

## **Executive Presbyter's Report to Presbytery Stated Meeting: Fall 2014**

**For those who don't know, Rev. Duke Morrow from Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church was medivaced to Providence Hospital in Anchorage this last weekend.** Blood clots had formed cutting circulation to one leg. On Sunday emergency surgery was performed, removing the clots and restoring circulation. It then became clear that his foot had been without circulation for too long, and the foot was amputated on Monday morning.

Duke is recovering well and invites visits/contacts from his colleagues. Please pray also for his wife, Li, who is with him. Those of you who know her may wish to contact her, as well. It is unclear how this will affect ministry in Barrow in the longer run, but recovery will take a while.

**We live in times of great social change, requiring the church of Jesus Christ to adapt and change to fit the new context.**

There is much for which to give thanks. There is some experimentation under way in our presbytery, and at least some of that experimentation will bear fruit.

1. For twenty years, fewer and fewer of our churches have been served by full-time pastors. More and more are served by unpaid Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs). Some are finding newer ways of including the Teaching Elder Gift in ministry.

### **Gambell and Savoonga Presbyterian Churches**

Rev. Leisa Carrick is volunteering (supported by United Protestant Church) as Teaching Elder to St. Lawrence island, providing coaching and support to CRE's. This arrangement has born some fruit over the past few years.

### **Kaktovik Presbyterian Church**

I have begun serving in a similar capacity as is Leisa on SLI. It is unclear as yet if this is a good ministry model for Kaktovik.

### **University Community & New Hope Church, Fbks/North Pole**

Both churches are unable to support a full-time pastor. Both have decided to hire a part-time pastor. This is the "tent-making" pastor model, where the pastor gets part of his/her income from work outside the church.

New Hope has voted to call the Rev. Curt Matz, pending presbytery/conference approval. UCPC's Pastor Nominating Committee is actively seeking candidates.

### **Olgonik PC, Atqasuk Chapel and Kuukpik PC**

#### **The communities of Wainright, Atqasuk and Nuiqsut**

These churches are working with the Committee on Ministry of Presbytery to seek a shared Teaching Elder. Their PNC is active and the COM will work with them to find candidates. This pastor will primarily work to train, coach, and come along side of local leaders, similar to Leisa Carrick's work, but full time.

### **Anchor Presbyterian Church in Anchorage**

Anchor currently contracts with the Rev. Britt Johnston for pulpit supply, session moderator and occasional pastoral care.

### **Chapel in the Mts., Anaktuvuk Pass**

Currently this congregation has neither an active Teaching Elder, nor a CRE, nor is there a candidate for training (that I know of). Ruling Elder Mark Wartes has put much effort into serving as moderator. It is unclear what fits this church as a ministry model.

2. **The Yukon Presbyterians for Earth Care sponsored a very successful event** that is gaining some national recognition across the church. They will have much to report as well.
3. **There is at least one small group exploring forming a new worshiping community** of some sort—maybe not a traditional “church.”
4. **The Joint Parish put together a rough draft of a new Village Ministries Committee** for presbytery. This continues the Indigenous Church emphasis that came out of our partnership with Tayal Presbytery. If this passes it will restructure some of our presbytery work to empower village people to oversee village ministry strategy.
5. **Our PLUME partners are exploring a new Lay-Monastic Community.** This may take more than one track. One will be to provide short, discipling experiences to help people learn new ways to embody Christ’s ministry. Others may include a coaching/small community “class” under the oversight of Rev. Dr. Elaine Heath to teach some of the methods for more effective experimentation in building ministry communities. She is seeking how to make this available in ways that are appropriate to different cultural contexts. We have been invited to participate.
6. **There are other things to celebrate that may not fit the “experimentation” category.** For instance, the committee overseeing the new building for Gambell will bring us a great report. I won’t steal their thunder too much here. I suspect there are other things we should celebrate, and I hope you will find opportunities to tell them at this meeting.

Changing times also raise some difficulties for us to address.

1. **Finances are tight and we do not currently have a viable plan** to address our shortfall. Luckily, we received a windfall from the synod this year, which buys us time to devise some “experimentation” in new ideas for financing. So...ideas anyone?
2. **Going to church continues to fall out of fashion**, especially among the younger generation. This requires new approaches for reaching out with the gospel. Again, this leaves room for some very interesting experimentation with new approaches!
3. **The world is changing. This raises the question of how the presbytery can best serve** now. This is a good time to ask the ongoing question: What role (or roles) can the presbytery play in the life of Christ’s Church to encourage health and innovation in local churches and local ministries?