

God's Work. Our Hands. with Friends in Wrangell, AK

By the Rev. Nancy Olsen Gradwohl, Island of Faith Lutheran Church, Wrangell, AK

Tuesday, July 28, 2017.

12 members of Edmonds Lutheran Church and Pastor Mary-Alyce Burleigh from Holy Spirit in Kirkland, WA arrived in Wrangell AK. Their mission: fellowship and service. The group flew back to Seattle, August 1--mission accomplished.

Shortly after arrival, the visitors attended the noontime Bearoque (Bear Festival happening) concert; Friday evening the visitors were welcomed to Island of Faith with a delicious dinner of homemade halibut chowder, salads, breads, desserts and an abundance of fellowship!



Guests and church members left Island of Faith at 8:30 Saturday morning to kick-off the congregation's new service activity: regular clean-up of miles 2-4 on Zimovia Hwy. What an amazing sight--13 bright God's Work, Our Hands tee-shirts: no safety vests required. Clean-up was finished in time to take in the Saturday market at the Nolan Center and meet more of Wrangell's residents. That evening they joined with the community again to enjoy live music--another Bearfest event.



Sunday, Pastor Julie Josund of Edmonds Lutheran preached, Pastor Mary-Alyce Burleigh assisted, Pastor Nancy Gradwohl presided AND Dawn Huffington of Edmonds led the psalm for the day.

After a light lunch, the group donned work clothes and headed up to Wrangell's long-term care facility and weeded and barked a large flower bed--preparing it for spring planting. The highlight of the afternoon was joining with the residents for worship and filling the dining hall with enthusiastic hymn singing!! The songs continued into the evening as the Washington

visitors joined with the Wrangell community for Singspiration--a monthly community hymn sing--hosted in July by Island of Faith.

No rest on Monday! While some visitors did chores at the church, others stocked shelves and filled food distribution boxes at the Salvation Army. That evening, Island of Faith hosted a thank-you dinner for the visiting Lutherans at The Stikine Inn.

Tuesday was a day of packing, reflection, gratitude and good-byes. Our brothers and sisters left on the afternoon jet. They were a wonderful gift to our congregation and community.