

# UNALASKA

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

... serving Unalaska and the greater Aleutian Community in the name of Christ



April-May 2009

## HERE'S LOOKIN' AT "U"!

A New Year, a new look for the news coming out of Unalaska UMC! Several things have come up that have delayed the sending of this newsletter earlier, but we hope it will be worth the wait!

Previous newsletters have been specifically geared towards our partnering churches across the country. Locally, though, people were reading them, too, and would often comment, "Wow!! I didn't know that..!"

Since we are joint partners *together* in this ministry to Unalaska and the Aleutians,

regardless of our geographical proximity, this newsletter will now be sent to both partnering churches, as well as to our local members and friends. We hope that this provides more of a 'big picture' for our local folks, and serves as a reminder to us all of our joint connections as members and co-laborers in the Body of Christ.

If you have questions, comments, or perhaps even a story to contribute, please let us know!

We hope you enjoy!

### Prayer Points

On each page, please check out the 'Prayer Points' list for some specific ways you can be praying for our various ministries.

## BALLYHOO VIEW

On a recent "date night," we (Dan and Kris-Ann) hiked part way up the southern face of Ballyhoo mountain to enjoy a little picnic and some quiet time together. If you have never had the opportunity to do this, be sure to note that, like all our treeless mountains here, it is much steeper — not to mention higher — than it looks from a sea level vantage point!! The last time we did this particular hike, though, we were also each carrying one of the little ones in a backpack, as well as trying to keep up with Esther's exuberant 4-year-old's pace — so all in all, it was a piece of cake this time!

As you can see from the picture below, it was a gorgeous, albeit COLD evening, complete with a breeze and lots of snowy patches to traverse as we ascended. We soaked it all in (often using the incredible views as an excuse to stop and catch our breaths again!!), and were overjoyed when the westerly clouds parted to afford us several quick glimpses of the beautiful *Makushin* valley (*Makushin* is an active, though currently quiet, volcano on our island). We also noted what appears to be a new eagle's nest being built at about the 3/4 point on the way up to Ballyhoo's peak. AWESOME!



### Inside this Edition:

Alexandria House	2
Child Care	5
Grace and Glory	5
Profile of a Worshipper	4
Saturday Night Life	2
Thoughts from Low Tide	3
Video Project	5
Women's Fellowship and Bible Study	2

## ALEXANDRIA HOUSE

### Prayer Point

Please pray that the process goes smoothly as we work towards the structure and implementing the dream of this very necessary facility.

Unalaska UMC is currently working with several other local congregations to address the issue of stranded or temporarily displaced fishermen and other workers. Hopefully, some time in 2010, construction will begin on a 15-bed nighttime facility that will house individuals who have no other shelter options. At this point, plans involve tearing down one of the country's most notorious bars which recently closed, and cre-

ating this new facility on the same site. A very generous gift from an individual in the community will make it possible to take on this enormous project without extensive fund raising, but lots of issues need to be ironed out prior to the project proceeding.

Please keep an eye out for possible 2010 summer work camps with this project!



*Personal Care Kits prepared for stranded fishermen*

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY

### Prayer Point

Be praying for God's presence for the women who are meeting, and also for open hearts and doors as we continue offering new fellowship and Bible Study opportunities.

Recently, a new weekly small group began meeting on Wednesday evenings for fellowship and Bible Study. During the first month, they added to their numbers every week, and now have 8-9 women gathering together to pray and study God's Word each week. It

proves to be a lively and diverse group, only half of which are members/attenders of Unalaska UMC. We are currently looking at *Hope: Your Heart's Deepest Longings*.

Thank you, Lord, for opportunities of fellowship and the gift of friendships!

### Prayer Point

We are mindful that this is God's endeavor, and are trusting the Lord to raise up both Spirit-filled worship leaders and worshippers seeking to encounter and experience God.

## SATURDAY NIGHT LIFE

In March, we launched a new, additional worship service specifically for those on the island who work every day and cannot make a traditional Sunday morning worship time. With a 7:30pm Saturday evening start time, we desire to make worship and fellowship with others more accessible for those

who may otherwise not have the chance. We had about 20 people the first week – so we are encouraged. Aside from being up against other Saturday evening community activities, the most frequent comment has been, 'This is great!, but now I need to get into the habit of remembering this is an option for me...!'

## A WORD OF THANKS

We want to thank the many people who sent cards and letters in January for Kris-Ann's birthday. It is always encouraging to be reminded that we are part of a great 'cloud of witnesses!' those that we know well, and those whom we have never even met (yet!).

Also, we thank you for the continued prayers and gifts lifted and given for the ministry God has us doing here. We are truly blessed, and sense God's presence through you as we interact with people around the island!

### UPCOMING DATES:

May 27, 2009— Kids Night Out End of Year Carnival:

May 15-16, 2009—Second Blessings

June 5-7, 2009—Alaska UM Annual Conference

*Hanging on to the Rock,*  
Daniel and Kris-Ann Wilcox  
Esther, Jaden, and Lydia

## THOUGHTS FROM LOW TIDE

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!*

*2 Corinthians 5:17*

One of my favorite activities to do with the family is to wander along the beach during low tide. At high tide, the beach is mainly grapefruit-sized rocks littered with rope, shells, occasional buoys, and various other flotsam. At low tide, all of that is there, too — but closer to the water, there is also smooth, shimmering black-chocolate sand. The sand, while it is still damp, is easy to walk on, and contains all sorts of treasures. We frequently find sand dollars, jelly fish, various shells, and colorful rocks. Once, we even discovered a worm that was clearly not something any of us had seen before.



The low-tide area is in some ways a whole new world. Separate from the higher area of the beach, with its ankle twisting rocks and nautical litter, the sand is smooth and simple, yet holds in its simplicity precious treasures anticipating discovery.

This reminds me of a quote that someone shared with me someplace along the line—“I don’t care a fig for simplicity that comes before complexity. But for the simplicity that comes after complexity, I would give my life.” I believe we are called to the latter — the type of simplicity that comes only after working through some ankle-busting complexities that otherwise inhibit our relationship with God.

In the same way that you can’t get to the low-tide sands without first wading through the jumbled rocks and rubble of the high-tide zone, you can’t

appreciate a simplicity of life in Christ without wading through the complexity of our sin, fallenness, and self-stored baggage.

Simplicity in Christ is best stated in Romans 14:8 *If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

If we live and die knowing that we are the Lord’s, then living or dying, we are His—that is simple living!

We are called as Christians to this type of faith—this type of living and dying. We are called to low-tide living—knowing we are ever seeking to move toward this simplicity in Christ.

We are also called to the new world—called to something that none of us has ever seen before. We get glimpses of where we are going in the hopes and promises of the New Testament—a new creation—a new Jerusalem—a holy priesthood—a new heaven—and new earth. These promises are of *Shalom*—the old Hebrew concept of life as God intended it.

If this is our hope, and our calling, is it not also our proclamation? This is the hope of God’s new creation: not proclaiming things as they are or as they’ve always been — but with great faith and confidence in things yet unseen, to be proclaiming *things as they should be* according to God’s heart and plan.

Watching  
the Water,

*Pastor Dan*



*Some of the tidal zones in front of the parsonage*

# PROFILE OF A WORSHIPPER

**Prayer Point**  
 Please be praying for Xavier in his semester at University, and for his ongoing work with the Methodist Church in Chile.



Map of Chile  
 (Concepción is indicated)

During a Spaghetti Dinner earlier this year, I (Dan) approached a small group of folks I didn't recognize. After saying hello and introducing myself, I suddenly realized that several of them spoke very little English (though still more than my Spanish!). One person in the group, however, jumped in right away and began translating back and forth with ease. And thanks to this young man, everyone was soon feeling at home and part of the conversation!

And so this was our first impression of Xavier Villanueva, a bright, joyful, and energetic young man from Concepción, Chile (and a great translator!). In no time at all, Xavier would be an active and vital part of our church family's life. After the dinner that first night, we gave him and a few others a ride back to their bunk house clear out on the Dutch Harbor side by the Spit, and it was during this time that our friendship with Xavier was cemented.

Xavier came to Unalaska during his summer break from University (Chile is in the southern hemisphere), where he is studying architecture. With the average income in Chile being only \$300-400 per month, Xavier said he had hoped to be able to earn money for his schooling much more quickly here. It was somewhat disappointing for him, then, that the economy here has begun to show signs of struggling, and he was only able to work for a total of seven days.

Still, he said, the trip here was worth it, and the benefits of the experience, challenge, and new friendships will always be treasured. In the short time we have known him, it was this kind of positive, hope-filled, God-trusting attitude that always stands out when talking with Xavier.

As an active member of the Methodist Church in Chile, Xavier teaches both Sunday School to children, and serves as

Vice-President of their young adult ministry. And just because he was away from home, his participation in the life of the church and community did not diminish. In addition to being in worship regularly, Xavier also helped out with sorting for our *Second Blessings* ministry, was a daily volunteer at the Senior Center helping serve lunches, and seemed to be anywhere someone needed a smile and a helping hand. We were also blessed for Xavier to share his testimony during worship!

Before Xavier left to go back to his studies in Chile, we asked if there were some way that our congregation could partici-

**Prayer Point**  
 We have come to see our ministry here in Unalaska as a sending ministry, one which goes well beyond this island and the Aleutians; we share in ministry with people for whatever time God places them here with us, and then send them out to the ends of the earth (quite literally sometimes!) to continue in the walk of faithful witness.

While change here is frequent, the upcoming months are typically a time of intense transition here as people move off the island and to new jobs, schools, etc. Please pray for all of us, and especially the children, as 1).we say good-bye to cherished members of our Unalaskan family, 2). as those people continue their journeys in a new place, and 3). as we welcome new faces onto the island who will undoubtedly become family to us as well.

pate in his church's ministry in Concepción. He was thrilled to consider the idea, and shared that his congregation works regularly with a children's home in their city that often has specific needs. He plans to communicate with us as those needs arise.

We thank God for Xavier's presence with us these past months, and pray that the Lord will continue to strengthen him in his studies, and as a powerful minister of the Good News!

## VIDEO PROJECT

### Prayer Point

Please share in our thanksgiving for the gifts Dan brought to us, and to this project—and for a successful completion of the video!



*Dan shooting some snow shots.*

We are very excited about a new way we will be able to share with you what God is doing here. Dan Snyder, from Bethany UMC, one of our partnering churches in Red Lion, PA, came for two weeks at the beginning of March to tape over twenty hours of things happening at the church and around town.

He became a part of the congregation while he was here, pitching in everywhere whenever he wasn't behind the camera. When finished, the project will offer three different things. First will be a 5-7 minute presentation that can be shared in worship or with a Sunday School class. Next, there will be an extended video with interviews from a number of people in the community and church, as well as possibly some additional footage from around the island.

Finally, there will be a brief video showing some of the areas that have been, or may be work camp projects at the church and in town. We appreciate Dan's time here, and the gift that he shares with us and with all of you as he uses his gifts and skills to bring this project to you.



*Dan shoots footage with Kids Night Out Kids*

## GRACE AND GLORY

### Prayer Point

Share in our thanksgivings for the many ways this production touched people in the community, and our hopes for future productions of dramatic ministry.

A cast of two people and a crew of many more delighted the congregation and community with this two part play about life and death, dreams and disappointments, hopes and fears. Based in the relationship between an elderly dying woman full of spunk, and her young Hospice worker full of suggestions, this

play touched on raw nerve while bringing the audience some great scenes of levity and laughter while exploring aspects of genuine hospitality and compassion. Well done, this is hopefully only the first of an annual dramatic presentation that the church will be sponsoring!

### Prayer Point

Please be praying for guidance and clarity as we pull together the many policies necessary to run the child care center, as well as finding the right staff persons.

## CHILD CARE

Our vision of offering a licensed child care facility for the community received a major boost in January as we received a generous gift from Butler First UMC, in PA. Above and beyond their yearly commitment as a partnering church, and in addition to also assisting with a much-needed update to our church computer system, this gift will allow us to purchase many of the supplies and other materials that will be necessary to open the center. Current challenges include

working with various legal aspects and approvals, and also securing a staff that will represent the vision and values of this evolving ministry.

In the mean time, however, the parsonage continues to function as a mini-childcare facility of its own, aiding a number of families from the church and community with a weekday childcare option. To quote Kate from *Jon and Kate Plus 8*, "It's a crazy life, but it's *our* life...!"

Check us out on the web at [www.UnalaskaUMC.com](http://www.UnalaskaUMC.com)!



**New Question:** Here's a shot of a commercial long-line fisherman pulling in his catch—what are these, and why does he need so many of them?

([www.avo.alaska.edu](http://www.avo.alaska.edu))

*Mt. Redoubt in recent eruptions. nearest hospital...)*

and the nearest town, Anchorage also has the and services from Anchorage (800 air miles away travel, mail service, and procuring other items away, they continue to cause difficulties with eruptions of Mt. Redoubt are nearly 700 miles our west). While the recent and much larger



air after Mt. Okmok erupted last summer (70 mi away on the next island to **Answer.** . . . The reddish color is caused by the volcanic ash hanging in the

**Last time.** . . . What is the significance of the color of this sunset?



## UNALASKA UNDERSTANDINGS . . . . .



**UNALASKA**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
... serving Unalaska and the greater Aleutian Community in the name of Christ

**P.O. BOX 121  
UNALASKA, AK 99685**