

Welcome to the Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministries (SPLM) new quarterly electronic newsletter!



SPLM is six Lutheran (ELCA) congregations located on or connected to Alaska's Seward Peninsula, located near the Arctic circle in rural northwest Alaska. These primarily Alaska Native congregations share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed in beautiful and remote areas of the state. This newsletter is brought to you by the Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministries Endowment Committee as a way to share what these ministries are doing and invite your partnership in what God is doing on the Seward Peninsula.

Salmon Lake Bible Camp 2015



Beginning with the 5th and 6th graders on July 13, the Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministry Association Bible Camp at Salmon Lake opened for another wonderful summer of Bible Study, fun, food, fellowship, swimming, games, singing and much more!

With more than 30 kids each week—coming from Nome, Wales, Teller, Brevig Mission and Shishmaref—along with support staff coming from all over the United States (2 of whom (Ruth & Agnes) having been coming for 25 years), this was another truly great year for Bible Camp at Salmon Lake. We also want to both acknowledge and thank Pastor Brian Crockett and Ginger Crockett for 25 years of Service at Salmon Lake as well!

The kids, chaperones, pastors and helpers at Salmon Lake Bible Camp would also like to express our deep appreciation to everyone who—over the years—have helped make the Bible Camp possible by supporting its mission to provide a meaningful Bible Camp experience for the kids of the Seward Peninsula!

(Images below: Pastor Brian Crockett leading singing; youth participating in Bible study).



Welcome to Wales!

Thornton Memorial Lutheran Church, Wales, AK, will host this year's SPLM Fall Conference, September 11-13, 2015. SPLM congregations rotate hosting Spring and Fall Conference, multi day events of singing, worship, testimony, fellowship and cluster business.

If you visit Wales, you'll find you can't go any farther east without crossing the international dateline. Wales, population 145, is the western-most American city on mainland North America. In clear weather, the Russian island of Big Diomedes is visible, as well as the eastern coast of Siberia. The village has long been inhabited by Inupiat Eskimo people and those who came before; a burial mound found in Wales dates back to 500 AD and is registered as a National Historic Landmark.

The village sits on a beach tucked up against steep bluffs. The area is plentiful with waterfowl and residents have hunted whales and marine mammals for generations.



Hunting is connected to both traditional ways and Christian faith, says Gilbert Oxereok, lay pastor at Thornton Memorial Lutheran Church since 2007. Oxereok was mentored by a former pastor and provides weekly worship, pastoral acts and is a stable presence for the community. He goes into schools (with permission) and talks with youth about leadership skills, hunting and spirituality and, if asked, he is permitted to share his faith story.

Working with youth is an important part of his work, Oxereok says. He's part of the village's strategy for helping young people avoid drugs and alcohol. Being part of a faith community gives young people an alternate path in life, Oxereok says. "I let them know there's another option, and it's free."

Oxereok says ministry like this is an important part of all Seward Peninsula congregations – set in villages with high rates of substance abuse, domestic violence and suicide. "God gives peace and healing," Oxereok says."

Though Lutheran today, the Wales church has an ecumenical history. In 1890, the American Missionary Association established a mission post here, the same year as reindeer were brought to the area. Since then, the congregation has been both Presbyterian and Covenant, officially becoming Lutheran in 1973.

If you visit Wales, Oxereok says to bring warm clothes and good hiking boots. And if you need a place to stay, just let him know. The church is always open. You might see Russia on your visit, but the lay pastor bets that you will also see God at work. He sees God at work in the fellowship in his small town and in the children playing. "I see God everywhere," Oxereok says, adding that he loves doing ministry in this part of the world.

Donate today!

Want to support the many ministries of the Seward Peninsula through the SPLM Endowment Fund? Please call the Alaska Synod office at 907.272.8899 to set up a recurring gift from your bank or send a gift via check to:

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