

## Interior Deanery NOTES (informal minutes)

Mtr. Betty shared prayer for those who are hurting in the villages.

### REPORTS

Tanana Valley:

Bessie and Jeanette - only missing two villages at Interior Deanery

Nobody from Circle - Mtr. Betty, Irene Roberts is looking for a way to have a confirmation class. Irene and Susan Mitchell are going to Circle for Easter service. Circle will host for the day 15 college and high school students who are coming from Kansas to experience what life is like in village. St. Matthew's provides Bread and wine (and Susan Mitchell.)

Eagle (Ruth) last time had a priest when Belle Michelson went during Yukon Quest. Put songs in Han Language. Having church every Sunday. Other church has a priest who comes up every few weeks. Everyone in Eagle is happy to get communion. Proud that the Episcopal Church does not talk about the other churches. Only about 20 people in village and 80 people in Fairbanks.

Fairbanks (Tom Marsh, Laura Bender, Mtr. Betty) 11 baptisms since January 1, 5 scheduled for Easter Vigil and 2 for Mother's Day, plus confirmation in September. Susan Mitchell will be ordained to the diaconate . Mtr. Betty mentioned that St. Matthew's provided Christmas gifts for the children in Circle that Susan Mitchell took to Circle. We began the service of Compline at Wednesday evenings at 8:00 pm that is streamed live by Facebook. Mtr. Betty would like someday to live stream Christmas and Easter services. (Bishop gave definition of "compline" service.). Irene Roberts says prayers in Gwichen. We have begun again classes in Gwichen led by Kenneth Frank. We invited people to say prayers during the service in the language of their heart (i.e. the Lord's Prayer).

Nenana / St. Marks (Tim Edington and .... ) services every Sunday, bible study on Thursday night (4-6 people) After Sunday service have a potluck lunch. Has Sunday school and every third Sunday have a children's service. Parish Hall is being used by AA Group, Kid's crafts that meets once a month and a talking circle the last Sat. Of every month. Has started a community garden and this spring plan on planting fruit trees and raspberry bushes that everyone can harvest. Also, have 2 people working toward ordination. 12 baptisms scheduled for after Easter, 6 confirmations last year, none this year.

North Pole (John) since the Bishop put Scott and John there 3 years ago, but congregation said even if he haven't the lay people stated that they would have continued with morning prayer. 2-10 children for Sunday school, 4 people in EFM (third year) merged with group at St. Matthew's. Started last year getting congregation to know more about the Saints. - so introduced congregation to Lent Madness and everyone is voting for their favorite saint (good educational tool) Outside of education work with Jubilee Food Pantry, three girls groups contribute as well as the Marijuana group who has been bringing cases of food. Have a Cross-fit gym and starting in October will have kids paying to learn to exercise by bringing cans that will be donated to the food bank. Also have program for providing sack lunches for kids in high school. 1 Layleader involved in prison ministry and a group that cleans up one of the roadways. Tree fell on roof and

insurance company come through to get roof fixed. Also, roof over boiler leaked and a couple of benefactors paired to have that fixed. Been using Lay-readers doing morning prayer to keep them up to speed have been having services during lent. WEstern and Native process to include talking circle, healing pipe ceremony for folks that are interested. Stations of Cross during Lent - last Sunday took children through the Stations of the Cross. Last year 3 baptisms, no confirmations. 2 people in the process of discernment - but both have stopped that process. One class started during Lent uses book "Walking in Love" by Forward Movement. Very good to use for back up for confirmation.

Tanacross/ St. Timothy (Betty) population around 100. Poor attendance. Just a handful so offering is quite low. Bible Study on Monday nights. Has help from "Northern lights baptist church) for electric bill. Prayer requests - lots of problems with drugs. Some on Village Council are also users/abusers so unless leadership changes there won't be a change with the drug problem. Has not done parochial report (ledger is missing) Youth nights on Monday and Thursday nights sponsored by the baptist and another church. Heard school might close down because of low enrollment of children. No confirmations. Some folks attend Lutheran church in Tok rather than in Tanacross. (Bishop gave descriptions of the different Lutheran churches.) Talked about nominated Betty's brother to St. Simeon and St. Anna - he would be a candidate except he is in Fairbanks on weekends.

Minto (report presents by??) Church as started confirmation class. Handful of faithful people that come on Sunday. Things are pretty quiet (village is "Wild West" with dog races, etc.) Have hope that they will grow. Healing among relationships are happening. Elders that have moved away are slowly returning. Per Tanana Chiefs 10,000 people have moved in to Fairbanks from villages. Concerned about what is happening with their spirituality? Need a different approach. Also concerned about pastoral care - need more training. Small group of people that are always praying for those priests and lay visiting.

Shagaluk / person? invited by Jeanette D - Dementi's moving back next month. Thankful for Jimmy and Jeanette for being in her life. Jeanette - Rev. Gayle Nauska servicing as small missions clergy - she goes out about once every 2 months and will be holding Easter's service. Did have confirmation class - it had been quite a while (10-15 years) when confirmation last took place. Bishop confirmed 8 last August. Daisy Workman wanted to lead services, but wasn't comfortable yet. So, several women worked together and Daisy then took training. Had Compline in Dementi house during the month they were there and had up to 20 people. Kids wanted to have Sunday School, so kids cleaned church and Jeanette offered mini vacation bible school. Daisy has since moved to Anchorage. The church has had some leveling work.

#### Yukon Flats

Venetie (Shaleen and Gary Simple) been involved with the church for a little under a year. Not many who attend every Sunday (3-20 depending on the season) Margo has church every Sunday and teaches Sunday school (currently teaching the 10 commandments). Try to have Bible Study every Wednesday. Every Sunday have talking circle (partnered with the mental health clinic) 4 funerals, 4 baptisms. More than 1/2 of community has moved out of Venetie in the last couple of years. Planning on an Easter play this year. Lots of alcohol and drugs, and Council has gotten

involved and is trying to clean up and there has been a big change and now just need to get them to come back to church.

Ft. Yukon (Nancy James) St. Stephen's - As chief coordinate with ?? And tribe. Demolished parish hall. Will be attached to the church. All paid by in kind donations. Lot of support - 21-45 attendance. Men are showing up. 3 people that are asking to read lessons. Services every Sunday led by Nancy. Big need to share and encourage one another to share and show them the prayer book and how to use it. Have had 19 funeral services last year. Rev. Dr. Nancy James will be leading Easter service. Sunday School - expect the Lutheran church to come back and do a summer program. After Easter there will be a big fundraising specifically for the parish hall addition and new roof for St. Stephens.

Bishop Comments on confirmation expectations:

Challenges - what do we expect confirmands to know? Bishop had to memorize the Catechism (outline of the Faith). It is a helpful tool to go through the catechism - but it does not have to be a formal curriculum. More important to invite the people to have a conversation about each one's spiritual journey. Also, Bishop had to memorize the Nicene Creed (official statement of our faith). Talk to students about what it means to them rather than just rote memorization. Had to also memorize the Lord's Prayer - the one prayer we all have in common. Talk about what the prayer means (imply). There are no right and wrong answers. Why do we do confirmation? Confirmation is this strange sacrament - only reason we do it is because of Bishops. Discussion to get rid of confirmation, but Bishops want to keep it. The Early Church the Bishop was always present at the baptisms - after baptism the newly baptized would then have communion and be anointed with oil by the Bishop. After the Bishops were not required to be present at Baptisms, the priests were allowed to anoint with oil. So, because Bishops didn't need to be present at baptisms, they needed an avenue to also anoint which created confirmation.

Lunch break

Circle - Irene Roberts (how arrived after lunch) - Susan Mitchell and Irene have been visiting and the kids love it. Tried to have Easter Service last year, but weather intervened. Went last week with Belle Michelson and Dancing with the Spirit. Susan and Irene are going again for Easter this year.

Continued conversation on confirmation

Most important is to develop relationship with those being confirmed. Talking circle approach about what it means. Looked at Baptism service. Emphasized that at least one person that is presenting child for baptism must be baptized themselves. The process for confirmation should be happening in the child's life, learning from all of the other members of the church what it (faith, church) is about so that eventually, they can answer for themselves during the process of confirmation. The Bishop walked us through the Baptism presentation and the baptismal covenant. And, every morning should do daily devotions. Commit to making church a priority in your life.

Committee Questions and discussion

Presentation: Understanding Grief and Affects on Alaska Native - We have the power within us.  
Tanana Chiefs Conference: Roxanne

Dene' was our original name, know family (clan)

WE knew it, we felt it.

History "Kill the Indian and save the man"

What is historical trauma is combined emotional and mental wounding of an individual or a group of people, caused by a traumatic event or experience. Individuals react in different ways to Historical traumas, by substance abuse, suicide, depression, anxiety, anger, violence...

Intergenerational trauma that is transferred from the first generation of survivors to the second and further generations.

What is grief? Grief is a conflicting feeling caused by end of or change in a familiar pattern or behavior. Grief is also what hopes, dreams and expectations you had for yourself or others.

Grief is natural, normal - that a bad thing.

SHAME. -Breve Brown "Ted Talk"

Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means No longer control our lives.

Connect the pst to the present.

Grieve over lost childhood. It's never too lates to address your grief.

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

Stephen R. Covey

"Twelve Lessens" by Kate Spencer

Saturday

Indigenous Missioner Report (Brad Hoff) - could not get here because of weather delays - lives in Minnesota.

Discussion of Village Reports

Addiction Problems, pastoral care, money issues, increased attendance.

Nenana (Tim) has a good congregation - older congregation, with few small children - got to find a way to bring in younger adults and older children. What can we do to make the church more appealing to those groups in those ages groups. Bessie mentioned using skits and plays to get people involved. Irene mentioned that in Circle the Baptist Minister goes around and picks up the kids an brings them to church. Provide transportation. Bishop mentioned that the challenge is not really the kids, but rather the adults who don't bring the kids to church. Inviting kids to be part of the worship service made a big difference in the Bishop's life as a child. Acolyte, thurabil, wore the vestments. Invite older kids to lead a service (morning prayers) - ST. Mary's youth run "Java Jesus" coffee stand after church. In Huslia ask children to volunteer. Mtr Betty mentioned putting duties in a basket and have people draw out a paper for being usher, greeter, offering, etc. 80% or better come to church because they have been invited. Grandparents taking grandchildren to church.

Addiction -Flora has reached out on her own but would like more support.

Gary Simple Jr., mentioned that more than 1/2 the population have left Venetie and have moved to Fairbanks. Luke Titus talks about how we need to be careful and how we perceive cultural values and Native ways.

Bessie brought up addiction and the migration of people to the cities. What elders are going to be left to help the young people with addictions and other problems. The church is critical with what goes on in the village.

Shaleen mentioned that growing up in an alcoholic family and only went to church for funerals - so church was not a positive place. Baptist church welcomed her and invited her in. Bessie mentioned getting ready for a service and not having anyone show up - so why continue? Because of Jesus.

Bessie mentioned that ST. Matthew's is too small for all the Native community living in Fairbanks. But maybe offering 1/4 yearly service. Lots of retired Native clergy living in Fairbanks that could lead service. Have to be more user friendly. Reconciliation service between the church and the Native peoples asking forgiveness, etc.

Suggested having a special event to honor Shirley Gordon.

Bessie spoke of the finances in Minto - offerings have gone way down which effects everything that they do - from paying the lighting bill, to traveling to convention/meetings, etc. Need to be more creative in how we keep our resources. Tasking Deanery to make a brochure to talk about the funding issues. Bishop mentioned that growing up he learned that it was his responsibility to take care of the church. Now it seems that we don't expect people to be active - when we talk about baptism there is no expectation that they will contribute to the church - not just financially, but with your life.

Myra takes about tithing and encouraging people to understand that the more you give the more blessings you get back. Encourage others that God can change people.

Tim mentioned that we need to be careful that we don't put people off by asking for money.

Bishop: How to make giving a part of your life - giving back. Bessie mentioned that tithe is a biblical principal.

Ruth mentioned that there needs to be more communication - didn't know that there was an Interior Deanery meeting until her sister called from Eagle and asked if she wanted to attend.

Betty (Tok) mentioned youth groups in Tok - Young Life is growing. Started from Fairbanks. Asked if the Episcopal Church had any camps for young people.

Indigenous Council of Advice Report by Bessie

Meet with Brad Hoff, the commissioner - promoting leadership, development in the church. Went to Malibu CA and met with other ministries. Talk about common areas, challenges and weaknesses and formulate a strategic plan. Prepare for General Convention. How do we get our issues on the table and keep them on the table in the National church. Bessie's term will be up in 2020 and wants the Deanery to start thinking about a replacement. An opportunity for indigenous people to share what they are doing around the world. A lot of dioceses were not aware of the amount of Native people within their area. This ministry is finding that almost every dioceses has some number of Native or indigenous people. Doctrine of Discovery - series of things that started in 16th century. The pope issued statements to go out in the world, conquer, take lands in the name of the church. 2003 Episcopal Church came out and said that that was wrong. One of the things that the committee is working on is identifying and hiring an individual to develop educational models to support indigenous ministries. Bessie mentioned that the budget for that position all has to be thought of in advance. Committee also brings resolutions to the General Convention - easy for indigenous issues to get lost. One of the challenges that the council has is that there are from all over the US and it is hard to feel like they have a sense of community.

Wintertalk is a gathering of people from across the country to talk about indigenous issues. Last Wintertalk was held in Tacoma, WA in a casino (good rate for conference attendees.) Traditionally, been held in Oklahoma at retreat center.

Bessie went to Wintertalk under the Indigenous Council duties. No clear format on how to get people to attend. Episcopal Diocese of AK does not have a process for sending people to Wintertalk. Diocesan Office does not get any information. Problem is that the host does not get the information out in timely manner. Bessie apologized for not getting the information out to the villages. No dates for the next Wintertalk or where it will be. If we want to have activities, we need to have documents ready to go to General Convention, and we need to make sure there is a healthy budget to be able to attend. Polly Simmond's mentioned that there has to be more communication to the villages about Wintertalk and a process for attending. Jeanette asked how many can we send. Suzanne stated that historically they could send two delegates. Tim asked what the largest expense is (travel, accommodations?) He suggested that if each congregation in Alaska took a couple of dollars a week to put toward expenses could we afford to send more. Mtr. Betty mentioned that if it is every year, could it a part of the regular voting elections. Bessie said it can be if we have all the information ready but supports rotating between villages. Bessie said if you are interested in applying for her position (a 2-year term) please let her or the Bishop know.

Deanery Business Session:

Mtr. Betty moved to accept the motion to approve the minutes, Flora seconded. Teresa T. Asked that Vanessa's last name be added Derendorf. Also, added under Bishop's overview: Allakaket, Tanana, Venetie and Eagle.

Suzanne (Canon for Finance & Administration Report)

Diocese is all 48 congregations in Alaska and the Bishop's Office. We have an annual convention, the deanery's run their own meetings, we have four deaneries, interior, arctic coast, southeast (panhandle), south central (Anchorage and surrounding area) Each Deanery has their own rules. Delegates are elected by congregation.

Every congregation can send at least 2 delegates to the annual convention, depending on size some may be able to send more. If priest cannot attend, you may send someone else instead with the permission of the Bishop. Anyone can attend as a visitor. Usually there is a motion that allows for voice and seat for visitors (but they cannot vote.) Convention is the governing body of the diocese. The Standing Committee acts similar to a vestry at a church, but is for the diocese. Acts as the governing body in between conventions. Standing committee has a lay person and a clergy member. The deanery reps make a nomination. Person is elected at convention. 2019 Oct 3-6 at St. Mary's Anchorage. Interior Deanery lay seat is up for election. 3-year term.

General convention is once every three years - a gathering of all the dioceses in the US. House of Bishops and House of Deputies (4 lay and 4 ordained.) Alaska deputation will be elected at 2019 Diocesan Convention. General Convention will be in Baltimore MD June 30-July 9th.

Commission on Ministry, clergy and layperson from each deanery and permanent deaconate seat. Clergy position is open but will be appointed by the Bishop.

St. Simeon and St. Anna - was intended to be a very small society (1 person elected a year), but now is open to anyone age 60 or over and is now over 200 people.

Minutes for 2018 convention are online (diocesan website). Bishop reminded people that delegates to convention should be taking information back to their congregations.

Bessie raised the concern that we don't have any Native people interested in being ordained.

FIT Grant - Faith into Tomorrow. Fundraising campaign started in the early 90's that set up an endowment, with corpus of money is invested and a certain percentage is allowed to be spent each year. October 11th is the due date. 1) Youth Ministry, 2) Caring for Victims of Poverty and Abuse, 3) Encouraging Spiritual Growth or Outreach. FIT Committee makes recommendations to Standing Committee who approves the grants.

#### FIT Facility Grant Programs

Case 2B Traveling Work Group Support Grant - deadline May 15th. Maximum \$500

Case 2A Facility Emergency Repair or Replacement - maximum \$10,000. Deadline - application must be received within 60 days of incident or event.

#### Interior Pledge (support of Diocesan Budget)

Covers Bishop Office including salaries, training events, conventions, Standing Committee meetings. Some monies go back to deaneries. Congregations have been asked to give a 25% pledge to support the diocese. Teresa T. Asked about St. Stephens, Ft. Yukon and some columns have no data (which means 0).

We receive \$433,000.00 from the Episcopal Church at large. 40-45% of the Diocesan budget is received from the Episcopal Church at large. They have an operating budget that they pass at General Convention. AK is one of 4 dioceses in the US that receive funding from the Episcopal

Church at large. It is important that parochial reports be filed because the funding from the Episcopal Church at large is in part due to these reports.

Congregational Support of Diocesan Operating Budget Pledge Income: Breakdown by Deanery.

Congregational Ministry Support through Block Grants to each of the four Deaneries. = Provides funding for Congregational Ministry Support. Each deanery has a custodial account through the Diocese. In addition to deanery support, each deanery receives \$2000 for youth ministry support (which can accrue so current balance is \$14000.00) - Estimated total custodial for ministry is \$60, 823.03 plus \$14,000 for youth ministry for a total of \$74, 823.03.

Budget Report: Bessie - principal diocese (large indigenous ministry) - grant - dream was to have a youth camp for the whole diocese. What does the Interior Deanery want to do with the funds available?

Bessie Titus was elected to Executive Committee for 3rd term for Tanana Valley. Florence Folger elected to Yukon Koyukuk.

Nominations for Diocesan Positions:

Standing Committee:

Mabel Vent - Mabel re-elected to serve 2nd term on Standing Committee

Laura Bender

General Convention Delegates

Lay delegates:

Tom Marsh

Florence Folger

Clergy delegates

Teresa Thomas

Bessie Titus

St. Anna and St. Simeon Nominations:

Ruth Folger, Minto

William Durendorf, Huslia

Raymond Thomas, Tanacross

Florence Folger, Tanana

Jeanette Dementi, Nenana

Darlene Jensen, Nenana

Carol Thomas, Nenana

Charlotte Wright, Nenana

Allan Todd, Fairbanks

Mary Johnston, Fairbanks

Eugenia "Genie" Grammer, Venetie



Resolutions: do not require action - beyond the scope of a deanery to act on (covered in the canons.)

1. Resolution - funerals service, St. Matthew's does not have room, services held at David Salmon Tribal Hall, and funerals are not recorded. Resolution is to count these funerals as recorded, and burial records attached to St. Matthew's.
2. Recording of funerals held at David Salmon Tribal Hall. (Ditto resolution)

Set date for Licensed Ministry Training: Proposed Date is second week of October. Bessie suggests that Executive Committee be involved in that discussion.

Executive Committee Recap:

Lorraine glad to see those here -

Myra glad she made it to last day - had training in Anchorage for her job yesterday.

Jeanette - encouraged about the committee - nice to see new faces.

Bishop's Comments: Collect to love God and love one another. Presented Bishop's Diocesan Pin - minister in the Episcopal Church. IF you find someone who you want to honor and give them your pin, and then tell the Bishop the name, he will replace your pin. Thanked us for commitment and prayers.

Teresa Thomas wanted to thank ST. Matthew's for hosting the Interior Deanery meeting and especially Diana Childs for organizing all of the meals.

Set date and place of next annual meeting - St. Matthew's April 23-25, 2020.

Bessie thanked everyone for coming and for being transparent and sharing your heart.

Tom Marsh - motion to move to adjourn.

Betty - tanacross