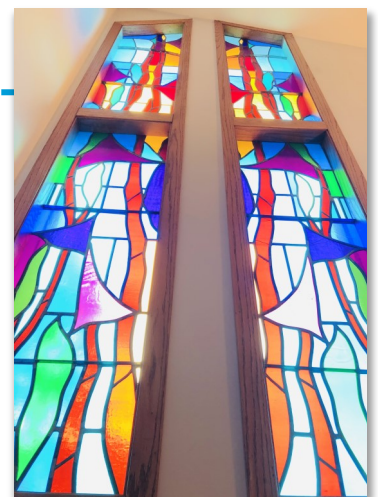
With this in mind, your Fellowship Ministry is inviting everyone to a Lunch and Learn in an FCC Zoom room after the worship service on Sunday, February 28th. Amy Tribett, Executive Director for Hospice of Anchorage, will join us and guide a discussion of planning for the end of life. Our focus will be the Pearly Gates Portfolio that FCC developed several years ago. In addition to helping you account for various formal documents, one of the reasons we created the Portfolio was so you could let the Church know details such as whether you wish to have a Celebration of Life. And if so, what are your favorite hymns? Do you have a Bible verse that has inspired you? Do you want the

Chancel Choir to sing and/or the Northern Lights Ringers to ring?

Watch the Daily Updates and the Church website for the time and Zoom room link and join us for the virtual Lunch and Learn. You can receive a copy of the Pearly Gates Portfolio by emailing the FCC Office (office@fccak.org), or calling (907-272-8363). I suggest you get your copy soon, so you can begin working through it. That way you’ll know what you need to ask Amy, and you’ll have a To Do list of actions you need to take.

As we all know, making decisions when we’re experiencing new grief is difficult. I believe that if my family and friends can consult my Pearly Gates Portfolio on file at the Church, they can devote themselves to happy memories rather than trying to figure out “what would Kate want.”

-Kate O'Dell, chair



Stewardship Ministry

We are into the second month of the 2021. Yes, another “groundhog day”, a sentiment by many of our current lives. Despite the restrictions or perhaps because of them, we have been blessed with a financially sound church. We have not been able to have many of the past fundraising events. Discussions are ongoing for the future. As always, the monthly meetings are open to all. We will continue to meet on zoom. The next meeting will be February 9th at 3:30pm. Please continue your pledges and donations. Prayerfully consider taking a leap of faith as God urges us to excel in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7).

-Sharon Higgins, chair



It's Shrove Tuesday,

Pancake Supper Time!

We won't be together physically on **Tuesday, February 16th**, but we're going to gather for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper from **5:30 to 6:30 pm in the FCC Gathering Zoom room**.

Instead of only two or three recipes cooked up in the Cary Mead Hall kitchen, everyone is invited to share their favorite pancake or topping in two ways. While we're in the Zoom room, you can point the camera of your computer or phone at the stack on your plate while you describe them. And you can send Kate your recipes as email attachments ahead of time. She'll collect them and send them to Krystal for a shareable file. We'll also have some fun facts about Shrove Tuesday, maybe an appropriate reading, perhaps even a song.

If you want to share your recipe for pancakes, waffles, or a topping, send them to Kate O'Dell (ks57deweese@gmail.com).



**2021
Virtual
Annual
Meeting
on June
19th &
20th**

NACCC News

The in-person 2021 Annual Meeting in Spokane, Washington has been cancelled.

That's the bad news. The good news is everyone can attend the Virtual Annual Meeting & Conference on Saturday, June 19 & Sunday, June 20. Registration is required but, there is no fee. I will keep you up to date on the opening of registration and the link. It is expected to be available in March.

-Sharon Higgins, Year Round Delegate

Finding our Way in the Future:

**'I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.' Psalm 32:8**

**"Count your garden by the flowers,
Never by the leaves that fall;
Count your days by golden hours,
Don't remember clouds at all.
Count your nights by stars, not shadows
Count your life with smiles, not tears;
And with joy through all your lifetime,
Count your age by friends, not years."**



First Congregational Church:
Open and Affirming (ONA)

Class & Discussion Schedule

- 2/05: Introduction- What is ONA? Why now?
- 2/12: ONA & the Bible
- 2/19: Intersectionality
- 2/26: Questions Session + example Welcome covenants
- 3/05: Pronouns, Acronyms, and “Alphabet” Soup
- 3/12: Transgender, Non-Binary, Gender Fluid, 2 Spirit
- 3/19: Guest Speakers or Documentary
- 3/26: Question Session + Welcome covenant brainstorm
- 4/02: Queer Theology
- 4/09: Preview of Welcome covenant draft
- 4/16: Wrap-up

**Friday nights
at 6:00pm in
the Gathering
Room on Zoom**



Protect Yourself

AVOID COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

As COVID-19 vaccine distribution begins, here are signs of potential scams:

- You are asked to pay out of pocket to get the vaccine.
 - You are asked to pay to put your name on a vaccine waiting list or to get early access.
 - Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources.
 - Marketers offering to sell or ship doses of the vaccine for payment.
- ✓ **Protect Yourself. Do not give out your personal information to unknown sources.**

! If you believe you have been the victim of COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to:

- HHS-OIG Hotline: **1-800-HHS-TIPS** | tips.hhs.gov
- FBI Hotline: **1-800-CALL-FBI** | ic3.gov
- CMS/Medicare Hotline: **1-800-MEDICARE**

For accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19, visit:

oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus
fbi.gov/coronavirus
justice.gov/coronavirus



HHS
Office of
Inspector
General



Federal
Bureau of
Investigation



Department
of Justice





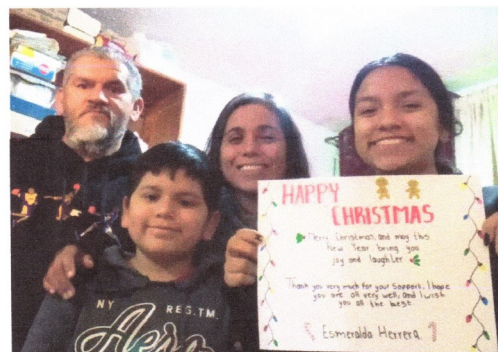
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JANUARY 2021

NEW YEAR, NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP



Our families are very grateful for all Sponsors who donated to our Christmas Program, our school members were safe at home and still received support to buy food and have a warm Christmas dinner.

We continue our online classes with all the laptops that were donated and paid for by Sponsors. Your support has also helped them pay for their medical expenses and internet bill.

During these unprecedented times, your good hearts, thoughts and support have kept us going.



THANK YOU



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\$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1,000 or any
amount you wish to donate
would help us greatly.

Online at
www.paischool.org



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A service that explores other ways to engage our faith and spirituality together.



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Congregational Christian
Churches*

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