

OutPost of Hope Reflection
November 19, 2023

Elisabeth A. Kachline

Sitka is a home away from home. A place of peace and rest. A community that cares about its residents and visitors. St. Peter's By-the-Sea is vital part of the Sitka Community. As well, St. Peter's is a place of spiritual rest, rejuvenation, and friendship.

Church has always been an important part of my life. Baptized Episcopal, raised in the Methodist Church, married in the Catholic Church, and currently members of First Congregational Christian Church in Anchorage. When Rabbi Rosenfeld was at Temple Beth Shalom we frequently attended services there. Our daughter referred to it as "hedging all bets."

Sitka Music Festival brought us to Sitka and St. Peter's. The Uncommon Music Festival reinforced our love of St. Peter's. Julie and Loyd, the congregants of St. Peter's, and the warmth of worship provide an OutPost of Hope for us - a place of safety, caring, fellowship and love. St. Peter's involvement in the community is remarkable and amazing as it reaches so many people of Sitka.

Raising an autistic son has brought many Outposts of Hope into our lives. Parents joining together to get services in Anchorage for autistic children - school, church, and community. Community organizations stepping forward to provide services. Assets of Alaska supervises our son's job with the Post Office on JBER. Hope Community Resources supports a group home for our son and two other autistic gentlemen.

Stepping out in faith to go to Alaska Pacific University to get a teaching degree. Employment with the Anchorage School District and forming life time friendships with staff, parents, and students. Outposts of Hope for each other - to have a student say, "You're a Christian, aren't you?" Then I'm doing okay. I strive to be a kind, caring, and positive influence on the lives of others - an Outpost of safety and compassion.

Harry Kachline:

Everything Elisabeth said, and for me, just phrased a bit differently: Sitka itself is a spiritual place for me. When the plane makes the last turn and we can see the bridge, we feel as if we're home. And The Sisters, Verstovia and Arrowhead, are waiting. That's the land, and then the people - since the advent of our steady visits in 2003, we have come to know more than a handful of folks who provide comfort and welcome in this outpost. Music, whales, bears, the National Cemetery, SPL, coffee, books, and a place to rest our heads. Ravens converse, pigeons wheel, seemingly reminding us each day to pass upon what Sitka has given us to members of whatever outpost we happen to come upon.

We are grateful beyond words to St Peter's, to Sitka's people for being the Outpost as well as for the gifts we can share with others wherever their outpost might be.

Gunalchéesh! Håw'aa!