



[All Margins justified, please. Thanks.]

## ***Western Jurisdiction Warmly Welcomed the HSUMC In Alaska in June***

As our incoming HSUMC President, Ivan Corbin, said, "Where else could we take a tour and see musk ox, an Athabascan Native/Russian Orthodox church, and Iditarod race dogs all in the same afternoon?" Along with the beautiful snow tipped mountains and Alaska Pacific University's resident moose that greeted Vernon and me at our apartment when we returned there one evening, as well as the many excellent presentations re: ministries in Alaska and the Western Jurisdiction, our annual meeting was filled with many memorable experiences. In addition, we were given a program book full of amazing information about Alaska and the development of Methodism in the state, compiled by our host, Larry Hayden. A few copies are still available for \$25; contact: [lhaydennjuno@gmail.com](mailto:lhaydennjuno@gmail.com).

About fifty people gathered on the campus of the Alaska Pacific University, originally organized as Alaska Methodist University, on Monday afternoon, June 26, for the opening of the 2017 annual meeting of the Western Jurisdiction CAH and the Historical Society of the UMC. We were warmly welcomed to Alaska by DarEll Weist, Chairperson of the Western Jurisdiction CAH. DarEll then introduced our first speaker of the afternoon, the General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, the Rev. Fred Day.



*Fred Day*

Fred began by stating that his remarks would be more in the way of a devotional than a keynote address and then offered a word of thanks to the Western Jurisdiction folks for their hospitality. He spoke of the glory of God as expressed in nature through the Psalms. "Who are we that you bless us and gift us with your handiwork and placed the stewardship of your imagination and creativity into our hands?" He then went on to describe the pastor of an almost dead church, who is crafting it into a

resurrection church – the pastor of St. James UMC in the Olney neighborhood in Philadelphia – which is, in fact, Fred's home church. Originally a part of Francis Asbury's 1814 circuit, St. James's grew into a great, stately, gothic building, boasting a congregation of 1,000 people in the post-WWII era, only to plummet to a place where a gathering of twelve disciples looked like a crowd.

The newly appointed pastor in 2016 decided that he needed to "Take the church to where the people are." "As a result," said Day, "St. James's has now become Philadelphia's Foundry – classically Methodist, strategically Wesleyan and historically grounded in what happens when we are true to form." What is happening there is a part of our Methodist DNA – faith and life that is grounded in love and inclusion, offering opportunities for small groups where participants can experience God's love and mercy. These groups, then, have helped participants to move from the inward to outward service, discovering that connectionally we are much more complete together than individually, doing the work of undergirding the foundation of mission. Our heritage is Mission – there is no mission without heritage.

St. James UMC is living proof of how our Methodist roots can shape the present, living up to the church our Methodist forebears bequeathed to us.

Following Fred's presentation, the Conference Superintendent, Carlo Rapanut, brought greetings from the 27 churches, 2 Fellowships, and 30 clergy of the Alaska Missionary Conference.

DarEll then introduced the newly elected President of Alaska Pacific University, Dr. Bob Onders, explaining that the University had recently entered into a partnership with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, which is now managing APU. After welcoming us to the APU campus, Dr. Onders stated that "History helps in making sure we don't make mistakes over again." He then acknowledged the proud heritage of APU as being founded by (*cont. p. 3*)

In a box down the left-hand column. This goes in every issue.

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First of all, thanks to our current and outgoing officers who have worked so diligently to keep before us all the "Ministry of Memory." Second, thanks to</p>  <p>the membership of our society for loving the United Methodist Church enough to not only help us celebrate our history and heritage, but to help our denomination learn from her past as we move into a new and uncertain future. By applying and teaching the lessons learned from our very rich and complex past we can help shape a much more hopeful future. It is this tension between our past, present and future that presents one of the greatest challenges our church has faced, but also one of the greatest opportunities as well. Thirdly, I would like to thank you all for entrusting the leadership of our organization to a band of relative newcomers. We humbly accept this responsibility, but do so knowing that we will be turning to each and every one of you for guidance and wisdom as we work together in this part of God's Kingdom. Finally, I would like to thank our hosts in the Western Jurisdiction and especially our local hosts in Anchorage for a wonderful conference.</p> <p>Coming out of our conference I have a much greater appreciation for how past and present come together. We heard some wonderful presentations from a varied and rich history of ministry out west and then we got to go see and hear firsthand how some of the "historic" Alaskan ministries are still making a difference in the lives Alaskans all over that vast state. Larry Hayden referred us to the book "Cry in the Wilderness" written by Tay Thomas for the Alaska Council of Churches back in the 1960's. Having already visited in person some of the locations and ministries highlighted in this book as well as the Alaskan Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, what would have been a book about unknown places and times has suddenly come alive. It is amazing to me how intertwined the work of the Church (through many denominations) and Alaska and her native and adopted peoples are. And that interconnectedness continues as relative newcomers from places like Samoa and Tonga bring their 187-year old version of Methodism to Anchorage or as missionaries from the Lower 48 continue to serve across this vast state, partnering with native disciples and following a path created long ago by other adventurous Jesus followers. Past and present meet daily creating a new future not only in Alaska, but all around our globe and we are in a unique position to appreciate not only what God is doing now as God "makes all things new" but what God has done all along in human history.</p> <p>As we work together in the HSUMC, may we be diligent about helping others see not only a value in our past, but also how our past can inform our present and our future. In this way, history truly becomes a living document, not just some dusty old stuff of interest only to researchers. As we prepare for next year's celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the United Methodist Church, may we discover the lessons learned in those 50 years in order to help shape the next 50 years and beyond.</p> <p>I've always had an interest in history since I was a kid. This is due in large part because my parents were intentional about introducing us to as many local museums, historical sites and venues as they could each time we moved to a new part of the country. Through presentations by historians, docents and interpreters, history came alive and helped me to understand that I (cont. p.20)</p>
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the Methodists. He lifted up the role of the Rev. Peter Gordon Gould in organizing the University, who, in his initial research, listed the six greatest needs of the people of Alaska: childcare, health and well-being, a wider spread of economic opportunity, a firmer basis for cultural sharing, education, and a greater opportunity for spiritual growth. Gould then recommended that the two most important things that the Methodist Church could do to address these needs were to 1) revive local churches by providing high quality leadership adequately financed, making the local church a dynamic spiritual center of its community and 2) to establish a privately supported liberal arts college or university.

Dr. Onders stated that the current focus of APU is business/public policy, health and wellness, and culture and environment. He has hopes in the future to attract national attention and develop partnerships with other entities that will strength the University. He noted that the Methodist Church has been one of their long-time partners.

Following Dr. Onders remarks, DarEll opened the joint session of the Western Jurisdiction CAH and the annual meeting of the HSUMC, with the singing of "I am the Light of the World." A number of reports were received for the WJCAH. It was noted during this time that Grant Hall (next door to the Carr-Gottstein Center where our meetings were held) was the first building constructed on the APU Campus.



*Grant Hall*



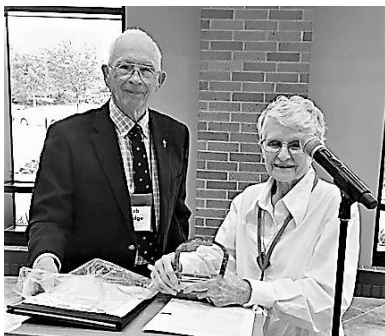
Priscilla Pope-Levison, out-going President of the HSUMC, then opened the HSUMC segment of the meeting, by encouraging everyone present who was not currently a member of the Society to join. She then introduced the members of the Board. Dan Swinson, out-going Vice-president of the Society announced the winners of the 2017 Ministry of Memory Awards. He explained that due to the large number of nominations for this award and the number of deserving recipients, that last year the Board had voted to allow the Program Committee discretion to nominate more than one candidate for the award each year. This year the Committee decided to make an

*Priscilla Pope-Levison* award to five people: Jean Traster, Central Texas Conference, South Central Jurisdiction; Maureen Vetter, Nebraska Conference, South Central Jurisdiction; Richard Crisman, Illinois Great Rivers Conference, North Central Jurisdiction; and Shirley and Donald Knepp, Oregon-Idaho Conference, Western Jurisdiction. Jean Traster and Maureen Vetter received their awards at their respective annual conference sessions. Unfortunately, Richard Crisman died before he could receive his award but was honored posthumously at the North Central Jurisdiction CAH meeting. Shirley and Don Knepp received their award at the HSUMC awards banquet on Wednesday evening of the HSUMC annual meeting in Alaska (*see p. 13*)

*Rob Sledge, former President of HSUMC presents Ministry of Memory*

*Lona Dumont, Chair, Great Plains Annual Conference, CAH Chair presents Ministry of*

*Ann Marie Crisman, widow of Ministry of Memory Award winner, Richard Crisman, and*



*Award to Jean Traster at Central Texas Annual Conference*



*Memory Award to Maureen Vetter at the Great Plains AC*



*her family, receive the award in Richard's memory at the Illinois Great Rivers AC Dan Swinson made the presentation*

*(pictures provided by respective annual conferences)*

Following Dan's presentation, Luther O'Connor presented some details on the 2018 annual meeting which will be held at United Theological Seminary, in Dayton, OH, from July 9-12, and will focus on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of The United Methodist Church, with the theme, "Merging the Streams: Pietism, Transatlantic Revivalism, and the EUB Legacy in United Methodism." We will be meeting together with the North Central Jurisdiction CAH, the Wesley Historical Society and the West Ohio CAH. Two of the plenary's will feature Steve O'Malley and James Stein. In addition, there will be a number of break-out sessions with a variety of speakers. See page twenty for the "Call For Papers," for these sessions. Two different tours will be offered – a tour in the Columbus area featuring Otterbein University, Hanby House, Church of the Master, and Ohio Methodism archives, and an Otterbein Lebanon tour, including the Otterbein Lebanon Senior Lifestyle Community, the old UTS chapel in Dayton and dinner at Otterbein Lebanon. The second tour features less walking for those with difficulty walking long distances. More information and registration forms will be available in the Winter 2018 issue of *Historian's Digest*.

Kerri Shoemaker, the HSUMC Treasurer then presented the 2016/17 Treasurer's Report and the proposed budget for 2017/18 which will be printed in the Winter 2018 issue of *Historian's Digest*.

DarEll then called upon Fred Day, once again, to make a presentation on the "Viability and Sustainability of Conference Archives." Fred began by pointing out that GCAH exists to support the work of the Conference Commissions on Archives and History. People are disciplined to Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by stories – both from the Bible and the stories of our history.

The viability of our conference archives (and our local commissions) begins with those who have energy for the work. Then, it is important to know and communicate our historical mandate. That is, to be familiar with the paragraphs in the *Discipline* which describes the role of the local church historian and the work of conference commissions on archives and history. Above and beyond that, it is important for conference CAH's to build alliances with other groups such as Partners for Sacred Places (based in Philadelphia), the Society of American Archivists and the Community and State Archivists Associations. Partners for Sacred Places works with folks in historical committees to assist them in determining whether they have an historic building or not, how you can find funds for building, and teaching and training teams in fundraising.

Fred then referenced the resolution submitted by the Eastern Pennsylvania CAH to their annual conference to set money aside from closed churches to be used by the conference archives for the preservation and storage of their records. This resolution can serve as a model for other conferences.

Official historic sites can become great sites for craft fairs or flea markets as a way to raise consciousness and knowledge about the sites. Get to know your conference communicator and let s/he know what is going on with your Commission and/or Historical Society. Engage on social media. Don't just post. Become the expert. Not everyone is a history buff but everybody needs to know how we got where we are today.

Fred ended his presentation by referencing their new geocaching site, [theamazinggrace.org](http://theamazinggrace.org), which encourages folks to visit the various Heritage Landmarks for the United Methodist Church through referencing their GPS coordinates. You can then visit and find a code that confirms you've visited and report to GCAH. When you've visited enough, you can qualify for a prize.



*First UMC, Anchorage*

We then adjourned our meetings for the day to prepare to travel downtown to First United Methodist Church of Anchorage, where we were royally treated to a delicious dinner prepared by the Samoan UMC congregation which also shares the building. Following dinner, we heard from Steve Maga, the Lay Leader of the Samoan UMC, who gave us a brief history of Methodism in Samoa. (*cont. p. 5*)



The introduction of Methodism into Samoa came in 1827 when Tongans, who had renounced heathenism, visited Samoa and married Samoans, and the church that the Tongans brought over to Samoa was established. In 1993 there were 8400 Samoans in Anchorage. There were UCC, Roman Catholic, Mormon, and Assembly of God congregations, but not one Wesleyan or Methodist congregation. On October 14, 1994, the Rev. Billy Still blessed a Samoan Fellowship at the Turnagin UMC, and in 2010 First Samoan UMC was established.

By 2017 there were 4 Samoan congregations in Alaska, two of which were members of the Samoan Methodist Independent Conference. Steve said that there was a vision of joining all four congregations. In 2019 they will celebrate 25 years of Samoan Methodism in Alaska.



*Steve Maga*

Following his presentation, one of the young Samoan women danced for us, demonstrating one of the ways in which they raise money for mission. As she was dancing, we placed bills of varying denominations on her person and around her. All the money collected was to go GCAH.

After the dance was finished, Lupe Saafi, a member of the United Methodist Tongan congregation in Anchorage, gave us a brief history of Tongan Methodism in Alaska. Tonga is 275 square miles, with 100% of the people below the poverty line. Many people want to come to America because of the great opportunities that are here:

- 1) Work – in America if you want to work, you can find a job; not so in Tonga. 2) Education – there is no higher

*Samoan woman dances for mission* education; high school was as far as you could go. 3) Medicine – scholarships were offered for students to study overseas; heart/organ transplants were available. 4) Constitution - never take for granted our freedom. 5) Pioneering Spirit – in America, if you think you can, you can; in Tonga, you can never rise above your station. 6) Reliable infrastructure – street lights, running water, etc. 7) Abundance of land and water resources; there is less land for agriculture in Tonga. 8) Higher over-all standard of living – you can buy what you want in the grocery store; food, water and basic necessities are abundant. 9) Geographic and Climate Diversity – in Tonga it is sun-parched or long winters. 10) Ability to provide for your family.

The first Methodist missionaries came to Tonga in 1822 and by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the island was Christianized. The relationship between the King and the Free Wesleyan Church has been strong and the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga has been involved in taking Christianity to others in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

The Tongan Methodists have been members of Anchor Park UMC since 1978. Tongans of different denomination meet together at the Church of the Latter Day Saints for worship. They are involved in many missions. There is harmony and respect among all cultures which make Anchorage the first city without prejudice. The Tongans are very grateful to the Americans for welcoming them.



*Lupe Saafi*

Following this presentation, Walt Hayes, also known as Mr. Methodism of Alaska, as he has been a resident for over 50 years, presented some of the history of Alaska and Methodism's involvement in that history. He handed out a Timeline of the forces that shaped the history and economy in Alaska and then elaborated on specific points. (cont. p. 6)



*Walt Hayes*

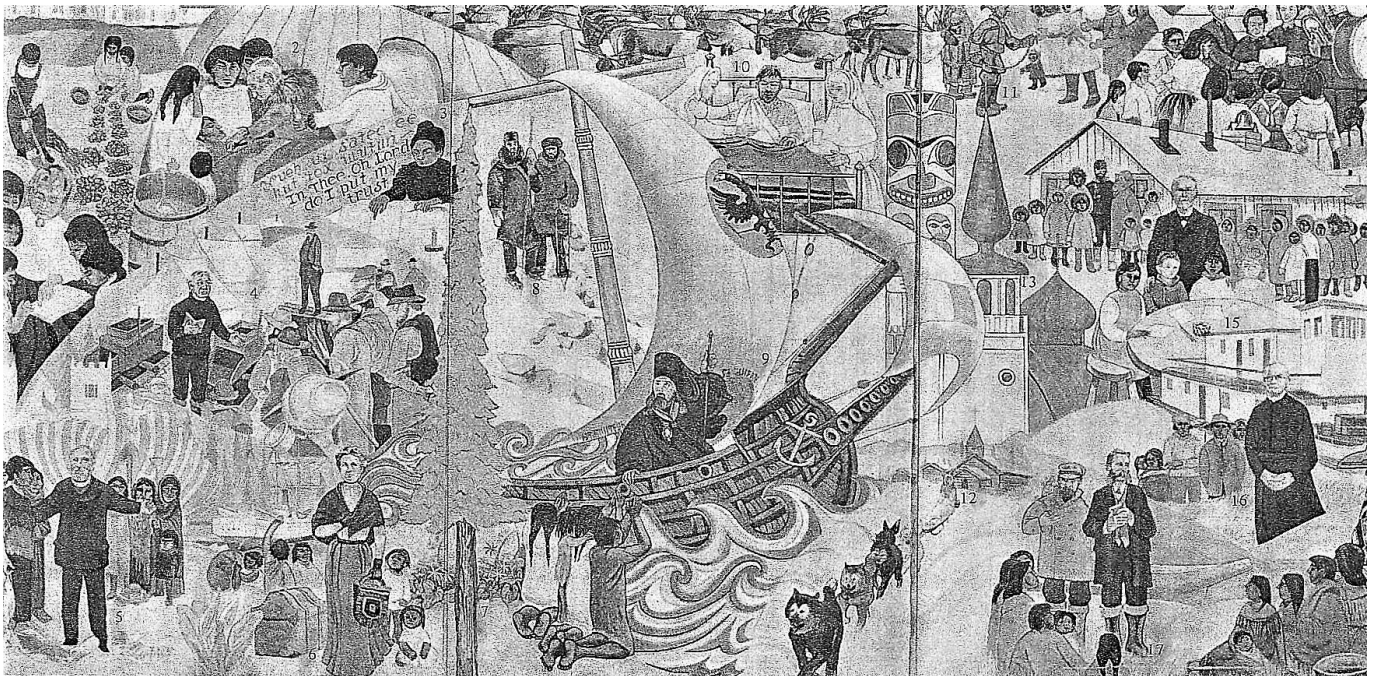
The Russians first established the fur trade in Alaska between 1760 and 1800, when the sea lions were discovered, and then established a colony there between 1800 and 1840. William Seward then negotiated the purchase of Alaska from the Russians in 1867. Thirty-three years later, in 1900, Edward Harriman, who owned several banks and railroads, decided that we needed to know what was in Alaska. He financed a team of scientists, artists, photographers and naturalists who spent two months exploring the area. One of the naturalists, John Muir, came back with several volumes of information.

From 1900 to 1940, the Territory of Alaska was controlled by Fishing and Mining interests who did not want Alaska to become a state. But, statehood was finally accomplished in 1959. Oil was discovered in 1968 and three years later, in 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed, providing funds and rights to Native Alaskans. The Trans Alaska Pipeline was built in 38 months between 1974-1977. And this year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the original purchase of Alaska.

Then Mr. Hayes went on to talk about the influence of Methodism and other religious denominations in Alaska, particularly the work done on social justice issues. He stated that Methodism at its best is always personal first and social always. Work was done to scuttle an attempt to use a nuclear blast to create a harbor, and to develop the Alaska Native Claims Settlement, among others. In 1967, on the occasion of the Alaska Centennial, there was a desire to honor the work which had been done in Alaska by missionaries from the various religious denominations. The result was a mural, 6' high and 12' long, which currently hangs in the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. This mural was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Rasmuson for the Alaska Council of Churches in conjunction with the United Campus Ministry at the University of Alaska. It is titled the "Cry of the Wilderness" based on the book, *Cry of the Wilderness* by Tay Thomas.

Quoting from a brochure describing the mural, "Alaska's history is inextricably intertwined with the accounts of missionary activity of the Christian church. Perhaps more than any other group of men and women these missionaries have shaped and influenced the destiny of this great state, bringing their several ministries to bear on the many great needs long ignored by others less concerned.

"By dog team, pack train, sailing ship, river steamer, and on foot missionaries have journeyed to the far corners of the state, and the 'good news' they brought, found form and substance in churches, schools, hospitals, homes for children and community centers. Their concern and ministry was to all men - trapper, miner, native fisherman and colonist, all were the object of their love." p. 7)



Alaska Centennial Mural "Cry of the Wilderness"

The mural includes a Methodist, a Moravian, several Presbyterians, an Episcopalian, two Norwegian Lutheran, and someone from the Swedish Covenant Church, the Russian Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church. Among the various individuals honored in the mural is the one Methodist, Agnes Soule Newhall, in the mid left-hand side of the mural, who first went to Unalaska in 1895 to direct the work of what became the Jesse Lee Home. The woman at the bottom left of the mural is Jennie Olson Rasmuson, from the Swedish Covenant Church, the mother of the benefactor of the mural, Elmer Rasmuson. Next to Jennie Rasmuson is a Spruce tree, representing Spruce Island, near Kodiak, AK, home for Russian Orthodox priest, Fr. Herman, the first saint to be canonized in America in 1970. In the middle of the right-hand panel is Sheldon Jackson, the first Presbyterian missionary to Alaska, who became the first General Agent for Education and was responsible for the beginnings of a school system in Alaska and the development of the Comity Agreement which assigned various parts of Alaska to each of the denominations involved to prevent competition and overlap. The Methodists were assigned to the Southwest.

Tuesday morning, June 27, began with a word of welcome from our Anchorage host, Larry Hayden. Many thanks go to Larry and his wife, Joanne, for all of their work in organizing not only the events of the meeting itself, but also organizing additional tours before and after the meeting and personally leading some of those tours. Larry introduced the Conference Superintendent, Carlo Rapanut, who provided morning devotions.



*Carlo Rapanut*

Carlo took the story of Jacob running away from the anger of his brother, Easau, and laying his head on a stone for a pillow in Genesis 28: 10-19a, for one of his texts for the morning. He noted how Jacob had exclaimed when he awoke, "Surely the presence of the Lord was in this place, and I was unaware of it." He then took a rock, set it up as an altar, and anointed it with oil, thus marking the stone with meaning and story. Carlo then noted that he was in the presence of stone (story) collectors.

This scripture was followed by the one in the book of Joshua, Chapter 4:1-9, in which the Israelites are told to bring twelve stones, one of each of the twelve tribes of Israel, and to place them in the middle of the Jordan River, as a permanent memorial to the people of Israel. Carlo then went on to describe Alaska as an outdoorsy place with not a lot of shopping malls, but lots of hiking trails instead. One day, when he was out running, he found a rock cairn which might have been used to mark a trail, or as a memorial. It was Holy Week when he was out there; he had taken the week off for spiritual revival and was climbing the mountain to seek God.

As Carlo picked up his own rock to add to it, he was struck how the cairn was full of story – every rock had the story of an individual or a group. He then pointed out that as we, as historians, collect rocks – that is, dates, events, people, etc. - they will remain only a pile of rocks if we do not also tell the faith story of these "rocks." He showed a video of a courtroom scene in which he noted that in the courtroom, whoever tells the best story wins. Carlo asked, "What is your faith story?" Each one of us is one of the twelve rocks (of the twelve tribes of Israel) called to tell the story. May we not be just a gatherer of rocks but may we find our own place in which to tell our own story, as well.

Following the morning devotions, the WJCAH completed the reports from the various conferences and the other business on their agenda for their annual meeting. Then Priscilla Pope-Levison convened the annual meeting of the HSUMC and introduced our new Membership Secretary, Donald Brenneman, who is taking over the job from Richard Stowe. She also noted that when the proposed by-law changes are accepted, the Membership Secretary will be an official member of the Board for the first time.

Priscilla then introduced Joyce Plyler, who had prepared the proposed changes to the By-laws to come and present them. Joyce pointed out that there were primarily two areas that were addressed: changes that related to our non-profit status and changes related to eliminating the Program Committee(*cont. p. 8*)

and establishing members-at-large. The changes to the By-laws were then accepted. Priscilla thanked Joyce for all of her hard work in preparing the proposed changes.

Priscilla led a short discussion about the need for everyone to take responsibility for recruiting new members to the Society. She then introduced our newly elected Officers: Ivan Corbin, President; Doug Tzan, Vice-President (both present at the meeting); and Sarah Mount Elewononi, Secretary, as well as the re-election of Kerri Shoemaker as Treasurer. Pat Thompson then rose to thank Priscilla and the other out-going officers, Dan Swinson, Vice-President and Barb Essesn, Secretary, for all of their hard work over the past years.

Dale Patterson, Archivist-Records Administrator for the General Commission, then made a presentation on Oral History. Before he began his official presentation, however, he said a few words about the new transcription project which his office is undertaking to allow interested individuals to transcribe the inscriptions on pictures in their vast missionary scrapbook collection. If you are interested in working on this project or would just like to know more about it, go to: <http://catalog.gcah.org/omeka>



*Dale Patterson presenting the new Transcription Project*

Dale then presented, “Oral History: What is it? How Do We Do It?” [The power-point slides are included in the program book we were given.] He began by stating that history becomes the story we tell that becomes our memory of who we are. If we have told no story, we have no memory of it. Oral history can help bring the memories alive in a special way and can also be very pastoral. It is the stories told that tie us together.

Oral history is a special type of primary document - interviews focused on special topics, asking what information this particular person’s recollections add to the historical record. It also allows the narrator to tell a specific type of story. Oral history is *Not* a taped discussion, a monologue, just a recording of events, or an “ET-style” of interview.

“An oral history interview can help to create a primary document. By manners, assumptions, questions, and techniques the interviewer may affect the validity of the information solicited. For this reason, the material recorded in an oral history interview should be as much as possible the creation of the narrator [i.e, the person being interviewed].” A good oral history interview requires a lot of research. Select your topic – local church history, conference history, person or event - and then become as familiar as possible with the topic’s history. You may need to read histories, check newspapers or other resources in your preparation. Then decide whom you will interview. Create a list of questions to be covered. Contact the individuals by letter or e-mail, explain your interest in interview them and include your questions. Confirm the request by phone and set a date.

Start your interview with your own name, the date, and the name of the person you are interviewing. Don’t rush the narrator, and try to minimize your own talking. Be flexible to allowing the narrator to open up new information while being firm about keeping the interview focused. End the interview by thanking the narrator and getting a signed release form. Then create either a summary or a transcription of the interview and send copies to the person with another “thank-you.” Finally store the tapes in a cool, dry place, and consider storage in your conference archives or another place which also has oral history transcription. Encourage others to use the information.



*Kelli Williams*

Following Dale’s presentation, we drove to the current Jesse Lee Home (now known as AK Child and Family) for lunch in the Benson Activity Center. After lunch, Kelli Williams, Director of Spiritual Life Services, told us the story of the establishment of the original Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska in 1889 and then its transition to Seward in 1925, to better serve the wider Alaska community.  
(cont. p. 9)





*Benny Benson*

In 1927 an exciting event took place at the Home. A contest was held by the American Legion to design a flag for the Alaska Territory. The contest was won by one of the residents of the Jesse Lee Home, John "Benny" Benson. Benny's design of a field of blue for the forget-me-not, the Big Dipper for the bear which represents strength, and the North Star of Alaska, the future northernmost state in the union, was selected from among some 135 entries. On July 9, 1927, Benny had the great honor of handing Alaska's flag to Territorial Governor Parks to be raised to fly underneath Old Glory for the first time at the Jesse Lee Home campus. In 1964, the town of Seward was devastated by an earthquake and resulting tsunami and though the Jesse Lee Home was located high enough on a hill to escape destruction, the buildings were heavily damaged and the children were evacuated.

Because the cost of repairing the structure was prohibitive and the children were in need of services not readily available in Seward, the United Methodist Women purchased 25 acres of land in south Anchorage and work began on several residential cottages, an administrative building and housing for the director. The children returned to the Jesse Lee Home in 1966.

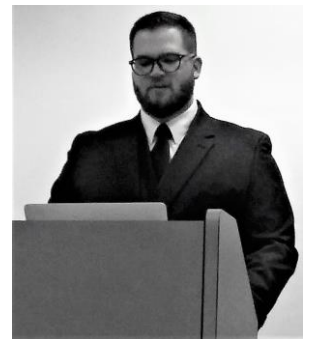
In 1970 the Jesse Lee Home merged with Lutheran Youth Center and Anchorage Christian Children's Home and was re-named Alaska Children's Services, a mission of the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and American Baptist Churches USA. During the '70's and '80's Alaska Children's Services provided group homes, mental health services emergency shelter, case management and adventure based programs. The Spiritual Life Program is also an important aspect of residential care.



*Photo Courtesy, Jim LeBau*

In 2013 the organization was renamed AK Child & Family in order to distinguish it from the state Office of Children's Services. The organization has grown and evolved to meet the needs of Alaska's children and families, helping children to understand their own stories.

Following lunch, we returned to the APU Campus to hear a timely presentation titled, "The Woman's Home Missionary Society and the Education of Alaskans," by Alex Parrish, a doctoral student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, who was born and raised in Anchorage. He began by noting that the story of Methodism in Alaska is largely due to the work of women. "Where others were unwilling or unable, Methodist women took the reins and resolved to continue the mission. In the face of danger, opposition, and even death, it was Methodist women who advanced the cause of Methodism in Alaska." In this paper, Parrish focused on the work of the Woman's Home Missionary Society (WHMS) and the development of their educational initiatives to the Alaska Native peoples.



*Alex Parrish*

The WHMS educational initiatives concentrated on industrial schools that taught American Protestant domesticity to indigenous women and children, and formal classroom education that attempted to replace indigenous cultures with an idealized American culture. He pointed out, however, that he was not attempting to evaluate or critique the educational practices of the women involved, but to merely describe "the educational philosophies and underlying ideologies at work in the educational practices as articulated by the missionaries and patrons of the mission themselves."

Lucy Webb Hayes, the first lady of the nation, was the first president of the WHMS. Its focus was to be primarily on services to those within the United States, with an emphasis on the home and Christian education. This emphasis on home and education was informed by a certain set of values, described by Dr. Priscilla Pope-Levison as "maternalism:"

Maternalism was not simply a compromise to mollify a male church hierarchy but an ideology that these women embraced and perpetuated among a wide swath of the faithful. In other (cont. p. 10)

words, the maternalistic ideology disseminated by women in the [WHMS] and the deaconess movement... restricted women by their own rhetoric and strategy to “mothering not governing.”

Between 1890 and 1891 the Society allocated nearly \$50,000 to the Alaska Mission, donated primarily by the women of the Society, not by the MEC's missionary society. During this time, the Society's efforts were strongly connected to those of Sheldon Jackson, the Presbyterian missionary mentioned above, who was also the general agent of education for Alaska for the US government. Jackson commissioned male teachers and paid them with government funds, while the Society commissioned female teachers, sometimes the spouse of the teacher, and paid them with mission funds. Thus, Alaska became, in fact, a mission for the women of the church and not the larger Methodist church.

This became especially the case when the greater church supported a proposed but ultimately defeated constitutional amendment that would have made government support for religious education unlawful, in an attempt to prevent Roman Catholics from receiving such funds. As a result, the MEC ruled that its missionary societies and auxiliaries would no longer accept government financial assistance. Thus, support for the male missionaries now also passed to the WHMS.

The WHMS' strong partnership with Sheldon Jackson, however, also informed and shaped the strategies and values of the educational initiatives. Prior to coming to Alaska, Jackson had worked among the Choctaw Indians which had “formed his ideology concerning indigenous peoples and the methods of Americanizing indigenous youth. Such efforts included a strong disciplinary element designed to drive out Native culture and replace it with the values of Protestant American civilization.” Thus, “The education strategy of the Society problematized Native culture and elevated the culture of white American Protestants as the primary force for the redemption of the world. This redemption was accomplished through a maternalistic lens, whereby the women of the Society mothered Native peoples, who, in the view of the Society, desperately needed Christian domesticity.”

Nativeness came to be viewed as a pestilence which needed to be eliminated. One of the ways in which this was done was through training in domesticity and insisting that they learn to speak English. The Native Alaskans were seen as literally unclean, and many of the diseases brought by the white folks who came into Alaska were blamed on the Alaskans. Thus, in order to confront the problem of Native-ness as early as possible, the Society focused heavily on the education of Native children.



*Jesse Lee Home, 1901*

The Jesse Lee Memorial Home and Industrial School in Unalaska was one of the earliest results. Lydia Daggett, Alaska Bureau Secretary for the Society , explained, “Because the indomitable courage and perseverance of Jesse Lee, *(from “Wikipedia”)* ‘The pioneer of Methodism to New England,’ planted Methodism in the extreme East of our land, it was thought eminently proper that his name should be placed on the first piece of Methodist property in the extreme West. Initially, the Jesse Lee Home was for girls and was seen as a safe place for ‘friendless girls’ who within a few years could be trained ‘for missionary work among the heathen tribes.’ It was supported by Sheldon Jackson until 1892, when the funds from the government were cut off. Surprisingly, however, many Alaska natives began to support the school and near the turn of the century, the General Missionary Society also finally began to support the Alaska mission.

By 1895, there was a need for a school for boys, as well. This school functioned as an industrial school where the boys were taught how to garden and raise fish. “The acclamation of Alaska Native communities into the newly established American society through conversion and industrialization were keys to Native survival in this educational philosophy. The skills and practices that had sustained Native communities for centuries were again replaced by American commercial enterprises and ideals.”

As time went on, the Jesse Lee School was raised up as a model for others. One government official wrote, “The success of the Lee School is due to the personal equation of the individuals presiding over it, and to the fact that the children are removed from their native home influences.” *(cont. p. 11)*

Parrish commented, "The alleged 'unbiased standpoint' from which these observations were made was indicative of the educational philosophy concerning the civilizing education Native children ought to receive."

He also went on to state that, "While the vision was considered for the good of Native people, it was not necessarily a good the indigenous Alaskans envisioned for themselves... Native-ness was problematized and white-ness was idealized. These ideas dominated the educational ideologies and practices of the Society during its nearly six-decade mission to Alaska."

Things have changed in more recent years, however. Parrish concluded by saying, "In 1999, the *Anchorage Daily News* reported on an ecumenical meeting sponsored by the Alaska United Methodist Conference that explored what it means to be Native and Christian. In June of 2010, the conference adopted a vision that included priorities concerning Native Outreach and a focus on young people. Such priorities reflect focus points that have been objects of concern for Methodists in Alaska for over a century. Even yesterday, Dr. Bob Onders, president of this university, relayed to us his commitment to the education and well-being of Alaskans through this university. He told us, 'History is important because it reminds us where we've been to show us where we're going.' Along with Dr. Onder's words and leadership, studies like the one presented today exhibit the importance of history. The Woman's Home Missionary Society's ideology and procedures in education demonstrate that words like 'education,' 'well-being,' and even 'health' are not value-less, monolithic words. They are given value and meaning through underlying assumptions and philosophies. Recognition of the ideologies, assumptions, and philosophies of the past are paramount for strategizing for the future. Or, to use a slogan of the Woman's Home Missionary Society, it is 'Looking Backward, Thinking Forward.'" (See October 2017 *Methodist History* for entire presentation).

Following Alex's presentation, DarEll introduced Shirley Manning Knepp, from the Oregon-Idaho Conference, who made a presentation on the development of women in ministry, leading up to the story of Grace Weaver, who was among the first women to receive full clergy rights in 1956. Shirley noted in 1786 John Wesley actually attacked the tradition that women be submissive. He was much influenced by his mother, Susannah Wesley, who believed that religion was not confined to the church. In 1761, Wesley gave written approval to Sarah Crosby to continue the public exhorting which she found herself doing as a class leader. He later granted approval to Mary Bosanquet (Fletcher) to preach, based upon her description of her *extraordinary* call. Bosanquet, had actually started preaching at age 13 and was kicked out of her home because of her belief.



*Shirley Manning Knepp*

Here in America, Mary Evans became one of the first woman class leaders in America, in Philadelphia, appointed by Joseph Pilmoor prior to the Revolutionary War. In the late 1870's, Anna Oliver and Anna Howard Shaw, graduates of Boston Theological School, sought ordination from the New England Conference. Oliver had struggled for many years with her call to preach, stating at one point that she had lifted up to the Lord all of the arguments that she could come up with as to why she should stop preaching, "But the Lord overturned all of them and bid me go on." When Shaw and Oliver were turned down by the New England Conference, they appealed to the 1880 General Conference. Not only were they turned down by the General Conference, because the *Discipline* did not allow for women preachers, but the General Conference also rescinded women's right to even have a license to preach. Anna Oliver never did achieve ordination. Anna Howard Shaw joined the Methodist Protestant Church and was eventually ordained.

Shirley lifted up Lucy Rider Meyer, who graduated from Oberlin College, and eventually along with her husband, established the Chicago Training School for Deaconesses. She had seen the success of the German deaconesses and felt many young women could be of service in the US. Lucy designated a black garb to help identify the deaconesses so that they could work in the slums, be easily recognized as servants of God and not be harmed. Meyer trained more than 5,000 students and helped (cont. p. 12)

initiate the development of 40 schools, hospitals, orphanages, old people's and deaconess' homes. Bishop James Thoburn and his sister, Isabella, were instrumental in promoting the Deaconess movement which was officially approved by General Conference in 1888. Abby Mills was the first Deaconess to be consecrated from Oregon in 1894. Shirley herself was the second woman to be so consecrated in 1964.

Then Shirley talked about Lea Joyner, who was ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church in 1939 just months before the three branches of Methodism (the MEC, the MEC,S, and the MPC) came together to form the Methodist Church. Appointments for women were hard to come by in those days, and she was told, "Lea, you don't have any money, you don't have any leadership and you don't know what you're doing." She was told to start her own church and was given a vacant lot in Monroe, Louisiana and \$5,000. Her church grew to become to be the largest one in the world being pastored by a woman. Tragically, Lea was murdered in 1985, in her church yard, by an emotionally disturbed young man.

Next, Shirley lifted up Maud Jensen, the first woman to actually receive full clergy rights in 1956 on May 18 – though "in absentia" - by the Central Pennsylvania Annual Conference, since she was actually serving in Korea, with her husband, as a missionary at the time. Then, on May 22, Grace Huck from North Dakota and on May 25, Grace Weaver from Idaho became the second and third women to receive full clergy rights.

Grace Weaver was born in Philadelphia, PA, in 1909. She once asked her mother to take her to a larger church where she received her call to ministry. The Depression postponed her dream for many years. She attended Glassboro Normal School and became a teacher for 15 years, never losing her desire to become a minister. When she approached the Mission Board, however, she was told that she would not be considered without a college degree and then earned a degree from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1947. When she went back to the Mission Board, she was given



Rev. Grace Weaver

(courtesy Shirley Knepp)

a choice of serving as a music teacher in a southern state, a children's home in Alaska, or at Highland Boy Community House in Bingham, Utah. She chose the position in Utah because she thought the weather would be milder. The dream of becoming a minister was fulfilled when she enrolled at Iliff School of Theology. She was finally ordained as a deacon in 1954 and sent to a church in Idaho. Thus, in 1956, when women were able to receive full clergy rights, she was received on trial in the Idaho conference and granted her elders' orders. After serving two years in Idaho, she was assigned to the

Alaska Missionary Conference and served as the only woman for five years. She then returned to Idaho and served there and in Oregon for an additional twenty years before retiring.

Shirley distributed to all participants an illustrated book which she had edited, entitled, *Grace Weaver's Life in Poetry*, with poems which Grace had written throughout her lifetime. Shirley inherited the poems after Grace's death in 2006.

Shirley has had an interest in the Japanese-Americans and their plight during WWII because of friends that had been interned. When her family went to the Portland, Oregon airport area, her father would point out the Japanese who were working in their gardens and mention how hard they worked. After they were sent to the concentration camps, he cried as he said, "They took their land and sent them to camps." Finding new information in the Oregon-Idaho Archives on a minister who was justice minded made her want to dig deeper.

In 1900, farmers in Mt. Hood needed help to clear the trees and brush from their land so that they could plant more apple trees. Japanese immigrant laborers, who had been brought there to work for the Mt. Hood railway were asked to work for these farmers. In exchange for clearing 15 acres of land, some farmers offered them five-acre plots of land, spread out over the valley. By 1920, ¾'s of the Japanese in Hood River were farmers. Their success was soon felt and the city passed a law that Japanese could no longer buy land. The mood became unbearable after Pearl Harbor. The day after the attack, a store owned by two Japanese brothers was shut down and eventually one was falsely accused of being a spy. The Japanese in the area were then given 15 days to sell their farms and everything they could (cont. p. 13)



not carry with them when they were bused out of town and placed in Concentration Camps. Many lived in tarpaper shacks, were forced to go to work and grow their own crops, and were paid \$5/day. Two-thirds of them were Japanese-Americans who had never been to Japan.

In 1942 Rev. Sherman Burgoyne was appointed to the Hood River Methodist church. Earlier a local war memorial with the names of all the men serving in the war, including the Japanese-Americans, had been installed. In 1944, members of the local American Legion Post blacked out the names of Japanese-Americans who were serving in the armed forces. Rev. Burgoyne advocated for the rights of those individuals and those returning from the concentration camps. When they returned to the area after the War, he and a group of like-minded souls helped the returnees by assisting with transporting their crops to market and in other ways. Rev. Burgoyne was transferred from Hood River and eventually served in Washington state. His work with the Japanese was highlighted in 1947 when he received the Thomas Jefferson Award for social justice. The Japanese communities financed his trip east.

Finally, Shirley lifted up the life of the Rev. Harry Denman, the well-known lay evangelist, for whom the Harry Denman Award is given each year in most annual conferences to honor a lay person and a clergy person, who have demonstrated outstanding efforts in evangelism. He grew up in the MEC,S and eventually worked for the MEC,S Board of Evangelism. He would go into homes and into bars and evangelize, traveling lightly, carrying only his toothbrush, comb, and a change of underwear. He owned only one coat. He had a gift that would make people want to listen to him as he expressed his love for the Lord and his fellow citizens. He was a man who gave all that he had including his faith.

Tuesday evening the HSUMC Awards banquet was held in the Atwood Center. Following the banquet, HSUMC Vice-President, Don Swinson, announced the winners of the 2017 Ministry of Memory Awards (see page 3 for a listing of the other awards). Priscilla Pope-Levison then presented one of the 2017 Ministry of Memory Awards to Donald and Shirley Knepp from the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference. They were honored for their many years of service as the archivists and historians for the Oregon-Idaho Conference. Over the last 15 years, they have given stability to the archives.



Don and Shirley Knepp receive MoM Award



Dr. Chilcote receives  
Saddlebag Selection Award

Then Linda Schramm, Chairperson of the Saddlebag Selection Committee presented the 2017 Saddlebag Selection Award to Dr. Paul Chilcote for his book, *A Faith That Sings Biblical Themes in the Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley*. After thanking the Society for the great honor of receiving this award, Dr. Chilcote talked about what led him to the development of this book. He stated that a lot of work and research has been directed toward to lifting Charles Wesley out from under the influence of his brother, John. Early Methodists learned their theologies by singing Charles Wesley's hymns and that has not been recognized the way that it should have been by contemporary scholars.

S. T. Kimbrough started the Charles Wesley Society in 1990 and Dr. Chilcote has served as the President of that Society. Later, Steve Long launched the Wesleyan Doctrine Series which seeks to reintroduce lay Christians of the Wesleyan tradition to the beauty of doctrine. Dr. Chilcote said, "It is for both professionals and people in the church."

His proposal to write a book for this series was triggered when he was Frank Baker's last graduate student and was working on Volume 7 of the Wesley Works project which was the *Collection of Hymns for Use by the People Called Methodist*, first published in 1780. Chilcote was given the job of finding the scriptural allusions in Charles Wesley's hymns and identifying those texts which were alluded to in 1780. This, he realized, would give us a summary of Charles Wesley's theology. (cont. p. 14)

Dr. Chilcote identified nine over all themes and devoted one chapter to each one: Incarnation, Redemption, Repentance, Justification, Sanctification, Prayer, Communion, Dominion, and Perfection. He then identified a signature hymn for each of these themes along with others that also related to the themes.

We spent the remainder of his presentation singing a number of those hymns which he had identified. Dr. Chilcote stated that both John and Charles Wesley were profound Trinitarians and he began his book on their understanding of the Trinity. We sang "The Triune God of Love," which he described as a vision of the triune God in the perennial dance of love with the Disciple of Jesus as a transcript of the Deity. We sang, "The Unspeakable Gift of Faith," describing justification by grace through faith. This hymn united creation and redemption and is about restoration, holding together the physical and the spiritual, Word and Table, faith and works.

He then stated, "I can never do anything about Charles Wesley without talking about both John and Charles' Eucharistic theology." They rediscovered the centrality of sharing the Lord's supper and the sacredness of sharing meals together. When they shared this meal together, God showed up and Jesus was present. This was where the Word became visible. We sang, "The Greatest Legacy," to illustrate this theme.

We ended with, "Love Divine, All Love Excelling," illustrating the final theme of Perfection in Love. Copies of Dr. Chilcote's book were available and following his presentation, he autographed them for us.



*Alaska Conference Center*

opportunity to visit the conference archives, all housed in one small room.

Wednesday was our tour day and what a day it was. Unfortunately, we were unable to visit St. John's UMC and view the totem pole there due to construction on the road to the site. We continued to the Alaska

Conference Office, where we had the



*Archives Room*



*Innocent Orthodox Cathedral*

in 1958 and 1961 saw the first summer of camping. Currently over 6,000 campers and guests are served annually.

Leaving the conference office, we then made a photo stop at Saint Innocent Orthodox Christian Cathedral – a Russian Orthodox church built in 1993. This would be a much larger building than the one we would visit later in the day. We continued on to one of the conference camps – Birchwood in Chugiak - where we had a tour, ate lunch and had a group photo taken (see bottom p. 19). We ate our lunch, including tasty hot dogs made from caribou sausage, down by their swimming area which had a beautiful view of the many wonderful *St.*

mountains which can be seen everywhere in Alaska. The land was purchased



*Original Lodge built 1964*



*Psalm Lake, where we ate lunch*

Leaving Birchwood, we traveled to the Eklutna Historical Park, which houses the former St. Nicolas Orthodox log church, built in Knik between 1830 and 1870 and moved to Eklutna in 1900 where it was used until the new St. Nicolas church was built in 1962. Here is also the Eklutna Cemetery, which represents the tradition of the Athabaskan Native people combined with Orthodox Christianity (cont. p. 15)



seen in the spirit houses built over each grave to house the spirits of deceased loved ones, along with the distinctive three-barred Orthodox Christian Cross. Fr. Mikel Bock, current priest at St. Nicholas, gave an interesting description of the historic site and current Russian Orthodox Christian practices – the most interesting of which might be that they believe that it is more respectful to God to stand during worship; thus, only those who are unable to stand for long periods are given a seat.



New St. Nicholas church



Eklutna Athabaskan/Orthodox Cemetery



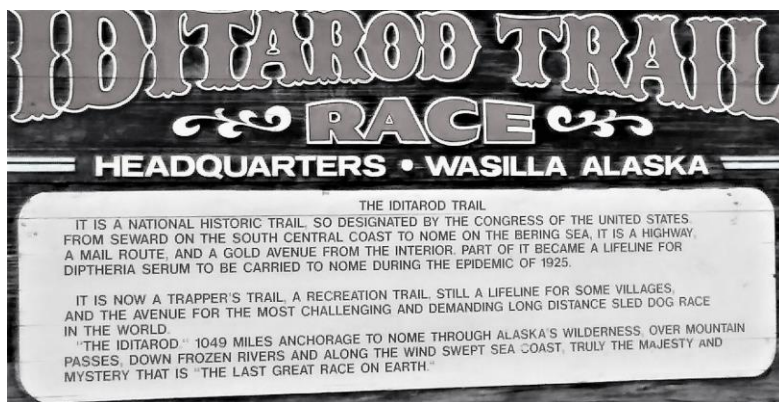
Former St. Nicholas church



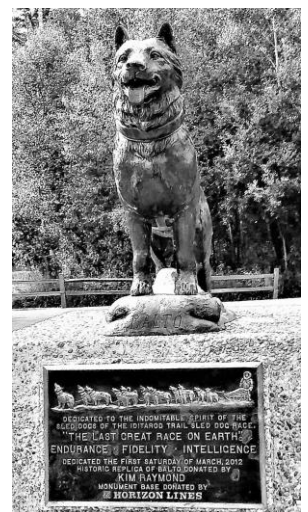
We then traveled to a musk ox farm in Palmer, started in the 1950's by anthropologist, John Jerome Teal, Jr. He initially brought a couple of musk ox calves from Canada to Huntington, Vermont, but the musk ox did not thrive there, and he decided to move his farm to Alaska, which was nearer in climate to Arctic region from which the musk ox originated.



They possess a soft under-wool called qiviut, which can be made into yarn and woven into beautiful, hand-knit garments. Sustainable agriculture for native farmers– raising the musk ox – and a cooperative of native knitters were a part of Teal's vision for native Alaskans.



Leaving the musk ox farm, we then traveled to the headquarters for the Iditarod Dog Sled Trail in Wasilla, where some of the group were taken on a ride drawn by the Iditarod Trail dogs.



A delicious dinner was served to us at the Christ First United Methodist church



Christ First United Methodist

Wasilla, AK (The Cross is a window.)

do ministry in Unalaska, you realize in concrete terms what the United Methodist connection is all about." He described a banner which had come from Texas and the communion ware which was donated by a church in Baltimore, among many other such items. (cont. p. 16)

Dan lifted up the remoteness of the area, noting that if someone was severely injured and needed more care than the very capable small clinic located there could provide, that they would have to be medevaced to a facility that was 3 hours away. There was a lot of transition among the people who lived there, as well. One fellow he met was down to his last penny and wanting to know where someone would go to get a job? He didn't do much homeless ministry as there was no place for them. Instead, he would buy airline tickets for folks to Anchorage or Seattle.



*Rev. Dan Wilcox*

The church had a children's ministry every Wednesday and there might be as many as ten different ethnic backgrounds represented, most of whom didn't speak any English. There were people from all over the world living in Unalaska and one of the things that he did was to try to connect them to some ministry in the area. There was one Japanese family who lived there, moved away, and then moved back. The church collected blankets and warm weather gear for children in an orphanage in Japan after the earthquake there. While they were collecting these items, there were also four Buddhist women working with the children in Unalaska. They were able to translate prayer cards from the church into Japanese so that the children in the orphanage could understand that the children in Unalaska were praying for them.

There were also some architectural students from Chile in the area and one of them connected the church up with an orphanage in Chile, where art supplies and winter clothing were sent. Often the people Dan met were only in the area for a short period of time, but after they left, they would then connect with people back at home and continue the ministries that had begun while they were in Unalaska. The connectional system at work.

Dan then described the mission work that had been undertaken by the church that he has just finished pastoring in Willow, AK. That church had a small congregation of about 45-50 people worshipping on Sunday morning, but they had gained a reputation for being the place to go if you needed something. This came about after a fire in town which resulted in the back half of the sanctuary becoming the central distribution point for water, Gatorade, and other supplies. This, then, led to the church coordinating the recovery effort which led to the church having an amazing mission focus. They provided week-end meals for children, Thanksgiving and Christmas meals for families with the Lion's Club providing Christmas presents, and a large food bank, as well.



*Rev. Charlie Brower*

Following Dan's presentation, the Rev. Charlie Brower, a Native Alaskan pastor, gave an amazing overview of spring whaling in Barrow, AK, illustrated by slides of the whole whaling venture. There is even a program for school age children to learn the whaling profession in which they can get credit at their school. Charlie took his grandson to the program.

Whales weigh an average of a ton a foot, so a 28' whale will weigh 28 tons! When a whale is caught, there is a great celebration. After that, they will be cut up and everything harvested that humans want from them; then the polar bears will come around and eat for about 20 minutes. They will leave and others will come along.

Traditionally, the whaling crews were all (Courtesy, Thelma Boeder) men, but that has changed in more recent years and now a woman can even be a captain of a crew.

Following his presentation on the whales, Charlie then talked about his ministry in Nome, AK. There are less than 3800 people in Nome and gas costs \$4.76/gallon and a 2-bedroom apartment would rent for around \$2800. Most of the work which he does there is in the community. The church started the Nome Non-profit Community Center where the UMW is very involved. (cont. p. 17)



*Nome UMC (courtesy Charlie Brower)*

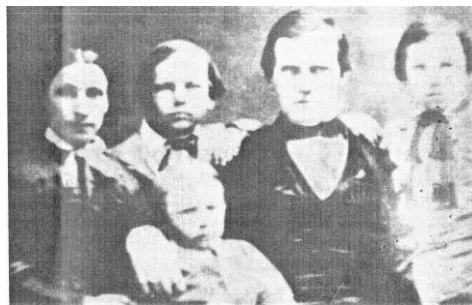


The Center provides short-term care for about 15 children and runs a thrift shop as well as a food bank which serves about 150 people/week. There is an XYZ Center for finding and taking care of the elders which is open five days/week for lunch. There is a big homeless population in Nome. Some of this is caused by the fact that folks come from "dry" communities to Nome which is an "open" community. They become inebriated and then have to be taken care of. The local Nazarene church keeps their church open to serve the homeless. Housing is also a problem as much of the housing is dilapidated.

On Thursday morning, DarEll Weist, Chairperson of the Western Jurisdiction treated us to a presentation entitled, "Tales of the Methodist Invasion of California," or "All Kinds of Methodists Have Invaded California!" He began with the story of the Rev. James W. Brier and his wife, Juliet, who were members of the Sand Walking Party, led by Captain Jefferson Hunt, a Mormon, which left Provo, Utah on October 29, 1849. Not being very experienced, Captain Hunt early on took a wrong turn but eventually got the group back on track. Shortly after that, they were met by another group which was being led by a Captain Smith, also a Mormon, who said that he had found a shorter route to the Los Angeles gold fields. The Sand Walking Party and the Jayhawkers (all single men) decided to head out with Captain Smith. Then, suddenly, they arrived at the entrance of a valley about 8 to 14 miles wide and 130 miles long, with nothing living as far as the eye could see.



*DarEll Weist*



Juliet, Christopher Columbus, James W., John W. and Kirk White (from Ancestry.com) Rev. James Brier's wife, Juliet, who was from Vermont and was a wisp of a woman, weighing only 70 lbs., with three sons, ages 8, 7, and 4, was the first white woman to enter "Death Valley." Terror struck her heart when she did so. Nevertheless, she remained undaunted. Sometimes going two to three days without water, at one point, it was suggested that Juliet remain behind with her boys. She answered, "I have never kept the company waiting neither have my children. *Every step I take will be towards California.*" With those words as her mantra, she continued to encourage her husband and the remainder of the party to continue forward. At one point when her husband was ready to give up and abandon the party, she cooked and fed him acorns, keeping him alive. Though many of their party did not survive the trek, due to Juliet's inner strength, grit and indestructibility, the Briers and a few others were able to cross the Mojave Desert and eventually arrived at the San Francisquito Ranch near Santa Clara.

The Briers never did go to the gold fields, but ended up in Los Angeles early in 1850 where they stayed at the home of J.G. Nicols. James Brier decided to start holding worship services, preaching the first Protestant sermon in LA – though no one was present except the Briers and the Nichols families. Although he advertised widely for the next three weeks, no one came. Los Angeles was not ready for either salvation or sanctification.

However, DarEll said, "We are getting ahead of ourselves." The earliest record of a Methodist in California was that of Jedidiah Smith, a layman and a fur trapper, who arrived in San Bernadino in 1826. It was not until 1846, when Adna Hecox, a licensed exhorter from near Santa Clara, preached a sermon at a funeral that the first Protestant sermon was actually given in California. William Roberts, however, a friend of Jason Lee from Oregon, was the first ordained pastor to preach in California.

Roberts was appointed as the Superintendent of the Oregon Mission by the General Board of Missions of the MEC and made his way to the Mission via South America and the Magellan Strait, and up the West Coast of the United States, along with another missionary and his family, the Rev. James Wilbur. Roberts and Wilbur were charged with making a survey of California along the way. They landed in Yerba Buena, or San Francisco, in April 1847, and Roberts preached a sermon in the Brown Hotel on April 27. (cont. p. 18)

The following month a Methodist class and Sunday school were organized, the first in California. In August, 1851, he organized the California Conference of the MEC.

David Thompson, from the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, came to California in 1849 and in 1859 Israel Sloane was sent to form a UBC Mission. But the UBC pastors were of a mixed mind as to how fertile the soil of California was for Christianity. In the town of Stockton there were 12 churches and 37 civic societies, 28 of which were secret societies. Writing 30 years later, Bishop H. J. Becker blamed the lack of religious interest in California on the secret societies, among them the Masons. Nevertheless, the UBC continued their work.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, also sent a contingent to California, though they were met with great opposition, due to having the word, "South" in their name. Many were suspicious and thought that their motive for coming to California was to establish it as a slave state. The Rev. Dr. Jesse Boring and Rev. A.W. Winn from Georgia and Rev. D.W. Polluck from St. Louis all arrived in San Francisco in May, 1850. However, they all had a good deal of bad luck. One of them purchased a lot to build a church only to find that the title was defective. Another did the same and found the property actually belong to public school. The third had a mortgage on which the interest charged became greater than the mortgage. Two weeks after the mortgage was paid, the church was destroyed by fire. Another was hopelessly in debt. There were some successful MEC,S churches established in northern California, however.

In 1853 the Rev. Adam Bland was appointed as missionary by the MEC to Southern California and established the first Methodist church in Los Angeles. His methods, however, were quite un-Methodistic! He leased the El Dorado Saloon and turned the first floor into a Chapel and the second floor became his living quarters and "The Methodist Chapel School for Girls," operated by his wife. He also preached in El Monte, Wilmington, and Santa Barbara. He supplemented his income by horse trading, for which he was chastised by the annual conference. He responded that when the conference paid him enough to support his family, he would desist from the practice. In 1854 he was appointed Presiding Elder and served for 51 years in the ministry.

The final Methodist that DarEll described was an African American woman, named Biddy Mason, who was brought to Los Angeles from Mississippi by her Master, Robert Young, a Mormon. When Young decided to move to Texas and take Biddy and her sister Hannah and their children with him, some freed Black friends of hers intervened and convinced a local judge, Benjamin Hayes, to declare that it was illegal for him to take them with him. Biddy was hired as a mid-wife and saved enough money that she was able to buy a home for herself and develop some rental units. She provided medical services for rich and poor alike and her home became a center for social services for those in need. In 1876, she and a small group of African Americans founded the First African Methodist Episcopal Church (FAME) in her home.

Although California was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1850, there was an on-going battle between northern and southern California over the issue of slavery, with Southern Californians pretty much favoring slavery. There was an attempt at one point to form the Pacific Republic, joining California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Washington and Oregon, into a separate entity – as an alternative to joining the Union. The churches were also involved in this dispute, as well, and there was an attempt to create an independent Methodist Church in California which was unsuccessful, as was an attempt to eliminate the word, "South" from the MEC,S.

In the 1850's the MEC withdrew all of its preachers from southern California because many of them were so outspoken in their opposition to slavery that much feeling was aroused against them. Other denominations did the same and funerals became the responsibility of the Masons. On the other hand, during the War, MEC,S Bishop H.H. Cavanaugh from Georgia, who entered California through the Union lines was accused of being a spy for the Confederacy and was arrested and put in jail. He was eventually released, however.

In 1866 the P.E., Adam Bland, found 30 Methodists in Los Angeles County and the Methodist Church was revived. In the 70's and 80's many, including a variety of ethnic groups from across the country, made their way to California in search of a new life – economic opportunities as well as a (*cont. p. 19*)

healthier climate. Among them were many Methodists. Eventually what is now the California-Pacific Annual Conference was formed from a merger of 23 Conferences.

DarEll ended by describing a group of what he called “invisible Methodists” – that is, preacher’s wives, who without portfolios or education provided untold services to their Methodist churches. Often they were the musician for the church. They visited the sick and dying and encouraged the lonely, ministering alongside their husbands. They took responsibility for their own children and the children of the parish and often made do with meager resources. Many times we do not even know their first name as their identity was so tied up with their husbands. “We will never know how large a part they played in the success of the Methodist Church in California.”

All kinds of Methodists invaded California!

Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, the Bishop for the Greater Northwest Area, including Alaska, spent a good deal of time at our meeting in Alaska and spoke for a few minutes between DarEll and Arlene Wood’s presentations. She encouraged us to know, keep and actively live out our faith, by putting history to work!



*Bishop Elaine Stanovsky*

Following Bishop Stanovsky’s remarks Arlene Wood made a presentation on Ministry to Native Alaskans in Russia. Siberia, or the Anadyr region of Chukotka, the far east of Russia, is separated from Alaska by the Bering Strait, with Native Alaskans living on both sides of the Strait. In the 1990’s people were desperate for help. There was a very nice hospital but absolutely no medicine. Women were coming to the hospital to have babies with no baby clothes. The men had no nets and no outboard motors for their fishing boats. People were totally without food and starving. The Rev. Della Waghiyi the first Native Alaskan woman to be ordained, was so disturbed that she could not eat her own food and called the Rev. Jim Campbell, who organized a ministry to these people, which resulted in the Russian Far East Task Force and Chukota ministries in 1999 – a joint effort of the Methodists and the Moravians. A wide variety of assistance was given. Food and clothing were provided. The clothing was stored in Arlene Wood’s church and eventually 2 ½ tons of clothing and toys were shipped to Chukotka, Koryak, Kamchatka and Magadan.



*Arlene Wood*

School supplies were shipped to schools at the beginning of each school year. A coop was developed for young people to provide work for them such as running errands for elders, picking up garbage and participating in art projects such as making notecards or painting pictures onto calendars. Under Jim Campbell’s leadership, \$40,000 was provided to outfit four boats for the fishermen. Providing medical supplies/medicines for the clinics was a more difficult problem because the Russian Army searched all of the boxes before they were shipped and often took out the medicines.

A soup kitchen, which eventually served up to 180 people/day was shut down because the governor of the province did not want word to get back to Moscow about the desperation of the people living there. Eventually, Russia cut off assistance from Alaska, and the Task Force was ended. But the Native peoples whom the Far East Russia Task Force and Chukotka Ministries assisted were very, very grateful. They said, “We thought that God had forgotten us; then you came.” *(Photo below courtesy of Jim LeBau)*



(cont. from p. 2) and my contemporaries as well as those who will follow us are the products of those who have come before. Helping people appreciate and understand our history is one of our greatest tasks and privileges. Fulfilling this responsibility of ours helps give shape and fullness to our future not only as United Methodists, but as citizens of planet Earth and the Kingdom of God. I hope you will encourage others to think about becoming a part of the Historical Society, reading and contributing to its publications as well as attending its meetings where history meets the present, informs the future and helps make our past come alive.

In Christ's service, Ivan G. Corbin

## **CALL FOR PAPERS for 2018 HSUMC ANNUAL MEETING**

"Pietism, Transatlantic Revivalism, and the EUB Legacy in United Methodism" serves as a fitting theme that allows us to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the merger between the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968. It celebrates the enduring legacies of the Evangelical Association and the United Brethren in Christ traditions, and the ways by which these legacies have shaped United Methodist identity. Consequently, two important motifs emerge as we discern these legacies, namely: Pietism and transatlantic revivalism. These two not only influenced the Evangelical, United Brethren, and Methodist traditions in various ways, but also enabled them to find common ground throughout their histories, and, thus, helping set the stage for the mergers of 1946 (EUB) and 1968 (UMC).

**Paper Proposals are due by February 1, 2018.** Accepted Proposals will be notified by February 15, 2018. **A list of possible topics and instructions and information on how to submit paper proposals will be available by September 1, 2017 at the United Theological Seminary website, [www.united.edu](http://www.united.edu).**



