

## Weekly Connector: The Last Frontier

July 18, 2018

Hello, Church!

At the beginning of this month, Sherry and I left the warmer climate of Northeast Ohio for the "Last Frontier" of Alaska. This is the land where, this time of year, it does not get completely dark; where bears are real, the moose are loose, and folks fish just for the Halibut (and the Salmon)!

This year in May, Sherry and I celebrated our 30th Wedding Anniversary. As we approached this milestone, we wanted to go somewhere special - maybe, a place we'd never been. Then, God had something to say...

Last June, as I prepared to return to Ohio from the Church of God Convention in Wichita, I had the opportunity to meet JR Stepp and his wife Nora, along with two others that were also on their way back to Alaska. They asked me to take their picture with Dr. Edward Foggs, a leader within the Church of God for many years. I agreed - making sure to take one with me in it, too. We talked and I discovered that JR had been a Sr. Pastor for all of 23 days of a fellowship of believers in Palmer, Alaska.

I prayed with them and prayed for them. It was, to my thinking, a Divine appointment. From that conversation, I was invited to preach at the Alaska Church of God Family Camp in Wasilla, Alaska, from July 10-15.

So, early this month, Sherry and I flew to Anchorage and spent time there, in Seward, Soldotna, and Homer before joining up with JR and the rest of the Alaska Church of God.

I like it when God steps in and makes things far better than we can ask or imagine. Of course, He does this more than we know. But there are times when His moving is more monumental than momentary. This was one of those times.

When Sherry and I were married, within 2 weeks we arrived in San Jose, California - far away from the family we knew, to be with the family we did not yet know. Our family in California was the first of many church families who would adopt us into their own: Bloomington, IL; Fort Collins, CO; Stuttgart, Germany; Greeley, CO; Wichita, KS; Uganda; East Canton, OH; and now, congregations across Alaska - Palmer, Wasilla, Fairbanks, and Anchorage.

More and more, I remain convinced: it is SO important to be in a local, Bible believing, Christ-following church. Period.



As we traveled in Alaska, we took a few boat cruises to witness the power and beauty of glacier movement. One captain, as he gave the prescribed safety instructions, pointed out that with our two hands, "one hand is for you, the other is for the boat." One simply does not know what turbulence will be encountered in the open ocean - so hold on! In the context of a Christ-follower's life, with our two hands, "one hand is for Christ, the other is for the church." One simply does not know what turbulence will be encountered in the modern life - so hold on! Hold on to Jesus. Hold on to the church. If you know someone who does not have a local, Bible believing, Christ-following church, let Jesus lead you to invite them to be with us! But do not put it off. Do not miss out on all that God has in store for you, your friends and family, and His church - together.

I am so grateful for those who taught in my absence: Rev. Demetrius Booker and Rev. Tim Smith. It is such a comfort knowing that the Word is so well communicated as I travel. These brothers are dear to me and, I know, to you.

This time of year offers each of us opportunities to seek personal and church-wide revival. Campmeetings (and now Family Camps) have from their earliest beginnings brought people to a humble recognition of their need for God and His offering of peace. I hope that wherever you are in your journey with Jesus you will seek out such times of refreshment and re-creation. The [Northeast Ohio Church of God Campmeeting](#) will begin this weekend, July 22-29. If you do not have plans to attend campmeeting, please come. I am praying that each who attends campmeeting will come away stronger for the year that approaches. Let's fill up and be ready for what lies ahead of us this year!

This Sunday, we come to another familiar passage in Scripture: "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Rom. 12:2. One of the last strongholds against a Christ-following life is the mind. What we think and dwell upon leads our words and actions to reflect our devotion or confusion. Be sure to come early to Sunday School and then to service as we celebrate Christ and seek to "Be Transformed!" I so look forward to seeing you there.

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph. 3:20-21*

May each of you enjoy His abundance - today!

I love you, Church!

Pastor greg



